

Uncovering Emotion in Adult Learning

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Declaration

Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in 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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Michelle K. Mulvihill

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Uncovering Emotion in Adult Learning

Abstract

The presence of emotion and feelings in adult learning is obvious and undeniable. Does emotion have an integral place or is it incidental or an obstacle?

This research looks at what might be learned about emotion when an adult learning facilitator uses sustained reflection on practices that use various ways of knowing to more deeply engage adult learners and practitioners with emotionality.

The inquiry looks at the question: If story is used to present, illuminate and reflect on adult learning experiences, where emotion is welcomed and honoured during the learning process, what can be revealed? The primary research question is: What can I come to know about the inner and outer processes of adult learning, by reflecting on moments in facilitated learning in which emotion is uncovered in the stories of participants and in the story of the adult practitioner?

Organic inquiry was chosen as a research methodology for this research because of its capacity to focus on stories as vehicles whereby both conscious and unconscious realms can be accessed. Arts-based research methodology was also used for this inquiry because it provided the dramatic setting, through the creation of semi-fictionalised stories, by which emotionality could be uncovered. These artistic forms of expression, used to reflect and examine the learning practices, extend the boundaries of how we come to know emotionality in adult learning.

Four adult learning scenarios are presented in the textual art forms of drama, film, storytelling and a circus presentation. The researcher's reflection on each of these vignettes provides one of the filters through which the emotionality of the learning scenarios is further experienced and understood. Reflections from some of the participants who were involved in each scenario are also presented, so as to deepen the reflection. In keeping

with the methodology of organic inquiry, the reader is invited to engage with this research as co-researcher.

This thesis presents an alternative way of understanding emotion in adult learning, one that reflects the central role of emotion in our ways of knowing, particularly in non-formal learning. The thesis argues that personally significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in, and derives from, the adult's emotional connection with the self and the broader social world.

The nub of this inquiry is to explore further what learning might happen, in different adult learning settings, when emotionality is uncovered, revealed and made known. A selection of postures, or behaviour and attitudes, are named which adult educators may wish to reflect on or adopt, in an effort to uncover emotionality in their own practice.

The thesis concludes that emotions and feelings can play an integral role in adult learning experiences.

Chapter 1: Framing the Inquiry

Introduction

As a small child, I remember seeing street parades in which people wearing large papier mâché masks and very funny clothes would walk along in the parade, and every now and then stop to talk to the children lining the street. At some stages of my early childhood these were believable characters and I felt terrified of them. I would run from the footpath and hide in the family's motorcar to escape them, feeling absolutely terrified. As I grew older, with a very practical, "grown-up" mind, I thought, "How silly it is to have such a strong emotional reaction to such an innocent occurrence!"

Today as an adult woman, with the vision to see "make-believe" in another light, I recognise that what I then thought to be simply fairytale or myth may also be seen as symbolic portrayals of what is real in our internal or external worlds. Stories and myths portraying main characters as taking a "journey", for example, offer symbolic meaning that, when explored, can lead to heightened understanding of one's internal and external way of being. Segal (1990), in quoting Campbell states, "Anybody going on a journey, inward or outward, to find values, will be on a journey that has been described many times in the myths of mankind" (p. 21).

Since my own enhanced awareness as a person and as a practitioner is central to this dissertation, I'd like to start with a "story" that offers a backdrop for my own reflexive journey to heightened consciousness.

During the 1980s I began teaching at an Australian University. I soon learned that at that time the pre-determined task of the beginning academic was to simply "implant" as much knowledge as possible inside students' minds, and then stand back and wait until they simply "regurgitated it" at examination time. The subject was Developmental Psychology and, during the early years of lecturing these teacher education undergraduates, I began to realise that by

continuing to distance students from their own developmental experiences, I was preventing them from making sense of what they were learning, as it applied to their own life stories. I began to change my strategy and during tutorial time, rather than go over and over the main lecture and “force-feed” it to students, I set up a process whereby students could begin, if they wished, to relate the various stages of development to their own life story. This was done in as non-threatening and as safe an environment as possible. Sometimes I would share some aspects of my own childhood to illustrate a certain developmental stage. One by one, they began to volunteer their own stories, or different aspects of them. Now the “theory” of developmental stages was beginning to make more sense to them. But along with this, I noticed the increase in the presence of emotion inside this tutorial group. The tone of the groups was sometimes emotionally very high, hilarious as very humorous stories emerged. At other times the emotional tone was very low, sad, particularly as a childhood struggle was disclosed. The impact of this story-telling was simply allowed to “be”. It was not processed too much. Sometimes it would be “named” and always it was honoured.

In 1990 I began facilitating adult learning groups as a consultant for a major corporation, I had little formal training in this area. I’ll never forget the day when my mentor directed me to observe his facilitation while taking “copious” notes. The plan was that I would facilitate the training on my own the following day. My “on-the-job training” became my main source of learning, which I supplemented by reading current literature in the fields of adult learning. However, I quickly came to realise that reading about this alone could not begin to prepare me emotionally for what might surface, both inside me and inside the group during these very challenging training sessions.

What I came to learn during both of these experiences was that if those of us engaged in learning, no matter what our role was, were encouraged to share personal experiences, then I, as learning facilitator, had to be prepared for the multitude of emotions that often

surfaced around these issues. Yet at times, I also found myself stunned by the feelings and emotions that surfaced within me while facilitating the experiences of such learning groups. I was instructed through my training and through socialisation, that as a white, Australian woman, my own experiences might be triggered by the thoughts and feelings of learning participants, but that these were not relevant to the learning process and should therefore be kept out of the actual training sessions. So I learned to suppress and mask my own feelings, contain them, as much as possible, never welcome them into the adult learning processes in which I was engaged nor draw on them for reflection with participants-learners.

Although I learned to master this technique quite well, the build-up in my inner dam of questions about this led me to query the feasibility of this approach. I began to query how it could be possible to engage in learning without honouring emotion. I wondered what it might mean for adult learning if emotionality is engaged with.

As a result of twenty years of facilitating various kinds of group learning processes, my own experience, as well as the experiences of my colleagues and group participants, has left me with questions regarding the wisdom of ignoring one's thoughts and feelings which may surface before, during or as a result of facilitating learning group processes. My interest in approaching and exploring these questions became the impetus for my dissertation research.

Nature and purpose of the inquiry/inquiry questions

In this research my interest was not in discovering a prescribed set of criteria (or tools) for engaging with emotions in learning groups, but instead in uncovering and exploring what might be learned, upon reflection, where the facilitator uses practices, which include different ways of knowing, to more deeply engage learners and herself with emotionality. In this research, my primary interest was in discovering what I might learn about my own inner and outer worlds through exploring the ambiguity behind these emotions. How might I, as a facilitator, use the experience of noticing and uncovering emotions during facilitation as an opportunity for learning?

My interest in this area led to the following research questions: If story is used to reflect on facilitated learning experiences with adult learners, where emotion is welcomed and honoured during the learning process, what can be revealed? My primary research question is: What can I come to know about the inner and outer processes of learning by reflecting on moments in facilitated groups where emotion is uncovered as being present in the stories of all participants? By inner processes, I am referring to my internal thoughts and feelings and by outer processes I am referring to my behaviour or actions.

I suspected that I might learn a great deal from re-telling the stories of my own experiences and that of my co-researchers¹, and that such knowing could ultimately enhance my capacity as a learning facilitator to stay centred in situations when emotionality became more apparent within a learning group. I define centred as “simply being settled into one’s inner nature without being displaced, confused, or lost in mental images, memories and thoughts, or thrown off by strong feelings that disturb awareness” (Hanna, 2000, p. 114). This inquiry, however, came to be an even deeper exploration into the convergences of my own internal and external processes as I explored my own remembered emotions during moments of adult learning facilitation.

I believe that this research has set my co-researchers and me on a journey that has led us to explore our internal and external experiences as adult learning participants. To offer insight into the nature of this journey, I’ve begun with a description of the problem or challenge that exists in the tradition of adult learning that has led to the suppression of our personal emotions and feelings.

Problem/challenge

We are constantly invited to be what we are. (Thoreau, in MacLachlan, 1992, p. 36).

¹ Co-researchers refer to all those participants whose stories are reflected in this research, all those who participated in reflecting on the stories and all readers of this research.

In order to be fully present for others, I now believe that I have to first be willing to explore my own emotions on a deeper level. And yet, in order to be effective in adult learning, facilitators like me are often, with good reason, trained to maintain an attitude of neutrality (Heron, 1999). However, neutrality, in this case, means not allowing one's own personal values, beliefs and feelings to affect one's ability to remain open to alternative, possibly challenging, perspectives within a learning group. Maintaining neutrality can be particularly challenging given the gamut of emotions that have the potential to surface within the group. For example, Heron (1999) talks about the process of "transference" in the context of adult learning, which occurs when group members unconsciously transfer to the facilitator hidden and repressed feelings about a parent or some other important authority figure from the past. Taking this process of transference to another level, Heron (1999) states that "universal transference":

... Goes every which way, not just from member to leader, but from member to member. In this case, it widens out beyond feelings for parents and authority figures. Any kind of repressed distress about anyone from the past can be unawaresly projected on to some present person, who is thus unconsciously appointed to be the current scapegoat for past ills (p. 63).

Not only are emotions likely to surface as a result of the above patterns of transference, but the adult educator may also experience the process of "counter-transference". In counter-transference, the facilitator may project hidden distress from his or her past onto one or more group members, or even the learning group as a whole. Heron (1999) warns the facilitator of what might happen should such emotions and feelings surface

Once your facilitation gets tangled up with your own blindly projected distress, it degenerates. It submits to group pressure, or takes flight from what is really going on, or verbally attacks and blames people. The group dynamic rapidly goes down the drain (p. 64).

Heron (1999) recommends that facilitators "keep relatively clear of their own past unfinished business while on the job" (p. 64). While this may often be the most effective strategy, the reality is that the adult educator's feelings and emotions at times do surface

through comments made by various group members and can indeed affect the facilitator's judgment and behaviour within the group. In other words, the adult educator's unconscious and emotional material can have an impact on his or her facilitation. Mindell (1992) points out that, "facilitators, group instructors, business executives, psychologists, politicians, and teachers are rarely in neutral or normal states of consciousness, even at business meetings" (p. 5).

As an adult educator my personal challenge in uncovering emotion and remaining emotionally centred during adult learning processes led to the focus of my dissertation study. Mindell (1993) uses the term "burn your wood" to refer to the kind of personal inner work that he feels is necessary for facilitators who facilitate situations where strong emotions and feelings are likely to surface. He points out that the work of dealing with group emotions can often compel facilitators to question their own deepest beliefs and meaning of life (p. 55). All of our childhood wounds can reappear as we deal with difficult emotions within groups (Arnold Mindell, 1995, p. 46). Mindell recommends that facilitators find a way to allow their own fires to rage, at some point, in order to better prepare them to "sit in the fire" of the group (p. 55).

Many writers in this field recognise that such personal work is important for a group facilitator of experiential learning processes (Gozawa, 2000a; Heron, 1999; Hunter et al., 1995). Yet, some adult educators continue to suggest the avoidance of such feelings, at least during the time of facilitation. The above authors, however, all recommend that such emotions and feelings be engaged more deeply at some point in time as part of the learning process. The following is offered as insight into the kind of learning environments and adult learning situations and dilemmas that have provided me with an opportunity for growth in emotionality as a person and as a professional educator.

Nature of learning groups and the role of the adult educator

It is important to recognise that because individuals are "potentially contradictory creatures", opposition, polarities, and conflict are often a "part of the DNA" of the

collective life of a group (Smith & Berg, 1987, p. xxvii). Understanding the adult educator's role in working to create a safe environment where all perspectives are engaged in a non-judgmental manner is vital to the tone of the group work referred to in this dissertation.

At any given point in time how adult learners understand themselves and how they choose to interact within the group can depend on the particular frames that they are using – their perspective in the moment resulting from personal experiences and other such filters (Smith & Berg, 1987, p. xxix). If the adult educator is able to help participants in reframing their perspectives (possibly through questioning their assumptions), this process could lead to a powerful shift in both individual and group meaning-making. My interest is in recognising that the adult educator's capacity to reframe his or her perspective, when necessary, could also be valuable in modelling this process with the learning group, as well as offer the adult educator an opportunity for personal growth in consciousness. The reframing processes of individual group members and the adult educator could have a continuously evolving effect on group meaning-making.

Mindell (1995) recognises the role of the facilitator in helping participants to get in touch with and articulate their feelings and emotions with the group. "It's the facilitator's job to remain sensitive to everyone, to draw distinctions and to encourage people to fine-tune their comments to reflect their precise feeling" (p. 105).

The role of the adult educator, therefore, becomes quite similar to that of a director or "process guide", someone who has the skills to help the learning group and its individual members to expand awareness and/or consciousness at many levels. By expansion of awareness or consciousness, I am not necessarily referring to a definitive agreement or resolution, a "happy ending" or perfect outcome, or a determination of right or wrong. I am instead referring to the new meaning that can result at a group level when the experiences, feelings, emotions and mindsets of all individuals within the group, including the adult educator, are accessed and processed, when appropriate. The adult educator, as defined for

the purpose of this research, becomes the guide and at times, model, for such a process within the group.

According to Webster (1981), the word “facilitate” means “to make easier”. For the purpose of this research, I have adopted John Heron’s definition of “facilitator”. Heron defines a facilitator as:

A person who has the role of empowering participants to learn in an experiential group ... by experiential group I mean one in which learning takes place through an active and aware involvement of the Whole person – as a spiritually, energetically and physically endowed Being encompassing feeling and emotion, intuition and imaging, reflection and discrimination, intention and action (Heron 1999, p. 1).

Based on Heron’s definition, it is the adult educator’s role (as facilitator of experiential learning groups) to make it easier for participants to bring their full being into the group’s process, when appropriate. While many have studied experiential learning in the manner described above, this dissertation highlights the importance of focusing on emotionality in this context. This dissertation explores what the adult educator notices both in her/himself and in the group, when, as a participating member of a learning group, feelings and perspectives must be considered, in an effort to enhance learning. Such work requires that the adult educator be aware of her or his own perspectives and emotions, thus enabling the facilitator to make more conscious behavioural choices during the process of learning.

This particular definition of facilitation has the potential to cover a wide spectrum of experiential learning processes. Some of these include skills-based training groups, encounter groups, personal development groups, interpersonal skills training groups, management training groups, adult learning groups, and social action training groups, among others. Heron (1999) believes that this definition “applies to all groups in higher, adult and continuing education of any kind where facilitators are committed to empower the autonomy and holism of the learner” (p. 2). The new meaning-making resulting from a group process of this nature might also come about through other ways of knowing, including, as Heron states, intuition, imaging, or reflection. I would add to this, that

emotionality and its exploration, is a vital and valuable way of knowing and one which requires that the whole person enter into its experience.

From my own experience, I see the role of the facilitator as being akin to what the authors Hunter, Bailey and Taylor (1995) refer to as a “peaceful warrior”, one who fights (sometimes more subtly, at other times more vocally) to create a space where many different voices can be given an opportunity to be heard and felt. My own assumption is in alignment with Hunter, Bailey and Taylor’s definitions of effective group facilitation, as described in *The Art of Facilitation*:

Effective group facilitation is an artful dance requiring rigorous discipline. The role of the facilitator offers an opportunity to dance with life on the edge of a sword, to be present and aware, to be with and for people in a way that cuts through to what enhances and fulfils life. A facilitator is a peaceful warrior (1995b, p. x).

Such a facilitator also has the skills and awareness to guide a group through cooperative processes, including collective decision-making, while working to create a space for all voices to be heard and all perspectives to be considered (Hunter et al., p. 5). While all groups do not focus on experiential learning and cooperative processes, for the purpose of this research, my interest lies only in inquiring into the experiences of adult educators who facilitate experiential or cooperative learning processes in this manner.

Importance of this study

My interest in this research lay in exploring what could be revealed when story, as an art form, is used to reflect on facilitated learning experiences with adult learners. In particular I wished to uncover what happens when emotion was welcomed and honoured during the learning process. I suspected that such learning might better prepare adult educators to accept those emotions which may be triggered into greater consciousness, during facilitation, and engage their emotions in such a manner that supports the process of facilitation within the group. The key is that the adult educator, when confronted with

emotionality in a group, has the “capacity” to choose to engage (or not engage) with the emotionality, depending on the situation.

The dominant paradigm of how knowledge is typically constructed and shared in adult education settings has been challenged in different ways (Green, 1995; Lawrence, 2005). In particular, the arts-based learning movement focuses on ways in which adult educators can expand learning opportunities and experiences for their learners. Through creating an arts-based version of my own stories and that of my co-researchers, my goal was also to discover what I might learn about my own inner and outer processes, and that of learning participants, when emotionality is uncovered, named, honoured and welcomed as a key aspect of group facilitation. Story-telling, together with reflective and inner work practices, offered multiple ways of knowing as a means of engaging the stories of my co-researchers at a deeper level.

It was my assumption that through processes that include reflective journal writing and inner work practices, I may have an opportunity to experience a shift or expansion in consciousness. The result might be a shift in how I see myself as an adult educator, and how I and perhaps other adult educators relate to others in learning groups, with a deeper and more authentic understanding of our own emotions and feelings, and with a heightened capacity to put these to work, in favour of learning.

Research in adult education continues to show that we each have our own way of internally organising our life experiences (Tang, 1998). This “core material” is composed of our earliest feelings, beliefs, and memories, sometimes created in response to stressful experiences in our environment. When a person experiences a current situation that in some way reminds her or him of an original painful event, the original response may be triggered and the original wound reopened (Bradshaw, 1990). When a critical incident in facilitating adult learning triggers such a response within the adult educator or participants, as stated earlier, the task of adult education is to embrace, hold and make meaning of these responses, appropriately.

I believe that inner work and reflective practices that support the adult educator in preparing for and responding to her or his own emotional reactions, in such situations, are valuable. The possible value of such work may be significant not only to the individual but also to the group, if s/he is able to be more effective in the role as a learning facilitator.

The targeted audience for this research consists of adult educators who facilitate learning in the manner described above and who, at times, find themselves and others in the presence of emotionality, as a result of adult education practice which is experiential in nature. Other individuals who are responsible for recruiting or using facilitators in experiential group work may also be interested in gaining greater insight into the kind of processes, involving reflective and inner work practices, that might support the group facilitator.

Limitations

This research focuses on the work of one adult educator who facilitates learning in the particular manner described above and in a wide variety of contexts. The experiences described in this research are unique to this adult educator and the respondents (also known as co-researchers) who participated in this research. Therefore, the results of this research may or may not be useful beyond the context within which the research was conducted.

Through this inquiry, my co-researchers and I were offered an opportunity for increased self-knowing, transformation and increased consciousness. Readers are offered the opportunity to compare our experiences with their own and to discern whether there are any correlations. It is my hope that this research might offer some glimmer of insight into their own learning processes, their self-knowing and possibly offer them a pathway toward greater consciousness of emotionality in their own lives.

However, this inquiry within the qualitative paradigm will not generate hard facts about how inner work and reflective practices in general can lead to personal transformation; or generate facts related to what can be revealed in all cases when such practices are used for deeper engagement of the adult educator's stories related to emotionality. The goal of this

particular research methodology is not to offer a definitive answer to the inquiry question in the context of “what works” or “what is”, but instead to offer the reader an opportunity to engage with the stories of the primary researcher and co-researchers and to see what they might come to know for themselves through this experience.

The intent of this research is to offer my own experience and that of my co-researchers, together with analysis and insights through connections made to relevant literature, as well as insights made through engagement in processes involving multiple ways of knowing, as “food for thought.” I have chosen to use the qualitative methodology of organic inquiry for this research, which invites the readers to notice how the stories of the primary researcher and co-researchers affect them personally. Because of the personal nature of my research, the results may not be relevant to other adult educators with different circumstances surrounding their experience. Therefore, patterns may be noted, but individuals will have to create meaning for themselves depending on their own unique experiences.

This research project itself took place over a limited time-frame – a period of four years. Therefore, the results of the inquiry will be more of a “snapshot” of insights derived at a particular point in time. I recognise, however, that expanding consciousness is more apt to be a long-term process. For each person, this process has a unique quality that has to be allowed to unfold in the manner that works best for the individual. For my co-researchers and myself, our own process actually began much prior to the beginning of this research. My engagement in reflective and inner work practices on a regular basis to support me in my facilitation work prepared me to deal with and learn from the emotionally challenging group facilitation experiences with which I continue to be engaged. Therefore, insights described in my research will not fully capture the complete process for my co-researchers and myself which led to our own expansion of consciousness or shift in self in self-knowing.

Definitions

Definitions are generally provided in the context of the discussions presented in this dissertation. Below, however, is a glossary of certain basic terms used through this dissertation. The Webster dictionary is the main source for the definitions provided below, unless otherwise noted.

Attitude – a feeling or emotion displayed through one’s behaviour.

Belief – specific knowledge or information that one holds to be true.

Centred – “being settled into one’s inner nature without being displaced, confused, or lost in mental images, memories and thoughts, or thrown off by strong feelings that disturb awareness” (Hanna, 2000, p. 114).

Conflict – mental and emotional struggle that results from what appears to be opposing or contradictory ideas, needs, interest, drives, wishes or other external or internal demands.

Consciousness – 1) “the essential structure of being that defines who we are and how we behave” (Tang, 1998, p. 27); 2) the state of being characterised by sensation, emotion, volition, and thought that feeds our mind thus informing our behaviour, 3) the totality of conscious states within the individual.

Emotions – the affective aspect of consciousness; a psychic and physical reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as a strong feeling.

Feelings – a compilation of one’s emotional states or reactions; a subjective response or sensitivity.

Frame – the general background or context against or within which something takes place.

Heightened awareness – a shift or increase in understanding, a realisation or illumination that leads one to become more conscious or clear around a given issue or topic.

Indwelling – the process of sitting with one's stories in such a way to "let go" of old concepts and meanings in an effort to discover new ones. Moustakas (1990) defines indwelling as turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience. It involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some facet of its wholeness. (p. 24).

Psycho-spiritual – relating to both the psychological and spiritual aspects of something.

Sacred – entitled to reverence and respect.

Spiritual – recognition of a sacredness between all beings and a Supreme Being; of or related to Spirit or a Supreme Being.

Spiritual beliefs – belief systems involving one's relationship to a deeper and more eternal Self, one's relationship to the original Source that creates and sustains the universe.

Transformative Learning – the process by which meaning schemes (beliefs about self and world) and meaning perspectives (comprehensive worldviews) are transformed through reflection on underlying premises leading to new meaning schemes and perspectives that are more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 6–7) Meaning schemes and meaning perspectives also transform through accessing the unconscious and engaging its symbolic contents (Elias, 1997, p. 2).

Trigger- a stimulus that initiates a physiological or pathological process.

Why emotions are integral to adult learning.

Emotions and feelings can play an integral role in adult learning experiences. Dominant views of learning suggest that emotions are important in adult education because they can either impede or motivate learning. Most of these perspectives inadvertently reinforce a “rationalist doctrine” that pervades most, if not all, formal educational efforts. This doctrine is illustrated in an emphasis within adult education practice and theory on factual information and the use of reason and reflection to learn from experience.

This thesis presents an alternative way of understanding emotions and adult learning, one that reflects their central role in our ways of knowing (Heron, 1992), particularly in non-formal learning. I argue that personally significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in and derives from the adult’s emotional connection with the self and the broader social world. The meanings we attribute to emotions reflect the particular socio-cultural and psychic contexts in which they arise. This process of meaning-making, however, is essentially extra-rational, rather than merely reflective and rational. Emotionally charged images, story-telling, conversations, processes that are evoked through the contexts of adult learning in everyday life, provide the opportunity for a more profound access to the world by inviting a deeper understanding of ourselves in relationship with it.

Understanding the meaning and experience of emotion in professional practice

The expression of emotions within adult learning experiences is not hard to discern. In the context of the research for this thesis, many ways of uncovering, dealing with and processing emotion, as primary and secondary tasks to learning, took place. However, understandings of emotion are shaped by specific socio-cultural (Denzin, 1984; Hochschild, 1983; Horowitz, 1988; Katz, 1999; Lupton, 1998; Lutz, 1988; Lyons, 1995) and psychic contexts (J. Chodorow, 1997; N. Chodorow, 1999; Denzin, 1984; Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1992; Ulanov, 1999; Woodman & Dickson, 1996). Through learning and acculturation, we construct the meanings we attribute to emotional states, reflecting “aspects of cultural meaning systems people use in attempting to understand the situations in which they find

themselves” (Lutz, 1985, p. 65). The meanings we attribute to emotional states also inform us about the broader social world and ourselves. As Denzin (1984) suggests, “To understand who a person is, it is necessary to understand emotion” (p. 1). Emotions always refer to the self, providing us with a means for developing self-knowledge. They are an integral part of how we interpret and make sense of the day-to-day events in our lives. As we look at and come to understand our sense-making practices in daily life and the ways emotions constitute that practice, we reveal ourselves more fully to ourselves and to others.

Our experience of emotion, however, and our understanding of self arise from more than just rational, conscious thought processes mediated by cultural symbols (Lupton, 1998). As in the vignettes developed in this thesis, we sometimes find ourselves feeling strongly about something or toward someone, without consciously knowing or understanding why or from where these feelings came. Emotional experiences are often shaped by strong inner, extra-rational dynamics (N. Chodorow, 1999). They are not always expressed through words but gain voice in dreams, fantasies, or other imagined aspects of our day-to-day world.

Emotions, then, give voice to our fundamental sense of irrationality (N. Chodorow, 1999). Through our emotional experiences, we recognise that our conscious sense of agency is often subverted by desire. In these situations, we experience a self that seems ambivalent, contradictory, and fragmented. Our consciousness seems populated by multiple voices, each claiming a different sense of reality (Clark and Dirkx, 2000). Thus, experience of emotion often reveals a multiplistic, contradictory self. Understanding of these multiple selves is achieved not only through conscious, rational, and self-reflexive practices (Mezirow, 1991) but through the products of our memory and imagination, the images that come to populate consciousness (Dirkx, 1998).

Experience of emotion as engagement and connection

Emotions are often associated with voices or images that emerge within consciousness. As Jung (quoted in J. Chodorow, 1997, p. 26) suggests, "I learned how helpful it can be ... to find the particular image which lies behind emotions." Through emotionally charged

images, individuals and organisations potentially express and connect with this deeper reality. We use these charged images to perceive and understand ourselves and the world. For example, behind strong feelings of anger and outrage may be a person who feels left out, even abandoned. A sense of confidence within a meeting may be undermined by an image of the impostor lurking at the edges of consciousness. Angry reactions to a person in authority may arise from an unconscious image we hold of her or him as an over-controlling or neglectful parent, or of an abusive school principal. These images convey a deep, inner life constituted by “intentions, behaviours, voices, feelings, that I do not control with my will or cannot connect with my reason” (Hillman, 1975, p. 2). As Whitmont (1969) suggests, “Images may appear spontaneously when inner or outer events which are particularly stark, threatening or powerful must be faced” (p. 74). They are gateways to the unconscious and our emotional, feeling selves, representing deep-seated issues and concerns that may be evoked through our experiences of the world. They connect some aspect of our outer experience with dimly perceived or understood aspects of our inner worlds.

Through the formation of images, emotions and feelings, we express the personal meanings which arise for us within any given context (N. Chodorow, 1999) and serve to animate our thoughts and actions. These meanings arise through our imaginative connection and engagement with these contexts. Our initial construal of meaning within particular emotional situations can be largely an act of engagement, guided by our emotional connection with both our inner and outer worlds. They help us understand and make sense of our selves, our relationships with others, and the world we inhabit. Our experience of this inner life is inherently emotional and deeply connected to the sense of self we construct and maintain (N. Chodorow, 1999; Denzin, 1984; Lupton, 1998). If that sense of self has been healthy, then it can be argued that positive transformation can take place. In the case where a sense of self has been shattered because of some experience of trauma or neglect, it can be argued that the immersion into emotion and feeling that is triggered through a life experience is even more important, for the sense of self to be recovered and, perhaps, more resolved.

Neo- and post-Jungians (Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1992; Sardello, 1992; Ulanov, 1999; Whitmont & Dickson, 1996) stress the importance of these emotionally charged images to the vitality and re-enchantment of our everyday lives, to fostering our sense of spirituality, and to developing relationships and dialogue with inner selves.

Dirkx reminds us that emotions can be interpreted as “messengers of the soul” (Dirkx, 1998 p. 94) seeking to inform us of deeply personal, meaningful connections that are being made within an experience. Thus, emotions are integral to the process of meaning making; to the ways we experience and make sense of ourselves (Campbell, 1997; N. Chodorow, 1999; Denzin, 1984; Jaggar, 1989) as well as our relationships with others and the world (Damasio, 1994; Goleman, 1995; Harré, 1986; Lupton, 1998; Mahoney, 1991). Emotions help us connect the inner dynamics of the self with the outer objects of our world and allow room for engagement in a new way of thinking or being.

The connection between emotions and learning in adult education

Much of the theory and practice in adult education reveals a tendency towards marginalising emotions and elevating rationality to a supreme position. Some previous notions of adult learning frame teaching and learning as largely rational, cognitive processes, and understand emotions as perhaps impediments to or motivators of learning. Reason and rationality are viewed as the primary foundations or processes for learning, through which learners obtain access to the “objective” structures of our world (Jaggar, 1988). Adult educators refer to personal or emotional issues adults bring to the educational setting as “baggage” or “barriers” to learning (Dirkx & Spurgin, 1992; Gray & Dirkx, 2000). Learners seem filled with anxieties or fears (Tennant, 1997). If and when such issues *are* acknowledged by educators, it is often to provide opportunities for learners to “vent” and “get it off their chests” so they can get back to the “business of learning.” Some educators within formal settings of adult learning seek to control, manage, limit, or redirect outward expressions of emotionality.

Educators in non-formal settings can ignore or draw from the emotional material that is at hand. In the non-formal situation where all are learners, the act of acknowledging and drawing meaning from the emotional content which is aroused, is an opportunity for transformation. I would argue that where this opportunity is not taken, risky as it is, then the transformative moment is lost. For example, in a transaction between learners, when emotion and feeling are not at least noted, the opportunity for seeing things differently vanishes.

The literature in adult education underscores the importance of attending to emotions and feelings in contexts, interactions, and relationships that characterise adult learning (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993; Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Brookfield, 1993; Daloz, 1986; Postle, 1993; Robertson, 1996; Tennant, 1997) in all kinds of educational settings. A growing body of research suggests emotions and feelings are more than merely a motivational concern in learning. Postle (1993) argues that affective, emotional dimensions provide the foundation on which practical, conceptual, and imaginal modes of learning rest. “Brain-based” theories (Damasio, 1994, 1999) and the concept of “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995, 1997) suggest that emotion and feelings are deeply inter-related with perceiving and processing information from our external environments, storing and retrieving information in memory, reasoning, and the embodiment of learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Taylor, 1996). Recent studies of transformative learning reveal extra-rational aspects, such as emotion, intuition, soul, spirituality, and the body, as integral to processes of deep, significant change (Clark, 1997; Dirks, 1997; Nelson, 1997; Scott, 1997).

Adult educators seem to be beginning to appreciate the expressive, affective and imaginative as modes of knowing in their own right (Heron, 1992; Jaggar, 1989; Nelson, 1997; Wiessner, 2006; Willis, 2000). These authors argue that imagination plays a key role in connecting our inner, subjective experiences of emotions and feelings with the outer, objective dimensions of our learning experiences. These relationships and dialogues are mediated largely through what Hillman (1975) refers to as “imaginal” approaches, such as dream work, free association, fantasy, active imagination, and other forms of creative

activity. These approaches bypass ego consciousness and allow for expressions of deeper dimensions of our psychic lives.

Making sense of feelings and emotions in adult learning

The “text” in adult learning (broadly understood to include print, speech, autobiography, visual cues, engaging in conversations, story-telling etc.) often evokes emotionally charged images. The images evoked by texts are not merely constructions of our conscious, cognitive egos. Emotionally charged images are not under the wilful control of the ego. Rather, they tend to appear spontaneously within the learning process. They arrive as they so choose, and one cannot predict them.

This active engagement and dialogue with our emotions can become transformative, particularly when imagination is called into play. (Clark, 1997; Nelson, 1997). Imagination helps us connect and establish a relationship with this powerful, non-egoic aspect of our being (Moore, 1992). By becoming aware of our emotions and feelings, we connect with the inner forces, which populate our psyche. As we learn to participate with them in a more conscious manner, we are less likely to be unwillingly buffeted around by their presence in our lives. Entering into a conscious dialogue with emotions creates the opportunity for deeper meaning and more satisfying relationships with our world, and opens the possibility for social change.

In the emotional world, we recognise, name, and come to a deeper understanding of what might be revealed through our deep, emotive experiences of the text (Hillman, 1975). The work of adult learning is to recognise, elaborate, and differentiate feelings and emotions as a means of developing a deeper understanding of our experience in the context of adult learning.

The purpose of uncovering emotionality is not to analyse and dissect, but to elaborate its meaning in our lives, and in the lives of groups and organisations. In addition to Mezirow’s (1991) notion of transformative learning, in which we are encouraged to ask “how” or

“why” questions about these feelings and emotions, we might simply ask “what”. What do these emotions feel like, remind me of? What do these emotions mean? What other times have I felt this way experienced these emotions? What was going on then? Who was involved in that incident? As we elaborate these feelings and emotions, the nature of the meaning behind them may begin to emerge.

As we recognise, name, and work with these emotions and feelings, I argue that adult educators and participants can move toward a deeper, more conscious connection with these aspects within others and ourselves. We can engage further with that person or persons within our psyche, or within the wider psyche of the group or organisation with whom we are engaged. We can transform ordinary existence into the "stuff of soul" (Moore, 1992, p. 205), establishing a meaningful connection through uncovering emotion and the text of our life experiences. These emotionally charged experiences could provide access to the psyche, an invitation to the journey of meaning, of coming to know oneself as a more fully individuated being. As they take shape within consciousness, they can deepen our understanding of their meaning. Once understood, perspective transformation can begin (Mezirow, 1991).

“Dealing in” emotions and feelings to the educational transaction demands a deeper understanding of the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions that are often associated with profoundly meaningful experiences in adult learning. This thesis presents the experience of dealing in emotionality, using different accounts of four adult learning experiences, which have profoundly affected me as an adult educator.

Emotionality in adult learning

In this dissertation, through the arts-based vehicle of narrative life stories, the reader (as co-researcher) is directly invited to uncover emotionality in adult learning. I would argue that through the respectful and honouring focus of welcoming and engaging with emotion in adult learning environments, learning is enhanced. The settings for learning can be both formal and non-formal. The role of the adult educator can include that of instructor or

facilitator. The role of participant learners can be that of student or peer. Whatever the status of participants, the core is emotionality and the hospitality accorded to it. In this dissertation it is my endeavour to explore further the contribution emotionality makes to learning, whatever the setting. The variety of backdrops or surroundings of such learning is inconsequential. The nub of this inquiry is simply to expose further, what might happen when emotionality is uncovered, revealed and made known, in a range of adult learning settings. What this means is proposed as a contribution to the meaning-making about learning that is taking place within adult education at this point in the twenty-first century.

Limitations of traditional ways of constructing knowledge in adult education

Cognitive knowing has dominated the adult education classroom, wherein the curriculum typically emphasises transmission of knowledge through cultural reproduction (Greene, 1995). The intent of this thesis is not to suggest that the emphasis on reading, writing and intellectual discourse is inherently wrong. However, they draw on only part of our human potential. Expression through spoken or written language can be a limitation (Lawrence & Mealman, 2001).

In this thesis I argue that when we open up intellectual space to incorporate other ways of knowing into our teaching practice, as expressed through such forms as metaphor, storytelling, script-writing, poetry, narrative fiction or dramatic expression, we draw on the affective, somatic, and spiritual domains. Participants can more fully express what they know. Barone and Eisner (1997), pioneers in the area of arts-based research agree that rationalist modes of inquiry have served to suppress artistic modes of expression. If we insist that people put their ideas into words, what gets communicated is often partial or not expressed at all (Lawrence & Mealman, 2001). I stand with Lawrence (2005) who argues that:

Traditional forms of teaching and learning based on textual forms of representation and rational thought may limit how we perceive our world (p. 6).

By using artistic forms of expression I am challenging the notion that the insistence on only written or linguistic forms of expressions as a singular way of knowing devalues learning and learning participants. By insisting that people speak our language rather than finding a common mode of communication such as through art, we can do violence to one another.

Learning about emotionality through the arts

The arts are an ideal companion to the rational discourse that attempts to wrestle with the integration of emotionality in adult learning. Many academics recognise the value of fine arts and a fine arts curriculum, however, the integration of arts into research and the incorporation of the arts into our practice as adult educators can challenge the discomfort of working outside the better-known academic framework. Perhaps it is much safer to stick to known pedagogical processes. I would argue, however, that more can be gained when we allow creativity to flow through us and, as Maxine Greene comments, "... we become agents in our own learning process" (Greene, 1995, p. 34).

Within the framework of transformative and emancipatory adult education, which cut across feminist, critical and poststructural theories, there is a firm focus on the power relationship between the instructor and student in the classroom. Ellsworth (1989) comments, "... these relationships are seen as complex ... and not understood, through universal theories about structures of power and oppression" (p. 299). Tisdell (1998) notes that the worldviews of instructor and learner impact on emancipatory learning and reveal effects of positionality of the student. It is my view that there is a dilemma, therefore, about how the experiences of emotionality, which are brought into the classroom, are valued. Whose approaches, whose emotionality is valued: the instructor's or the students, neither or both? I would argue with Durie (1996) that the differentiation or dilemma, which this presents, impacts on student voices and determines who speaks and who is not heard.

Further to this, I would argue that the current adult education approach to the arts is to view art as "a toolbox of techniques rather than recognize it as an expanded view of reality" (Wiessner & Newville, 2006, p. 497). Shusterman (1997) argues that the essence and value

of art are not in artefacts but in the “dynamic and developing experiential activity through which they are created and perceived” (p. 4). I stand with Langer (1964) in noting that the import of art is “the whole vast phenomenon of felt life, stretching from the elementary forces of existence to “the furthest reaches of the mind” (p. 391). Dewey (1934) describes art as the evidence of human use of the materials and energies of nature with the intent of expanding one’s own life.

Art throws off the covers that hide the expressiveness of experienced things; it quickens us from the slackness of routine and enables us to forget ourselves by finding ourselves in the delight of experiencing the world about us in its varied qualities and forms. It intercepts every shade of expressiveness found in objects and orders them in a new experience of life (p. 104).

Wiessner and Newville (2006) point out that “the raison d’être for the existence of works of art is the emancipation from false consciousness” (p. 498). The act of uncovering emotion in adult learning, then, may be summed up by Brookfield (2002) who argues that “a truly critical adult education would be concerned not just with locating itself within existing social movements but also with creating intense aesthetic experiences that trigger a rupture with present-day reality” (p. 266). It is this rupture that is at the heart of this dissertation.

Artistic forms of expression can extend the boundaries of how we come to know emotionality. Making space for creative expression in the adult learning setting can help learners uncover hidden experiences and knowledge about emotion that cannot easily be expressed in words alone. It can open up opportunities for adult learners to explore the phenomena of emotionality holistically, naturally and creatively, thus deepening understanding of self and the world. In this thesis the use of artistic forms of expression with participants and by the researcher and/or co-researchers pushes out these boundaries.

Map of this thesis

This thesis works on multiple levels. In the next section of this Chapter, I draw this thesis as a map or guide, so that the reader can follow the intention of the researcher. In order to do this I use the metaphor of imagining that this research is, in fact, an arts festival on

emotionality. I invite the reader to join with the researcher and all participants in the research, to join in aspects of the festival in whatever manner they wish. Although this thesis document has been constructed in a linear way, and specific details of each section can be read in the Contents section, the thesis has been written so that the point of entry for the reader could be at any particular chapter (or theatre) in The Festival of Emotion and Adult Learning.

What follows, then, is a backdrop, a landscape, a guide, which may assist the reader more fully in uncovering emotionality in adult learning and in viewing this through the lens of all participants, including the researcher and the reader.

I imagine this dissertation as a celebration of emotionality. It is a festival, a gathering, a presentation of different voices utilising different artistic approaches. Emotionality is the theme. Uncovering emotion is the task of the festival. It is a celebration because it is my view that emotionality in adult education is still in the process of being highly prized and valued. All who participate are co-researchers, including the reader. What follows, then, is an imaginary world in which emotion is celebrated and into which all participants are welcomed as co-researchers, encouraged to engage in meaning-making in whatever way they wish. As emotion is uncovered in the various artistic presentations, the possibility for transformation is put forward as a process in which to be engaged.

Welcome to The Festival of Emotion and Adult Learning.

This Festival is housed in a large Theatrical Complex, which is designed to hold many different types of theatrical experiences. It consists of Drama Theatres, Story-telling Spaces, an Indoor Circus Tent, and a Recital Hall. Each theatre is self-contained and seats between 100 and 1,000 people. The theatrical spaces are joined by foyers and bars, restaurants and sitting spaces, outdoor and indoor spaces for gathering, or for sitting alone.

You will notice, as you enter this Complex, that the Festival of Emotion's Program is available at each of the Theatres' entrances and exits. The Program is also available in the Large Foyer, which houses all participants before and after each event. Please use the informal meeting spaces inside and outside the foyer for discussion and review of this Festival.

For those of you who would like a map of the Complex and a Timetable of Events, this may also be found in the spaces between the theatres.

The Program

The formal Program for this Festival is written in various Chapters. There is a lengthy **literature review**, which is there for the information of the attendees. I imagine this review as something like a documentary on the background to the Festival. In my mind the review takes place in a dark space, such as a film theatre. There are seats available so that visitors to the Festival can sit and listen to the various points of view about emotionality in adult learning. It also has the function of orienting the Festival attendee (reader) to what he or she is about to observe. It provides a context for the Festival, a chronology, and presents some of the dilemmas of understanding emotionality in learning. The literature review outlines the vast terrain of emotionality in adult learning. It positions this Festival within the recent literature, particularly that of postmodernity, multiple interpretations, reflexivity, new meanings and new ways of making meaning. Although it is suggested that visitors to the Festival visit this theatre first, and it is written as the first Chapter, some may prefer to leave it until the end, much in the way that some people prefer to attend a play or art exhibition, and then read the background to these artistic forms having experienced the creative elements for themselves.

Next in the Program is an outline of the **Methodology** for this Festival. This forms the technical and aesthetic background for the various dramatic presentations. I imagine the methodology section of the Festival, akin to the literature review studio, but very different in its demands on the Festival participants. The methodological section provides the

Festival attendee with the tools which may be needed to understand something of the work of the artists who appear in the program. I imagine that some may listen to the methodology using an audio device, perhaps sitting in a sculpture garden within the festival site. It is a quieter, reflective piece, which orients the Festival participants in a different way. One of the outcomes of the methodology could be to engage the attendees with their own emotional fields at the time of attending the Festival. It explains some of the journey of the primary researcher and situates her within her world-view, and that of her peers.

A smaller Chapter within the Program, or outline, indicates the **Strategies and Method**, the ways in which the data and ideas for these stories were gathered. It outlines how previous participants in each dramatic presentation were contacted (or not) and how the engagement of some of the actual participants took place. This strategy and method section is imagined as a lift-out within the Festival Program, something that participants may wish to refer back to, as they uncover emotionality for themselves. It is a guide as to who is involved and how they came to be involved in the Festival itself. It is an item one may wish to slip into one's "back pocket" so to speak, for easy referral.

The Artistic Program, which then follows, clearly outlines the four productions, which have been developed for the Festival. Following each production there is an imaginary on-stage discussion about what took place. After this the audience is invited to take this discussion further by joining with the author and participants in the foyer and reflecting on what they have just experienced.

The artistic productions you are about to attend display a small but rich and diverse "slice" of adult learning in many different formats. The settings for these are situated in different parts of Australia and New Zealand. Each event relies on the recount of the Researcher, as Scriptwriter/Author/Creator, to place before you multiple views of emotionality in adult learning. One of these recounts is written as a drama involving a training instructor and workers. Another recounts the facilitation of a very tense meeting. A third presents as a circus act a dilemma about a business partnership. The fourth is set within the context of a University and a class full of undergraduates.

The four productions, or stories, that you are invited to attend are vastly different pieces in setting, learning focus, participant group, characters and outcomes. Emotionality in Adult Learning is the binding ingredient.

Story One, called **RoadWorks**, takes place in the large drama theatre. This is a drama within a drama and a story within a story. The setting is the area of Australia known as the “outback” and took place in about 1990. At that time changes to industrial relations law in Australia required workers to be “trained” in the process of acceptable workplace behaviour and in “Grievance Management”. A group of nine men, most of whom were labourers and some of whom are secretly illiterate, arrive for a two-day training program. The formal program outline is supposed to look at appropriate workplace behaviour, the legal requirements of such behaviour, policies and processes when workers breach these rules, and how to submit a grievance report to management, so that it can be dealt with. What actually happens when the workers connect with their own emotionality about this entire industrial and social landscape is the heart of this production. The story is written as a script from the adult educator’s perspective. However the script contains stories within stories, which were told by participants during the larger setting of the learning process. The intersection of emotionality between these stories, and how these are constructed and “held”, shed light on emotionality and its potential in adult learning, in this surreal setting.

Story Two takes place in the smaller Performance Studio. It is a narration of the experience of a learning facilitator who is chairing a meeting between two men, one a male victim of childhood sexual abuse, and the other a representative of the school where this abuse took place, some thirty years prior. **The Meeting** holds up a mirror to the possibilities for healing when emotionality is welcomed into this learning environment. The Head of the school wants to learn, to understand, to offer restitution. The victim has learned and heard hatred, vilification and self-blame. When both parties meet for the first time and express emotionality, not only about the past but also the present moment between them, the reader is confronted with his or her own emotionality through the reading of this text.

Story Three is written as a text for a small circus, and takes place in the Amphitheatre at the Arts Centre. The production is something within the genre of Cirque Du Soleil. The focus of this story, called **RunWay**, is the work of an adult educator facilitating learning with business partners who are close to making a decision about staying or leaving one another. What happens when the various circus acts end, and emotionally charged conversations are facilitated, provide the focus of this work. Its difficult ending provokes questions about adult learning interventions and their role in the success or failure of adult learning within the context of emotionality.

Story Four is a drama called **DisAbility**, and takes place in the theatre in the round inside the complex. This drama is set in an emerging University in Australia during the late 1980s. Every year new undergraduate programs were funded by the Government and more and more courses were added to the University's prospectus. A three-year program in Habilitation Studies began and the target group was those adults who worked with adults or children who suffered some form of physical or "mental" disability. What the University (or the educator) did not account for were the number of so-called "disabled" or "physically challenged" students who won places into the program. The untrained and under-prepared lecturer attempts to begin to deliver an undergraduate program, which, for her, is one among many. The emotionality between the participants, the system and the lecturer exposes a multiplicity of understandings of adult learning in this setting and asks political and social questions about learning and emotion, which remain unresolved.

The format for each theatrical experience

Each theatrical experience follows a similar format or structure.

Introduction

A narrator introduces each dramatic episode.

The creative action

What follows next is a creative interpretation by the author of an adult learning event.

Participant panel

The narrator then comes back on stage and interacts with some of the participants in the original drama, about their own recounts of the events being interpreted.

Author's review

Following this, the author recounts her experience of being involved as the adult educator in the dramatic presentation.

The use of organic research methodology impelled me to write at a deeper level about the “presenting story”. This happened upon reflection by peer and dissertation supervisor’s feedback to me about “going deeper” into the story. It grew from my own inner reflections on the other level of the story, which included my own feelings about this learning program, in the first place. The author is now written into the script, in a different way. This story is placed here for deeper analysis and review.

Analysis of the stories

The audience then hears from the author of the dramatic interpretation about the responses of those involved in the drama (the participants – co-researchers) and what sense could be made of combining both the author and the participants’ recollections.

Audience discussion/data analysis/wider implications

The audience is then invited to move in an imaginary way to the foyer to reflect alone or to discuss with one another what they noticed during the theatrical event, and what meaning the experience held for them.

Reflexive connections

The final Chapter of this dissertation (or Festival Program) is an attempt to confirm the validity and meaning of the act of uncovering emotion. The organic research methodology demands that concrete outcomes, specific directions, applications to other fields of research and so on, remain with each co-researcher. These will not be articulated by the primary researcher. However, as the writer of this dissertation I attempt in this final piece, to bring to a sort of order what may have been experienced as chaotic. I demonstrate some of the new perspectives from which I now review, extend my understanding of, and perhaps re-interpret the processes of emotionality in adult learning. I put forward various postures for learning which I believe are essential for the housing or holding of emotionality in adult learning. I invite the co-researchers to do the same as together we leave the Festival physically, and allow it to become infused into our practice as adult educators.

Chapter Two: Literature Review – Preparing the Ground

Part One: Creating Fertile Conditions

Before any seeds are planted, the earth must be spaded and broken up ... and fertilizer added (Clements et al., 1998, p. 4).

Reflective practices

“As Gabriel Marcel (1950) put it, ‘reflection ... is one of life’s ways of rising from one level to another’” (Marcel in Welwood, 2000, p. 92).

Theorists who helped me to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to intentionally reflect on one’s experiences consistently inspired my thinking. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) define reflection as a form of response to experience. The authors indicate two main components: the experience and the reflective activity based upon that experience. Experience is defined as consisting of the total response of a person to a situation or event – what he or she thinks, feels, does and concludes at the time of the experience and immediately thereafter. Following the experience there is an opportunity for what some refer to as a “processing phase”. At this point, the individual has an opportunity to reflect on the experience. Reflection is seen as “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it” (Boud et al., 1985, p. 19).

One’s ability to reflect on experience in this way is important in the process of learning. And yet the capacity to reflect is developed to different levels in different people. Why is conscious reflection necessary? It is necessary because only through bringing our ideas to consciousness can we begin to evaluate them (p. 19).

Welwood (2000), however, points out that one problem lies in the fact that our ordinary state of consciousness involves what some psychologists and spiritual traditions refer to as “prereflective” identification. Early in our lives we form identities based on how others

perceive us. We internalise the reflections of others and come to regard ourselves based on how others relate to us.

It is like looking in a mirror and taking ourselves to be the visual image reflected back to us, while ignoring our more immediate, lived experience of embodied being ... By the time our capacity for reflective self-knowledge develops, our identities are fully formed. Our knowledge of ourselves is indirect, mediated by memories, self-images, and beliefs about ourselves formed out of these memories and images. Knowing ourselves through self-images, we have become an object in our own eyes, never seeing the way in which we are a larger field of being and presence in which these thought-forms arise. We have become prisoners of our own mind and the ways it has construed reality (pp. 91–92).

The first step, therefore, in freeing ourselves from the “prison of unconscious identification” is to make conscious that which was previously unconscious.

Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) acknowledge the work of John Dewey in what Dewey referred to as “reflective thought”. Dewey defined reflective thought as:

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it ... it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality (p.9).

It is important to recognise that Dewey assumed reflective thought to be a highly rational and controlled process, but Boud and his colleagues expand on Dewey’s definition by giving greater emphasis to the affective aspects of learning.

Reflection in the context of learning is a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities [underline added] in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations (p. 19).

In recognising the organic nature of our thought processes and the feelings attached, Boud et al. (1985) emphasise that reflection is not a purely linear or rational process (pp. 35–36).

Theorists in the field of Transformative Learning continued to expand my perception of what could be learned by intentionally reflecting on one's experiences at a deeper level. In his discussion of transformative processes in adult learning, Mezirow (1991) uses the term "critical reflection" to emphasise a more critical approach to reflection, recognising that we each embody certain meaning schemes (specific beliefs about self or world) and meaning perspectives (comprehensive world-views) as a result of family, cultural and/or societal conditioning. Mezirow (1991) states,

When self-reflection is critical, it involves a searching view of the unquestioningly accepted presuppositions that sustain our fears, inhibitions, and patterns of interaction, such as our reaction to rejection, and their consequences in our relationships ... (p. 88).

Mezirow emphasised that much of what we have learned about ourselves has not been critically examined for unconsciously incorporated assumptions about the roles we play, our fears, or patterns of thought and response.

Mezirow uses the term "transformative learning" to refer to the process by which meaning schemes and meaning perspectives are transformed through reflection on underlying premises leading to new meaning schemes and perspectives that are more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 6–7).

Brookfield (1987) uses the term "critical thinking" to further emphasise in this reflection process, not only the tasks involved in critically questioning our previously accepted values, ideas, and behaviours in order to explore possible alternative interpretations but also the act of being *ready to think and behave differently on the basis of this critical questioning* (p. 1, italics added).

Also, in recognising that critical thinking is not a purely intellectual process, Brookfield (1987) states, "critical thinking is not seen as a wholly rational, mechanical activity. Emotive aspects – feelings, emotional responses, intuitions, sensing – are central to critical thinking in adult life" (p. 12).

In their discussion of transformative learning in adult education, others have pointed out that being aware of emotions and other ways of knowing (knowing that comes through dreams, art music, poetry, etc.) is also valuable in this reflective process (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Taylor, 1997; Dirkx, 1997, 1998).

Reason and Rowan (1981) used the term “critical subjectivity” to take the reflective process described above by Mezirow and Brookfield one step further. Critical subjectivity means that we avoid suppressing our primary subjective experience. This would mean, for example, as an adult educator, that we not pretend that our perspective does not exist or that it is irrelevant to the situation. Not only are we cognisant of our particular perspective and its bias, but we may also articulate it in our communication within the group, where appropriate. “Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 327).

For the purpose of my research, I have chosen to use the term “reflective practices” as an umbrella to include not only the process involved in critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991) and critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987) but also critical subjectivity (Reason & Rowan, 1981). Based on the examples offered by both Mezirow and Brookfield, I believe that both critical reflection and critical thinking include in their reflective process not only the act of calling into question our assumptions, but also being ready to think and act differently on the basis of this critical questioning.

With regard to critical subjectivity, the adult educator takes the critical reflection and critical thinking processes a step further in making a conscious choice about disclosing her feelings within the group, dependent upon the value of such disclosure to the group’s process, as she perceives it. My interest was to focus on what the adult educator might learn by consciously reflecting on her previously unquestioned presuppositions, fears, inhibitions, and patterns of interaction such as reactions to rejection, that may at times surface during adult learning. Critical subjectivity, as I understand it, is the capacity most important to the adult educator in deciding how to engage her emotions at the time that they are triggered within the learning group.

However, in my research, I have chosen to use the all encompassing term “reflective practices” to explore what can be known if adult educators are given the opportunity to tell their stories about emotional moments which occur during the facilitation of learning and are allowed to engage their stories more deeply through reflective practices. What can I come to know about my own inner and outer processes through deeper reflection around the stories of these triggering moments?

Brookfield (1987) states that the teacher or facilitator who is able to engage critical thinking in an effort to better understand her or his own thoughts and feelings is able also to begin to reinterpret past actions and ideas from a new vantage point. The individual is able to question whether old assumptions about roles, personalities, and abilities are accurate and is also aware of how context influences thoughts and actions (p. 8). The facilitator who is able to reflect in such a manner may be able to use her own shift in awareness to take the group to another level of awareness, as well. However, in accordance with the nature of organic inquiry, my research was not meant to serve as a measurement of the effectiveness of reflective practices to the adult educator, but instead as an exploration of what can be organically known by engaging stories through a process that allows for more intentional reflective practices.

Inner work practices

The outward journey is our ordinary life in physical form, or worldly existence from birth to death. The return journey is the inner quest for our origins, the quest to remember our purpose and to find again the light within, from which we became separated (Metzner 1998, p. 257).

Johnson (1986) defines “inner work” as the means by which we gain awareness of our deeper levels of consciousness and move toward integration of the total self (p. 13). To expand consciousness means to gain insight into those deeper feelings and beliefs that seem to come from some “unknown place” deep within our inner being (p. 2). Johnson (1986) points out that these hidden parts of ourselves have strong feelings that want to be

expressed and that unless we learn to do the inner work, these parts of ourselves remain hidden from our conscious view.

Sometimes these hidden personalities are embarrassing or violent and we are humiliated when they show themselves. At other times we wake up to strengths and fine qualities within ourselves that we never knew were there (p. 3).

So how might we accomplish this goal of gaining awareness of the unconscious dimensions of our being? According to Johnson (1986), humankind has developed an infinite variety of approaches to the inner world (the world of the unconscious), each adapted to a stage of history, a culture, a religion, a therapy or a view of our relationship to the spirit or to the earth. A few examples include yogic meditation, psychotherapy, and Christian meditation, modern daydream work, and the process of “active imagination”. In active imagination, a process pioneered by Carl Jung, the individual develops a dialogue with various dimensions of her or his unconscious. Through dreams, imagination and intuition the individual often gets messages from the unconscious in symbolic form.

In referring to the work of Jung, Dirx (1998) points out that in seeking to better understand emotions within his own life, Jung described the relationship between image and emotion. Jung states, “I learned how helpful it can be ... to find the particular images which lie behind emotions” (p. 7).

Dirx (1998) draws on the work of Hillman to further elaborate on the relationship between images and our deeper beliefs and realities. In re-visioning a way of knowing through imagination, Hillman stresses the need to grasp the archetypal significance that is carried in the depth of our words.

Images are ways through which individuals and collectives potentially come to express and connect with this deeper reality (Hillman as cited in Dirx, 1998, p. 7).

In this research the re-visioning of stories by the use of different genres in which to depict them allows the researcher's imagination to be set free, and to experience the story in a different mode.

As an adult learner, many of our experiences provide a context for fostering a kind of self-knowing. Dirx (1998) suggests that by approaching these experiences imaginatively rather than merely conceptually, learners can recognise themes in the experience that relate to their own life experiences, thus enabling them to see their own experiences from a new or different vantage point (p. 5). It is my assumption that inner work practices that assist an individual in getting in touch with the unconscious dimensions of her or his being can be of value to the adult educator who is confronted by emotions and conflicts that surface when facilitating within groups. Dirx (1998) talks about the value to the adult learner of accessing the mythic or imaginal as a way to understand various dimensions of one's being that may surface in these unexpected moments.

Arnold Mindell (2000) is a proponent of the theory that we are actually dreaming twenty-four hours a day (as opposed to only when asleep) and that we can gain valuable information if we become more aware of our sentient experiences. Mindell (2000) has drawn on his experience with doctors and healers from all over the world, in an effort to bring awareness to the value of tapping into and learning from our lucid dreaming. Mindell's sentient movement process combines role-play and movement with active imagination in a manner similar to that described by Mary Whitehouse (1999) in *Authentic Movement*. Participants allow sentient experiences (impulses, spontaneous or intuitive movements) to reveal unconscious feelings and beliefs that might offer deeper insight into the nature of the issue that the individual is confronting. Sentient refers to an automatic awareness of subtle, normally marginalised experiences and sensations. By becoming lucid in our sentient experiences we are able to tap into the unconscious realm of our being.

The intent of this research was to explore what could be learned about our emotions, surfacing as a result of facilitating group processes, as we recognise them and choose to work with them through the engagement of both inner work and reflective processes.

Processes involved in exploring different ways of knowing

In utilising both reflective and inner work practices as a means to increase conscious awareness, this research is involved in two different ways of knowing. The following section will explore what is involved in these two different approaches to knowing and engaging our experiences. Several theorists offer insight into how these different ways of knowing might be intentionally worked with in combination and have thus influenced my own thinking.

Welwood (2000) begins by discussing the “divided consciousness” involved in reflection.

Divided here refers to the subject/object split, in which the divide between observer and observed, perceiver and perceived is a primary determinant of how and what we perceive.

When we reflect on self, self becomes divided – into an object of reflection and an observing subject (p. 88).

Welwood affirms that dividing the fields of experience into two poles can be useful for most purposes and yields relative self-knowledge. Through this process we can, as the observing subject, learn about our conditioning, our character structure, our particular ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and perceiving. In this research, the division of stories from simple recollections into imagining them in different genres is one attempt to divide consciousness so as to enable greater reflection.

Welwood (2000) states that as a result of conventional divided consciousness, we fail to see how our conceptual assumptions often produce a distorted picture of reality. For example, Welwood points out that if we see a tree through our conventional divided consciousness then “our experience of the tree is shaped by ideas and beliefs about a category of objects called tree” (p. 89). Welwood offers in contrast Krishnamurti’s description of a tree, which conveys what it is like to experience a tree in a more direct unalienated manner:

Utterly still ... listening without a moment of reaction, without recording, without experiencing, only seeing and listening ... Really the outside is the inside and the inside is the outside, and it is difficult, almost impossible to separate them (as cited in Welwood, 2000, p. 89).

Welwood relates this experience to his own experience with meditation.

Meditative experience reveals a different kind of knowing, a direct recognition of 'thatness' or 'suchness' – the vivid, ineffable nowness of reality, as disclosed in the clarity of pure awareness, free from constraints of conceptual or dualistic fixation. When this kind of knowing is directed inwardly, it becomes what is called in Zen, "directly seeing into one's own nature" (Welwood, 2000, p. 89).

The kind of story-telling designed for use in this research is one attempt to “describe the tree” in a different way so as to exert different ways of knowing about experiences in adult learning. Meditation and similar practices allowed this to happen and allowed me to be more “present” to my experiences by letting go of conceptual constructs so that I could experience reality more “as it is”. The result is that I feel a oneness with my experience of reality versus my experiencing reality in a more dualistic manner that usually results when I view reality through my divided consciousness.

In this dissertation, which takes into consideration both inner work practices (meditation, active imagination etc.) and reflective practices in describing the processes engaged in by my co-researchers and me, I have not made a detailed distinction of the various stages in coming to conscious awareness, as Wellwood has done, but I have made a distinction between subject-object reflective practices and practices that focus more on presence or oneness with the experience.

In offering a similar explanation of the two ways of knowing presented in this dissertation, Kolb (1984) uses the terms “apprehension” and “comprehension”. Most forms of inner-work involve knowing that is based on apprehension. Apprehension is described as a “registrative process” involving knowing in the “here and now” which cannot be judged by systemic forms of criticism (p. 102). Instead, apprehension involves the process of “appreciation”, a process of affirming based on belief, trust and conviction: “To appreciate

apprehended reality is to embrace it. And from this affirmative embrace flows a deeper fullness and richness of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 104).

Kolb (1984) further states,

Apprehension of experience is a personal subjective process that cannot be known by others except by the communication to them of the comprehension that we use to describe our immediate experience (p. 105).

Comprehension, on the other hand, is an interpretive process through which articulate forms of knowledge are analysed and criticised (Kolb, 1984, p. 103). Kolb points out that the nature of “comprehensive knowledge” is such that it can be rearranged based on different times and contexts and that through comprehension, knowledge is refined, elaborated and integrated. Reflective practices involve the process of comprehension as the facilitator questions and reframes her own assumptions and beliefs to better understand the origin of her perspective and emotions.

It is my assumption, as it is Kolb’s, that the use of these two knowing processes, apprehension and comprehension, while very different, can also be complementary, thus offering an opportunity for the individual to experience a deeper, more complete sense of knowing. Through both inner work and reflective practices (apprehension and comprehension) the adult educator is offered an opportunity to engage different ways of knowing as a means to a deeper understanding of self.

Another theory that offers additional insight into the nature of these two different ways of knowing and being in a society is presented by Peter Reason (1994). Reason, drawing on the work of Owen Barfield, borrows the terms “original participation,” “unconscious participation” and “future participation” to describe how we as human beings have evolved in terms of our way of understanding and relating to one another in a given society. In original participation, there was a deep experiential sense of “oneness” with one’s immediate environment and with the Universe. The distinctions of an “either-or”

consciousness were not relevant. According to Reason, original participation is found primarily in societies based on hunter-gathering and horticulture.

In such societies economic activities, myth, ceremony and story-telling knit together in an integrated whole ... Such people will experience themselves as embedded in and part of their local ecology. Body, emotions, mind and spirit will all be integrated aspects of the whole human person, integral aspects of their way of sensing and experiencing (Reason, 1994, p. 20).

In contrast, in unconscious participation of modern society, there is both an absence of a felt sense of knowing that we are one with each other and one with the world, and a differentiation and subsequent polarisation. Reason (1994) states,

Such societies will experience themselves as separate from a hostile and chaotic natural world, and strive for control over it. Mythological processes will be unconscious and devalued, and intellectual processes overvalued, science eventually taking over as the new (unconscious) myth (Reason, 1994, p. 23).

Reason points out that while original participation denies differentiation, unconscious participation denies communion. Therefore, neither of these forms of consciousness is sufficient (p. 29). It is Reason's premise that different aspects of participation may coexist in an individual and in a culture at different points in time. An individual might experience these different aspects of participation in terms of cycles of phases. For example, Reason points out that one might experience the sound of the ocean during meditation (experiencing a oneness with nature); label the sound as the sound of the ocean (thus, briefly differentiating through reflection), notice the labelling (continuing to briefly reflect); and then choose to sink back into identity with the immediate experience (again experiencing oneness with nature). When this happens in meditation, the mind is drawn away to our thoughts and then gently drawn back to our breathing and to our immediate presence and apprehension (p. 31).

Reason (1994) refers to the above example as a way of being that reflects future participation. Reason describes future participation as

A form of consciousness rooted in concrete experience and grounded in the body; characterized by self-awareness and self-reflection...there is a much deeper appreciation of the alienating power of conceptual language and more active and aware use of imagination and metaphor (p. 33).

Reason proposes that an inquiry community can offer a space to practise future participation. In this kind of setting, individuals are invited to become self-aware, and self-reflective, allowing for the reframing of ideas and perspectives based on the emergence of new information. Optimally, such a community will also allow for other ways of knowing that are not cognitive, such as knowing that comes through intuition, imagination and an awareness of the physical self. According to Reason, this type of human inquiry “can be seen as a discipline for the cultivation of future participation” (p. 39).

The nature of this dissertation is similar to the kind of community inquiry described by Reason in future participation. The inquiry co-researchers engaged in a process that involved valuing and integrating the different ways of knowing as described in future participation, although in a much more limited way. Such a process, involving different ways of creating meaning, also recognises the adult educator’s role in valuing both apprehension and comprehension in relating to one’s experiences as described by Kolb (1984).

Understanding the meaning and experience of emotion in professional practice

The expression of emotions within adult learning experiences is not hard to discern. In the context of the research for this inquiry, many ways of uncovering, dealing with and processing emotion, as primary and secondary tasks to learning, took place. However, understandings of emotion are shaped by specific socio-cultural (Denzin, 1984; Hochschild, 1983; Horowitz, 1988; Katz, 1999; Lupton, 1998; Lutz, 1988; Lyons, 1995) and psychic contexts (J. Chodorow, 1997; N. Chodorow, 1999; Denzin, 1984; Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1992; Ulanov, 1999; Woodman & Dickson, 1996).

Through learning and acculturation, we construct the meanings we attribute to emotional states, reflecting “aspects of cultural meaning systems people use in attempting to

understand the situations in which they find themselves” (Lutz, 1985, p.65). The meanings we attribute to emotional states also inform us about the broader social world and ourselves. As Denzin (1984) suggests, “To understand who a person is, it is necessary to understand emotion” (p. 1). Emotions always refer to the self, providing us with a means for developing self-knowledge. They are an integral part of how we interpret and make sense of the day-to-day events in our lives. As we look at and come to understand our sense-making practices in daily life and the ways emotions constitute that practice, we reveal ourselves more fully to ourselves and to others.

Our experience of emotion, however, and our understanding of self arise from more than just rational, conscious thought processes mediated by cultural symbols (Lupton, 1998). As in the different stories developed in this thesis, I sometimes found myself feeling strongly about something or toward someone, without consciously knowing or understanding why or from where these feelings came. Emotional experiences are often shaped by strong inner, extra-rational dynamics (N. Chodorow, 1999). They are not always expressed through words but gain voice in dreams, fantasies, or other imagined aspects of our day-to-day world.

Emotions, then, give voice to our fundamental sense of irrationality (N. Chodorow, 1999). Through our emotional experiences, we recognise that our conscious sense of agency is often subverted by desire. In these situations, we experience a self that seems ambivalent, contradictory, and fragmented. Our consciousness seems populated by multiple voices, each claiming a different sense of reality (Clark & Dirks, 2000). Thus, experience of emotion often reveals a multiplistic, contradictory self. Understanding of these multiple selves is achieved not only through conscious, rational, and self-reflexive practices (Mezirow, 1991) but through the products of our memory and imagination, the images that come to populate consciousness (Dirks, 1998).

Defining emotion

A continuing theme in the literature on emotion is the extreme difficulty of defining it (Gilbert, 1997; O'Reagan, 2003). LeDoux (1996) makes the point that

Everyone knows what [emotion] is until they are asked to define it (p. 23).

It might be suggested that this may be one reason for the lack of wide research on emotion in different academic disciplines. However, emotion is considered to be multi-faceted and diverse, and so are many of its definitions.

Emotion could be categorised as being part of what is known as the “affective realm”. In *The Encyclopaedia of Psychology* (Wertlieb, 1984), the section on Affective Development begins with a definition of affect:

Affect, as a feature or type of behaviour, and hence a form of psychology is one of the least understood and most difficult problems in the field. “Affect” relates to and/or encompasses a wide range of concepts and phenomena including feelings, emotions, moods, motivation, and certain drives and instincts.

The affective realm is constructed by Goleman (1995) as follows:

Each of these [anger, sadness, fear, enjoyment, love, surprise, disgust, shame] families has a basic emotional nucleus at its core, with its relatives rippling out from there in countless mutations. In the outer ripples are moods, which technically speaking are more muted and last far longer than an emotion...Beyond moods are temperaments, the readiness to evoke a given emotion or mood that makes people melancholy, timid, or cheery. And still beyond such emotional dispositions are the outright disorders of emotion such as clinical depression or unremitting anxiety ... (p. 290).

Within this affective realm, emotion appears to be the source phenomena from which other entities in the affective sphere (moods, temperaments, emotional dispositions, emotional disorders, etc.) flow.

Across disciplines, a review of different perspectives on emotion shows that emotion is conceptualised as (a) inherent or biologically driven; (b) socially constructed; (c) an integration of inherent and socially constructed; and (d) extra-rational.

From the inherent or biological perspective, emotion is conceptualised as an “internal feeling, or an experience involving such a feeling” (Lupton, 1998, p. 10). In other words, emotions are seen to be “hard wired” – part of the biology of humans, and not learned. Sylvester (1998) defines emotion as:

An unconscious body and brain system that alerts us to dangers and opportunities. It activates our powerful, multifaceted attention system in order to organize the myriad conscious and unconscious rational systems that our brain uses to solve the current challenge. Emotion and attention thus become the pathways into all rational cognitive behaviour (p. 35).

The research findings of Paul Ekman, as cited by Goleman (1995, p. 290) support the inherent or biological perspective. More will be said about the biological aspect of emotions later in this chapter.

In contrast to the inherent or biological perspective on emotion, from a socially constructed perspective, emotion is considered to be learned behaviour, shaped and constrained by social processes and institutions. Advocates of this position argue that emotion is entirely a product of social construction. Evans (2001) asserts that for most of the twentieth century the predominant theory of emotions was that emotion was socially constructed, “transmitted culturally, much like languages” (p. 4).

From another perspective, emotion is considered to be a blend of the inherent and socially constructed perspectives. For example, the cognitive theories of emotion and the theoretical frame of the “weak” social construction are blended. In doing this, emotion is recognised as having a strong inherent component but also considered to be a function of the judgment and assessment of the social context (Lupton, 1998). Although the existence of basic, inherent emotion is acknowledged, there is also recognition that there are culturally specific emotions which Evans (2001) defines as “less innate than basic emotions, but more innate

than culturally specific ones ... they are not so automatic and fast as basic emotions nor are they universally associated with a single facial expression (p. 27).

Similar to the cognitive theories that blend both inherent and socially constructed views of emotions, “weak” social constructivism acknowledges the role that biology plays in felt and expressed emotions. However, weak social constructivism, according to Lupton (1998) “takes more of an interest in social and cultural aspects of experience and understanding of the emotions ... (p. 15).

Others argue for a truly blended approach to viewing emotion. Ford (1992) defines emotion as conceptualised but integrated. He sees it as consisting of three integrated components: an affective component, a physiological component and a transactional component. Lupton (1998) also takes an integrative view of emotion. She writes, “Like the body itself emotional states serve to bring together nature and culture in a seamless intermingling in which it is difficult to argue where one ends and the other begins” (p. 4).

The last major perspective from which emotion is viewed is the extra-rational perspective – or that which is beyond conscious thought process. This perspective acknowledges the role that the biological and the social play in the understanding of emotions, but it takes one step further. It argues that emotions happen at the unconscious level of experience and that the unconscious can be a powerful source of emotional response (Denzin, 1984; Dirkx, 2001; Lupton, 1998).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) assert that because of the under-theorising of emotion in education, adult education writers tend to “conceptualize rational discourse and the affective as separate and distinct from one another, even while acknowledging that people learn holistically” (p. 190). Some educators criticise a way of knowing that privileges rationality. Michelson (1996) observes “the cerebral, the objective, the universal are seen as superior to the subjective and particular ... [in order to] have power over experience” (p. 444). Mary Stone Hanley (as cited in Yorks & Kasl, 2002) views this rational mindset to be “emotionally repressed”. She argues “over reliance on the mind limits learning” (p. 184).

New awareness in the value of emotion

Taylor (2001), in summarising the neurobiological research into emotions, writes “feelings have been found to be the ‘rudder of reason’, without which it wanders, aimlessly with little or no bearing in the process of making decisions” ((p. 234). Pert’s important research suggests that “molecules of emotion” or messenger molecules called “peptides” are distributed throughout the body. Thus the bloodstream becomes a kind of second nervous system, influencing “feeling states” (Jensen, 1998, p. 77).

In recent research on the role of emotion in learning, Hargreaves (2001) devised a conceptual framework he termed “emotional geographies of teaching” that focuses on “how teachers’ emotions are embedded in the conditions and interactions of their work” (p. 1058). Kort and Reilly (2002) argue the importance of the interplay between emotion and cognition in learning. They propose a model for thinking and posing questions about the role of emotion in learning in which they theorise the connectedness between emotion and learning. Yorks and Kasl (2002) argue for an expanded theory of adult learning that “positions affect as a central feature of learning” (p. 189). Taylor (2001) argues that Mezirow’s theory focuses on critical reflection and minimises the role of emotions and feelings in the perspective transformation process. He suggests that the theory needs to account for the “emotional” nature of rationality and the unconscious ways of knowing – what he terms “implicit memory” (p. 218). Finally, O’Reagan (2003) argues, “any theory of learning which fails to take emotion into account of this centrality (the centrality of emotion] is lacking a critical element and is, therefore, seriously deficient in its representation of reality” (p. 89).

The research literature also looks at specific ways in which emotion drives learning. D’Arcangelo (1998) asserts that complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat. Shelton (2003) argues that “emotional awareness” is the key to effective teaching. Similarly, Kovalik and Olson (1998) suggest “we remember little of content that has no emotional tag on it” (p. 29). Woolfe and Brandt (1998) argue that learning is

strongly influenced by emotion. Newmann (as cited in Cobb & Mayer, 1998) suggests, “higher-order thinking can be enhanced through empathic teaching” (p. 18). Finally, the research of Rowe (2006) on the role of emotion in on-line learning highlights the notion that connectivity between teacher and learner is greatly enhanced when the issue of emotionality in on-line learning is managed and dealt with clearly in the communication transaction on-line.

Summary of various kinds of literature used in the first part of this literature review

In the area of reflective practices

Brookfield (1987), Mezirow (1991), and Reason and Rowan (1981) explore the concepts of critical reflection, critical thinking, and critical subjectivity, all of which involve examining assumptions and biases and exploring possible alternative perceptions and behaviours. Brookfield informed my thinking around the value of critical thinking to teachers and group facilitators. Brookfield (1987) cites Myers in pointing out that “by modelling reflective thought in lectures and discussion, teachers can do much to encourage this frame of mind in their students” (p. 85). I see this as being the role of both teachers and facilitators in adult learning environments that value reflective learning. Exploring the adult education experiences of my co-researchers and myself in this manner became the primary interest of this dissertation.

Individuals and organisations who/that are aware of the value of reflective learning must also be committed to finding ways to develop and model such skills as leaders, teachers, consultants or facilitators. While the others talk about the importance of modelling reflective thinking, Reason and Rowan (1981) more clearly articulate the step of communicating one’s biases and prejudices to the group while teaching or facilitating in an effort to create an environment where all individuals are encouraged to question their assumptions. While the authors in the field of reflective practices use different terminology, in reading the examples given by each, the intent and behaviour seem to be the same. I have

engaged their theories around reflective practices to see what I might come to know about the inner and outer processes of the adult educator.

In the area of managing difficult emotions and Jungian psychology

The work of Amy and Arnold Mindell has also guided my thinking in relation to my inquiry question. The Mindells' work led to my interest in exploring how adult educators, in general, might use experiential group settings as an opportunity for their own growth in consciousness.

Amy Mindell (1995) uses the term "metaskills" to refer to the "feeling attitudes" of the adult educators who facilitate large groups. These attitudes are helpful in expanding this arena to recognise the value of emotional awareness to adult educators who facilitate a wide range of group processes.

According to Arnold Mindell (1995), "Before we can transform communities with conflict, we have to be able to survive it ourselves. A special kind of inner work is needed to transform us into elders who can "sit in the fire" (p. 33). As mentioned, earlier, Mindell emphasises what he terms "dreaming" (a lucid dreaming process which combines elements of active imagination and guided visualisation) as a means of exploring the unconscious through imagery or symbolism for the purpose of expanding awareness around individual and group meaning. Lucid dreaming refers to a dreamlike state of consciousness while awake.

As mentioned earlier, Boyd and Myers (1988), Johnson (1986), and Smith and Berg's (1987) work on exploring the personal and collective unconscious further guided my thinking around the importance of inner work to the adult educator.

Storr's (1973) book on Jung also provided the groundwork for my understanding of the mythical and the collective unconscious. Jung's work provided the foundation for many of the other authors that influenced my thinking in the early stages of my dissertation process

(Johnson, 1986; Boyd & Myers, 1988; Smith & Berg, 1987; Arnold Mindell, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2000; and Welwood, 2000, to name a few) and continued to have an even greater impact through the literature discovered in the exploratory phase of my literature review process. Storr helped me to gain greater insight into Jung's theoretical framework.

In the area of adult education as group facilitation

In the area of adult education as group facilitation, I was guided by the work of Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor (1995) and very much by John Heron (1999). Heron talks about the transpersonal side of group facilitation, which he describes as allowing an immanent power within to shape one's unique expression. Hunter et al. quote Heron as stating,

You let your distinctive behaviour well up out of some presence far more deeply interfused. What you say and do is a personal manifestation of some movement of the spirit within.

There's an inner source, a wellspring of personal potential and it's an accessible mystery (Heron as cited in Hunter et al., p. 220).

The focus is on allowing the unknown to unfold as it manifests in the person of each individual. I suspect that the adult educator who has taken the time to do his or her own inner work may become a more conscious leader in this process.

In the area of transformation, transformative learning and transformative education

The term "transformation" is often used in relation to psychological notions about significant personality changes. The work of Jung (1969), Neumann (1954, 1959), Jacobi (1967) and Gould (1978), form a significant body of literature concerned with psychological transformation (Boyd & Myers, 1988). Boyd and Myers point out that,

Although all transformations do not lead to the expansion and integration of an individual's personality, it is only through transformation that significant changes occur in the individual's psychological development (p. 262).

Elias (1977) also talks about “the resourcefulness of the unconscious in our effort to transform our fundamental perspective on the world” (p. 3). Elias refers to the “apprehension” of frameworks of meaning that emerges from the unconscious. He states,

Transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analysing underlying premises (p. 3).

Among these authors, transformation is seen as being important in moving individuals toward an active realisation and integration of all dimensions of their true being. Working toward this level of integration is ultimately my personal goal as an adult educator.

It is my assumption that since such emotions and feelings sometimes surface unexpectedly while facilitating adult learning groups, using such an incident as an opportunity to explore the unconscious feelings and emotions at the core of one’s response could result in a transformative learning experience for the adult educator.

Transformative learning theory, as articulated by Boyd and Myers (1988), Mezirow (1991, 1995), Cranston (1994), Taylor (1997), Clark (1997), Dirkx, (1997, 1998) and Elias (1997), to name a few, has led to the perception of adult learning as a process of personal meaning-making.

It was through my introduction to transformative learning theory that I first became aware of the value of ascertaining meaning not only through an intentional cognitive process of reflecting on assumptions, but also through a process of intuitively noticing what symbolic meaning surfaces through a more arcane exploration of the unconscious. It was this premise, relative to transformative learning processes, that supported my own thinking with regard to the importance of using both comprehension *and* apprehension – two ways of knowing – in an effort to gain greater insight into self-knowing.

Gozawa (2000a) acknowledges the challenges that facilitators face in embracing conflict and emotion during profound transformative learning moments. In pointing out that their behaviour may be informed by their emotional reaction in the moment, she offers “a philosophical framing of why facilitators and learners, despite their understanding of transformative learning theory, might experience deep fear in such moments” (p. 1). Gozawa offers her insight into what needs to shift within educators or facilitators if they are able to help make critical incidents in learning into transformative learning moments for their students. Her insight informed this inquiry by helping me to see the potential value, as an adult educator, of using an emotionally triggering experience occurring as a result of group facilitation as an opportunity for transformative learning.

In the area of story-telling

While our stories in this inquiry offered the all-important seeds for our growth to consciousness, the growth process itself could not have happened without rich nutrients – the literature – to assist in uniquely shaping the full body of the tree. Much of the literature that guided my thinking in contextualising this research was introduced to me through my studies in adult education. In the same manner that nutrients continue to offer magical ingredients to nourish and support the tree throughout its growth cycle, the literature discovered in this review deepened my own awareness and continued to shape the branches of my consciousness.

Part Two: Clearing the Ground

I will now turn to the area of emotion as it is described through a variety of lenses in the literature on adult learning, emotion theory, neurological functioning, critical poststructuralism, postmodernism and memory. I have reviewed this literature separately in an effort to clarify the variety of positions one can take. Finding this literature and reflecting on it is part of the organic nature of this inquiry, the rich soil in which this inquiry is rooted.

Emotional dimensions are a foundation for learning

A growing body of research suggests emotions and feelings are more than merely a motivational concern in learning. Postle (1993) argues that affective, emotional dimensions provide the foundation on which practical, conceptual, and imaginal modes of learning rest. “Brain-based” theories (Damasio, 1994, 1999) and the concept of “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995, 1997) suggest that emotion and feelings are deeply inter-related with perceiving and processing information from our external environments, storing and retrieving information in memory, reasoning, and the embodiment of learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Taylor, 1996). Recent studies of transformative learning, including those studies which use organic inquiry as a key methodology, reveal extra-rational aspects, such as emotion, intuition, soul, spirituality, and the body, as integral to processes of deep, significant change (Clark, 1997; Dirkx, 1997; Nelson, 1997; Scott, 1997).

Adult educators seem to be appreciating more and implementing the expressive, affective and imaginative, as modes of knowing in their own right (Heron, 1992; Jaggar, 1989; Nelson, 1997; Willis, 2000). These authors argue that imagination plays a key role in connecting our inner, subjective experiences of emotions and feelings with the outer, objective dimensions of our learning experiences. These relationships and dialogues are mediated largely through what Hillman (1975) refers to as “imaginal” approaches, such as dream work, free association, fantasy, active imagination, and other forms of creative activity. These approaches bypass ego consciousness and allow for expressions of deeper dimensions of our psychic lives.

Fostering emotional reflection creates meaning

“Dealing in” emotions and feelings for the educational transaction seeks a deeper understanding of the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions that are often associated with profoundly meaningful experiences in adult learning. Journal writing, literature, poetry, art, movies, story telling, narratives, dance, and ritual are specific methods that can be used to help foster transformative learning in our relationships with others and with the

world. By approaching emotionally charged experiences transformatively, rather than merely conceptually, learners locate and construct, through enduring mythological motifs, themes, and images, deep meaning, value, and quality in the relationship between the text and their own life experiences.

Emotion theory

Recent work on the theory of emotion by sociologist J. M. Barbalet (1998) is useful in foregrounding the emotional context of learning. Barbalet points out that although there is no consensus in the literature defining “an emotion”, there is agreement that emotion includes three elements:

a subjective component of feelings, a physiological component of arousal, and a motor component of expressive gesture (Barbalet, 1998 p. 86).

Significantly, he and others such as Scheff (1997) characterise emotion as compromising cognitive and dispositional elements. Emotion states include decision-making and a disposition to act, and so emotion has elements of reason and action as well as of feeling. Emotion can no longer be (dis)regarded as a synonym for irrationality.

In the literature on emotion, shame has become prominent in recent years (Frijda, 1994; Kitayama, 1994). I was especially drawn to the research of Scheff (1991) who describes shame as the “master emotion”, basic to the dynamics of relationships because of the way in which shame generates alienation while its opposite, pride, accompanies solidarity. He argues that

Shame is crucial in social interaction because it ties together the individual and social aspects of human activity as part and whole. As an emotion within individuals it plays a central role in consciousness of feeling and morality. But it also functions as signal of distance between persons, allowing us to regulate how far we are from others ... (pp. 13, 14).

Distance between persons in social settings is a strong indicator of acceptance and rejection by those one looks to for recognition. This can be seen particularly in learning settings. The shame generally accompanies distance, whether through one’s own conscience or through distancing by others. Scheff writes that shame is “a normal part of the process of social control” (Scheff, 1997, p. 74) in families and the wider society. Shame and pride are

significant in learning experiences, which make learning possible (Ingleton, 1994). They are also fundamental in the formation of confidence, anxiety and fear. Pride and shame are central in the construction of identity, and so are significant in the theorising of emotion and learning, particularly in the context under discussion in this thesis.

Emotion, learning and neurological functioning

In an attempt to explore further the nature and function of emotion during important adult learning exchanges, I am calling on three different, separate areas of research and theorising. These areas are critical postmodernism, particularly in relation to knowledge and meaning; constructivist ideas about learning; and neurological research in brain functioning as it relates to emotionality. After briefly outlining some of the most pertinent ideas from each of these areas, I will attempt to draw together strands from each to identify key elements of how learning happens and apply it to develop ideas in this study about emotions in learning.

Critical postmodernism

Critical postmodern theorising is associated with a contestation of what is taken to be core assumptions within modernism. Amongst these, the impartiality and objectivity of knowledge, meaning and/or truth, and the unitary identity of persons are identified as significant areas, which are open to question, and re-evaluation (Yeatman, 1994). Yeatman argues that epistemological foundationalism is based on assumptions that language and knowledge stand outside, and are free of the power regimes in which they were constructed. This process posits language and knowledge as conduits (Yeatman, 1990) or as mirrors (Yeatman, 1991, 1994) which, being singular in meaning, can be claimed to be “objective” and universal, because such cultural elements are held to be untainted by social conditions and or personal interpretation. A postmodern critical perspective challenges such assumptions, arguing that knowledges and meanings are considered to be culturally and historically situated, and saturated with previous power contests. Knowledge is therefore

understood to be political, contested, and irresolvably multiple (Foucault 1980; Kenway, 1992; Martusewicz, 1992).

In this context every person is understood to be both positioned within the discursive traditions that have formed them (Yeatman, 1994) and as an individual who experiences and interprets those traditions according to their own multiple and complex positionings, within different and sometimes disparate roles and relationships.

This perspective of knowledge and “knowers” differs from a modernist, pluralist view that regards knowledge as culturally relative. The postmodern critique takes account of the contestation and power struggles, which are integral to knowledge and meaning construction. It also differs because, in not giving higher status to particular forms of knowledge, which in the past in western society has usually been “scientific” knowledge (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Minnich 1990; Yeatman, 1991; 1996), it also allows space for recognising multiple forms and sources of knowledges, multiple meanings and interpretations.

In this inquiry, my co-researchers and myself ponder on the many different ways my recollections of adult learning scenarios provide different ways of knowing about learning. In particular, this inquiry is situated within the postmodern genre through its methodological stance using an arts-based inquiry design, as an intentional way of attempting to identify different ways of knowing as a research tool.

Constructivist ideas about learning

My inquiry also leads me to literature that looked at ways of learning through a constructivist lens. One of the central tenets of the constructivist view of learning is that knowledge does not exist outside people, “there is no knowledge without a knower”, [and that] “the knower personally participates in all acts of understanding” (Kincheloe, 1991, p.26). Transformative learning, therefore, is a process of meaning-making through an

interaction between a person's experiences, her/his existing constructs, and the information/ideas that are available to her/him.

Another, associated tenet of constructivism is a rejection of a realist and/or rational view of knowledge. This understanding of learning is diametrically opposed to the positivist position that “objective” knowledge is there to be accumulated by the learner. When a constructivist argues that all knowledge and meaning are social artefacts, they are recognising that, whilst it is the individual who constructs meaning, meaning-making is never done in isolation from the social context (Bourdieu, 1971; Freire, 1970, 1985). Culture, language(s), politics and history inevitably influence this context. Therefore when a person learns, s/he constructs her/his own knowledge and meaning(s) according to what s/he already knows, within the social, historical, and linguistic, context(s) of her/his learning.

A focus of constructivism is therefore not on an “external reality”, but on how people organise and impose interpretive structures on their experiences to make meaning. The process of meaning-making is understood to be a continual process in which learners actively interpret new experiences, which may act to transform their prior knowledge. In these processes, each person’s system of constructs is not seen as an exact replication of external reality, but as a set of “working hypotheses” or “frames”, which that person uses as if they were reality. Over time these mental constructs become that person’s reality, as they see it (Crebbin 1995). But whilst a person’s “world-view” may frame how they see the world, such processes are understood to be rarely linear or uni-dimensional. It is considered much more likely that they are experienced as part of an “ever-evolving, dynamic complexity” of problematic and unpredictable cycles which have no final resolution (Bawden, 1991).

The place of emotion in learning, then, relies on the idea that personal constructs are constituted by both emotive and cognitive aspects of oneself. Emotions can be a conduit for learning, for they can provide the learner with another means of viewing oneself and the world.

Neurological research in brain functioning

In this section I would like to draw more deeply the connection between emotions and learning, as evidenced by different areas of research into brain functioning. This, too, is seen more as “clearing the ground” in the organic inquiry sense, than as evidential quantitatively, in that the presence of emotion in learning is an imperative that cannot be denied. The aim is to shed more light on the consistent points of view that have been building in this literature review, by showing that emotion is “hard wired” in each human being as an effective and efficient way of knowing.

Since the development of techniques which allow for non-invasive monitoring of brain functioning, it has become possible to construct a much clearer understanding of how the brain functions. Currently there are two different areas of research. Possibly the most well publicised are the various forms of “brain mapping” which produce visual images of a person’s brain showing areas of increased oxygen usage and/or electrical currents as a specific task is performed (Haberlandt, 1998). This has led to a greater understanding of which areas of the brain are involved.

Some of the important insights from this research are that:

- a. it is not only the cortex which contributes to learning and thinking. The “lower brain” or limbic system, particularly the thalamus and hypothalamus are significantly involved in the communication of information;
- b. learning and thinking do not occur in separate parts of the brain, but involve the whole of the brain, to different degrees.

This knowledge that the whole of the brain, including the “lower brain”, contributes to learning is important, because it makes it possible to understand that emotion, personal interpretation, and varying levels of consciousness, are involved in constructing meaning as well as memory. The fact that there is a neurological explanation, which outlines the

involvement of emotion in the learning transaction as being legitimate and valid, adds strength to the notion that there is more to understand about emotion in the learning transaction.

Alongside that research, there is work being undertaken to try to identify the neurological processes that are involved in learning, memory and consciousness (Kandel, 1995). It is some of the different aspects of this work that I am finding most useful in trying to re-conceptualise what we mean by learning, and knowing. In this, there are four different areas of research that I see as contributing important information: the electro-chemical processes involved in the transmission of messages; levels of consciousness; how memory is stored and retrieved; and emotions in learning and memory.

Electro-chemical processes involved in transmission of messages

From my searching for explanations of how memory is stored through the use of neurochemistry, I conclude there is now a “plausible” explanation of the memory mechanism of brain circuitries involving physiological/chemical processes (Lynch, 1999, p.1). This research has begun to highlight the complexity and multiplicity of the learning process. For example, it has been estimated that there are approximately “100 billion neurons in the human brain and each has about 10,000 contacts with other neurons” (Department of Psychology, California State University (DPCSU), 1999, p.1), and that at any time a neuron can be receiving thousands of messages (DPCSU, 1999). These messages are carried through the movement of chemicals known as neurotransmitters, which move across the synaptic space between an axon of one neuron and a dendrite of another. At the moment there are known to be approximately 100 different varieties of neurotransmitter in the brain (DPCSU, 1999, p.3).

The contribution of these findings to my research in trying to uncover the place of emotions in adult learning includes the understanding that:

- i. Any thought process, or “learning experience”, involves multiple sources of information including information from different sensory modes (Crick & Koch, 1990; Bergenheim, Johansson, Granlund & Pedersen, 1996), which are processed in the thalamus and hypothalamus and are then distributed to the cortex (Kandel, 1995).
- ii. A signal is transformed as it passes from one part of a neuron to the next, and also as it passes through the synapses from one neuron to the next. Each message undergoes a series sequence of analysis, re-coding and elaboration which involves both parallel processing and integrative linking (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1988; Kandel, 1995).
- iii. All of these processes involve several different chemical neurotransmitters, each of which carries its own form of instructions (Schwartz, 1995).
- iv. At least some of these neurotransmitters carry messages of emotion, awareness, and/or intention which become inextricably linked with the information. For example: the importance of arousal, intent, and associated with this, a sense of self, is recognised as integral components of learning, memory and thought (Penrose, 1994, pp. 35–36); incoming stimuli are thought to be subjected to an emotional evaluation which contributes to, but is separate from, the conscious awareness of emotion (Reiman, Lane, Ahern, Schwartz & Davidson, 1996); and emotional arousal is considered to be critical for enhanced conscious memory (Cahill, 1999, p.1).
- v. The actual processes of signal transmission and recognition within the neuro-system, and across the different message systems, are the same (Kandel, 1995). This does not vary with age, race, or gender. What does vary is the meaning that each individual makes of those signals
- vi. The response(s) to incoming messages depends on the person’s interpretations, which are influenced by their interpretation of the context, plus their expectations (Kandel & Kupfermann, 1995a).

These findings are of critical importance to this study. Emotionality in learning is present, whether it is acknowledged or not. The factors that are involved in naming, exchanging and sustaining emotion in critical learning transactions are then extremely important.

Consciousness

Traditional thought about adult learning seems to have been firmly based on assumptions that learning only occurs when the learner is consciously focusing on the “teacher” and/or the content. An example of this is the teacher requiring students to have nothing in their hands and to focus on the teacher. Another example is the “time-on-task” research that was popular in the 1980s. In worksites, examples of informal learning might involve an interviewee listening to an interviewer, or a supervisee focusing on a supervisor’s instructions.

In contrast to these assumptions, neurological research has made it clear that there is a great deal of information that is processed by the brain at a sub-conscious level(s) and that we only become aware of impacting signals when they reach a certain threshold level (Kandel, 1995). Some of the most recent research in consciousness has indicated that a great deal of our emotional evaluations, information-processing, and meaning-making are interactive processes which occur at pre-conscious or sub-conscious levels (Kihlstrom, 1996; Reiman et al., 1996; Schwartz, 1996).

It is also now recognised that learning and interpretation can occur during what Koch (1996, p. 250) refers to as “subliminal perception” and/or “learning without awareness”. This kind of learning/meaning-making rarely comes into consciousness as explicit knowledge. We may not be aware that critical learning transactions are, in fact, emotionally charged. These latter processes seem to be particularly sensitive to the interpretation of contextual cues and are understood to have the potential to frame and impact on subsequent learning.

How memory is stored and retrieved

At least one part of the “lower brain”, the hippocampus, appears to be involved in the mapping of connections within/between events. It is also the place where information is stored before it is re-processed and transferred to other parts of the brain to be stored as

long-term memory (Boitano, 1996). Time is needed for this re-processing and consolidation of memory. Information can be stored for several days before it is re-processed for storage. Therefore, only information that has made a strong impact, either through powerful emotional connections, or the significance of the meaningful links which the person constructs, survives to be stored in memory (Haberlandt, 1998). The greater the contribution of meaning, the stronger the memory trace will be. (Kupfermann & Kandel, 1995).

Contrary to the previous language of memory as re-call or retrieval, there is evidence from research in neuropsychology that indicates that memories are not stored intact in any one part of the brain to be retrieved, but are stored in distributed, but specific, areas which are connected through linking networks. In recall the information/knowledge is re-constructed through complex re-activation and re-connection processes (Freeman, 1995). But this does not mean that each retrieval requires exactly the same processes as the initial experience. It seems that repeated similar events, or even some single events, can establish links, or pathways, which may be characterised by changes in the protein structure of the synapses (Flanagan, 1996), a process associated with increased synaptic strength which lasts indefinitely (Lynch, 1999). The strength of the memory trace is dependent on the degree of elaboration and the complexity of the meaning network (Haberlandt, 1998).

By linking these ideas with the previously mentioned understandings of neurotransmission of messages being multiple rather than singular, it seems that the processes of memory re-activation and re-connection potentially bring together all of the different forms of information, including sensual and emotional, plus the interpretations and meaning(s) that were part of the previous experience(s). This supports a notion of memory being made up of multiple rather than singular messages that have been “bound together” across networks, in some way (Crick & Koch, 1990). In some of the research on how memories are retrieved as a re-construction of meaning(s), the centrality of the self, as the constructor and corrector of meaning(s) (Conrad, 1996), and/or the impact of the emotions in the experience(s), is acknowledged (Penrose, 1994; Reinman et al. 1996; Cahill, 1999).

Emotions in learning and memory

It appears from this research that there is no such thing as a behaviour or thought, which is not impacted on in some way by emotions. The prefrontal cortex, which is involved in cognitive functioning, is not directly connected to any of the sensory systems. Even the simplest purposeful behaviour requires several kinds of sensory information to be integrated. This means that all of the messages must be linked together and/or re-directed (Jessell, 1995; Kandel & Kupfermann, 1995b). In this process these messages are inevitably linked with information about the person's emotional state, intentions and expectations.

There are no neurotransmitters for “objectivity” but, even in the simplest response to information, signals are linked with possibly several “emotional” neurotransmitters such as epinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin (Haberlandt, 1998). The neurotransmitters which carry messages of emotion are integrally linked with the information, during the initial processing, the linking of information from the different senses (probably initially in the thalamus and hypothalamus), and again in the re-processing and re-call. It becomes clear, therefore, that there is no thought, memory, or knowledge that is “objective”, or “detached” from the personal experience of knowing.

To challenge traditional “scientific” assumptions even more strongly, the evidence that a great deal of this processing occurs at a pre-conscious or sub-conscious level suggests that the learner/knower is not conscious of these embedded messages and therefore cannot access them in an explicit way. For example, a person who has had a negative experience in a particular context (subject area; sporting activity; particular environment; particular person; institution) may know that they are reluctant – feel anxiety – to re-enter that context, but not know why. Such a reaction to negative experience is therefore not logical or rational, but is an integral part of the meaning for that person.

So, although emotionality has for years suffered from being typecast as irrational, and therefore dismissed, it now appears, through this recent neuropsychological research, that it

is eminently rational, and importantly so, and cannot and should not be dismissed from learning exchanges. In fact, it seems that it is impossible for this to happen.

Key elements in emotionality

In drawing ideas from, and making links between, these three different separate areas of research and theorising, I have identified a number of what I see as key elements which are probably not found in most previous understandings of adult learning that are based on positivism and memory analysis, only. In some more recent approaches to adult learning that value critical reflection (Boud, etc.) and transformative learning (Mezirow, etc.) there are attempts to understand the nature of emotion in knowing and learning. Some educators have voiced criticism that the role of emotion has not been illuminated enough even in recent adult education theories (Hart). Understanding the elements of emotionality needs to be given consideration to further and change our understandings of how learning happens.

The four most obvious key elements are:

- a. The significance of each individual's *personal meaning(s)*. The learner is the person who constructs meaning from experience, and who has choices about the interpretations that s/he makes. Emotion within a learning experience happens automatically, neurologically, and therefore is a legitimate, normal, rational phenomenon, which can be called upon to enhance personal meaning, if it is named.
- b. We need to recognise the potential of multiple meanings and interpretations, both at a social/cultural level, and at the level of each individual. When emotion is named, the potential for learning is vast, because despite the millions of meanings and interpretations possible socio-culturally, emotion is present in each individual too, and is present in learning transactions, as a vital resource for learning waiting to be tapped.

- c. Learning is not a single process but occurs across time, through a complex construction of experiences and information, which are inter-linked through a neural network of chemically constructed messages. If emotion is named and then sustained creatively, learning can take on a different energy.
- d. Learning is inherently connected to emotion. An individual's meaning making is impacted upon by her or his pre-conscious, or sub-conscious, perceptions and emotional evaluations of information. These include her/his responses to contextual clues that have the potential to elicit previously established constructs, plus expectations or mind-sets that they have developed through her/his cultural and personal experiences. Frequently these tacit forms of knowledge influence meaning-making in ways that the individual is unaware of. When emotions are exchanged during learning transactions, meaning-making can be enhanced for all those engaged.

The significance of the self as learner and knower

Each person's experiences and understandings about learning and knowledge, and of her/himself as a learner, in that context, has a very strong impact on how s/he approaches learning.

This is not a new idea. During the last two decades there has been a great deal of research and debate, particularly in formal adult education literature, focusing on how adult learners go about learning, but there has been less so in the area of informal, worksite learning, although this is now changing. One substantial area of research has focused on adult learner's characteristics, their learning approaches and expectations, and the impact that that has on how they deal with new information (Entwistle & Waterson, 1988; Ramsden, 1988, 1992; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Eley, 1993; Marton, Dall'Alba & Beaty, 1993; Weinstein & Meyer, 1991, 1994). And although several of these authors have approached their research from different perspectives, or used a range of different words to describe what they mean by effective learning, there is some consensus that adult learners bring a

range of different expectations and approaches which impact on the effectiveness (depth) of their learning in formal environments.

According to Marton et al. (1993) and Akerlind and Jenkins (1998), an important dividing line between these learning approaches is based on underlying assumptions about knowledge. For example, a view of knowledge as given or transferred between teacher and learner is consistent with passive learning approaches of receiving and absorbing information, whilst a view of learning as understanding or making meaning is linked with active learning approaches.

A slightly different interpretation is offered by Ramsden (1992), who agreed that learners include information about the context and the subject, about self-as-learner-in-this-subject, and about task demands, into the interpretation. But he also included knowledge of different learning approaches, arguing that those adult learners who had access to a range of different ways of approaching a task, choose the approach which they consider most appropriate for the needs of the task.

Despite the fact that these “theories” acknowledge the importance of learners’ expectations and assumptions about learning, knowledge and self-as-learner, and recognise the learner-as-interpreter-and-decision-maker, they do so in a way which suggests to me either, that these decisions are rational and logical, or that they follow some inevitable sequence.

What seems to be missing from all of these studies is recognition that learning is a “personal”, emotionally embedded process in which networks of un-conscious and sub-conscious tacit knowledge have the potential to impact on the multiple ways in which the learners interpret information without any conscious awareness.

Why emotionality in learning needs uncovering

Despite years of giving some kind of acknowledgment to the need to “start from the person’s understandings” (which indisputably includes emotions) this is frequently not

done, or done poorly, not because teachers/learning facilitators don't try, but because much of the information which is "taught" is not named, exchanged or sustained in ways that are personally meaningful. Adult educators/learning facilitators are sometimes complicit in this because they do not question the kind of information to be learned and/or the learner's relationships with the information being taught.

It would seem that often a great opportunity for learning enhancement is not taken up because it is not emotionally re-processed. If the learning experience(s) is (are) not sufficiently dynamic for the re-processing to occur, then there will be no memory network laid down. Alternatively, whilst many teaching approaches emphasise practice and re-visiting of previously "learned" material, if it is not done in ways that enable a student to both connect to, and build on, that prior learning then the student may interpret the material as separate sets of information.

Further, the notion that a learner's emotional reactions/processes could be uncovered during the act of learning continues to be un-named. When and if emotion is named, then it is seen as a kind of illegitimate approach to learning. Uncovering the emotional content, links, processes, and meanings with adult learners may require of the learning facilitator that there is real collaboration between learners (including the teacher-learner), including disclosure by both about the emotional impacts.

It is my argument that this can be engaged with creatively, imaginatively, safely and with outcomes that will potentially lead to a richer way of knowing, for both teacher and learner. Fostering these schemata, in my view, will therefore lead to a greater opportunity for social justice to follow, because of this more holistic, inclusive pedagogy.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology – Planting the Seed

Once the ground has been prepared, the gardener plants the seed in the darkness of the earth (Clements et al., 1998, p. 26).

Introduction

Van Maanen urges movement toward unmasking fieldwork by breaking methodological silences and inventing forms of textual self-consciousness...The methodological self-reflection engendered by such experimental forms of textual construction is based on the realization that the so-called facts that one “discovers” are already the product of many levels of interpretation (Lather, 1991, pp. 150–151).

This Methodology section, normally devoted to detailing a coherent, carefully constructed, and linear description of a research design, written from a third-person perspective, will instead be written as a story, of sorts. Richardson (2000) proposes a way through this kind of process when she suggests the concept of writing as inquiry. She offers one particular kind of writing as inquiry called “writing-stories” as a method used to situate the author’s writing in the author’s life. Richardson defines writing-stories as “narratives about the contexts in which the writing is produced” (p. 391). As Richardson advocates a method of inquiry – writing stories – that “counts” as scholarly research, I take up her challenge to set this research in the context of writing stories within the context of my professional life. In doing this I am also standing with Van Maanen and Lather, quoted at the beginning of this section, as they advocate “breaking – methodological silences” (Lather, 1991, pp. 150–151).

Horsfall, Byrne-Armstrong, and Higgs (2001), referring to the authors in their edited volume *Critical Moments in Qualitative Research*, comment:

*A rigorous qualitative researcher does not ignore the critical moments, sanitize them or dress them up behind closed doors. This is what our authors demonstrate in their negotiations with the research process. Good qualitative research included **critical moments, struggles, resistances, pleasures, and a personal journey** [highlights added] ... They [the researchers] stepped around the wall of silence that surrounds **subjective experiences, radical processes,***

and messy moments, [highlights added] and said, "This is what happened, this is how I negotiated it, and this is what I now know" (p. 12).

In the paragraphs that follow I share something of my world as a researcher. I situate this methodology within the framework of qualitative, interpretive perspective, sometimes defined as "seeking to interpret the world, particularly the social world" (Higgs, 2001, p. 49). I have developed for this inquiry a qualitative research methodology, using a multi-focal lens, that of organic research inquiry and arts-based methodology.

Ellis, (as cited in Ellis, 1997) writes:

The advent of a section in the American Sociological Association called "Sociology of Emotions" legitimated the study of emotions as a proper arena of research ... I was soon disappointed to see many colleagues follow a "rational actor" approach to emotions research, busily handing out surveys, counting and predicting emotional reactions, observing facial muscles contracting on videotapes, categorizing people and abstracting generalizations from lived experience. Emotion was in danger of simply becoming another variable to add to rational models of social life. What about emotions lived experience and interaction? I vowed to resist the rationalist tendency to portray people exclusively as spiritless, empty husks with programmed, managed, predictable, and patterned emotions (p. 126).

Janesick (2000) describes the quantitative researcher as being "perfectly comfortable aggregating large numbers of people without communicating with them face-to-face" (p. 382). Since my interest lies in understanding more about emotion in the facilitation of adult learning, a qualitative perspective that "seeks to understand the meaning of participant's lives in the participant's own terms" (p. 382) is an essential framework for this project. As Higgs (2001) asserts "qualitative research assumes that the world consists of 'multiple constructed realities.' 'Multiple' implies that there are several versions of reality, depending on from which or whose perspective it is viewed. 'Constructed' means that the participants attribute meaning to events as they occur" (p. 46).

Within the qualitative perspective, however, I felt uncomfortable adopting only the “single lens” theoretical framework of an interpretive paradigm, given that emotionality in itself is such a multi-layered phenomenon. Although the goals of this paradigm “to understand, interpret, seek meaning, describe, illuminate, and theorize” (Higgs, 2001, p. 54) are consistent with my goals for this research inquiry, I had concerns that it would not, by itself provide the multi-faceted tooling I required. If I wanted a richer perspective on emotion in the realm of adult education, I needed to look at the context and the discourses around which emotion is articulated. It was at this stage that I reached one of Horsfall et al.’s (2001) “critical moments” (p. 4) defined as “messy, unspoken, complex, and disturbing moments in their [the researchers’] research processes” (p. 4).

The critical moment? This arose after I had virtually exhausted as much searching of relevant literature on emotion and emotionality in education as I could. I had read and reflected, puzzled over different points of view, with no idea at all of how to tunnel into the research from a methodological point of view. What I could relate to, however, were a couple of “stories”, strong memories from my own professional life, that continued to be remembered by me, as I was pursuing the question of emotionality. I noticed that over a period of some months I continued to focus on four or five key moments as an adult educator, which had stayed in my memory. One of these moments was about twenty years ago, another just last year. I went searching for my journal notes on these events and found them. But what was drawing me to these stories, and why? Rather than ruminate the “whyness” of this question, I decided to retrieve these stories from my memory, notes, journals, and copies of session notes and then write them. However, the way in which I was to actually do this presented a problem for me. Would I write these memories as simply that: in the past tense, third person, in chronological order? Or could I study aspects of emotionality in these stories by “fictionalising” these memories. In other words, how could I best use text to revive in myself and to give the reader some of the emotional flavour of these adult-learning experiences?

What came to my mind was a “what if?”. What if I imagined that for just one weekend an entire arts centre had been set aside for my use, within which were several theatres. Each

theatre would present one of these vignettes from my adult learning practice. What if each theatre provided the story in a different art form? What if the script for each of these stories was written in that particular art form, and “presented”, as it were, to the audience of my imagination?

Ultimately, this was exactly what I ended up creating. Using an arts-based methodological stance, four “thick” stories or memories were retrieved from my imagination and memory, and written in narrative form. These four scenarios are written and have been re-presented for myself, the audience of those participants in the actual adult education scenarios that I could contact, and for the audience of “the reader”.

Selecting theoretical frameworks

How do I select and articulate my “theoretical framework” – the perspectives through which I am going to view/analyse my research – which facilitates consideration of the discourses of emotion in education and which allows a further discourse to be created?

It was at this moment that I remembered a paper given at a Transformational Learning Conference in New York in 2003, at which I was present, and at which the notion of the organic inquiry process was presented (Ettling, 2003). This was my introduction to this framework and I remembered being deeply connected in some way to thinking about this as a possible way of working with the question of emotionality. This methodology stands within the frame of a holistic, hermeneutic, transformative, reflective, participative methodological process. My intention in finally choosing the organic methodology was that it was one of the most pertinent lenses through which I could consider the notion of emotion, for it was inclusive of the researcher as part of the research process. What was needed was a methodology that would make some concession in supporting a view that understanding emotion involves an acknowledgement of the unconscious. Some adult educators support this point of view (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Courtenay, 1994; Dirkx, 2001; Tisdell, 2000). Dirkx speaks for all, perhaps, when he concludes that the meaning we attribute to emotions is “essentially imaginative and extra rational, rather than merely

reflective and rational” (p. 67). I needed an inquiry method that would include the possibility of unconscious emotions being written into the text for discovery much later, if necessary.

I stand with Lupton (1998), along with those cited above, in arguing for acknowledgement of the unconscious on emotional experience. Lupton is critical of theoretical perspectives that view emotion exclusively as emerging from conscious thought processes. She concludes, “emotions are often felt or experienced at the unconscious rather than the conscious level of experience (p. 28). Lupton defines extra-rational as “incorporate[ing] meanings derived from ... that which precedes or is beyond rationality” (p. 27) or “delving beneath the conscious level of meaning” (p. 27).

A second insight into the question I had about how to adopt methodologies which would allow the inquiry into emotionality to be textured and layered in all its richness happened when I remembered the American Education Research Conference held in 2000 and being introduced to the potential for using various art forms (drama, poetry, music, literature, and visual art) in the collection and analysis of data, and in the expression of research findings (Lawrence & Mealman, 2000). The arts based approach represented the “other ways of knowing” which I was searching for in attempting to understand emotionality, for it represented a way forward as legitimate knowledge that transcended cultures and expanded world-views. It had enough breadth to expose both the researcher and the reader to open themselves up to a rich potential for epistemological and ontological insights. It also allowed for the notion that the use of such artistic devices as narrative, or literature, is intended to provoke or stimulate thinking by appealing to all of our senses. It sits within the postmodern/poststructural research perspective, and from this viewpoint knowledge is “not necessarily rational” (Kilgore, 2001 p. 57). Given that it was emotionality that was under the spotlight in my research, it seemed that the use of this methodology could greatly enhance the “not knowing” part of emotionality. As Baker and Strauth wrote in a popular self-help book that could easily be related to the poststructural framework in the writing of stories:

We don't describe the world we see – we see the world we describe. Language, as the single most fundamental force of the human intellect, has the power to alter perception. We think in words, and these words have the power to limit us or set us free: they can frighten us or evoke our courage. Similarly, the stories we tell ourselves about our own lives eventually become our lives (Baker & Staught, 2003, p. 38).

It is argued that the way individuals make meaning is to fit their experiences into available discourses. For example, Richardson (2000) asserts, “people make sense of their lives through the stories that are available to them, and they attempt to fit their lives into the available stories” (p. 26). Heliburn (1988) supports this perspective when she concludes “... We can only retell and live by the stories we have read and heard” (p. 13). Riessman (1993) argues that these discourses can serve to constrain how individuals express and make meaning. She writes, “some experiences are extremely difficult to speak about ... Political conditions constrain particular events from being narrated” (p. 3).

Finally, directly related to understanding emotion, Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990) argue for a perspective on emotion whereby it is viewed as a discursive practice. They write that a focus on discourse “leads to a more complex view of the multiple, shifting, and contested meanings possible in emotional utterances and interchanges, and from there to a less monolithic concept of emotion” (p. 11). Thus a poststructuralist perspective offered me another lens which I could use to look at emotion.

Criticism of postmodern/poststructuralist approach

The core of postmodern perspectives, poststructuralism being a specific kind of postmodern, is the “doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the ‘right’ or the privileged form on authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism *suspects* all truth claims of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles” (Richardson, 1994 p. 928). This doubt

has opened poststructuralism to criticism that nothing can be known from a poststructural perspective if the hallmark of this perspective is doubt. Richardson counters, "... a postmodern position does allow us to know 'something' without claiming to know everything. Having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing" (p. 928).

Similarly, Haraway (1991) and Harding (1991) support Richardson's contention that knowing something without claiming to know everything is still knowing. Haraway takes issue with attempts at what she terms the "God trick". She defines the God trick as an attempt to "see everywhere from nowhere" and she challenges the concept of the God trick. Haraway argues that we all see from a "somewhere" that is our personal lived experience – a personal context that impacts on theory-building. Harding also advocates that researchers be trained in "locating the social contexts – psychological, historical, sociological, political, economic contexts – that give meaning and power to historical actors, their ideas, and their audiences" (p. 95).

Narrative research and organic inquiry

In the following section I discuss: 1) the importance of writing stories as an integral part of this research strategy; 2) the five characteristics of organic inquiry; 3) the general meaning of paradigmatic assumptions in research; 4) the ontology and epistemology of the researcher; and 5) the paradigmatic assumptions of organic inquiry, explaining why I felt organic inquiry was most suitable for this particular research project; 6) the role of arts-based inquiry methodology in this research and how it works, hand-in-hand, with organic inquiry. In an effort to better describe organic inquiry I chose to compare it to participatory methodology, a more familiar methodology, which has characteristics in common with organic inquiry and yet is also different from organic inquiry. I also explain the importance of "chthonic" in relation to organic research. Lastly, I engage in a discussion of the research design considerations and the various tasks involved in the research.

I begin the following section with a discussion of the value of stories, since “story-telling” is key to understanding the nature of organic inquiry and its relevance to this particular research.

Stories as an integral part of the research strategy

My research strategy involves exploring, through the use of “story”, the inner and outer life experiences of adult learners, including myself, who have engaged in adult learning practices which produced examples of expressed or unexpressed emotions that may at times surface as a result of adult learning group processes. The design of the research process offered both the participants and me an opportunity for greater self-knowing through the sharing and recalling of the “story” of each particular adult learning experience, by me, the researcher. Stories have the potential to communicate to us at many levels. Clements, Ettling, Jenett and Shields (1998), the originators of organic inquiry, point out that, “Because stories speak from the heart as well as from the intellect, they communicate and transform on many levels from archetypal and unconscious realms to rational and intentional ones” (p. 5).

Stories offer an opportunity to gain greater insight into the human experiences of individuals through the eyes and hearts of those who have lived the experience. In speaking of the growing awareness of the value of stories in our society, the anthropologist, Behar (1996) states that one influence in our growing awareness of the value of stories in, for example, the United States ... ” is the work of minority writers ... who challenged monolithic views of identity ... and asserted the multiplicity of American cultures ... ” (p.27). The substance of organic research (the data) is the “interwoven stories” of the researcher who offers her experience in relation to the topic of the inquiry. Essentially, my stories and the reflections of my “co-researchers” (as organic theorists like to call participants) become the primary data for the inquiry. Gozawa points out that “such recollections allow the listener (or reader) to access the inner emotional experiences of the storyteller and how he or she has lived a situation” (Ellis as cited in Gozawa, 2000b, p. 1).

Because organic inquiry builds from the personal story of the primary researcher, it is customary to write about organic research in the first person. In the ultimate presentation of the research finding, the reader is also encouraged to personally experience the data through the researchers' stories.

The primary researcher serves as a guide to the reader's experience of the stories by using her or his own story as a conscious point of departure for the analysis of all the others. This encourages the reader to similarly re-experience her or his own story relevant to the topic (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 26).

The reader is invited to enter into the inquiry with the co-researchers, reflecting on her or his own experiences and questions as they surface (Gozawa, 2000b, p. 2).

The five characteristics of organic inquiry

The originators of this methodology describe the five characteristics of the theory of organic inquiry using the metaphor of the growth process of a tree.

Phase I: Sacred – preparing the ground

Before any seeds are planted, the earth must be spaded and broken up, old roots and stones thrown to the side, and fertilizer added (Clements et al., 1998, p. 14).

Preparing to participate in organic inquiry, either as a researcher or as a reader calls for “spading up one’s old habits and expectations and achieving an ongoing attitude which respects and allows for the sacred to emerge on all levels” (Clements, et al., p. 14). The result is that “fertile conditions” are created to foster growth and development (Clements, et al., p. 14).

From the beginning of my research process, I felt drawn to the organic inquiry methodology, and while I had some sense of my research topic I also knew that I had to

clear the soil to allow for the discovery and planting of the appropriate seeds. I kept my mind open to all possibilities. I checked through the many notes and journals I had kept which housed experiences of adult learning over the past twenty years or so. I thought and discussed with colleagues, friends and acquaintances, and anyone who was interested, all thoughts I had at this time, about what role emotion might play in enhancing adult learning. These conversations helped me to clear the ground so that my research questions could more clearly emerge.

Phase II: Personal – planting the seed

Once the ground has been prepared, the gardener plants the seed in the darkness of the earth (Clements et al., 1998, p. 26).

The researcher's story of her or his subjective experience of the topic becomes the core of the investigation (Clements et al., 1998, p. 26) The seed represents the inquirer's personal experience of adult learning from which the research is initiated. The researcher's personal story is not ignored but is instead acknowledged as being integral to the creation of the inquiry and as a filter for analysing the stories of the participants, or co-researchers (Clements, et al., p. 26).

The impetus for this research centred on my personal experience as an adult educator who had experienced many "emotive" moments in adult learning and my curiosity was with what could be learned if such emotions were fostered in the learning transactions in which adult learners participated. My impetus also grew from knowing that within each and every learning transaction, people are involved who all have inside them "the darkness of the earth", or their own story. Having taken many years to understand my own story and its impact on my life, I am aware of this aspect of people, be they learners or educators, and how often it is not able to be authentically portrayed in adult learning.

Phase III: Chthonic – the roots emerge

When the ground has been prepared and the seed has been planted, the gardener must trust that what happens underground will be successful. With proper conditions (warmth and moisture), roots begin to emerge below the surface affecting what happens above ground. The intuition, dreams, meditations, or other spontaneous developments lead to shifts in the research design and the structure of the tree in its various phases of growth and development. (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 34).

The researcher waters and nurtures the tree by paying attention to expressions of inner knowing throughout the process of the research. “Like roots, this realm can’t be controlled but is one which offers much richness to the evolution of the research” (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 34). Reflection on learning experiences in the past, allowing potent memories of adult learning to re-emerge inside me and giving myself the space and time to re-visit these moments inside myself, assisted this inner knowing.

My experiences as a facilitator of adult learning who kept close records, diaries and journals in my professional practice, is an example of a chthonic event that profoundly affected the design of the inquiry and the growth and development process of the tree.

Phase IV: Relational – growing the tree

A thin, sun starved white stem with one leaf unfolds above ground and the gardener sees the progress of the plant for the first time. In the light of the sun, the stem turns bright green and begins to grow and thicken. More leaves emerge. Over months and years, the stem grows into a trunk with limbs and branches and green leaves. (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 43).

The researcher is joined by co-researchers who describe their own experiences of the topic through a story-telling process, which involves a recall of the story, sent by audiotape to the “co-researchers”. “Each story is an articulated branch growing from the main trunk where it joins with the researcher’s core story” (Clements, et al., p. 43). By presenting these stories in a kind of fictionalised manner, the creative expression of them is able to throw out to the researcher and co-researchers more of the life of the story. It is presented in this way so as

to involve the co-researchers and myself in seeing again, as it were, the story as it unfolded. By creatively writing into the script the comments of those I contacted for the purposes of third inquiry, and by “going live” with them in creating a Participant Panel, other aspects of the story are able to be told. By then re-writing the story from my own reflections, at a deeper level, another story emerges.

The nuances of the stories communicate meaning not only to the rational mind but to the body, emotions and spiritual self, as well (Clements et al., p. 43). My co-researchers’ reflections continued to sprout branches of meaning for this inquirer throughout the months and years engaged in this research project.

Phase V: Transformative – harvesting the fruit

Every spring, masses of tiny blossoms cover the tree. The pollinated flowers turn to fruit, which is harvested for pleasure and for food. Seeds from the fruit may be planted back in the earth to grow new trees. (Clements et al, p. 50).

The fruits of organic inquiry lie in the rewards received through transformation or a shift in the self-knowing for the primary researcher, co-researchers and possibly the readers. Another outcome or flourishing of the seed may be seen as the completion of each story, written in an arts-based genre, took place, through to the completion of different parts of the inquiry and then the final document itself, “The flowers may be seen as copies of the finished study in the hands of the readers” (Clements et al., 1998, p. 50).

Through their participation in the inquiry, the researchers and readers have an opportunity to grow to the extent that they are willing to engage in the conscious and unconscious aspects of the work allowing them to be moved by their involvement. To truly experience the story of another requires a willingness to be changed by it. “Transformation may be an apparently small insight into one’s understanding of past actions or it may be a major restructuring of lifestyle” (Clements et al., p. 50).

My co-researchers and I all reported experiencing a shift in consciousness of one kind or another as a result of sharing, reflecting on the stories which were presented, and deeply reading or listening to the story of another. My hope is that the readers will experience a similar shift in awareness.

Paradigmatic assumptions

It is important to understand the researcher's paradigmatic assumptions, which Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out, means understanding "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). Ontology refers to the nature of reality as understood by the inquirer. The researcher, for example, may perceive that there is a fixed reality or an evolving, ever-changing reality. Epistemology addresses the relationship between the inquirer and what is to be known. If reality basically is a rational structure, then the posture of the knower must be "objective detachment or value freedom in order to be able to discover how things really are and how things really work" (p. 108). Conversely, if the researcher assumes reality is a dynamic mystery, the researcher may perceive that reality is continuously unfurling.

Qualitative research recognises that all research is interpretive. Methodology, however, makes particular demands of the researcher relative to how the research is to be conducted, by addressing certain questions that describe the inquirer's belief system (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 13). This set of beliefs – the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises – "shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts upon it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 13).

Paradigms or "overarching philosophical systems" offer the story or framework within which the research is conducted (p. 2). The authors point out,

Researchers all tell stories about the worlds they have studied. Thus the narratives, or stories, scientists tell are accounts couched and framed within

specific storytelling traditions, often defined as paradigms (e.g. positivism, post positivism, constructivism)....(Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 3).

A given paradigm, therefore, outlines a specific set of assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge, and a set of guidelines for the conduct of research within which the researcher tells his or her story.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that while the qualitative researcher might use multiple methods (interviewing, story-telling, observing, self-reflecting) as part of the strategy in attempting to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question, methods must be appropriate to the predetermined methodology (p. 108).

The methodology the researcher chooses to use will depend on the intent of the research and the suitability of the methodology to the particular inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1994. p. 13). To explain further, Gozawa (2000b) points out that although action precipitated from all of the qualitative paradigms strive for a better world, the “researcher’s different sense of what is effective action, informs the choice of the subject matter, inquiry goals, inquiry design, anticipated outcomes, and ultimately the researcher’s relationship to the participants” (p. 65). Understanding how paradigmatic assumptions guide the researcher in her or his choice of methodologies is key to fully understanding the nature of the inquiry.

Ontological and epistemological beliefs of this primary inquiry

To better understand my relationship as the primary researcher to this particular inquiry, an explanation of my own ontological and epistemological beliefs might be helpful. With regard to ontology, reality, as I see it, is a sacred mystery that is manifested in individual consciousness and emerges as we hold each other in respectful relationship, in community. Reality is continuously unfolding and ever-changing. Individual consciousness is represented by uniqueness of being and is reflected in the interconnected web that we view as reality. I perceive reality as a sacred mystery continuously emerging versus a static entity to be known once and for all.

Epistemology, or the relationship between the knower and what is to be known, I believe can be accessed through multiple ways of knowing – both rational and non-rational. Such knowing, therefore, emerges through the individual and collective experience. My own epistemological belief acknowledges an interconnectedness of the human spirit.

Since I perceive reality as multi-causal, multi-dependent, and continuously unfolding, individual growth in consciousness is deemed as an important and necessary link in a larger chain of events leading to the potential for growth within groups, families, and communities. Our transformation as individuals can therefore inform the system as a whole.

Paradigmatic assumptions of organic inquiry and its suitability for this inquiry

In this section I describe the paradigmatic assumptions of organic inquiry and demonstrate how they align with this inquiry. I discuss organic inquiry's ontological and epistemological beliefs, demonstrating their relationship to the ontological and epistemological beliefs underlying this research.

The action of organic research, while in accord with the intent of all the qualitative research paradigms “to make a better world” is more indirect, circuitous or inconspicuous in its nature. It is the action involved in story-telling and deep listening. Organic inquiry assumes that in sharing or listening to the story, the listener and the storyteller are offered an opportunity to experience a shift in consciousness. This more subtle action is the action of being open to receive the story of another (or to share one's own story) and of allowing for insight as a result of sharing and/or taking in another's story. Gozawa (2000b) points out “It is action that informs being rather than action that informs doing” (p. 68).

The action involved in this inquiry is also the more subtle action of sharing and being open to receiving the various stories of the researcher who is recording crucial moments in adult learning and who is illuminating the aspects of emotion which may lie hidden inside the story. The action intended in this research for both the researcher involved and the readers is also action that informs being, rather than action that informs doing.

The intent of organic inquiry is to evoke a transformation of consciousness or a shift in being, working to bring deep, subtle and unconscious dimensions of one's being to a more conscious level, in a method that is less direct than asking questions. This distinction is central to the nature of organic inquiry.

The intent of this research is also to offer the researcher involved and the co-researchers an opportunity for transformation, a shift in consciousness or simply increased self-knowing through a process involving story-telling and a deeper engagement of emotions. The inquirers and possibly the readers are given an opportunity to bring deep, subtle and unconscious dimensions of their being to a more conscious level.

In organic inquiry the relationship between the researcher and co-researchers is for the purpose of increased self-knowing, healing or transformation. The relationship between the co-researchers is mutual in nature akin to the "I-Thou" relationship referred to by Buber (1937), which recognises a sacred interconnectedness of all beings. Heron (1996) points out that unless the relationship with another is truly mutual, we don't properly know the other. "The reality of the other is found in the fullness of our open relation (Buber, 1937), when we each engage in our mutual participation" (p. 11).

In this research the relationship between the primary and co-researchers is also one of mutuality. The embracing of the "I-Thou" relationship is central to the belief system of each of the co-researchers involved in this project. Their valuing of this relationship becomes clear in their reflections following the sharing of their recollections of the stories, which are recalled.

The tradition of story-telling also informs the sacredness of the relationship between the co-researchers, further highlighting the spirit of mutuality at the heart of the organic methodology. The sharing of personal stories in organic inquiry engages the co-researchers at a heart level, bringing each person more fully (or wholly) into the experience of the

other. This relational aspect of organic inquiry further supports the potential for transformation through the sharing of life experiences.

With organic inquiry, knowledge is seen and valued as organic in nature, and while specific themes may emerge for the primary researcher, it is not necessarily seen as information or experiences to be organised or categorised into generalised patterns (Clements et al., 1998).

As mentioned earlier, with organic inquiry, each story is seen as sacred. The purpose of the story-telling is to evoke transformation or a deeper self-knowing for the primary and co-researchers and possibly the reader. The meaning becomes, as the anthropologist Gertz states, “person-specific”, that is, each individual creates her or his own meaning based on how the individual experiences the story (Behar, 1996, p. 8). The intent of the action is not to get others to see things in a particular way (relative to a behaviour or practice) based on generalised patterns but instead it is intended to allow individuals to find their own meaning.

Organic inquiry in comparison to participatory research

Organic inquiry, like participatory research, is different from more traditional methodologies, where there is an attempt to maintain distance between the researcher and the participants in an effort to gather reliable data. Participatory approaches emphasise experiential knowing, which comes from direct, face-to-face experience with the object to be known. Heron (1992) describes presentational knowing as an important bridge between experiential knowing and propositional knowing (conceptualisation). Presentational knowing includes the expression of meaning made from experiential knowing symbolised in various forms such as visual (drawing, photography, collage) and musical expression (instrumental and vocal), movement and story-telling.

The intent of participatory research is to inform practice. Specific patterns are observed in the experiential phase leading to meaning-making in the presentational and propositional phases and finally to practice (thus demonstrating “how” to do something). The relationship

between experiential and presentational knowing to propositional knowing is quite similar to Kolb's (1984) description of "apprehension" and "comprehension" with experiential and presentational knowing being more closely related to apprehension, and conceptualisation and practice taking place in the phase of comprehension (p. 103).

As mentioned earlier, while organic inquiry values multiple ways of knowing, the intent is not to categorise patterns or inform practice demonstrating "how" to do something. It holds the primary researcher and co-researchers' stories (which is the primary data for the inquiry) as sacred and there is not a dialogic process involved with the intent of coming to consensus in order to create a more "sophisticated" view of reality. Gozawa (2000b) describes organic inquiry as:

Looking for the context that can hold contradictory points of view, not from a logical countenance, but rather from a spiritual one; from the sense of interconnectedness, not of isolated concepts and ideas, but rather of beingness, of heartfelnness, and of soul (p. 73).

With organic inquiry, reality is considered whole and complete as it exists and story-telling about the heartfelt experiences of human beings becomes one method of accessing this multi-dimensional reality. Its more spiritually centred view of the world sees value in intuition and other non-cognitive ways of knowing as a means of accessing reality (Gozawa, 2000b, p. 73).

In this research my interest was not in discovering a prescribed set of criteria or practices for engaging emotions based on the experiences of my co-researchers and myself or in deriving meaning through consensus surfacing through patterns in our experiences. My interest was in exploring "what" my co-researchers and I might learn as learning facilitators if we use story-telling, reflective and inner work practices to more deeply engage our own emotions, while reflecting on the emotionality during various learning transactions. My primary interest was in coming to know what I might learn about my own inner and outer processes through engaging with the stories in various forms and relating these stories to my own experiences. The reader is also invited to engage in the stories, be moved by them, and to come to her or his own insights.

Unlike organic inquiry, in participatory approaches, the primary researcher and co-researchers collaborate to define the problem or issue and this approach to the inquiry, clearly articulating all perspectives. In organic inquiry the primary researcher defines the problem out of a compelling issue that emerges from within. Gozawa (2000b) points out that “the participatory paradigm in its quest for collaboration in practical action with co-researchers creates a different relationship with them than does organic inquiry with its intention to transform first from within” (p. 70).

Organic inquiry distinguishes itself from participatory research by intentionally evoking the sacred through its focus on the mythical and its belief in oneness or interconnectedness of the human spirit. Organic inquiry’s attitude of reverence recognises and weaves together the sacred aspects of the topic, the method (design), the collaboration with co-researchers, the context, and the implications of the inquiry and includes non-rational and non-verbal ways of gathering and reporting data (Clements et al., 1998, p. 86).

The design of this research also intentionally evoked the sacred through its focus on the mythical and a belief in oneness or interconnectedness of the human spirit. I believe that the relationship developed among the adult learners in each story, and the relationship with those who were asked to comment at a much later date on their memory of a specific learning incident, purposefully took into consideration body, mind and spirit aspects of being. All of this contributed to the sacredness of this research project and are in alignment with the intent of organic inquiry.

An epistemology that acknowledges the interconnectedness of the human spirit and an ontology that holds sacred the multiple dimensions of reality is a prerequisite for the researcher choosing organic inquiry as the methodology for her or his research. Organic inquiry’s epistemology focuses on a way of being that evokes story-telling, reflection or inner experiences, and allows for a shift in self-knowing that could ultimately lead to a change in one’s “beingness”.

Because of its underlying recognition of mutuality in relationship and its openness to multiple ways of knowing, there is a strong affinity between organic inquiry and the participatory paradigm. However, as noted above, there are also differences between organic inquiry and methodologies falling within the participatory paradigm. Organic inquiry's focus on evoking a shift in consciousness and on the more spiritual aspects involved in coming to know and create meaning for our learning experiences are in alignment with the nature and intent of this particular research project.

Organic inquiry and the chthonic

One of the characteristics that distinguish organic inquiry from other methodologies is its attention to the chthonic. "Chthonic" derives from the Greek work "chthonios" which means "in the earth" (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 35). Chthonic refers to the realm outside what is perceived as rational, logical thought. Ettling (1998) describes organic inquiry as having "an underground life of its own" (Clements et al., 1998, p. 34). The method (design) evolves and changes over the course of the research as the researcher's synchronicities, dreams, meditations, intuition, and body responses inform the process and outcome of the research. By recognising the chthonic the researcher is encouraged to pay attention to the spontaneous expression of inner knowing, which, like the roots of a tree cannot be seen but do indeed provide the foundation for all other knowing (Braud, 1998, p. 119). In the case of this research the chthonic element is strongly related to the fact that this research is based on stories, which in some cases are many years old. They have been "held" by the researcher in her memory and in her journals and diaries, having a life of their own, until called upon. The below-the-ground inner-processing that took place related to the researcher's strong awareness of emotionality in adult learning, especially when the scenarios were crucial in terms of their outcomes.

One of the characteristics that distinguish organic inquiry from other methodologies in this research is also the way in which the story-telling is structured. The stories of adult learning experiences in which emotionality was at least one remembered part of the experience were written from a dream-like stance. The researcher focused on these experiences in a deeply

reflective mode and then wrote them so that the reader might also “have the dream” of what happened. Many sub-conscious and unconscious aspects of the story came to the surface, and these were often not focused upon by the researcher as having multiple meanings because they were in fact not truly conscious.

The capacity for each story to engage the researcher and the co-researchers at different levels, including the reader, is a central difference from other methodologies and fits within the framework of the “organic” methodology, although it may not be named as such quite as specifically in the literature on organic methodology.

Summary: why I chose organic inquiry as a research methodology for this dissertation

In summary, organic inquiry emphasises the chthonic (a more intuitive process), story-telling, mythical and other ways of knowing, and interconnectedness between the researcher and the stories and the researcher and the co-researchers. While organic inquiry does have certain characteristics in common with other methodologies, it is also very different from most methodologies in its intent to evoke transformation or a shift in being through the relationship that evolves between the primary and co-researchers even as separated by time and space, as a result of focusing on and sharing these deeply personal stories and feeling deeply heard because of the way in which they are expressed.

I believe that organic inquiry is ideal for this research project given the parallel between its assumptions and intent, and the assumptions and intent of this inquiry. Given my assumptions regarding the nature of this inquiry, I wanted a methodology to fully take into account feelings and emotions, given that this is the focus of the inquiry. Organic inquiry offered such an opportunity while honouring the “sacredness” of the research.

Conducting organic research requires honouring our collaborators, our memory, our readers, ourselves, and the context in which we work. The ontology is one of constantly emerging reality. It means consciously keeping ourselves open to the gifts of our own

unconscious mind as well as to the “other”. The epistemology allows for many ways of knowing. The researcher is responsible for inviting both the co-researchers who are portrayed in the story-telling, and the reader, into this expanded point of view (Braud, 1998).

I was also drawn to organic inquiry because of its focus on exploring the more emotive inner worlds of the primary researcher and co-researchers through the writing of these stories in different genres. I initially came to see the value of story-telling through my work in facilitating many different adult education learning programs. Oftentimes, as a result of writing or sharing personal stories in conjunction with deep and relentless listening, I witnessed a shift in consciousness taking place, both within myself and among participants. I referred to this shift as “a meeting of hearts and minds” or more simply a “heart’s connection”. This shift, as I saw it, did indeed demonstrate a different way of being with the material, with the story and with the other, a greater acceptance of the other. Organic inquiry encourages and supports such a relationship between the primary and co-researchers. This kind of relationship I believed to be critical to this inquiry, given its focus on the experience of emotion and the deep feelings of those involved in the different stories.

It was also my belief that in order to do this type of deep personal work, the parties involved must feel safe and must know that their responses are respected deeply. Story-telling, in a way that allowed for feelings and emotions to be expressed, could help to foster such a relationship, thus helping to create an environment where the “other” could reflect deeply on the learning transaction.

Organic inquiry is a form of qualitative research that allows for such an unfolding through subjective and intuitive methods. This assumption, giving value to “subjective and intuitive methods” in research, parallels my own experience regarding the value of the subjective and intuitive within adult learning processes.

This organic way of being means surrendering at a deeper level of consciousness in order to trust a process that is not completely known.

Organic methodology agrees that a study's method must be allowed to evolve as the study proceeds. The researcher begins with an intent but often finds herself or himself needing to change directions because of new interpretation of the data or ... because of an unnamed intuitive discomfort and consequent inability to continue the research as previously set forth (Clements et al., 1997, p. 74).

While my research strategy began with some ideas of specific designs in mind, I knew from my experience that I needed to trust the process – trust that the needs of the primary and co-researchers, our inner and outer experiences and intuitions, and the context of the inquiry question, would ultimately determine the direction that this process would take. Therefore, my research intentions were in close alignment with the nature of the organic inquiry methodology, making organic inquiry a suitable choice for this dissertation.

Narrative and arts-based qualitative research

The development and use of narrative approaches to research has accelerated since the 1970s in qualitative research. Most commonly, studies at that time that employed narrative approaches took the methodological position that stories, myths, sagas and other forms of narrative were an overlooked yet valuable source of data for research. Often located within a social constructivist framework (Boyce, 1996) the use of narratives as data enabled researchers to examine emotional and symbolic lives within a variety of disciplines. Today, narrative research is much more multi-faceted – narratives are recognised not only as a form of data (Mitroff & Kilmann, 1976), but also as a theoretical lens (Pentland, 1999), a methodological approach (Boje, 2001), and various combinations of these.

Narrative theorising represents a move away from the “aperspectival sense of objectivity with the realist ontology that typifies much of organization science” (McKinley, 2003, p. 142). Its use in viewing organisations and the way in which stories and therefore organisations are constructed, recognises the multiple ways that both people in

organisations and researchers are actively involved in the narrative reconstitution of organisations. This is relevant to research on aspects of emotionality because people in organisations are not unemotive figures. Narrative research across the social sciences collectively illustrates and elaborates a unique perspective on the human condition in general life. By listening to, documenting, analysing and reporting the different stories that people tell about their learning, narrative researchers have sought to bring the subjective experience of learners within the focus of research.

My methodological search led me to the work of Barone and Eisner (1997), who have developed a list of what makes up arts-based educational inquiry. These suggestions, as listed below, can provide the narrative focus of this research with a cradle, a position of holding the narrative features of this study on emotionality.

The seven features of arts-based inquiry

Barone and Eisner (1997) list seven features of arts-based educational inquiry that have huge resonances with the narrative work pursued in this research. The first feature is that arts-based research *creates a virtual reality*. They suggest (1997, p. 75) that “the author acutely observes and documents the telling details of human activity”, but within a work of fiction which nevertheless mirrors the lived world and somehow makes the familiar fresh. This is the aim of using narrative forms in writing the four stories in this research.

The second feature is *the presence of ambiguity*. The arts-based researchers try to leave spaces in the text which can be filled by the reader in a kind of dialogue with the author, but adding her or his own insights and images to enrich the reading of the text.

The aim of the literary artist is not to prompt a single, closed, convergent reading but rather to persuade readers to contribute answers to the dilemmas posed within the text (ibid).

The third feature is the *use of expressive language*. Barone and Eisner mention writing that is metaphorical and creative. They quote Dewey's comment that artists *express* meaning, whereas scientists *state* meaning. As he says (1934, p. 84):

The poetic as distinct from the prosaic, aesthetic art as distinct from scientific, expression as distinct from statement, does something different from leading to an experience. It constitutes one.

There are significant links between this feature and the storied texts which form the data for this research.

The fourth feature of arts-based research is the use of *contextualised and vernacular language*. Arts-based research wants to use "non-technical, everyday vernacular forms of speech that are more closely associated with lived experience" (Barone & Eisner, p. 76). Barone and Eisner stress that such language is not abstract and theoretical but vernacular. The use of language in the stories I have written tends to mirror the ordinary vernacular language of the various speakers, and I believe this adds an incisive and powerful insight into the person and situation behind the text.

The promotion of empathy, the fifth feature of arts-based research, refers to its capacity to represent the viewpoint and feelings of people involved in an experience. The use of literary devices and approaches has some capacity to evoke empathetic feelings, images and insights in the reader. I would add to this, the *promotion of emotionality*. Using text-based narratives and presenting these as a drama, a story, a short film script, can evoke strong emotions in the reader, as will be demonstrated in this research.

The sixth feature refers to the writer's *personal signature*. Arts-based inquiry has a strong individualised feel to it. The writer has, to a greater or lesser extent, put her or his unique intuiting of a phenomenon into text. It is the artist's gift that something so individualistic and specific to the writer can have (to a greater or lesser extent) the power to evoke in the reader an analogical resonative experience.

The seventh and final feature is the *presence of aesthetic form*. Barone and Eisner suggest, as does this thesis, that expressive genres like stories and poems have special aesthetic requirements, which must be followed to generate the desired evocation and portrayal. Good arts-based research must, as far as possible, be good art as well – a good story, poem and the like.

These seven features can be found in the central narrative pieces of this research and serve to make apparent the arts-based character of this thesis.

Summary: why I chose a narrative, arts-based research methodology for this research

Emotionality is mostly existent in contexts. Narrative methodologies, especially story-telling through text-based mechanisms, can provide a context which opens the possibility for emotionality to be appropriately present during adult learning. The narratives chosen for this research came from those moments in my practice as an adult educator, which lingered in my memory. Each narrative story had an emotional content, or connection, between learning facilitator and learner, and vice versa.

Arts-based methodologies contain the facility for realistic portrayals of life-based adult learning scenarios, rather than theoretically based case studies. The methodologies I chose, that of writing a script for a scene in adult learning written as a play or drama, the text for a story-telling session, the script for a drama, and the script for a short movie, used artistic licence in portraying emotionality in adult learning. These texts provided both data for the research itself, as well as another level or aspect of emotionality, as it was written and read by researcher and co-researchers. Such a methodology gave me the licence to fictionally portray real-life moments in which emotions were visible, and were used as a resource for learning.

Within the context of organic inquiry methods, this organic, narrative, arts-based research methodology allowed for varying levels of conscious and unconscious aspects of

emotionality to show themselves. The act of doing this was extremely potent in demonstrating the power of emotion in adult learning.

Chapter Four: Research Strategies and Methods – Chthonic: the Roots Emerge

When the ground has been prepared and the seed has been planted, the gardener must trust that what happens underground will be successful
(Clements et al., 1998, p. 34).

Tasks of the inquiry

The inquiry moved through various phases or tasks. While these tasks may appear to take place in a sequential order, with the exception of the first, they do at times occur concurrently. The tasks included: 1) Selecting the stories which I would call upon to demonstrate the uncovering of emotion and setting the tone for the inquiry, 2) Contacting each participant organisation to seek permission to use my recollections of adult learning events for the purposes of this dissertation; 3) Collecting the data – including choosing those aspects of the stories I would focus on and then writing these stories in different artistic formats; 4) Contacting as many participants in the various stories as I could and inviting them to reflect on their own recollection of the event captured; 5) Indwelling with the stories repeatedly in association with the responses from participants; 6) Analysing the data; 7) Analysing insights and reflections in association with my own practice and experience and with that of the academic literature about emotionality, and then reporting outcomes.

Selecting the stories

With twenty years of adult education practice behind me there were hundreds, if not thousands, of hours of adult learning experiences, which contained emotionality, from which I may have chosen. When the time came to choose and to not choose moments, vignettes of adult learning, four moments continued to come back to me. In one sense, I did not choose these stories: they chose me. I began by listing outstanding events in my work as an educator in which emotionality was present. It began as a very long list, however, the four stories on which this dissertation is based returned to me both consciously and

unconsciously. The four events happened within the space of the last fifteen years and the most recent story, just two years ago. Rather than attempting to over-analyse why these stories formed the data for this research, I simply acknowledged within myself that their recurrence in my thinking and dreaming impelled me to develop them as the basis for this research. I did not set out to choose learning events, which appeared overly dramatic, or even shocking. Instead I attempted to be open to those learning encounters, which in some way confronted my own capacity to work with emotionality in learning. If there is a link between the stories, then consciously this was not noted at the time of choosing them.

Contacting participant organisations

One of the dilemmas in the work of reflective practice is that of the moral and ethical protection of confidentiality. While every attempt has been made in these stories to change the identity of participant and participant groups, permission had to be sought from those organisations that had employed me to engage with the work of adult learning at that time. This was done in the form of a formal exchange of letters allowing me to use these recollections as the keystone for this dissertation. Each organisation granted permission and the Ethics Committee of my own University agreed.

Collecting the data

Collecting the data included choosing those aspects of the stories I would focus in on and then creatively writing these stories in different artistic formats. The choice of artistic format for each story came quickly, following intensely long periods of reflection. The stories were written one at a time until they were completed. Those aspects of the stories which were finally transformed into an artistic form gathered a momentum about them, during the creative process. Very little was removed to the so-called “cutting-room” floor. Once each story was completed in its artistic format, it was left as it was for many, many months.

Data, therefore, consisted primarily of personal information gathered in the writing of the stories. This information was stored within notes, journal entries and within my mind, over a long period of time. I paid close attention to my own feelings and emotions at reading and re-reading the stories at a much later time, and I kept close journal entries on these responses inside myself, paying close attention to the chthonic. This led to the writing of the “story beneath the story”, that is, my own emotive memories of what had led up to these learning transactions, what happened during them and then what I was left with as the learning facilitator. This became further data for analysis and was in keeping with the organic methodology and in connecting with other ways of knowing. I continued to record my thoughts, feelings and intuitions during the months of creating the arts-based re-writing of the various stories. I also recorded my dreams throughout the process. I spent months, and actually years, indwelling and engaging with the literature and the data I had created, going back and forth in the dance of reflective praxis.

Contacting participants in the stories

Participant organisations assisted me to contact as many participants in each vignette as possible, so as to find out what their recollections of that particular learning moment might be with each story while exploring relevant literature. Privacy laws prevented me, and protected participants, from making unwanted contact. I wrote a brief letter to each participant whom I could contact and attached a very short audiotape. The audiotapes I had constructed about the particular adult learning transactions, were recorded by me, and listened to over and over again by me before they were sent, so as to ensure that the respondents could clearly understand what was being asked of them. A set of questions was offered to the co-researchers who had been participants in the stories, as a guide to their reflection process. However, it is important to note that in order to allow for the organic nature of this research, the questions were meant to be suggestive rather than directive. Audiotape was chosen as another way of connecting with participants. It was assessed as more personal. It used a voice prompt, which could be interpreted as a more personal connection, rather than as a distant and cold invitation to take part in a research review.

In all, sixteen people responded. Some responses were very brief and others very enthusiastic. The aim was not validity, but rather to acknowledge the contribution of co-researchers by writing them into the script, as well as to give some greater depth to the meaning-making, also known as data analysis.

As is often the nature with organic inquiry, the design of how the data was finally gathered emerged as respondents communicated back to me their reflections. Through journal writing and indwelling with the stories, together with a review of the relevant literature, I found myself rationally and intuitively guided toward trying to make meaning of all of these experiences. Dreams, reflection on the day-to-day dramas of daily life and other chthonic occurrences further guided my thinking.

Indwelling with the stories

Central to the process of data collection is the process of indwelling, a concept that deserves clarification before discussing the overall process of data collection. In his book describing heuristic inquiry, Moustakas (1990) refers to indwelling as a process of sitting with one's stories in such a way as to "let go" of old concepts and meanings in order to discover new ones. Moustakas (1990) defines the process of indwelling as:

Turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience. It involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some facet of its wholeness (p. 24).

Moustakas explains that indwelling involves sitting with the object of consideration to draw meaning from it through noticing every possible nuance, texture and fact. While indwelling is a conscious process, it is not linear. It is organic in that one might follow all clues and intuitions to see where they might lead. For example, in indwelling with one's experience of anger, Moustakas (1990) states,

One seeks to apprehend anger in a living sense: its qualities, the conditions (internally and externally) that evoke it, the events, places, and people

connected with it. The process requires that one remain with one's anger and return to it again and again, until one is able to depict it fully in words and pictures, and perhaps even in creative expressions such as through poetry, artworks, movements and narratives (p. 24).

Moustakas's process of indwelling involves both apprehension and comprehension as introduced earlier. My own growth in self-knowing resulted as I dwelt on each of the stories using the texts, as I immersed myself into the experiences of the stories once more. I paid close attention to the chthonic in order to discover through non-cognitive means, such as intuitions, dreams, and visualisations, what new and deeper meaning might surface.

Analysing the data

Through immersing myself into the stories and into the responses of my co-researchers, my intent was to explore what I might come to know about our deep-seated emotions and feelings that may surface as a result of adult learning work. I analysed the data from the stories which were written, the reflection of my co-researchers following their responses to the stories, and from my data from journals and other ways of knowing. My analysis also included a discussion of the impact of these methods on our shift in awareness.

As mentioned earlier, organic inquiry does not seek to generalise the results of a study. Instead, organic inquiry's goal (and the goal of this research) is to harvest some part of the essential wisdom of the topic and directly present it to the reader by way of stories, which re-create the experiences of the participants (Clements et al., 1998. p. 2). In this research I have taken the story-telling process of organic inquiry one step further by directly engaging certain other methods (as described above) to deepen our knowing.

Data analysis occurred at several levels. On the first level, I did a personal analysis of the data (journal entries, peer co-researchers' comments and any other reflections of the experience of reading the stories or of recalling the events described. This involved indwelling with the data in the manner described earlier to see what I might discover, utilising both apprehension and comprehension. Apprehension consisted of my indwelling with the data to notice what bubbled up intuitively while comprehension involved

conceptually or rationally making meaning from what surfaced. My own story and subjective experience became the lens through which I observed and analysed the data. The literature that surfaced throughout this process also became extremely important, playing an integral role in my interpretation of the data.

At the second level of my data analysis process, my co-researchers were given their tapes and open questions and this data was then gathered and analysed. Throughout the data analysis process, it was important for me to bear in mind that this particular methodology seeks diversity rather than unity, which is in line with the goals of my research. I believe that my stories generated a range and variety of experiences for the reader, such that they may find within the richness of the stories and in the literature related to the stories, material that supports, challenges or expands their thinking in relation to their own experiences and knowledge (Clements et al., 1998, p. 149). Readers, who bring their own unique experiences, are encouraged to seek new meanings based on the encounter with diverse stories.

While organic inquiry was the methodology used, which refers more to the attitude behind “how the inquirer goes about finding out what is to be known”, as mentioned in the general discussion of paradigmatic assumptions, multiple methods (such as story-telling, mirroring, self reflection, written reflections) may also be used as part of the research strategy. It is important, however, that the methods be suitable to the nature of the chosen methodology. The attitude and intent behind the methods must be consistent with those of the methodology. In the following section I will describe certain methods that I have woven into the organic inquiry methodology.

Using synergic inquiry as a method

The design for this research was also informed by another method of inquiry used to explore differing perspectives or ways of being. The synergic inquiry method as defined by Tang (1996), combines various theories of Eastern and Western cultures to offer individuals an opportunity to expand consciousness at three levels: the logical or rational

level (thinking/analysing), the visible or physical level (movement/feeling in one's body) and the mystical level ("the mythico-symbolic dimension which encompasses myth, faith, spirituality and so forth") (p.9). The synergic inquiry process begins with the sharing of heartfelt stories and deep listening in a manner similar to that of organic inquiry.

Synergic inquiry draws on the best of interpersonal communication theory and practices. A specific process that I was initially introduced to through my experiences with synergic inquiry and chose to incorporate into the design of this inquiry is that of "mirroring", but in a very modified way. Following the reminder of the time these stories took place and some summary of what took place, my co-researchers were asked to re-call their own versions of the story and to write these back to me. Tang (1996) uses the term "other-knowing" to refer to the process of mirroring back to another individual not only the words of her (or his) story but also (to the extent possible) the deeper emotions and feelings that the listener is perceiving through her words (or body language or tone of voice, if the person is speaking rather than writing). For the storyteller, in hearing another individual reflect the essence of the story, she is often also able to not only hear her own words but to experience her feelings at a deeper level, and, in doing so, gain greater insights into her "self-knowing". Gaining greater insight into her self-knowing refers to the experience of a shift in consciousness – a shift in the essential structure of her being that informs her behavior (Tang, 1998, p. 27).

The storyteller not only feels heard but is also encouraged in such a way that leads to deeper awareness. Following the mirroring, which took place in writing (due to the difficulties of proximity) my co-researchers were each given an opportunity to go deeper into their stories, with the intent of allowing for greater self-knowing. These peer co-researchers were given an opportunity to share deeply and to feel empathically heard when they responded to each of the stories.

Hart's description of "deep empathy" best describes the quality of listening that I refer to as "relentless listening".

When we pay attention and simply open ourselves to the person in front of us, we come closer to understanding their experience ... When such an opening does occur, there are sometimes moments when understanding of the other deepens beyond what I can easily explain. I seem to experience the other's feelings directly in my body or recognize patterns, histories, or meanings that do not appear to come from interpreting the words and gestures that we exchange (Hart, 2000, p. 253).

The listener is in the flow of the experience with the storyteller. Having facilitated this process of story-telling, combined with mirroring and deep listening, on several occasions, I can personally attest to its value in allowing for deeper reflection and greater self-knowing through a nurturing process.

Engaging in personal inner work to gain understanding of one's deeper emotions or feelings – one's unconscious or inner world – can be a daunting process. Oftentimes, one may lack the support needed to feel nurtured and “not alone” in this process and therefore, may not feel supported in engaging deeper emotions creatively. This is often the challenge for facilitators of adult learning, particularly those who work with groups that are facing a particularly difficult issue or moment in the history of their learning. It is my assumption that a supportive peer group might help such learning facilitators.

Validity procedures

The key measure for validity in organic inquiry is trustworthiness. This is in contrast with the way validity is looked at in traditional research. Trustworthiness is an alternative to assuming that for any research question there is a right answer. Relative to validity procedures in qualitative research, Janesick (1994) states,

Description of persons, places, and events has been the cornerstone of qualitative research ... What has happened recently, as Wolcott (1990) reminds us, is that the term validity, which is overspecified in one domain, has become confusing because it is reassigned to another ... Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 216).

In referring to the work of Wolcott, Janesick (1994) further states, “Wolcott (1990) provides a provocative discussion about seeking and rejecting validity. He argues for understanding the absurdity of validity by developing a case for no single ‘correct’ interpretation” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 216).

I concur with Janesick and Wolcott’s approach to validity. In approaching the issue of validity in this organic research project, the main question that I found myself asking was: “What is it that needs to be validated in this process?” In response to this question, I recognised that it was important to validate my *representation* of the stories that were written, the representation of my co-researchers’ responses and their experiences of the process, as well as my own. It was also important to validate my own internal experiences of the process. Internal validity looks at how the results of my research, as I present them, are congruent with my own experiences and the experiences of my co-researchers.

I have confirmed with my co-researchers that I have created an accurate portrayal of their experiences, both in terms of their reaction and feelings expressed throughout the process. My co-researchers were given opportunities to provide feedback. It was important to get their feedback after collecting and analysing their responses to the stories, as well as throughout the research process to ensure that the results of this research are trustworthy and transparent to my readers.

I also received feedback from my dissertation supervisors to determine whether or not I was transparent in my presentation of our experiences. Have I presented the stories and experiences in such a way that brings the reader into a coherent experience? I realised that as individuals who are deeply immersed in the process (my co-researchers and myself), we may have omitted important details in the reflection of our experiences because our knowing comes as a result of “being there”. I trusted my dissertation supervisor to let me know if important “links” were missing in relaying the stories and reflections on the process.

Moustakas (1990) sees “intuition” as a valid means of gaining knowledge without “the intervening steps of logic and reasoning” (p. 23). In discussing heuristic research, which is similar to organic research in certain respects, Moustakas attributes value to the primary researcher’s “judgment and intuition”, believing that only the primary researcher can truly validate his or her own experience (p. 32). Validation comes through the primary researcher’s reflexive attention to critical moments throughout the research process.

In his discussion of internal validity procedures, Braud (1998) also points out that a purely intellectual approach to validity can be insufficient. Braud quote Sents’an, the Third Patriarch of Zen, who wrote the classic *Hsin-Hsin Ming (On believing in Mind or On Trust in Heart)* in stating, “To seek mind with the (discriminating) mind is the greatest of all mistakes” (p. 216).

Braud (1998) talks about the importance of expanding our view of validity to “consciously” take into consideration other ways in which we might gain insight, such as bodily wisdom, emotions, feelings, and intuition. Braud points out that other ways of knowing such as one’s “gut feelings”, having something “touch your heart”, feeling something “in the pit of the stomach”, may also be considered as validity signals. In referring to the “wisdom of the body”, Braud states,

It is possible that certain bodily reactions could provide indications of the truth or validity of statements or conclusions in research, and other reactions could signal that something is amiss. Such bodily reactions could be noted in the research participants and sometimes in co-researchers, in the researcher, or the readers of research reports, and they could serve as validity signals to be used along with more conventional indicators (p. 216).

While bodily reactions might not always be accurate, such reactions can provide a useful source of validity together with other sources. Braud also talks about emotions, feelings, and intuitions in the same light. In focusing on the value of intuition in validity procedures, Braud refers to the work of Harman.

William Harman (1992) recommends, as an additional test of the discernment of the trustworthiness of one’s findings and conclusions, looking for an internal

feeling of certainty, a noetic, intuitive and persistent feeling that one's knowledge is true (Braud, 1998, p. 221).

Throughout the inquiry, I noted bodily reactions, emotions, feelings, and intuitions.

My journal writing served two purposes. First of all it enabled me to explore my own feelings and experiences surfacing throughout the entire process of this enquiry. Journalling helped me to gain greater insight into the meanings surfacing as I related my co-researchers' experiences to my own experiences, thoughts and feelings. I also used my journal to record thoughts surfacing following deep thinking, and dreams. Journalling offered an opportunity for self-dialogue as described by Butler (1992). Butler refers to the work of Moustakas (1990) in pointing out that in "self-dialogue the researcher questions and communicates his or her direct experience to herself" (p. 46). Fleeting intuitions or thoughts surfacing in dreams or through other non-rational ways of knowing can be revealed more fully and clearly through the journalling process. Butler states, "The meaning reveals itself to me only as I write down the experience. At this point I am able to glean the depth of what I received" (p. 46).

Journalling provided a means to "mull over" and revisit my insights and to possibly reinforce meaning by comparing our thoughts with other literature or interpretations recorded in a given area. Over the years of writing my dissertation, I found this process to be extremely helpful as new meanings intuitively and synchronistically surfaced. By reviewing my journal on a regular basis, I was able to summarise what I learned through this research from personal explorations, describing key experiences or insights. I made journal excerpts that related directly to my research available to myself by keeping it highly visible in my day-to-day life and work and it is available to anyone who wishes to read it so as to validate the trustworthiness of my conclusions with my actual experiences.

Because of the different assumptions that underlie qualitative research paradigms and more specifically the assumptions that underlie the organic inquiry methodology, it was not necessary that I bring in additional support to substantiate the results of my research as undeniable "truths" that I have discovered. Instead it was only important that the results of

my research be as trustworthy and meaningful as possible, given the inherent subjectivity involved as I attempted to interpret through the lens of my own experience. My experience, as the primary researcher, was not “bracketed” as it is in many other research methodologies (Merriam, 1988) but was instead recognised as an integral part of the research process. It was important that I relayed my experiences and the experiences of my co-researchers in an honest and trustworthy manner. Feedback from my co-researchers and supervisors offered me an opportunity to collaborate with others in a limited manner that I believe led to expanded awareness and greater insights into the nature of my inquiry.

Having set out an examination of the literatures that relate to this research, and having presented the methodology and methods I used, I now turn to the four artistic presentations.

Chapter Five: The Stories Begin – Relational, Growing the Tree

... over months and years, the stem grows into a trunk with limbs and branches and green leaves (Clements et al., 1998, p. 43).

Welcome to The Festival of Emotion and Adult Learning.

In this section of the inquiry I use different arts-based settings in which to “tell the story” of four different adult learning events. These were chosen after going through the “organic” processes of indwelling, journalling and reflection about those episodes of teaching and learning which stand out in my life as ones in which “telling the story” facilitated the disclosure of emotion.

I have chosen to place these stories inside a certain genre of story-telling and to take a little licence by using imagination, an organic methodology key ingredient. I am imagining that these plays, stories, narratives, are taking place at a festival of co-researchers. We are all taking part in such an event in an effort to notice what is present when emotion is particularly focused on, during adult learning. The definition of adult learning in this context is any learning that takes place in either a formal or non-formal setting between adults.

In this section of this inquiry I now move into a third-person account of these adult-learning scenarios. I am attempting as best I can to remove myself from the action and become a participant observer of my own behaviour. In keeping with the methodology of insider–outsider research, I am an insider, reporting what has happened, who then moves to the outside, in order to reflect on the research data. Below, I outline the setting, and then tell the story. After each story is told (one way or another), there is a set plan, which is followed. These steps are outlined below.

The format

Each theatrical experience follows a similar pattern of events. The format is described below.

Introduction

A narrator introduces each dramatic episode.

The creative action

What follows next is a creative interpretation by the author of an adult learning event, following reflection on this event and particularly on the emotionality of this event.

Participant panel

The narrator then comes back on stage and interacts with some of the participants in the original drama, about their own recounts of the events being interpreted. In particular we are noticing whether or not the emotionality of these adult-learning events were noticed by the participants in relation to emotionality.

Author's review

The audience then hears from the author of the dramatic interpretations about the responses of those involved in the drama and what sense could be made of combining both the author and the participants' recollections. We are looking at "What happened here?".

Audience discussion/data analysis

The audience is then invited to move to the foyer to discuss with one another what they noticed during the theatrical event, and what meaning the experience held for them. In other words, this is the opportunity for co-researchers, including the reader, to think about and discuss this inquiry.

STORY ONE: ROADWORKS

A ONE-ACT PLAY

CAST:

Michelle: an adult education facilitator

CO-RESEARCHERS

Liu: a motel and restaurant owner

Rob: a truck driver

Andy: an Aboriginal road worker

Charlie: a road worker

Smetna: a truck driver

Joey: a leading hand

Snitch: a foreman

Nadda: Sri Lankan engineer

Mick: a truck driver

Tink: a road worker

Introduction

Narrator:

This is the story of how an adult educator, working in a deeply rugged, rural area of NSW, Australia, manages to create and sustain a learning space, which allows the emergence and naming of emotion into the learning experience. This is achieved by participants telling some aspects of their own story. Story-telling, therefore, takes place through this presentation of a short drama.

Michelle (the adult educator) has been contracted by the Sydney office of a large road construction company to develop training for its staff throughout the State. This workplace training is on the topic of the new Grievance Procedures she has developed for the Company. The training “package” consists of two-day learning workshops. Having written the training program, and having delivered it in a “pilot” program in Sydney, Michelle flies in a very small aircraft from the city to Broken Hill some months later, to begin to deliver the program. Participants drive up to 800 kilometres to attend the training. The venue for this has been arranged by Head Office. It is to be held on the second floor of the local Chinese Restaurant. It is 1988.

No training materials arrive. The courier company, when telephoned, says that the truck carrying notes, workbooks, flipchart paper, music, data projector and participant materials, including a video, has broken down. The materials would not be transported to Broken Hill in time. Michelle has two days’ work with nine very diverse people, and no resources other than herself.

Background to this story

A Road Construction Company, based in Sydney, found that with the implementation of new Acts of Parliament relating to workplace behaviour, most of its leading staff required training in order to meet the requirements of the Law. Michelle was contracted to firstly write a grievance policy and protocol for the organisation, which met the letter of the law. She was then invited to create the learning package, which went with the training, and was invited to “roll out” this training throughout the organisation. This was to be the first such adult learning group.

Aspects of the grievance procedures which required focus included understandings of discrimination in the workforce, including racial discrimination; harassment including sexual harassment; and an understanding of how a grievance process happens in relation to the breaching of the code of conduct for workers. The notion of a code of conduct for road construction workers, as well as for “white collar” employees of the organisation, was

mostly unwelcome by staff and by management. The culture of the Company was extremely closed. Very few women worked for the Company, and then, only in secretarial or low-level administrative work. Many of the professional staff, including engineers, accountants and managers, were from countries other than Australia. This was a very authority-driven organisation. The head office in Sydney, from which most of the “professional” staff worked, seemed an intensely political place. Michelle found herself involved in many conversations with employees about their prospects of promotion, and about who was “in charge”.

The Company at head office, as a whole, seemed very bemused about the changes to the Legislation, which brought workplace practices and behaviours into intense scrutiny. Many staff made “jokes” about the imposition of a code of conduct. Attempts were made several times to prevent the finishing and approval of the grievance policy and protocol. “White-collar” workers, who vigorously scrutinised every aspect of the “training package”, attended the pilot workshop. Eventually the training was ready to be extended throughout city sites, and then to regional country areas of NSW. The training pedagogy included instruction, group interaction, viewing a video and responding, as well as discussion and the practice of interpersonal skills. Role-plays were developed over fictitious events. Involvement of participants at a very high level was anticipated.

Participants were hand picked by the Human Resource Department. Participants were to become the “grievance officers” for the organisation. One outcome from the workshops was that participants would be able to recognise when a breach of the code of conduct had taken place. They would then be equipped to take the complaint and write a report, develop an intervention or send the grievance to someone more senior to deal with. Grievance officers received a small allowance in their salary for this new task.

Before arriving at Broken Hill, a very isolated inland town in the far north-west of the State, Michelle had presented six training packages to small groups. Four of these had been in the city and the other two had been in regional centres. At these previous workshops there was a mix of men and women, white- and “blue”- collar workers, nationalities and

age. Up to this point, all participants could read and write. Most seemed quite interested in their new role of grievance officer, and seemed hungry to learn new things about workplace behaviour. They were readily able to give examples of how grievances might or might not occur, and readily engaged in discussion. Most were able to identify situations in which the code of conduct could be breached and were able to role-play different situations, as developed in the package. Independent learning was possible, with small groups working without supervision or instruction. Many participants enjoyed being together and meeting new people. Although there were a few situations in which the entire notion of a code of conduct was debated, once staff could see that this was now mandatory, they appeared to engage in learning. Some went on to give more personal examples from the past of what they might now consider breaches of the code of conduct. Self-disclosure led to very focused learning as some participants developed their own case studies. Others stayed directly with the material in front of them.

The arrangements for the training were made by the Human Resources Department. They booked training facilities, and couriered the training packages to each site. Each participant was supposed to receive a folder with a copy of the code of conduct, a copy of the grievance policy and procedures, and a training manual. This had worked very efficiently in the pilot groups. Also included in the training kit were the training facilitator's notes, the video tape, overhead slides, paper, colour pens for whiteboard use, writing materials and all materials relating to the workshop, including evaluation forms. At each venue the large, and heavy, box of training materials awaited the trainer on the first morning of the workshop. But not today in Broken Hill, in the "outback" of Australia.

Broken Hill

Broken Hill is Australia's longest-lived mining city. Its massive ore body, formed about 1,800 million years ago, has proved to be the world's largest silver-lead-zinc mineral deposit. Beyond the Darling River on the edge of the sundown, is where they used to say you would find Broken Hill, as if there were nowhere further to travel in Australia. Perhaps it was the feeling of suddenly being confronted by such a vast space, like an inland sea

rolling into the sunset. Travelling in the desolate landscape surrounding Broken Hill is like driving towards a painting of soft mauve and sage hues. It is no wonder the city has become known as a Mecca for artists. It is here that the big red kangaroos run two hundred kilometres at night chasing a thunderstorm, and the unique Sturt's Desert Pea blooms in dark red soil. This is the outback.

The venue: the setting for this play

There are many Chinese Restaurants in Broken Hill. Hang Sing's Chinese Restaurant is the closest to the three-star Motel, called the Regal Motel, where the participants are booked in to stay. On entering Hang Sing's Restaurant, there are stairs immediately to the right, past the cash register and empty fish tank on the left and below the Buddhist shrine, covered in the left-over dust of passing trucks from the main road, and last night's incense sticks.

Upstairs is the conference room, a long, pink-toned dining area. Tables of six or eight were set up with pink tablecloths and plastic flowers stood in small vases in the centre of the tables. Wine glasses, chopsticks, plates, napkins adorned each tabletop. Around the room hung various framed posters of ancient China. The floor is a grey industrial-strength carpet. At each end of the room are small verandas, overhanging the car park below. This is to be the workspace for two days. No training box has arrived.

The creative action

Part One

Michelle is outside Hang Sing's Restaurant, trying to gain entrance. She rings the bell vigorously. It is 8.30 a.m. on day one of the training.

Michelle (MM): Hello, can you let me in?

Liu: Come in, come in, you are very early.

MM: I am here for the training day today.

Liu: Ah, the big conference. Come in, I show you.

MM and Liu walk up the stairs into the training venue.

MM: Is this the room?

Liu: Yes, this is the room. Now what time you want Lunch? 12 o'clock?

MM: What time is lunch booked for?

Liu: 12 o'clock. You want it earlier?

MM: No, that's fine. Where can I get a cup of coffee around here?

Liu: I have coffee urn on over here in the corner. It not hot yet, but will be soon.
Everyone can make his or her own coffee.

MM: (Thinking that this is the dining area and that the conference room is elsewhere)
So, where is the training room for today's conference?

Liu: This is it. You are here. You work here and then you eat here.

MM: So, where is the video and the television screen?

Liu: No, we have none.

MM: And the overhead projector?

Liu: No, we don't have that.

MM: A whiteboard?

Liu: No. We have morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. What time you finish?

MM: About 4.30 p.m.

Liu: Good. We open at five o'clock for dinner. You must be out by then.

MM: (Persisting) Are you sure this is the room that is booked for the training?

Liu: Yes, yes, men in Sydney book it.

MM: Has the box arrived? You know, a large box from the courier. The training materials. A delivery. You know, from Sydney. A large box.

Liu: No, no. No boxes. What time you want morning tea?

Part Two

It is 9.00 a.m. No one has arrived for the training course. Michelle is beginning to feel anxious. She has convinced herself that one of the participants will bring the training materials with him or her. She begins to wonder if she has the day right. It is now 9.15 a.m. She phones Human Resources in the Sydney Office. Her liaison person is having a rostered day off. The next in seniority is at a training course. Finally, a secretary confirms that this is the correct day for training in Broken Hill. She assures Michelle that the training materials will arrive. Michelle waits, thinking about what she might do if the training materials do not arrive. She begins to move the tables around. Finally someone arrives.

Tink enters the room, stops and stares at Michelle, and then turns around as if to run off somewhere. Michelle interrupts his escape:

MM: Hello. Are you here for the Grievance Training course?

Tink: (Stopping but not turning around) Yep. Just going out for a smoko.

MM: I'm sorry, I was starting to think that no one would come. It's already nine twenty-five. I'm Michelle.

Tink: Probly the roads.

MM: Sorry, did you say something about the roads?

Tink: Yer. Lots of potholes. Rained last week. Some of the boys will be having trouble. But they'll get here, at least they'll sign on by the end of the day.

MM: So, what's your job?

Tink: Um, I'm a road worker. Yer. Work on the road. I think I can hear someone else coming.

Tink disappears down the stairs. Five minutes later he re-appears with two other men.

MM: Hello there. Have you come to join the program?

Nadda: Yes. Hello. Hello. My name is Nadda. And this here is Snitch. He is the foreman.

MM: (Shakes hands) Pleased to meet you. I was wondering where everybody was.

Nadda: Oh, this is country time. They will be here soon.

MM: And who did you say you were?

Nadda: I am Nadda. I am from Sri Lanka. I am the engineer. Snitch here, he is the foreman. Tink, who you have already met, he is a road worker. We are from all over the district.

MM: So, you know each other well then.

Nadda: No. I just met them downstairs. They are from a very long way away.

MM: Look Nadda, I am concerned that this is the training room. Do you think this is the best venue for working on this program? Do you think there might be a better one we could organise? And there is no equipment here.

Nadda: You worry too much! Some of us have had meetings here before. The men prefer it. They enjoy the curried prawns and rice for lunch. It will be fine.

There is a loud noise in the car park outside, as two trucks arrive simultaneously. Other car doors are heard slamming. Eventually others enter the room and Michelle greets them.

Rob: (Shyly) G'day. Jeez, they sent a bird² this time!

Andy: (Nervously) Hello.

Charlie: I'm Charlie. I work with Tink. He said you're from the big smoke.

Smetna: They say there's no good-looking wimmin in the Hill! I'm Smetna and I'm stayin' at the Regal Motel, next door. Where you stayin'?

Joey: Don't take no notice of him. He's all balls and no talk. I'm Joey and I will be able to help you with anything you want. Anything.

They all stand around at the end of the room waiting for the huge, stainless steel coffee urn to boil. They light up cigarettes and smoke them on the verandahs, chatting quietly to one another. No one has the training materials. They have not arrived.

MM: (Out loud, to all of the men gathered.) Do you think we ought to start soon?

Smetna: I'll start with you anytime you like luv! (Loud guffaws)

Nadda: Now, now Smetna, that's enough. Look Michelle, I think we'd better have a smoko.³ Andy's been travelling for eight hours to get here, and Mick left home at 3.30 this morning. We need to wait a bit, or nothing will happen.

² Woman.

³ Cigarette break.

The group keeps chatting until 10.30 a.m. Finally, without a signal, they all come into the room and sit around one of the large round tables, with the pink tablecloth on it, looking as if they are ready to begin.

Part Three

Michelle begins to improvise. She begins with a simple ice-breaker, asking each person to take one minute to speak to one other person they do not know well, telling that person what they hope they might gain from this two-day program. Then the communication reverses. She then moves on to speaking about the purpose of the training, why there is a need for a code of conduct and a grievance policy, the outline of workplace law in NSW, the basic outline for the next two days and the time-frame. The group has lost interest already. She wonders what is in their mind, what they are thinking about. She notices that they are trying to look politely at her, but only Nadda seems to be taking anything in.

After about thirty minutes, she gives them five minutes to have a stretch. There is much relief as they head as one outside, onto the balcony, for a cigarette. She calls Nadda to one side and asks for feedback. He tells her to just keep going, but then she remembers that all of these men work outside, and sitting inside must be very new for them. When the group returns, she puts this to them. They agree, this is new, they are not used to sitting around, they prefer to be outside, but are happy to be inside for two days in the cool of the air-conditioned pink room.

Michelle decides to abort the set program, and to work with what she has in front of her. She creates a task in her mind and then begins to work with the group.

MM: OK, well I think we have to make some drastic changes to this program today. First of all, your training packages have not arrived. Secondly there is no equipment here for me to use. So let's do things differently. Would that be all right with you?

GROUP: That's fine (mumble mumble), go on luv.

MM: So, let's get into two groups and then I'll give the next instruction.

Rob: We can't get into two groups. We don't have an even number.

MM: OK, one group of five and one group of four.

Fairly quickly the two groups emerge and sit separately, around two pink table-clothed tables.

MM: Group One. You are going to put on a play. (Guffaws, laughs, nervous talking)
You are going to put on a short play about what it feels like in your workplace when someone else harasses someone. Each of you has a speaking part.

Tink: That's good, 'cause I can't read, so I can't have a readin' part!

They all laugh.

MM: Your play will show us a few examples of what it is like when someone bullies you, or teases you too much at work, or has a go at you. You have to be able to tell a story about it and especially about what it feels like when you're at work. After you have made up the story, and acted it out, then we will all sit around and talk about what we all noticed. Clear? You have one hour before lunch to prepare this. I will come around to your group, if that's OK, and just see how you are doing. So, what about you work down the south end of the room.

Snitch: Yeah, but what's the others gonna do? I might prefer that.

MM: OK. Group Two. I want you to put on a play, as well. I want you to think up a couple of stories in which you have been involved in your personal life, where

you have felt harassed. You know, bullied or picked on too much, by someone in your family life, or social life, outside of work. It might be something that happens when you go shopping, or when you play cricket on Saturdays

Joey: (Loudly) They won't let me play cricket!

The entire room breaks into raucous laughter.

MM: OK. That's a good place to start. Why won't they let you play cricket?

Joey: Because I used to play in the Broken Hill Jail First XI and they won't consort with me now. We might all get locked up, again, if I play with the Broken Hill Huskies!

More guffaws of laughter.

MM: I think you have a great play just in that one thing you said. (They look amazed. There is uneasy silence.) I'm very interested in how you might feel about not being able to play cricket anymore.

The two groups begin work. Michelle moves from group to group, giving hints, hesitantly making some suggestions, reinforcing that the dramas that might come out of their storytelling could possibly include how they experience the stories they are about to enact: perhaps they might even show (in role) some emotion.

At 12 noon exactly, steaming hot plates of curried prawns and rice arrive upstairs, carried by Chinese women. The men slowly retrieve themselves from the groups and take a plate of food. Next, braised beef and black bean sauce and finally sweet and sour pork with fried rice. They each eat three plates of food. They swallow jugs of lemon and orange cordial. They eat quietly, not conversing, simply focusing on the food. Then they move outside for a cigarette. Michelle joins them on the veranda. They are talking about the plays they are

going to do. They stand in their two groups working, talking quietly, and practising a move here or there. Some come in for a cup of tea. They indicate they will need more time to do this. Michelle tells them all that they have an extra thirty minutes. Each group is very focused and takes the task very seriously. They are debating and talking about what happened and what it feels like. Michelle encourages this discussion. They keep working for another half hour, and then another half hour. By three o'clock they are ready.

Rob: This is Group One's Play. There's me, Andy, Charlie, Smetna and Snitch. It's about what happens at work that makes you feel bad. So each of us just tells a story of somethin' that happened to one of us at work, and then we all talk about what it felt like. So we are just doing story-tellin' as our play. I'm goin' first.

Rob begins to tell his story. There is silence as each person listens to the other, with deep respect.

Rob: My story's about one day I was an apprentice. About ten years ago now. I was working on a road gang out near Brewarrina. We'd have to sleep out there in caravans all week and come into town Fridays. Go back out Monday morning. It was that bloody hot. After the first two months I'd saved up enough money to buy a really good esky.⁴ Real solid. Good insulation. Keep the ice cold for the day, so the drinks were always freezing. Take a big block of ice on Monday morning from home and it'll last 'til Tuesday lunchtime at least. Kept my food in there and all. It was the first thing I ever bought with me own money, you know, the first real thing. Sounds funny to youse, I know, but I really liked that esky. It meant a lot to me. I had to work for it. Anyways, about four weeks after I gets it, a bloke⁵ on the gang starts skylarking⁶ with me. Half bloody mad he was. And one lunchtime I go to get the esky and it's gone. I felt that damned angry. Bloody bloke was over the other side of the road gang, using it for

⁴ Large, insulated food/drink container.

⁵ Man.

⁶ Having fun, playing.

batting practice. It was completely bashed out of shape and the lid didn't fit any more. I was that wild I wanted to knock his head off. He shouldn't have done that to me. The other part, that was almost worse, was that the blokes on the gang all laughed at me. They didn't care. They thought it was funny when I went red and showed them I was furious. They said things like "get over it son", and "the poor baby lost his esky". They did nothing about it, even the leading hand. When you're young, like, you can't stick up for yourself. I still feel cranky about it today, and I'm very cautious about my things at work from then on. I kept them real close to myself, so no one could knock them off. When young kids come into the gangs now, I just want to tell them to look out for mug galahs⁷ like that bloke. Sometimes I tell them about me esky. Still got it, you know. But it's buggered. A bit like me at the moment.

There is dead silence. No one moves. Rob sits down. They sit, thinking hard, nodding their heads in empathy. The silence lasts.

Andy: I'm next. (A very soft voice). My story is about not being treated the same as everyone else.

The silence is now stunned silence.

Andy: I was born in Bourke on the mission⁸ and my family has lived there for years and years. Anyway now I live out the back of the Hill and me missus and me kids are, like, the most important thing to me. I know some of youse got de factos⁹ and some of youse got no one, but I got the missus, the three kids, and my family at Bourke. One day I go and see the Boss. The missus was very sick. Some kind of woman's sickness. She could not get out of bed. The eldest two go to school and the baby stays with the wife's mother during the day, while the wife works at the servo¹⁰ and I do the road gang. Well, this day I just needed to

⁷ Fools, silly persons.

⁸ Ghetto for Aboriginal People administered by Church or State.

⁹ Unmarried partner.

¹⁰ Petrol station.

get off a bit earlier, to pick up the kids from school. Normally they stay at the after-school care, but this one day, it was a Monday, and they had a teacher-free day. The school was shut so the teachers could have a big meeting. The kids were with the wife's family, but the eldest one, well he had the flu. I had a doctor's appointment for the wife and the eldest kid at 3.30 p.m. I just needed to leave half an hour early, so I could get back off the road into town, pick them up and take them to the doctor. The wife was too sick to drive. I knew lots of other blokes had got off early for different things. So I went to the leading hand and I tell him the story. He listens to me, then he says, "OK Andy. You go early. But first, you prove to me that you have that doctor's appointment". I said, how I'm gonna do that? I'm stuck out here, on the road. I've got no proof with me. Anyway, I got a bit argumentative because I felt shattered. I never heard him ask other blokes for proof. So I said "So you don't believe me then", and he says "I know you want to go to the pub. Some of your 'lations come to town I suppose. It's dole¹¹ day, so I guess you're meeting them". Well I could have knocked him in the guts then and there, but it was me who was knocked in the guts. I said "Boss, I gotta go, they're real sick. The wife needs help. And he says "Get your black butt over there and dig that trench and you do what you're told". So I went and I swung that pick like I was killing someone, 'cause I felt murderous. First he thinks I'm a liar, then he thinks I'm a bludger and then he says I'm both of those things 'cause I'm black. He says yes to the white blokes, but no to the black bloke. Anyways, it gets towards three o'clock and I don't care any more. I finish, walk over to my truck and start her up. He walks right over in front of the truck and says "Where you goin' Andy?" I say, "I'm takin my family to the doctor". He says, "OK, but you'll get docked¹² for it". And he docked me half an hour. From that day on I never asked for anything and I never talked to him again. Two more years I was on that gang and we never spoke.

¹¹ Social Security payment.

¹² Pay taken from wages.

There is a very long, embarrassed silence this time. Awkwardness. An uncomfortable, anxiety that was palpable.

Smetna: I'm next and Charlie and me are going to do a story. I am going to tell a story to Charlie, and he is going to tell one back to me. We are having a conversation. Our story is about learning.

So, Charlie, how you been?

Charlie: I've been pretty good Smetna. But I want to talk to you about learning.

Smetna: What do you mean, learning?

Charlie: Well, one thing I've learnt in this place is that you don't get very far in life without learning. Take me, for example. My father was a rodeo rider. And I spent most of my early life travelling around to the different rodeos. So I went to about six different schools every year. When I was twelve, I still couldn't read or write English. I could speak Italian fluently, but I couldn't read or write it. I could speak English at school, but when it came to reading and writing, I just couldn't crack it. I lasted at school until I was fourteen, then they let me go. It was no good being there. Too many schools. Too many teachers. Then I had to find a job, so I found jobs at different rodeo places, tending horses, you know, shearer's cook, that sort of thing.

Smetna: When I come to Australia with my parents from Poland my father told me that I had to get an education. He drilled it into me. He said that reading and writing were the most important things. I went to the state school at Coober Pedy. You know, all underground living. I did reading and writing all day and at night my father would stand over me and make me do it again. I think that's how he learned English really. Trouble was, I didn't have a lot of brains. So all the reading and writing in the world couldn't help me.

Charlie: So eventually I got a job on the road gangs, and I been with this Company fifteen years now. But I got nowhere. Every time a job comes up, a promotion, you have to fill in those forms, and so the wife does it for me. But then they play tricks. You get to the interview, you've got clean clothes on, an ironed shirt, even clean boots, and they say "Fill out this short questionnaire", and I can't do it. The first few times I told lies. Told the interview people that I forgot to fill it out, or that I lost it. But eventually they figured it out. So I stay a labourer, and some bloke who knows a lot less than me, he can fill in the forms himself, and he goes for the promotion and then he's foreman before you know it, earning all that extra money.

Smetna: Well, I drive the truck. And I'm happy doing that. Do my own thing. No one can hassle me. I drive the truck, then I go home and read novels, and travel literature. I've written some short stories too, about leaving Poland and my Grandfather. But hey, Charlie, surely someone in the Company can get you reading and writing lessons?

Charlie: Gotta be jokin', man. They had this girl came out from Sydney. She was something like the leading hand¹³ in training. We all met with her and told her what we could and could not do. Eventually I summonsed up the courage and told her I couldn't read or write. If she was looking at the training needs, and serious about it, I'd have thought this was a fairly good thing to do. Know what she said to me?

Smetna: What?

Charlie: She said she'd never met anyone in her whole life who couldn't read or write. She didn't have a clue what to do. So she left me a form to fill in ...

¹³ Supervisor.

Everyone bursts out laughing with Charlie.

Then she said that maybe I could think of other employment. Then she got rid of me quick smart, like I had a disease or something.

Smetna: Smartarse!

Charlie: No, I felt sorry for her. Imagine knowing so much, but knowing so little. She had no idea what to say to me. No idea what it felt like. How humiliating it is all the time. How many tricks you have to learn to pretend. How much it hurts inside of me. If she can't read those sorts of things, and I can only not read English or Italian, then I think I'm better off than her anyway.

Smetna: Yeah, but she gets paid more than you, Charlie.

The group nods, acknowledging. They look at each other, knowingly.

Snitch: Well I'm the last one in my group, but I need more time to prepare, so I thought I'd ask you Michelle, if I could wait for a bit. I need to get a few things straight in my head.

MM: Sure, Snitch. Just when you're ready. And if you don't want to tell the story then that's OK too. Let's have a break, everyone, just for a few minutes, to catch our breath and thanks to Group One for that fantastic group work and presentation.

Applause.

The groups go out onto the balcony again for smoko. Some get another coffee. Liu comes in, waves at Michelle, holding her watch: Half past three, half past three, one hour before you go. We have to set up for dinner. Eventually the two groups return to the room.

MM: Well we have a choice now. We can spend this time talking about the stories we have heard so far and thinking about them in terms of harassment, and grievances, and what we might now be able to do to address these, to change things at work. Or we can move on to Group Two, and hear their presentation about what it's like in the out-of-work places, where sometimes the same things happen.

The Groups decide to move onto Group Two. They are now like excited school children. They want the show to continue. They are completely engaged.

Nadda: Well our play is a conversation between the four of us, Joey, Mick, Tink and me. So we are sitting in the Music Club down the street, having a talk.

Interjections: "Bloody posh place, Nadda", and "they wouldn't let you in, Joey".

Nadda: Gooday, fellows.

Joey: Nadda, this is social, remember, not work. You don't have to be that formal.

Nadda: But I am always that formal. That was how I was brought up. Anyway, we are here to establish the Road Works Cricket team. Being from Sri Lanka I have to tell you I have a distinct advantage over you, because my country is obsessed with cricket.

Rob: (Interjection) Yeah, that and bloody hot curries! (laughing).

Nadda: So, Joey, you were the captain of the first grade XI at the Jail. Mick, you played cricket at boarding school down in Forbes, but only up to Year 8. Tink, you've never played cricket in your life, but you like the Chappell Brothers, and as I

said, there's myself, a cricket fanatic, a player at my University in Singapore, before I came to Australia to be an engineer, so a cricket tragic, as they say.

Interjections, howls of laughter from the audience.

Nadda: Now, we have asked for expressions of interest from all the different road gangs in the area, and from the Regional Office in Dubbo. So far we have about thirty interested players. Now for the hard part. Six of these players are girls. What should we do?

Loud interjections, laughing.

Mick: I think the girls should be allowed to join in and play mixed cricket. Like they do in lawn bowling.

Charlie: (Interjection) I knew you'd bring balls into this somehow Mick!

Mick: The girls say that they are left out of everything, and they should be allowed to play.

Nadda: Now I have put this proposition to some of those interested in playing, and they vary from being not sure, to saying definitely no. So I am telling them that we should not be discriminating between them.

Tink: The second problem we have is that the cricket ground here is fully booked up every night for practice. But if we throw the cricket club a few dollars, they will kick out the Wednesday night team, and let us use the ground.

Mick: Sounds good to me. Who's the team they're kicking out?

Tink: It's the under-21s team. They got no money, so we can pay off the club and get rid of them.

Mick: The third problem we have is that we have to choose a team, and bring it down from thirty to eleven or twelve. How do we decide who to keep in and who to get rid of.

Tink: Well leave the girls out for a start!

Joey: And keep out the ex-cons.¹⁴ (He smirks.)

Nadda: And maybe exclude anyone who has never played cricket before.

Tink: Hey that's me! Bugger that! If I'm organising this I'm gonna be in it.

Nadda: You could carry the drinks.

Tink: I'll be no bloody team's water boy!

Joey: Well, we could have two teams, one of ex-cons, one of people who can play cricket and the leftovers can be back-ups, or umpires or something.

Nadda: I hate being called a water boy!

Tink: And I hate being left out. It happens all the bloody time.

Joey: And I hate the thought of all those girls being wasted! (no one laughs)

Mick: And we're all fighting so bloody much that we can't even think straight. Jeez, trust the bloody engineers to stuff it up.

¹⁴ Ex-prisoners.

Nadda: I take exception to that. We engineers make work for you lot. Without us you don't have roads to build.

Mick: Yeah, and without us you have no friggin' road.

Nadda: So if we return to cricket for just one minute, it looks like we could decide to have two mixed teams, with a few reserves for each side. But we still have to find out where to practise, and try to be fair to everybody.

Joey: So what do we do next?

Nadda: Well look (pointing at Group One and Michelle) that looks like an out-of-work cricket team over there, let's go and ask them.

Laughter, clapping, hooting, joking from the participants.

MM: OK, it's four o'clock, we have just another half hour. We need to stop and think about what just happened in here today. So how about you get into twos,

Joey: Uneven numbers!

MM OK Joey, you can talk with me in a one-to-one.

Mick: You're the lucky one Joey!

MM And this is a talking and listening exercise. So one person talks at a time, and the other listens without interrupting. Then the other person talks, and the other person listens without interrupting. Here are the questions:

What did you notice about today?

What surprised you?

What do you think you learned? What helped?

Participant panel

We now move from the “raw” data to the recollections of some of the participants, as outlined in the Method Section of this inquiry. In this section some participants who could be contacted agreed to write back to me, outlining their own recollections of this particular two days of adult learning in Broken Hill. Each of them recollects some fragments from the event or from preparations for the event. Their recollections are *italics*. The primary researcher writes the rest of the narration.

The Narrator comes back on stage and discusses the creative action with some of the cast. Also present is one of the people from the Company who designed the training program, from Sydney.

Well, thank you for that warm welcome. We have just three participants from this story from Broken Hill. Sadly, most of the cast have moved on from Roadworks and are very hard to trace. But we have had some good fortune in finding one participant in the training day. I have also managed to get in touch with the person who developed this Grievance Training Program in the first place. Finally, I have invited the current Grievance Manager of Roadworks to join us.

Firstly, I would like to introduce Nadda, who is still working for the Road Works Company as an engineer. He has, however, moved from Broken Hill and is working in Sydney. He is now the Chief Engineer for the Great Western Highway. Thanks for coming here, Nadda.

Secondly, let me introduce Matthew Trainer, who is now Head of Learning and Development for a large Government Department in Canberra. Matthew was responsible

for the research, writing and roll-out of the Grievance Training project for Roadworks over ten years ago.

Last, but not least, I introduce to you the current Grievance Manager of Roadworks, Lucy Lucknow. Lucy's current job is the implementation of the upgraded Grievance Policy and Training for Roadworks. Lucy previously held the role of Training Officer for another large Government Department where she was involved in Anti-Harassment Training for all staff. Welcome, Lucy.

So that we do not take up time from you, the audience, having the opportunity to discuss what you saw about emotionality in the workplace, I will invite each person to say a few words to you about what they thought about during this one-act play that we all have just seen. Following this, the play's author has written some points for us all to consider and at the end I invite you all to adjourn to the foyer for refreshments and the opportunity to discuss the contribution of this play to the understanding of emotionality in adult education.

Nadda:

Thank you, Narrator. Well it seems like a long time ago that I was the Engineer in Broken Hill. When Michelle contacted me, through work, to see if I could come and watch the play, and then she asked if I would write down some comments, I felt a bit nervous – a bit like how I felt when she first came to do the training for Grievance Officers.

I am trying to remember what happened during those two days of training. I know I was there, that's for sure, because I remember the story about the esky. You know, that was the first time I had ever heard any of the blokes talk out loud about things that belonged to them and how much they meant to them. When I first came to Australia from Sri Lanka I was so nervous of making a mistake. I used to get teased a lot myself, about being vegetarian; about the rice I had for lunch, about many, many things. So this story about the esky stuck in my mind. I realised that some Australian men could talk about things that

mattered to them, and some could not. It's the same in Sri Lanka, but in Australia I had never heard the men talking about things that matter.

The other thing I noticed about the play, when I thought about it again, was how far we have come in terms of grievance management, in our Company. I remember how sorry I felt for Michelle, being the only woman in the room, for this training, and how some of the men were competing a bit with her, to see who had the right answers. I still remember Michelle told us she grew up in Bathurst, and she kept encouraging us to get on with the training ourselves. This felt very weird to me, because I am more used to training where the teacher teaches and the student learns. She gave no lectures and for at least the first half of the program we seemed to do a lot of just talking in groups. At the time I thought it was a waste of time and the second day was a lot better, because she had more to say about the Grievance program. It's funny, but I remember more about the first day, than the second day.

Since I have moved back to Sydney, I have been at a lot more training. I attend maybe five or six days of in-house training every year. The last course was on Occupational Health and Safety. This was very structured. I didn't get to know anybody in the room very much, but I did get to understand the new legislation in New South Wales about safety at work. I have a folder to refer to, when I need to. I noticed Michelle did not give us any notes, but perhaps she had not prepared the program well enough, given it was a very new one.

Matthew:

For me this was a bit of a "blast from the past". I remember well writing that Grievance Officer's Training Program, back in 1993. Shortly after writing it, I applied for a promotion, and moved to Canberra, into another Government Department. I was disappointed not to be able to do the contracting of trainers for this course, because it was very new.

I must say I was extremely surprised when they chose a lady to run the program. I was shocked, really. I would never have appointed one, because these blokes around New South Wales who work on the road gangs, are a completely different group of men. They have their own culture and their own rules. You can't just go in there and tell them what to do, let alone send a woman in there to try to do this. I just thought the whole thing would be a failure, when I heard who was doing it. I did not know Michelle at that stage, but any female would not have survived in that training environment.

When I received the invitation to make a comment about this training, I thought I should come forward. I agreed to do it because this grievance training has been very successful inside RoadWorks. Because of that, some Government Departments decided to copy the training model I drew up, and take it through their own Departments. What is very strange, is that in some of the other Departments, the feedback on how the training went was not anything like the evaluation of the program which RoadWorks came up with. I know Michelle completed the training for Roadworks throughout the State, but she did not provide the training for any other group. Perhaps that was one issue. I also know that she changed some parts of my training manual, so maybe that was another part. I am not sure what happened, but I thought I should mention it.

What I also noticed is that there might have been times when participants are asked to talk about how they feel. This is very dangerous, and should not be encouraged in workplace training. Everything can go off the rails if you let that happen. The trainer has to make sure that people stick to the topic and not be lead astray by feelings, emotions, or telling stories about themselves. There are a lot of privacy issues here and I would never want to see that developed in any workplace.

Lucy:

What a long way we think we have come! In my current role as full-time grievance officer for RoadWorks, I can recognise some of the big changes that we have made over the past

ten years or more. For example, I myself am in a role that did not exist ten years ago. This training program was designed so that people at worksites could take the first step in at least hearing from a peer what a grievance was, whether it was something to action or not, and then following procedures so that if something happened at work it could be investigated properly by Human Resources. What we did not know then was that even the introduction of training programs on things like Preventing Harassment or Managing Grievances would bring forward a whole list of illegal practices that took place in the workplace. So, eventually RoadWorks had to recruit a full-time person in this role.

What I noticed is that some of the stories the road workers told are very familiar still today. What we do now, though, so that people won't get upset too much, is to give them a form to write on, to fill in, and then to return to us. We just ask for the facts, who was involved, time, date, and recount of the event. Then I decide if this is worth taking action about. If yes, we do so. If not, I simply write back to the complainant and tell him or her that we cannot do anything. This ensures that people don't get too involved personally with what is happening.

The final thing that I just have to say is the following: The way in which the stories are told would not happen today. I do not put up with people who use bad language in the workplace. I also noticed that Michelle did not seem to stop people from calling others names that may injure them personally. Today, this would not happen. Training programs would immediately stop, and warnings would be given, if this took place. This surprised me. In fact, it enraged me, that she did not stop and correct this kind of behaviour. I think it reinforces the behaviour of the men, rather than raising their consciousness about the need to change their language.

Author's review

In keeping with the methodological stance of organic research, the researcher now writes more deeply about her own reflections on this adult-learning event in Broken Hill.

The assignment

I remember the feelings of excitement and eagerness at the opportunity to meet with the RoadWorks' Human Resources team at RoadWorks, in the heart of the city of Sydney. The RoadWorks Company had been well known in Australia as a large, public company, which built roads and dams. It was probably the largest Company I had ever been invited to work for, and the prestige and status of such a well-known Company seemed to rub off on me. I felt impelled to demonstrate my absolute best, while knowing more deeply that what lay ahead could be outside my experience as an educator. At first I felt nervous and a little overwhelmed during the briefing meetings with the Human Resources team at RoadWorks. After several meetings with the Training Co-ordinators, and many hours work, writing the program, I presented the outline of the final "training package" which was both competency-based and outcomes-based. I was relieved to have finally committed to paper the process for learning. I enjoyed developing case scenarios. I was secretly delighting in constructing possible scenarios that would be a "best fit" for workmen who built roads, not that I had ever met one. I had grown up in a country town and was surrounded by "workers", so I knew something of this culture, but I was not prepared for the kinds of dilemmas I was presented with.

The subject matter was about grievances in the workplace and having been the subject of some humiliating moments at work in my own career, particularly misogynous behaviour, there was a part of me that felt empowered to make a change, something I relished and delighted in. One part of me felt a little superior, secretly a little better than these men I was about to work with, and a little more informed even than these Human Resources people. I wasn't very proud of this secret feeling, but here was an opportunity to prove myself. It was as if I was going to be given the opportunity to demonstrate to a largely male population, that discrimination, harassment and misogynous behaviour was now outlawed. This made me feel satisfied. I was finally going to get something off my chest, so to speak. I had not met these participants, only others that I thought might be like them. I would present to them material that was unambiguously racist and sexist and they would, in the end, have to sit there in silence (if necessary) and accept that their behaviours needed changing, because

poor behaviour at work was now outlawed. Sure, there might be a few intelligent men present, probably more the professional-types, who would understand. As for the others, I imagined that they would require a lot of tutoring from me, in order to change the attitudes that I assumed they already had. I felt challenged, and I knew I had to be challenging. I was excited by this prospect and eager to get started. Anytime I felt a little worried about the program, or thought about what types of adult learners I would encounter, I quickly repressed these emotions. I would cope, I told myself.

The only comment the Human Resources group from RoadWorks finally made about the very large, comprehensive training document and participant's handbook that I had written, was that it "needed formatting differently". They thought the font type was too large, and the text required more visual aids so that it could be read more easily by participants. I felt totally confused by this feedback. Hadn't they seen the content, the "heart" of the program? Why had this raised no comment? I was very disheartened that all this highly creative work had not been recognised in any way by them. I felt taken for granted. Didn't they recognise excellent work when they saw it? How come they couldn't give me even one tiny little bit of feedback? I became enraged, hearing in their absence of feedback, the same "don't care" attitude that I expected the participants to have. Eventually, I completed the word-processing and delivered to them a very smart-looking, desktop-published document. I told colleagues about them and made jokes about the fact that RoadWorks probably did not even read the content, but that all they wanted was something that looked good. I felt insulted, but did what they asked, shortened the font size and inserted the graphics. I used colours to break up the package into pieces. I felt like it was packing lunch for a child: cutting the sandwich into four, adding the grapes, here the drink, there the sultanas. It has to be appealing to the eye and digestible. Though I resented what I thought was window-dressing an already good piece of work, I felt pleased with the final copy, still a little unhappy that there had not been any real input into the document from the Company itself, but overwhelmingly challenged to make a difference towards justice and working conditions in a very large workplace.

The pilot program

I presented the two-day training package to a “pilot” group of selected Roadworks staff, including the Human Resources Manager and the Training Manager. I was a little nervous to begin with, a situation which was quite unusual for me. I had to contain some of the outrage I still felt at what seemed to be a very half-hearted approach by the Human Resources team towards this program. It felt, to me, that while the Company was keeping the letter of the law in providing training in grievance management, perhaps there was little really commitment to it.

All participants in the pilot program were from the city and worked at the Head Office of the organisation. None of them had ever worked on the road, so I felt as if this were really pretending. It was a fake, a set-up. They would pretend they were rural road workers, and the odds were high, I thought, that they had never met such a person themselves. They engaged in the learning process with some enthusiasm, though in some ways they gave me the impression that most of the material was “beneath” them. In other words they stayed in role as “overseers” of the program, not participants. They took part in the variety of simulated communication exercises and case studies, which had been constructed. They took on different parts in role-plays, such as road worker, truck driver, leading hand, engineer and so on. I remember feeling that there was an air of unreality about the learning-work being done, about the engagement in learning, but I felt anxious that the program would be accepted and acceptable at this level in the Company. If it did not pass here, it would go no further, and the program would be “shelved”. I did not want this to happen, so I compromised, stayed silent, and did what I was told, pretending that here was a room full of road workers and I was working with them in the “outback”.¹⁵

At the completion of the two days I felt completely exhausted, as if I had been managing a training program within a training program. A play within a play. Participants who were assessors, not partners in learning. I found this very stressful and was relieved that it was over. I hated intensely the notion that this work was on display and that I was being

¹⁵ Interior of Australia.

assessed publicly. The inauthentic nature of what a “pilot” program felt like struck me as tragic. Worse still, the fact that I felt I had to hand over my power to these assessors upset me greatly, though at no time did I feel safe enough to say this. The power imbalance knocked me out and I felt very stressed. It felt like these people at Head Office did not really take this learning seriously and I felt very disappointed.

The pilot group was very brief in genuine feedback. They made one or two suggestions, which seemed quite superficial to me (“use different background music during session three”, for example). I felt puzzled about the pilot group’s lack of any real engagement in the process, given that the workplace legislation, which was being implemented, applied to them as much as it applied to road workers. Perhaps I was taking this too seriously. I felt physically and emotionally depleted at the end of the two-day pilot program, as if I had done all of the “work” and the participants were testing me, but giving me no results or feedback. I felt confused and increasingly, a little more frightened. Perhaps this was not going to be as easy an assignment as I had first imagined. What if the employees in the rural areas I was to visit were like this pilot group: what if they really did not want to be there, and did not want to learn? What on earth would I do? How would I be able to survive all of these training days if there was such continued withholding? After a few slight adjustments, the program was ready to be implemented.

Setting the scene for learning

I recall being faxed the proposed program for the “roll-out” of this program throughout the State, from RoadWorks Human Resources team. At the top of the list was Broken Hill. I felt partly excited about going to “the Hill” because it was a place I had heard a lot about, but had never been to personally. I checked out the travel arrangements and the only feasible way to get there seemed to be by very small plane, taking three hours from Sydney. There was something of the feeling of adventure at travelling to such a remote venue, and now that the program was approved, I would be able to retrieve my focus from acceptance of the program to the real work of adult learning.

I arrived in Broken Hill early on a Sunday afternoon, an unforgettable air journey across vast plains of nothingness, in preparation for meeting the training group on Monday morning. The program was to begin at nine in the morning and was to go through until four-thirty in the afternoon. The drive from the Broken Hill Airport into the town was my first real experience of this isolated inland “city”. The streets seemed very empty and there was virtually no one around. I felt a little apprehensive as I checked into a Motel in the centre of the town. I knew I did not belong. Between the taxi driver’s silence and the Motel Manager’s distant and half-hearted greeting, I felt an object of their wonderings. Not that they said anything, but the long, intrusive stares at me, along with the crisp, tight questions (“Where’d you come from? What are you doin’ out here?”) told me that perhaps they thought I should have been back in the city. I was wishing that myself on this particular Sunday afternoon.

I found my room, (a three-star Motel room with one-star décor), flicked on the Television to the single television station, then flicked it off, and decided to go for a walk to see something of the place. I felt a mixture of terror and enjoyment. Most places were closed but the licensed Clubs and Hotels were doing a good trade. I wandered into a licensed premise called the “Musicians’ Club”, a very crowded bar and casino. I felt as if I were being stared at continuously, and I probably was. I was obviously from “out of town”, dressed differently from most of the women there. I was middle-aged and without a man. I sat and had a soft drink, observing the locals observing me. There was coarseness about the place and what felt like a “closedness”. My anxiety about how this program, devised in the city for rural participants, would go, increased. I went back to the Motel eventually, but not before a Vietnam Veteran attempted to “chat me up” at the bar. I left the club and purchased some takeaway food to eat for dinner in my Motel room. There was nothing else open and I felt like I, too, was very closed down. This was going to be plain, hard work, if the kind of people I had observed in the Club were going to be in class tomorrow.

The next morning I gathered all that I needed for the day, much of which I had carried with me on the plane. I had decided not to carry any learning material and I felt comforted by the fact that Roadworks had arranged for all the training materials to be couriered to the site.

Being 1989, internet connection was rare and I did not have the luxury of a laptop computer. Because I had spent so much time writing the program, I felt it was inside me and in my mind I went through each step of the program for day one. First, I would facilitate an “ice-breaker”, then a simple introduction to the program. After that we would launch into a “plain-English” version of the legislation, look at what a “grievance” is inside the context of workplaces, applying the legislation to these definitions. In the afternoon there was time to think about experiences of grievances that the participants may have witnessed or been involved in through the case studies which were available. This would set the platform for day two, which was about how to implement the policies and procedures that RoadWorks had developed to manage any grievances from this point onwards. I felt more confident than before, a little anxious, but a good mixture of feeling good about the program and low level nervousness.

I met a Chinese woman, Liu, at the entrance to what I now know was the conference room. She was the proprietor of the Restaurant and she irritated me greatly by demanding to know what time the meals were to be served. I felt as if she was taking time away from me by trying to accelerate the meal times. Her insistence was very distracting and it was poorly timed. She became difficult to deal with. I did not wish to be impolite or unreasonable. I felt trapped by her assertiveness and unwillingly I gave in to her demands. It felt as if I was being cheated of time as well as resources. This room also doubled as a Chinese Restaurant. In fact when I was shown towards this upstairs room at the Motel, which the proprietor showed me, it took a while for me to understand the fact that this restaurant would double as the training venue. My heart sank at the sight of pink tablecloths and a small vase of plastic flowers on each table, but I felt grateful that I had arrived early. I was early enough to move some of the furniture around, so as to create a more appropriate learning space, get rid of the pink and move the plastic flowers. I needed good workspaces, not a restaurant. My annoyance with this scenario pushed me firmly into moving furniture, tables and chairs, way beyond my normal capacity. I thought that if I had travelled all this way, I was going to do this correctly, no matter what the barriers to learning that might come my way.

I spent at least twenty minutes moving heavy tables together, under the watchful eye of the proprietor, who made no move to assist me. She stood and watched me with a look of horror on her face. She seemed to be silently questioning my authority to take over the learning space and I began to feel a little angry. Here I was, miles from home on a Monday morning, at a venue that seemed totally inappropriate. When she told me that there were no training aids, overhead projector, whiteboard, data projector and so on, I felt a deep sense of alarm. I could not take this information in, immediately. Further, when it seemed that the box of materials from Head Office had not been delivered, I felt livid and upset. It was as if there was now an “us” and a “them”, city and rural, and I had suddenly crossed the great divide. I was here, alone, in the rural, and now had to rely on my own ingenuity to work with these participants, with no concrete assistance of any kind from “them” at Head Office. Both my adult learners and I had been abandoned and I felt alone and disconnected.

I recall feeling irate at the entire situation and I panicked a little. This was now a situation of sheer survival and I now had to put this inconvenience to work: I just had to get on and do it, leave behind my rage and act as professionally as I could in the circumstance. I cheered myself up by remembering that there had been several times in the past when I had to change my plans as a learning facilitator and had to rely on my own resources, and I had done so with success. These previous experiences were only for much shorter periods of time, a session or two at the most, but I had survived.

The learning group arrives

When the participants arrived, one at a time, I felt a mixture of relief and fear: relief that I could engage with each of them as a person at last; fear because they no sooner greeted me than they disappeared again. I recognised this withdrawal as possibly shyness or anxiety, but when it was repeated I felt a deep sense of “oh no!”. How was I going to retain their interest, I wondered. When their introductions to me included humour, I again felt relief. I knew that I could work with people who had a sense of humour. I could see that it masked by what looked like awkwardness on their part. This relief was, however, mixed with terror when the misogynist jokes came forward. I felt a sense of dread, as if I was alone in what

was increasingly becoming clear as an all-male world. My dread increased when the humour drew attention to my gender and my difference. It came as something of a shock to me that I was ascribed the status of a “city chick”. Having been born and raised in rural NSW myself I did not feel this way about myself in any way. My sense of my identity was very different to this. This relegation of me to a status and stereotype to which I felt I did not belong, increased my own sense of awkwardness. I felt an object of difference and indifference. I was now the “other” to these men with whom I was to work over the next two days.

The program gets underway

As the program began I instinctively knew that I would have to draw on all of the resources I had inside myself, and all of the resources of the men in the room. We all needed to engage in real life examples of what caused grievances. I knew that a simple introduction of who I was and where I was from would not suffice. I had to give them more. I had to paint myself into this tapestry of learning scenarios and I felt vulnerable at the prospect. I knew that I would have to ask them to engage in life stories very early in the program, in order to hold relevance. The plan for the day had to change and I had to let go of my own plans so as to allow these men to have a voice, very early in the program. I could sense the paradox of what was at play here. Head Office had demanded a systematically programmed training plan, placing most of the responsibility for learning in the hands of the learning facilitator. After all the work involved in documenting the program of learning, and the piloting of it, I now had to hand over the pace, material and focus to the participants. This was what I had wanted to do in the first place, but RoadWorks had other views about how workplace learning should take place and I had to follow its template. I felt an edginess about now changing pedagogy, some real hesitation, but this was an imperative that came from these men, the learning participants, not from the program. Once I knew this deeply, I relaxed into the process, in some ways very happy to be free of the vessel I had myself created. What would be created between us would be much more important, much more real, and I felt this sense of authenticity deeply.

My intuition was that together we could work on interventions and managing workplace grievances once we all felt safer in the learning space we created together. This was a completely different way of ordering the material we were learning. I also knew that given their isolation, the aloneness of their work as drivers or road workers, their learning might be enhanced by working together. It was imperative to increase the safety of the learning space. This meant facilitating a lot of listening to them and between them, in my view. Only after they had listened to themselves and to one another, would they possibly listen to me. In many ways it was now a real relief to not have any training materials present.

I felt nervous explaining the first task to them. I was not sure if they would, in fact, move into working groups. I feared they might over rule me, given the “welcome” some of them had given me. I needed to take up my authority in my role, in a good sense. I felt vulnerable and defenceless. If this strategy did not work, it could end in disaster. I felt the pressure of how they might assess me and report this to Head Office, if this change of plans did not work out. Despite this I had to gather my courage and hold onto my experience as a facilitator of adult learning, and forge ahead. Once I began I relaxed immediately, despite the many interjections, which I ignored. I felt as if I was on a journey from which there was no way back, but the only way ahead was forward.

Engaging in learning

The ease with which they did move into working groups caused me immediate relief. I felt somewhat doubtful, however that they would in fact “work” on the task they had been set. I exerted my authority, in a good sense, by moving between groups to ensure they were on task. I urged on, coached, made small suggestions, modelled possibilities, always gauging what I had done so as not to intervene too much. I challenged, encouraged activities and was relieved by the fact that both they and I, were deeply engaged with the task, demonstrated by some of them even asking for extra time. Perhaps as my anxiety shifted into relief and joy at what was happening, their own anxiety did likewise.

When they presented their work, theatrically, I was overwhelmed with feelings of admiration for them, and I showed this both verbally and non-verbally. Their simplicity and the depth of emotion they showed moved me deeply. As they looked to me cautiously when their stories unfurled, I felt deep respect for them and demonstrated this by my feedback. This feeling of regard and deep respect seemed to transmit itself and increasingly they showed respect for one another. I had little, really, to teach them, but I had everything to learn. I felt honoured to hear their stories, especially where there were levels of self-disclosure that could have been hidden. As I named how I felt about each presentation, I noticed that most men heard not only the content but it seemed as if they had also heard the emotion in my voice, saw my animation and acceptance. Some acted as if they were shocked by this mirroring. Deep silences emulated what was being processed by some, or simply thought about by others.

By the end of the first day, despite feeling irritated that we were being rushed out of the restaurant to make way for the evening meal, I felt a resounding empathy with the group and a deep respect. These men knew a great deal about workplace grievances. They had obviously suffered because of the actions of others. I felt satisfied that although for some of them their previous learning experiences had been difficult, we seemed to be making progress together. They needed relentless listening. They required respect. Then they could be themselves, and learn.

Their offer to me to join them for drinks after day one was an indication of the bonding that was beginning to occur. I felt bad that I rejected their offer, but knew it was the correct thing to do. I did not need to weaken the learning transaction by diluting it with socialisation at a very early stage. I still had another day to go. I did not wish to give the message that I was standoffish, or that I did not wish to join them as people. I was conflicted about what message they might get and how this might be played out on day two. However I also felt my depth of experience in relying on my intuition and professional experience to say no.

Audience discussion/data analysis

In reflecting deeply on the RoadWorks story, the Participants' comments and my own deeper writing of the story, I noticed the following themes emerging:

- ◆ Enthusiasm for the task
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Empathy
- ◆ Hope
- ◆ Care and peer support.

Enthusiasm for the task

Long before this opening moment in the play, in her role as adult educator, Michelle had to overcome many barriers to actually be in Broken Hill, conducting this training program. In this section she reflects on these barriers, which include dealing with the bureaucracy of a large organisation, managing a system, which is not really in touch with its workers, and experiencing the way that workers describe being treated by management.

All participants in the Pilot Training Program were from the city and they worked at the Head Office of the organisation. None of them had ever worked on the road, so I felt as if this was really pretending. It was a fake, a set up. They would pretend they were rural road workers, and the odds were high that they had never met such a person themselves ... They engaged in the learning process with some enthusiasm though in some ways they gave me the impression that most of the material was "beneath" them.

Such behaviour in the preparation for the program required demonstrations of enthusiasm. Michelle compromises, stays silent, take the pilot program through its various phases of assessment. She enthusiastically presents the material to the HR

group in the Head Office of the Road Works Company, trying to engage the organisation in a type of learning they thought irrelevant to them as a group. They acted as if they did not need to know the material being presented. The emotions of disappointment and powerlessness, as expressed by Michelle, underline the deep motivation.

The inauthentic nature of what a "pilot" program felt like struck me as tragic. Worse still, the fact that I felt I had to hand over my power to these assessors, upset me greatly; though at no time did I feel safe enough to say this. The power imbalance knocked me out and I felt very stressed.

Michelle finally resolves the many issues with the Head Office and takes the journey to Broken Hill. The Roadworks' story shows the many signs of strong emotional content. It begins from the moment Michelle vigorously enters the scene for the training program.

Michelle is outside Hang Sing's Restaurant, trying to gain entrance. She rings the bell enthusiastically. It is 8.30 a.m. on day one of the training program.

The way the learning is approached by the training facilitator has meaning for all those involved. There is a sense of enthusiasm and dynamism. She does not ring the bell sluggishly, but does so with a sense of vitality and spirit. This sets the scene for the opening of the learning transaction.

In her work on reflective practice, Cheryl Hunt (1997) discusses the role of mind-maps. She tells us that to do reflective practice is to be willing to state, "*this is how and where I am now and this is the particular map I'm using on which to identify my position*" (p. 92). To site oneself in a place where, implicitly or explicitly, others may be able to point to unexplored pathways that will lead to a different position, is part of the work of the reflective practitioner. If, for example, a map indicates that one is in a particular kind of environment (hostile, mechanical, caring, confrontational, or whatever) and one's daily experiences repeatedly confirm this, "... the stronger one's belief is likely to become that

the map provides accurate representation of the world in which one lives” (Wilson, 1990, p. 87). In the case of this environment of Broken Hill, the mind-map of participants was very present. The task of uncovering emotion for the reflective practitioner, therefore, is to attempt to hold up another mirror to those who are of one mind map, with the possibility of providing a contrast. This act of holding can be done with the hope that unexplored pathways may lead those involved to a different position. The workers hold up one mirror. Michelle another. When emotionality is held in such a manner, challenge and change can have a profoundly disorientating effect on the individual. Michelle’s disorientation was palpable, but so was the disorientation of the participants. Hitherto unexplored pathways, for both Michelle and the workers, were able to be explored.

Michelle’s opening words to Liu, who is answering the door, ring true for the theme of this entire drama presented as a dilemma for any adult learning facilitator:

MM: Hello, can you let me in?

Being allowed “in” to this geographical site, “in” to the minds and hearts of the participants, is the real work of this learning transaction. If she does not get “in”, does not manage to get past the variety of barriers or defence mechanisms (as psychoanalysts might say), that are present in both the learning environment and in the people, then there seems less likelihood that learning will take place. Likewise if she is unable to allow the participants to get “in” to her, if she is unable to be seen by others, known by the participants, she will not learn about who they are, what they need to know or how they might best learn what it is that they need to know. Being allowed “in” is paramount and a dilemma that must be resolved one way or another, by all those involved.

Having entered the training room, time is spent enthusiastically chatting about the arrangements. For Michelle, a key to progressing the learning satisfactorily is having the training materials and aids available to her. She has a plan in mind, a program, and this is to be supported by documents and technical equipment. That is her agenda and she asks about these things with the same enthusiasm with which she rang the bell.

MM: So, where is the video and the television screen?

Liu: We have none.

MM: And the overhead projector?

Liu: No, we don't have that.

MM: A whiteboard?

Liu: No, we have morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. What time you finish?

This first illustration of competing agendas happens very quickly. Liu's agenda is to have the training participants in and out of the facility as quickly as possible, so as not to upset her routine. This is not an uncommon scenario, which faces adult learning facilitators from time to time, in one form or another. The suitability of time and space for learning seems to be a constant dilemma, especially in workplace learning. For Michelle, the focus at this stage is tightly focused on the learning materials and sorting out the facilities. Her agenda is to have to facilities in which learning can take place. One can almost hear the frustration begin to build as Michelle and Liu interact. They are about different things, and with equal enthusiasm.

Liu: We open at five o'clock for dinner. You must be out by then.

MM: (Persisting) Are you sure this is the room that is booked for the training?

Each time Michelle tries to engage Liu in having her needs met, she feels blocked and there is a growing sense of urgency.

MM: Has the box arrived? You know, a large box from the courier. The training materials. A delivery. You know, from Sydney. A large box?

Liu: No, no. No boxes. What time you want morning tea?

In this opening scene, enthusiasm to gain entry compete with determination to guard territory and time. Their shared vitality is about different things entirely. Vivacity and gusto look alike, but when they are focused on competing needs, communication may become frustrated, or break down entirely.

The idea that enthusiasm within all parties in the learning transaction can be equally expressed, but not connect accurately, may demonstrate the importance of recognising and naming the central emotion present when entering a learning site. In this scene, both characters have a role and a task. For Michelle, it is to be prepared for the learning to begin and to ensure that she has adequate tools to assist her in her work. For the host of the learning, it is to ensure that both Michelle and the participants are timely, and that they know that there are rigid boundaries around the use of time as a scarce resource. What develops, however, is a completely different view of time and space.

The enthusiasm is still alive in the co-researchers, particularly the participant panel, which is a collection of the responses received from the one participant, Nadda, who was part of this Broken Hill RoadWorks training program. Nadda's written responses focus on what he remembered about the two days of training he took part in at Broken Hill.

I know I was there, that's for sure, because I remember the story about the Esky. You know, that was the first time I had ever heard any of the blokes talk out loud about things that belonged to them and how much they meant to them.

It is also present in Matthew, the current Head of Learning and Development, who was responsible for the writing and development of the RoadWorks program at the time.

For me this was a bit of a "blast from the past".

Matthew comments about the enthusiasm he had for the program and his disappointment at being moved to Canberra to work with a Government Department, rather than to see this

training program through after all the time he had spent working on it. There is warmth in his response and spontaneity.

Likewise, Lucy Lucknow displays gusto and vitality. Lucy, the current Grievance Officer for RoadWorks, still develops similar programs for staff today. However her focus is of a very different nature:

The way in which the stories are told would not happen today. I do not put up with people who use bad language in the workplace. I also noticed that Michelle did not seem to stop people from calling others names that may injure them personally. Today, this would not happen ... I think it reinforces the behaviour of the men, rather than raising their consciousness about the need to change their language.

There are moments in adult learning when what might be known as “political correctness” requires suspension rather than enforcement. In the RoadWorks training program the exact moment for introducing the alternatives, the imperatives about correct speech and behaviour in the workplace are suspended and introduced during the program, not at the beginning. Comments made by the participants early on the first day are not seized upon as examples of language or behaviour, which are not to be used. This is not to lessen its importance. At the heart of the matter is tempering the application of the cultural change, and in this way, timing is everything. Michelle chose to ignore the innuendos and comments, which came directly from the men, consciously, deliberately or not. What was more important was the capacity of each participants to feel safe enough to be themselves, so that when new material was introduced the capacity to learn was present.

In Michelle’s reflection, enthusiasm to be part of the group, to engage in the task, to demonstrate her absolute best, is present in the opening sentence of her reflection:

I remember the feelings of excitement and eagerness at the opportunity to meet with the RoadWorks’ Human Resources team at RoadWorks, in the heart of the

city of Sydney ... I felt impelled to demonstrate my absolute best ... I was secretly delighting in constructing possible scenarios that would be a "best fit" for workmen who built roads, not that I had ever met one.

Michelle's attitudes and beliefs at the time were born of a lack of experience in this kind of workplace. Although born in the country, she was city-based and a long way from the focus group at Broken Hill. Her interactions with the RoadWorks Human Resources team did not dampen her enthusiasm, even though she received no feedback from them directly about the program she had developed. It is vigour and its expression that wins over the Roadworks' group in the city. There is a sense that if Michelle cared as little about this program as the Human Resources group did, then it might never materialise.

When Michelle is preparing the training room, it is done with enthusiasm and determination, and perhaps invigorated with the beginnings of anger:

I spent at least twenty minutes moving heavy tables together, under the watchful eye of the proprietor, who made no move to assist me ... She seemed to be silently questioning my authority to take over the learning space ... I began to feel a little angry.

The preparation of a learning space is not an uncommon task for adult-learning facilitators. Often spaces require sorting and fixing so that adult learning can be enhanced. In this case, the renovation of the room from a restaurant to a learning space, was the task at hand and it was vigorously pursued. The lack of learning tools such as electronic equipment and hard copies of programs meant Michelle had to draw on her own resources. If this meant that the room needed re-arranging, then so be it.

My heart sank at the sight of the pink tablecloths and a small vase of plastic flowers on each table. I was early enough to ... get rid of the pink and move the plastic flowers. I needed good workspaces, not a restaurant. My annoyance with this scenario pushed me firmly into moving furniture, tables and chairs,

way beyond my normal capacity. I thought that if I had travelled all this way, I was going to do this correctly, no matter what the barriers to learning that might come my way.

Observable enthusiasm is a friend to adult learning. It can have many different faces. There are many paths to enthusiasm for the task and not all of them require an exertion of energy beyond what is normal human experience. A sense of enthusiasm and vitality, excitement even, can be created by the steady gaze one holds, by the pacing of time, the arranging of space, the way we approach and leave the learning situation, by the encouragement that is offered to all. Enthusiasm for the task demands, however, that learning participants understand that the learning work at hand is important enough to for vitality and enthusiasm of all to be present and expressed. There is a sense of joy in the enthusiasm for the task that emerges throughout this story that enhances both the engagement in and the experience of learning.

According to Bopp and Bopp (2001) transformation through adult learning is the “dissolution and reorganisation of the constituent elements of any system around a new organising principle, a new pattern of life” (p. 37). In order for emotionality to affect transformation these authors argue that there needs to be:

- ◆ Termination of existing patterns, structures and institutions
- ◆ Access to, deep understanding and acceptance of, new information that is generated from outside the current paradigm ...
- ◆ A critical mass of engagement to ensure that system (community, organisation etc.) does not revert to established norms and mores
- ◆ The creation of new structures and webs of interconnectedness around the new organising principle.

Clearly transformation, as described above, is impossible without enthusiastic vision (the ability to see ourselves in different conditions); imagination (it is practically impossible to experience a condition we cannot imagine); learning (transformation requires changes to

our habits, attitudes and beliefs); and participation (transformation cannot be done to someone). One needs the determination and involvement to be affected positively by the process of transformation (Bopp & Bopp, 2001. p. 136). The uncovering of emotionality during the RoadWorks project contained all of these components, to a greater or lesser extent. By using the tools of vision, imagination, learning and participation, emotionality provided sustainable opportunities for all participants to emphasise the validity of their experiences through living in the present moment and thereby encouraging transformative elements to be present.

Anxiety

Part two of this story can be seen as something of an exposition on the experience of anxiety in the learning environment. It begins with Michelle, still not having found the learning materials, waiting for participants to arrive. We can feel the tension as she waits. This is a strange physical environment for her, different from that to which she may have previously been exposed.

It is 9.00 a.m. No one has arrived for the training course. Michelle is beginning to feel anxious. She has convinced herself that one of the participants will bring the training materials with him or her.

There is an assumption that both men and women will be attending, which does not turn into reality. The other reality we are about to learn is that nobody has the learning materials. Unease begins to grow. Nobody has arrived and Michelle begins to doubt the very fact of her being at the right place at the right time. Reality begins to be questioned.

She begins to wonder if she has the day right. It is now 9.15 a.m.

How often do learning facilitators have to face such situations of not knowing and have to deal with the anxiety of not only leading a learning process that is worthwhile and successful, but also of getting off to a difficult start? Michelle demonstrates concern. Not

only has nobody arrived but neither does she have the materials for learning. To make matters worse, when she rings the Head Office in the city for confirmation and assistance, there is nobody available to assist her who knows about the training, but then she finds a secretary. Her anxiety grows into agitation and is then relieved.

She phones Human Resources in the Sydney Office. Her liaison person is having a rostered day off. The next in seniority is at a training course. Finally, a secretary confirms that this is the correct day for training ...

The arrival of the first training participant demonstrates an example of overt anxiety. There is discomfort right from the start, if not outright fear.

Tink enters the room, stops and stares at Michelle, and then turns around as if to run off somewhere. Michelle interrupts his escape ...

Early moments of engagement in learning can be fraught with apprehension, agitation and alarm. The formal program has not yet begun, but the informal program is in train. Michelle engages the first arrival and self-discloses about one of her concerns, telling Tink that she was beginning to think that no one would come. This disclosure seems to have the effect of stopping the nearly escaped Tink in his tracks and he begins to stand still and to mumble information about possible reasons why nobody else has arrived.

Tink: ... Lots of potholes. Rained last week. Some of the boys will be having trouble. But they'll get here ...

This reassurance from him foreshadows what grows into conversation, which has the effects, both ways, of lowering the disquiet and worry both may have been holding at that moment of first meeting. Michelle does not give him time to escape again, and moves in deliberately asking him about himself. The nervousness and relief in both of them is palpable.

MM: So, what's your job?

Tink: Um, I'm a road worker. Yer. Work on the road. I think I can hear someone else coming.

Tink disappears down the stairs. Five minutes later he re-appears with two other men.

This engagement with one's own anxiety and the anxiety of others at a first meeting is a key to effective learning. It is like a dance in which the learning facilitator is inviting others to take part. Central to its success is that she takes part herself. In this scene Michelle is not simply the animator of the bridge-building that needs to occur between adults, but is also a key participant. She repeats to others as they enter that she was wondering where everybody was. She receives a variety of replies. Michelle puts her dilemma to them, but not in a judgmental or forceful way. She simply names her anxiety that it is well past the start time but very few have arrived. This invites the learning participants to join with her emotionally and often leads to the beginning of a trusting relationship, of intimacy which begins to overcome the anxiety present.

Nadda: Oh this is country time. They will be here soon.

MM: And who did you say you were?

Nadda: I am Nadda. I am from Sri Lanka. I am the engineer. Snitch here, he is the foreman. Tink, who you have already met, he is a road worker. We are from all over the district.

Michelle then makes a basic error, possibly from the centre of her own agitation. She unthinkingly assumes that because Nadda tells her about others in the group, they know one another, only to find out that this is not so.

Nadda: No. I just met them downstairs. They are from a very long way away.

Michelle once again uses self-disclosure to engage with the participants at a different level. She confides in Nadda, telling him that she is concerned that this room is the training room and asks him his opinion about whether this will work or not in this room. She allows him to make a judgment, a call, on the very environment they each feel strange in, including Michelle.

MM: Do you think this is the best venue ... Do you think there might be a better one we could organise? And there is no equipment here.

Michelle is passing on her anxiety to her student, who demonstrated some leadership previously by introducing others to her. She does so deliberately. She wonders not only how she will survive working in this room, but she also wonders how the participants will survive this. Her anxiety is again passed on for reflection. She then receives the feedback.

Nadda: You worry too much! Some of us have had meetings here before. The men prefer it. They enjoy the curried prawns and rice for lunch. It will be fine.

This is key information. This is the training site used previously, perhaps often, by RoadWorks. The men like it. They like the food, and food is obviously very important to them. They are going to be comfortable here. Michelle is now going to cease her own angst and settle in to it. Along with it, she now has Nadda's support and he then moves into becoming an "assistant" for the day, giving orders to the others, defending Michelle and organising the schedule.

MM: (Out loud to all of the men gathered). Do you think we ought to start soon?

Smetna: I'll start with you anytime you like luv!

Nadda: Now, now Smetna, that's enough. Look Michelle, I think we'd better have a smoko. Andy's been travelling for eight hours to get here,

and Mick left home at 3.30 this morning. We need to wait a bit, or nothing will happen.

The anxiety about joining in with a learning group can also raise both conscious and unconscious anxiety about gender and sexuality. Sexual connotation and sexual humour are used very soon after the group gathers informally and while Michelle introduces herself to them. This gives Michelle a great deal of information about not only some of the issues within the culture of this organisation that she will have to face, but also foreshadows some of the potentially un-named tension between learning participants and facilitator. Michelle is the only woman in the room throughout this drama. Some participants take advantage of this opportunity to test her out, by using sexual innuendo. The anxiety of potential intimacy in the learning dynamic appears to demand this of some, while for others it is not practised.

Smetna: They say there's no good-looking wimmin in the Hill! I'm Smetna and I'm stayin' at the Regal Motel, next door. Where you stayin'?

The irony of this comment is laid bare. Michelle is in this learning context to facilitate learning about a grievance process, which has been designed to deal with such a sexual pass, even if it is done in humour. If Michelle intervenes too quickly and criticises Smetna for making this statement, she may “lose” the group. They may disconnect, even at this early stage. However if she does nothing about it during the course of the two days, then she is colluding with its inappropriateness. This dilemma of anxiously holding onto comments, quips, introductory words, even humour, is fundamental for an adult-learning facilitator. These are held like gold. They are not used later to reprimand or humiliate, but rather as a gentle illustration, as examples. They are gold because they are of great value. They are real-life examples, they often have an emotive content, and they cannot be easily excused or passed over because they are hypothetical situations.

The anxiety which Michelle has been through, long before this training program actually begins in Broken Hill, becomes part of the historical and emotional story, which is held by her in relation to this program. Her anxiety that the program will be accepted by a non-

communicative Head Office, her fears of rejection during the Pilot Program, her arrival at the Motel and the anxiety of being the object of stares when she calls in for a drink at the Musicians' Club. Flying over a desolate landscape to reach the venue, trying to deal with Liu at the venue and not knowing why nobody has arrived on time, all of these anxieties become part of the learning transaction. The major anxiety of not having training materials arrive as planned and then having little to support the art of learning and teaching by way of whiteboard or even newsprint, all of this has to be held by the training facilitator.

The ability to hold these emotions and allow them to resolve themselves over time is assisted by the expressions of anxiety as an emotion that can be engaged with positively. Had Michelle panicked, refused to carry on with the day, punished those who were late, berated Liu, walked out because it was all too hard, then anxiety would have been totally in charge of the experience. Adult educators are commonly called upon to deal with such anxiety in constructive and thoughtful ways. The imagination is called upon to improvise, to alter rigid expectations and to transpose the learning transaction from one key to another.

All of this happens so that the heart of the learning process can continue to be focused upon, unhindered. Michelle chooses to share her anxiety with the group and in turn, they share some of their anxieties in return, in a much more processed way. By displaying her vulnerability, Michelle invites participants to display their own vulnerabilities, adding a richness and depth to the learning process that cannot be written into competencies or outcomes of learning. The appropriate expression of anxiety as part of the human condition can promote a readiness to learn by all. It is a political act, not an emotionally controlling one. It has no expectation of being returned. It simply and politely describes to the other that this is how it feels for me right now. This can be either ignored or returned at some later time. It acts as an equaliser. The hierarchy of power is flattened. The capacity to learn by demonstrating sameness rather than difference breaks open silences long held. Anxiety can be a great friend of the adult educator, if reframed in such a manner.

Empathy

The expression of empathy in learning environments is essential to the fostering of learning, no matter what age group the learners belong to. For adults it is particularly so, for empathy is a potent enhancement to the fostering and encouragement of learning.

In this story a hermeneutics of marginality may amplify the requirement for empathy in this situation. To describe the term “hermeneutics of marginality” Downey (1994) writes:

The term “hermeneutics of marginality” describes a way of looking, understanding, judging, deciding, and acting from the margins, in solidarity with those who live and speak from the periphery: from the fissures, the cracks, the edges of the centre. Adopting such a hermeneutical stance, deciding that one will perceive and be in the world from the margins, is to risk being at odds with what is judged to be “normal,” “established”, “reliable”, and “traditional” (p. 75).

In the story of working with RoadWorks, Michelle finally begins the program with the participants in Broken Hill, with those literally on the margins of Australian society. Those at the margins do not fit, or are not in step with, prevalent modes of being and perceiving. And yet, by standing at the margins with these participants, the possibility is open to view the centre differently. Taking the empathic leap of doing so opens the way forward for inclusion rather than exclusion and for transformation to begin to occur for all involved. The centre moves to the margin and emotionality provides the pathway for this change.

Michelle allows adequate time for the group to settle and suspends judgment about their need to take time out for coffee or cigarettes. She does not question them. She allows them to make their own decisions about this as she tries to understand what this behaviour means. She does not name any of these behaviours in a derogatory fashion, nor does she promote them. Rather, she stays in role and offers kind support for the men for whenever they are ready to begin. This is not always easy to do, nor possible. However, when this is possible and within certain limits, the “dance” of learning can begin when everybody is ready. All participants, be they teacher and learner, know when this is expected, even if they do not know what is expected. When the group experiences these feelings of having

been empathically “seen” in the analytic sense, which leads to a sense of being held, of safety, they begin their work.

The group keeps chatting until 10.30 a.m. Finally, without a signal, they all come into the room and sit around one of the large round tables, with the pink tablecloth on it, looking as if they are ready to begin.

The expression of empathy with learners, and vice versa, appears to lead to a kind of consent from both parties, that the learning environment is established safely enough to begin the work of learning. In her anxiety to get the program started, however, Michelle begins to improvise at the beginning of the formal learning and talks to the men about the more structural and contextual aspects of the program. The text indicates that she has “lost” them.

The group has lost interest already. She wonders what is in their minds, what they are thinking about. She notices that they are trying to look politely at her ... after about thirty minutes; she gives them five minutes to have a stretch. There is much relief ...

The participants are trying to demonstrate empathic behaviour towards Michelle, feigning interest. They are trying to behave themselves. Although she has only been with them in an informal way for about an hour, it seems that she has some kind of intuition that something is missing. It is through her empathic joining with them that she notices their body language and listens to their sighs of relief as they leave the room. In order for this to be rectified she takes another risk and actually asks one of the participants for feedback. He does not really give it to her, but the conversation between them leads to a new insight:

She calls Nadda to one side and asks for feedback. He tells her to just keep going, but then she remembers that all of these men work outside, and sitting inside must be very new for them.

Michelle then takes the next risk and checks out her hypothesis with the group as a whole. This could be a dangerous step to take because it might display uncertainty. However, it is presented to the group as an act of empathy, it is offered out of consideration for them, out of support for them and kindness.

When the group returns, she puts this to them. They agree, this is new, they are not used to sitting around, and they prefer to be outside.

The hypothesis is confirmed, however, what follows is also a surprise, borne out of consideration for both Michelle and for them:

... but they are happy to be inside for two days in the cool of the air-conditioned pink room, they tell her.

Michelle's empathic attempt to connect with them and to alleviate as many potential hurdles, which lie in the path of learning, is not all together accurate. However, inaccurate empathy may be better than none at all. There is a sense that Michelle has also missed out on the conflicting reality that it is immensely hot outside and although the men are very used to this, they are happy enough to stay inside where it is cool, and inappropriately pink. This could also be seen as an act of reversed empathy: they are now taking Michelle's needs into consideration and this act of support and agreement with her facilitates the launch of learning.

It is after this clarification that a new creativity enters the learning transaction. Michelle chooses to improvise. She decides to work with the group directly, following her intuition. But she demonstrates respect by checking this out with the group first:

OK, well I think we have to make some drastic changes to this program today ... So let's do things differently. Would that be all right with you?

This empathic demonstration of respect for the learner, shown throughout this story by the number of times Michelle checks with the group rhetorically, is key to the ongoing engagement of the adult learner. The act of asking permission, as it were, to take this path or that, and gaining consent from the group as a whole, is not only an expression of deep respect for the learners. It also acts as a way of emotionally connecting the desires of the learner with that of the learning facilitator. It provides an opportunity for the learner to intervene and certainly for the learning group to intervene, in an open way. It also allows the facilitator to legitimately move forwards in a certain direction, knowing that this has been tested out with the group. This legitimacy for all parties in the learning transaction enhances learning. Participation is high because a tacit agreement has been reached between those involved in the learning transaction. It is as if they are all learning together and the stage is set for both teaching and learning by all.

This empathic joining of learners can also lead to a greater understanding between the parties about the particular learning needs that are at play. In the story, Michelle asks the group to put on a short role-play. She tells them that each person will have a speaking part in the play, in other words indicating high levels of participation. What comes back to her, however, is a surprise:

*Tink: That's good, cause I can't read, so I can't have a readin' part!
(They all laugh).*

The issue of literacy had not entered Michelle's mind. But as her work continued, what unfolded was the notion that several of the participants could not read, or could not read very well. Michelle does not dwell on this, but stores it in the back of her mind. This is an extremely important piece of information, which had not been disclosed to her by RoadWorks Head Office. Perhaps they, too, were unaware. Levels of adult literacy were known to be quite high in the Australian outback, among some groups. She had not thought that employees, who were chosen to become grievance officers for the Company, might not be able to read the material. Michelle does not dwell any further on this issue, nor does she raise it further with Tink, who spontaneously told her this information. She does not wish to

humiliate him or provide a less trusting space for him in which he felt uncomfortable. She simply carries on. But in the back of her mind there is a contingency plan forming about what the group might and might not be able to manage in terms of literacy.

The empathic, considerate and supportive learning environment having finally been established, what emerges next is the capacity of the participants to feel safe enough to be themselves. This is demonstrated by the beginning of a witty, humorous dialogue, as the men take up their task in the engagement in learning. What emerges is more and more personal data, which is respected yet funny.

MM: ... It might be something that happens when you go shopping, or when you play cricket on Sundays

Joey: They won't let me play cricket! (Loudly)

The entire room breaks into raucous laughter.

MM: Why won't they let you play cricket?

Joey: Because I used to play in the Broken Hill Jail First XI and they won't consort with me now. We might all get locked up, again, if I play with the Broken Hill Huskies.

Michelle's immediate acceptance of both the content of what has just been stated, as well as the masked humour, without judgment, surprises the men and is another next step in the learning process:

MM: I think you have a great play just in that one thing you said. (They look amazed. There is an uneasy silence.) I'm very interested in how you might feel about not being able to play cricket anymore.

This focus on the emotions that might lie behind Joey's statement has the effect of helping the participants to stop and focus more fully on what they are doing. The intervention is not

about stopping the witty statements. It is about challenging the participants to reflect on what they might be feeling about what they are saying. Soon after this intervention the two groups settle down into working together, so much so that they continue through the afternoon working together, not wanting to stop. Eventually Michelle has to bring it to a point of closure so that the groups can present back to the larger group the fruits of their learning, and to allow for processing of this.

Michelle joins them on the veranda. They are talking about the plays they are going to do. They stand in their two groups working, talking quietly, and practicing a move here or there ... They indicate they will need more time to do this. Michelle tells them all that they have an extra thirty minutes. Each group is very focused and takes the task very seriously ... By three o'clock they are ready.

The empathy displayed both ways by all participants acts potently to settle the group, to create safety in the learning process, and authenticity. The group begins to change from one which was avoidant of the learning process, to one which is now working through lunch time with the task at hand. The effects of offering deep respect and of demonstrating this repeatedly invites emotion to the fore. Emotion is not only welcomed but finds a sustainable habitat, which serves to enrich the learning transactions and to foster transparency in dialogue and action.

Rob begins to tell his story about his esky, and how a road gang played a prank on him once, destroying his prized icebox. Nobody laughs. There is a quality of listening, which exudes compassion and support for him in this scenario. His use of emotive language as well as the highly emotional recount of this story has the effect of silencing the participants.

There is dead silence. No one moves. Rob sits down. They sit, thinking hard, nodding their heads in empathy. The silence lasts.

The demonstration of emotion is not only about Rob's esky but it leads to self-disclosure that calls for understanding. Rob obviously feels that he will be understood, that he is being understood as his story unfolds. This is not just a story about someone damaging another person's property while at work. It is highly symbolic. Without the esky on these hot, dry roads, the men would not survive. The icebox is a symbol of survival. It is to be respected. For it to have been damaged indicates that the attack was on Rob himself, not just on his belongings. Rob demonstrates strong emotion in his attempt to make meaning out of the incident:

I felt that damned angry. Bloody bloke ... they didn't care. They thought it was funny when I went red and showed them I was furious ... I still feel cranky about it today.

The paradox at this point of his story is that Rob is recounting a time when people in his workplace behaved in exactly the opposite way to how he was now experiencing being heard. He tells us that he now keeps to himself and that he keeps his things, his belongings close to himself. He does not trust easily. Yet he then adds on to the end of his recount a highly personal point, said with great emotion:

Rob: Sometimes I tell [others] about me esky. Still got it you know. But it's bugged. A bit like me at the moment!

The invitation to use emotive terms and to demonstrate emotionality is taken up quickly when a group feels ready enough to allow it into the learning transaction. No sooner has Rob finished his recount, and following a silence, born out of empathy and respect for Rob, than someone else takes up the role of storyteller. The group is stunned.

I'm next. ... My story is about not being treated the same as everyone else. (The silence is now stunned silence.) I was born in Bourke on the mission...

Perhaps the stunned silence emanates from the fact that Andy is an Aboriginal man who is a road worker. There are many learning situations in which the dominant culture takes over the learning processes. But now we have two participants, the first two participants to give the group a recount, both of who are Aboriginal road workers. The dominant white culture is asked to listen and this normally talkative group is stunned, not only by the recounts of the grievances, which are portrayed by the speakers. It is not uncommon in circumstances such as this for the dominant white culture to dominate the conversation and for the aboriginal culture to be silent. This is now reversed. The emotional material in Andy's story is not unlike that which any of them could have experienced. There is a joining around the story and sameness begins to be born from difference.

Andy has had his salary docked because he needed to take his wife to the doctor. Any reasonable supervisor would have allowed a worker to do this, under the circumstances. But Andy is describing a situation that is racist in theme. It is the intimacy of the story and the emotive way in which it is presented by the softly spoken Andy, that holds the attention of the participants. One could imagine that some of the attitudes and stereotypes offered to Andy by his boss, as to why he needed time off, could belong to many in the room.

Andy: Anyway I felt a bit argumentative because I felt shattered. I never heard him ask other blokes for proof ... and then he says "I know you want to go to the pub. Some of your 'lations come to town I suppose. It's dole day, so I guess you're meeting them". Well I could have knocked him in the guts then and there, but it was me who was knocked in the gut s...

The silent listening by the learning group can be heard loudly throughout Andy's recount of an unfortunate situation about which he still holds strong feelings. The story is told softly and emotionally. It is a story of survival and the content challenges the group. The story is not just about Andy. It is about each of us in the group, about our own prejudices and views of the world. It is held sacredly. There are no interjections or interruptions. There is nothing

humorous about this story. The pathos grips all participants through to the end. Then the story is over.

There is an embarrassed silence this time. Awkwardness. An uncomfortable anxiety that is palpable.

The uncovering of empathy as a strong and vital emotion in adult learning began long before the group had met to learn. One suspects that even to volunteer to be a grievance officer that participants might have thought of themselves as someone who might be interested in helping others. This is a guess, not covered in this research. On the other side of this assumption is the fact that the learning facilitator exudes empathy both for the cause of human rights in the workplace, and for the men themselves.

As the program continues, Michelle still displays the same empathy for the men as when they arrived:

I instinctively knew that I would have to draw on all of the resources I had inside myself, and all of the resources of the men in the room. We all needed to engage in real-life examples of what caused grievances ... I had to let go of my own plans so as to allow these men to have a voice, very early in the program.

The empathy displayed over-rode what RoadWorks had consented to and had approved for the training. Michelle had to take a risk, a “leap of faith” as the existentialists might name it, and gain confidence in what was unfolding before her. Even if this meant dissent, a radical change in the designated learning program, what was more paramount was what she empathically sensed from the men, that the learning fitted the learner and vice versa.

I felt edginess about now changing pedagogy, some real hesitation, but this was an imperative that came from these men, the learning participants, not from the program. Once I knew this deeply, I relaxed into the process, in some ways very happy to be free of the vessel I had, myself, created.

The notion of working separately or working together was also thought about deeply by Michelle. This issue of how to use space and time is one not unknown by adult educators. Does one focus on allowing people the space to learn for themselves, in their own way? Or does one do this in groups, and how is this judgment formed or informed? When Michelle stopped to think about pedagogy, the notion came to her that these men spent an enormous amount of time alone.

I also knew that given their isolation, the aloneness of their work as drivers or road workers, their learning might be enhanced by working together. It was imperative to increase the safety of the learning space. This meant facilitating a lot of listening to them and between them, in my view.

Positive feedback to learners is central to encouragement and engagement in learning and this is not less so for adults. The type of feedback that one gives, however, the quality of it, requires a great deal of attention. For these learners it was clear that it had to be transparent. You had to mean what you said and say what you meant. Michelle faces this dilemma at the end of the first day and reflects on it with warmth:

By the end of the first day ... I felt a resounding empathy with the group and a deep respect. These men ... had obviously suffered because of the actions of others ... They required respect. Then they could be themselves, and learn.

Hope

The emotional state of hope can be heard in many adult learning situations. Commonly it is not usually named. It is taken for granted. When Smetna and Charlie take to the floor and tell stories to one another, they are immersing themselves in a conversation about hope. They tell the group.

Our story is about learning.

The story is about learning, but it is also a story about hope in the face of enormous hopelessness. Charlie begins to converse with Smetna. It is inside a conversation that hope can begin to emanate. Charlie tells Smetna, and the group, about his great struggle to learn to read or write English. He could speak Italian fluently, but because of the nomadic lifestyle of his family, he was moved from school to school. There was no grounding for his learning, no stable place. He left school at fourteen feeling a failure, but he found work for himself despite his inability to read or write.

I found jobs at different rodeo places, tending horses, you know, shearer's cook, that sort of thing.

The courage to stand in front of a group of peers and disclose illiteracy demonstrated enormous trust in both himself and the group. His expectation was that he would not be berated for something that had not been achievable. The conviction with which he spoke and the confidence with which he recounted his story of grievance acted as a counterpoint to what might seem a hopeless situation to others.

You get to the interview, you've got clean clothes on, an ironed shirt, even clean boots, and they say "Fill out this short questionnaire", and I can't do it. The first few times I told lies ... but eventually they figured it out. So I stay a labourer...

During the conversation Smetna challenges Charlie, suggesting that surely someone inside the Company could intervene and teach him to read and write. Charlie responds without bitterness and tells Smetna of one occasion he dealt with a training officer who was doing training needs analysis and who talked to Charlie about his training needs:

Eventually I summoned up the courage and told her I couldn't read or write ... Know what she said to me? ... She said she'd never met anyone in her whole

life who couldn't read or write. She didn't have a clue what to do. So she left me a form to fill in ...

This was not seen as a critique by Charlie, of the woman in that role. He displays empathy, pity for her:

... I felt sorry for her. Imagine knowing so much, but knowing so little ... she had no idea what to say to me.

Not only is Charlie now displaying a kind of understanding for the training officer, but this leads to him expressing a brief outline of all of the emotions he has suffered over time because of what he sees as his inability to learn:

[She had] ... no idea what it felt like. How humiliating it is all the time ... How much it hurts inside of me.

The conversation acts as a vessel in which Charlie can feel held by Smetna as he discloses these raw emotions. At the same time he is able to display significant hope in the face of such a hopeless situation. His wisdom about learning is then unleashed, in a humble and trusting way, as he makes meaning about the different texts that are being read. The training officer unable to read the humiliation and the hurt. Charlie unable to read and write.

Charlie: If she can't read those sorts of things, and I can only not read English or Italian, then I think I'm better off than her anyway ...

Smetna: Yeah, but she gets paid more than you, Charlie.

The whole group understands the economic cost of illiteracy. Different levels of education, of formal learning, are rewarded differently. For someone who did not have the good fortune to be formally educated, economic punishment for life can be a reality.

The group nods, acknowledging. They look at each other, knowingly.

Yet the very delivery of this story has in it the foundations of hope. Charlie is not complaining. He is naming his reality. This is his lot in life. He does not suggest to the group that he is a victim, or that he is resentful of what might be seen as a great disadvantage. He simply tells the group what it feels like and he makes meaning out of it by valuing his capacity to have taken a risk, his ability to experience hurt and humiliation, but not to be ruled by it. It is in the conversation, the speaking of the language, that he feels comfortable and valued. To him, emotional expression is everything. It is more important than formal learning or economic reward. His capacity to reflect on his feelings and report these in a wise and sensitive way, without blaming others, is a profound example of the power of adult learning to engage in a language of its own, given the right circumstances.

Smetna's contribution to the conversation with Charlie is almost a parallel story, but this time the focus is on Smetna being forced to grapple with formal schooling during the day, and having his father learn vicariously with him at night.

I did reading and writing all day and at night my father would stand over me and make me do it again. I think that's how he learned English really. Trouble was, I didn't have a lot of brains ...

Again, this part of the conversation Smetna is having with Charlie demonstrates his own comfort with himself and with the group. He tells them about his own opinion of his academic ability. It is not done so with resentment. There is no judgment about a school system, which obviously failed him. Nor is there bitterness about how his father learned English, using his son's lessons and his son as his teacher. There is hope here, very early in the story.

Smetna continues to develop his own discourse on how he manages day to day. He drives a truck and he tells us he is happy doing that because he feels safe. He then discloses that

after work he goes home and reads. He reads novels and travel literature. One has the sense that he is able to create a world for himself through the use of his imagination. Perhaps the travel literature also stands for the hope he carries inside himself, but stands in stark comparison to Charlie's inability to read or write. The two men share a conviction that things are simply the way they are. They are not agitated or angry with their lot in life. They have made various adjustments in order to etch out a life for themselves in different ways. They present reality in a calm, almost matter-of-fact way and the insertion of emotion, either by the way in which they tell their story, or the way in which they describe their experience, has the effect of grounding and contextualising their experience.

Emotion is the colour in what would otherwise be a black-and-white text. It enhances their recount. It draws others closer to them. There is a simplicity about it, which is engaging and enriching in the learning context. Stories about grievances are told not with angry resignation or bitterness, but with hopeful confidence and enormous sincerity. There is an openness to learn, therefore, despite the hardships. It is within the conversation about their learning journeys that openness to learning takes place. It is through the action and reaction of themselves and others as peer learners that trust grows between learners. There is an eagerness to learn deeply, in a meaningful way that is fostered by the emotive action and enriched by the depth of life experience and its delivery.

Smetna: I drive the truck, and then I go home and read novels, and travel literature. I've written some short stories too, about leaving Poland and my Grandfather. But hey, Charlie, surely someone in the Company can get you reading and writing lessons?

For the learning facilitator, if there was not hope that the learning process could be worked with and would have good outcomes, then one suspects this project might never have begun. Michelle's hope lay in her "secret" that this was an opportunity for her to demonstrate that there was no place for the misogyny that she suffered in workplaces herself. She felt immediately empowered that she may be able to make a change inside this

very large organisation and it was this hope that drove her with such vigour into the learning environment at Broken Hill.

Having been the subject of some humiliating moments at work in my own career, particularly misogynous behaviour, there was a part of me that felt empowered to make a change, something I relished and delighted in.

Michelle was bringing her own personal story to this situation. Again, not uncommon for us as adult educators, because in one way or another we each carry with us our story. But rather than carrying it in a bitter way, Michelle looks forward with conviction and confidence to the possibility of effecting just a little social change in one small way. Though the methods through which she viewed how some of these changes might be enacted were never acted upon, there was a passion and a sense of greatly looking forward to this opportunity:

I imagined that they would require a lot of tutoring from me, in order to change the attitudes that I assumed they already had. I felt challenged ... I was excited by this prospect and eager to get started.

As the learning program gets underway, one senses deeply the hope held by Michelle. This positive outlook acts as a counterbalance to the anxiety they each experience in the program. The passion and sincerity that this would work, that they were on a journey together from which there was no return, was grounded by the stark realities of the many challenges faced by all. For the men, they were faced by the notion that they were being sent yet another “city chick” to work with them. They were not impressed, initially at least. For Michelle, she was faced with not only improper facilities, no program or resources, illiteracy and attitudinal issues which needed confronting, but with her own sense of anxiety and hope.

Care and peer support

The capacity for adult learners to demonstrate care and peer support towards one another, during adult learning, requires some discussion. The Roadworks story demonstrates, from beginning to end, the enormous influence of care in adult learning and the love of learning itself. Michelle reflects on this during the preparation:

I felt pleased with the final copy ... but overwhelmingly challenged to make a difference towards justice and working conditions in a very large workplace.

From a group of men who arrive nervous, anxious and perplexed and through a learning process, which carefully nurtures a learning environment, and which is deeply respectful of each person, there emerges a group of learning participants who display warmth, encouragement and affection for one another. This is displayed both verbally and nonverbally.

Rob begins to tell his story. There is silence as each person listens to the other, with deep respect.

It is displayed through the huge plates of Chinese food that is served for them. The learning facilitator encourages respect as she encourages and fosters learning in this broken context.

When they presented their work, theatrically, I was overwhelmed with feelings of admiration for them, and I showed this both verbally and non-verbally. Their simplicity and the depth of emotion they showed moved me deeply ... I felt deep respect for them and demonstrated this by my feedback. This feeling of regard and deep respect seemed to transmit itself and increasingly they showed respect for one another.

We see the participants tending to one another, protecting and nurturing the other. We see it in the way they stand together, outside, at smoko time. We watch it as Michelle remains

separate from the group until such time as she is invited to join in. She must give them the space and time they deserve. These two values, space and time, are named as a subtext to almost every scenario of grievance that they display. It is cultivated carefully and gently by Michelle who demonstrates relentless listening to every movement, every sound, every action and word used by the participants.

From the way the men are gently encouraged to begin when they are ready, taking into consideration the long journeys many have had, through to the checking out of the venue and not making a fuss that it may be unsuitable, the expression of love in action is central to the capacity to learn. The act of ignoring what potentially could inflame some people, the sexual innuendos and the jokes, and seeing them as the expression of anxiety rather than as personal affronts, calls for a capacity by the adult learner to be focused on the task, to stay in role and to trust her experience:

I felt vulnerable and defenceless. If this strategy did not work, it could end in disaster. I felt the pressure of how they might assess me and report this ... Despite this I had to gather my courage and hold onto my experience as a facilitator of adult learning, and forge ahead.

These two capacities, to focus on the task and to remain in role, are not rigid or mechanical actions. Rather, they foster a capacity in the learner to support both their peers and eventually the learning facilitator. The work of socio-analysts in understanding this phenomenon will be discussed later. For the present, however, these two keystones merge in and out of the learning process:

The ease with which they did move into working groups caused me immediate relief. I urged them on, coached, made small suggestions, and modelled possibilities, always gauging what I had done so as not to intervene too much. I challenged, encouraged...as my anxiety shifted into relief and joy at what was happening, their own anxiety did likewise.

The promotion of care in learning environments is seen in the friendliness of the participants and of the learning facilitator. It is demonstrated in the way participants withhold judgment and even in the way in which they tease and provoke each other in good humour. The friendly affection they display for Michelle is actioned through their invitation to her to join them for drinks.

Their offer to me to join them for drinks after day one was an indication of the bonding that was beginning to occur ... I did not need to weaken the learning transaction by diluting it with socialisation at a very early stage.

The participant's desire to learn is recognised and seen for what it actually is. It is an act of care, for one another, to participate at the level on which they are challenged to be involved. Many of the stories of grievance are littered with incidents of harshness and of no care. They are reported to the group with the integrity of emotion. There is a widespread sense in the content of each man's story that the pain of what has happened can be presented along with the facts. The hurt does not need to be hidden. It is there and it is legitimately available for all to see, in a measured way. Without this, then the stories the men told would simply be case studies. They would be third-party incidents, which held little or no meaning. What could have been created, had Michelle used the training manual, might have been someone else's stories which may have had no real connection with the reality of what was presented by the men, by default.

Michelle's role in preparing for this learning journey, also displays clear aspects of great care. Despite the confusing and difficult beginning with the RoadWorks Head Office group she proceeds through the pilot group work in a manner that depicts the greater end that she has in sight. Even the unreality of the pilot program did not prevent this focus from being a distraction:

They took on different parts in role-plays, such as road worker, truck driver, leading hand, engineer and so on. I remember feeling that there was an air of unreality about the learning-work being done, about the engagement in

learning, but I felt anxious that the program would be accepted and acceptable at this level in the Company. If it did not pass here, it would go no further, and the program would be “shelved”. I did not want this to happen.

Part of the act of care, which a learning facilitator needs to understand, is that of self-knowledge. Michelle has to be in touch with how she feels and naming this for herself, even processing it through writing it down, helps her to be centred and ready for what is ahead. She reflects on how she is exactly feeling, just before leaving the Motel room and moving into her role at the restaurant/training facility.

I felt more confident than ever, a little anxious, but a good mixture of feeling good about the program and low-level nervousness.

Noddings (2005) makes the distinction between the virtue of care and caring relations. Most of us would claim to be caring individuals, as care is a virtue commonly held. Caring relations requires us to understand who we are in relationship with others and to accept responsibility that our actions, how we live and interact with others, always affects the ability of others to live well, learn, and take action in the world. As Southern (2005) suggests, “Care is a way of being. It extends beyond what we feel for others to how we live and take action together”. Sharing authority for teaching and learning brings us into a relationship of care that allows us to enter and share the space of not-knowing and vulnerability that is necessary when emotion is uncovered. The discovery of self through meaningful relationships, mutual understanding, and collaborative action, can be one outcome of empathic learning processes.

When care can be expressed in its many different ways inside adult learning, then there appears to be a platform set for other strong emotions to have a place to exist and co-exist. Hope can be seen in the face of deep hopelessness. Curiosity can be encouraged so that inquiry can take place. Empathy can exercise itself appropriately as a key tool, in the best sense of that word, in encouraging learning. Vigour can be enthusiastically seen and transmitted so that the spirit of what happens in learning can have a vitality of its own.

Anxiety can be held, housed, not shut down or controlled. Anxiety with all its manifestations can be seen for what it is. The worry, concern and unease experienced within the learning group can be held well enough, and for long enough, for the disquiet and agitation to lessen, when people are ready.

This careful consideration of how to foster the emotions that are present inside participants in adult learning, or in fact in any age group, is the essence of the importance of recognizing emotion for what it is. When emotion is expelled from the room, when it is not seen or allowed to be present, when it does not have a name or a place in the adult learning environment, then learning is much poorer for it.

Story Two: The Meeting

STORY-TELLING

Narrated by the writer.

Characters in the story:

Michelle: An adult educator, psychologist and the meeting facilitator.

The Provincial: The Head Brother of a religious order who meets with victims who have suffered child sexual abuse in the past, at one of the order's schools.

The Victim: A middle-aged homeless man, who was physically and sexually abused as a child by one of the Brothers belonging to the Religious Order. This Brother is now deceased (he was in jail before he died).

Support Team:

Stage Manager: A colleague in media relations who sets up the meeting.

Choreographer: The head of the hotel's function rooms.

Background Sounds: The sounds of passing traffic in a Western Australian city.

Lighting: Halogen down-lights sit just above the boardroom table, "floating" from on high.

Music: There is silence.

Sets: The room holds eight black leather chairs, around a polished mahogany boardroom table. There is a side table for tea and coffee. In front of each

chair is a writing compendium including a pen and hotel writing pad with “thoughts of the day” written on the front of each page. A jug of water sits in the middle of the table surrounded by glasses. Mints are available in two places at the centre of the table.

The performance lasts approximately one hour.

Introduction

Over the past fifteen years there has been an increase in the number of religious organisations to whom complaints have been made, that children were cruelly treated during their time as students or guests of the organisation. In particular there have been numerous allegations of sexual abuse, torture, physical punishment, emotional and spiritual abuses, which have been made and proven, against priests and men and some women from religious orders. Perpetrators have gone to jail and many religious groups have been left to deal with this crisis without preparation or planning.

The abuse of children by persons entrusted with their care is an issue in which there is a wide variety of perspectives and agendas. There appear to be several stages that victims, perpetrators, the leaders of religious organisations and the general public go through, in dealing with the issues at hand. However, within most religious organisations over the past fifteen years or so, is that learning about how to effectively and compassionately face up to, deal with and manage all the consequences of complaint management, has not happened. Although some progress has been made, there seems little change by religious organisations towards dealing more constructively with victims, their families, perpetrators and communities, so that together their learning about what happened, might deeply affect the way in which such organisations are structured today, and develop ways in which victims and families can begin to heal.

As each wave of new allegations is brought forward world-wide, as millions of dollars pass hands in many countries as compensation, and as more and more church members appear shocked about the little they are told, there is an ongoing power base within religious organisations' culture which has not been examined. It evades visibility and scrutiny. It almost seems to be non-existent.

While there are numerous educational events offered by religious organisations to their members which purport to “train” people in dealing with these dilemmas at hand, (seminars, conferences, summer schools and in-house learning) little application of learning from experience seems to have taken place. Perhaps the learning reflects the current worldwide practice of deleting any emotional content from the interface of victim and religious organisation. In facing situations in which emotion and particularly distress runs high, perhaps the learning in which people engage sidesteps the emotional content of the interaction between the victims and the representatives of religious organisations.

The meeting described in this story took place between the Provincial, or Head, of a male religious order and a man who was once a victim of sexual abuse. The abuser is now dead. The victim has been to the Police to report his abuse. The Head Brother has invited him to meet with him. The Head Brother decided that rather than go through a formal church process, he would simply like to meet face-to-face with the victim, in an attempt to really hear what had happened to him. Because the abuser is now deceased, and therefore cannot apologise to the victim, the Head Brother offers to meet with him instead. The victim agrees. The facilitator (and narrator) was asked by the Head Brother to arrange the meeting and to facilitate the conversation between the victim and himself. The purpose of this was both to ensure psychological safety in the meeting room and also to make sure that each one had a turn in saying what they wanted to say to one another. This was the fourth such meeting between individual victims, and the Provincial and the facilitator, but the first meeting between this victim, Tim, and the Head Brother, Joe.

Creative action

Narrator:

I am sitting in a meeting-room at a five-star Hotel, around a boardroom table with seats for eight people.

The victim, known as Tim, leans against the table, arms folded, head drooped.

He tells us he is forty-five years of age, though he looks about sixty-five.

Heavily oiled hair parts on the left-hand side.

Fingernails are torn.

He wears shabby clothes, which look many years old.

This is the uniform of the dispossessed.

Joggers, decades old, have lost their colour.

The shoes are like the victim. No tread left (in the sole/soul).

The oily hair falls down to his collar, combed in straight lines.

A pale-blue denim shirt.

Cheap sweatshirt over the shirt, a few holes in the sleeve. Harley Davidson icons, once part of the sweatshirt, are almost washed out on the surface.

Discoloured jeans, very dilapidated.

These make up his possessions, these and a wallet, empty of credit cards or other signs of belonging.

The wallet carries two stained photographs: one of himself as a child at boarding school standing next to a Religious Brother, his abuser, who has his arm around him, holding him (as if) warmly.

The other is a photo of his first three children, all girls with blonde hair and winsome faces, long since disappeared from his life.

Tim has shaved especially for the meeting, this meeting, with the current “Head Brother” of the Order that ran the boarding school that Tim attended when he was seven years old.

He droops further down, bent towards the table, and every now and then peeks up and looks at the Brother, known here only as Joe, and the woman who is facilitating this meeting. Deep distrust fills the room. It sticks to the halogen lamps. Joe begins to listen to his story.

I am accompanying the Head Brother. I am a facilitator. I deal with the heart of the matter at hand. I coach the Head, Joe, to work in unison with his heart, and the heart of the victim, Tim.

Together, the two of us listen relentlessly to Tim's story piece by piece. He only needs to tell us as much as he is comfortable with ... We know that there is more to his story...we do not wish to distress him ...

Tim is one of ninety men in the same situation. Abused as part of the welcoming ritual at the boarding school.

Balls groped. Oral sex.

Sodomy.

A depraved way of saying "welcome" to a child who has an intellectual disability.

Then later, a few weeks later, after the children had settled into the school, all of them "handicapped" one way or another,

the resident paedophile Brother comes to this boy's bed at night,

and takes him for the walk of his life, which forever determines his future. He holds the naked boy in bed with him. He penetrates him.

If he cries, he strikes him with a belt. Makes him stand in the corridor, naked and alone, until morning.

If he is "good" he gives him lollies, or a cigarette.

Later, Tim tells us, the child watches the paedophile Brother at the school send some of his "special boys" to check out the other children.

They are boy-scouts: they scout the dormitory every night for a fresh youngster who will be good for the resident paedophile tonight.

For that, they receive favours: a bottle of beer; extra sweets after dinner; sexualised partnering.

One day, Tim is told, he will be one of these special big boys ... if he is good.

Tim tells the story haltingly.

It comes out slowly, little piece by little piece.

He is shattered, like his story. His self is shattered, as is his sense of himself. He tells of how he tried to tell the Brother in charge. How nothing happened. How that Brother then abused him.

He told of being struck on his naked bottom while in front of his classmates, for some small aberration. He shakes and sweats, recalling the horror.

I am watching him watching us. He is watching Brother Joe who is looking deeply into his eyes. He is watching what he is watching.

I prompt haltingly, so the story comes out more fully.

When Tim seems to be finished telling his recount for now,

Brother Joe responds.

He tells Tim, the man/child, how he feels being there, being there with him, telling this story. Brother Joe tells Tim that he feels horrified that these terrible things happened to him.

He tells the boy/child that these paedophilic men should never have treated him in such a way and he feels disgusted by their behaviour.

He assures the child/man that he did nothing to deserve this cruelty.

He says he is very sorry. He feels impotent, unable to say or do much in the face of such pain.

He apologises on behalf of himself, and the other Brothers.

He says that he knows this will never undo the hurt the man/child is suffering and has suffered all these years.

But this is how he feels.

Tim looks away. He says it feels weird after all these years.

He says this is different from what he expected. He didn't think anyone would want to know.

Then he cries, weeps. Apologises for crying like a child.

He says he did not ever think that anyone would want to hear, want to listen. He stammers, spits. There are front teeth missing.

He says he feels relief at having "gotten it out".

He was just seven years of age when his mother abandoned him to the State.

His father had already left.

She could not manage financially.

He became a "ward" of the State, he tells us.

The doctor said that he had a mild intellectual disability because he behaved so badly at school, so he was sent to the special boarding school, which the Brothers ran.

He still can't read or write. He was not stupid, just traumatised.

He watches me nervously as I now stop writing, as I stop making notes so that Brother Joe can remember later, who Tim is, exactly, and what he says.

There are so many men that Joe has to meet with. The record of the meeting is vital. I ask Tim if this is OK with him, for me to write.

He agrees haltingly.

I know that he means no and he does not know how to say this.

He says that he cannot write.

He watches my pen.

I put the notebook down and rest the pen.

He sighs then looks more relaxed.

We are now on the record off the record.

The coffee finally arrives. He has milk and three heaped teaspoons of sugar, two sweet biscuits and then a third.

They all have that, all of these fragmented, disheartened men.

They have sweeteners.

Though now it is different. He is no longer a child.

He drinks it carefully, noting with us how expensive coffee is these days. He can't afford to drink it.

The Head Brother asks him about his life after leaving the school. His story is like most of the others. No enduring relationships. Alcohol and drug abuse. He has been in jail "on and off". He gets violent. He has been in a mental institution. He has been on medication. He is on a government pension, living on \$200 per fortnight. He has "five or six" children. He does not know how many exactly, or where they are. He has not held a job for longer than a month, because he keeps "getting mad at people". He watches us, to see what we are watching.

We are looking at him earnestly, nodding our heads, feeling disheartened once more. We try not to show to him too much of our distress, but he is hungrily searching for it.

Once again I feel powerless, deadened by the weight of a life lost. He looks at us looking at him.

We are engaged.

Then the Head Brother says "I want you to know that I believe what you have told me about the abuse".

He looks amazed, and gets slightly teary once more, and dives into his emptied coffee cup.

The Head Brother goes on:

"I want to tell you that I feel absolutely disgusted that you could have been treated so badly by people who call themselves Brothers".

The victim looks stunned, like he cannot believe what he hears.

“And I want you to know that I hope that these Brothers end up in jail where they belong and I don’t care how old they are now. They disgust me”.

The victim begins to weep, invisibly.

“You were sent to that school to be looked after and to be taught how to read and write, not to be sodomised and belted and I am really sorry that this happened to you”, the Head Brother says.

The victim is now shocked.

He is speechless as the Head continues:

“I want you to know that these Brothers who hurt you are under literal house arrest at this moment”.

The victim grins, just a little.

“They are not safe to be let out on the street and I have told them to stay put. They are fully supervised and that’s where they will stay until they go to jail, or die”.

Some of those who hurt you are dead already.

The victim smiles widely, and then looks sad again.

The victim opens his cracked lips and a question drifts out, very softly:

“So, they won’t be able to come after me?”

“No, they will never be able to come after you.

First of all they do not know where you live, but secondly, they are not free to ramble around.

They are under strict supervision.”

“You are safe”, I find myself saying.

The victim nods. Relieved.

He looks at me. “How could they do this to me?”, pleading for an answer.

“I really don’t know”, I hear myself saying,

“But you were just a little boy, and you did nothing wrong.

There is no excuse for this.

But you did nothing.

You were just a little child”.

There are tears in my eyes, and I keep them in.

Many years of professional practice helps.

But I allow the tears to be there, so he can see them.

There are tears in the victim’s eyes.

They plop onto the table in front of him.

“So what happens now?” he asks.

He is not looking at us, but he can see us.

We see him.

We hold his face in our gaze.

His cheeks are now red.

“I would like you to know that I am here to help you”, Joe says.

So I would like to help you today, find out how I can do something for you in a concrete way here and now, to help you get on with your life.

Then later, in a few months I will come back and meet with you and see what I can do to help you in a bigger way.

So that you can put all this behind you”.

The victim looks bewildered. “So what does that mean?”

He looks surprised.

“Well, for instance, do you have any outstanding bills at the moment that I could pay? That would be one way I could let you know that I am here to help you”.

“Of course I have bills ... there’s the phone; the hire purchase left on the television – that’s \$1,400; other things.

And me teeth need fixing.

You don’t know how much I hate looking like this.

Me front teeth got knocked out at school.
One of the Brothers did it.
He picked me up and threw me into a door.
Broke me teeth”.

The victim looks ashamed. He does not look at us.

“I want you to know I am here for the long haul,” Joe says.
“Let’s total up the bills you would like me to pay for you now and I will get a cheque to you.
This is just a small way of me saying to you that I want to help you.
If I can just do one small thing for you right now, then you might start believing that I can actually help you.”
Tim sneaks little glances at Joe.
“And what about counselling?
Have you ever had the chance to talk to someone about all that happened to you?”
“No, I just keep it to myself ... it’s better that way”.
“Well, I will hand over to Michelle now and she will talk to you about counselling.
She is a counsellor herself.
She knows the name of good counsellors in this district who would be willing to work with you.”

I feel sick.

Participant panel

The Storyteller comes back onto the stage and discusses the creative action with the Head Brother and the Victim, both of whom appear by satellite link via video to the audience.

Storyteller: Thank you for coming in today and allowing the audience to hear from you about this story. For the sake of today’s interview we will call the victim “Tim”

This is not his real name. He really would like to maintain his privacy. You also note that Tim has asked for the camera to blur his features so that we cannot identify him, but we can hear his voice. Are you *there*, Tim?

Tim: *Yes. I am here.*

Storyteller: Thank you very much, Tim, firstly for giving me permission to tell this group about you and something of your story. You told me that you wanted this to happen, because you wanted people to “know what it’s like to be me”.

Tim: *When Brother Joe and Michelle first offered to meet with me, I felt very scared. Then, once they met with me, I started to feel stronger.*

One thing I was scared about was how angry I felt and I was worried I would get angry at the meeting and become violent. Hit them or something. That’s what has happened in the past.

At the Meeting when Brother Joe told me that he believed me, I felt such relief. I couldn’t believe it. I thought nobody would believe me.

I also felt sad that it had taken so long to tell someone.

I felt that Brother Joe really believed what I had to say. He offered to help me, to give me some relief. He also offered counselling. But this is not the most important thing. The most important thing is the way in which they both spoke to me, like they respected me, like they understood, like there was hope. This is the first time I can remember anyone being that gentle with me. It broke me up.

Now all of this happened about five or six years ago, and since then I have had a lot of help from Brother Joe. I still feel very sad about what happened to me. I still act this out sometimes. But now I have found out that there is nothing

wrong with my head, and Joe has paid for reading and writing lessons for me and I can read and write, then that has made a big, big difference to me. The fact that the Brother who has done all these things to me is in jail, also helps me.

It's not about the money. It's about being treated differently now, so that you begin to kind of hope again. That's a very big difference to feeling very hopeless.

Storyteller: Thank you very much, Tim. Those are very important comments about that meeting. You are very brave to come on line to meet with us so that we can learn more about how to help you and people who have had some of your experiences.

Now I would like to introduce Brother Joe to see what his reflections might be about the meeting.

Joe: *I remember that Tim was one of the first people we met after this entire ordeal started. I remember feeling extremely nervous. I knew that we needed someone experienced to facilitate these meetings because anything could happen, they are so emotionally charged. I also needed to learn how to deal with these men so that they felt heard, were believed and were given an on-the-spot apology plus an offer to help them.*

I remember this meeting with Tim not just because it was among the first meetings, but because Tim exhibited a lot of real pain. He found it very hard to speak and we had to wait a very long time with him while he gathered himself enough to get some words out. This waiting was important. I also remember Tim because of his tears. I remember them plopping all over the table. I was struck by how much he was hurting and how hard it was for him to say

anything much about his experience, but I knew that if it wasn't already too late, we could begin to engage him in a very different way.

Tim became one of our most frequent telephone callers following this meeting. He was often on the Free Call Hotline chatting to me or to Michelle. We were able to form a real relationship with him. Eventually he did go on to receive therapy and has had his ups and downs in the past few years. However, that connection with him is still very strong.

I think that the fact we both shared how we felt helped enormously to think deeply about the situation he was in as a child and to respond appropriately, with compassion and hope.

I expect that Tim and I will have contact for a very long time because of this connection, and that will make a great deal of difference to me and to him.

Storyteller Thank you, Brother Joe. Well that brings us to the next stage, which is an opportunity for all our listeners to think about this story and to reflect together on what you both have said. Thank you for responding to our request to reflect and research with you on this very important topic.

We now move to listening to Michelle's reflection on what she noticed during this important meeting and in particular some of her comments about both the lead-up to this meeting, the experience itself, and the reflection after it was finished.

Author's review

Following the reading of the story by the narrator, and after hearing from the two participants in the story, I now write my own reflections on my own experience of this story.

My story

One Saturday morning in May 1999 my home telephone rang. Brother Joe was on the other end of the line. Somehow he had found out my telephone number. I had not previously met him, but he told me that a couple of other colleagues of mine had referred him to me. He was very apologetic about phoning on the weekend and I was feeling a little testy about this myself. I indicated this to him, point blank, that I did not work on weekends, however, there was something about the tone of his voice, and the panting of his breath(lessness) between sentences that kept me focused on this call.

Something had happened, he told me. The front page of the *City Newspaper* had a large and damning story about his group of Brothers, with allegations that in the past, they had seriously abused many schoolboys. Some of these boys had come forward to the newspaper. There were photos of (now) elderly Brothers on the front page and a two-page spread about the school, the order and these Brothers. He needed help. He did not know what to do. He had been onto his lawyers, who had drawn up a proposal for him challenging the legitimacy of these claims, but he did not feel comfortable with this. What if the men were telling the truth? What if this had actually happened? There could be arrests of Brothers and court cases. But most importantly how was he to deal with these victims. The paper mentioned twenty-one of them. There could be more. Could I help him? The newspaper and other news media were beginning to phone him. This was a crisis. He had not done this before. What was he going to do?

I remember hearing both the urgency and the sincerity in his voice. If it had been just urgency, I probably would have responded very differently. But I heard something else. This sincerity had an air of genuineness about it that I had not heard very much from other Major Superiors I had worked with in the past. I had experience dealing with some church people who found themselves having to deal with this kind of problem, managing complaints against the Church. I did not much admire them on the whole. I found them

hollow, dissociated, uncaring on the whole. They probably weren't, but this was how it seemed to me.

This was something different. This was authenticity in your face. Here was someone not only worried about a public relations nightmare. Here was the sound of genuine care about the victims. This was new. I had to see it for myself. I arranged to meet with him later that afternoon, then logged on to the Internet to look up this religious group, about whom I knew very little and to find the Newspaper story from that morning's news.

When I arrived at Joe's home, on the other side of Sydney later that same day, I did not find the usual "Church" building. This was just a normal house in a normal street. Joe looked like just a normal man in his early fifties. He was very grateful I had responded. He was very nervous, very upset. We went into a private office area and sat down. He showed me the newspaper article, which had been faxed through to him. This is definitely not the way to find out that some members of an organisation you have belonged to for many, many years, have betrayed you. I read the story again, with Joe, and remember having that kind of "oh, no!" experience out loud with him.

This was repulsive reading. The details of physical, sexual and emotional abuse were deeply unsettling. The names of at least eight Brothers appeared in the newspaper with old photos of them. Some were long since dead. Also in the paper were photos of young children aged between eight and fourteen years. They were the ones who claimed being abused. The allegations were horrendous. I began to feel very frightened and told Joe something to the effect that "this is very scary stuff", to which he nodded in agreement.

There were other complications and as the story began to unfold there were more and more challenges. Some of the brothers who were named were on the executive group who worked closely with Joe at present. Others were in charge of large facilities, schools and hospitals. Some were retired or deceased. Others had never been posted to that particular school, so there could be mistaken identity issues.

The loudest “oh no” came straight out of my mouth when Joe told me that all of these men attended the school which was set up for mentally disabled children. The children were all simple. All “intellectually challenged”. They each had some kind of learning or communication disorder. That was why the school was set up. Some had behavioural disorders. Others were physically handicapped as well. Oh no! The smallest of the small, the most fragile in our society, had been attacked. My sense of grief for these children was overwhelming and I sat with this immense sadness. I shared these strong feelings with Joe and he nodded, once more. The look of desolation on his face is well remembered and was repeated many, many times over the coming years.

I also felt a mixture of rage and disbelief as we sat with the news report and asked questions of each other. How could this be so? If these children were mentally disadvantaged, then how could they remember what had happened to them? If they were handicapped in their mind, how on earth would they be able to recall, recount, recognise, identify their perpetrators? Was this a beat up? Did these children and their families make it all up? Were they out for money and compensation alone? If so, who had set them up to do this? Surely there were other teachers at the school who would have seen the signs of abuse, if it actually happened? Maybe we should be suing them, paying them back for these outrageous allegations! Surely all of these allegations cannot be true, some of these Brothers are highly respected members of the Order! This *can't* be true! These men probably ganged up together and learnt a story off by heart. Where was the evidence? The school was now closed. It had been knocked down. It no longer existed. How can they prove what they are saying?

Disbelief soon turned into denial and Joe and I sat in that state for many hours, feeling a whole lot better. Then the phone rang and Joe answered it. It was Tim on the phone. He wanted to arrange a meeting with Joe. Joe put on the loudspeaker so I could hear his voice. It was pleading, in pain, distressed, drunk. Joe's eyes met mine and we both filled up with tears. Here was the voice of the dispossessed, the unwanted, the very people for which this order was founded to assist. This was not made up. This sounded very real. Joe finished the call, telling Tim he would certainly meet with him and he would phone him back. We sat in

silence. There was nothing to say. Denial now began to turn to possibility. The phone rang again. Somehow Joe's phone number had been released and for the next two hours victims called, one by one, wanting to meet, to tell their story. They spilled some of it on the phone. Some very angrily, hurting. Others more gently, beaten, retreating, terrified.

After a very sleepless night, I met the next day with Joe. We now both knew that there was something to this that we had not been able to process. We talked further about "what if", but this time we stayed in the reality of "what if it did happen" rather than the opposite. A strange feeling of both anxiety and peace descended upon us. I felt calm yet terrified. There was a lot to do, to arrange. I recommended we phone Paul, who was a professional public relations person I knew would be helpful. Paul came on board and assisted not in deflecting the media, but in being the go-between. We set up a hotline for victims so calls could be better organised and could be free for the caller. In all, another ninety men came forward and over a period of one year, each of them was met with, some were met with several times. We visited jails, hospitals and family homes. We met in hotels and meeting rooms, boardrooms and hostels. We sat in prison cells and around kitchen tables. We met with victims and their families. We met siblings who had all been at the same school at the same time and who suffered the same distressing treatment. We listened relentlessly, while at the same time a huge police investigation continued.

Five years later, Joe and I are still meeting the Tims of this world. They still call occasionally to tell Joe how they are going. Many of them have had large sums of money placed in trust funds as a 'pastoral gesture' for all they have been through. Some Brothers have gone to jail. Others are long retired, unable to give evidence. It has been a sordid, difficult, drawn-out matter. Joe has remained faithful to Tim. Having re-engaged him with great compassion and care, he will stay there for Tim and all the other Tims, until they no longer require his assistance. Many have received therapy. Some have not been so successful and have committed suicide. Others have died on the streets or in motorcycle accidents on lonely country roads.

The feeling of what it has been like is overwhelming, still, from time to time. Denial sometimes takes the form of finding a large posse of disbelievers, which tries to storm Headquarters and move Joe out of role and attempt to get him, and me, to join them. We resist. At other times I felt ripped off, beaten, crushed. Two of the “victims” were lying to the police. Nothing happened to them at all at the School. They made the story up in order to receive monetary gain. Both Joe and I felt betrayed and even a bit silly that we had been “taken in” by these two men.

But at the end of the day who will ever know what really took place? Who are we to try to gather recounts of human history when the scene was so obviously one of devastation. Joe and I cheered when one magistrate said that this entire episode was not so much about who did what to whom but that like the war crimes, something terrible had happened. We just didn’t know exactly what, exactly by whom or exactly when. But it was real and it actually happened.

We still take phone calls on the hotline. We speak to troubled young men who may never get over what happened to them. For me personally, this is a “long-haul” job that has no real end. It is a progress. It is organic. It feels real and is not stuck in denial. It is a relief to know that so many have been helped. It is also devastatingly sad to know that for some it is too late. They have taken refuge in madness or addictions or in the acting out of their own abuse, in order to manage the devastation. This hurts. But at the end of the day we did our best. We ignored the advice of lawyers and police to take the black-and-white legal route. Instead, we met these people eyeball to eyeball, with compassion and respect and openness to learning. And for me that has made all the difference.

Audience discussion/data analysis

While reflecting deeply on the stories I heard on these meetings/this meeting with Tim, I discovered that the central themes emerging were in alignment with some of the other stories displayed in other theatre spaces in this research. In particular the themes that I discovered in the stories Tim told include:

- ◆ The expression of emotion
- ◆ The role of denial
- ◆ Suppressing emotions
- ◆ Being conscious of one's behaviour and suspending judgment
- ◆ Naming issues/gaining freedom/trying to get it right

The expression of emotion

My personal challenge in experiencing and then expressing my feelings with immediacy was accentuated during the event of this meeting and of the many meetings I attended in the course of this work over a five-year period. Listening to the recall of this story, hearing the comments of Joe and Tim and then reflecting on my own story at a level of deeper consciousness, surprised me. Embedded within all of this text is the growth in my capacity to demonstrate the presence of emotion and to allow it to be present, unfiltered, uncensored and as diverse as the many ways in which it is described in the text.

Occhiogrosso (1991) talks about the practice of “witnessing consciousness”. He reminds us that our thoughts and feelings are not who we are. “It is as if we have two selves, one which has the thoughts and feelings and another which is aware that we are having them” (pp. 33–34). Kegan (1994) describes this practice as “transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into object so that we can ‘have it’ rather than ‘be had’ by it” (p. 34).

From this aerial view, through the story-telling at different levels, I am now able to explore how I had come to allow myself to begin to admit emotion into each of the communications

that took place in this story. My professional practice as a psychologist has trained me in mostly holding onto emotion, “containing” it at the very least, and treating it, at times, as a remote enemy, especially when one needed to remain “neutral” and to not make a judgment. My experience in this story is exactly the reverse. It is the appearance of emotion and the allowing of emotionality to be present that empowers the relationships, energises the capacity to see reality and engages the human aspects in the different scenarios. Emotion is the energy source for transformation. By shutting emotion down, we shut down the capacity to allow it to inform our consciousness and thereby lose this enormously rich resource.

It is my contention in this paper that when emotion is uncovered and properly engaged in during crucial learning exchanges, such as when a victim of child abuse meets with the representative of the perpetrators of their abuse, it is likely that social change begins to take place. Further, the naming, exchanging and sustaining of emotion between individuals, or between groups, during such raw moments of learning, can lead to substantive healing. Critical to the crucial transactions in this learning process are the factors that contribute to, create and sustain emotionality in learning. The nature of emotion and its contribution to learning in these crucial situations is, therefore, of acute importance (Mulvihill, 2003, p. 3).

Sitting with a group of men or women and allowing strong feelings to emerge, is not a frequent situation I find myself in. Secunda (1992) states that strong “negative” emotions such as anger and rage were not emotions good girls were supposed to feel (p. 282). In the Australian culture white women did oftentimes express anger, however, the message that I received was that it was perceived as unattractive by men. Further to Secunda’s comments, I would add that feelings such as sadness, upset and deep hopelessness are not emotions men are encouraged or supposed to feel, let alone display, in the Australian culture.

As I reflected deeply on these stories, it dawned on me the significant extent to which I had internalised the belief that to be more closed emotionally, more “male-like” in my way of being, would lead to more positive responses from others, professionally. This behavior included stifling my emotions and feelings in order to be more like a man, in the workplace. It meant that I had to learn to put up with things rather than speak my mind and heart. As an Anglo-Australian woman I was taught to be strong, tough and independent. I was taught,

through my childhood, that to cry was not OK and furthermore, to have feelings that resulted in my wanting to cry meant that something was “wrong” with me. Often, throughout my life, having the possibility of the reputation that I may have something “wrong” with me, was more painful than ever having anything wrong.

In *Women's Growth In Connection* (1991), in a chapter on the construction of anger in women and men, Jean Baker Miller talks about the impact on women of growing up in a male-dominated society. Miller states,

We live in an andocentric (male-centered) society – that is, one that is organised in terms of the experience often as they have been able to define it and elaborate on it. This elaboration is called “culture” and “knowledge”. The society also is largely patriarchal ... (p. 182).

Miller discusses the impact on women of growing up in a society that says that the male way of being is “normal” and that the women’s way of being is therefore subordinate to that of the male. Miller goes on to discuss the psychological impact of this belief system on women. Generally speaking, women have also been led to believe that their anger over such treatment is irrational and unjustified; that there is something wrong with them if they feel anything like anger. Women, therefore, are left to believe that they are weak, unworthy and have “no right” and “no cause” to be angry. Miller states that anger therefore, “feels like a threat to the woman’s sense of identity, which has been called *femininity*” (p. 184).

As the only woman present, most times, in meetings such as described in this story, I am aware that I may have to hold the projections of others into me, and in particular the positive and negative transference that may or may not take place. It became clear to me that the withholding of displays of strong emotion was, at times, necessary so that I could get on with the task. However, it was not impossible to also demonstrate the presence of strong emotions such as compassion, respect and sadness in the face of the people to whom I was listening. I believe that such a demonstration enhances the capacity for connection between people and the ability of all to be truthful and more open in what they have to say.

Suppressing emotions

In the setting of “The Meeting”, Michelle chose to suppress her feelings of sadness for the victim and rage at the perpetrators in order to continue with the facilitation of the meeting. Following the story, Michelle shared her feelings of rage and anger at what had happened with Tim and with others who know about the story. The question of appropriateness in bringing emotion onto the stage, so to speak, is one which presents a dilemma for adult educators. In my professional practice, when I focus on the needs of the participants and in doing so, draw on my own intuition to empower the other individual, I feel more connected to my work than if I allow myself to get mired in the web of trying to suppress my emotions so as to please others. By trying to suppress all emotions I now understand that I could be actually giving up a part of my own intuitive wisdom, which is often perceived as a feminine dimension of one’s being.

According to Ruiz (1997), we often wear social masks to keep others from noticing our disconnection (p.18). Michelle recognises that in some settings she is able to fully bring herself into that arena while in others, she reveals less. While Michelle has the skills necessary to facilitate in many different settings, she questions how much of herself she feels comfortable revealing within groups and different settings, as well as the question of how appropriate this might be. I believe that this is an integral question for adult educators to consider and one that I will continue to explore with regard to my own experience and practice.

As I reflected on Michelle’s comments, and then on Joe and Tim’s comments, I became even more aware of the extent to which the adult educator’s comfort level in sharing openly about herself (or himself) in a given situation could affect her capacity to reveal personal feelings when triggered during the facilitation of learning groups of any kind. How much is the individual willing to disclose of herself within a particular group setting in an effort to model open and candid communication?

Michelle's insights helped me to see that I wear different masks that enable me to reveal more or less of who I am, depending on my comfort level in a given situation. I realise that my feelings may be affected by a myriad of variables, at any given point in time including the kind of energy that I might feel coming from others in the room. The challenge, as I see it, comes in being aware of the different masks that come into place, understanding why; and, in being able to make conscious decisions regarding my behaviour in the moment.

The teacher and learner; suspending judgment of self and others

In reflecting more deeply on this story, Michelle talks about what she perceived as somewhat mixed behaviour. She meets with Joe and forms a variety of emotions ranging from disbelief and denial through to rage and then to a position of "what if?"

It is very surprising, upon reflection, how quickly the feelings of denial come into play and how long they remain. There is comfort in not accepting what is before her and Joe. She notices her change in behaviour from acting out of the fear of the reality as it starts to seep into her consciousness compared to the virtually relaxed state of denial. It is easier to not suspend judgment and to refute a potential reality. She is beginning to learn. Thomas Moore (2002) in discussing transformational education, comments that he sees it as closer to Plato's conception of learning and remembering, realising the truths that are already there "to be recalled and embodied within us". (p.259). Moore goes on to remind us that:

At its very best the archetype of teaching/learning is not split up between two people. Both teach and both learn. The learner teaches himself but instructs the teacher as well, and the teacher is always at the point of taking his learning deeper (p. 258).

In this story, Tim taught both the facilitator and the Head Brother a great deal. They were there to assist him in resourcing him, understanding him and putting things into place to assist his learning and growth towards healing. Instead, Tim, and subsequently the many Tims they encountered in their work, taught them a great deal and provided a resource for them that was indelibly printed on their hearts.

Becoming more conscious of Joe's voice and the authenticity, which she heard when he first called for help, was also a critical cue. Michelle's comments regarding this authenticity were important in reminding me of the value of staying cognisant of my more subtle feelings and being willing to explore those feelings more deeply. I also realise that challenge involved in being willing to go deeper into negative feelings that surface unexpectedly while in the midst of facilitating such a meeting. The work, as noted earlier, seems to come in allowing for the emotions that I may experience without letting such emotions impede my ability as a facilitator to step back and view the interaction as a learning opportunity. How do I not allow my emotions to overwhelm me, thus inhibiting my capacity to make conscious and authentic choices regarding my behaviour within the particular group I am working with?

As discovered earlier, an individual might become less willing to share feelings if he or she perceives that she or he has done something wrong in the eyes of others. In training in adult education, as in psychology and facilitation, we often recommend, "suspending judgment" that we might feel toward another for various reasons. One question to consider as a facilitator is "Am I able to suspend judgment of myself, as well?" Essentially this would mean suspending my evaluation of my own behaviour, thus silencing that part of me that serves as my inner critic. I view this as a way of honouring my feelings while treating myself as compassionately as I would treat another. When I'm not in judgment mode, I'm more open and objective, and possibly, more capable of checking out my feelings within the group I am working with. It may also be helpful to others as the adult educator models such behaviour within the group, when appropriate.

In her treatise on emotions and education, Megan Boler (1999) writes strongly that

It has been patently obvious that what defines the discourses of emotion most predominantly are silences ... (p. 140).

Boler (1999) goes on to question how it might be possible for education to intersect with emotional epistemologies and she notes the silence within the academic community about how this might happen.

More specifically, how does a sexual abuse survivor's shame and his or her required silence about this experience inform his or her license to speak with authority? (p. 142).

By specifically inviting Tim to speak, without interruption, and through the display of empathy and compassion for him, displaying relentless listening to his recount, silence is broken. Welcoming emotionality into the conversation provides the valency for this silence to be broken. Emotionality provides the safety-net, the hospitality, the clear air space into which Tim's story can, as it were, free-fall, while still being held. Such a space can create room for transformation, or at least the soil in which transformative views of self and the world can begin to grow. This kind of soil can hold many different feelings, cognitions and intuitions, even those that are entirely different.

Michelle reminds us of the importance of allowing for different perspectives, especially the one or two voices that might appear to go against the majority view. As an adult educator it is important to create an environment that does not stifle the lone or different perspective so that we can gain a deeper understanding of the issues from various vantage points. The challenge, however, comes when the adult educator internalises or perceives as a personal attack any comments that are made by the group participants. Michelle speaks from personal experience in alluding to the fact that through her training, and with a conscious awareness of what's going on at any given moment, both with regard to the process and one's own feelings, the adult educator can more readily avoid taking the participants' comments personally. The goal is to facilitate in a more conscious and authentic manner, thus creating a more open environment for growth within the learning group.

Naming the issue; gaining freedom; trying to get it right

Having thought deeply about the text of the story of The Meeting, I then wrote more thickly about my experience in this story. In doing so I was able to name a wider and deeper range of feelings that I experienced in this "long-haul" work. This type of written reflection implies strongly the commitment necessary to be involved in this kind of work. It notices

the many disparate sides of the discussion that take place around topics as unsavoury as child sexual abuse. But I also note that five years down the track I am still taking calls from complainants. In other words, this work has a longevity and sacredness about it and a challenge that calls on every part of me to not only keep facilitating people to name the issues, but also for me to name issues for myself and for the organisation I am working for, and thus gain the kind of freedom that some of the victims, like Tim, have gained.

Adult Education is not always a glamorous job and the work that I carried out over this period was particularly unglamorous. I hint at this when I mention the various settings in which I met with the men who were victims.

This story and its various reflections, following on the heels of the RoadWorks story, reaffirmed for me the importance of acknowledging and allowing for the feminine dimensions of my self to manifest in my life's work. I believe that my life's work is part of the essence of who I am on this planet. The stories of The Meeting and of RoadWorks led me to explore even more deeply my contentment (or at times, lack of contentment) with my work in both the corporate and not-for-profit arenas. More specifically, how do I continue to get in touch with the kind of work that will promote authenticity in me, and in others?

I have often found myself emotionally triggered at the end of an adult education session, and especially if I have received a low evaluation from even one participant in the program. Forever trying to "get it right", or seeking perfection, can cause me a great deal of grief. Michelle's behaviour in The Meeting story tells us this. At a rational level I recognise a number of variables, both personal and professional, that might affect an individual's attitude toward a facilitated learning session. Such variables might include believing that one doesn't need the training, fear of failure, embarrassment, transference of negative feelings from past experiences, or resentment toward being forced to take time out of one's work schedule. In the case of The Meeting, other variables could include the role of denial in grasping uncomfortable recounts or memories, breaking silences about 'dangerous' topics, and allowing those who are usually disenfranchised from society, to speak and to be heard.

Although I am aware of the fact that I have little control over the above variables affecting the participant's attitude, unfortunately, one poor evaluation can negatively impact on my perception of the success of the facilitation, and likewise I often fear that management, whomever that might be, may also be affected in this way. I have often found it difficult to not take the individual's feedback personally when I perceived, to some extent, that my success as an adult educator was dependent upon her/his perception of the program *and* her/his perception of me as the program facilitator. I believed that one negative critique could affect my ability to get additional projects, given the competitive nature of the corporate environment.

Being called to give evidence in Court as a witness for the Crown, and being publicly cross-examined on my facilitation process (as actually happened as one outcome of The Meeting) is a more extreme version of being interrogated about one's performance. Having one's comments written in the media in a negative way, is yet another example of the public interrogation of situations which they find generally unpalatable. In particular, being questioned about the role of emotionality in such settings, and having to defend it on the public record, is a reality check in speaking up for the victims.

Previous to this research, and certainly because of the many such meetings which I facilitated, I sometimes experienced facilitation as being akin to a "performance", with a goal of getting all members of the audience to "like me", as opposed to measuring the success of the training by the attendees' growth in awareness and skill level. Feeding on my need to be liked, I found myself emotionally triggered if I had not met the standard of performance I had set myself. The result in such situations was that I believed I had "failed" if I received negative feedback. Ruiz states,

Not being perfect, we reject ourselves ... We cannot forgive ourselves for not being what we wish to be, or rather what we believe we should be (Ruiz, 1997, p. 18).

I have learned that if I was overly concerned about the possibility of negative evaluations at the end of a facilitated session, I was less authentic and present in my delivery style. This hampered my emotional style. At times, I've noticed my tendency to "walk on eggshells" as I tried to win the support of those who might not be happy about what they were hearing, either from me or from someone in a group. The processing work I have done through this research has assisted me greatly in changing this.

My reflection and inner work over the years of conducting this research has helped me to see the participants' evaluation of the facilitated session in a different light. I am able to recognise that in most cases the individual's dissatisfaction has very little to do with me. For various reasons, he or she may not be open at that time to participating in the facilitated session and may resent being forced to do so. The story of The Meeting led me to a deeper exploration of my fears, more specifically, my fear of not being "good enough," and my fear of rejection or failure. Savage (1997) points out that sensitivity to rejection can be a symptom or attribute of a number of psychological issues including depression, stage fright, highly sensitive nervous systems, shame-based issues, shyness and abuse. She states, however, that rejection, "is more than just another slice of the pie – it is also the crust that overlays these issues" (p. 3). Underlying many of our fears is the fear of not being accepted by others. This can greatly affect my emotionality. It can still, occasionally, cause me to "shut down", to put on a mask that keeps distance, so as to avoid rejection.

As I read Savage (1997), I felt that the following paragraph could have been taken directly from my own journal:

When I was a child my processing system didn't work very well; I was always taking something personally. My antennae were always out. I would watch and listen carefully, searching for cues from people around me. I'd try to read their faces, their tones of voice ... If someone looked at me the wrong way, I'd wonder, "what's wrong with me? What did I do wrong this time? How can I do it better ... It seems I was getting my feelings hurt all the time (p. 5).

Savage suggests considering that if there is some aspect of what is being said that is true, maybe our reaction may have more to do with the manner in which it's said. She states,

“Can you respect the truth of their words while disregarding their attitude? In other words, can you take it seriously, but not personally?” (p. 4).

Savage’s comments were extremely important to my own growth. I came to realise that to a great extent, my reactions sometimes had more to do with my perception of the attitude behind the words expressed. This insight reaffirmed for me the value gained in suspending judgment, especially of oneself.

Savage points out that rejection messages have been passed along from generation to generation. Our work, therefore, is to “learn how to break the cycle” (p. 9). Unfortunately, these unwanted behaviours couldn’t be totally extinguished. However I am more conscious of this strong feeling of potential rejection and sometimes I am able to talk about it in adult learning environments. At other times I am able to use my sensitivity to it as a way of demonstrating deep respect for someone who is “acting out” his or her own rejection experiences by being particularly demanding. In *The Meeting*, the realisation that Tim would have suffered enormous rejection and abandonment, not only at being placed in that school at a very young age, but also by the many abuses, I was extremely careful to ensure that he did not experience rejection in any way from me as the facilitator, as far as I could control this myself. As each of these meetings went on, one after the other, this “muscle” of rejection was strengthened. These men who had been abused taught me that whatever level of rejection I may feel, because of an adult education experience, faded into insignificance compared to the deep feelings of rejection they had to contend with. My resilience has grown dramatically in this area as a result of my research inquiry. This is an example of an educator finding an opportunity for learning as a result of something that the learner/“facilitated” person does.

As a result of my research, prior to an adult education session which I am facilitating, I now take time to “self-talk” and affirm that our work together will be a positive learning experience for all involved, including myself. And, while my intent is to do what I can to support that effort, I’ve also learned to detach a lot more – let go of my need for perfection! At the opening of a session I acknowledge all participants for where they are at, at this

point in their learning process relative to the given topic. I encourage them, however, as members of an adult learning community to accept responsibility for what they choose to take away from the experience and how they choose to support their team-mates. I explain to them that my role as a facilitator of learning is to create a learning environment where everyone has an opportunity to grow in awareness and understanding. The result is that I no longer accept full responsibility for the learning outcome. I believe that my personal attitude comes across in my behaviour in that I feel more honest and free.

I have also learned not to allow others' opinion of my work as a learning facilitator to dictate my emotions. I recognise, however, that as a result of many years of conditioning, it will take an ongoing effort to avoid my predilection to placating everybody. In separating from this need to please everybody in order to be true to myself (which also means ignoring my inner critic), it is important to follow my intuition so that I am authentic in my words and in my behaviour.

Although my inner critic still raises its head from time to time, I am less worried about losing opportunities for adult education training projects due to one or two poor participant evaluations. I am certainly far less worried about being cross-examined, literally or metaphorically, for my beliefs and professional judgments. I have learned instead to trust that my skill and my training style will lead to additional work despite the perceived obstacles. As a result of the awareness that I have gained over the years of writing this dissertation, I am more capable of surrendering, trusting and accepting that it will all work out well in the end. The negative experiences are noted, registered through emotion. Without attending to emotion, the potential for growth could go unrealised.

The work involved in this dissertation has given me a stronger grounding inside myself to trust that everything is working in my best interest in the same way that it did for Tim and Joe, and the road workers in Broken Hill. In naming the issue, I become free to fully experience being myself. I recognise that even the perceived negative experiences are there as opportunities for growth.

My reflection in recognising that the kind of work that I do allows me to be my most authentic self has also led me to question my own work in the corporate arena. Do the rules for success in the corporate environment make it difficult for me to feel comfortable bringing in the feminine dimensions of my own being? How might I create a work environment that will allow me to fully be myself – balancing the feminine and masculine dimensions of my being? These are the kind of questions that I continue to explore in the months of deep reflection with my co-researchers' stories while writing my dissertation.

Story Three: RunWay

LEARNING ABOUT PARTNERSHIP

A TWO-MAN CIRCUS IN FIVE ACTS

Introduction

Part of the corporate work with which Michelle becomes involved, from time to time, is in mediation, or conflict resolution, in workplaces. More recently Michelle has been involved in working with different business “partnerships” where there are difficulties arising between the partners, which seem not to be easily resolved. Often accountants or Board members refer this sort of work to her from a wide variety of organisations.

Quite often the intervention, alone, is about assisting the business partners to hear one another’s version of how they see their work together. It is not uncommon to find that despite a breakdown in real communication, business partners can avoid what is happening and can keep pretending to work together.

In this story Michelle chooses the metaphor of a circus to best describe as many elements of the story as possible, including how this work came to exist for Michelle. The Participant Panel, in which both business partners Milo and Warren participate, follows this thematic. The Accountants, as co-researchers, reflect somewhat on what they thought happened during the facilitated work together. Michelle also writes thickly about her role in this learning opportunity after reflection. Finally, all of this data is reflected upon and analysed.

Performers in Order of Appearance

Michelle: An adult educator and facilitator of courageous conversations

Milo: A young businessman, sales and marketing focus, and business partner of Warren.

Warren: A middle-aged business man, administrator, and business partner of Milo.

Support Team

Stage Manager: A colleague in the pharmacy trade who invites Michelle to work with the RunWay Team.

Choreographer: The Head External Accountant, who arranges the Circus.

Stunts Coach: The Assistant External Accountant, who teaches tricks.

Sound Manager: The sounds of the surrounding industrial park in the suburb of French's Forest, Sydney.

Lighting: Arrangement by Milo and Warren with specifically focused artistic lighting for the paintings hanging on the office walls.

Music: The sounds of birds from French's Forest.

Sets: Artworks by a painter from Sao Paulo who has eight oil paintings in the office, with deeply spiritual themes.

The performance lasts approximately one hour.

Scenery and properties, costumes and millinery, wigs, hair products all designed and imported from the best of European Circus houses.

About this circus-story

This is a story about how two business partners learn that attention to intimacy between them, and reflection on the emotionality in their relationship is necessary, in order for their business partnership to continue to be successful. I was asked to come in and facilitate some conversation and reflection with these two entrepreneurs, at a time when their

business partnership was failing. What follows is a snapshot of some of what happened during this process.

I have used the setting of a two-man circus as both a location and a metaphor for what I was observing. I do not mean to do this in any way that is derogatory. However the mix of playfulness, skill, demonstration of strengths and weakness, and even humour, allows me to develop this metaphor as one in which adult learning is sometimes held and played out.

Circus setting

The fine chemicals trade in Western countries is increasing dramatically. Alternative medicines are very popular. Self-empowerment through self-medication is being promoted alongside conservative medicine, as a “complementary” approach to good health. Warren and Milo work together in a multi-national company, as importers and sellers of fine chemicals. They promote key accounts with the sellers of very fine ingredients, from Europe and Asia. They work with “elder” chemists in making potions, supplements, so as to increase the health of already healthy people. The profitability of this is potentially huge in what is known as a “blue sky” industry.

After working together for five years, Warren and Milo decided to found their own fine chemical company. They snared a few key suppliers from their previous employer, and started RunWay International. They have been successfully working together for ten years. Now, there are problems in their partnership. A colleague, whom Warren has spoken to about his dilemma with Milo, tells them about Michelle, an adult educator. They devise a plan, which enables Michelle to be engaged by the choreographer, who also works as a Head Accountant, a person they all know. This Head Accountant brings Milo and Warren together for a meeting in the RunWay International boardroom, along with the stunts director, whose role it is to teach them new tricks. They agree that Michelle will work with Milo and Warren on a project called “Learning about Partnership”.

The creative action

Act One:

In the Head Accountant's (Choreographer's) Office

Michelle meets the Choreographer in his office. He keeps her waiting forty-five minutes to see him. He is always very, very busy; this is one of the first stunts she notices. He is a very successful accountant and he tells Michelle this. He shows her some tricks: he has just returned from Pebble Beach, playing golf with a client; and he wears a souvenir tie to prove it. He shows her a choreographed trick he learned which involved building the very building she was sitting in. This stunt makes sure that he feels in charge of everything all the time. He tells her that he knows Milo and Warren and he has been on surfing holidays with them, and on ski trips with them, trying to get to know them better, and trying to teach them new tricks, over the past ten years. He feels he knows their business minds, but that he has not “been close” to either of them.

The Choreographer/Head Accountant speaks to his wife in the middle of their meeting, on the telephone. He calls her “darling” and finishes with “I love you”. Another trick. Here is a businessman dressed as a guru who tells Michelle that his first priority is his family, and the second his finances. He hopes to retire soon. He is forty years of age. He tells Michelle about some of the tricks he has taught Milo and Warren: how to invest their profits, how to plan about paying tax, how to be more profitable in their business together and grow their business. He still feels like he hardly knows them. He is very afraid that their partnership might break up, and this would be a great financial loss to both of them (and to him). The business is at a critical stage in its development. Milo and Warren require outside assistance to help them work together more. He has tried all the stunts he knows. He now invites Michelle to help. He wants Michelle to teach Milo and Warren some ways of communicating better with each other and with their staff of about ten people with the long-term goal being that they learn to work together as partners, rather than competing against one another and acting like enemies.

Michelle agrees to meet Milo and Warren at their French's Forest boardroom in two weeks' time. It has been arranged that the choreographer and the stunts coach will be there too, because they are on the Board. Being on a Board is, in itself, a very thrilling stunt that takes years to perfect.

Act Two:

In the Boardroom at RunWay International

Michelle is invited into the boardroom. She has had to find this room, in this large building, among many different buildings, at the great industrial estate in the middle of the Forest. There, aged gum trees overhang modern offices and warehouses. Birds sing and cars roar. Everything is secured tightly. Finally she manages to solve enough puzzles to enter the building and RunWay's offices. On one wall is an Olympic Games flag, signed by each Australian medal winner at the Sydney Olympics. What a magic trick, she thinks to herself. On another wall, a most magnificent painting in oil. It is metres high and wide and depicts angels. They are jumping out of the frame, they are so alive. You can hear them sing, almost, Michelle reflects. This is truly magical! Michelle then enters the boardroom. They are all waiting for her: Milo and Warren, the Head Accountant (Choreographer) and the Assistant Accountant (Stunts Director).

The meeting begins. The Choreographer introduces Michelle to Warren and Milo. The two men look very anxious. The Stunts Director is more relaxed. He listens to every word the Choreographer puts forward, as if his very life depended on his accuracy. Warren and Milo glance continually at the Stunts Director, who comes in and out of the conversation, particularly when it gets a little personal. The Choreographer gives a very long introduction and finally hands over to Michelle.

Michelle explains that she is an adult educator and that she is interested in workplace learning, particularly in assisting partnerships to learn as they grow. She says that the Choreographer has told her that Warren and Milo are at a critical point in their partnership and that their business was under threat of collapse, unless this is reversed. All four look

terrified at naming the barest of issues. She assures them that workplace learning, if engaged with properly, can help partnerships become stronger and stronger. They look more relieved. She then adds that sometimes it is impossible to make partnerships stronger and stronger, and sometimes adult learning helps people to separate out from partnerships that are not sustainable. They look more nervous. She tells them some stories of life in different parts of the forest, and how even the most endangered species could find a mate, if it really wanted to. Learning about partnerships was a bit like that. But first there had to be some attachment to the task, some engagement with it, before her dance could begin.

Michelle engages the four men in trying a variety of tricks and stunts. She diverts, and attempts to engage her audience. She uses humour and tells them jokes. She role-plays what it is like, sometimes, to be in a business partnership? Milo is hard to connect with. He will not look at her. He stares at the trees and at the birds. He will not look at anyone directly. She will have to try another stunt. She can see that right behind his deep brown eyes is a pulled curtain. He will not open the gateway. Warren engages easily. He goes along with some stunts: he smiles, speaks about some of what has happened in a vague way, rolls his eyes, smiles, twitches, fiddles with paper, tells a story, diverts, tries not to look at Milo.

Michelle continues with her show until there is agreement for a process, a map, and a way forward. This involves several meetings with the partners, learning how to understand what a partnership is and hearing from them how they could take positive steps forward in their business. They both look alarmed and anxious. However, all agree. Dates and plans are made. Diaries open and then close. She leaves. On the way out she notices the artwork in the boardroom. It is of spirits, dancing. She is deeply moved by it and stands astounded at what she sees. Milo and Warren are with her. They are very fond of the painting. They have entered it with her. Together the three of them stand silently in wonder as together they enter the painting. Milo asks her if she has seen the painting of the angels in the boardroom and she says yes. He looks pleased, for the first time today. They stand together, in awe and silence for several more minutes, and then Michelle leaves. Warren shakes her hand goodbye, as does Milo. Their spirits feel less heavy.

Act Three:

In Milo's Office

Michelle goes back to the Forest one week later, to meet with Milo and with Warren separately. Milo entertains her with a program of risk, balance, strength and grace. His dark eyes are impenetrable. They look at her as if she is going to hurt him in some way. He is hurting. He does not speak about Warren or of their partnership. His performance is about himself. He draws on a piece of paper the names for all the acts he performs in his life. There is the dance of the property market, a large investment of time, energy and profit. The short folk song is next, of his family history, his father a hero in the Vietnam War. Fear enters his face as he talks about how his father's plane was shot down, over Vietnam, but his father survived. Next comes the drama of the history of RunWay, and then the ballet of a sideline company of which he is also a part, which is a sideshow in disguise, competing quietly with RunWay for fine chemical sales. A musical interlude, played by three-part recorders with folk guitar, tells of his parents and his sister, whom he now supports financially. He smiles, he is happy to help them. He likes being appreciated. He then moves to the show ring of the farm he owns at Jillaroo, a place in the countryside, to the horses, and the brilliance of his success through hard work. Finally, the operatic aria of his life as an unsuccessful student, a drop-out, a hard worker, driven towards success, marrying a high-school, hippy sweetheart, and now having two young Princesses in his 20-hectare castle, overlooking the Southern Beaches of Sydney. Milo tells Michelle that he is in Woodstock. His life is resolved. He is very, very happy.

He finishes. Milo swings on aerial ropes. He spins cups on long sticks. Balls are thrown in the air at the same time. He paints the artwork as his setting. All three rings of the circus are used. He brings in fine horses and the finest of riders. He balances many, many different objects on top of his head. There are whistles and bells, clowns faces and bad jokes. He uses mirrors that distort.

Michelle and Milo are both exhausted. His performance is perfect, no mistakes, nothing dropped or let slip, or so he thought.

Michelle goes for a walk around the Forest and thinks. She keeps listening to the stories Milo has told her. She notices that she is feeling very sad for him. Despite all his tricks going on simultaneously, she experiences a deep and very sad background. It suddenly strikes her that Milo is alone, disconnected, alienated, even from him, and she wonders about what has happened to him to make him so sad, and in so much pain.

Act Four:

In Warren's Office.

Michelle then spends time meeting with and watching Warren. He uses drama, pathos and story-telling. He injects humour along the way. His only focus is Milo. He imitates what Milo does and then reviews it critically. He acts as if he is confused, anxious, frightened. He cannot understand how Milo does all these tricks. Warren only wants to sing the song of RunWay, but Milo continues to bring in more stunts. Some of them fail and Warren has to pick up the pieces when things break, after they fall off his head. He fears that Milo is drifting away, in the process of being seduced by other circus companies. Milo also has other things going on in the circus ring that he has not told Michelle about, and as a spectator Warren feels alienated.

Warren shows Michelle what other tricks Milo has been developing, including the documentation of systems and processes, writing down all the tricks they have done together so that others can follow. He knows that while Milo is able, he is not happy, and Warren's jokes do not work on Milo any more. Warren sings an aria of abandonment, with a frightening high aerial act in the background, lacking any safety nets. Warren wears a harness, but Milo will not. He fears he is losing Milo. Warren resents the day that he changed the business ownership from a sixty per cent shareholding to a fifty per cent share. He was trying to even things up, but now he feels betrayed, abandoned, and a fool. He acts the fool, but does not use mirrors. There are, actually, no mirrors in the building

whatsoever. There are only windows, Michelle notices, which look outwards. There is nothing there, except the artwork, to help them look at themselves.

Act Five:

In Milo's and then Warren's Office and then the Boardroom

The following week, Michelle returns to RunWay. She spends some time with one last piece of Warren's performance. He tells Michelle that he needs extra time. She notices that he has a large Rugby Union Jersey in a glass frame, signed by every team member in the Australian 2000 Rugby World Cup team. Behind the desk is another Guernsey, this time signed by every player in the New South Wales State of Origin Rugby League Finals in 2002. Warren shows her these artefacts and speaks of each player as if they were his friends. Warren has evidence, everywhere, that he has lots of famous people on his side, but Milo will not be among them, he fears. Warren tells Michelle that the staff members of the Company do not like any of Milo's tricks and they always look to him, Warren, for leadership. He feels frustrated that Milo does not stay out of the way and let him get on with the business of running the Company. Milo should go out and sell, and leave the running of the business to him, Warren.

Michelle then spends time again with Milo. She gives each of them feedback on what she has learned about them through their performances of last week and again today. They are hungry for a reviewer who has looked and listened to their various acts. They invite feedback, separately.

Michelle tells Milo that he looks like he is dead. Despite the truly wonderful acts and tricks and stunts, which he performs, every day, he displays a look of being shut down. Milo is finally engaged. He wants to hear more. His eyes are nearly popping out of his head. Michelle does not use any props. No spinning balls or cups on sticks. Instead she breathes, remains extremely still (which is very hard to do in the middle of a circus ring) and gazes at Milo, holding him in her look. She tells him that she thinks his relationship with Warren is the most important relationship he has ever had in his life. His solo acts, songs, and dances

are important too, but he and Warren are intimately connected and so there might need to be some learning about how to sustain that intimacy over time, as well as some learning about how to let go, and take up his own place in the world, in his own way.

Milo asks Michelle if she thinks Warren is going to leave him, abandon him and his antics. He has the look of a child who is facing a dreadful loss. Michelle replies, “I am not certain, but at this point ... no”. Milo looks very relieved and the curtains behind his eyes fall open. He is now letting Michelle in. This is a new routine for him, a very dangerous one, from his perspective. They talk about the levels of intimacy that can exist in a business partnership. He is tearful. He then agrees to meet Warren with Michelle in the boardroom, next week, to talk more about what a business partnership might mean for each of them, at present.

Michelle then meets with Warren and tells him that she thinks that he has moved out of role. She thinks that perhaps he has joined in with his staff to examine Milo’s performances and to wonder aloud about him. She tells him that she thinks Milo wants to be closer to him, more intimate, but Warren keeps being distracted by the stunts and the risks of the acts. He has stopped seeing Milo. He has engaged in a sideshow, run by wives and children, where a knock ’em out game is played, and every one is a winner. Michelle tells Warren that Milo probably feels redundant. Warren’s circus acts and tricks are so good, increasing profitability 33% in the last financial year that Milo may have peaked early, and may not feel he has a real role now. They had to talk about it together, if the business was going to survive, and if their partnership was going to live on.

Finally Warren, Milo and Michelle begin talking together. Michelle invites Milo to show Warren the great number of stunts he has developed. Together, Warren and Michelle watch these and nod in agreement and in awe at the talent he has. Then, Michelle invites Warren to do the same. Warren has fewer acts, but they are extremely skilful. Milo and Michelle sit and watch the depth of these together and then applaud. They begin to see one another.

Michelle finally engages them in talking to one another about each other’s stunts and acts, and they do so for a long while. Michelle works with them, punctuating their learning

conversation, and helping them to move past this and to talk about themselves to one another. They stand in front of the painting of the dancing spirits every now and then, when they run out of things to say, or go blank about how something they have said actually feels, they wait in silence until they have re-entered it together, then they begin to talk to each other again.

Warren tells Milo that he feels like Milo has left him. Milo tell Warren that he thinks Warren is going abandon him. Milo cries, softly. Warren is tearful. They re-commit themselves to more conversations together, about RunWay and about their individual pathways. They also agree to talk about their joint pathway and agree that together, they can sort this out, but it is going to take a lot of work, learning about a new way to be in partnership together. They also agree that there is a lot be learned about planning for partnership together, over time, and changing the tricks and stunts they use separately and together.

They then ask Michelle to stay with them while they learn these new ways of being with and for one another. There are differences to settle. Will the circus support football or ballet? Topics like this cause enormous arguments and bitter feelings. Are any of their acts really redundant? Who has the final say? What happens when they disagree? What does it mean that they have been connected for fifteen years, and how is this connection to be nourished over time?

Michelle leaves RunWay, scheduling in more learning opportunities for the three of them, Warren, Milo and Michelle. The lights go off in the circus tent, the birds are asleep in the forest, and there is a ring around the moon.

Participant panel

The Narrator comes back onto the stage and discusses the creative action with Warren and some of the cast. Also present is the Head External Accountant (Choreographer), who invited Michelle to design this process of learning.

Narrator: Thank you for coming back on stage, Warren and for speaking with us for a few moments. I would also like to introduce to the audience the Head Accountant and Choreographer, who played a role in setting this production up and who, in real life, works with RunWay in advising both Warren and Milo in their business decisions. Milo is not here today. He telephoned me, after receiving the invitation some weeks ago, and said that he had found a new breed of cornhusk in South America, Brazil, I think. This husk, when ground down to oil, is a remarkable carrier for butcher's broom and Korean ginseng. He has been trying to find this compound and now that he has, he has rushed to Brazil to ensure that RunWay is the only supplier of this to the world. When produced it will sell world wide as an energiser for vegetarians recovering from chronic fatigue. It also helps scabies heal.

Warren: *Isn't that absolutely typical of Milo? Chasing dreams all over the world and very few of them ever work out!*

Choreographer: *Hang on, Warren, you agreed with him that he needed to go and find this stuff first hand, so it's a little unfair to blame him for not being here!*

Narrator: OK. Well, my thought for this part of the panel was to simply ask you to each speak aloud about what you thought about during this circus presentation that we all have just seen. The presentation looks at how emotion in the workplace can help when learning about communication and business partnering. So that we do not take up time from you, the audience, having the opportunity to discuss what you saw on stage right now, I would like to ask both of you to

briefly tell us what came to mind when you saw this presentation. Following this, the author has written some points for us all to consider. At the end of this panel I invite you all to adjourn to the foyer for refreshments and the opportunity to discuss the contribution of this “circus” to the understanding of emotionality in adult education. Warren, how about you go first.

Warren: *Well, thank you very much everybody and let me say how pleased I am to represent our company at this learning event. I have to say that what I just saw jolted my memory. It has been about twelve months since Michelle came and worked with us, trying to help us learn more about how a business partnership works and how we might be able to relate to each other. I have to say that twelve months ago I really thought that we were about to go our separate ways, and that I would have to buy Milo out, but we kept on working together until last month. We both finally admitted to one another that we have had enough and we have gone our separate ways. We have split the business in half and it is so far so good. I feel very relieved, myself.*

I do have to say that I was struck by the powerful moments that you just saw; especially the amount of conflict there was at the time. For a long time this subsided, but unfortunately it has crept in again. Michelle met with us about five times, over a two-month period, and things seemed to really pick up. I remember one day after she left we were about to come to blows at a Board meeting. Then we stopped, stood up and looked at the picture of the dancing spirits for a while, then sat down, and we were much more attuned to one another. The rest of the Board did not know what we were doing!

I know that Michelle told us at the beginning that she could only work with us within a two-month time frame, because she had other commitments, and this was the only window of time that she had. But unfortunately I think it was too short. She certainly brought in a substitute, who has tried to help us at least

keep the peace, but we have never been able to go back to that moment together, when we expressed how we really felt.

At that time, I felt very close to Milo again. We had never expressed it. There seems to be some kind of rule between men in Australia that you never express intimacy ... you know, people might make something else of it. But when in the privacy of our own boardroom we were invited to do this, it helped a great deal. It was so powerful. Here we were, terrified that each one would leave, abandon the other. That's what we were really fighting about. But then the time ran out and Michelle had to go. I have to say, I felt a bit abandoned by her. I tried to convince her to stay and help us, but she could not. I felt very disappointed about that, and still do, to some extent.

Milo is still acting as if I am his father, and as you know he really hates his father. So I am copping the blame for everything that goes wrong, whereas he causes most things that go wrong! So this pattern has not really changed over time. Just recently things got so bad that we actually decided to split the business up, and that is what we have done. He has taken over the European and South American countries. I have North America and Asia. We still operate from here at the Forest, but Milo has now built his own offices on his property overlooking the water. He took some of our staff with him. For me it's a relief and now we can see on the balance sheet every month who is really doing better and we each profit from our own areas, not from joint efforts any more. I guess you might say that the way we were encouraged to use emotion brought some things to the surface, but it did not really resolve anything. Sorry if this feedback is not what you wanted to hear.

Narrator: Thanks, Warren. There is nothing that we do not want to hear, or not hear. Your experience of learning at that time, twelve months ago, is what we are very interested in. But I am curious that you say that the work we did together did

not resolve anything. It sounds as if something very big has finally been resolved.

Now, Head Accountant (Choreographer) what about you? You have been a keen observer of Milo and Warren over the years. What did you notice following the learning times that they spent with Michelle last year? What sense do you make of it?

Choreographer: *I really thought that bringing Michelle in would solve all of RunWay International's problems. She had come highly recommended as a very skilled adult educator who had worked with many businesses. I was desperate to find someone to work with these two, because I knew I was out of my depth in trying to help them. The conflict at the time was shocking. They would bag one¹⁶ another behind each other's backs, to me, and Warren criticised Milo to all of the staff, a great deal of the time. Milo would be irritable and moody at work and kept dreaming up things to do so as to exert his authority. I felt caught in the middle.*

What I remember about the two-month period when Michelle was working with them is several bits and pieces. Firstly, they seemed to be able to listen to one another just that little bit better, and that made a lot of difference. I must say Warren, I think that still happens, that listening quality has changed, so that's a good thing from my perspective. You have both stopped interrupting one another or looking blankly at one another during Board meetings, which is the only time I meet with both of you together.

Secondly, I felt relieved and much less anxious within myself when Michelle was working with them. It was up to her to fix this, not me. You both seemed to take part enthusiastically in some of the conversations you had together. Well, that's what you told me, anyway. So I felt a lot of relief, and I shared this with

¹⁶ Criticise.

other colleagues who were involved. I think this made my financial input much better and I was able to get on with the business end of things, rather than the relationship.

Thirdly, I do remember when Warren rang me to say that Michelle was not working with them any more. Warren, you knew from the very start that you had two months only, but for some reason neither you nor Milo took up the invitation until finally Michelle called the first meeting. So, a lot of time was spent waiting for something to happen. I think this reflected the tension and real terror that you both felt before all this started.

Finally, Karen has been working with you two for the rest of the year. She is a fine adult educator and she meets with you regularly. I know there has been lots of conflict, most of it hidden, but that's part of a business relationship too. But the most interesting thing I noticed is this: you two have finally made a decision not to be together. I know that you have now concocted some plan about working separately and dividing the business down the middle, but from my perspective you work in separate businesses. You are still business colleagues in related fields, but this partnership is over. The accounts, tax and corporate affairs of the business still act as one. You have not left one another, yet, according to corporate law. You are still in this together on one level, but in reality you have separated, and I wonder if you would still have been together had you not admitted to one another your closeness to each other.

Narrator: Thank you very much gentlemen. I think you have given us a great deal to think about and I now invite you to join the audience in the foyer for further discussion with Warren and the Choreographer, along with the author.

Author's review

This scenario took place in 2001 and at that time I remember feeling somewhat strangely seduced into working with this group. The person who approached me to work with them was a long-standing colleague who knew both Milo and Warren personally, and subsequently did not wish to get involved with their partnership. This person knew of some of the adult learning that I did with very small groups, including partnerships.

With the luxury of hindsight, my initial feeling about taking on this assignment was of having a lack of ease about it. Something did not feel right. I was reassured by my colleague that there was nothing wrong, and that I had worked with this kind of issue (whatever the issue was, at that stage) “a million times before”.

My lack of ease was confirmed at the initial meeting with the Head Accountant, whose task it was to find someone to work with these two. I entered the Head Accountant's offices and felt extremely annoyed that he kept me waiting for over forty-five minutes before he saw me. I kept going up to the reception desk to check that he knew I was there, but the Receptionist kept on telling me that he was on the phone, and so I waited. I remember that I felt there was something phoney about this whole set up and I made a mental note that I would charge them for my time, including the time I was kept waiting. I do not understand why I did not listen to this uneasiness. There was something quite appealing in the introduction by the Head Accountant. He presented as an extremely rich, very successful businessman, and he introduced Milo and Warren to me as men who were similar to himself. He asked me about what experience I had in working with business partners and I remember feeling very defensive, as if I had to explain my credentials to him. I felt offended by this, and put down, but did not listen to this feeling inside me for very long. I now moved on to try to impress him, giving him a potted biography, name-dropping one or two very large corporations with which I had worked. Later I wondered why I had bothered to provide so much information. It was as if I felt that I had to prove myself and I noted what felt like a huge power imbalance, though this was never stated.

Towards the end of this first meeting the Head Accountant asked me about my rates and charges. I told him what the hourly rate would be, which I had moved upwards slightly since being kept waiting by him. He showed no sign at all of surprise and I felt relieved. I told him that from this point onwards I would not speak to him about this matter any more, and that privacy and confidentiality had to be in place. He seemed surprised by this and asked me if he could ring me “from time to time” to see “how it’s going”. Again, I stated that I would not have anything to discuss with him and that if Milo and Warren wished to speak to him then that was up to them. Although this was normal practice for me, I felt a little frightened stating all of this to him. It was as if I was nervous that he might attack me. I noted this and then moved on to making arrangements to meet with Milo and Warren. There was something wrong here and I did not know what it might be. But something definitely felt very wrong.

When his wife rang, he turned his back entirely to me, swivelled around in his chair and firmly faced the other way. I felt entirely shunned, made invisible by one small action. I felt embarrassed that I had to listen to this intimate conversation. There were lots of words of affection being used: “honey”, “darling”, “baby”. I wondered if he acted in this way in front of everybody? Was he trying to tell me something about himself, or was this raw coincidence? He finished speaking to “sweetie” and hung up, looking at me looking at him. I felt as if I could not wait to get out of his office quickly enough. We talked about the costs of this work and I swiftly left.

At the first meeting with Milo and Warren, the Head Accountant and his more junior Assistant Accountant, I felt decidedly nervous. This was uncommon for me at such a gathering. The aim of the first meeting was to set expectations. I once again had a strange feeling about this work but could not bring it to consciousness. I noticed that both Milo and Warren looked decidedly sad. Having previously worked with partners whose relationship was in trouble, I recognised a kind of resignedness in each of them. They both looked to me as if the other had beaten them. They were very quiet at this meeting saying little, agreeing with each other on the surface, and staring at me through the corner of their eyes. They gave me the impression that they were very worried about the issue of their partnership. I

experienced a real sadness in the room. I remember saying this to the four of them: that it felt like there was real sadness about the situation and about the fact that despite the many ways in which they had tried to resolve the situation, it seemed that none had brought about sustained relief. We made plans for the next round of meetings.

When I met with Milo I felt two strong emotions: firstly the sense that I was definitely never going to be allowed to “get inside” Milo. He wore his personal defensiveness loudly. He was reserved, thoughtful and very focused on our conversation. He told me about his version of the situation. Throughout this meeting, I wondered “what else”? I thought that I was being read one text, one narrative of the situation, but that Milo had many more texts, perhaps some of which were unconscious. When he spoke about helping out his father and mother, buying them a new house to live in, and then about helping his sister and her son, I sensed in him a deep feeling of pride. He told his story about his own pathway with an eye for detail, but still with no emotion. Here was a man with a vacuum inside and it was this vacuous space that he presented to the world. I felt him keeping his emotional distance from me. The more he did this the sadder I felt. I allowed tears to well up in my eyes as I looked deeply at him. I know that he saw this. He seemed distracted by this. It was my way of telling him that I knew he was in pain, even though he could not say it himself. He stopped acting as if “everything will be all right”, the text he was firstly pitching, and as I tried to give him reassurance, speaking softly and more slowly to him, he allowed glimpses of himself to be seen. When I talked to him about his fear of abandonment, the moisture in his eyes matched my own. We were now engaging in a capacity to understand what this issue was about and to focus on what there was to learn about this, with a view to a remedy, if possible.

My first meeting with Warren left me feeling shocked and troubled. He did not focus at all on himself, he spoke the entire time about Milo, about how terrible Milo was, how he made terrible decisions, did not follow through on things and was a complete failure as a manager. When Warren told me that he previously owned 60% of the Company and Milo held 40%, but that when they became successful he “gave” Milo the 10% he needed to become equal partners, I could feel his deep regret at taking this step. I could also feel my

own regret that I had ever taken on this assignment. It was becoming blindingly obvious to me, even this early in the process, that this story would not have the happy ending they were both saying they wanted. For the first time since I had met them, I had the distinct feeling of enmeshment. From Warren's version of things, and from "by-the-way" details he gave me, these two men had few boundaries between them. Their wives knew each other and were quoted by both men, especially in terms of what each wife felt about the current situation. They had both recently built large homes, within one kilometre of each other, with competing water views. Both had the same model of motor vehicle and the same colour. Both had identical artistic tastes, and these paintings hung around the walls. Their children went to the same pre-school. The enmeshment and competition here was so overt that I felt overwhelmed by it.

The final meeting that we had between Milo, Warren and myself left me feeling a kind of dread about the future that may have been a mirror to them. On one hand, there were several things each could "do" so as to enhance communication. But I felt that it was too little too late. I was overwhelmed and I felt very flat for days after this meeting. There was hopelessness about it that I carried with me. While on one hand the notion that their fear of abandonment by the other was named, and this could have been the thing that brought them together, I wondered if it would be enough. It was not.

I also felt a little guilty about having to withdraw after the initial two months. Although they took several weeks to take the first step, using up valuable time, I felt that perhaps I should not have taken this job on. I did not have long enough to complete it. Even though all parties seemed to clearly know that there was only a small window of time, I did feel pushed into working with them. Perhaps this was the basis of the underlying unease, in the first place. I understand that with abandonment as a key issue, neither of them could possibly have invested in a full process with this very short time-frame. Consequently I felt as if I had failed. I should not have been taken in by the Head accountant. I should not have allowed myself to have been seduced by this 'circus'. It would have needed a much longer intervention. Even then, it may have been too late, but I will never know that.

Audience discussion/data analysis

In this section I will analyse the RunWay Story including Michelle's Reflection and the Participant Panel. In doing so I will attempt to focus on the major themes that emerge in relation to emotion and adult learning.

The themes that I discovered in reflecting on these stories included the following:

- ◆ Limiting, halting or changing the adult learning process/using the facilitator's behaviour to create a learning moment, which can 'welcome' emotion.
- ◆ Being willing to be vulnerable as a facilitator: listening to distressing emotions.
- ◆ Using nurturing relationships and support systems to practise honest communication and engagement with emotionality.
- ◆ Being present for another's story without judgment.
- ◆ Listening to one's own intuition as warning signs and as affirmations.
- ◆ Using reflection and mindfulness to stay present and gain awareness of emotion.

Limiting, halting or changing the process/using the facilitator's behaviour to create a learning moment which can welcome emotion

Michelle placed limits, or boundaries, on this learning scenario from the very start. She had only a two-month window in which to work. She sensed in the early stages of her work that this might take a while to get started so she used her own behaviour to not collude with the participants in wasting time by delaying the start. It seems that there could well have been a very long period of pre-engagement work, but there was not time for this. The information that she had from the Head Accountant, clearly suggested that they had been "putting off" trying to sort things out, for a very long time. Michelle allowed her experienced side to prevail in deciding to give clear indications of time as one of the boundaries that would have to be observed. However, this was not successful, in terms of starting early within the time frame. The feelings of hesitation and the strong fear that was present in Warren and Milo were very powerful. As the Head Accountant commented to Warren in his participant panel "discussion":

Warren, you knew from the very start that you had two months only, but for some reason neither you nor Milo took up the invitation to begin until finally Michelle called the first meeting. So, a lot of time was spent waiting for something to happen. I think this reflected the tension and real terror that you both felt before all this started.

On the other hand, to have forced an earlier start may have resulted in a premature withdrawal from the process by both participants. This can often be the dilemma of the adult educator, particularly in facing difficult conversations or confronting exceptional moments with learning groups. In some ways, timing is everything; it is the perfect counter-measure to hesitation and denial. On the other hand, when time is limited, knowing when and how to intervene accurately, presents a challenge. Knowing that there might be exposure to strong feelings and even distress makes this notion of timing even more critical.

The adult educator makes decisions, based on experience and practice, and on the knowledge that welcoming in emotionality must be managed well, if it is to be effective in terms of enhancing what we know, or do not know, about one another, or about one another's behaviour.

After a lot of hesitation, the meetings began. In this way, the adult educator's intervention by getting started, and not colluding with absolute avoidance, became an authentic example of the kind of behaviour that the business partnership had come together to discuss. Their continued avoidance of one another, having now been mirrored by their slowness to start, could now be noticed and worked with at the outset. It presented live data for Michelle to work with. It was recent and it was still alive. It involved the learning facilitator as well, so it was something that could be shared by each participant.

Adult educators who work in a holistic way should always be on the look-out for what it is that is held in common with all learning participants. Something as alive and fresh as the

boundary of time or place, or beginnings or endings, can be very helpful levers in engaging a group of adults in how they bring themselves to the task of learning. Reflecting on group behaviour in this way can elicit strong emotions and sometimes this is the very point of the matter. It is not engaged with as a provocative act, but as one of inviting, encouraging adult learners to engage with their own inner-selves, with what they, too, bring to the learning group.

During his feedback as a co-researcher, Warren speaks about the time-frame, noticing that he thought it was too short.

I know that at the beginning Michelle told us that she could only work with us within a two-month time frame, because she had other commitments ... But we have never been able to go back to that moment together, when we expressed how we really felt.

The use of time to create an early learning moment, which can welcome emotion and perhaps enhance learning, was certainly something on my mind in taking up this role. A period of two months is extremely short, given the task that is at hand. Rushing through agenda so as to bring forward a new “shoot” in the organic sense, is certainly not recommended. However, the risk was taken to begin to name what had remained silent, as a catalyst for greater insight into this partnership. Whether this was a useful tactic or not, is difficult to measure, for the situation was extremely complex. However it seems to me that when adult educators apply the pressure of time limits, it can focus the task of learning very quickly. Having a definite starting and finishing time for this project enabled Michelle to cut through the many “acts” or masks that were being used, to get to the heart of the matter. In this way, her meaning-making about this business relationship began very quickly.

Michelle’s intuition that the process of getting “behind the mask” with each of the two men involved needed to be heard. On one hand, she thought that this process might take more than the two months that she had allotted. On the other hand there seemed to be a need for clarity and timeliness so as not to mirror the denial and avoidance she met. In the

interaction about time, Michelle tried to suspend judgment of herself – she did not allow herself to get entangled in a side-bar conversation of analysing and judging her own behaviour. Instead she worked towards being as objective as possible so that as much could be achieved as was realistic inside the time-frame.

But both participants wanted Michelle to stay with them.

They then ask Michelle to stay with them while they learn these new ways of being with, and for one another.

She schedules in extra time together but the sense is that this is not enough. Warren refers to this in his later reflection on this time, and wonders whether had she been able to extend her stay, things may have worked out differently.

Unfortunately this was too short. She certainly brought in a substitute, who has tried to help us ...

On the one hand, Michelle accelerated her interventions, bringing emotionality to the fore and creating the possibility, through emotion, for connections to really take place. However, she may have miscalculated the amount of time for this kind of healing to really take place. The outcome of the intervention, at some levels, may have been because of this fact. Of course, not fully, as the intervention at whatever level, may have been far too late to begin with. Sustainability is always an important consideration in this kind of facilitative work. However it is very hard to know this when one takes on such a consultancy, and these actions were all carried out in good faith. For adult educators, however, what can be noted positively is the idea that when there is a limitation of time, as there is normally, the possibility of using this limitation in a positive way can bring things out into the open much more quickly, and thereby quicken the learning process. There is a highly active role for the learning facilitator:

Michelle works with them, punctuating their learning conversation, and helping them to move past this and to talk about themselves to one another.

Michelle also models the reverse of moving too quickly, within the time-frame. In some important moments she introduces them to the notion of reflection, and of time out, changing her behaviour to stand together with them and look at something outside themselves, using the art on the wall. This kind of skill can rarely be “written down” or “programmed” inside adult learning. The art was on the wall. The reflection on it was used as both a tool of engagement and as an opportunity for “time out”, a chance to externalise something that they may have been feeling deeply inside themselves.

They stand in front of the painting of the dancing spirits every now and then, when they run out of things to say ... they wait in silence until they have re-entered it together, then they begin to talk to each other again.

This notion of limiting and/or changing the process so as to enhance the opportunity for emotion to be brought to the fore and thereby continue to stay engaged with learning is an important consideration for adult educators. On one hand, being definite and drawing the line about availability, timeliness, the use of time and space and bringing things to closure, are always considerations, which require thought. However, the ability to think on one’s feet, to create opportunities for learning from what we notice, what we see the adult learners being drawn to, what there is in common, and what is even potentially a spiritual meeting of people, can very much enhance the learning process.

In this instance, when there were no more words to speak, either because the content was unspeakable or because there was a need for an energy break, the artwork was used as the catalyst for revival. Being confident to trust one’s own intuition and spirit, during learning facilitation, to change direction, to stop and reflect, to engage the learning group in pacing itself, even at times of very strong emotion: these are some of the keys to the enhancement of adult learning.

Vulnerability in facilitation: holding onto distress emotions

Michelle finally engages them in talking to one another about each other's stunts, and acts, and they do so for a long while. Michelle works with them, punctuating their learning conversation.

In *The Art of Facilitation*, Hunter, Bailey and Taylor (1995) point out that when we are feeling very vulnerable we may actually be most “in our power”, which has more to do with being present and authentic (p. 10). Others might recognise the learning facilitator's attempt at being strong and confident to conceal nervousness and vulnerability as a cover-up or perhaps incongruence. By allowing her self to be vulnerable in naming, directly, how she sees both Milo and Warren, during the individual feedback sessions they both so desperately wanted, the two directors become more open, begin to disclose their distress emotions, honestly, to Michelle and after that to one another.

Michelle then meets with Warren and tells him that she thinks that he has moved out of role ... that perhaps he has joined in with his staff to examine Milo's performance ... He has stopped seeing Milo ... he has engaged in a sideshow, run by wives and children, where a knock 'em out game is played.

However, this kind of direct and somewhat confronting feedback is a very risky business for both the facilitator and the adult learner, and certainly not for the faint-hearted. This kind of risk may lead to enormous vulnerability if the learning facilitator provides inaccurate reflections or mirroring. Going back to the section in this research on the organic inquiry method, we are reminded again of the importance of “burning our own wood”. Doing our own work, not bringing into the adult learning environment too much of our own baggage, can certainly assist us in using our intuitive and professional selves as instruments, gauges as it were, of the emotionality and resilience of another. Presenting these to another takes a great deal of skill and I am not suggesting that everyone should try it. However, what is most important is the outcome when these kinds of competencies can be utilised for greater learning about oneself or about another.

Michelle tells Milo that he looks like he is dead. Despite the truly wonderful acts and tricks and stunts, which he performs, every day, he displays a look of being shut down. Milo is finally engaged ...

This act of honest feedback, given empathically and compassionately, finally engages the un-engageable. The mask is now gone. He wants to hear more. He does not protest or deny. He is curious. Michelle continues to move slowly with the feedback she gives him because at all times here, and from now on, she is making herself extremely vulnerable. She is taking a very large risk that this could backfire. She could be asked to leave. She may encounter a return fire of very angry feelings. He might walk out and abandon the process. This does not happen, of course, because the intervention was well judged and timed, presented in a sensible and compassionate way. But the risk is truly there. It is not rocket science, but if managed well, making oneself vulnerable as a facilitator enables distress emotions to be truly held, in the psychoanalytic sense, and held well.

Flowing from the individual feedback Michelle gives them, and the naming of very strong emotions and behaviours by both of them, together, the two men are prepared to speak to one another, and to listen. They have been given a type of language or template by the learning facilitator, from which to reflect on their feelings for one another.

Warren tells Milo that he feels like Milo has left him. Milo tell Warren that he thinks Warren is going to abandon him. Milo cries, softly. Warren is tearful. They re-commit themselves to more conversations together ...

By taking the risk and making herself vulnerable to the possibility of annihilation, true learning about, and checking out each other's motives, positions, stances and feelings finally begins. This kind of breakthrough could have taken months and months, but there was not that amount of time. By naming the unnameable and speaking the unspeakable, the learning facilitator was able to give the participants a language with which to speak, and consequently learning was accelerated and enhanced.

Listening to one's own intuition as warning signs and as affirmations

There are so many instances in these stories wherein intuition plays a major role in the text and subtext, and it is my view that the adult educator ignores intuition at his or her own peril. Well-nourished intuition can provide both a system of warning that all might not be well. It also has the capacity to affirm that what is happening is good and useful. In focusing on emotion in adult learning there are many levels of intuition to which we might attend.

Michelle notes a number of emotions, which may be also called “intuitions” throughout the story and also in her reflection. In discussing Warren handing over 50% of the RunWay business to Milo, Michelle notes:

I could feel his deep regret at taking this step. I could also feel my own regret that I had ever taken on this assignment.

It is certainly my own experience that at the most intuitive of moments my own intuitions as an adult educator match those of people I am working with. Again, when first meeting the Head Accountant, Michelle notes deep questions arising from her feeling very uncomfortable when the accountant answers the phone to his wife:

... he turned his back entirely to me, swivelled around in his chair and firmly faced the other way. I felt entirely shunned, made invisible by one small action. I felt embarrassed that I had to listen to this intimate conversation ... Was he trying to tell me something about himself ... I felt as if I could not wait to get out of his office quickly enough.

There are several moments when Michelle indicates that perhaps she should have heeded her own intuition more. On another level, it seems as if the participants themselves may also be acting out of intuition. Warren comments about this after the event in his feedback

as a co-researcher. He is conscious of the role of emotion inside the culture of Australian men, with its limitations and he makes reference to this from an intuitive rather than cognitive way:

There seems to be some kind of rule between men in Australia that you never express intimacy ... you know, people might make something else of it. But when, in the privacy of our own Boardroom we were invited to do this, it helped a great deal.

Warren indicates that acting in this counter-cultural way at some level enriched his ability to understand what the real issue was, between Milo and himself. Although this did not lead to the answer they both necessarily wanted, from a conscious point of view, it is my understanding that this mix of intuitions finally set up the outcome. It was not really Michelle's lack of time to spend with them. It was, it seems, the fact that they needed, paradoxically, to note their attachment to one another, in order to separate. It was only when connected that they could finally let go of their business relationship. The ambiguity that may have been the major descriptor of this relationship went, once they had that intimate conversation with one another about abandonment. Were they not speaking paradoxically? Were they not intuitively noting their fears about separation and speaking about it for the first time?

This coming together of intuition, both from the adult educator's point of view and from the participants, can often happen in adult learning experiences. When all participants work as if they are one, then a truly affirming moment can happen. As Warren and Milo both noted:

I remember one day after she left we were about to come to blows at a Board meeting. Then we stopped, stood up and looked at the picture of the dancing spirits for a while, then sat down, and we were much more attuned to one another. The rest of the Board did not know what we were doing!

One reading of this is that both men grew intuitively, in relationship to themselves and to each other. This finally freed both of them to make the momentous decision to separate. Even if I did not see it this way at the time, and somewhat took on the guilt that it had not worked out, upon reflection on my own written words I can see that from the outset my intuitive self was uncomfortable that the outcome would not necessarily be the one that any of them wished. The outcome, however, may have been the best one for all concerned.

The use of intuitive inquiry, on another level, brings richness in understanding to this story. The work of Rosemarie Anderson (1998) has influenced me deeply in understanding how intuitive inquiry can assist research. Her research on sacred weeping (Anderson, 1996) was born of personal experience and desire to give voice to a life experience unexplored by contemporary science. My own research and experience with this story has allowed me to lean deeply and gently into the experiences of others for deeper understanding. This was essentially introspective, heuristic, reflective, and enormously demanding in working with the data. Anderson (1998) tells us that:

Building on heuristic methods advanced by Clark Moustakas (1990), intuitive inquiry positions the experience and interpretation of the researcher at the center of the inquiry regardless of whether the data themselves are qualitative or quantitative in nature...For both the intuitive and the heuristic researcher, expressing a comprehensive understanding of experience seeks to speak directly to the inmost self of another (p. 75).

The intuitive research method adopted in this inquiry as part of the organic research methodology emphasises the unique and personal voice of the individual researcher and depends on the experiences and insights of the researcher at every phase of the research process. The depth of my own intuitive understanding gives a universal voice and character to the research findings.

Clark Moustakas (1990) describes the process as:

*An unshakable connection exists between what is out there, in its appearance
and reality, and what is within me in relative thought, feeling, and awareness
...*

Moffitt (1971, p. 149) captures this kind of seeing and knowing in his poem “To Look At Any Thing”:

*To look at any thing
If you would know that thing,
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say
“I have seen spring in these
Woods,” will not do – you must
Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves,
You must take your time
And touch the very place
They issue from.*

By allowing my own intuitions to become part of this experience in adult education, and knowing that the intuitions of the other participants were also activated, allowed a fuller way of knowing and of not knowing, what the outcome would be. By allowing myself, as it were, to “be the thing you see”, then emotion could be uncovered in a place where such emotion was repressed, withheld and even acted upon, without consciousness.

Using nurturing relationships and support systems to practise honest communication and engagement with emotions

Michelle reaffirms the perspective that group work has the potential to tap into old wounds if the facilitator does not work through them in a safe environment (Arnold Mindell, 1995, p. 46). Maintaining healthy relationships with others, with whom the facilitator can

communicate in an authentic manner, can be helpful in creating a safe place where the facilitator might release pent-up emotions and negative feelings. Kahn (1991), in discussing Carl Roger's approach to sharing feelings with clients, also points out that while Rogers recommends genuineness and honesty, he cautions against using this sort of advice "as a license to work out their own issues on the client's time".

Rogers suggests that often the appropriate person with whom to share one's feelings might be a supervisor or colleague (Kahn, 1991, p. 40).

When asked by therapists, what should one do about highly distressed emotions, Rogers and his followers offered the following advice.

1. *Do not share each passing irritation.*
2. *Consider sharing a negative feeling only if it is striking or persistent or is interfering with your capacity to be fully present with the client.*
3. *Before saying it, ask yourself this question: For whom am I doing this? Do I want to say it to unburden myself, to get revenge, to hurt the client? Do I want to say it to show off how authentic I am? If the answer to any of those is yes, keep the feeling to yourself or save it for your supervisor.*
4. *If it seems to you that your speaking out is indeed meant for the benefit of the client and the movement of the therapy, say it in a manner that shows your basic regard. And say it in a way that minimizes the chance that the client will hear it as criticism. That means taking personal responsibility for what you say (Kahn, 1991, p. 141).*

Once again, I am using a comparison of the work of a facilitator to that of a therapist in that the facilitator is also working to help group members to explore their feelings more deeply and to risk sharing them. In an effort to achieve this goal, I believe that it is important that the facilitator model the behaviour involved in genuine sharing, as recommended by Rogers and his followers. I think that it is also important that the facilitator put in place support systems that will enable him or her to engage his or her feelings more deeply on a regular basis outside the group work arena. However, adult education is not psychotherapy and this should be made clear.

While Hunter, Bailey and Taylor (1995) are not of the belief that the facilitator should share personal feelings during group facilitation, the authors do, however, recommend personal development work, meditation, consciousness-raising discussions, and other training and development in experiential learning techniques as useful ways to develop awareness of one's personal issues. They concur that awareness is the facilitator's most important asset (p. 39).

I am sometimes struck at the loneliness or isolation of adult educators, who work in their various positions and roles, but do not have either the facility to discuss their work in depth, or the awareness of the importance of doing so. In working with adults where emotions are welcomed in to the learning environment, I have found it essential, for myself, to seek such support. Seeing someone who might "mentor" me has been critical to my education practice. Having a place and a space to sometimes vent my own pent-up strong emotion, with a colleague, provides safety both for me and for my students. Being given feedback on the way in which I am working, having someone listen to my particular highs and lows of adult education, gives me greater surety that such nurturing relationships assist me greatly in engaging appropriately with emotions at a direct level, in my work as an adult educator.

Being present for another's story without judgment

Michelle also talks about the power of telling our stories and, equally important, being fully present for the story of another. Kahn (1991) states that Rogers often talked about the power of empathic listening or "empathic understanding," as he referred to this quality. Rogers felt that such behaviour on the part of the listener (therapist or facilitator or adult educator) encourages the speaker to clarify her thoughts and feelings and, in doing so, increases the speaker's understanding of herself.

This form of empathy teaches the person sharing to be empathic with one's self, as well, and to try to gently grasp one's own experience in the accepting way that the listener is doing. He points out that another's empathy can have a powerful effect on one's self-esteem. The person sharing might feel that if this individual believes that it is worth the

time and effort to try to understand my experience, essentially, “I must be worth the time and effort” (Kahn, 1991. p. 43). Empathic listening, therefore can offer a valuable gift to another in helping to enhance one’s self-esteem.

Michelle reflects on the use of empathy, during her own reflection on this story:

I experienced a real sadness in the room. I remember saying this to the four of them: that it felt like there was real sadness about the situation and about the fact that despite the many ways in which they had tried to resolve the situation, it seemed that none had brought about sustained relief.

There is no denial of this empathic naming of the notion that there was deep sadness. It was allowed to be there because it was not stated in a judgemental way, but in a truly empathic mode. This was an intervention of its own and it enabled the group to make plans for the next round of meetings. In other words, such use of empathy in naming the atmosphere, the emotion that seemed to be hanging heavily in the room, was then used as an impetus to take further steps together.

Michelle also allows visceral empathy, allowing her eyes to fill up with tears in response to Milo’s story. The more he kept emotional distance from Michelle, though what he was saying was extremely sad, the more Michelle allowed him to see the impact this story was having on her. In other words, rather than being a “blank screen” in listening to Milo, Michelle allowed empathic signals to grow from her listening:

I felt him keeping his emotional distance from me. The more he did this, the sadder I felt. I allowed tears to well up in my eyes as I looked at him deeply. I know that he saw this. He seemed distracted by this. It was my way of telling him that I knew he was in pain, even though he could not say it himself. He stopped acting as if ‘everything will be all right’ ... he allowed glimpses of himself to be seen.

Like the demonstration of compassion, the exercise of empathy does not have to be a passive exercise. Actively displaying empathy by the use of congruent body language, verbal expression and visceral behaviour can enhance the capacity for appropriate emotional content to be included in the learning process.

Using reflection and mindfulness to stay present and gain awareness of emotionality

Meditation and reflection work have also supported me in learning to remain centred when very difficult emotions may have otherwise thrown me off balance. I must admit, however, that even with years of personal growth and learning, I continue to be amazed at how easy it is for me to become emotionally hesitant in the face of very strong emotions.

My first meeting with Warren left me feeling shocked and troubled ... I could feel my deep regret that I had ever taken on this assignment. It was becoming blindly obvious to me, even this early in the process, that this story would not have the happy ending they were both saying they wanted.

The ability to stay with strong emotion and to process these, both with immediacy and with hindsight, is integral for the adult educator. This takes an ongoing awareness of one's own growing emotional repertoire to be prepared for such situations. Mindfulness is a key ingredient at such times.

Epstein (2001) states that through the practice of mindfulness in deep reflection, he first learned how to observe his thoughts and feelings allowing them to flow without feeling a need to control, identify with, or analyse them. Such a practice can also help in learning to be less judgmental of one's own emotional responses and less invested in always maintaining control over one's inner life. Epstein states, "I saw that my feelings arose together with my awareness, but that it was possible to take the me-ness out of those feelings, to make light of them" (p. 89).

Epstein (2001) realised that he could not stop his disturbing feelings from arising but that he could use “his observing awareness, his mindfulness “to create a sense of space around them. While deepening his experience of himself, he became more interested in investigating than in controlling his thoughts and feelings, thereby relieving a heavy burden. He accepted feeling less sure of himself in some ways but more willing to explore whatever his experiences were in the moment (p. 89).

In *Emotional Alchemy*, Tara Bennett-Goleman (2001) points out that,

Cultivating this quality of mindful attention allows us to go through our days with the ability to notice any thoughts or feelings, no matter how initially disturbing, and be relatively unperturbed. This gives us the capacity to face distressing feelings, like fears, in a way that renders them less overwhelming (p. 35).

From a more scientific perspective, Bennett-Goleman (2001) further explains mindfulness relative to the mechanics of the brain.

The left prefrontal area contains a main array of neurons that tone down disturbing surges from the amygdala, something like the way a dam holds back all but the mild flow from an otherwise raging river. Mindfulness strengthens this dam, making these restraining neurons more active, so they act as more powerful curbs to a distressing emotion (p. 34).

Michelle’s story and reflection, together with Epstein and Goldman’s comments helped to remind me that through the practice of mindful reflection I can learn to stay conscious of my feelings during facilitation without being judgmental. I am further reminded of the fact that my feelings are not the total descriptor of who I am. They are the feelings that I am experiencing at the moment and I can choose how I want to respond to them.

It is important to note, however, that as adult learning facilitators, any one of us can be on or off balance at a given point in time and therefore we will not always have the level of awareness to recognise what’s happening in the moment or to be willing to reveal our feelings with the learning group process. Or, we may be conscious of having triggered emotions in a given situation yet choose to respond differently. Gaining greater awareness

of the issues that have the potential to trigger us emotionally can enable us to be conscious more frequently.

Not taking it personally: the power of empathic listening

As I read Carl Rogers' perspectives on the value of empathic understanding, it struck a chord deep within my mind and heart. For the last five or so years I have done personal work about my own issues of not feeling seen or heard in my early life. Today, I understand that it had more to do with the particular style of the way I was communicated with, than it had to do with me. But as a young child, and even later, as a young woman, it led me to feel that what I had to say was either unimportant or not worthy of the time and attention of others. My self-esteem was negatively affected in that it led me to believe that I had to be "perfect" in the accuracy of what I shared and in *how I expressed myself* in order to be accepted by others. There was simply no room for error. If people were going to take the time to listen to me then I had to be absolutely clear and concise in getting my point across.

I now recognise this belief to be one of the many facets of my "perfectionist" way of thinking and being. It also further explains my tendency to become alarmed if I receive a low evaluation in my adult education work. Such experiences reinforce the deeper belief that has remained in my subconscious that either I am not good enough or that I have not proven myself worthy of others' time and attention.

As a result of my growth in consciousness through this research, I have shared my feelings with my close friends, which has led to a conscious effort on all of our parts to demonstrate empathic understanding in our conversations. Healing, however, is a long-term process. Yet, I am learning that with greater awareness there can be continuous movement along the path.

I am also more likely, now, to speak out as an audience member or group member without feeling self-conscious, carefully judging and weighing each word, as was often the case in the past. I am more likely to trust my inner voice and know that there is a reason why I am

being moved to contribute to the discussion at that particular point in time and that I am expressing my thoughts in a clear and compassionate manner.

I believe that as a result of my own experience, and of reflecting on my own experience, I am also more conscious of how I demonstrate empathic understanding as I listen to others. Whenever possible, I incorporate empathic listening exercises into my adult education programs with others. In many instances I have had the joy of witnessing the benefit to others in feeling truly heard.

Strong emotion is sometimes present in a wide range of adult learning circumstances. As teacher, facilitator, group leader or consultant, the adult educator is challenged, at times, to deal with this reality. In the next story, the role of Adult Educator as University Lecturer raises once more the invitation that emotionality can present in learning environments.

Story Four: DisAbility

DISABILITY

A SHORT-FORM FILM

Characters in Order of Appearance

Michelle: an adult educator and University Lecturer

Terry: a student who is visually impaired

Margy: a student who is totally deaf

Maryanne: the mother of a child who has motor neurone disease

Teena: a student suffering from poliomyelitis

Mandy: a student who works as a carer in a community home

Penny: a student who works as a carer in another community home

Angie: a student who does not speak: has severe facial distortion.

There are approximately eighteen other students in the room, plus some carers.

Introduction

The film lasts ten minutes. It is set on a University Campus in one of Australia's State Capitals, where a new Program has begun: The Bachelor's degree in Social Science, with a Major in Habilitation Studies. This degree attracts those who care for the so called "disabled" in our society, those who write Government Policy or who are administrators of Government funded not-for-profit organisations who provide services to people who live with a disability. Some of these carers or administrators are also physically challenged.

In 1990 some Universities in Australia have offered scholarships to students to attend classes and to use distance learning, to qualify as trained carers. This follows a special initiative by the Australian Government.

Michelle is an academic who is teaching a subject called “Becoming a Tertiary Student”. It is a pre-entry qualifying unit of work, which students must pass in order to take the next step in higher education into this Bachelor of Social Science (Habilitation) Degree. It covers most aspects of university life, including how to access University services, how to write an assignment, how to conduct basic research and how to prepare for examinations. There is also a short, personal growth section to this unit of study, which focuses on personal development and disability. The aim of this section is to facilitate these students in getting to know one another.

Michelle has been told by her academic Head of School that she must teach the curriculum as it is, without making any changes to it. Members of the Education faculty have written this academic unit of work. None of these academics have taught this course, or this kind of cohort before. It is written for a group of up to fifteen students.

The students attend the University in Melbourne each semester for two weeks. The rest of the time they live in very isolated regions, and the plan is for them to learn using online technology, and to attend local day-care centres or group homes so as to develop their knowledge of issues related to disability. Melbourne is the second largest city in Australia.

The creative action

The towers and spires of a large University campus come into view. Strong marching music is played loudly, heralding the greatness of this place of learning. National flags fly from the flagpoles on top of the spires. The courtyards are wet. It is raining, but it is extremely hot. It is the student vacation, when full-time students take a break from the rigours of academic life, and part-time or distance education students arrive on campus for one or two weeks of intensive learning. Most of these students are adults, hold down jobs, have

children and mortgages and relationships. Many are changing from one job to another. Some have come long distances and are staying on-campus in this city, many miles from their families.

Some students come to the campus with their own carers or education assistants. A young man who is totally blind is accompanied by his assistant and his seeing eye dog. He appears very disoriented as he tries to find his way around, using a white stick. He wears very large dark glasses, and carries a heavy notebook computer over his shoulder. Another young man swings along on permanent crutches. It is this or a wheelchair, so he takes the crutches as his last dash of independence. The campus isn't set up for wheelchairs anyway. It isn't really set up for people on crutches, either, but he manages the stairs vigorously, finding his way around from lecture to lecture. A deaf woman approaches each lecturer with a wireless microphone, asking them to place it around their necks during lectures, so she can pick up the signal and hear the lecture. She receives a variety of responses, from embarrassment at having to wear a foreign object, to hilarity. There is only one bathroom cubicle for disabled people on each floor of the central lecture block, so the line outside this is quite long during meal breaks.

The scene moves into focus on one classroom at the University. It is very crowded. It normally seats eighteen to twenty people, but today there are twenty-five people present, all crammed into the one room, waiting for the lecturer. There is a very soft sound of students speaking to one another, hesitatingly, nervously. They anxiously look to each other for support. They have several things in common. Firstly, they each wish to study Habilitation. Many are already working in this area, but lack the formal qualifications to complete the work and to have a career in this area.

Secondly, they all must pass these pre-entry level units of study in order to enrol in the Habilitation program.

Thirdly, they are all either physically disabled or live or work with someone who is. They are each from different cultures and backgrounds. They range in age from eighteen years to fifty years of age, with the average being in the late twenties.

The camera shot focuses on Michelle, a white, forty-something, female, university lecturer, who is running late for the start of this lecture. She was delayed by the mother of one of her new Habilitation students on the telephone, trying to pass on to her what the mother thought “vital” information about her son. She did not wish him to be embarrassed, because he suffered incontinence, and could Michelle take this into consideration if he came and went from classes from time to time.

She arrives at the door of the room and sees a sea of faces looking at her. She smiles, automatically, and more slowly walks to the one space left around the group of tables in the room where there is a vacant chair. They stop speaking and stare at her, looking very worried, frightened. It is very hot in Melbourne at this time of the year. The rain spits towards the ground and steam rises from the cement quadrangle outside.

The dialogue begins

Michelle: Well, good afternoon everyone, it is great to see you all here for this Unit. I must say I can't believe there are so many people in this room! I thought we had about fifteen students signed up for this.

The students look around at one another and seem terribly worried, as if they have done something wrong.

Michelle: Obviously student services didn't tell me that there was such a big over-enrolment in this course. We will have to do something about it.

Terror seems to grip the students. They now stare in a very fixed way at Michelle, and she notices this, making her very tense.

Michelle: I have no idea how we are going to cope today. There are just too many of you. So first of all, please look at your letter of enrolment, if you have it with you, and make sure that the subject “Becoming a Tertiary Student” is written on it.

The students move about, flicking pages, searching handbags and briefcases. They are looking for something which few of them have in their possession at this time. Nervousness increases.

Michelle: Found it? No? Well I’m not sure what to do now. I only have enough course programs for twenty people. I did a few extra because I know that sometimes extra people start a course and then drop out.

Fear emerges once again. Whenever change of any kind is mentioned, a raw terror seems to engulf the room. Michelle becomes aware of this and begins an attempt at humour.

Michelle: No, look, only joking. I promise I won’t kick anybody out of the course – not yet at least.

Confusion increases. Students hold their stare at Michelle, for a few seconds holding her tightly, before she makes another move.

Michelle: All right. I will hand out the course booklet and you will have to share one between two. When we get this sorted out we will get some more printed. For the time being you will have to share. Let’s begin by going through what this unit is about, what the different assessment tasks are, how you can contact me during semester time, and then let’s make a start today.

Terry: Did you bring a course outline in enlarged print for me? I know that the Blind Society has been in touch with the University to arrange all material six weeks in advance ...

Michelle: (Shocked and embarrassed) No, sorry. No one has passed on that message to me. Perhaps you and I can talk at the end of the lecture and let's see what I can do to help. In the meantime just look on with someone else and do your best.

Terry: (Sounding frustrated) But I can't read it!

Michelle: (Embarrassed at this huge oversight) Look I'm sorry. We will read key aspects of the course overview aloud so you can join in.

Margy: (Spoken in a garbled, hard-to-understand language) Excuse me Michelle, but could you please wear my sonic microphone so I can hear you. I have to wear this, and you have to wear that ... (she moves forward and hands Michelle a microphone. There is clumsiness about how it is to be attached and both Michelle and Margy giggle a little, and then it is attached). That's it. Thanks.

Michelle: Anybody else with a special need? (They look at her blankly.) Right, let's make a start with this course outline.

Michelle works her way through the course outline. Increasingly there is restlessness in the room and tension mounts. Nobody speaks except Michelle. Some write notes furiously. Others have tape recorders placed on their desks, recording the entire lecture. Some students come in and out of the room; some carers talk to their charges or take notes for them. Most students look terrified and overwhelmed. Michelle notices this, and after about ten minutes, stops.

Michelle: You know I have never taught this subject to a group like you, you know. I feel a bit concerned that I'll be able to do it correctly. I really want to help you succeed so we are going to have to really work closely together so each of you can really do well.

Maryanne: I'm sorry, but I don't know what you mean by "a group like you".

Michelle: (Nervously) Well, I mean to a Habilitation group before. I mean to people who work with people who have disabilities ...

Maryanne: But everyone has one ...

Michelle: Sorry? Everyone has what?

Maryanne: A disability. Everyone is challenged in some way or another. It's rarely the person with the so-called disability that has the problem; usually it's the other.

Michelle: Look, I'm not sure we are on the same wavelength here ...

Maryanne: Yes, I think we are. You are saying that you are not used to teaching people "like us" and you have just placed all of us into some huge stereotype. My point is that some people are intellectually challenged, some physically. Others are morally challenged or for others generosity is challenged. Everyone has some outstanding issue. For some people it just happens that it is physically obvious.

Michelle: (A little shaken) Look ... Maryanne ... I'm just here to help you find your way around academic life. I am here to arrange skills workshops in academic reading, and writing essays. I want to help you use the library, carry out searches, and pass examinations. That's what "Becoming a Tertiary Student" is all about. I'll leave the philosophising about what a disability actually is, and so on, to the others who are up in all of this. I just want to help you get started here, and help you stay onboard long enough to survive the first year. If I can do that I have done my job. OK?

Maryanne: No, not really.

Teena: Michelle I think what Maryanne is saying is that so far we have had a shocking time at this place, and now you have come in here talking to us like we have it all together, know what we are doing, and thinking that we can cope with our program and this University. (She begins to cry.) Well I know I can't. We've had a shit of a start here. And now you are just adding to it. I don't even have proper bathroom facilities!

There is a long, tense silence.

Margy: Look, I can't hear all of you properly, but I think you are all talking about how tough this week has been since we have been here. I have missed out on a lot of the talk because the way these rooms are set up I can't see you and can't read your lips. I feel like packing up and going home right now. This is just too hard. And now we are all crammed in here, sharing vital documents, and it's just not fair.

Mandy: Michelle, can I say something please?

Michelle: (Empathically) Go right ahead! It looks like everyone needs to have his or her say right now, so let's get into it.

Mandy: We have all been here since last Sunday night and this is Wednesday. Some of these classmates of mine are physically challenged. We thought that if a University were going to offer a Course in Habilitation, they would at least have the facilities at hand so that those who have special needs would be catered for. From the moment many of these people have arrived, it has been extremely difficult. I feel worried for these people, yet I don't want to have to. I am here for a bit of a holiday from the hard yakka work I do as a carer. I'm not complaining, but ever since we have been here we have all had to pitch in to help out. This is not fair. And now we are all crammed into this room and I feel

like we are just a nuisance. And then you start talking in a very threatening way as if some of us will never make it!

Michelle: Hey, I have never said you were not going to make it or that you were a nuisance. I am just surprised at how many people there are doing this program and at the fact that I had not been told about this. This is a University problem, my problem, if you like, not yours. I will sort it out. Promise.

Terry: See, see, when I asked you about the Blind Society contacting the University, I started to understand that really this place is not ready to cater for people in our situation. It takes the Blind Society six weeks to transcribe all my notes into Braille so that I can read them. Now I am going to be at least six weeks behind because again, in this subject, communication has been terrible. I am just stunned by this, but then again, I shouldn't be. It's been like this for many of us all of our lives. We just didn't expect it here.

Maryanne: I'm here because of my son. He was born with severe dysfunction of cognition. As time went on other, more serious physical complaints emerged. I won't go into all of them here, it's not the place. But when I see fellow students have to suffer just because some bureaucrat in a University fails to find a place for them, because they just don't fit into facilities that are not purpose-built, I think of my son and all the mothers and sons who have this problem and wonder when will you people ever get the message! This enrages me! I'm sorry.

Michelle: Maryanne, the reason you are here is extremely important to me, and I promise to do all I can to make things better for everyone. But let's keep talking. Maybe someone else can tell us why you are here at this program?

Teena: Well I've had polio all my life. My parents didn't get me immunised. They had arrived in Australia from Malta during the 1960s and they didn't have much English. They didn't realise they had to get a needle for me and I got Polio. It's

not too bad, just me leg is crook and I have to have these crutches to get around. I'm doin' this Course because the only job I can get is workin' at the office of the local community disability co-ordinator. To keep the job I need qualifications, so I come here to get them. Bits of paper that tell others that I know what it's like to work with others who are physically challenged. Weird isn't it!

Penny: It's the same for me too. I need the bits of paper. I have worked in community houses for five years. I love it. But if I want to get paid more, I have to have the qualifications. My brother has Down's Syndrome. I have lived with that all of my life so far, so I think I know a great deal about how to look after people with Down's. I think it really sucks that now I have to come here and study, just to prove it!

Terry: I, I always wanted to go to Uni, but it is so hard to study. I did really badly in my HSC. Someone suggested I might get into this course because the entry score was lower than most other courses, so I am going to give it a try. But I feel very nervous about everything. It is all so strange and I am worried about the amount of reading I will have to do, especially when there is such a long delay in getting things in Braille. My parents want me to stay working at the rehabilitation shelter. I put boxes together, packaging for beauty products and other things that I can learn by rote. But it is so boring. I want to make it and I know I can, but I really need help to do this.

Michelle: Anybody else?

Silence.

Terry: Doesn't sound like it! But what about you, Michelle?

Michelle: (Surprised) What about me, Terry?

Terry: Well, why are you teaching in this course? What do you know about people like us? How come you are teaching us here at this Uni? I suppose you just breezed through school and Uni and now you are an academic?

Michelle: (Haltingly) I guess what you might be asking, Terry, is what's it like for me to be teaching this course. Honestly, I have to tell you that I feel absolutely scared. I have to be honest. I know a fair bit about how to do the academic work, and that's what I'm here to teach you, but I have never taught in this program before, here or anywhere else. I am nervous because it is just dawning on me that I am going to have to depend on all of you to teach me about the best way to work with you all. I suppose I need to ask your permission for that. And, if I make mistakes, as I am sure I will, then I need to ask you to let me know.

Several: We will! Don't worry!

Michelle: And as for breezing through school and Uni, that's not quite true. I did most of my learning as an adult. School was not a great experience for me, and it took me a long time to enrol in a University and have the courage to become a tertiary student myself. So, on that level, I think I know quite a bit about what it feels like.

Margy: So, you've never really taught people who have disabilities before?

Michelle: No. Never.

Mandy: It's not that different, you know, Michelle. We are all here to learn. It's nothing to be scared about.

Michelle: Well from what we have all said so far, it feels as if we are all a bit nervous, and a bit frightened. What we might need to keep doing, then, is to check in

with one another to see how it is all going. That way we might all get to feel more confident about what we are doing together. It would really help me if you keep telling me what works, and what doesn't work, in terms of my direction of the class.

Margy: Well, I think it would really help the other way round too: if you tell us how we are going fairly often, so that we get more confident and so we can fix things early, rather than leave it right till the end.

Michelle: Do we have an agreement then? Transparency and honesty both ways: we keep talking to each other about how we all are going and that way we can manage the rough parts together?

Several: I'd like that; yes, yes; beauty.

Mandy: Michelle, if we have to break up into two groups because of class size, will you teach both groups?

Michelle: Look, Mandy. I can't promise that. It's up to the University and right now I already have too many hours of teaching per week.

Several: Please, please. We don't want to have to go through all of this again and again.

Michelle: I will do what I can to help you. Now, let's go through what we have to cover in the next few months, and then let's work out a plan for doing it.

The short film ends.

Participant panel

We now move to that part of our inquiry where we invite people back to talk with us about how they remember that first classroom experience. Some are participants and other co-researchers were working within the University at that time, in a relevant role, who remember the context.

Narrator: The participant panel today consists of Jim, the person who was the Head of School, responsible for the Habilitation program at the University in its first year. We also have with us Merryl, who was the Equal Opportunity Officer at the University at that time. Terry is also able to join us, but only briefly, and we also have Michelle. Jim, you might like to start. What sense did you make of this short film? How did it strike you? How do you feel about what you just saw?

Jim: *I am really surprised by this film. This is the first time I have ever seen disclosure like this in a classroom setting at a University. I had hired in several Habilitation experts to teach this program at the University and I assumed at the time that other academics, like Michelle, would just fit their programs around the specialist lecturers. I know that during the first year there were lots of teething problems. There were no facilities ready for the students that met their special needs. We basically had to rely on the goodwill of the students and staff to get through that first year. Capital funding from the Government had not come through in time and some minor building works were completed to accommodate the students, but not enough. The large numbers that enrolled in that first year also surprised us and we took as many students as we could, expecting half of them to drop out. Of course, they didn't, and I am just starting to think again about this and wonder if the attrition rate was low because of some of this formative work done in these early units of work, like the Becoming a Tertiary Student course.*

I remember asking Michelle to take on this course as she had taught it before to other groups. At that time everyone had an abominable teaching load, and Michelle did too. She was a fairly accommodating staff member and I knew I would meet little resistance from her. When she came to me to say the class was too large to handle, the only thing I could do was to ask her to take both groups, and again she did not protest too much about this, but I knew that I was now really overloading her.

What I remember most though, was the high level of anxiety both in the students and in Michelle. There had been no special preparation of lecturers who were to teach this cohort. I suppose they just had to make things up as they went along. I really did not know just how frightening all of this was for the students at that time. I am used to first-year students being a bit nervous for a while, but when you look at the movie, we really placed these students at great risk, with not even their physical needs being met. This is an embarrassing oversight and one that I know will not be repeated, if I have anything to do with it.

I am also struck, in hindsight, by how isolated we make our lecturers. No preparation, and probably nowhere to debrief moments like this. The paradoxes are raw and I think as a University we failed to really appreciate or know who our students were, and what they needed to assist them in their learning. Even now, the classes are still too large, and we expect young academics to take on teaching loads that are unreasonable. But I have never thought about it from the point of view of the student before. This really makes me stop and think.

Narrator: Thanks Jim. What about you, Merry! You were the equal opportunity coordinator at this University at the time all of this was going on. What strikes you about what you have just seen?

Merryl: *I feel horrified! I can't believe that our students had to go through some of these things when they came to the Uni. Remember, I joined the Uni much later in the year, and some of the minor building works had been completed. The following year they put the lift in, ramps and extra bathrooms. It's disgraceful that we even enrolled students, let alone that large number of them, and took them on. If I were Michelle, I would have refused to teach! What the University did was literally break the law! Or almost! Facilities have to be in place! I am outraged! That poor visually impaired student not having his notes a long way ahead of time! The one thing that saves this whole debacle was that in the movie Michelle turned this around and turned around the power imbalance in the room. She was able to take on board the issue of power and powerlessness, and she saved the day, so to speak, by joining in with the students in identifying how she herself felt about teaching them. I thought that there were also lots of things that she didn't say, or that the movie probably left out! The paradox of a University setting itself up as a centre of excellence in the training of people in Habilitation and then not having the actual facilities for the participants, most of whom are, themselves, physically disabled, does not escape me!*

Narrator: Nothing like a vigorous point of view! Thank you Merryl. Now let me introduce Terry to you. He only wants to make a very brief comment. Terry was a student in this program that Michelle taught at the University.

Terry: *I will never forget that first semester at the University. Nobody had any notes for me early, so my whole program was set back by more than a month until the notes, articles and texts were copied into Braille. I remember how really scared and nervous I was back then. Some of the lecturers just ignored me, because I was too difficult to deal with: I mean my blindness seemed to threaten them, or something. But I do remember the course Michelle taught because she encouraged us time and time again to talk about how we felt in the course and in the program, and that helped me a lot, because I had somewhere to put these feelings. I did not have to walk around with them inside myself all the time. I*

could tell that group how it was for me and then get on with what we were learning. This was such a big relief for me. This group of students in this “Becoming a Tertiary Student” course became quite good friends and we all stuck together in the course. One problem was that when we tried to talk openly and honestly about this in other lectures, it would fall on deaf ears. Other lecturers did not really respond to what we said, so often I was left with how I felt all by myself, and I had to carry that around and even take it home with me. I didn’t need that extra burden. Nobody does.

Author’s review

In this section, I reflect deeply on this first classroom meeting, the events leading up to it, and some of my memories of emotion and feelings both at that time, and now.

The Habilitation program began at the University with what seemed like very little preparation. There were meetings going on within the School about this new course, but I worked in another department and so was not really involved. There seemed to be some terrific people hired in to develop the core curriculum and have it accredited. Some of them stayed on to teach these central units. Around the edges of the program lecturers like me were supposed to adapt other courses to this cohort.

From a distance, this did not seem like a very difficult thing to do. When asked to do it, many months before the program started, I embraced the idea with curiosity and I really like a challenge. However I also felt some resentment. I felt as if I had been somewhat “demoted” or relegated to the “lower ranks” of academic work, teaching a pre-qualifying course. I knew that very few of these students would be straight out of school and that most of them would be young adults, in their twenties or thirties, but this was even more unattractive to me. The stereotype I was working from came from my experience of teaching this subject previously to education students, all of whom were mature-age students. I found in my prior experience that this a draining, very involved process.

I (wrongly) anticipated that this Habilitation group, like the mature-age group in Education, would be overly dependent as learners. I sometimes felt as if I wanted to shake these mature-age students into independent learning. They were frightened of the simplest things: going to the library, conducting literature searches, submitting finished work. It seemed they were forever at the door of my office to ask the tiniest of detailed questions. They rang me up and sent me e-mails. It was all too time-consuming. I felt irritated by the prospect of having to go through this again. I knew that it certainly took me over the line in terms of number of teaching hours per week, but I had hoped that this semester things would be different.

When I spoke to my Head of School about this he really did not want to know about any of my objections. I felt disappointed that he saw me as something of a “junior” academic, though he denied this when I raised it with him. He appealed to my sense of good will in “helping him out” this semester. He promised it would not happen again and also mentioned some postgraduate programs he had ear-marked for me the next year. For me to then complain to him about teaching this subject felt like stepping out of line. I thought I simply had to go ahead, say nothing, put up with it, and promise myself that now I had had my “turn”, twice, I would not be asked to do this kind of teaching any more.

The thought of teaching Habilitation students also did not really interest me. I felt that perhaps they would be easier to work with if they had only been out of school three or four years. The “talk” around the staff room was that this Habilitation program had been “pushed through” by one or two political activists on the Board of Studies of the University on the one hand, and by University administrators who had interpreted the Government’s agenda on disability and saw it flowing into big dollars for training at University level. Also, given the nature of the values of the University, there was a lot of rhetoric being informally communicated at the time, about “reaching out”, and “social justice in action” surrounding the Habilitation course.

My interpretation of this was that this program was one way the University could engage both in social action and in helping out a group in society who needed both empowerment

and assistance. The reality was that the course was at the bottom of the pile, prestige wise, and once the Government funding started flowing, the program and its participants were virtually left to their own devices, while University administration searched for the next source of University funding to spread around into other programs.

This whole scenario saddened me and overwhelmed me. I felt trapped into teaching a course about which I had very little knowledge to a group of students whom I thought had been virtually “hoodwinked” into attending. I was very annoyed that basic facilities were not provided, but I did not know this until the students finally arrived. It had previously not been brought to my consciousness, nor (as it turned out) the University’s.

Despite all of this, there were certain attractions to teaching this group. This included the fact that my week during semester time could be freed up a little because all the face-to-face teaching for this programme was crammed into these two weeks of residential learning. It promised to be something of an “easy” couple of hours teaching if all worked to plan. I had covered the same content before but to different kinds of groups. The program was all set up. It would be a case of just replicating what I had already done, or so I thought.

I gave very little thought to the notion that the students who were attending may have suffered or be living currently with a physical or (as I found out later) a mental disability. There was no preparation, no induction for staff. I walked in fairly confidently on the first day for our first meeting, thinking that this would be an enjoyable and simple task in the middle of a very busy program. I was wrong.

The appearance of the students in this class gave me a shock. It was like watching an episode of *M.A.S.H.* I was stunned to see that out of about twenty-five students at least half had some form of obvious disability. There were people in wheelchairs, students who had slung crutches across desks, those with walking sticks, one guide dog, some students wearing hearing aids and some with physical deformities: twisted hands, turned-in feet, damaged faces. These were people either born this way, or survivors of terrible accidents or

acts of nature. It was cruel to see them crowded into this one room, together. I began to feel absolutely overwhelmed.

Others in the room were young and enthusiastic students who worked as carers for those who were in pain or who had obvious physical and mental limitations. As well as these two different groups of students, there were others present whose job it was to assist the students during class. Some were scribes, others physical carers. This whole scenario alone, gave me a start, a shock, and it seemed impossible not to focus on it at some stage. I tried to hide it as best I could, but I doubted very much that these people would not see through this attempt.

What became most apparent to me was the trauma. These people had suffered not only physical trauma but emotional trauma as well. They had suffered deeply and some were still suffering. Some were suffering right here and now, right in front of me. One woman kept leaving her seat and finding a place to lie down, would stretch out on the floor, from time to time, telling me “don’t take any notice of me”. She obviously was in pain. How do you not notice? Others left the room and then returned, with some frequency. At first I felt totally confused. I wondered if they were leaving for a cigarette break and I felt incensed that they would be rude enough to just take themselves out of the room. Then it dawned on me that these were the incontinent. They had to go.

Others were those on special diets: they simply had to eat something every ninety minutes, because of their medical condition. Some fell asleep in class, then woke up and kept up with us, the effects of medication. Some never spoke at all, from the first day to the last. I felt too embarrassed to ask them anything, in case I found out that they were literally dumb, unable to speak. How stupid would I look then? What I learned to do over time was to suspend judgement and to simply let them “be” whoever they were, without question, in whatever way they wished.

There were two women who looked totally depressed. They seemed fully dissociated, staring out the window, with vague, dull looks on their faces. I was too scared to go near

them in case whatever it was they were suffering from might have to be dealt with by me. I felt inadequate. What was it exactly that I knew about the whole issue of Habilitation that was more than these people knew? Their way of knowing was from their own lifelong experience. I felt overwhelmed by my own sense of not knowing, but then remembered that the task was to help them become a tertiary student. I needed to stick to that task, to that goal, but some of the “how” of this needed to be radically altered. I felt weak that I had to ask for help, from them, but in fairness to these students this was what I had to do.

The tightly packed room was not helped by having to accommodate the mechanisms that helped these students get around, each of which was a symbol of pain and trauma. The wheelchairs. The earphones and microphones. The walking-frames, the guide dog. All of these aids told stories of people who had suffered a great deal. Compared to my own discomfort of having too many students in the room, of not really knowing what to do next in terms of pedagogy, what these people had suffered was enormous.

I noticed that at first I tried to deny what was actually in front of me. I thought that the best way through this situation was to focus clearly on the task of learning. Initially, then, I ignored the students, their pain and even the elevated sense of anxiety in the room. I focused on the task, not the students.

Thanks to their interventions, I could not sustain this position. Their interruptions, complaints and openness forced me to reciprocate, in my own way. When I allowed myself to feel some of the nervousness I was experiencing, then I began to let down my guard, and invite the students in. I also then gave myself permission to enter a little of their world, to begin to “see” the students and to hear them.

Some students spoke very, very loudly. Others were almost unintelligible. There were more tape-recorders and Dictaphones on desks than I had ever seen in one room. It was like a press conference, people putting special microphones on me and turning on tapes, just in case they missed anything I was going to say. I felt overwhelmed. I was just a lecturer. What would I really know? Initially I had viewed the use of such devices as weakness. I

had never, in my whole experience in academic life, used such contraptions myself. I ungraciously agreed to allow these contraptions to be used during the first session, but then realised that they were not additional means of taking in information. For some they were the central means. For whatever reason, there were concrete reasons why tape-recorders had to be used. I felt stupid. Here I was, looking down my nose at what I saw as an overly dependent way of learning, whereas for some a tape-recorder was a necessity for learning.

I felt ashamed that I had not thought of this earlier, that I did not have enough notes to distribute, so as to assist in the communication processes. I wondered about how I might be able to move material onto the University's website so that those people who needed this kind of connection could fairly get it. But it all seemed a bit too late. We only had two weeks to go, and both the University and I had failed to understand who our students really were. One part of me felt sorry that I had ever agreed to get into this situation. I told myself that I should have known better. That the University always did things like this, and I had been left to sink or swim many times before.

Another part of me felt compassion and empathy for these students, and something of a responsibility to turn this terrible situation around and make it right. Even if it was only this particular course that was on the road to getting it right, I could make a difference here and now, and for that I felt grateful. Deep inside I was also very concerned about the time that I was now going to have to give to these students. They demanded time. Their method of communication was not always efficient or speedy. It was often slow and deliberate. I needed patience and I needed to be available. I also needed to draw the line, so that I would not have all my time taken away from me by these students. I felt overwhelmed by this task, but firmly convinced that at this point I could not abandon them. I could not simply walk away as if they did not exist and I felt a responsibility to listen to them and to act on what they were telling me.

I felt furious with the University for placing these students, and me, in this position, and now with facing the possibility of running two classes, not one, which is what happened in the end. I felt we were all used and abused. Not surprisingly, as the semester unravelled I

recognised that students were experiencing much of what I was experiencing emotionally. Rather than walking around enraged, as I was, they formed an action group and ultimately met with the Vice Chancellor to voice their concerns. My guess is that he may have had a similar shock to mine, because the building program was certainly accelerated, and other provisions were made available to the students, which should have happened in the first place.

These students had a great deal to teach me, about disability, about myself, about life, about how some adults learn. I felt defeated by an academic system, which failed to acknowledge that from the very beginning it had to change if it was to accept students who were so different. I, too, had to change and this made a great deal of difference to me.

Audience discussion/data analysis

After many months dwelling on this story and the participants' comments, the themes that created meaning for me were overlapping in the following areas:

- ◆ Compassion as a change agent
- ◆ Discrimination/shame/internalised oppression/stigma of disabilities
- ◆ Shame in relation to fear
- ◆ Society's labelling/impact on self-image and on learning
- ◆ Power – finding one's true voice
- ◆ Maintaining equanimity
- ◆ Exploring one's shadow

Compassion as a change agent

Michelle recognised that her compassion for others gave her the courage to stand up for the issues of others while she felt a greater challenge in standing up for her own issues.

I felt furious with the University for putting me in this position, and now with facing the possibility of running two classes, not one, which is what happened. I felt used and abused. Not surprisingly, as the semester unravelled I recognised that students were also experiencing much of what I was experiencing. They had a great deal to teach me, about disability, about myself, about how some adults learn.

Adult educators who facilitate in the field of diversity often express this challenge. On one hand there are the hard cold facts of reality that education with and for people seems to come last in the race for funding. On the other hand, here were these people who genuinely wanted to learn as a means of getting ahead, so it was totally unfair to either blame them, or to treat them as if they did not have special needs. It appeared to Michelle that the one particular special need they had was to be treated with respect and compassion, even when they challenged Michelle on the way in which she spoke to them, as seen in this important interaction:

Michelle: *You know I have never taught this subject to a group like you, you know. I feel a bit concerned that I'll be able to do it correctly. I really want to help you succeed so we are going to have to really work closely together so each of you can really do well.*

Maryanne: *I'm sorry, but I don't know what you mean by "a group like you".*

Michelle: *(Nervously) Well, I mean to a Habilitation group before. I mean to people who work with people who have disabilities ...*

Maryanne: *But everyone has one ...*

Michelle *Sorry? Everyone has what?*

Maryanne *A disability ...*

There is poignancy about this interaction. Michelle proceeds and notes her nervousness in response. Had she not felt compassion as a basic and underlying tenet, then there is a strong possibility that some thing as important as this realisation may have been missed. As the story unfolds and in her reflection, we hear more of her own “disability”, or “shadow” as Jungians refer to it.

I, too, had to change, and this made a great deal of difference.

In this story, Michelle demonstrates that she felt very deeply the pain of the students in her class. This was almost a universal pain of oppression of one kind or another.

Another part of me felt compassion and empathy for these students, and something of a responsibility to turn this terrible situation around and make it right.

With the dynamics at work and the strong emotional pull that Michelle experienced from those in the group, Michelle finally feels comfortable becoming very transparent with the group. She answers their questions directly, and reveals to the group that she has not worked with this kind of cohort before.

Honestly, I have to tell you that I feel absolutely scared. I have to be honest ...I feel nervous because it is just dawning on me that I am going to have to depend on all of you to teach me about the best way to work with you all.

This self-disclosure gives both her and the students some kind of relief. Authenticity is what they are searching for, and when this is achieved, compassionately and honestly, then the students are able to begin to settle into their tasks. Had Michelle remained distant from them, speaking to them as if there were absolutely nothing wrong in the room, then they would never have really been “seen” by one another, or by Michelle, and vice versa.

Discrimination/shame/internalised oppression/stigma of disabilities

The experience of rejection associated with social disapproval can have great repercussions in adult education, where discrimination is often one of the strongest reasons why people with disabilities may fear disclosure about speaking at all about their particular physical or mental challenge. The shame and internalised oppression that one might experience as a result of being told by society that your particular way of being is not normal, acceptable or equal in value to others does not go away easily or without continuous effort and attention.

I think of my son and all the mothers and sons who have this problem and I wonder when will you people ever get the message! This enrages me! I'm sorry.

This feeling of shame has a way of reigniting like the “trick birthday candles” which go away and then suddenly come back without prompting. Whitfield (1987) believes that shame runs even deeper than guilt in that it defines one’s way of *being*, one’s identity. In making a distinction between the two, Whitfield (1987) states,

Shame is the uncomfortable or painful feeling that we experience when we realize that a part of us is defective, incomplete, rotten, phoney, inadequate or a failure. In contrast to guilt, where we feel bad from doing something wrong, we feel shame from being something wrong or bad (p. 44).

The premise is that guilt can be addressed or forgiven while shame associated with one’s core being is difficult to change, even if one should choose to do so. Whitfield (1987) describes shame as a characteristic that is “universal to being human” (p. 45).

Shame in relation to fear

Michelle picks up the shame in the room despite the fact that it is fairly aggressively kept at bay by the challenges the students present. Rather than denying that there is aggression and fear in the room, she opens the door for the students to say how they are feeling in relation to being in the group. This only happens, however, after a fairly disastrous start, in which her “upbeat” beginning with the group is read as something to be very fearful of.

Most students look terrified and overwhelmed.

Michelle notices this and after about ten minutes stops.

First-year University students can often look terrified and overwhelmed by the newness of the environment, the expectations and the lack of knowing. For adult educators to ignore this in adults could be seen as unhelpful and even disrespectful to those who are learning. She then attempts to speak to them directly about the notion of success in an attempt to reduce the fear, and to reduce her own feelings of shame at her own not-knowingness:

I really want to help you succeed so we have to really work closely together so each of you can really do well.

Underlying the obvious “differences” of the group, fear begins to be named loudly, and Michelle promotes the expression of this, and then adds in her own fear of teaching and even some of the shame she feels about this.

You know I have never taught this subject to a group like you, you know. I feel a bit concerned that I’ll be able to do it correctly.

Whitfield (1987) points out that if we do not recognise and work through the issues of shame and let go of them, shame tends to accumulate and burden us more until we become its victim (p. 44).

In addition to feeling defective or inadequate, shame makes us believe that others can see through us, through our façade, into our defectiveness (p. 45).

Michelle's personal reflection indicates the shame she felt that the University had not catered adequately for the students.

I felt ashamed that I had not thought of this earlier, that I did not have notes to distribute, so as to assist in the learning processes.

I remember feeling a great deal of shame during this entire semester. Perhaps it was this shame that allowed me to place myself in the position of running two classes rather than one. I knew that my Head of School did not feel this same shame, or at least there was no hint of it being on his agenda. The shame I felt fed my own fear of failure, perhaps of my own fragility in the face of physical fragility I had not encountered a great deal. I note that these two feelings, shame and the fear of failure, were the common ground I shared with the students. However rather than allowing the shame to paralyse, it was worked with constructively. I set myself to understanding who these students were and to meeting their needs. I stayed in role, focused on the task, drew some lines about my availability but nevertheless taught a very impressive class. To both groups. For the students, the formation of their advocacy and protest group allowed their shame to be channelled through confronting the fear of failure of the University. I will write more about this later.

Society's labelling/impact on self-image and on learning

This research seems to bear out that people who are physically or mentally challenged have to deal with more than just the behaviour of others towards them. They also have to deal with the profound effect on one's self-image and on one's capacity to learn. External manifestations of a particular disability reveals little about who these students are as people.

Given the complex nature of any discussion in this area, it seemed important that sufficient time be allowed to process some of the feelings and emotions of the group members. The program design, however, allotted only a small amount of time for this kind of discussion.

Michelle's reflection implies that she took matters into her own hands, anyway, and adjusted the program around the students, rather than the other way around.

This is a feature of adult education that may require further research. However it is my experience, and the experience of others, that at times the best packaged education program may have been devised, but if there has not been accurate research on who the learners are, then this presents a dilemma for adult education practitioners. The dilemma is exactly the one faced by Michelle within the University context: how to implement the key aspects of a pre-designed learning program, only to find that if it were followed precisely, learning would be in a deficit position. As Jim, the Head of School, mentioned in the participant panel:

The paradoxes are raw and I think as a University we failed to really appreciate or know who our students were, and what they needed to assist them in their learning ... I have never thought about it from the point of view of the student before. This really makes me stop and think.

This quotation is a great example not only of not labelling but of really not knowing that adult learning demands that the whole person is engaged in the learning process.

Given that many of the individuals in the group felt that they were not being treated fairly, were perhaps being labelled as "different", were frustrated at trying to survive their first experience of higher education, and knew that the University was deficient in the way it did not cater for their specific special needs, Michelle thought that they were not likely to be open and ready to engage in a frank and open discussion. However, once it was raised, Michelle facilitated the flow of this conversation. This intervention gave people choices and seemed to empower them in the fact that they could affect the way in which they were to be treated.

Once this outpouring of emotion was permitted and the adult learners were encouraged to vent their anger at not being catered for, Michelle was then able to get on with the task of

teaching and learning. One outcome of this was the beginning of an improved relationship between students and teacher, and the setting of some boundaries in the way the special needs of each was catered for.

The issue of self-image is critical to learning. For some students, they were at the University to receive the “piece of paper”. For others it was an exciting prospect of being able to advance themselves in a career. For others it was about learning how to better work with those who have particular needs in our society. Whatever their motivation, what none of them missed was the fact that their physical learning needs were not catered for. As Meryll, the equal opportunity co-ordinator at the University at the time this was going on, comments:

I feel horrified ... It is disgraceful that we even enrolled Students, let alone large numbers of them, and took them on.

As adult educators, if we believe that we are working with the whole person, then the self-esteem of our students, no matter what their age is, requires attention, sometimes nurturing and often encouragement for growth. Allowing adult learners to voice transparently some of how they are experiencing their learning processes (and not leaving this until the very end of the programs) can open the door to other ways of knowing who we are as adult educators and adult learners. Aligned with this is the notion of power and of finding one’s voice.

Power – finding one’s true voice

In reflecting on the various stories within this story I began to question my own thinking. Synchronicity and intuition have afforded me many lessons in the process of writing my dissertation. It seemed to me that it was synchronous that I took on the task of teaching these students in the first place. Jung defines synchronicity as “a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved” (Jaworski, 1998, p. 88). Intuition refers to knowing something instinctually without actual

evidence of it. I have learned that synchronistic events sometimes occur for my own growth in consciousness and while at a rational level, I would like to be more aware of the choices that I make, at times, the choices are not as visible as I might like them to be. Intuition also provides me with messages that are not always easy to see and comprehend at a rational or intellectual level.

The experience of working with this Habilitation course was one of these opportunities with which I was presented the opportunity to learn a great deal. My rational self told me that I was overloaded already in my teaching program. My intuitive self accepted the role, and then doubled it, and with this came the rich experience of working with these young adults, and now having the chance to reflect on it in a much deeper and wider way, through this dissertation process.

The challenge in this process involved progressing from no longer allowing “the tribe” or others to control our actions (thus becoming personally empowered), to accepting that our choices may at times be directed by intuition without our being totally conscious that this is indeed happening. However, as we become empowered individuals, we come to believe that we should be totally conscious and in control of our behaviour, including the choices that we make. Myss (1996) states,

The notion of releasing our power of choice ... remains the greatest struggle for the individual seeking to become conscious (p. 220).

Myss points out that:

The idea that consciousness requires surrendering personal will ... stands in direct conflict with all that we have come to consider the measure of an empowered person (p. 222).

This was particularly insightful for me as I reflected on how often I have recognised the value of synchronicity and intuition through the messages that have come to me at unexpected times. The work with this group of disabled people was one such choice. While I did not use my own power well, at the beginning, giving in to the feelings of shame and

embarrassment that someone had to do something to assist in this learning environment, I was able to find my own voice towards the end of the program and felt able to stand up for myself, and my students, at various forums within the School, at a later date. However, I was able to use my power, and my own voice, in re-constructing the learning material, making it relevant to them, putting into place the variances necessary for the topic to be more relevant to their stated needs. All of this was born out of the capacity we each had to name the emotionality we experienced and to deal with it. This was not totally successful, for there were still students who, at the end of the semester, were unable to really take part in the discussions overtly. However their written reflections indicated to me that even they, too, had found a way of being, through writing, that was growing in its transparency and inner voice.

What I saw in these young adult learners was the notion that for these people, empowerment took on an entirely different form, because there are so many limitations they have to contend with on a daily basis. Paradoxically, their own capacity to find their voices and name much of what was happening for them became central to their own empowerment, both within the coursework and within the University setting. Listening deeply to my own intuition to promote this conversation, difficult as it was at times, was vital in enhancing the capacity to learn, for them and for myself.

Maintaining equanimity

What does it mean to maintain equanimity in the face of confrontation? The Dalai Lama (2001) defines equanimity as the “attitude of sympathetic impartiality toward all beings. Equanimity removes our prejudices and enables our altruism to reach all sentient beings” (p. 124). Equanimity relates to compassion in that it enables us to see ourselves in others and have compassion that transcends beyond their visible behaviour. Having compassion and patience with “the heckler” in the group gave Michelle the opportunity to demonstrate respect for “the heckler” who might also be present as a dimension of our own beings. Mandy almost shouts at Michelle:

I'm sorry, but I don't know what you mean by "a group like you".

If I go to the place of unconditional and positive regard within myself, I will not fear anyone who takes up the role of heckler. I will learn to embrace this dimension of my own being, both in allowing an adult learner to speak out, if a little unfairly and in an unfamiliar genre. Letting out some of the anger, the confusion and the fear allowed Michelle and the group to not continue to suppress their own realities at that moment. In the face of such serious personal challenges, the right to have feelings and to express them, without this becoming a destructive and fruitless task, is about the maintenance of equanimity. Many Eastern spiritual practices describe equanimity in a similar manner as compassion, empathy or love (Chodron, 2001).

My capacity to be mindful of these strong emotions and to maintain equanimity calls for strong and mindful attention. Bennett-Goleman (2001) points out that moving into our day-to-day experiences with this kind of mindful attention allows us to face our disturbing feelings and thoughts without becoming overwhelmed by them (p. 35). Oftentimes emotions and feelings are suppressed in the unconscious and are simply not allowed for.

It may have been easier to not engage with Mandy's opening salvo, to let it simply sit, in silence, in the room. There have been times when facilitating adult education groups, when I have done exactly that. Mindfulness assists me in knowing when to dialogue with such a challenge and when to simply keep going with the task. If one were to take up every expression of emotion and try to process it with an individual or group, the task of learning would be hindered dramatically. Timing is everything, and deep listening to the sense of urgency, to the relevance of what is being named, and the capacity to stop and deal with such material, depends on my centredness and mindfulness as an adult educator, at any time. I know that for myself, I do not always get this right. There are moments when such outcries must remain as sub-texts within the learning forum. But they are there, and need to be noted, if equanimity is to be maintained and encouraged. If, however, they continue to be sub-textual, then I as an adult educator am giving up an amazing opportunity to work with the whole person and the whole group.

Strong emotions such as anger and shame can be wonderful precursors to greater insight into how I teach and how I learn. Likewise for adult learners, facilitating their capacity to reflect on such strong emotions can assist in greater self-knowledge.

Exploring one's shadow

According to Zweig (1991), negative emotions and behaviours such as anger and shame “lie concealed just beneath the surface, masked by our more proper selves”. Known as the personal shadow, “it remains untamed, unexplored territory to most of us” (Zweig & Abrams, 1991, p. xvi). Jung referred to the shadow as “one of the major archetypes in the personal unconscious” (p. 5). It is also sometimes perceived as “the thing a persona has no wish to be” or those repressed dimensions of our personality that we have disowned (p. 4). We become enlightened by making conscious those dimensions of our being that have remained in the dark. Through my research I became aware of the extent to which I had learned to suppress my own feelings of anger and rage.

Coleman (1995) refers to Jung's work in relation to “merge experiences” that transcend the individual psyche: “The concept of merger is a literal metaphor for one's origin; we start life as dependent beings fused with the physiology of another person” (p. 24). Many psychologists and philosophers have studied the development of the early state of consciousness in the infant. Some believe that an understanding of the “merged consciousness” of the infant with the mother might hold the key to explaining many of the feelings of the individual later in life. Some believe that this process might be even more critical in explaining the person's development of her sense of self than originally thought to be the case (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991).

Iyania Vanzant (1998) talks about the behaviour patterns that are also born within us. Vanzant states,

Largely, they are set by the patterns of our birth. Otherwise known as the birth pattern. As we move through life we unconsciously recreate the incidents,

energy, and environment that existed before and at the time of our birth. Our responses to our birth patterns are often unconscious, which is the very reason we can't always recognize what we do, why we do it, when we are being passive or why we are being aggressive. If we took just a little time for self-reflection and examination, we could easily connect what goes on in our relationships with the patterns of our birth. While we are unaware, we become fixated on trying to figure out what just happened and why it is affecting us so deeply, and often painfully ... (p. 42).

Vanzant goes on to share the story of her own birth and how her mother's alcoholism during pregnancy and, at the time of her birth, has impacted on her own way of being – her fears and insecurities (pp. 42–44). This information contributed significantly to a shift in my own consciousness. It helped me to understand feelings that sometimes surfaced that could not be explained solely by life experiences. Particularly where strong feelings of fear are present, in the Habilitation group, it was not only the strong feelings that surfaced about the current reality of the University.

What was surfacing were fears and insecurities that came from a long time ago, from a lifetime of discrimination and from an experience of abandonment which was continued to be enacted both by the University, and almost by me. Until I could display a capacity to stop and relentlessly listen to the possibility of these strong emotions emanating from a place that could not readily be explained, then I could do nothing as an adult educator, in terms of learning.

By listening to some of the stories of adult learners, we can gain insight into the presence of potential shadows, not that our work is therapeutically focused. For myself, the capacity to simply ask students something as simple as why they are in a particular program, and to take the time to really listen to this, can bring to the fore emotions that may enhance not only the connection of the people in the group, but may also assist them in uncovering their unconscious selves. The same goes for me in my own work. Where I am able to add in parts of my own story, appropriately, including how I feel about working with this or that particular group, can enhance the connection that is made with adult learners and therefore the capacity to learn. Without this, the holistic and reflective capacity we each may have, in the task of learning, is a resource that is lost.

Summary

Through this story many themes have been developed about the way in which adult learners and adult educators can draw on emotion as a vital resource in learning.

Through compassion, an adult educator can model ways of “seeing” another person and thereby encourage her or his knowing that s/he is valued and respected as a human being.

The naming of discrimination, shame, internalised oppression and the stigma of having any kind of disability, can free adult learners in being who they are within an adult learning environment. Likewise, for the adult educator to hear these stories alerted me to reflect on my own internalised oppression and shame, and wondering how this may be acted out in my role, for better or for worse, of adult education.

Focusing more closely on the role of shame as a reaction to fear allowed me to understand that no matter how tentative an adult learner may be, the acknowledgement that fear is present and can be worked with, is one of the tools I broadly use. This can have the effect of releasing students from the shame of not knowing, and reminds me that I, too, sometimes need to be released from this prison that I create for myself.

Improving self-image and the continued importance of doing this throughout adult development, is central in enhancing learning. As an adult educator I believe that at the very least my work with adults should not disrupt any student’s self esteem, but should enhance it and help its growth. To ignore this is to ignore the whole person, and thus disenfranchise adult learners from integrating who they are as a person with what they are learning.

One way of doing this is to not aspire to society’s labelling of others, no matter what their presentation. It means to attempt to see with a different lens, each learner’s capacities and potential, rather than to only see what is on the outside. For myself, too, this means

allowing adult learners to grow my own self-esteem, and not taking things personally when in their state of anxiety and fear they sometimes project things into me that do not belong.

Finding one's voice as an adult learner is a vital step in enhancing learning. Some adults struggle with this, as I did myself, and encouragement through accepting what might come, respectfully, is a first step to growing this part of adult learning. There are few more powerful experiences for any adult than to find his or her own voice and to know, as if for the first time, that such a step empowers and develops both the person and learning.

For this to happen, the adult educator must maintain equanimity, must not engage in distraction from the task, must use mindfulness as a tool for judging when to stop and reflect and when not to. Engaging the whole person requires timing, sensitivity to the energy or atmosphere in the learning group, and a personal centredness and capacity to be still and listen.

Finally, being aware of one's own unconscious actions, even shadow, can be a resource for the adult educator who aspires to holistic teaching. Allowing adult learners themselves to say a little more about who they are and why they are at any given learning event, can bring to consciousness those motivations and presentations of self that may not have been noticed before. Adding pieces of one's own story to this colourful and rich collection, including emotionality, can have the effect of assisting educators and learner to form important connections which enhance learning.

In the next chapter I turn to the fifth stage of organic inquiry: harvesting the fruit. The organic inquiry method suggests that once the research has moved through each of its phases, the reflection is left to the reader as co-researcher. The fruits of the inquiry, called the transformative phase, are left to those who are engaged in the inquiry to reflect on and make their own, as they see fit. For the purposes of this thesis, I present some of the reflections I have personally made as a participant in this inquiry. Each of these reflections has provided me with an opportunity for transformation within my own practice.

Chapter Six: Reflections and Reflexive Research – Transformative: Harvesting the Fruit

... seeds from the fruit may be planted back into the earth to grow new trees
(Clements et al., 1998, p. 50).

Critically reflective research

In this inquiry I have attempted to use different voices in presenting and processing the stories as a device for demonstrating that I have engaged in “critically reflective research” in the study of emotionality (Jones, 1992). In other words I have tried to continually look again, to seek different meaning from what might be read or heard as a very common setting. I have attempted to do this separately from my co-researchers, by the use of different voices for my own experiences. I have also attempted to do this in a collaborative way, both through holding the memory of these adult learning experiences and expressing them artistically, as well as through the more participatory process, which is the core of cooperative inquiry. The organic methodology, however, fused with an arts-based, narrative method, has assisted me in achieving my goal of critically reflecting on a variety of situations by using different lenses and voices. I now list some of the elements of the outcomes of this reflection about emotionality and learning.

Unbending intent

I found the phrase “unbending intent” in Angela Brew’s (2001) depiction of the Nature of Research in Australian Universities. The sense that unbending intent carries appears to be more than just determination, or finishing something. It also contains the sense that everything is treated as relevant, even that which is most submerged. As Reason and Rowan (1981) point out, delving into our own subjectivity usually means getting more than we bargained for. As Brew (2001) puts it:

Unbending intent means carrying on even when the going gets tough (p. 60).

There were many times in developing this thesis when the going did get really tough. It was necessary to read through and reflect on a great deal of material that related to issues of emotion and feelings. Some of this seemed irrelevant to this experiential form of narrative writing, which had a fictionality about it. My intent was to find a way to describe to myself and the reader, with unbending loyalty to the participants, the sense of *being there*. What might have come forward, both consciously and unconsciously, took on a life of its own. It was my intention to use the text of my stories and experiences as a way of transporting the reader into the emotionality of that moment at that time, nothing more and nothing less. I noticed that as I wrote, I re-lived some of the emotional content. I found myself deeply engaged with each piece of writing, as it unfolded in front of me on the page. I felt the joy and the pain, the humour and the embarrassment, the sadness and despair, and a sense of great humility at being able to be a participant in so many learning scenarios such as these.

There were moments in writing the thesis as a whole when I felt as if I were in an intellectual fog for most of the time. I had the stories inside me, bursting to come out. I had no idea what they might say. I had to find a way of giving myself licence to do this, to explain to the reader what happened during these moments. I knew of arts-based research and its growth in recent times, particularly in the domain of transformative learning. Likewise I happened upon the organic methodology of inquiry, as explained earlier, at a conference, and felt somehow drawn to its very earthy explanations and saw it as a potential vehicle for bringing emotion to the fore, in different settings. I found myself writing, and then having to leave writing alone for long periods of time, while I sat with the material and it sat with me: finding the words to speak the unspeakable; to listen to the silences; to see disappearing scenes that existed only inside me, was a challenge in and of itself.

In the end it was this unbending loyalty to what I believe actually happened in these learning transactions that allowed me to build, piece by piece, the work as a whole. It was not simply an academic process, which was required to be written in academic form. It was a part of me that needed to be explored. At times I felt frightened that I would never be able to find enough ways to “hold” the research together in parts. At other times I felt frustrated

and angry at my seeming lack of capacity to find the right words or phrases, which described what was happening for me during the inquiry. At other times I rejoiced in being immersed in bringing something to light and staying with it, and I could not be dragged away from my computer for anything. In other words, the unbending intent to authentically portray emotionality, to name it in many different ways, and to let go of it and hand it over to the co-researchers, brought up in me many different emotions that I had not experienced before, in relation to academic work. This unbending intent is, I believe, reflected by the participants in each of the four stories and points the way forward as a key ingredient in uncovering emotionality in adult learning.

Unbending intent, in these terms, is viewed as a key element in working in adult education where emotionality is worked with to bring forward outcomes, which enhance learning. In the RoadWorks story, for example, it could have been easy to have aborted the entire first day of training, given that there were no textual or visual resources available. Likewise for the participants, given that they had arrived at the venue to find that the materials had not arrived, it could have been easy for them to simply have driven home. Instead, both the adult educator and the participants engaged intentionally in using the wide-open space of learning.

The text for learning was actually “inside” both the educator and the learners. Determination of the unbending kind was demonstrated when both parties allowed this space to emerge, trustfully. Not giving up, when the going gets difficult, is imperative. The members of the DisAbility story also certainly demonstrated that. Further, the text and subtexts of learning in the RoadWorks scenario emerged, the emotionality demanded that each have their turn, that each was valued equally and that the feelings which emerged through story-telling by the participants were valued. Likewise, in the DisAbility story, the determination to keep going had to be unbending, otherwise human survival was at stake.

Choosing the stories

Choosing what stories to work with and which ones to leave alone, presented another issue, which I had to resolve. Discriminating between stories that might just “sound good” and those, from an entertainment point of view, that were ordinary enough, and those which stood out most in my mind because of their emotionality, created some initial dissonance. However entertainment is not what this research is about, and being true to what in myself I knew could be adequately worked with, presented a dilemma that took a very long time to resolve. Taking into consideration whether or not there might be participants in the stories whom I could contact presented yet another issue. What emerged, however, is the notion that perhaps I went through a parallel process to that of my co-researchers. Each of them, too, had to choose what aspects of story they were going to tell orally. For me, which ones was I going to choose to tell in narrative form?

In the end, I had to go with my own sense that those events, which stood out more in my being, were the stories to write and to reflect on. Whether or not they are “good stories” is irrelevant in this context. Likewise, whether or not I could find participants and participant organisations seemed an inauthentic way to decide what to write. I was able, to a greater or lesser extent, to find enough participants and to get the necessary ethics clearance to proceed. What I had to come to terms with most, however, was my own motivation for these choices. It was not my purpose to expose people and situations in a political sense. This may or may not have happened, but this was not my intent. The unbending intent that stood out for me in choosing these four stories was simply that when I allowed myself to sit and think about my career I asked myself the question: “What stood out for me, in terms of emotionality, as examples of adult learning transactions?” The scenarios that I remembered were the ones that stood out emotionally for me. In other words, there was an emotional attachment to these memories of learning that had somehow connected with my capacity to remember the different scenarios intensively.

Not having access to many of the participants involved in these stories presented a challenge, but it was not going to stand in my way. For better or for worse, this research

was not the type of inquiry that really was asking for that type of validity. Also, some stories I have inside me from my own experience as an adult educator might sound better, be more entertaining, not be on difficult subjects, may have provided much richer data. However my unbending intent for authenticity and transparency over-rode many of these seductive thoughts.

Mirroring my own journey perhaps, the stories which the participants chose to tell all had an emotive content. In the story DisAbility, for example, when the educator finally stopped talking and allowed the students to speak from their anxieties and experiences, what came forward was the students' own version of their own story. The stories of how these students had so far coped at the University during the week came tumbling out, with true feeling. The examples they chose were not simple complaints, but were a recall of those experiences, which elicited emotional aspects of their time as "students". Likewise, the focus of the RoadWorks participants in role-playing, as it were, different experiences they wished to share, focused on those which had an emotive element. The oral re-telling, as it were, brought to the surface such emotion. In the RunWay story the participants chose to nominate those things that kept them separate or which drew them together and it was impossible for this to be discussed without emotionality. For the facilitator and the Head Brother in The Meeting, the act of silent listening meant that the emotion was rawly available to each of those gathered around the table. The learning facilitator, then, can model emotionality and how valued it is or is not, through her or his own self-disclosure. If this is tempered with other elements in facilitation, there is a greater capacity for emotionality to sit comfortably, or uncomfortably, in the arena of learning.

Mirroring emotionality between researcher and research

In thinking about the DisAbility story and the way in which the students selected stories, examples, role plays, disclosures and conversations, as did the RoadWorks participants and the RunWay partners, I was struck by the notion that there was a larger story that catapulted me, as researcher, into choosing the focus for this inquiry. Perhaps this might be explained by a short reminiscence of my time as writer of this research.

Humiliation

I remember feeling totally humiliated when I presented my doctoral submission to a collection of fellow students and professors. There were so few words I had at my disposal, with which to explain the inquiry, so little clarity, a kind of gaping, awkward silence in trying to explain something that I did not yet know or experience. Having “not knowing” as the only answer to questions of theory and outcome was very uncomfortable for me. Moving through this time of feeling as if I had been “struck dumb” meant being faithful, in a relentless way, to my own inner processes, sometimes during very tough moments. Allowing support to come from supervisors who demonstrated likewise unbending intent on allowing this reflexive praxis to emerge, in a most thoughtful and appropriate manner, assisted me during these tough times. Allowing, in my relationship with supervisors, to name some of these feelings and giving my academic guides permission to name some of their own feelings in relation to both my work, and me, was also very congruent with what I was attempting to inquire into. What was at the heart of the research therefore became core to the supervisory relationship and vice versa. These experiences may also have had a “drip-down” effect, in the sense that in choosing the stories to represent emotionality in this thesis, there may have been certain emotional triggers that helped me make this decision.

When I reflected on this, I could see that one of these triggers, this humiliation that I described earlier, comes from a time and place much further back in my personal history. It really did not belong as a response to the doctoral submission gathering with my supervisory panel and other interested academics and students. To have experienced this, and to have reflected upon it, allowed me the room to move on, otherwise I may never have taken one step further in this research. I remembered this when I began to write, and I notice that each of the four stories has an aspect of humiliation, or the potential for humiliation within it. In this way, what was happening within my own emotional praxis was also congruent in bringing forward the narrative. This mirroring continued. The feeling of shame on hearing, for example, that it looked like I did not really know what I was doing in planning my research (and I truly did not know, at that stage) was mirrored in some of

the stories. The University students in DisAbility did not know where they were going with their work. The two men in The Meeting did not know what the outcome would be or even what the process might elicit. The men who met in RunWay had no idea what might emerge.

Affirmation

The power of feeling increasingly affirmed by my supervisory panel, and its impact on my capacity to function well in writing, is mirrored in the effects of affirmation on participants in the stories. Throughout my process of writing this research there were many times when I wondered if it would ever come together and I felt overwhelmed. Each time I was affirmed in one way or the other, as thoughtful conversations emerged between us about how to solve a particular problem. The affirmation in RoadWorks worked both ways. The educator was affirmed by the presence of the “co-facilitator”, the engineer, who translated the men’s behaviour for the educator. This affirmed her in staying put and waiting for them to return from a break. Michelle affirmed each storyteller and one by one they affirmed each other’s stories, through clapping and laughing and generally cheering one another on, no matter what the emotional content. In RunWay the movement to look at the painting by the educator affirmed the men’s joint good taste in choosing art works. This freed them both to stand in front of the works at emotionally difficult moments, and wonder together, affirming one another, silently, in doing so. Affirmation took place in The Meeting simply by the posture of listening and respect that was present. The political act of meeting with a complainant and apologising is a massive act of affirmation simply in human terms. When affirmation is uncovered by action and by words, it can be a powerful ally to learning. To assume it is present, but to leave it unnamed, reduces its potency.

Panic

My experience of panic, at times, when I felt as if I could not read or write anything that was worthwhile, is mirrored in some of the feelings of panic that are exposed in the stories. The DisAbility students were certainly displaying signs of high anxiety and panic in the

ways in which they engaged in learning. The feelings of an almost palpable terror in some of them were so strong that it had to be listened to and metaphorically “held” before anything else could happen. The victim in *The Meeting* was likewise terrified and the Head Brother was panicked. The panic in the educator when the materials had not arrived and when the Chinese Restaurant was to double-up as both the venue for the training and the dining room was palpable. Panic requires human-accompanied interaction, until it abates. It requires, of its very nature, that it be engaged with, not denied. When this happened at every level in this inquiry, the capacity to learn was strengthened. The facilitator accompanied the participants, the facilitator was accompanied by the supervision panel, the supervision panel was accompanied by one another, perhaps by the participant’s panel, or by human experience. Naming panic for what it is can act as the antidote to unbridled confusion. Engaging with others who are in a state of panic, through accompaniment, can act to facilitate growth through difficult times. Not to engage in such a way in adult learning environments may serve to thwart learning and to neglect the very core of how learning takes place. However, emotionality which is humanly accompanied in adult learning environments can be a powerful tool for change.

Joy

The joy I experienced in finally having the time to stop doing anything else other than to concentrate on my research is also mirrored in the stories when the quality of time spent together is reflected upon by the joy of participants, or at least the relief, at being heard and listened to, and given the space and time to dedicate to learning. The battle with myself, at times, to not give up, to keep going, to not go with the fleeting feelings of hopelessness, can be seen in the stories where experiences of hope and hopelessness were clearly at stake. *The Meeting* displays great feelings of hopelessness, yet the outcome, as I know it, was not. The RoadWorks group laughed and cheered one another about a potential cricket match, as well as listening to one another in respectful silence at the loss of an esky or about someone’s sense of fairness. The joy of the shared relationship as it had been, and of the art works, was shared in *RunWay*. As a result of the actions, which took place during the story of *The Meeting* (and many, many such meetings later), joy is one of the outcomes, as

victims are heard, acknowledged and cared for by the Religious Order. The joy in this case is not apparent at the time. In fact, the opposite. Desolation, hopelessness, powerlessness. These states become the source of joy, in the end. Adult learning environments that promote joy, when appropriate, and that note the lack of joy and name it, sensitively, for what it is, promote learning.

Switching off emotionality

This mirroring continued throughout the process of writing and throughout the stories, almost in equal measure. In this way both the internal and external realities of emotionality became clearer. Adult educators bring with them their own emotionality to the learning environment. There, they meet with learners who have their own set of emotions at any given time, and with group emotionality. When these three sets of emotional spaces are allowed to meet one another, rather than be hidden from each other, in a respectful and safe environment, then the learning can begin for all concerned. For the adult educator to “switch off” emotions, he or she may be switching off the capacity for emotionality to be a vehicle for learning in so many ways. Likewise it is also arguable that if the emotionality is too strong, and is not facilitated well, it could lead to a lack of learning because it distracts or distorts the learning material.

By treating everything as if it were relevant, and reverent, I was able to examine some of the deeper assumptions about emotion and feelings in a way that may not have been possible to me previously. One of the very strengths of the type of methodological models I have used is that I have been able to explore more issues, ask new questions, and examine again and again my findings, as will the co-researchers who read this thesis.

The postures for uncovering emotionality in learning

I have used the term “welcome” several times in relating the notion that emotionality has to be greeted and “shown through”, as it were, into the adult learning environment. In this sense I wish to explore some of the ways in which this was able to happen, as seen through

the narratives presented in this inquiry. I have identified the following stances, or postures which emerged from the narratives as being key elements of emotionality in adult learning, as reflected upon in this research: relentless listening, hospitality, attunement and waiting. These four key elements facilitated emotionality in adult learning in the four scenarios I have presented in this research. I will now expand on these four elements and demonstrate the impact of these on both the learning facilitator and the learners.

Relentless listening

The role of listening or of so-called “active listening” in education has been written about and practised over and over again in adult education. However the act of relentless listening is qualitatively different from simple active listening. Relentless listening requires that all participants hold within themselves a deep respect for the person they are listening to. The quality of listening is “beneath-the-skin” listening. In other words, the act of listening is a deeply focused, reflective act. It pays total attention to the speaker. It listens not just to the words, but watches how the words emerge and from which behavioural stance the words take shape. There is deep silence when each of the RoadWorks participants speaks. They are not interrupted, except by good-natured banter now and then. The relentless aspect of the listening gives to the speaker the room to nominate emotions, and to state more about the impact of what they are orally portraying, emotionally. In the meeting with the RunWay business partners there was a sense that this was the first time they had ever given one another the space and time to listen. It was relentless in that it waited, probed, sighed, respected and revealed a capacity to actually hear what was being said. In the DisAbility story, when the adult educator finally noted that there was emotionality, which required noticing, the relentless listening allowed students to take out their highly anxious states and place them in the room, as it were. When these emotions were then named by the educator, there appeared to be greater feelings of relief in the students. At last, someone was listening to them, as it were. In the The Meeting story, the relentless nature of listening required that there be no interruptions to the speaker. Even when the speaker faltered, demonstrated long silences, stopped to drink his coffee or just to breathe, the listening continued. It was as if everything was being listened to, and everything in the world depended upon it. There is an

urgent edge to this kind of listening that requires a deep sense of centredness and calm. This pre-disposition allowed the emotionality to be there and to be heard as well.

Relentless listening can also be viewed as a deeply political act, by virtue of giving another the space and time to speak the sometimes unspeakable and to be able to hear herself or himself speak in this way. The content of what was about to be revealed in The Meeting is an example of this unspeakable reality. So often, if one does not wish to hear something, it is easier to block it out, by jumping in and starting a conversation. This is not relentless listening. Allowing the other person to continue and to not relent, is an act of power-sharing, and enables a story to be truly heard. It is relentless, in this case, because it never interrupts, it does not distract or distort. Relentless listening takes the posture of compassion, and quietly and almost reverently, listens to both the words and actions. Relentless listening hears what is being said and what is silent. It gives licence to the speaker to say what he or she needs to say, without interjection or judgement.

Relentless listening is a sibling of unbending intent, as described earlier. It stands together as it were, with the intent to allow emotionality to take a place in learning and vice versa. It is also related to intuition, because the relentless listener has to know how to allow the relentless speaker time to speak and time to listen to him or her. The relentless listener provides safety through the act of not acting, or by interacting in a way that prevents participants from speaking their truth and having this heard. Relentless listening provides a platform, or a crib, for holding the speaker, until the words subside, sometimes like the act of a mother holding a crying child, until she or he comes to a point of calmness.

In the narratives presented in this research, relentless listening is paramount in welcoming and constructively hearing and holding emotionality. It is a posture of welcome, a movement of the heart and the body, which stretches the emotional muscles, as it were, and legitimises what and how things are said and heard.

Hospitality

The act of hospitality can incite deep emotion in the learning environment and within the educator and learner. As an educator, when facilities are available and space has been thought of for adult learning, I am more able to engage in the task of relentless listening. But more importantly, when I allow myself to become the instrument for hospitality, then I am allowing something qualitatively more to happen. I am standing at the doorway, so to speak, inviting, welcoming, showing enthusiasm for and with those I am working with. This hospitable stance can be seen in many different ways in the narratives of this inquiry.

The steaming hot plates of Chinese food made available for participants in RoadWorks who had travelled many, many hours, just to be present at the learning place, spoke as an affirmation to them, and as consideration to their needs. The invitation to the facilitator to join the participants for a drink after the first day of RoadWorks training is another example. The decision by the lecturer to take on two groups of students, not just one, because not to do so would have sat inhospitably with her own sense of herself, or of her duty to her students, is another. The facilities, which were available for learning: the meeting room for The Meeting, which is visually private, soundproofed, with coffee and tea, another. Small things, these are, of and by themselves, but highly significant in terms of making possible the capacity for emotionality to present itself and to remain. The many instances of hospitality, or the lack of hospitality seen in the lack of adequate facilities, allow emotionality to feel safe or unsafe. RunWay's closed boardroom door allowed for a full and thorough conversation. No glass see-through windows into the room. No interruptions.

Likewise, when a student mirrors this hospitality or brings it with her or him as part of her/his own toolkit, then there is less likelihood that the emarginated will be left on the edges of learning, nor that those with the loudest voices will be the only ones heard. Hospitality is a stance that is quickly communicated in adult learning. It stands with an open posture, sometimes it smiles, it looks like it wants to be there, and it stands eyeball to eyeball with the other, gazing in wonder. Like relentless listening it provides the valency

for intimacy. It says not only that there is care about the way learners interact, but also there is care about that care.

Hospitality might sometimes take the form of course materials for visually impaired students being available, as in the Dis-ability story, or simply a cup of tea or a seat to sit on, as in RoadWorks. But it is much more than that. Hospitality is the way learning facilitators demonstrate to learners that they have been held in the mind of the educator, even before meeting. It says “I have been thinking about you” to the learner, “before you even came into this learning environment”. Hospitality meets every individual with deep respect and compassion. It engages groups of people in the same way, with a deep knowing that there will be a lot of not knowing before the group breaks through to a new and different space in its life cycle. It does not demonstrate anything other than an openness to be a co-learner and a co-teacher. Hospitality moderates the temperature of emotionality in the learning facility. It creates homeostasis. It notices when someone is switched off and quietly attempts to engage them, without anyone really noticing. It allows space and time for reflection and thought within the learning environment. It plans ahead, but is able to take on new directions when the time calls for it. It does not judge the other, nor does it cancel time together because materials have not arrived.

Hospitality is an essential pre-cursor to emotionality. It announces, in silence, the safety of working together. It nominates without pointing loudly, the act of integration, of holistic working together, from the inside and from the outside. Hospitality rides the boundaries of a learning group, ensuring nobody gets lost, or over-involved in foreign fields of previously unfelt feelings and broken connections. It waits.

Where there is a hospitable stance towards learning, the valency for emotion to be integrated with the material being learned, is noticeably stronger. Hospitality takes the posture of servant, in the best sense of that role. It encourages scholarship. Hospitality shouts and cheers encouragingly from the sidelines, as learning takes place within learning groups and between learner and instructor, and vice versa. It allows its eyes to well up with tears, when the other is distressed, like a mirror. It allows its own acts of hospitality to be

returned by the receiver, and it is a reciprocal agent for connections between and within adult learners and the material on which they are focusing.

Attunement

Borrowing this term from Heidegger (1953), the act of demonstrating attunement to learners is an act of enormous hope which begins from the outset in adult learning and which draws all participants, including the facilitator, into a deeper understanding of the relationship between emotionality and authenticity. When the facilitator thinks about the adult learning that is ahead, tries to “guess” the kind of participants who arrive, and plans for that, attunement has begun. But even more so, when that is done and she gets it wrong, as identified in RoadWorks, attunement allows for a flexible friendliness, which soon grasps the human needs of the group. To continue with the RoadWorks example, had the learning facilitator not been able to stay centred, then she may well have allowed those emotions which were triggered inside her because of the lack of materials and poor working space, to have been projected onto the learners. She may well have taken this discomfort out on them. She could have adopted a very black-and-white approach to the situation in staying strictly within the boundaries of time that had been established. Had she not been able to attune herself to the needs of these learners, there is a fair suggestion that the entire program could have been a dismal failure.

Attunement “holds” the learning environment and the emotionality alive within it. It stops and listens, and with an hospitable attitude, attempts to know what is presented at first sight and to see more. When the learning facilitator arrives at the learning space in the DisAbility story, for example, she quickly had to attune herself to the needs of the participants. Although she attempted, at first, to simply carry on as if none of this were in front of her, it was not long before this early, sweeping sense of being swamped had to be let go, so that she could become more attuned to the students. Attunement listens out for emotionality. It hears the sounds of unspoken feelings as they crash through the learning spaces and between learner and teacher and vice versa. Attunement does not run away, but relentlessly

listens to each step of the learning interaction and stands next to the emotionality that is being acted out.

We see attunement at work in the The Meeting story. How the “victim” would present himself was a vast unknown. The acts of welcoming him allowed a process by which the attunement would begin. Might he present as angry, enraged and hostile? Would he hit out metaphorically or actually, at the facilitator and Head Brother? Would he arrive, as had others, intoxicated with alcohol or sniffing glue in the waiting area? Attunement acts as a kind of radar system for emotionality. It predicts, then changes the prediction. It gathers first and second impressions and then listens to them. It watches every move, without anyone noticing. Attunement has the capacity to go with the ebb and flow of emotionality, from great sadness to joy and back again, in the same sentence. Attunement calls for self-attunement so that this “radar” system is operating properly and is at its peak. Without attunement, relentless listening is not possible, nor is hospitality. Attunement is not haughty or puffed up with its own sense of importance. It is sometimes very tentative, displaying signs of not-knowing, before it actually knows. It holds the emotionality of learning, knowing that there is always more, always more to see and to hear, always more to know and to feel. Attunement allows the facilitator to model an aspect of learning which takes place silently and unobtrusively, but which is a powerful instrument in the permission it gives to learning spaces for people to be authentically themselves, and to be responded to with deep respect.

Waiting

Emotionality requires that we wait. We wait for birth, we wait for death. We spend a great deal of our life waiting. It is no different, then, in adult learning that the task of waiting be taken up as a way of providing safety to the presence of deep feelings. Emotionality cannot be hurried and will not be. A posture of waiting for the right time, the correct moment, the catalyst for emotion within adult learning, provides a deep sense of safety to adult learners. The RoadWorks story presents this sense of waiting, providing timely interventions, allowing more time to some activities and to the presentation of others, as a way of

allowing participants to know that they were important, and that each of their own stories was likewise important. In *The Meeting*, the brief story which is written took a very long time to be put forward by the “victim”, possibly twenty or more years. In adult learning scenarios, it may have taken a participant a lifetime to be brave enough to say something, and this requires a patience and a posture of waiting that allows this to happen. When waiting does not take place, it is my view that emotionality is diminished. Waiting is a friend of silence, for sometimes the waiting is in silence. In the story about RunWay, it took time for both partners to meet with one another and the learning facilitator, so as to actually learn about how each other was feeling about their business relationship. As it were, they probably both left it far too late for any intervention to actually work. However, the wait with the facilitator to begin to name those strong emotions, which terrified each of them, allowed for a reasonable separation to take place, in the end.

As the writer of stories, it was absolutely essential that I wait until the right moment to begin to write. This could not be rushed. The materials of two or twenty years required that they be honoured, and this took place. Waiting gives the message that whatever feelings come forward, they will be honoured and not denied. They will be safely held by attunement and they will be treated hospitably. Attunement is vital in the setting of scenes, in the work of noticing emotionality and in knowing what the other may not consciously know.

Summary and implications

Uncovering and acknowledging learner emotion by an adult educator who understands its connection to teaching and learning impacts on learner success in a variety of learning environments. However, in Western culture, emotion is generally viewed by educators as a distraction and as a confounding element (Lupton, 1998; O’Loughlin, 1997). However, it is argued here that teaching and learning are emotional activities. Daloz (1986) writes: “ ... emotional engagement must be part of the learning process ... passion is central to learning and the capacity to provide emotional support when it is needed are hallmarks that distinguish the good mentor from the mediocre teacher” (p. 33). Palmer (1993) challenges

teachers to set an emotional environment of trust and acceptance to facilitate the deep connections between teacher and learners to foster deep learning. But how can emotion be uncovered in such a way in adult learning environments so as to support and facilitate that deep connection which fosters learning?

This research focused on understanding multiply dialogic relationships: my emotions as an adult educator as they impact and are impacted upon by the emotion of adult learners, and the impact of the discourses of emotion in education which shape and constrain the felt and expressed emotion in adult learning. Further, my research suggests postures or strategies which assist in the creation of a positive emotional environment in adult learning. My goal was to understand more fully what might emerge when emotion was uncovered in adult learning and to ponder the possibilities and limitations of engaging with the emotional environment as it relates to the creation of deeper learning connections.

APPENDIX 1

UTS LETTERHEAD

Dear ...

My name is Michelle Mulvihill and I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney, in the Faculty of Education.

I am conducting research into the way in which emotion can help adults learn in workplace environments and would welcome your assistance. You will remember that some time ago, I conducted some workplace learning/facilitation in which you were involved. Now that time has passed, I would like to hear your reflections on what you noticed about the way you learned during the time we spent together.

The research would involve your listening to a tape recording, which I will send you, which lasts about five minutes. The recording is a reflection from me of what I noticed during our time together. After listening to the tape I ask that you respond in writing, on the sheet provided, giving your reflections on your experience in this learning transaction.

At all times, your response will remain anonymous and in writing up the research report, you or your organisation will not be identified in any way.

If you are interested in participating, I would be glad if you would contact me.

You are under no obligation to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle K Mulvihill

[Redacted signature]

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

CONSENT FORM – STUDENT RESEARCH

I, _____, agree to participate in the research project

“Uncovering Emotion in Adult Learning”, being conducted by Michelle Mulvihill of the University of Technology, Sydney, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to gather my reflections on a learning interaction in which I was involved and which is now finished.

I understand that my participation in this research will involve listening to the researcher’s reflections on the learning interaction which will be sent to me via audiotape, and then writing my own, brief reflection, as I saw it.

I am aware that I can contact Michelle Mulvihill or her supervisor, Professor David Boud, if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from this research project at any time I wish and without giving a reason.

I agree that Michelle Mulvihill has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Signed by

___/___/___

Witnessed by

___/___/___

NOTE

This study has been approved the the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer, Ms Louise Abrams (ph: 02 9514 9615, Louise.Abrams@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 3

RESEARCH FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS TO COMPLETE

Please listen carefully to the five-minute audiotape reflection by the researcher on the learning process in which you were involved.

After listening to the audiotape, please write as fully as you can about the questions on this page.

The description you hear on the tape might be so different from your recollection to be almost unrecognisable. Your thoughts and feelings might diverge very substantially from the researcher's view on the tape. This is to be expected, because we all see things differently and we recall things in different ways.

From your own perspective, could you write some reflections on the following questions?
Please use separate pages to write your responses.

1. When you think back to the learning time we shared together, which I have described in the audiotape, what did you notice about the way learning happened for you and for others?
2. What do you remember most about the way in which you were (or were not) engaged emotionally in the learning process at that time?
3. Do you remember having any emotional response to the learning? If so, can you name these emotions?
4. Were your emotions involved or not involved in your learning on that occasion? If so, can you name which emotions and in what ways they were present in the learning interaction?
5. Did you have any emotional response to the learning interaction some time after it was completed? If so, when was that? What kinds of emotions did you experience?
6. Do you have any emotional response to this learning interaction now as you recall it? Can you say something about what these emotions are?
7. What do you think has been the outcome of this learning interaction for you, in the short and long term?

Thank you for your comments.

Please return your responses to Michelle Mulvihill at michelle.mulvihill@uts.edu.au
Or mail to Michelle at Faculty of Education, PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007.

APPENDIX 4

UTS LETTERHEAD

To: The Workplace Head of the organisation in which the fictionalised accounts of the stories in this inquiry took place.

Date

Dear ...

My name is Michelle Mulvihill and I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney in the Faculty of Education.

I am conducting research into the way in which emotion can help adults learn in workplace environments and would welcome your assistance. You may be aware that some time ago, I conducted some workplace learning/facilitation at your offices. Some of your staff members were involved in this project.

Now that time has passed, I would like to hear the reflections on what your staff noticed about the way they learned during the time we spent together.

The research would involve your staff members listening to a tape recording, which I will send them, which lasts about five minutes. The recording is a reflection from me of what I noticed during our time together. After listening to the tape I ask that staff members respond in writing, on the sheet provided, giving their reflections on their experience in this learning transaction.

At all times, staff members' responses will remain anonymous and in writing up the research report, staff members or your organisation will not be identified in any way.

If you are interested in giving permission for your staff to participate, I would be glad if you would contact me.

You are under no obligation to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle K Mulvihill

[Redacted signature]

APPENDIX 5

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

CONSENT FORM – STUDENT RESEARCH

HEAD OF ORGANISATION IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS WORK

I, _____, agree to allow my staff members to

participate in the research project “Uncovering Emotion in Adult Learning”, being conducted by Michelle Mulvihill of the University of Technology, Sydney for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to gather staff members’ reflections on a learning interaction in which they were involved and which is now finished.

I understand that staff members’ participation in this research will involve listening to the researcher’s reflections on the learning interaction, and then writing their own, brief reflection, as they saw it.

I am aware that I can contact Michelle Mulvihill or her supervisor, Professor David Boud, if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my organisation’s participation from this research project at any time I wish and without giving a reason.

I agree that Michelle Mulvihill has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in a form that does not identify my organisation or my staff members in any way.

Signed By

____/____/____

Witnessed By

____/____/____

Note: This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer, Ms Louise Abrams (ph: 02 9514 9615, Louise.Abrams@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

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