ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING ACCESS:

Hope in times of crisis in South Africa

Edited by
Zelda Groener and
Sandra Land

RESPICE PROSPICE
UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the authors, their families and friends who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We extend our dedication to the eight Durban University of Technology's Adult and Community Education students who lost their lives at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The loss of loved ones is a life-changing crisis. Our collective endurance in publishing this book is a celebration of resilience and our hope for overcoming as yet unknown future obstacles to advance new dimensions in our struggle for humanity.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to everyone who was involved in the publication of this book.

Both editors were involved in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) projects, funded by the European Union (EU). This book emerges from the research project, 'Access, participation, success and barriers that affect these in post-school education and training' which Zelda Groener has co-ordinated since 2016.

We are grateful to the European Union (EU) for funding this research project, and in particular, the publication of our book. We express our appreciation to the DHET for securing the funding from the EU for the Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Project (TLDCLIP). We would like to acknowledge the support of the DHET staff who were involved in this project: Michelle Mathey, Mokwi Morgan Maputha, Precious Siphuka and Whitfield Green. We consider this book a contribution to building the capacity of academics and practitioners involved in the post-school education sector.

We would like to acknowledge the support of our respective institutions, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and the Durban University of Technology (DUT). We are grateful for the support of our colleagues in the Institute for Post-School Studies (IPSS), particularly Joy Papier and Seamus Needham.

This co-edited book was the first project in which Zelda and Sandra worked as collaborative partners. Sandra, I am so happy that I had the privilege of co-editing this book with you. Our book became a labour of friendship. As reflected in the topic of the book, we lived through the COVID-19 crisis as the publication evolved.

I owe special gratitude to Sandra. Diagnosed with COVID-19, my sister Wilma Adams was admitted to Vincent Palotti Hospital on 12 January 2021. Following two weeks of intubation on a ventilator, she died on 25 January 2021. Sandra held my hand as I roller-coasted between the prospect of her recovery and the moment of her death. Sandra, I am deeply grateful for your sincere support during those deep dark moments, and my bereavement.

For both of us, co-editing our book was a steep learning curve. We owe a debt of gratitude to our 19 authors. We appreciate everyone's patience. To the novice

authors, we thank you for your endurance in responding, with such good grace, to our multiple requests for redrafts and changes.

We are thankful too to our international and local reviewers who peer-reviewed the chapters and for their candid and critical reviews.

We also owe gratitude to:

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Prof. Zelda Groener

In addition to joining Zelda in expressing the acknowledgements above, I would like to thank her for inviting me to co-edit this book; it has been a real pleasure to work with her on this project. Also, it was an agreeable surprise for both of us to discover how well we worked together – so well in fact, that we managed the whole process more than a thousand kilometres apart without a single in-person meeting, and in spite of real tragedies encountered along the way. All this involved a lot of rapid learning for me, for which I am very grateful. My thanks also go to all the authors who submitted chapters that we found ourselves unable to include. I'm sorry we couldn't include all the submissions, but I hope you found some value in our communication with you nevertheless.

Dr Sandra Land

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FOREWORD

The European Union's support to South Africa dates back to the 1986-initiated Special Programme for Victims of Apartheid. With the move to democracy in 1994, the EU set up formal diplomatic relations with South Africa, and has since then continued its support for the country and its people through wide-ranging bilateral cooperation. Human rights have been, and remain a critical focus of EU-SA collaboration. The Union's support has focused on a number of sectors, with education having been a key beneficiary. Education is one of the three primary pillars of the Human Development Index and is also one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4) aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education and skills are critical enablers of social change, addressing vulnerability and creating opportunity.

In reaffirming the EU's commitment to support education, the European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen emphasised: *"Education has the power to transform lives and societies; it is the foundation of equality and a key to a better future..."*. Education is not limited to children and youth, but in a rapidly changing world, also benefits adults who embark on life-long learning to acquire new knowledge and learn new skills to adjust to changing economic and social environments. Education is a critical contributor to sustainable development, and the EU actively supports and promotes the UN's 2030 Agenda on sustainable development goal to "leave no one behind".

In South Africa, the EU supported the "Teaching and Learning Development Programme" with some €26 mil (R442 mil). This publication, supported by the EU and the Department of Higher Education and Training through the Teaching and Learning Development Programme, examines adult learning in times of crisis. While the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic is most certainly being felt in the education sector, it must be said that it essentially made matters worse by exacerbating the pre-pandemic challenges faced by the sector. The wide-ranging contributions to this publication explore issues of socio-economic crisis, distributive justice and what the critical role of education can and should be; the publication also interrogates vulnerability and marginalisation, as well as Gender-based Violence in adult education, impacting on education outcomes. It emphasises the critical role of agency, intervention and hope. Education is at the heart of recovery, resilience and progress.

Enabled by the Teaching and Learning Development Programme, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and all involved universities, educators, researchers and civil society organisations have made an invaluable contribution to improving education in the country, providing knowledge, skills and resources, and contributing to justice, human rights and sustainable progress.

We look forward to our continued collaboration with South Africa and are excited to be part of the next step towards a just and equitable society where no one is left behind.

Dr Riina Kionka
EU Ambassador to South Africa
June 2022

Abbreviations and acronyms

(C19) TERS:	Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme
ABE:	adult basic education
AET:	adult education and training
ANC:	African National Congress
ANT:	Actor-Network Theory
ASC:	Amended Senior Certificate
BIG:	Basic Income Grant
CANs:	Community Action Networks
CLC	community learning centre
COSATU:	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPTD:	continuous professional teacher development
CPUT:	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CTT:	Cape Town Together
DASO:	Democratic Alliance Student Organisation
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DVA:	Domestic Violence Act
DWYPD:	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
ECD:	early childhood development
ECE:	early childhood education
EFFSC:	Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command
EPWP:	Extended Public Works Programme
ETDP:	Education and Training and Development Practices
FPL:	food poverty line
GBV:	gender-based violence
GEAR:	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GETC:	General Education and Training Certificate

HBI:	historically black institutions
HCBC:	home community-based care
HE:	higher education
HEI:	higher education institution
HSRC:	Human Sciences Research Council
HWI:	historical white institution
ICT:	information and communications technology / information and communication technologies
IIED:	International Institute for Environment and Development
iKamva:	UWC online learning management system
IPV:	intimate-partner violence
IT:	information technology
KZN:	KwaZulu-Natal
KZN BDS:	KwaZulu-Natal Biodiversity Stewardship Programme
KZN CETC:	Community Education and Training College system in KwaZulu-Natal
LBPL:	lower-bound poverty line
LGBTIQ:	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/ questioning
LMS:	learner management system
MBSR:	mindfulness-based stress reduction
MoU:	Memorandum of Understanding
MTBPS:	Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement
NATED:	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NDP:	National Development Plan
NEMPAA:	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act
NGO:	non-governmental organisation
NIDS–CRAM:	National Income Dynamics Study–Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
NPR:	non-profit organisation
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS:	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PalCHASE:	Palliative Care in Humanitarian Aid Settings and Emergencies Network
PASMA:	Pan Africanist Student Movement Azania

PEPUDA:	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PRA:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSET:	post-school education and training
PTSD:	post-traumatic stress disorder
QCTO:	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RDP:	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RMF:	#RhodesMustFall
RPL:	recognition of prior learning
RU:	Rhodes University
SACP:	South African Communist Party
SAHO:	South African History Online
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
SASCO:	South African Students Congress
SBA:	site-based assessment
SETA:	sector education and training authority
SGB:	school governing body
SRC:	Student Representative Council
SRD:	Social Relief of Distress
SU:	Stellenbosch University
TAC:	Treatment Action Campaign
TERS:	(see C19 TERS above)
TVET:	technical and vocational education and training
UBI:	Universal Basic Income
UBIG:	Universal Basic Income Grant
UCT:	University of Cape Town
UJ:	University of Johannesburg
UKZN:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UPBL:	upper-bound poverty line
UWC:	University of the Western Cape
WHO:	World Health Organization

Editorial

By Zelda Groener & Sandra Land

The call for chapters for this book was inspired by the shock of COVID-19 impacting on the adult and community education sector in our country. However, the proposals for chapter after chapter that landed in our inboxes underscored the reality that people active in this field are constantly buffeted in the waves of a whole range of crises, and that they lack protections taken for granted by many practitioners in other sectors.

Consequently, this book offers a collection of chapters describing a wide range of crises that affect both learners and educators in adult and community education. Written by people working in this sphere, it makes available practitioners' first-hand experiences of the impact of some of the more sudden and acute crises, as well as their experiences of dealing with more enduring and enervating problems.

Crises are not new for vulnerable black adults. As economic, health, poverty and education crises have unfolded, anti-establishment mobilisation, campaigns and protests by organisations such as Equal Education, Social Justice Coalition, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and the Stop Gender Violence Campaign continue to challenge existing power relations.

Compounding these long-standing difficulties, the COVID-19 pandemic ignited a crisis unprecedented in living memory, and catapulted the world into a global lockdown. People were forced to recede into whatever spaces of safety they had, the engine rooms of society screeched to a halt, and the streets became silent, eerily silent. The world took a deep breath. A strange kind of orderly consensus descended upon the world. London, New York, Nairobi, Windhoek, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban were deserted by their inhabitants. Airport traffic halted and planes were abandoned on runways. For the world's citizens, this was a strange experience. Not at any prior time in modern history have governments, with their citizens' consensus, intentionally shut down their economies. These were dramatic, life-changing moments for the global world. It was a historical turning point.

In placing lives and livelihoods at the centre of our thinking, it is impossible to fully understand at this time how the ramifications of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown have affected the lives of disadvantaged black adults, who constitute the target population for many adult learning and education programmes in South Africa. At this stage, there are strong indications that disadvantaged adults,

particularly women, whose livelihoods have always been precarious, have been the hardest hit in the wide-scale loss of jobs and livelihoods caused by COVID-19 and the lockdown. These crises have laid bare and accentuated the fault lines of an unequal and unjust society.

This book is published in 2022, at a time when the pandemic could be transmuting into an epidemic. We have experienced four waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have endured variants and sub-variants. There is still no cure, but a vaccination blankets us from the worst effects of the virus. The number of deaths has surpassed 100 000 in South Africa, and 5 million worldwide. The question, 'What is the COVID-19 crisis teaching us?', must be considered, along with questions that remain unanswered from long-standing and painful injustices and problems.

Perspectives in this book provide glimpses into adult education and learning practices emerging from a South African context of crisis. The compilation of this peer-reviewed book is supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), with funding from the European Union (EU). Academics, researchers, postgraduate students, adult learning professionals, and practitioners submitted chapters that are evidence-based, critical and analytical.

The book will be useful for a broad range of academics, researchers, students, adult learning and education professionals and practitioners, community education and training college lecturers, community activists, and policymakers.

Chapters have been grouped into the following themes:

- Crisis and vulnerable adults' access to adult education/post-school education and training and community education and training;
- Crisis, community education, and social movement learning;
- Higher education: Sites of crisis and COVID-19 crisis intervention; and
- Building capacity for crisis intervention and hope.

In these themes, the various authors interrogate emerging understandings of relationships between crisis and adult education and learning practices, and provide snapshots of social crises and education responses predating the COVID-19 pandemic, and during the COVID-19 crisis. We hope that the themes will offer readers of the book responses to some of the following questions:

Theme 1: Crisis and vulnerable adults' access to adult education/post-school education and training and community education and training

- How do we try to understand the pandemic crises in terms of adult education and learning?
- How do crises shape access and barriers to adult education and learning for vulnerable adults?

- How are we learning to devise adult education and learning strategies that respond proactively to crisis-issues related to access and barriers?
- What has the crisis taught us about reflecting on, and evaluating, adult education and learning strategies?
- What pragmatic adult education and learning strategies emerge through the lived experiences of crisis?

Theme 2: Crisis, community education, and social movement learning

- How do we learn to mobilise ourselves in response to crises?
- How do we learn to protest, and build organisations during crises?

Theme 3: Higher education: Sites of crisis and COVID-19 crisis intervention

- What has the 'emergency' experience of online teaching and learning taught us about the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning for adult students?
- What has the crisis taught us about devising innovative teaching and learning strategies for adults across the post-school sector?
- What has the crisis taught us about adapting teaching and learning strategies for adults across the post-school sector?

Theme 4: Building capacity for crisis intervention and hope

- What do crises teach us about ways that adult education and learning can facilitate crisis intervention and foster hope?

Crisis and vulnerable adults' access to adult education/post-school education and training and community education and training

In her chapter, '**Socio-economic crisis, social security, distributive justice and vulnerable adults' access to post-school education and training in South Africa: An emerging conceptual framework**', Groener argues that the COVID-19 crisis has adversely affected vulnerable black adults, the target population for many adult learning and education programmes. The loss of jobs and livelihoods prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has exacerbated the struggle for survival they experienced prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The author acknowledges the government's COVID-19 social security emergency assistance measures for vulnerable adults, even though it is hardly adequate, but urges that the government should implement social security to improve vulnerable adults' life prospects and their chances of accessing and being successful in post-school education and training (PSET). She suggests that our contemporary class, race and gender inequality perspectives are under scrutiny because of

the inequalities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and asks how we should incorporate 'crises' more consciously into our thinking about social reality, how social security could instil hope, and how crisis can prompt the rethinking of distributive justice.

Mthethwa and Land, in their chapter, '**The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Community Education and Training College system in KwaZulu-Natal**', focus squarely on the effects of COVID-19. They contextualise this pandemic against previous pandemics, some of which had devastating effects on society, and then describe the impact of this pandemic on the logistics of the Community Education and Training College system in KwaZulu-Natal. Noting how it exposed shortcomings in the system, they conclude by expressing the hope that the pandemic may have released planners from habitual perceptions and beliefs which, previously, possibly restricted learning opportunities offered by the system.

In '**Gender-based violence in adult education: The experiences of rural learners and adult educators**', Mncube, Mutongoza and Olawale courageously offer a distressing account of how gender-based violence (GBV) is manifest in adult and community education. They show that both adult learners and adult educators may be victims, and that members of both these groups are among the perpetrators. The evidence these authors present, gathered in interviews with adult learners and educators who revealed the pain of suffering violence or being targeted by sexually predatory people, rings with authenticity. The chapter may be shocking to practitioners in the field who visit sites of adult learning and imagine them to be peaceful sites of learning where all are immune to acts of aggression and sexual predation. However, as the authors assert, and no matter how painful it might be, there is a need for the issue to be openly aired and not clouded with shame. Their work will certainly open the way for further discussion.

Crisis, community education, and social movement learning

With many of our ecosystems destroyed, damaged or increasingly threatened by human activities, the chapter, '**Community education and the crisis of biodiversity loss: Reflections from the hall of mirrors of past projects**', asserts that South Africa faces the crisis of the loss of many of its plant and animal species. The authors, Phadima, Memela and Land, note that, historically, approaches to conservation efforts tended to disadvantage and alienate people in rural communities, and failed to persuade them that conservation practices held value for them. They then discuss dynamics that are vital in community education initiatives which attempt to encourage long-term, sustainable biodiversity conservation strategies that avert the crisis of the loss of biodiversity and truly benefit people and ecosystems.

Basing her chapter, '**Learning democracy in a social movement in times of COVID-19**', on the case of Cape Town Together (CTT), a social movement founded in response to COVID-19, Walters, the author of this chapter, explores the development of relationships amongst members of this movement across the divides of their city. She sees the work of CTT as aligned with the feminisation of politics. Her main message is that the establishment of respectful relationships that foreground social solidarity rather than the divides of location, race, sex–gender, and power is central to the development of true democratic principles that enable inhabitants of a city to unite, and to cope with present and future crises.

In his chapter, '**Higher education funding crisis and access: Student protests, UWC#FMF, and social movements**', Mdepa acknowledges that higher education institutions are sites of crises, protest and social movement learning. Students' experiences of individual financial crises, the crisis in higher education institutions, and a government fiscal crisis precipitated widespread student protests across South Africa in 2015 and 2016. Students demanded free higher education, and their efforts paid off, because the government increased NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) funding and higher education institutions agreed to 'no fees increase' for 2015 and 2016. Drawing attention to these financial crises, Mdepa analyses the rise of the #FeesMustFall movement that led the protests against the crises in 2015 and 2016. He sketches the emergence of the funding crises in higher education, and analyses its effects on students and higher education institutions. Captivated by the #FeesMustFall movement as a new form of social movement, and intrigued by activists' social movement learning, the author investigated social movement learning arising from student protests. His findings reveal fascinating perspectives on ways that student activists learnt about protesting, challenging institutional financial crises, and using crises for social transformation.

Higher education: Sites of crisis, protest and COVID-19 crisis intervention

Lack of finance is a fundamental problem for many disadvantaged women in South Africa who aspire to study at universities. In her chapter, '**Funding as a crisis for mature women students: Agency, barriers and widening participation**', Aploon-Zokufa draws on her research into the learning journeys of six mature women in which she used life history interviews to reveal that these women experienced inadequate finance as an enduring crisis throughout their lives. She highlights the crisis of funding as a key barrier to access and shows how it shapes the agency of mature women as they travel along their learning pathways in pursuit of higher education studies. The study shows that, while a lack of funding gives rise to a crisis, these women demonstrate high levels of motivation because they viewed access to higher education as access to employment, as an

escape from poverty, and as financial security. The author's findings show that three of the six women in her study navigated their way through their funding crises and reached their destination of higher education studies, while the other three were continuing their pursuit of higher education studies.

Dasoo and Van der Merwe-Muller, in their chapter, '**Towards a socially just, continuous professional development model for teachers as adult learners**', observe that the closure of all educational institutions at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic transformed teachers into adult students. This happened as they learnt, often by experimentation and trial and error, about teaching through digitally supported methodologies. Continuous professional teacher development (CPTD) played an important role in supporting teachers' explorations of new methodologies as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. In their study of 26 teachers, Dasoo and Van der Merwe-Muller discovered disparities between digitally advantaged and digitally disadvantaged teachers, which created unequal competences. Concerned about such injustices, the authors present an innovative model for CPTD, which has the potential for providing socially just CPTD opportunities to enable teachers to develop digital skills and competences.

'**Designing online learning environments in higher education: Building capacity of lecturers to design and facilitate blended e-pedagogy for mature students**' is a chapter by Dankers and Stoltenkamp. These authors argue that, amidst already-existent funding shortages, the COVID-19 pandemic hit higher education institutions hard, compounding the crises they face. As lockdown restrictions prevented face-to-face, on-campus instruction, online learning emerged as a crisis-related alternative. As novices to online learning, many academics immersed themselves in the practices of e-pedagogy. Dankers and Stoltenkamp adapted what is known as the ADDIE instructional design model to assist academics with designing and facilitating e-pedagogy. The acronym that is used as the name of this model stands for Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate. Arguing that the COVID-19 crisis propelled blended e-pedagogy to prominence, they suggest that further research will illuminate future possibilities for considering new dimensions in this model.

Building capacity for crisis intervention and hope

Hope for overcoming crisis and building sustainable futures are in the hands of our children. In their chapter, '**Access to early childhood development qualifications, Extended Public Works Programme, agency, and crisis intervention and hope**', Groener and Hector-Dreyer point out that children's early childhood experiences of safety, security and happiness are determinants of resilience in later life. The authors note that many young children grow up in families and communities where crisis is a daily lived experience, and that early

childhood development practitioners who themselves have overcome crises of one kind or another are well positioned to identify dangers to which young children are exposed. They suggest that expanding access to qualifications for ECD practitioners would create an opportunity for them to deepen their knowledge and enhance their skills as potential first responders who may facilitate crisis intervention and foster hope for the future.

In the COVID-19 crisis, palliative care workers have been called on to act as front-line health care workers, both for COVID-19 patients and those with chronic diseases who are at risk of contracting the virus. Authors Newton and Frick present a chapter entitled, '**Workplace literacy in a time of crisis: A narrative account of palliative care workers' learning as regards dealing with adversity**', in which they use a narrative approach to trace the experiences of four palliative care workers as they acquired the workplace literacy they needed for work that was beyond the scope of their training. Using the lens of transformative learning theory, the authors aim to contribute to our understanding of the development of workplace literacy as a key crisis learning for health care and palliative care professionals.

In her chapter, '**Transcending crisis and trauma through mindfulness and embodied learning**', Hamman reminds us that, for most people, crises are a traumatic experience that affect the body, mind and spirit. The COVID-19 crisis has prompted collective societal trauma, and has been a traumatic experience for people who have lived through their own struggles for survival and recovery, or are grieving for lost relatives and friends. People searching for strategies to manage stress, trauma and crisis may find solace, through a reconnection between body, mind and spirit, in the practices of mindfulness. Hamman proposes an embodied learning approach to mindfulness training as a holistic way of building capacity for crisis management. Her research on mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), conducted in a pre-COVID-19 context, offers insights for designing mindfulness training for managing trauma and crisis. She invites us to conceptualise embodied learning within transformative learning theory so as to discover the potential for mindfulness as a way of healing, and learning to heal from crisis.

Socio-economic crisis, social security, distributive justice, and vulnerable adults' access to post-school education and training in South Africa:

An emerging conceptual framework

Zelda Groener

Abstract

Emerging international theoretical perspectives illuminate new understandings about adults' access to post-school education and training (PSET) in contexts of crisis. As the crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds in South Africa, it draws attention to the socio-economic hardships confronting vulnerable black adults. Anticipated deepening poverty and unemployment will intensify as material barriers to PSET. How does the COVID-19 crisis invite us to rethink distributive justice in terms of social security in a context of crisis? How do the COVID-19 crisis, the socio-economic crisis and the government's emergency social security measures inform our thinking about vulnerable adults' future prospects for a sustainable life and, as potential adult learners, access to PSET? Conceptualising access to PSET in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the pre-Covid-19 impending socio-economic crisis, and the government's realisation of socio-economic rights to new forms of social security generates new theoretical insights about the possibilities that an 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance for vulnerable adults could improve access to PSET.

Introduction

In the first three months of 2020, alarm bells rang throughout the world as death rates resulting from COVID-19 spun into an upward spiral. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus a pandemic. A global human crisis started unfolding as social lockdowns, economic shutdowns, and stay-at-home orders were enforced. Revelations of the real extent of this human catastrophe would emerge over time.

As the crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds in South Africa, it converges with socio-economic crisis that was looming prior to COVID-19, drawing attention to the socio-economic hardships confronting vulnerable black adults. It is a constitutional imperative that all South African citizens have access to material resources in order to build a sustainable human life. For citizens to function optimally as human beings, participate actively in social, economic, political and cultural activities, and contribute to the advancement of society, they must have sufficient material resources such as decent housing, water and sanitation, food, safety and security. These resources sustain human life and can enable adults to create living conditions that are fundamental in accessing, and being successful in, PSET. The constitutional socio-economic right to social security is one that guarantees access to such material resources.

At the outset, I mention that social security as discussed in the South African Constitution refers to social assistance. Although there is no discussion about 'social insurance' in the Constitution, numerous policy documents and academic literature incorporate 'social insurance' under the rubric of social security. I distinguish between the government's emergency Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant as social assistance for unemployed adults, on the one hand, and future social insurance for these persons. The government implemented the SRD grant as social assistance in response to the COVID-19 crisis specifically for unemployed and vulnerable adults. However, researchers, scholars and policymakers, concerned about the incomplete redress of socio-economic disadvantage brought about by historical apartheid, and about rising unemployment and poverty, have advocated over the past few years for some form of social insurance for unemployed, vulnerable adults/families. In this chapter, I develop some theoretical perspectives on relationships between social security, vulnerable adults and access to PSET in South Africa's context of crisis by exploring the question, 'How does the COVID-19 crisis, the socio-economic crisis and government's emergency social security measures inform our thinking about vulnerable adults' future prospects for access to PSET?'

Evidence shows that, in pre-COVID-19 South Africa, rising poverty and unemployment increased the financial burden of the 15 to 18 million vulnerable black adults. Consequently, these adults cannot meet their basic needs and

secure a sustainable human-life future, also termed their 'life prospects'. Influenced by international policies and practices, and prompted by the government's new social security responses to the COVID-19 crisis, I propose social security that, for least-advantaged vulnerable adults, creates access to life-sustaining material resources such as housing, health services and livelihoods for human beings. This implies that social security must have a human-development purpose. These material resources also create conducive conditions that are fundamental to accessing, and being successful in, PSET. Implicit in these arguments is a conceptual relationship between social security, development and access to PSET which could inform conceptualisations of policies and practices related to access to, and success in respect of, PSET.

Evidence reveals that a socio-economic crisis has been emerging in recent years as a daily lived experience for millions of vulnerable black adults. Among the vulnerable adults classified as poor, are potential adult learners that public sector adult education targets – the precariously employed, the unemployed, low-income earners, and those with a low level of education. Included are, for example, an estimated one million domestic workers who 'effectively lost their jobs and their ability to earn an income at midnight on Thursday 26 March [2020], when the lockdown began' (Francis, Valodia & Webster 2020: 347). The COVID-19 crisis has heightened vulnerable adults' socio-economic crises. It is also evident that vulnerable adults' daily-lived experiences of socio-economic crises will continue even when the COVID-19 pandemic has receded. These kinds of socio-economic crises prevent vulnerable adults from building and sustaining a human life that is fundamental for access to, and success in, PSET. In fact, such socio-economic crises are barriers to such access and success. At a micro level, we must consider all PSET contexts involving vulnerable adults as contexts of socio-economic crises. In the light thereof, I suggest that a conceptualisation of social security for vulnerable adults must incorporate a crisis-intervention purpose. Following on from that, I propose the incorporation of crisis-intervention into conceptualisations of policies and practices related to access and success in respect of PSET.

The post-apartheid social transformation project intended to address the historical disadvantage of vulnerable adults is incomplete. Given the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, this project now overlaps and converges with addressing vulnerable adults' daily-lived experiences of socio-economic crises in contemporary times. I infer that the limited redress of access and success in respect of PSET is a part of the incomplete post-apartheid social transformation project. Therefore, I draw from conceptualisations of social security aimed at addressing apartheid injustices, and argue that social security must continue to have transformative purposes. The 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social security also implies a social justice purpose.

The following distributive justice principles constitute a significant key to unlocking social security that has human development, crisis-intervention, transformative

and social justice purposes for building and sustaining human life as a foundation for access to, and success in, PSET:

- **Principle 1**: Recognise vulnerable adults' experiences of socio-economic crises.
- **Principle 2**: Realise socio-economic rights to social assistance for vulnerable adults experiencing socio-economic crises.
- **Principle 3**: Realise socio-economic rights to 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance.

In my view, as proposed by Van der Walt (2004), an 'above and beyond minimum threshold' of social insurance would be required to address the incomplete redress of vulnerable adults' historical socio-economic disadvantage as well as the more recently-emerging daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises.

Establishing a threshold of social security, also referred to as a 'social minimum', has been the source of much controversial international debate. Some societies in the Global South promote a broader and more holistic form of social security, and promote a social minimum as a means to maximise the life prospects of the least advantaged.

Given South Africa's history, I propose an 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance that enables vulnerable adults access to life-sustaining resources so as to address their daily lived experiences of socio-economic crisis and secure sustainable human-life futures which are fundamental to accessing, and succeeding in, PSET.

Socio-economic crisis, COVID-19 crises and vulnerable adults: Possibilities and limitations regarding access to PSET

The COVID-19 crisis has affected the most vulnerable people in society. McConnell and Stark (2021: 1123) reported that, in Spain, 'one study of lockdown measures indicated that outcomes had a negative impact on lower-paid, under-educated workers'. According to Castelyn, Viljoen, Dhai et al. (2020: 85): 'Vulnerable populations are unable to cope in a disaster such as the one we are currently facing. Their basic human dignity and rights, including access to healthcare, are in the balance.'

In the South African-specific socio-economic context, the multidimensional COVID-19 crisis has exposed the socio-economic vulnerability of many at-risk adults that public sector adult education targets – the precariously-employed, the unemployed, low-income earners, and those with low levels of educated. The COVID-19 crisis has also exacerbated and, in many instances, deepened the socio-economic vulnerability of this target group.

In the next section, I provide a statistical overview of levels of education, unemployment and poverty that profiles vulnerable adults who endure daily-lived experiences of socio-economic crisis, and are potential adult learners.

Vulnerable adults' daily-lived socio-economic crisis: Poverty, unemployment and education

Individual poverty profile

Various instruments are used to determine levels of poverty. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) identifies three national poverty lines that indicate a money-metric measurement of poverty per person per month.

Based on March 2015 prices, Stats SA (2018b: 13) established the National Poverty Lines 2015 as follows: the food poverty line (FPL) – R441.00, which covers basic food items; the lower-bound poverty line (LBPL) – R647.00, which covers basic food and non-food items; and the Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL) – R992.00, which covers basic food and non-food items.

Drawing on the National Poverty Lines 2015, the Living Conditions Survey 2014/15 established that 49.2% of the country's 35.1 million adults (aged 18 years and older) were defined as poor (Stats SA 2018a). This equated to approximately 15.5 million adults living in poverty. Across the poverty lines, the number of adult women experiencing poverty was higher than that in respect of adult men (Stats SA 2018a: 13). The Living Conditions Survey 2014/15 (Stats SA 2018a) estimated that, among the adult population, 49.2% fell below the UBPL; 33.8% fell below the LBPL, and 20.6% fell below the FPL. Given that the FPL is also considered the 'extreme' poverty line according to Stats SA (2018a), this means that approximately 20% of the population were living in extreme poverty.

Vulnerable adults are the least-advantaged members of society who are also identified as poor. However, 'poor people' do not constitute a homogeneous grouping. Classifications in this regard include the chronic poor, the transient poor and the vulnerable, with middle-class and elite households being at the other end of the spectrum (Zizzamia, Schotte & Leibbrandt 2019: 22).

Although statistics with regard to the impact of the pandemic on poverty are still emerging, indications are that the COVID-19 crisis has increased poverty among vulnerable adults. Early estimations are that at least one million adult workers may have become poor through COVID-19-related job losses. Assuming that each worker has at least two dependants, this means that three million people could have become poor, and, in this way, individual poverty could also translate into an increase in household poverty (Jain, Bassier, Budlender et al. 2020a: 1). One can therefore assume that the overall rate of poverty has increased, albeit perhaps in the short term.

Household poverty profile

According to the Living Conditions Survey 2014/15, 36% of households can be classified as 'extended households' (Stats SA 2018a: 9). 'Approximately half of the female-headed households (49.9%) were classified as extended households' (Stats SA 2018a: 10). 'The food poverty line reveals that female-headed households were almost twice as likely to be poor (19.6%) than male-headed households, who only had 10.1% of their households living below this line' (Stats SA 2018a: 16). 'Approximately 33.0% of female-headed households were living below the LBPL while only 19.2% of male-headed households lived below this line' (Stats SA 2018a: 16). 'The proportion of females living below the UBPL was 16.9 percentage points more than that of households headed by males (49.9% versus 33.0%)' (Stats SA 2018a: 16). Almost half (46.6%) of households headed by black Africans were living below the UPBL in 2015, while a third (32.3%) of Coloured-headed households lived under this line. More recently, Francis et al. (2020: 346) confirmed early indications that 'approximately 18 million South Africans live in the poorest 20% of households'.

Vulnerable adults, poverty and education

A profile of adults in respect of poverty exposes the vulnerability of adults who have low levels of education.

Sustained research shows that people who are classified as poor, have low levels of education.

There is a strong correlation between adult poverty, gender and education levels. For those who had no schooling, 76.7% of men and 80.7% of women lived below the UBPL (Stats SA 2018a). Comparative statistics reveal a stark contrast between 75.2% women with some primary schooling and 38.5% women with matric who live below the UBPL (Stats SA 2018a).

The National Development Plan (NDP) targets 22% of South Africans aged 15 to 64 to achieve a post-school qualification by 2030 (National Planning Commission 2012). Recent research indicates that government will not reach these targets (Branson 2020). Research reveals the trends and patterns in respect of achieving this target. Of 6.5 million unemployed people, 53.2% had levels of education below matric, and 36.4% had matric.

With matric

According to National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) Waves 1–4 (2008 and 2014), within two years of completing Grade 12, 68% of matriculants had not enrolled at any institution; 13% had enrolled at university; 8% had enrolled at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges; and 11% were referenced as 'other' (Branson 2020).

With no matric

According to Nicola Branson, the NIDS research revealed the following: 47% of youths aged 25–35 have incomplete secondary education. Of these, only 14% go on to complete a post-school qualification. Most have a certificate or diploma that does not require matric – 53% from a group called 'training providers'; 19% from TVET colleges; and the remainder from private colleges and nursing institutions (Branson 2020).

While we await more conclusive empirical evidence about the impact of COVID-19 on poverty, current levels of poverty are high and the following question is still critical: 'How could deepening poverty (among those who live below the poverty line, and particularly those who experience extreme poverty) influence vulnerable adults' access to PSET?

It seems that the COVID-19 crisis has further hampered government's achievement of its 2030 targets in respect of access to PSET. What does the future hold? To what extent can social security expedite access to PSET?

Vulnerable adults and employment/unemployment

Among vulnerable adults classified as poor there are those who are unemployed. Those who are employed often occupy precarious employed, and their income is unpredictable. There is evidence that the COVID-19 crisis has increased unemployment among the most vulnerable adults.

Rising unemployment trends

Evidence shows that the alarmingly high rate of unemployment had been increasing during the pre-pandemic period. One can infer that, as unemployment increased, more adults became vulnerable. According to Stats SA (2019), in Quarter 4 of 2019 the official unemployment rate was 29.1% (6.7 million), and the expanded unemployment rate was 38.7% (10.4 million). In Quarter 1 of 2020 (Stats SA 2020b) the official unemployment rate rose to 30.1% (7.1 million), and the expanded unemployment rate rose to 39.7% (10.8 million).

Implemented at the end of Quarter 1 of 2020, the hard lockdown created a 'massive disruption to the South African labour market' (Jain et al. 2020a). Therefore, some notable changes were evident in Quarter 2 of 2020 when the official unemployment rate decreased to 23.3% (4.3 million), and the expanded unemployment rate increased to 42% (10.3 million) (Stats SA 2020c). In Quarter 3 of 2020, the official unemployment rate was 30.8% (6.5 million), and the expanded unemployment rate was 43.1% (11.1 million) (Stats SA 2020d).

In Quarter 2 of 2021, the official unemployment rate among people aged 15 to 64 was 34.4% (7.8 million), with the expanded unemployment rate being 44.4% (11.9 million) (Stats SA 2021a). This is the highest recorded unemployment rate

since 2008 when the Quarterly Labour Force Survey started and, reportedly, the highest in the world. In Quarter 3 of 2021, the official unemployment rate was 34.9%, and the expanded unemployment rate was 46.6% (Stats SA 2021b).

Owing to lockdown restrictions, people could not seek employment, and, consequently, a decrease is reflected in the rate of unemployment. Reporting on the NIDS–CRAM (Coronavirus Rapid Mobile) Survey (Wave 1), Jain et al. (2020a: 11) estimated 'that over the February–April period, on net about one in five workers suddenly found themselves without a wage or even the prospect of a job to return to'. As many vulnerable adults are precariously employed, one can assume that they are among the many workers who lost their jobs.

Vulnerable adults, unemployment, and education

Women are the most vulnerable. Statistics show that, over the period 2001 to 2011, employment among women aged between 15 and 64 years who had no schooling 'decreased from 36.6% to 14.2%' (Stats SA 2013: 29). As mentioned above, the percentage with no schooling is highest among black African women. With reference to the age group 15 to 64 years, it was stated: 'Black African women are thus most likely to be unemployed in both 2001 and 2011' (Stats SA 2013: 31).

Statistics reveal a correlation between levels of education and levels of unemployment, showing that 57% of unemployed persons had less than matric (Grade 12) (Stats SA 2019: 7). Given the latter, it seems likely that, if levels of education are lowest among unemployed black African people and women, they may not find employment in the near future. This is echoed by Zizzamia and Ranchhod's (2019: 16) findings of their longitudinal study:

> *Unsurprisingly, low educational attainment appears to be a stronger predictor of chronic exclusion from (or weak attachment to) the labour market. Only about one in five of those with less than a matric were consistently employed, while one in three were not employed in all [periods] or all but one period.*

This statistical trend continued during lockdown according to researchers, who reported:

> *[T]he labour market shock has exacerbated existing inequalities. Women, those with lower levels of education, those in manual occupations, informal workers, and the poor in general face the greatest net employment losses, with these employment losses being disproportionately made up of terminated employment relationships (Jain et al. 2020a: 1).*

Statistics show that, in the period April 2020 to February 2021:

> *[w]orkers in manual occupations and in the poorest quartiles experienced the greatest active employment loss compared to February (approximately 30%). Non-tertiary educated workers also experienced disproportionately large net active employment losses (22% for this group compared to 15% for tertiary-educated workers) (Jain et al. 2020b: 1).*

If these statistical trends continue, then vulnerable adults with low levels of education (black women) are likely to have less access to employment in the future.

Given the profile of vulnerable adults and their daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises, how can we conceptualise social security which has developmental, crisis-intervention, transformative and social justice purposes? How can this kind of social security enable vulnerable adults to overcome daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises and have access to PSET, as well as foster participation and inclusion in social, economic and political activities?

COVID-19 crisis, socio-economic crisis and social security crisis intervention for vulnerable adults and access to PSET: Emerging policies and practices

Government's socio-economic responses to vulnerable people's COVID-19 crisis-induced socio-economic deprivation through emergency social security prompt us to think about three possibilities: firstly, that social insurance could improve the material resources of vulnerable individuals and households, and facilitate access to health, land, housing and livelihoods, which underpin access to PSET; secondly, that the fulfilment of unemployed adults' socio-economic rights to social insurance advances the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights as defined in the Constitution; and, thirdly, that social insurance may address COVID-19 crisis-related deprivation, may address historical poverty, and may achieve social justice.

COVID-19 crisis

There is consensus among many scholars that COVID-19 is a crisis. 'Threat, urgency and uncertainty' are elements that define crises (Lipscy 2020: E99). Lipscy (2020: E99) confirms that 'pandemics such as COVID-19 also fall under the umbrella of crises'. Of critical importance, he argues, is that 'the politics of COVID-19 is the politics of crisis' (Lipscy 2020: E99).

In South African academic literature, descriptions of the crises associated with COVID-19 include the COVID crisis (Francis et al. 2020: 347; Parry & Gordon 2020: 795; Blumberg, Jassat, Mendelson et al. 2020: 825; De Villiers, Cerbone & Van Zijl 2020: 797; Bhorat, Köhler, Oosthuizen et al. 2020: 9) and the COVID-19 global crisis (Parry & Gordon 2020: 796).

What constitutes a COVID-19 crisis? What characterises the COVID-19 crisis? The COVID-19 crisis has been described as a health crisis (De Villiers et al. 2020: 799). In my view, the COVID-19 pandemic–related health crisis has induced crises at multiple sites such as educational institutions, the workplace, and the community. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised as a catalyst that has intensified the emerging pre-COVID-19 socio-economic crisis related to increased budget deficit (Francis et al. 2020: 345), economic-growth contraction, budget deficit (Bhorat et al. 2020), and escalating unemployment (StatsSA 2021d). In short, the COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis in its own right, and yet, at the same time, because it has affected multiple socio-economic issues, the COVID-19 crisis has become multidimensional.

Poverty, socio-economic rights, and emergency social security crisis intervention

Of the adult population, 49.2% who are classified as poor are also vulnerable. The COVID-19 crisis exposed the extent of vulnerable people's pre-COVID-19 poverty and their precarious life circumstances. Anticipated deepening poverty is likely to increase the number of adults who are living in extreme poverty and exacerbate the injustices they endure. Since 'Michelman's theory of social justice takes extreme need or deprivation as its starting-point' (Van der Walt 2004: 290), it is useful as an analytical lens to analyse the social justice measures that will be required to redress historical and contemporary, crisis-related, vulnerable adults' material deprivation and, in some cases, extreme need caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

In response to vulnerable adults' material deprivation, the Department of Labour implemented a COVID-19 Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (C19 TERS) for employed workers who became unemployed or experienced reduced working hours as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Department of Social Development introduced a COVID-19 SRD grant of R350.00 for unemployed adults, who, in all likelihood, constitute the majority of people living in extreme poverty. The COVID-19 SRD grant for all unemployed people is important, albeit forced by circumstances, because it signifies the government's recognition of people's financial crisis arising from unemployment. It is also important because it seems that government acknowledged its constitutional responsibility to provide emergency socio-economic crisis interventions that address disadvantaged, unemployed people's survival crisis. Such interventions exemplify the way that Michelman translates the 'moral obligation arising from the extreme need into a constitutional duty' (Van der Walt 2004: 290). While it is

an infinitesimal amount of money, it may have enabled vulnerable unemployed people experiencing extreme deprivation to secure shelter and basic food items.

The COVID-19 SRD grant, and temporary emergency increases in other social grants, signalled the potential expansion of social assistance and the introduction of social insurance as strategies to address unemployment and poverty that arose from the COVID-19 crisis, as well as historical socio-economic disadvantage. The provision of the COVID-19 SRD grant, in particular, has fuelled advocacy for social insurance for unemployed people. The anticipation of deepening poverty prompts new concerns about vulnerable adults' socio-economic rights to social assistance and social insurance. This notwithstanding, emergency crisis social assistance must specifically address the COVID-19 crisis and not be forged as historical redress.

On 25 May 2021, the Minister of Social Development, in her departmental budget speech, announced plans to introduce a new Basic Income Grant (BIG) of R500.00 per month for unemployed people between the ages of 19 and 59 (BusinessTech 2021a). It was anticipated that the Minister of Finance would, on 11 November 2021 in his Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), discuss this proposed new BIG as social insurance for unemployed people. However, he announced the extension of the COVID-19 SRD grant until 31 March 2022, and indicated that he would discuss the proposed new BIG in his budget speech in February 2022. In his budget speech on 22 February, the Minister of Finance announced the further extension of the COVID-19 SRD grant until 31 March 2023. The 'simulations of options to replace the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant and close the poverty gap at the food poverty line' (Goldman et al. 2021) are particularly pertinent.

Van der Walt's (2004: 257) 'transformation-based approach to the theory of social justice' draws attention to the 'transformative context' that informs the social justice measures that are required to address extreme need. As discussed earlier, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated adverse socio-economic conditions in the 'transformative context', and the numbers of vulnerable adults living in extreme poverty may therefore increase. The COVID-19 crisis and the socio-economic crisis require new social justice measures through:

> *general access – above and beyond the minimum threshold – to social and economic welfare resources such as housing, health care, education, and social welfare, in line with the state's constitutional obligation to ensure the progressive realisation of social and economic rights (Van der Walt 2004: 305–6).*

We could argue that the implementation of a grant for unemployed people exemplifies progression with regard to government's constitutional obligation to 'realise socio-economic rights progressively' in implementing social security and social insurance.

However, it is important to acknowledge that government's consideration of the new BIG was prompted by community organisations' endorsement of the COVID-19 SRD grant of R350.00, and by opportunistic advocacy for the proposed new R500.00 BIG. Although R500.00 is paltry, it may improve disadvantaged people's/households' collective material resources for accessing basic life-sustaining services, which, in turn, may facilitate access to PSET. Notwithstanding this, R500.00 is not 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance. While achieving a 'minimum threshold of social insurance' should be considered as a significant shift toward 'realising socio-economic rights' and social and economic justice, what will be required to achieve an 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance?

Vulnerable adults' access to PSET and household social security

Tentative analysis indicates that social assistance alleviated material deprivation induced by the COVID-19 crisis, albeit over a short period. This is instructive in understanding how social security, including social assistance and social insurance, may create overall, enabling material conditions to facilitate vulnerable adults' access to PSET.

As people lost jobs and income during the lockdown, attention focused on household poverty and household income in low-income communities. While social assistance can be considered a material gain for an individual, it is the case that, as precariously employed and low-income earners often share households, social security can be regarded as collective household income. Therefore, it is important to consider how different forms of social security may be seen as shared household income and 'collective resources' that could facilitate vulnerable adults' access to human-life-sustaining resources such as housing, health services and livelihoods, which are fundamental to success in both education and PSET.

With the COVID-19 crisis compelling government to provide emergency social security, a debate was initiated about different kinds of social security that may be required to assist 'materially deprived' adults through, for instance, start-up funds for livelihoods and job-seeking grants. However, if poverty deepens, it could multiply material barriers to PSET. We have learnt through government's responses to the COVID-19 crisis that crises create opportunities to advocate for material resources that assist vulnerable people. Declaring a 'poverty crisis' in respect of vulnerable people's material deprivation may fuel advocacy for government to grant further access to socio-economic material resources that, in turn, enable access to health and social services, which are fundamental to fulfilling human rights regarding access to PSET.

The prevalence of individual poverty, household poverty and community poverty challenges our thinking about the relationships between individual rights and collective socio-economic rights to social assistance and social

insurance, which could improve the collective material circumstances of vulnerable individuals, households and communities during times of crises.

Therefore COVID-19 crisis-induced socio-economic deprivation, and the anticipated deepening of poverty, necessitates the realisation of socio-economic rights to social insurance as a means to improve the overall, collective, socio-economic material conditions of vulnerable households that may facilitate access to housing, healthcare and livelihoods, which are fundamental for access to PSET.

The proposed new BIG for all unemployed people/family members, whether it is R350 or R500, could be considered a 'minimum threshold of social insurance' and will not address poverty but merely alleviate material deprivation and/or provide seed funding for seeking jobs and/or PSET opportunities. However, the acknowledgement of the critical importance of social security is significant, as is the recognition that vulnerable adults need material resources to change the course of their lives, including access to PSET.

As proposed by Van der Walt (2004), an 'above and beyond minimum threshold' of social insurance would be required to address the incomplete redress of historical socio-economic disadvantage and COVID-19-induced crises affecting vulnerable households. As the amount of money which is required to determine the 'above and beyond minimum threshold' of social insurance may be disputed, could a minimum wage for all heads of family households living in extreme poverty be considered as social insurance for a defined period of time? Perhaps such a social security intervention could radically address social inequalities and provide impetus for vulnerable people to access life-sustaining services that are fundamental for accessing, and achieving success in, PSET? In this way, we may think of social insurance as resource collateral that provides material resources for accessing PSET.

COVID-19 crisis, socio-economic crisis and social security, vulnerable adults, and access to PSET: Emerging distributive justice principles

What distributive justice principles can we derive from the emerging policies and practices related to government's social security, COVID-19 crisis-interventions that could address vulnerable adults' daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises, enable them to build a sustainable life, and improve their future opportunities of accessing PSET?

I derive two principles of distributive justice from the social assistance, emergency crisis-interventions that the government has implemented since the imposition of the COVID-19 lockdown.

Principle 1: Recognise vulnerable adults' experiences of socio-economic crises

As outlined earlier, statistics show that 50% of adults were classified as poor during the pre-COVID-19 period, half of whom experienced extreme poverty. Poor adults who are vulnerable suffer daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises. Extreme poverty implies extreme need, as discussed by Van der Walt (2004: 290). Michelman translates the 'moral obligation arising from the extreme need into a constitutional duty' (Van der Walt 2004: 290). This is evident in the following constitutional socio-economic right:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to have access to — … (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of [this right] (section 27(1) & (2) of the Constitution).*

As discussed earlier, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated adverse socio-economic conditions, and therefore the numbers of vulnerable adults living in extreme poverty may increase. For this reason, it is critical to recognise vulnerable adults' daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises.

Principle 2: Realise socio-economic rights to social assistance for vulnerable adults experiencing socio-economic crisis

The COVID-19 crisis created human-life crises when adults suddenly lost their jobs and livelihoods. As they had no means, or only reduced means of income, the following constitutional right came into effect:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to have access to — … (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of [this right] (section 27(1) & (2) of the Constitution).*

The constitutional socio-economic right to social assistance compelled the government to provide emergency social assistance such as the C19 TERS for employed workers, the COVID-19 SRD grant, and increased child grants. These were short-term interventions that responded to vulnerable adults' needs arising from the COVID-19 crisis.

Several scholars warned of the necessity for emergency social assistance. Gerard, Imbert and Orkin (2020) propose social protection responses, through a wide

range of emergency economic measures, for developing countries to consider. According to Castelyn et al. (2020: 85): 'Vulnerable populations are unable to cope in a disaster such as the one we are currently facing. Their basic human dignity and rights, including access to healthcare, are in the balance.'

Informed by democratic theory, Haagh (2020: 111) states: 'The COVID-19 pandemic sheds new light on the question and properties of economic justice in society.' In sketching 'hopes and illusions of COVID-19' (2020: 119), she warns against ad hoc redistributive crisis measures, and of the pitfalls of extending the so-called Emergency Universal Basic Income (UBI) so that it becomes a long-term scheme. She advocates for the deepening of democracy and for building a democratic state that is 'more effective for freedom in society' (2020: 119).

Referring to resource allocation during COVID-19 for vulnerable populations in South Africa, Castelyn et al. (2020: 85) urge that 'distributive justice must be implemented to the best of our ability, and we should avoid exacerbating inequality by implementing narrowly focussed frameworks and directives'.

These scholarly perspectives prompt us to think about social insurance as a longer-term response to vulnerable adults' daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises. While the COVID-19 crisis has exposed and heightened vulnerable adults' socio-economic crises, it is rooted in the emerging pre-COVID-19 socio-economic crisis. Although the COVID-19 crisis may have given rise to short-term socio-economic crises for many adults, for millions of vulnerable adults, their daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises related to poverty and unemployment will persist. The numbers of vulnerable adults may increase, as those previously experiencing transient poverty may transition into persistent poverty. These developments urge us to rethink the realisation of socio-economic rights to social security and, more specifically, social insurance as a broader, longer-term response to vulnerable adults' daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises and their material needs to build and sustain their human life as a way to access PSET.

Recent policy developments prompt thinking about the principles that should guide the implementation of social insurance. Forms of such socio-economic vulnerability as discussed earlier are similar to the 'extreme need or deprivation' which Michelman's theory of social justice takes as its starting point and premise for 'arguing that a minimum threshold of social insurance should be provided before the normal economic balancing of rights can take place' (Van der Walt 2004: 290). How could the distributive justice principle, 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, guide the distribution of human-life-sustaining material resources for vulnerable adults in order to overcome daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises and build a sustainable life that facilitates access to PSET?

Principle 3: Realise socio-economic rights to 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance

All South African citizens must have access to material resources that enable them to build and sustain a human life. For citizens to function optimally as human beings, participate actively in social, economic, political and cultural activities, and contribute to the advancement of society, they must have sufficient material resources such as decent housing, water and sanitation, food, safety and security. These resources sustain human life and can enable vulnerable adults to create living conditions that are fundamental for accessing, and being successful in, PSET.

If adults become vulnerable and do not have the capacities to obtain such resources through income-generating activities, the government must realise the following constitutionally-defined socio-economic right to social security:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to have access to — … (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of [this right] (section 27(1) & (2) of the Constitution).*

While social security and social assistance are mentioned in the South African Constitution, social insurance is not mentioned. However, it is widely understood that social insurance is a component of social security. The government is reconceptualising the emergency COVID-19 SRD grant of R350.00 for unemployed adults as a possible form of social insurance (Goldman et al. 2021).

Establishing a threshold of social insurance is a contentious matter. Should it be determined as a minimum, as a social minimum, or as an 'above and beyond minimum threshold'? Waldron (1986 :21) proposes that 'a certain minimum provision is necessary for people to lead decent and tolerable lives'. A 'social minimum' is widely promoted to maximise the life prospects of disadvantaged groups and, specifically, 'the least advantaged' (Barrientos 2016: 160). Considering South Africa's history, a 'social minimum' is not sufficient to address vulnerable adults' disadvantage and so achieve social justice.

Promoting 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance stirs up controversy, as governments and other parties contend that it is unrealisable. Notwithstanding this, Van der Walt (2004: 305–6) proposed that an 'above and beyond minimum threshold' of social insurance would be required to address the socio-economic disadvantage arising from apartheid. In arguing that the social transformation project for addressing historical disadvantage is incomplete, and that it dovetails with recent socio-economic disadvantage, it is contended that the 'above and beyond minimum threshold' of social insurance is still applicable.

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance and purposes thereof: Implications for vulnerable adults' access to PSET

Considering the purposes of the 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance illuminates the conceptualisation of the relationships between social insurance, vulnerable adults and access to PSET in South Africa's context of crisis.

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, vulnerable adults and human-development purpose: Implications for access to PSET

Van der Walt (2004: 305–6) advocated that:

> *The guiding notion for legislation and interpretation should be improving general access – above and beyond the minimum threshold – to social and economic welfare resources such as housing, health care, education, and social welfare, in line with the state's constitutional obligation to ensure the progressive realisation of social and economic rights.*

Providing vulnerable adults with access to social and economic welfare resources through 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance enables them to build a sustainable human life. Viewed in this way, social insurance has a human-development purpose.

An important dimension of building a sustainable life in most societies is education. Explicit in Van der Walt's (2004: 305–6) proposal is a contingent relationship between social insurance and access to education. If vulnerable adults have not completed schooling, social insurance could enable them to build a sustainable human life as a vehicle for access to PSET.

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, vulnerable adults and crisis-intervention purpose: Implications for access to PSET

Socio-economic crises cause adults to become vulnerable. Despite post-apartheid social, political and economic transformation, as discussed earlier, millions of vulnerable black adults experience daily lived socio-economic crises. Research indicates that the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated adults' daily lived socio-economic crises.

Consequently, socio-economic crisis as a human condition is a barrier to a sustainable human life that limits access to, and success in, PSET. Given the human condition of socio-economic crisis, social insurance must have a crisis-intervention purpose, which, for millions of vulnerable black adults, is that their daily lived experiences of socio-economic crisis are historically deep and broad. Given the extent of socio-economic crisis as a human condition, the government

must expedite the realisation of the socio-economic right to 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance to fulfil vulnerable adults' human-life-sustaining material needs so as to overcome daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises and build a sustainable human life that can facilitate access to PSET.

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, socio-economic crises, developmental crisis-intervention purpose: Implications for access to PSET

Social assistance in the form of social grants has reduced poverty in South Africa, albeit minimally. Drawing on this achievement, I assert that social insurance as a form of crisis-intervention can address poverty as a lived socio-economic crisis. If such poverty arises from unemployment, it implies that social insurance can address, simultaneously, poverty and unemployment as lived socio-economic crises.

A similarity is evident between the realisation of socio-economic rights to 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance 'if [people] are unable to support themselves and their dependants' and 'Latin American human development conditional income transfer programmes [which] epitomise the developmental orientation of social assistance explicitly designed to address the persistence of poverty' (Barrientos 2016: 160). Although I advocate 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, the debates about the developmental orientation of the 'social assistance' social minimum (Barrientos 2016: 160) are instructive. I draw a similarity between the 'social assistance' developmental social minimum and 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, which I conceptualise as developmental. As discussed earlier, poverty and unemployment are examples of daily lived experiences of socio-economic crises, which are socio-economic barriers to a sustainable life that can support access to, and success in, PSET. As a form of crisis-intervention, social insurance can address poverty and unemployment as socio-economic barriers. In this way, social insurance through crisis-intervention is developmental.

When the 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance is conceptualised and executed as a social means to address poverty and unemployment as lived socio-economic crises, and as barriers to PSET, it can be defined as developmental crisis-intervention. These conceptualisations imply a contingent relationship between social insurance, developmental crisis-intervention and access to PSET.

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, socio-economic crises, developmental crisis-intervention purpose, marginalisation and exclusion: Implications for access to PSET

As the statistics show, under the conditions of the COVID-19 crisis, adults lost their jobs and livelihoods. Consequently, unemployment has become a daily lived experience of socio-economic crisis for many adults. It is a crisis that makes adults vulnerable and creates issues such as marginalisation and social exclusion, which undermine a full life through participation in economic and political activities, and social activities such as PSET.

Under these conditions, 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance is a form of 'crisis-intervention' that addresses crisis-related marginalisation and exclusion emanating from poverty and unemployment. Access to PSET is a powerful vehicle for combatting marginalisation and exclusion. If social insurance provides vulnerable adults with access to PSET, it could address crisis-related marginalisation and social exclusion.

Albeit a discussion on the social minimum, the following thoughts of Barrientos (2016: 157) are relevant:

> *This is achieved by ensuring that inequalities in society are only acceptable where they maximise the life prospects of the least advantaged, and through policies aimed at ensuring social, political and economic participation by these groups. In combination with other institutions, the social minimum helps to ensure citizens can take part in economic cooperation on 'appropriately equal conditions.*

There is a similarity between the outcomes of the realisation of socio-economic rights to social security 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' for vulnerable people who are marginalised (Van der Walt 2004: 306) and the assertion that a 'social minimum is developmental and focused on economic and political inclusion' (Barrientos 2016: 157).

'Above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, social justice purpose: Implications for access to PSET

Social crises affect vulnerable, least-advantaged adults more extremely. Inadequate social security creates crisis-related injustice. For this reason, 'above and beyond the minimum' of social insurance which can be equated to a justice-based social minimum is necessary to address crisis-related injustices. As Barrientos (2016: 157) explains: 'A justice-based social minimum is effective because it contributes to ensure the social, political and economic inclusion of disadvantaged groups. A justice-based social minimum would need to ensure the full participation of disadvantaged groups.'

While I advocate the 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' of social insurance, I am aware of the limitations of its practical implementation and therefore acknowledge Barrientos's caution words:

> *To be effective as a social minimum, it is important that the relevant programmes and policies maximise 'the life prospects' of disadvantaged groups, that they have a developmental orientation at their core. It makes sense to measure welfare in the context of whole lives but, as the issue of beneficiary selection indicates, this is hard to do empirically (Barrientos 2016: 159).*

Conclusions

How does the COVID-19 crisis, the socio-economic crisis and government's emergency social security inform our thinking about vulnerable adults' future prospects for access to PSET in South Africa?

What are crisis social assistance interventions teaching us about the possibilities of social assistance and social insurance as distributive justice? The COVID-19 crisis-related lockdown restrictions exposed poverty among vulnerable people, and the government's socio-economic responses inadvertently realised socio-economic rights to emergency social assistance and, possibly, longer-term social insurance.

The South African Constitution guarantees socio-economic rights to social security if citizens are unable to support themselves. In a context of crisis, such as the COVID-19 crisis, when vulnerable adults cannot support themselves, they are entitled to receive social security.

Given South Africa's historical and contemporary socio-economic crises, I propose that social insurance should be introduced at an 'above and beyond the minimum threshold'. In order for 'above and beyond the minimum threshold' social insurance to be effective, it must be intentionally and purposefully be a form of crisis-intervention, must be developmental and transformative, and must achieve social justice.

What is the COVID-19 crisis teaching us about vulnerable adults' future prospects for access to post-school education in South Africa?

The South African Constitution guarantees socio-economic rights to social security which could enable vulnerable adults to realise their human rights to PSET. A holistic approach promoting the socio-economic right to social insurance as a means to support access to human-life-sustaining resources such as housing and health, also supports the human right to access, and achieve success in, PSET.

We could extrapolate a theoretical perspective, asserting that crises create new opportunities to consider the advancement of vulnerable adults' socio-economic rights to social security. However, a question looms: Can the expansion of social security present a 'socio-economic crisis-intervention' as a route out of socio-economic crisis in order to avert wide-scale poverty, hunger and social unrest?

An understanding of the extent and depth of the socio-economic crises, whether directly or tangentially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, is emerging. Notwithstanding this, there is evidence that the socio-economic crisis is deepening. For this reason, it is imperative to contextualise our analyses of crises and crisis-intervention measures within theories of social transformation and theories of social justice. However, analyses of the capitalist economy in South Africa as a context of crisis, are also crucial. As explorations of economic recovery unfold, contradictions inherent in capitalism may constrain a fuller achievement of distributive justice. If social security is a collateral economic stimulus for capitalist economic recovery, can it exacerbate social inequalities associated with capitalist reproduction, yet at the same time exemplify distributive justice? Is this conundrum a contradiction?

Against the backdrop of increasing structural unemployment, mounting structural poverty, and escalating disintegration of social cohesion, we can expect a variety of social crises. Characterised by unexpected events, uncertainty, dramatic change, and sudden change, 'social crisis' as a phenomenon must inform policies and practices related to PSET. Government's COVID-19 crisis-interventions have highlighted the necessity for strengthening relationships between PSET policy and social policy.

Highlighting the possibilities that the COVID-19 crisis presents for plotting new directions for education, Stanistreet, Elfert and Atchoarena (2020: 627) raise some critical challenges:

> *How we respond and the actions we take now will have a profound impact on the society of the future, including the future of education. It will determine whether we continue on our current course, leading, as it would appear, to increasingly brutal, authoritarian and inequitable forms of capitalism, or whether we recognise the profound dysfunction at the heart of our socio-economic arrangements and try to create something better.*

Lima's (2018: 228) caution is instructive:

> *And it is here, in this process of legitimising the crisis, and the structural conditions of its emergence, that it is essential to avoid the institutionalisation of education and training, with merely palliative and crisis-management aims seeking only to dampen the most dramatic negative impacts of insecurity and high levels of structural unemployment.*

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Community Education and Training College system in KwaZulu-Natal

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Abstract

This chapter gives an account of how adult learners and educators in the Community Education and Training College system in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN CETC) have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown, and considers implications of their experiences for the future of the system.

The current COVID-19 pandemic is contextualised against the history of previous pandemics, some of which had devastating effects on society. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the CETC system is described, including the denial of access to learning venues and initial difficulties in procurement of protective equipment and products required for the re-entry of learners and educators. The keen sense of injustice felt by some learners and their responses to this injustice are noted, as is the exposure of shortcomings in the system, and the associated transformational learning opportunities for adult learners, adult educators and the managers of the system.

Introduction

This book calls for us to reflect on adult education in a time of crisis in South Africa, and refers to a number of factors currently compounding the situation in our country, to the detriment of the lives of adult learners. The most recent, the COVID-19 pandemic, appears to have exacerbated the effect of other negative factors such as gender-based violence, inequality, unemployment and poverty. This chapter gives an account of challenges faced by adult learners, adult educators and community learning centre (CLC) managers after March 2020 when lockdown protocols were introduced, as well as of their experiences under lockdown rules as the COVID-19 virus took its toll on South African society. It also describes unexpectedly positive spin-offs of the pandemic that arose as people responded to the effects of the limitations brought about by the illness itself, and to the limitations brought about by lockdown rules.

A commonly expressed view in casual discussion of the COVID-19 virus is that nothing like the current pandemic has ever been experienced before. Therefore, it may be useful to first consider the current pandemic in the perspective of the history of past pandemics that humanity has survived across the globe.

The COVID-19 pandemic in historical perspective

Pandemics, plagues and famines have affected swathes of people in different communities around the world since medical history was recorded, and no doubt before that as well.

One of the earliest pandemics on record was the Justinian Plague that killed about a third of the population in countries surrounding the Mediterranean (Little 2006) about one-and-a-half-thousand years ago. Attempts to curtail the spread of the plague through restrictions on travel and trade were not successful, and people continued to contract the disease and die. Foreshadowing the negative effects of COVID-19 and the lockdown on modern-day economies, many farmers and labourers involved in growing crops or tending to domestic animals contracted the disease and died. As a result, food production stopped, and many who had escaped infection died of starvation in the famine that accompanied the plague (Little 2006).

Even more severe was the 'Black Death' (2020) in Asia and Europe, which killed half of the population in some countries between the years 1360 and 1400 CE. At that time, people had no knowledge of viruses or bacteria, and many believed that the plague was a punishment from God. Nevertheless, there was a shared sense that the disease was spread through contact. Because of fear of infection, ships were refused access to ports or were quarantined (Medix 2020), merchants were refused access to towns, and infected people were separated from their

healthy neighbours and their houses boarded up. Basically, cities were in a lockdown similar to the one imposed in South Africa in 2020, but, as in previous pandemics, farmers and farm workers were affected, crops and livestock were not attended to, and there was famine and further loss of life in Europe ('Black Death' 2020).

Viral pandemics have included the polio pandemic of 1916, which, like COVID-19, was usually a mild, temporary illness but could cause paralysis or death, and a series of influenza pandemics in the 20th century. These influenza infections included the Spanish flu (which killed millions of people in 1918), the Asian flu (1957), and the Hong Kong flu (1968) (Kilbourne 2006). In the 21st century, we have seen, among others, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, commonly known as 'SARS flu', that ran from 2002 to 2004, the H1N1 flu of 2009 (McIntosh 2020), and now, with more devastating effect, COVID-19. At the time of writing, towards the end of 2021, this virus was known to have affected people in 221 countries and territories around the world, caused the deaths of close to five million people (Worldometer 2021), and, through efforts to limit its spread, resulted in the closure of many business initiatives. With these closures have come decreased income, increased unemployment, and disruptions in industries, transportation, and services on all continents (Pak, Adegboye, Adekunle et al. 2020).

While pandemics are obvious crises of health, their effects are always wider and they are usually accompanied by economic depression as well as widespread anxiety, depression and fear. Consequently, they impact on economics, politics, social issues, technological development and other spheres. In 2014, the West African Ebola virus epidemic was associated with violent riots when some groups started believing that the curfews, quarantines and treatment centres were part of a secret political plot on the part of the party in power and consequently vandalised the treatment centres and attacked staff working there (Shang, Li & Zhang 2021). It seems common that, during pandemics or epidemics and the application of measures taken to contain them, suspicions of social or political manipulation tend to be aroused in some people, and they are attracted to suggestions of political conspiracy. The current pandemic is no exception, and belief in conspiracy theories is resulting in resistance by some people to adhering to lockdown regulations and to the use of vaccines as protective measures.

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

What this brief review of previous pandemics tells us is that the COVID-19 pandemic is not something new to the world, and, although it has brought tragedy to many families, the loss of life and disruption to society are not as great as that brought by pandemics in earlier centuries. Even in the worst-affected countries, life appears to be returning to normal after the disruptions of lockdown just two years after the pandemic began. However, the virus does have a particular feature

that, counterintuitively, makes it difficult to contain and may even ensure that it becomes endemic. This distinguishing feature is that many infected people experience mild or no symptoms. Pandemics where everyone who is infected experiences and displays severe symptoms are easier to contain and control because it is obvious who is infected, and people who are infected are aware that they have the virus and may infect others. In contrast, many COVID-19 virus carriers look and feel perfectly well, and continue circulating in their communities, travelling to other places without realising that, as they do so, they are infecting others who may become ill and die. In spite of this possibility, COVID-19 is simply the latest in a long line of pandemics that humans have suffered and survived, and no doubt there will be more pandemics that afflict humans in the future.

Fortunately, along with the suffering they bring, pandemics can have positive impacts such as advances in medical understanding. With each pandemic, our understanding of how infection occurs, how the dynamics of infections play out, and how to treat afflicted people increases (World Health Organization 2009). With these advances in medical understanding, and especially in vaccinology, we are better able to save lives and sustain our way of life. An indirect effect of COVID-19 that many would see as positive, is that it has catapulted the adoption of online communication forward, especially in developing countries (Shang et al. 2021). Outcomes include, for example, that it has become commonplace for university students to chat with supervisors online and to attend cohort sessions offering support without having to travel to campus. Increased online communication improves people's safety by reducing road travel, saves people time and money otherwise spent on travel, and reduces our impact on the environment.

These positive spin-offs, while welcome, are naturally obscured by the negative effects of the pandemic. As noted in the introduction to this book, and, as with most other pandemics, those hardest hit by the negative effects of COVID-19 are the most vulnerable people in society – in other words, those lacking access to good medical care, and those most likely to have their livelihoods severely compromised by illness, death of a family member, or lockdown. For example, informal traders who make a living selling cooked food to passing commuters at taxi stops are among the first to suffer when workers must stay at home, or become ill. Their income, which they have come to count on as steady and dependable, simply disappears. Likewise, informal workers who are paid for 'tog' work, are sent home, on the understanding that they will be called if they are needed. These are people eking out a living on the margins of the working economy. They are the people that the new Community Education and Training College (CETC) system should be serving in terms of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET 2013) and the National Policy on Community Colleges (DHET 2015). For people 'on the edge' with little agency and power in society, negative discrimination, oppression and crises are frequent visitors in their lives. For instance, many mature women in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) were denied primary education by their fathers, who did not believe

there was value in educating girls (John 2016). Also, as a result of the enforcement of apartheid laws before 1994, as well as numerous political conflicts in the province, it is not uncommon for people to have barely survived political violence or lost family members to it, or to have suffered repeated trauma in their lives, such as witnessing the forced removals under apartheid, or horrific acts of political violence (John 2016). Or they may have simply never been offered a real chance to gain a solid education or develop their skills and interests. For them, the CETC system promised opportunities for adult learning that were supposed to redress the educational neglect experienced in their early lives.

How the COVID-19 pandemic affected the KwaZulu-Natal Community Education and Training College system

The KZN CETC is part of the post-education and training (PSET) sector as promulgated by the Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006. It is the third tier of higher education institutions after universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges. The community learning centres (CLCs) that adult learners attend, operate mostly in schools, as there are very few dedicated facilities for the KZN CETC, and insufficient funding to build facilities. Therefore, the platoon system is used, and most CLCs begin their classes at 15:00 or 16:00 after the schoolchildren have left the school buildings, and run until 17:00 to 18:00, from Monday to Thursday. Inevitably, all teaching and learning programmes of all CLCs are aligned to the Department of Basic Education's (DBE's) school calendar to ensure access to DBE facilities.

It is important to note that the components of the PSET sector outside universities have long been under-resourced and poorly developed, with CLCs suffering the most from the perennial problems of:

- Inadequate funding and infrastructure;
- Inadequately trained educators;
- Poor conditions of service for educators;
- Classes that are not easily accessed in terms of time and location;
- Unattractive learning options and lack of publicity; and
- Insufficient support from state structures.

(Aitchison 2018)

Aggravating the already difficult conditions that South African CLCs operate under, the COVID-19 lockdown began in March 2020, and school facilities were closed. For most of the year in 2020, all the CLCs in KZN were closed, impacting close to 25 051 CETC students in the province. The lockdown was implemented

suddenly and swiftly, and KZN CETC management had no time to put in place any alternative learning options for their adult learners, and, in any case, had no budget to cover the development of even a rudimentary online system.

What follows below is a description of how the running of KZN CETC teaching and learning programmes has been impacted by the pandemic and associated lockdown, and the implications this has for future activities and developments for adult education and training in the country.

Data collection

For education management purposes, the province of KZN is divided into 12 districts, and, in the restructured CETC system in the province, there are 40 CLCs, each made up of a main office and centre, and a number of satellite centres. Each CLC is in the charge of a manager responsible for the CLC and its cluster of between three and five satellite centres. The data gathered for this study were obtained telephonically from CLC managers during 2021 by the KZN CETC principal, who is one of the authors of this chapter. Two CLC managers from each of the 12 districts in KZN were consulted, constituting a sample of 24 CLC managers from the total of 40 CLC managers, and thus more than 50% of the CLC managers in the KZN province.

The telephonic conversations were based on open-ended questions concerning closure and reopening of classes, access to venues, obtaining protective equipment and sanitisers, and other issues related to the running of CLCs. Therefore, in each conversation, the KZN CETC principal and CLC managers discussed the sudden denial of access to learning venues, difficulties in procuring COVID-19-related personal protective equipment, and the development of strategies for cleaning and disinfecting the learning areas according to COVID-19 protocols. Beyond that, the conversations were free-ranging. In these conversations, shared familiarity with the context of each CLC and established trust between the KZN CETC principal and CLC managers facilitated their communication, thus enhancing trustworthiness. There is a possibility that the power relations between the KZN CETC principal and the CLC managers who report to him may have influenced the collection of data. To mitigate this, the CLC managers were assured that their identity would not be revealed in reports based on the data they provided, and that there would be no negative consequences in respect of any information communicated during these conversations.

The COVID-19 impact effects

Overall, the effects of COVID-19 and its impact on the college manifested in the following pattern:

- Fear;
- Lost access to learning venues;
- Challenges of screening and cleaning;
- Frustration and anxiety;
- Uncompleted syllabi and rescheduled assessment programmes;
- Loss of adult educators;
- Loss of adult learners; and
- Pressure to adapt.

Fear

Many adult learners experienced fear and anxiety about the pandemic, and, not knowing which sources of information they could trust, came to suspect that COVID-19 was a planned political and biological attack by groups in society that they believed might act against them. In addition, some believed that measures put in place to protect people were a new version of apartheid-era-like restrictions of freedom, or a hoax, or somehow not applicable to them. For many adult learners and educators, fear was the predominant response, and they were reluctant to venture out of their homes.

There were also fears on the part of principals of schools, who felt responsible for the children in their schools; some of them feared that, if any of their chairs or desks were touched by a person with COVID-19, they would be permanently contaminated, or that they needed to fumigate their schools to get rid of the COVID-19 virus.

Lost access to learning venues when CLCs were evicted from DBE facilities

The lockdown that was announced for the entire country had a devastating effect on CLCs in KZN, as it brought the already limited time available for teaching and learning to a sudden halt. While this was to be expected as part of the lockdown for the entire country, the blow for adult education was compounded when CLCs were not reopened when DBE schools resumed their normal teaching and learning activities. This extended closure was in response to a circular emanating from the DBE head office which instructed principals to halt all community activities in schools with immediate effect in order to minimise unnecessary contact and the spread of the virus. The principals of the DBE-run schools classified formal classes of CLCs that had been running at their schools as part of community activities and consequently barred all CLC-related activities from schools, literally stopping adult educators and learners at the school gates. This

denial of access to DBE facilities caused hurt and frustration to CLC educators and learners who were anxious to continue with their programmes and were thwarted.

The refusal to allow adult learners and educators to enter schools constituted an overwhelming problem for KZN CETC management, as it brought all formal adult learning activities to an abrupt halt, with no foreseeable return to normal. The management recognised that school principals' actions were based on well-founded concern for the safety of the children at their schools, and that many were acting in accordance with the apprehension shared by the staff and school governing bodies (SGBs) of their schools, who were anxious about keeping their schools as safe as possible. The KZN CETC management then worked with CLC managers and satellite heads to devise strategies for minimising chances of contamination, and for how CLCs could ensure that the learning venues they used could be disinfected. They then negotiated with district directors and circuit managers of the DBE, who, once they understood how the CETC system is designed to operate, and how the devised strategies would effectively protect school children from infection, sent circulars to school principals giving instructions for readmission of CLC learners and educators to the learning venues. Readmission happened at different times in different districts and schools between July 2020 and February 2021.

A positive spin-off from the exercise was that many DBE officials, school principals and SGB members' schools who had not understood that the CLCs were part of the DHET system, gained a sound understanding of the CETC and CLC systems. That they had no knowledge of the system before they were approached by the CETC management, highlighted the depth of the need for advocacy and information about how adult learning opportunities are offered in communities through the CETC system. 'We were not aware' was a commonly heard exclamation during the communication about CLCs with DBE staff and SGB members, some of whom understood for the first time that the CLCs were part of South Africa's official education system, and not initiatives of private groups or churches. Once they had gained this understanding and were persuaded that adult learners and educators would be able to screen people coming to class and disinfect venues used, they became much more accommodating and allowed adult classes to resume in their schools throughout the KZN province.

Challenges of screening and cleaning

While the KZN CETC management negotiated with district management of the DBE about access to learning venues in schools, the issue of hiring people to screen learners and educators, and to clean and disinfect venues posed another major challenge. No funding had been provided to pay for screening and ensuring that venues were cleaned and disinfected, and the time taken to find a solution to this lack protracted the period of halted teaching and learning in CLCs. This was an amplification of a problem that had existed as a resource deficit in CLCs long

before the advent of COVID-19. The reason for this was that, while schools run by the DBE had in place people paid as cleaners and screeners who would ensure that everyone who came together was screened, and that school buildings were sanitised, the CLCs using the same facilities had none, and no plan in place to provide these. With no provision of cleaning materials, some CLC and satellite managers and adult educators had to draw on their own personal resources to have the learning venues cleaned, or call on their learners to contribute to costs and to help with cleaning. Thus, the advent of COVID-19 served to compound this long-standing challenge of cleaning CLC venues, and the problem had to be resolved before classes could resume. This challenge was complicated further when the issue was taken seriously by labour organisations, which insisted on a literal interpretation of policies and maintained that educators could not perform cleaning functions. This became a sparring and bargaining point used by labour unions. The DHET ultimately provided funds to pay for cleaners in CLCs. Following the supply chain processes, the CLCs identified service providers to perform the functions of cleaning in learning venues. In addition to this, the DHET later initiated a partnership with Higher Health which saw the provision of screeners to some CLC sites. As a consequence of these initiatives, people were in place to fill those roles, and access to school facilities for CLCs was once again allowed.

However, even after regained access to learning venues, restrictions on attendance at CLCs by adult learners and educators who were over 60 years old or had medical conditions that made them particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus continued, putting learning and teaching out of reach once again for some individuals.

Frustration and anxiety about impending assessment

During their exclusion from venues for learning, adult learners became increasingly frustrated and anxious as the time for them to write examinations approached with no hope of readmission in sight. In CLCs located in urban areas around Durban, the anxiety, frustration and uncertainty culminated in formal, peaceful protest action by some adult learners and educators against what they viewed as injustice and a violation of their basic human right to education, as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. In two KZN areas, the student representative councils (SRCs) of adult learners led organised, peaceful protests in a way that set them apart from the violent student protests we have become used to in South African universities. The route they chose was to appeal to local councillors for their assistance and support, and then to send orderly delegations representing their groups to the offices of DBE circuit management to make people in this structure and district directors aware of their plight. It was during these negotiations that the adult education delegations discovered that some DBE officials had no knowledge of the CETC and of the programmes it could offer. This careful approach has paid dividends in that it has made DBE officials aware of how the CETC operates under the DHET, and has gained the support of DBE officials for the CETC system going forward.

Uncompleted syllabi and rescheduling of the assessment programme

The platoon system currently followed in conducting teaching and learning at all KZN CETC centres confines teaching and learning to the very limited time of one hour per day, per subject, for four days per week, since no teaching is done on Fridays. COVID-19 lockdown rules and the time taken to negotiate readmission to venues further diminished this already limited contact time with students, and the months of lost teaching and learning time made it impossible to meet the programme targets of the original work plan. Consequently, it was inevitable that the assessment programme had to be rescheduled. After marathon consultation meetings, it was agreed that the mid-year Amended Senior Certificate (ASC) examination would have to be rescheduled to be written at the end of the year 2020.

In addition, the scheduled dates for conducting and monitoring site-based assessment (SBAs) had to be changed and aligned to the revised teaching and learning programme. This meant that examinations and the marking of scripts had to be rescheduled to be 'in sync' with the new timing. The effect of all these changes on the teaching and learning operations of the KZN CETC and CLCs was negative; most educators struggled to adapt and keep up when so many changes occurred in a short space of time. In addition, the number of learners registering for examinations was much lower than would have been expected if it had not been for COVID-19.

Loss of adult educators

Inevitably, some adult educators contracted COVID-19 and were ill for protracted periods of time. Some lost their lives or were traumatised by illness and death in their families or did not return to class for other COVID-19 related factors, even after lockdown measures were eased. Also, according to COVID-19 prevention protocols that came with risk-adjusted levels, educators with comorbidities and those who were over 60 years were expected to work from home. But in the CETC system, no provision was made to enable adult educators to be effective working from home or even to keep in contact with their learners. Inevitably, in CLCs where this COVID-19 measure was applied, learners were left with no educators in the place of those who could not be in class.

To contend with the loss of educators, CLC managers had to reorganise placements of other educators within the system and deploy them in the place of those who were lost to the system or advised not to teach. Some adult educators who were over 60 years took early retirement, but, by October 2021, most of those whose access had been restricted had returned to work, and, with the reduction in the number of learners, the KZN CETC system did not suffer a shortage of adult educators in CLCs. However, it must not be forgotten that many of those who work as adult educators have no education beyond Grade 12 and

no teacher training, so the CETC system continues to suffer from a shortage of well-trained adult educators.

Loss of adult learners

Like their educators, some adult learners contracted COVID-19 and were ill, and some lost their lives. Others were traumatised by their family members' illness or death or could not afford to continue with classes because they had lost their income, or lost the motivation they had to learn, or had other reasons for not returning to class, and have stayed away since the start of lockdown.

As noted above, news of the COVID-19 virus sowed fear amongst both adult learners and teaching staff. Given that this was a novel situation for them, and that they could access little information about the pandemic at that time, this was understandable. This fear drove many adult learners to refrain from venturing out of their immediate communities, so that they were too afraid to attend class and mix with people from other communities. Even those who returned to classes suffered because, after their protracted absence from learning, they struggled to remember what they had learnt. Some believed that they had lost the memory of what they had learnt. This resulted in discouragement and an increased dropout rate. The number of adult learners who sat for the 2020 final General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) AET Level 4 examination was only 3 435. This figure represents a massive drop from the 13 106 who sat for this examination in 2019, and only a fraction of the 22 535 who sat for this examination in KZN in 2018 (DHET 2019), before the effects of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown.

The absence of student support services in the CETC system meant that, for the most part, students who stayed away were not contacted and encouraged to return. If they had been contacted, and perhaps redirected to a class where an educator was physically present, and where they could have continued with classes, this dropout rate could possibly have been reduced. For many of them, the presence of an educator is an imperative in terms of their expectations of how learning and teaching happen.

Pressure to adapt

With the sudden loss of access to learning and teaching venues described above, suggestions that the CETC system should be adapted to incorporate technologically based models of teaching and learning had to be considered. However, there was complete unpreparedness on the part of CETC management, CLC managers and adult educators to adopt unfamiliar technology, and there was no possibility of organising or accessing training and equipment that would enable them to even start offering online learning.

Even if the management and educators had been in a position to consider adding the option of online learning to the offering of the CETC system, very few learners

would have been able to take advantage of it. Not many of those attending classes below ABE Level 4 (at NQF Level 1) would have known how to access online learning, and very few of those who knew how this learning could take place have access to computer facilities or the Internet.

In essence, from a theoretical standpoint

It is difficult to imagine a starker practical example of the concept of social exclusion (Sen 2000; Bernard, Contzen, Decker et al. 2019) than that of adult learners and educators being denied access to their places of learning at the beginning of the pandemic and of the lack of provision of the products and means needed for readmittance. The concept of social exclusion relates to the failure or disruption of mechanisms that should serve people in society and provide interconnections and resource allocations, so that some groups suffer multidimensional disadvantage.

Although, theoretically, the CETC system should be able to offer learning of different kinds to satisfy all the formal and non-formal learning interests of adults from all socio-economic and educational levels, practically all adult learners in South Africa attend classes at CLCs to make up for educational loss. They are either attempting to gain education that they were deprived of as children or are taking advantage of a second chance to gain a grade that they failed. For these groups of people to be deprived of access to learning, is indefensible. Yet, for many of them who have joined classes in the CETC system, the experience of education as adults is one of continued exclusion – from adequate learning materials, from adequate infrastructure, from well-trained educators, from current technology, and from a curriculum that will adequately address the needs that they experience as under-educated adults (Aitchison 2018).

This social exclusion and deprivation are indicators of the long-term underlying pattern of lack of development of the adult and community education component of the PSET sector, and an example of the iceberg metaphor common in systems thinking (Christiaens 2018). In this image of an iceberg, the submerged, not obvious but determining factor is the generally accepted mental model of adult and community education in South Africa, which is that it is an expendable part of the system, and that adult learners are not in need of the solid support and provisioning that are generally accepted as necessary for schools and universities.

At the level of personal experience, many adult learners experienced fear and anxiety about the pandemic and had no definite access to reliably accurate information. This could be seen as another instance of social exclusion, since under-educated adults have not had the education that would enable them to develop the critical reading and language skills needed to discriminate between information that has the marks of validity, and fallacious information. As

described above, for some adult learners, uncertainty and the interruption to their already minimal learning arrangements were simply too difficult for them to cope with. They lost momentum and hope and dropped out of what they had registered for. Social exclusion almost inevitably results in poor development of functionality in mainstream society (Sen 2000), and those adult learners who dropped out were likely to have been overwhelmed by the obstacles in their path and unable to find the agency needed to cope with them, and thus experienced 'capability failure' (Sen 2000: 7).

In complete contrast, for some adult learners, notably the SRCs in two KZN districts, the denied access to learning venues and extended interruptions that jeopardised the only opportunity for learning that they had, led to a heightened sense of injustice which spurred them to action. In the image of a theoretical coin with social exclusion on one side, on the other side is strongly shared social identity as members of a particular group. Sharing a sense of injustice strengthens it, and this common experience and shared association exemplify Tajfel's social identity theory (Brown 2020). The fact that this strong sense of injustice culminated in a well-organised delegation of learners and CETC staff who travelled to the offices of the DBE officials to state their case, is significant, both currently and potentially for the future. The group was successful not only in regaining access to learning venues in schools run by the DBE, but also in gaining the attention of DBE officials and establishing improved understanding and relations with them. This is likely to have consolidated the sense that these adult learners have of themselves as a social group, stigmatised and excluded from mainstream advantage, but with shared identity and potential power. The difference between the route they chose to convey their dissatisfaction and the violence of the numerous student demonstrations we have come to expect in South Africa could possibly become significant for their development of agency as a distinct group, far less privileged but with more gravitas and self-possession than many of the young students who protest at South African universities.

Unpreparedness for a new model of teaching and learning

The impact of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown gave rise to a textbook example of Mezirow's transformational learning for the managers of the CETC system. Mezirow sees all of us as bound by our habitual frames of reference, which determine the way we understand issues and events in our world, and, importantly, the limits to what we believe to be possible (Kitchenham 2008).

COVID-19 and the lockdown exposed the extent of unpreparedness in the KZN CETC and CLCs to deliver any form of learning other than face-to-face teaching. With this exposed shortfall came the awareness that the traditional method of

teaching and learning need not be the only channel of delivery in the CETC system, especially if it is to cope with the continued risks of COVID-19 and other future pandemics, or other unpredictable disruptions that may interfere with face-to-face teaching. This realisation disrupted the strong belief or mental model (Christiaens 2018) that had been shared by most people active in the CETC system, namely that adult learners in the CLCs cannot learn if they do not have an educator present. In a classic example of effective, critical self-reflection and the consequential reframing of frames of reference (Kitchenham 2008), and with very constrained resources, the KZN CETC had to start considering how it could begin to offer blended teaching and/or e-learning to mitigate the risks of compromised teaching and learning.

Thus, in an instance of the kind of situation that can lead to transformational learning, the disorienting dilemma presented by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown challenged the habitual perceptions and beliefs of the management and staff of the CETC system (Kitchenham 2008). In practical terms, they were forced to reconsider their long-held position that CLC adult learners can only be served in a face-to-face, paper-based model of learning. In addition, they had to recognise that, even in rural communities with few resources, an increasing number of families have access to smartphones. With this new realisation that limitations were not as insurmountable as they had supposed, and that new possibilities could be opened up, managers of the system realised that to move in this new direction would require:

- Identification of the needs and resources of both adult learners and educators in order to create and deliver effective interventions as an alternative to face-to-face teaching;
- Identification of an effective online teaching model that would suit the rural, poorly provisioned context of many of the adult learners in KZN;
- Plans to secure funding for resource provisioning for at least minimal electronic devices and Internet connectivity at CLCs, or, preferably, at satellite centre level; and
- Re-engineering the lecturer training model to ensure that educators at future CLCs and satellite centres will be able to deliver learning via channels other than face-to-face teaching; this would include ensuring familiarity with e-learning options and devices, and with educational use of the Internet so that educators will be able to play a role in the transformation of the CETC sector so that it is not excluded from the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Although the options listed above seemed impossibly remote before, the advent of COVID-19 and its effects exposed the shortfalls of the teaching and learning model of the CETC system. The contrast between the demonstration of what is possible online, with the better-resourced elements in other sectors of South Africa's education system, highlighted the poverty of offerings in the CETC system and enabled its planners to see that technologically based teaching and learning

must be an integral part of any growth in adult and community education offerings.

Given the extremely slow pace of change that is usual in adult and community education in South Africa, it is highly unlikely that any change will be speedily implemented in the CETC system. If it were, it would run the risk of what is known in systems thinking as a fix that backfires (Christiaens 2018). In the case of the CETC system, if planners switched to an online system in response to the problems outlined above, the change would immediately improve the situation for some adult educators and learners, but would simultaneously exacerbate the exclusion and disadvantage of those unable to access or use electronic devices or online learning options, and they would conceivably be worse off than they currently are.

The adjustment – catching up to the new normal

The weaknesses in the CETC system exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic forced planners in the system to consider the question of what adjustments could be made to draw closer to the new normal. This question needs to be asked even though many CLCs in KZN are in deep rural areas where there is a shortage of network and where few families have access to computer facilities.

Planners in the CETC management recognise that online learning requires specialised methodology and that few of the currently employed CLC educators understand what it entails and have the technical competence to attempt it. However, strides made by educators in other sectors have brought to their attention opportunities that could be explored, and factors in the context of CETC learners that could be exploited. These factors and opportunities include the following:

Regularising the use of basic technology

The use of increasingly common smartphones with their increasingly user-friendly systems and the ever-extending reach and performance of cell phone networks, are a factor to be considered and used to maximise the quality and accessibility of learning for adult learners.

DHET officials now recognise that basic and readily available technology like WhatsApp, Zoom and Teams may be viable as learning channels, even though, currently, very few educators are capable of teaching in this way. However, thanks to the COVID-19 lockdown, managers of the CETC system now recognise that steps could be taken to empower adult educators in the use of electronic devices and in basic online education strategies. While this is far from fully fledged online learning, it would constitute a step towards it, and may begin to mitigate the risk

of the absence of a dedicated online learning platform specially designed for adult and community education. Start-up outlays to begin offering online learning as well as ongoing data costs are often cited as unsurmountable barriers to considering any online education in the CETC sector, but it is possible that planners and managers in the CETC system have not yet fully realised how these costs could be offset by savings that would be made in even a modest, partial switch to online offerings.

Changing format of student recruitment and offerings at CLCs

The number of adult learners attending CLCs in KZN has been in decline for several years. From a 2016 high of 54 340, the number of learners dropped to 26 760 in 2019 (DHET 2021), representing a drop of 49% in four years, even before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although 2021 figures are not available, the COVID-19 pandemic, with all the associated factors described above, has caused a dramatic further drop. These figures tell a story of decreasing appeal of what is available at CLCs to the target population of potential adult learners in the province. It is clear that, to change the story and increase the appeal of CLCs and their offering to potential learners, as well as retain learners who do attend, the planners and management of the CETC system need to relook at a number of features of the system. Apart from reconsidering formal and non-formal options offered, extending learning options to include skills training, and the introduction of extramural activities, the system would need to be adapted to include new methods of outreach, the recruitment process, admission criteria and admission practices, and increased student support. These adaptations could be effective in shifting the CETC system towards a more student-centred trajectory.

Having a learner management system (LMS) and data management systems in place could be useful in adjusting the operations in community colleges towards practices that are more structured for student-centricity and relevance. The current absence of an LMS in all CETCs constitutes a lost opportunity for efficiency and responsiveness that could be remedied.

Improvement in learning material and learning options

There is a great opportunity at this time of reflection and possible new initiatives for the CETC system to address the paucity of teaching and learning material provided in CLCs and to start improving the quality of the learning material that is used in the teaching and learning process. This could be done by introducing links to digital books on the college website; these could additionally benefit from advantages associated with zero-rated material.

The timing of COVID-19 and the disruption it has caused are fortuitous in relation to a recent research project (Lyster & Land 2019), the findings of which indicate learning options desired by registered learners as well as community members who would consider registering at the CLC if these options were available. This

project generated proposals for community college pilot sites in each province, reporting on how they could expand and adapt to best fulfil the policies and plans for the new CETC system.

At the KZN pilot site, which is Ilungelolethu at Osizweni near Newcastle, registered learners stated that they wished they could learn skills related to running a business, working with electricity, plumbing, getting a learner's and driver's licence, working with computers, and growing vegetables. Community members who live within reach of Ilungelolethu but who have not registered for classes stated that they would register if they could learn skills, naming a wide range of skills they wished they could gain. These included running a business, baking, computer skills, and growing food crops and vegetables (Lyster & Land 2019). Ilungelolethu does not have the facilities and staff it would need to offer this skills training. However, expanded use of technological options could enable it to increase the range of non-formal learning opportunities and offerings through new technology. This could entail taking advantage of the increasing access to smartphones even in disadvantaged communities, to offer online demonstrations of skills and online tuition. For instance, in vegetable gardening alone, which many of the learners could practise at their own homes, there could be short demonstrations of a range of skills, and online tuition for anyone preparing for a learner's licence. Recorded commentary and guidance in all official languages could be a part of these learning options.

If one of the spin-offs of the COVID-19 pandemic was the addition of online options such as these to current offerings, and even if this was only at pilot sites, the pandemic would have spurred a leap towards the community colleges envisaged in the policy documents. This is because COVID-19 has presented the planners and managers of the CETC system with a real example of Mezirow's disorienting dilemma that irrevocably challenges their entrenched frames of reference (Kitchenham 2008) in relation to the delivery of adult and community education in South Africa. Experiences like these compel us to interrogate our habitual expectations. In this case, the disruption may bring new understandings not only of how modes of delivery could be shifted to embrace technology for more sustainable teaching and learning, but also of how the CETC could take advantage of this technological shift to renew itself, expanding its offerings and geographical reach at relatively low cost and in a short period of time.

Conclusion

It is interesting to consider the extremely slow pace of change towards what is still a community college mirage in terms of the limits-to-growth archetype from systems thinking. This recognises that, in spite of efforts to effect change in a system, there is often underlying resistance to change, which is so strong that it appears that the system itself is pushing back against change (Christiaens 2018).

In the case of the CETC system, expectations of positive change raised by the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET 2013) are frustrated, and policies relating to the community college system (e.g. DHET 2015) seem as yet to have had little effect on the poor experiences available to most adult learners in the country. This intransigence is possibly rooted in the mental model shared unconsciously by most South Africans, in which adult education is tolerated as an educational poor cousin, not deserving or in need of better resourcing, and we remain oblivious to the possibilities for positive change that substantial investment in a well-resourced adult and community education system could offer to members of society of all ages.

The COVID-19 pandemic has to date, near the end of 2021, not resulted in nearly as great a loss of life or disruption to society as have pandemics in earlier centuries. Nevertheless, it has taken a tragic toll on many families across the social and economic spectrum in terms of ill-health, loss of income and security, and the loss of family members. In terms of loss of livelihoods and learning and teaching opportunities, the most disadvantaged sector of learners and educators in South Africa appears to have been the hardest hit. These are learners and educators in the CETC system, who are surely the most deserving of 'front of the queue' treatment after years of deprivation and lost chances. Yet, in a classic example of social exclusion (Bernard et al. 2019), they have suffered denial of access to venues, and delayed implementation of strategies needed to ensure the restoration of access to venues and their protection from infection. For many of them, the fear and anxiety they have suffered along with the rest of society have resulted in the loss of their motivation to learn, and many have given up and dropped out, as is shown in the dramatic decrease in numbers of learners since the beginning of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the saying 'Never waste a crisis!' springs to mind. The disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic may shift the limits to growth in the system, and spur on some of the positive and possible changes described above for the CETC system. If this happens, it could be a catalyst, nudging the system away from old offerings and modes of delivery that have attracted only a fraction of the potential adult learners to new beginnings, and to more appealing offerings delivered in more flexible ways.

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Gender-based violence in adult education: The experiences of rural learners and adult educators

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Abstract

Gender constitutes an integral part of both individual and collective uniqueness, and it is distressing that gender-based violence (GBV) remains persistent in education. Gendered violence is a scourge globally, more particularly for educational institutions – which are often imagined to be peaceable and immune to acts of aggression. Around the world, instances of GBV continue to surface at an alarming rate, and South Africa is no exception. The prevalence of violence based on gender continues to threaten the drive towards inclusive education, as contemplated in various policies. Despite South Africa transitioning from apartheid in 1994, it is disturbing that challenges remain in terms of access to education. Although adult learning was implemented as a strategic initiative in the quest for inclusive education in this country, worryingly, GBV continues to pose a threat to the effectiveness of such programmes in rural communities. This chapter seeks, through the lived experiences of adult learners and adult educators in rural areas, to unearth the dynamics of GBV as it relates to adult learning. To investigate their experiences, data was collected using interviews. The findings of the study revealed that GBV remains prevalent as a result of power dynamics, attitudes and socialisation, and social learning, among other factors. As the findings indicate, while it is challenging for traditional South African societies to address GBV, there is a need for all educational stakeholders to spread awareness and advance equality where GBV is most common.

Introduction and background

Worldwide, gender-based violence (GBV) is rooted in the very same gender inequality and discrimination that cause gendered gaps in learning. Gendered violence is a human rights abuse on a massive scale, with immeasurable impact on individuals' health, as well as on the welfare of society and the economy at large, which, in turn, have a negative effect on educational achievement (Fergus & Van 't Rood 2013). Accordingly, GBV is seen as a pandemic in itself, as evidenced by research findings which reveal that it affects as many as one-third of women globally in the course of their lives (World Bank 2019). While GBV is gender-neutral, evidence of disproportionate victimisation of women tends to lead to the view that GBV is only about women. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2013), 35% of women globally are victims of non-partner sexual violence or physical and/or sexual intimate-partner violence (IPV). Notably, the United Nations (UN) defines GBV as physical, sexual or psychological injury or suffering perpetrated on women, which includes threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, which happens both in their public or private life (WHO 2021). Sabria and Granger (2018) argue that GBV occurs as a result of the normative role expectations related to gender, as well as uneven power dynamics between genders. It comprises acts of violence, which may be physical, sexual, and/or psychological, that are directed toward people or groups based on their biological sex and/or expected gender roles in society. This may involve partner and non-partner rape and sexual assault, domestic/intimate-partner violence (IPV) (including dating/relationship violence), sexual harassment, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking, forced marriages and child marriages, genital mutilation of women, and other harmful gendered behaviours (Fergus & Van 't Rood 2013).

Around the world, the issue of GBV on campuses continues to surface at an alarming rate. In developed countries like the United States, increasing awareness of the problem has been bolstered by several high-profile cases of sexual abuse and harassment, including cases involving prestigious institutions, where victims have spoken out against the harm done to them, as well as about their subsequent challenging journeys within the university and the law enforcement agencies (Bagley, Natarajan, Vayzman et al. 2012; Finchilescu & Dugard 2021). In developing countries such as Ethiopia (see Mamaru, Getachew & Mohammed 2015), Zambia (see Menon 2015) and Nigeria (see Agbaje, Arua, Umeifekwem et al. 2021), the incidence of GBV at institutions of higher learning continues to be a matter of significant concern. South Africa is not exempt from this scourge, and it is widely accepted that the nation is grappling with an astronomically high incidence of GBV (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation [CSVR] 2016; Finchilescu & Dugard 2021; Wilkinson 2017). Consequently, socio-economic conditions in local townships, oftentimes worsened by the troubled history of apartheid, have produced an environment which promotes violence against women (Mosavel, Ahmed & Simon 2012).

Since the country's democratic transition in 1994, South Africa has ratified several international instruments aimed at reducing the prevalence of GBV. The policy framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (UN 1948), which is a landmark document in the history of human rights, provides the basis for the measures in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (UN 1995), and Article 4 of the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (African Union [AU] 2003). The authors of this chapter urge African governments to prioritise the reduction of violence against women in both the public and private spheres, as well as implement specific strategies to protect victims and punish offenders as recommended in the Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (DHET 2019). Also advocated is the identification of the causes of violence against women, as well as the provision of support services to victims. In spite of these commitments, and regardless of the policies listed below, GBV remains a somewhat permanent fixture in South Africa (Dlamini 2021).

South Africa has committed itself to achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2016). Goal 5 of the Agenda involves gender equality and advocates for the eradication of violence against women and girls in all its forms, in both the public and the private spheres. This includes sexual exploitation, other forms of exploitation, and trafficking. In addition, South Africa is party to several international treaties on GBV and has thus established fairly strong legislative frameworks such as the Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Human Persons Act 7 of 2013 (RSA 2013), the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (RSA 2007a) and the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 116 of 1998 (RSA 1998a; see, also, Moolman 2016). Similarly, various Acts such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (PEPUDA) (RSA 2000a), the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (RSA 1998b), the Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases in the Workplace (RSA 2005) (developed under the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998) (RSA 1998b), the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (RSA 2007b), the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011 (RSA 2011), the DVA (RSA 1998a), and the recently published National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Strategic Plan (RSA 2021), all aim to eliminate gendered violence in both the public and the private spheres.

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA 1997), the Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006 (RSA 2006) and the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 (RSA 1998c) lay the foundation for non-discrimination and equality amongst all people in the post-school education and training (PSET) system. Despite these policy frameworks, cases involving GBV continue to make headlines. It has therefore become apparent that the educational sphere is one among many sectors where South Africa has very sound legislation but deplorable practice. While many instances of GBV are not reported (Fergus & Van 't Rood 2013; Finchilescu & Dugard 2021; Ryan 2020), research on how this phenomenon manifests itself in adult education in South Africa is sorely limited.

The importance of adult education is recognised by several international declarations which have reaffirmed the right of adults to education, with such recognition dating back to the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948). Yet, on the African continent, progress remains slow in terms of achieving ambitious goals relating to inclusive education, the reason being that the global agenda is oftentimes dominated by the quest for universal primary education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2020). This has the undesired effect of sidelining adult education, which is unfortunate given its possible role in accelerating efforts to reduce negative social ills and promote active citizenship. This chapter therefore seeks to examine the prevalence of GBV, and the related experiences of a group of rural learners and adult educators in a South African adult education programme.

Statement of the problem

The historical legacies of racial and socio-economic discrimination have played a crucial role in the social formation of violent masculinities in South Africa. Arguably, the country's apartheid past has instilled aggression in masculine gender identities (Dunaiski 2013; Eagle 2015; Finchilescu & Dugard 2021). For most black men, apartheid created a 'struggle masculinity' which normalised and legitimised violence, which was, however, abruptly made redundant by the 1994 democratic transition in the country (Dunaiski 2013). Apartheid, with its enforcement of forced removals and migrant-labour patterns, left most South African homes with unusually patterned family structures, in which approximately half of all families are female-headed (Ryan 2020). This has had major implications for poverty levels in the country, with single-parent homes and female-headed households making up the poorest families, where domestic violence is highly prevalent. This domestic violence has often been blamed on the over-reliance of women on their male partners. Inclusive of apartheid's enduring legacy of violent subjugation, socio-economic dislocation and exclusion, Finchilescu and Dugard (2021) posit that the high unemployment rate, socio-economic inequality, and prevalent patriarchal and gendered norms are underlying factors which act as drivers of GBV in South Africa. Although it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on gendered violence, since most incidents go unreported, South Africa has a high incidence of such cruelty, including violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual and queer/questioning (LGBTIAQ) people, and against women and girls (VAWG) (Dartnall & Channon 2021). While people of all genders can be perpetrators and victims of different forms of violence, men are most frequently the perpetrators of violence, particularly intimate-relationship and/or sexual assault, and women and children are most frequently the victims (Dartnall & Channon 2021; Dartnall & Jewkes 2013).

Contextualising adult education in South Africa

Learning is a dynamic, diverse and continuous process that takes place throughout one's life. Thus, because of the continuous increase in socio-economic and technological development in society, individuals are always seeking ways that encourage the acquisition of new information and skills, allowing them to remain relevant in an ever-changing environment (Addae 2016). This makes lifelong learning a basic human need. According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA 2016), adult education and training (AET) is intended to promote lifelong learning and personal growth in order to enable individuals to successfully adjust to South Africa's rapidly changing economic, social and political atmosphere. While 'learning' occurs throughout one's life, 'education' occurs at some moment (or at several stages) in one's life. (Baatjes & Baatjes 2008). Therefore, education has evolved into a tool for promoting economic growth and addressing structural inequalities in society (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] 2017).

To achieve these aims, there is a need to address adult education and literacy (particularly in disadvantaged and marginalised areas) by providing adults with basic skills for the labour market and allowing them to enhance their children's access to quality education (HSRC 2017). Adult education is thus an expansive discipline which integrates basic and continuing education, technical and vocational education, higher education, and professional development provided by various agents such as the state, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), enterprises, companies, and private providers through formal, non-formal and informal education (Baatjes & Baatjes 2008). The policies relating to adult education programmes claim to be making education more inclusive in character, simply because everyone in society – regardless of socio-economic background – is given the opportunity to learn basic skills such as writing, reading and numeracy (Moyo 2014). The reality however, is that, for various reasons, some adults have never benefited from formal schooling.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) (RSA 1996) legislates the right to basic education for all South Africans, including adults. The Bill of Rights, in section 29(1) of the Constitution, recognises the right to basic education (including adult basic education [ABE]) and further education, which the government must make available and accessible progressively (RSA 1996). Different measures and regulatory frameworks have been developed over the years to promote adult education and training and to affirm its importance as part of social change and growth (HSRC 2017). Amongst these are the Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 (RSA 1999) and the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 (RSA 1998c), which enable the establishment of sector education and training authorities (SETAs) – the custodians of education and training in diverse sectors such as banking, manufacturing, and information technology, among many others (HSRC 2017; Walters 2006).

Thus, to allow for the development of public and privately owned adult learning centres, funding for adult education, quality assurance procedures for the sector, as well as public centres governance, the Adult Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 (RSA 2000b) was promulgated (HSRC 2017). It must, however, be noted that, despite appearing promising, the Adult Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 was repealed in 2015. There have been numerous reforms in the South African education sector. One notable change was the splitting of the Ministry of Education into two ministries in 2009, ultimately leading to establishment of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (HSRC 2017). The DHET has become the overseer of AET (DHET 2015). In keeping with this transformation, recent significant changes in the AET sector have been chronicled in a DHET document called National Policy on Community Colleges (DHET 2015).

While the importance of adult education programmes in South Africa's nation-building agenda is well understood, very few scholars have attempted to examine the effects of adult education programmes on the socio-economic profiles of those who benefit from them (Rabothata 2016). Also important to interrogate, are the experiences of adult learners and the link that exists between adult education and GBV, which runs in both negative and positive directions. This prompted the authors to examine the prevalence of GBV, and rural learners' and adult educators' experiences of such violence, in a South African adult education programme.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach. The population for the study was composed of five adult educators and ten adult learners (of whom seven were women and three were men) in a rural adult education learning centre in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Worth noting is that few male adult learners were available to serve as study participants because, generally, there are not many male students in community education and training centres classes. Data was collected using interviews, and interview responses were thematically analysed.

Drivers of gender-based violence in adult education in South Africa

While there have been considerable efforts to reduce and, ultimately, combat GBV, the incidence thereof remains persistently high worldwide. South Africa has made significant policy strides towards establishing a transformative and progressive democracy, yet levels of violence remain persistently high in this

country (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [DWYPD] 2020; Farber 2020; Gould, Mufamadi, Hsiao et al. 2017). In fact, South Africa is ranked as one of the most violent societies in the world, accounting for one of the highest murder rates outside of conflict zones (DWYPD 2020; Institute for Economics & Peace 2020). The prevalence of GBV in South Africa has been attributed to gender inequalities and patriarchal gender norms which relegate women to the fringes of society, where they are oftentimes dependent on their male counterparts for their survival (Mudau & Obadire 2017). GBV in South Africa manifests itself in several forms, including violence against women and girls, violence against LGBTQIA+ persons, femicide, IPV, or domestic, structural or sexual violence (SaferSpaces 2017). But what are the drivers of GBV in South African adult education, as revealed by adult educators and learners in a study of adult education in rural South Africa?

Attitudes and socialisation

Cultural traditions of violence, gender roles, and male entitlement are catalysts in the occurrence of GBV in adult education in South Africa. This is because such traditions legitimise gendered violence and may further result in biases in the responses given to incidents of GBV. As one female participant posited:

> *[M]en still believe that it is their world; they have too much ego and believe that whatever they say, is final. For instance, when issues are raised in classes, they want their views to be accepted, given that most of them are fathers at home. As a result, we women feel inferior in the classroom. (Female learner 2)*

This participant's view reveals how socialisation and ingrained attitudes entrench and foster male superiority and dominance in an adult learning set-up. That men are socialised to dominate women shapes those attitudes which entrench violence against women; hence male learners seek to assert their 'authority' over their female counterparts. These sentiments were corroborated by a male participant, who stated:

> *Our culture teaches us that men are the head of the house, so women must respect us … . Even from childhood, a boy is valued more than a girl, because a boy continues the family name and legacy. Girls, on the other hand, will eventually leave and they start new families where they are married. (Male learner 3)*

The proliferation of sustained patriarchy (a male-dominated society which subjugates and excludes women from influence) has resulted in a toxic form of masculinity that seeks to dominate women in order to prove masculinity (Sarieddine 2018). This is exemplified by the view that socialisation into such attitudes happens in varied contexts, and that 'toxic masculinity' is promoted by both male and female members of society (Connell 2013). Toxic masculinity, which

can be referred to as socially constructed definitions of masculinity, can be harmful to society, women, and even to men themselves (Elliot 2018). This was revealed by one participant who opined:

> *The problem of GBV, in my opinion, starts from home. When a child is growing, male and female people surround the child – it is not just a matter of men promoting toxic masculinity. Playfully, parents and guardians use terms like 'big boy' for boys and 'little girl' for girls. This sort of entrenches the ideal that boys are stronger than girls … . As a result, boys grow up with strong persuasions that they are stronger and better than girls. (Female adult educator 4)*

While it is commonplace to assume that toxic masculinity is a result of male attitudes, the above view reveals that this assumption is flawed and misleading. Men *and* women appear to have a role in the production of toxic masculinity, which, in turn, drives the incidence of GBV.

The foregoing views of learners and adult educators alike corroborate the findings of an investigation into the influence of socialisation on gendered violence, which revealed that females are socialised into submitting to males, while males tend to be socialised into dominating females (Fry, Skinner & Wheeler 2019). This is due to the fact that men tend to face 'pressure' from their male peers to display masculinity by initiating dominance and control over women and girls. This often results in the formation of toxic masculinities, which are usually evident in an overcompensation for insecurities through sexual conquest, and this directly contributes to GBV (Fry et al. 2019). Mudau and Obadire (2017) extend this argument by postulating that, in traditional communities where patriarchy is rife, women are seen as unfit for the workplace; thus educational attainment is deemed a luxury. This is because patriarchy ranks men higher than women, and therefore provides a social structure that grants men uncontested authority (Mudau & Obadire 2017). Studies have revealed that, in patriarchal societies, women are believed to be powerless and dependent on men. A case in point can be drawn from how men in these societies control every aspect of life, for example in the reproduction process, the number of children to bear, and the type of work women should do (Mudau & Obadire 2017; Sikweyiya, Addo-Lartey, Alangea et al. 2020). GBV against female learners, both at home and at school, may thus be viewed as a reinforcement of male dominance – especially because more women than men opt for adult basic education in South Africa (Aitchison & Land 2019; Statistics South Africa [Stats SA] 2015; UNESCO 2020). GBV thus becomes validated as an acceptable means of enforcing male dominance over women, by men who feel threatened by women being empowered through the agency of education. Socialisation and attitudes therefore play a central role in the perpetration of GBV in various forms in adult education settings.

Power dynamics

GBV is also motivated by attitudes of toxic masculinity which create the need to dominate women and legitimise violence as a tool of oppression and of enforcing sexual acceptance. The need of men who display this toxic masculinity to maintain or attain power and dominance may thus manifest itself through femicide, economic subjugation, and physical, emotional or verbal abuse, among other forms of assault. A male participant noted:

> *Just like in the community, women suffer the most in terms of GBV … These things are happening daily. When a woman, for example, rejects romantic advances by a man – whether an adult educator or a fellow learner – she goes through hell. There was a female learner who is rumoured to have rejected the advances of an adult educator; she suffered and ended up dropping out. The adult educator would always tease her in class, [and] the rest of the class sort of joined in [in] making fun of her. (Male learner 1)*

From the above response, clearly GBV in the domain of adult education may be premised on a failure to accept rejection, which becomes more pronounced when it involves someone in a position of authority/power. Such blatant abuses reveal how deep-seated power dynamics entrench GBV in adult education. Similar sentiments were proffered by a female participant:

> *It is difficult to say 'No' to romantic advances from male students. If you say 'No', they bully you and they can come up with lies – for example, that you are a prostitute. They will spread these lies and tarnish your reputation. I have heard stories of adult educators who try to get involved with female students – I think it is difficult to say 'No' to someone who oversees your life as a learner. And who do you report to? The community? They will say you seduced the adult educator. Other lecturers? They are colleagues and they may decide to support each other against you. It is a losing battle. (Female learner 7)*

The above sentiments reveal how deep-rooted power imbalances and the abuse of authority influence the perpetration of GBV, even in an adult education setting. Importantly, such power dynamics are not limited to adult educators, but also involve learners. This was highlighted by a male participant:

> *Some of these female teachers are bossy; they think we are their kids. They come to class trying to impose their will on us, while some of us here are old enough to be their fathers. In our culture, women should honour men regardless of status – even in the community. (Male learner 2)*

The foregoing perspective reveals an intrinsic predisposition towards being domineering and demanding respect – even within the confines of education.

The basis of this may have its roots in the culture of neopatriarchy, which pits men as better than women and therefore worthy of reverence. 'Neopatriarchy', here, refers to a traditional patriarchy, especially that embedded in religion. An adult educator also weighed in on this topic:

> *Adult classrooms are difficult to navigate … . I try to treat all my learners with respect, but sometimes some learners appear to demand preferential treatment … . Some of these learners expect me to be submissive to them, just because I am a woman. I have suffered a lot of emotional abuse because of my stance towards equality in the classroom … . I have been accused of being un-African, and in more extreme instances I have been called a prostitute in the community – this affects not just me, but my family as well. (Female adult educator 1)*

The participants appeared to signal that, in an adult education environment, male learners and adult educators were more likely than their female counterparts to perpetrate GBV against their female counterparts. Thus, patriarchy plays a significant role in inculcating GBV.

Importantly, systemic humiliation which devalues and debases women renders them 'inferior' to their male counterparts and serves to perpetuate gendered forms of violence (Goitseone & Goitseone 2020; Mudau & Obadire 2017). As Snodgrass (2016) concludes, the current neopatriarchal backlash against gender equality in South Africa provokes and sustains the subjugation of women, casting them as victims and perpetuators of pervasive patriarchal values. This means that it is not uncommon for women to engage in practices that engender patriarchal traditions in society. Similarly, the foregoing views find credence in the conclusion that the subjugation of women by men tends to be viewed as a legitimate and normal display of masculinity. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for women to view toxic masculinity as the status quo (Ratele 2015; Snodgrass 2016). Our study participants' responses revealed that toxic masculinity and neopatriarchal practices have severe implications for access to adult education, as they aid GBV. Power imbalances are thus strong drivers of GBV in adult education classrooms.

Social learning

Social learning theorists propose that social behaviour is learnt when an individual observes the behaviour of others, as well as the consequences of that behaviour (Bandura 1977). Arguably, individuals undergo three phases of learning social behaviour: the ideation of appropriate behaviour, the enactment of this perceived appropriate behaviour, and the adoption of such behaviour if it has positive outcomes (Gagnon 2018). This perspective may find legitimacy in adult education milieus, given the exponentially high incidence of violence in South Africa (Institute for Economics & Peace 2020). In this regard, a female participant explained:

> *From the community to the school, men dominate everything. I have lost count of how many cases of assault and sexual violence in the community have been reported, but nothing happens. The perpetrators still walk free, and it is normal to have nothing happening. We have accepted that this is our reality – even when it comes to school; what can be different here? (Female learner 5)*

This view suggests that a lack of law enforcement on the part of the relevant authorities sends a salient message that appears to signal a gap between what is unacceptable in law and policy, in contrast to what is unacceptable to people in society, including those who are, or should be, in positions of law enforcement. Consequently, learners who are victimised tend to feel powerless to deal with, or confront, GBV, even if they encounter it in an adult education setting. A male participant opined:

> *Sometimes the violence which we see happening across the country gets imported into the schooling environment. If nothing is being done about violence against women in the community, how can the school be expected to be different? Our societies appear to make it okay for men to be abusive to women. This is just not right. The law is also failing us, because the perpetrators of GBV continue to walk free; in other words, … law enforcement has made it alright for women to be abused. There are no direct consequences for crime, so it almost appears as though perpetrating crime has incentives. (Male adult educator 3)*

The lack of consequences for perpetrating GBV appears to encourage this phenomenon. The male adult educator's argument is premised on the perception that GBV within the domain of adult education is symptomatic of the high levels of GBV in the wider South African society. As one participant added:

> *The learners that come to school here are coming from the community. The community has taught them how to behave and what is acceptable … . We know what is wrong and what is right, but it is difficult to just start implementing these things in school. Equality has been preached for a long time now, but changing the culture of violence will take more than just speaking. (Male learner 3)*

The learner identified that cultural norms that are passed down from one generation to the next play an important role in perpetuating toxic masculinities which legitimise violent behaviour. In addition, the transmission of violence from the community to the school is also of concern in the production and reproduction of violence.

The responses of the study participants revealed that GBV which manifests itself in the adult education environment is a consequence of behaviours learnt in childhood and reinforced in adulthood. This is because violence has, for some

time now, been associated with the absence of serious consequences or punishment for perpetrators (Bleich, Findling, Casey et al. 2019). Consequently, a good starting point is to explain how lethargic policing has enabled perpetrators of GBV, given that a functional criminal justice system can play an important role in ensuring that victims of GBV are able to access justice. In most cases, the police are often the first responders, and are responsible for gathering evidence, ensuring that victims access medical treatment, and finding them a safe haven. Social learning happens when an individual makes sense of social interactions based on the outcomes, in order to arrive at socially acceptable behaviour (Connell 2013; Gagnon 2018; Marcou 2018). The general consensus is that no one is born violent, but an inclination towards perpetrating violence is birthed when attitudes and behaviours of violent conduct are learnt over time, thanks to being legitimised through the agency of action or inaction (Demos & Segal 2013; Fry et al. 2019). Notably, social learning contributes significantly to the perpetration of GBV in adult education classrooms.

Family, schools and religion

Another crucial influence that was identified during a discussion of the causes and drivers of GBV in adult education was the role of social institutions – the family, school, and religious institutions. Importantly, victims of violence tend to normalise abuse after either experiencing it repeatedly or seeing it happening without inhibition (Bleich et al. 2019). Thus, from childhood, individuals learn how to treat others by witnessing how people are treated. There is evidence that individuals who are exposed to violence at institutions of socialisation (the home, church or any other setting) from a young age have a high likelihood of being involved in violence as adults, as either victims or perpetrators (Fry et al. 2019). This is because violence which unfolds in these settings is normalised when perpetrators and victims find justification in their life experiences. A female participant explained:

> *In our church, we are taught to be submissive to male figures … . Even when the male person is younger than you, you must respect them because they are men. Church leaders can even beat you up if you are caught breaking the laws of the church – they are allowed [to]. This is the church I grew up in, so even when I come here to school, I am aware of my position as a woman. (Female learner 4)*

As the participant indicates, social institutions play a prominent role in the production of violence, rather than becoming sanctuaries of equality and peace. A male participant added:

> *People who are raised in violent homes end up thinking that violence is a normal way of communicating or responding … . To tell these people that you can communicate without using violence is difficult. Some become repeat victims of violence, especially women – they suffer more because of GBV. (Male learner 4)*

It is not uncommon for victims of GBV to suffer repeatedly at the hands of aggressors or perpetrators of violence. Violence which happens in spaces of socialisation is highly likely to form part of the fabric of society, because such institutions are central in shaping an individual (Bandura 1977). A female participant weighed in thus on the aspect of institutions of socialisation:

> *While we deal with adult learners, it is important to note that these learners were children at some point in their lives, and they were taught certain things which form part of their personalities. For example, a child who grew up in a home where anger and violence are seen as legitimate responses, may grow up believing that these are appropriate responses. It is not uncommon for such a child to grow into a short-tempered adult who responds to conflict violently. (Female adult educator 2)*

The above response reveals that the social setting in which an individual is raised – especially the family, which is the primary institution of socialisation – plays a central role in the production of GBV. In similar vein, churches and schools may further entrench GBV, as these are also places where socialisation happens.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the gendered violence experienced in adult education is a product of socialisation from childhood, where children are socialised into attitudes about themselves and in respect of people of different genders and other identity forms (Connell 2013; Griner, Vamos, Thompson et al. 2020). Experiences of sexual abuse or other types of violence within an institution of socialisation oftentimes distort notions of healthy sexuality into inappropriate justifications for violent conduct and a failure to develop healthy boundaries, among other things (Jordan, Combs & Smith 2014). This usually degenerates into communication and coping styles that rely on denial, a reinterpretation of violent experiences, and avoidance (Connell 2013; Mahlori 2016; Spies 2020). As supported by the foregoing statements, institutions which are tasked with socialising individuals also play a significant role in producing GBV in adult education in South Africa.

The cost of GBV in adult education

As discussed, GBV occurs in markedly different forms, and has diverse effects. This means that, while some forms of GBV may be subtle, there are other, more explicit manifestations thereof which may result in the death of victims. The following segment focuses on the cost of GBV in adult education, as revealed by the participants in this study.

Physical injury

GBV which involves physical assault may result in physical injury for the victims. Such injuries may stem from acts such as punching, the use of weapons (knives, clubs, iron bars, etc.) against a victim. It is estimated that, in South Africa, as many as 1.75 million people annually seek treatment for injuries resulting from violence (SaferSpaces 2017). With regard to the adult education setting, a male participant posited:

> *Some people have been grievously injured as a result of GBV, both in … society and sometimes at school. You find that some matters that start at school are sometimes finished off away from the school, and some people really get hurt. (Male learner 3)*

The reality of GBV is that it sometimes results in physical injury and, as noted by the learner, such harm may be inflicted either within the schooling environment or away from it, despite having started at school. A female participant commented:

> *We used to attend with a lady who was involved in a dispute with her spouse regarding school. They ended up fighting because the spouse did not want her to attend school … . The husband beat her with a club, and she had to be hospitalised. She now walks with a limp. (Female learner 6)*

This observation reveals that GBV has the potential to cause physical injury and disability. Some of the injuries resulting from gendered violence may include wounds, muscular injuries, brain trauma, skeletal injuries, nerve injuries, etc. (Biribawa, Nuwemastiko, Oporia et al. 2020). In some instances, the injuries may be fatal or result in disability.

Mental health problems

GBV is associated with poor long-term mental health, which manifests itself as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Mental health challenges may, in some instances, result in suicide, unless the victim receives mental health counselling and other support. In this regard, a male participant noted:

> *GBV results in pronounced mental health problems for the victims … whether they be adult educators or learners. A person who survives GBV is never the same again … . They need psychosocial support in order to cope. This, for me, is one of the challenges we have in rural settings; we need to grow awareness. The trauma of surviving GBV is too great for one to stomach. (Male adult educator 3)*

The impact of mental health problems is likely to be more pronounced in rural and traditional settings, where mental health awareness is likely to be relatively

low. Adult educators and learners who survive GBV need considerable assistance in order to cope with the trauma of being a victim of gendered violence. A female participant explained:

> *When someone for example is sexually assaulted, they may find it difficult to shake off the feeling of unworthiness which grips them. You feel dirty and less human; you blame yourself for the GBV. Without professional assistance, it is difficult for one to get back [on] [one's] feet again. (Female learner 5)*

These perspectives, as expressed by learners and adult educators, reveal the more subtle effects which GBV has on victims – effects which cannot always be seen, but are nonetheless debilitating. Service providers should be aware that, compared with the general population, women who have experienced violence may require additional psychological support (Cools & Kotsadam 2017). It is also important to recognise the enduring impact of the violence that has occurred, and to tailor outreach and treatment services accordingly (Hossain, Pearson, McAlpine et al. 2021). Interventions with regard to GBV need to take cognisance of the mental health concerns which victims of gendered violence express.

Educational outcomes

Another theme that arose from a discussion on the cost of GBV in adult education was that of educational outcomes. With GBV come increased rates of absenteeism, weaker academic performance, and increased dropout rates. In some instances, where the adult educator is a victim of GBV at the hands of learners or fellow adult educators, the result may be absenteeism from work, which has a negative impact on the quality of education. In this regard, a female participant reasoned:

> *When you are harassed and attacked because you are a woman, you can try to be strong. You think that you have to be strong – for your kids and what you want to achieve. But at some point, you can no longer take it; you are always depressed and even thinking about school makes you sad. It is not nice being nervous in class because you fear what may happen … . Even your concentration levels go down. You can begin to daydream and 'wander away' in your thoughts during classes. (Female learner 4)*

While victims may attempt to be resilient in the face of gendered attacks, sustained aggression will have a marked effect on their academic and educational outcomes. The scourge of GBV in adult education was also demonstrated by a female participant who added:

> *We are not robots, we are human. When someone says something or makes unwelcome advances towards you, you feel it and it makes you uncomfortable. Many of my female learners are being harassed and, in*

> *some cases, it is related to their decision to go back to school and pick up from where they left [off]… . Sometimes you just have to sit down with the victim and offer pastoral care to the learner as a means of psychosocial support. (Female adult educator 3)*

A male adult educator offered a perspective on his own experiences with regard to GBV in adult education:

> *One thing that is not said enough, is why we do not seem to attract young men from the community. Sometimes you can think that just because they are male and there is a lot of patriarchy in our societies, then automatically they have access to education. Most of the young men in the community are afraid of being called names and jeered at because they are men, and society expects them to be educated. I am not saying that women do not go through the same, but I am just giving another side to the issue of why we have [fewer] men than women in adult learning. (Male adult educator 4)*

It is apparent, therefore, that, although both men and women are affected by GBV, women bear the brunt of violence at the hands of men. The foregoing responses reveal that GBV affects all genders, yet women remain in the majority as victims of GBV in adult education settings. In this regard, learners who experience GBV are usually more likely to perform below standard and have a higher dropout rate than their counterparts who have not suffered abuse (Beyene, Chojenta, Roba et al. 2019). Additionally, a victim of GBV may experience the inability to concentrate or study, their grades may start falling, they could become disruptive in class, fail to attend lessons or even drop out of school (Hossain et al. 2021; Wondimu 2019). Female learners may also suffer from low self-esteem, a lack of confidence, an inferiority complex, fear of the unknown, etc. (Wondimu 2019). Gendered violence therefore has a varied yet marked effect on educational outcomes in adult education.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study has demonstrated that there are multiple forms of GBV, which have varied effects on both the victims and the perpetrators. The findings revealed that violence at the adult education institution in this study is largely driven by unequal power dynamics and hardened attitudes, and by socialisation, social learning and social institutions, such as schools and the family. The study further revealed that learners and adult educators in the study point to three prominent themes in relation to the effects and cost of GBV in their education, namely physical injury, mental health issues, and negative educational outcomes. While the sample size was relatively small, and the investigation cannot claim to have extensively unearthed the experiences of adult learners and adult educators, it

could form the basis for further research in enhancing gender equity in adult education. Therefore, the recommendation is that more psychosocial support be offered to adult learners in order to improve coping strategies in the face of GBV. The study also proposes that more programmes be initiated to raise awareness of gender equality. Lastly, the authors recommend that there be more coordinated systems of reporting and follow-up on any instances of gendered violence which occur within the domain of adult education.

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Community education and the crisis of biodiversity loss: Reflections from the hall of mirrors of past projects

Lehlohonolo Joe Phadima, Bhekathina Memela & Sandra Land

Abstract

South Africa is one of the most biologically diverse countries on our planet, and many South Africans depend on our biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, we face a rising biodiversity crisis, with many of our ecosystems destroyed, damaged or increasingly threatened by human activities. Effective community education is needed to limit further degradation of natural ecosystems that provide us with clean air and water, food and fuel, medicinal plants, and health-giving environments.

In the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, 80% of ecosystems needing protection for their survival are within communal or privately owned land. Past top-down engagement approaches to conservation efforts targeting rural communities failed to turn many communities towards desirable conservation practices, and, instead, tended to alienate and divide people in rural communities. This chapter discusses key understandings and dynamics in community education initiatives aimed at reversing the biodiversity crisis, and bringing long-term, sustainable, biodiversity conservation solutions that truly benefit ecosystems and people in rural KZN and beyond.

Introduction

> *In its simplest terms, biodiversity means variety of life. This includes all life, from tiny plant and insect life to the biggest animals. The reason this is so important is that it plays a critical role in meeting human needs as well as maintaining the ecological processes, upon which people in our province, and, ultimately, humanity's survival on Earth depends. The more species we lose, the less diverse life becomes and the more unhealthy our ecosystem becomes. (Lombard 2016: 1)*

With a view to optimising the potential of planned community projects to ameliorate the crisis of biodiversity loss and the looming danger it holds for people and other forms of life, this chapter reflects on reports of conservation projects spanning the last few decades in KZN and beyond, and discusses the importance of the following:

- The heterogeneity of communities and the diverse needs community members have in relation to natural resources within their reach;
- The relationship between incentives and conservation practices, and implications of short- term material incentives compared with longer-term intangible incentives; and
- How considerations that foreground community representatives may represent the views and needs of only a few among the community, and how 'who learns what' affects the long-term goals of biodiversity.

Rural communities in Africa that have access to, and control over, natural resources are often underdeveloped and poor, and they may not be aware that the biodiversity in their area is threatened, or what the implications of biodiversity loss are for their way of life. Furthermore, individual members of rural communities are likely to have different views on what should be prioritised and worked towards, since they naturally experience needs differently, have different understandings of the desirability of different incentives, and may not see the loss of a particular species or their habitat as important. Therefore, completely different types of engagement are likely to be appropriate for different environmental education projects in different contexts.

Unsurprisingly, the goal of community education for biodiversity conservation has been to encourage behaviour and practices that will conserve rather than threaten biodiversity. Concomitantly, the traditional approach of conservation agencies to avert loss of biodiversity by offering indigenous communities incentives to cooperate with them has been based squarely on one of the most intuitive bases for human learning and associated behaviour change: instrumental learning (Skinner 1974). The theory of instrumental learning is a behaviourist theory based on positive and negative reinforcers of behaviour, and it offers a way of understanding and predicting learning ranging from its simplest form, where, for instance, a person behaves in a particular way simply to gain an

immediate concrete reward, to complex learning, where people go to extraordinary lengths to gain deferred, complex and abstract gratification.

However, as is shown later in this chapter, the success of incentive-based initiatives has been limited and often temporary, and may simply mirror the shortcomings and limitations of behaviourist theory in explaining complex human behaviour. It has become apparent that, in biodiversity conservation initiatives, healthy shifts in behaviour are most likely with a careful combination of negotiated tangible and intangible incentives, delivered on a transparent basis that is clear to all stakeholders and acceptable to them, and are likely to be sustained where there is shared awareness of long-term positive outcomes associated with avoiding the loss of biodiversity. This awareness indicates a necessary shift in underlying beliefs about learning and behaviour from behaviourist thinking, towards concepts implicit in Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (Sen 2000). In this approach, Sen sees people's welfare as measurable in terms of 'functionings', which include being healthy, having access to shelter and adequate nourishment, and being able to move freely. When people see that these freedoms are linked to the preservation of biodiversity, and may be furthered by particular practices, they are likely to adopt them.

Biodiversity in KwaZulu-Natal, and conservation

Owing to its diverse landscape and varied habitats for both flora and fauna, the province of KZN in South Africa is abundantly rich in biodiversity. In an effort to safeguard the richness of flora, fauna and habitat, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife initiated a KwaZulu-Natal Biodiversity Stewardship Programme (KZN BDS) in 2005 to expand the network of protected areas and improve the management of biodiversity on land under both private and communal ownership (SANBI 2018; Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife nd). The programme aims to encourage landowners to commit to practices that allow natural, indigenous biodiversity to flourish, and makes use of legal tools such as the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 (NEMPAA) that maximise protection of the landowners' biodiversity. There are six different types of protected area, each with its own limitations on land use. By 2018, more than 564 000 hectares were declared as protected under biodiversity stewardship programmes (Wright 2018).

One critical aspect of the KZN BDS Programme is the use of incentives to support the adoption of practices and attitudes conducive to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The current KZN BDS's suite of incentives for stewardship sites is geared to encouraging private or individual landowners to practise biodiversity conservation and avoid the loss of diversity on their land. However, it fails to adequately address the determining of incentives for rural communities, which are heterogeneous groupings of people with different interests, complex social networks and power relations, 'best portrayed as "communities of communities" where complexity and competing interests are

standard and trade-offs are necessary' (Roe, Nelson & Sandbrook 2009). A shift in thinking away from oversimplified behaviourist principles towards those of Sen's Capability Approach, even if not consciously articulated, is likely to enable this and other biodiversity programmes to gain more traction in the long term and improve their chances of enabling awareness of the value of biodiversity among the people they aim to benefit.

For effective adoption of attitudes and practices compatible with the conservation of biodiversity at community level, the life gains for the affected communities must be emphasised, especially since many South Africans associate notions of conservation with forced removals and other apartheid practices that prioritised the preservation of ecosystems over their quality of life. Also, people in rural communities exploit natural resources to sustain their livelihoods, often relying on plants and animals of the veld and forests for food, medicine and other purposes (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013). In conservation work, it is therefore important to follow processes such as those based on community-based natural resource management principles (Fabricius, Cundill & Sisitka 2003), which put emphasis on improving livelihoods of local people, ensuring effective communication with all affected people (including those most often marginalised), acknowledging local knowledge, securing rights of community members to long-term control over resources, and ensuring clarity in relation to roles, rights and responsibilities of all involved.

Ultimately, biodiversity conservation depends on decisions made by people (Reyers, Roux & O'Farrell 2010), and, in terms of the Capability Approach, people will adopt and maintain practices that do best in removing restrictions to freedom such as poverty and lack of opportunity. Therefore, an understanding of what encourages each land user to see value in, and buy into, stewardship for conservation, is imperative. Understanding drivers of this decision-making is complicated in rural communities where one deals not with individuals, but with groups of different landowners and land users with differing needs, who use the same resources for different purposes, and may have different aspirations for the land. Here, a finer understanding of complex systems can lead to co-learning[1] and more sustainable initiatives (Ostrom & Cox 2010). Interventions that claim to promote co-learning should consider that co-learning cannot take place in an environment that promotes rigid, prescriptive pathways and a culture of silence (Freire & Ramos 1970). On the contrary, co-learning can occur only in an environment that encourages a coercion-free and inclusive dialogue (Habermas 1990), and action based on social integration and solidarity can be coordinated only where mutual understanding is achieved through open dialogue (Habermas 1984). When practices consistent with conservation of biodiversity are maintained by communities without associated

1 Co-learning is defined here as collaborative knowledge creation, where different individuals or groups share and take notice of one another's views. In this case, people involved would be community members, their leaders and representatives, and external agents, and possibly their representatives.

incentives, it is reasonable to conclude that they may be experiencing the direct benefits of, and thus integral incentives for, biodiversity conservation. An instance of this is where conservation of vultures, and hence their increased numbers, can result in reduced incidences of diseases affecting livestock (Gross 2006). Alternately, environmentally positive changes in behaviour may be because, through co-learning, people have become aware of the negative consequences of over-exploitation of at-risk species, and, in Sen's terms, of the value of biodiversity conservation practices in allowing them increased political freedoms, economic resources, social opportunities, security, or transparency in systems they are a part of (Sen 2000).

Thus, as Freire noted in *Pedagogy of the oppressed* more than 40 years ago, it is important for any agency involved in co-learning for biodiversity conservation, or in community environmental education, to develop a deep understanding of each community that it deals with. This understanding must include its sociopolitical environment and socio-economic dynamics, its ways of relating to resources, and the influence that various factors have on ownership of, access to, and use of communal land. Developing this understanding will enable agencies to avoid two common 'traps' associated with biodiversity conservation learning in communal areas: an over-emphasis on tangible incentives, and the fallacy of community 'representatives' as comprehensively representative voices of the community, which we address in more detail below.

Historical land dispossession and alienation of people from resources as stigmatisation of conservation efforts

There is evidence from the beginning of the 19th century that, in Southern Africa, the *Amakhosi* (traditional leaders of the Nguni people) traditionally maintained conservation initiatives but that their authority was undermined by colonisation-driven conservation initiatives (Honey 1999). In South Africa, this was exacerbated when rural communities were dispossessed of their land through the Natives Land Act 27 of 1913, and the enactment of laws that criminalised African livelihood practices that were in conflict with colonial conceptions of conservation (Duffy, St John, Büscher et al. 2016).

Conflicts that have occurred since then between rural communities and conservation efforts are well documented (Andrew-Essien & Bisong 2009; Roe et al. 2009). In colonised Africa, conservation areas were usually put out of reach of local communities through forced removals, were protected using military techniques, were financed through government subsidies, and were run with political and social blinders (Honey 1999). Laws that imposed unilateral conservation initiatives by force, marginalised rural communities and often provoked hostility between conservation initiatives and these communities (Andrew-Essien & Bisong 2009). For instance, hostility between the KwaJobe people and the Mkhuze Game Reserve authorities in South Africa was triggered by the removal of the KwaJobe people for the establishment of

Mkhuze (Lewis 1997). Trust between communities and the conservation agency was destroyed, and many communities continue to treat initiatives by conservation agencies with suspicion. In addition, outside of designated conservation areas, people may see conservation laws that criminalise their use of wildlife as part of the remaining vicissitudes of an oppressive legal system of colonial regimes. Consequently, some African communities continue to refuse to accept legislation intended to protect wildlife and avoid the loss of biodiversity (Duffy et al. 2016). In these cases, external agencies may offer incentives as a first step for community members to start to unlearn these negative associations and move towards gains that biodiversity conservation practices may hold for them.

Factors to be taken into account in co-learning for conservation initiatives

Socio-economic dynamics within communities

Currently, rural communities across Africa, particularly those in remote rural areas, have socio-economic challenges related to high poverty levels, low education levels (Stats SA 2020), internal conflicts, poor infrastructure, and weak support services (Roe et al. 2009). One of the main reasons that biodiversity is used unsustainably and degraded in such areas is that exploiting resources makes economic sense to people maintaining their livelihoods. In KZN, while rural people might support the concept of conservation in principle, their economic needs make it difficult to comply with practising sustainable use and conservation of natural resources (Wright, Hill, Roe et al. 2016). In the iGxalingenwa and Kwayili forests in the Drakensburg, KZN, where traditional institutions that might have worked to preserve natural resources were weak, communities over-utilised the forest in providing for their livelihoods (Robertson & Lawes 2005). Clearly, here, people's practices of overuse of forest resources provided enough positive, short-term reinforcement for them to overlook the consequences of not ensuring regeneration of resources.

In contrast, another study at Ongoye Forest in KZN showed that, even where communities rely heavily on natural resources to support themselves, resource use can be maintained at sustainable levels (Boudreau, Lawes, Piper et al. 2005; Phadima 2005). This case demonstrated the value of co-learning and shared agency in rural conservation interventions that acknowledge economic, social and environmental constraints of communities, and avoid prescribing uniform sets of incentives for a rural community with context-bound livelihoods, dynamics, social networks and governance. In the Ongoye Forest instance, strong local traditional governance added complexity, but was possibly a powerful factor in maintaining awareness of the intrinsic rewards of keeping use to a sustainable level and avoiding the loss of biodiversity.

As demonstrated in the Ongoye Forest example, a thorough understanding of how people make choices regarding land and resources, and how they see various benefits, is needed (Wright et al. 2016), and livelihoods and attitude assessment should be undertaken in each case. A livelihood assessment looks at the nature of livelihoods and the constraints, imperatives and shortfalls that drive people to degrade natural resources in the search for subsistence resources, income and employment (Emerton 1999) when common-property management fails. This is important because, in the absence of functioning institutions and governance systems, users of shared resources make independent and anonymous decisions that lead to what Ostrom (2007) terms the 'tragedy of the commons', which refers to the depletion or degradation of shared resources and hence massive loss of biodiversity through the cumulative effect of the behaviour of individual users to benefit themselves without consideration of the common good. In terms of the Capability Approach, it is clear that, when this happens, short-term rewards or opportunities have trumped the consideration of freedoms implicit in any positive, long-term consequences of biodiversity conservation in shaping the practices of a community. Where the state of people's perceptions in relation to biodiversity and the options they have is not clear, there is value in an attitude assessment to explore people's attitudes to the resources and environment in question and reveal what people understand about relevant issues and their own position in relation to them. Key here is the transparency perceived by affected people in dealings with agents for biodiversity conservation, the extent to which they believe they have agency, and the extent to which they perceive the system represented by the agents as trustworthy. It is vital to take these factors into account in planning any community education initiative.

Communities as heterogeneous groups

People working from a Western perspective frequently assume that rural African communities are unified homogenous and harmonious entities that simply await some community education initiative and/or incentives in order to adopt biodiversity-friendly practices. In reality, just like communities everywhere else in the world, they are heterogeneous, complex and politically driven, and frequently characterised by conflicting interests (Roe et al. 2009).

The emphasis in the South African post-1994 democracy era on human rights added complications for traditional areas. In some communities, democratically elected councils were set up to work alongside traditional leaders who previously controlled the allocation of land in areas under traditional African authorities (Ntsebeza 2000). This was socially divisive, causing conflicts over decision-making power (Roe et al. 2009), particularly in rural parts of the KZN province where a significant proportion of land (over 33% of the area of the province) is in the hands of traditional African authorities.[2] Since social

2 In KZN, 3.1 million hectares of land is owned by the Ingonyama Trust (in other words, is held for the Zulu people by their king) in accordance with the KZN Ingonyama Trust Act, No. 3KZ of 1994 (SANBI 2018).

heterogeneity and differing needs impact on access to resources and leadership struggles (Van Heck 2003), identifying various groups within communities and their political dynamism is fundamental to any intervention. Understanding what information is appropriate for each group (such as women, the poor, and subgroups involved in activities like small garden committees), and the processes that determine appropriate co-learning for conservation initiatives within a rural community, is equally important.

Attention to process is vital for ensuring that the people who bear the costs of biodiversity conservation understand the reasons for, and consequences of, conserving or not conserving resources, and receive any accompanying incentives. This is because, as the principles of instrumental learning tell us, people will manage their environment only if gains from such management exceed their costs (Wright et al. 2016), and because of the importance, in terms of the Capability Approach, of people's perceptions of transparency and trustworthiness (Sen 2000). Consequently, when dealing with heterogeneous and politically driven rural communities, community educators should try to understand and take into account the complex and not always harmonious systems existent in communities, and consider the multifaceted implications of what this means for planning, delivery, and hoped-for outcomes of education initiatives as well as for what incentives are offered to whom. An operational paradigm shift from mechanical, product-orientated programmes with rigid time frames and quantified goals, to genuine continual and sustainable participatory involvement of communal landowners at their pace, is needed. For this to happen, it is imperative that all concerned hear one another's points of view, and together work out strategies that accommodate felt needs. In some instances, sharing of ideas in this co-learning practice may result in the development of new, context-specific tactics.

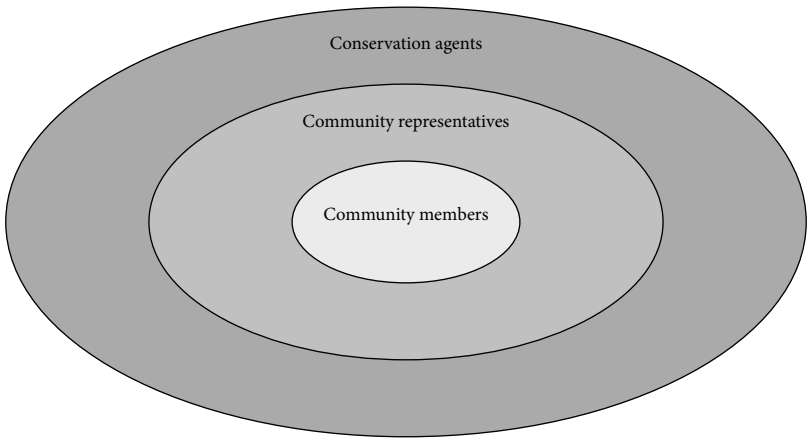
The myth of 'representative' community structures

There are critical considerations around who is approached in the initial steps of interacting with communal landowners and planning community education. Simply involving apparent community representatives is shown in Figure 1, where the innermost circle represents people in a community who are ignored, having not been directly contacted by conservation agents (represented in the outermost ring). The inner ring, between the innermost and outermost rings, represents the community representatives who are in contact with both ordinary community members and conservation agents, and through whom all communication is filtered.

Working through community representatives and relying on them to pass on the substance of community education is an option that appears convenient in the short term, since no time is spent discovering the dynamics of a community and becoming involved in extended communication with multiple participants. However, the weakness of this option is that it is less participatory and does not

give external agents insight into the community they are working with. Without insight gained from direct communication, agents cannot plan co-learning for conservation strategies that are likely to be most effective in particular instances of community education. They also cannot see if proposed incentives are appropriate, or how they will be distributed among community members. If incentives do not reach intended beneficiaries, they cannot be effective in encouraging the adoption of the biodiversity conservation behaviours and practices they were designed to reinforce in the long run.

Figure 1: Community representatives



Source: Phadima, Memela and Land

In fact, the most immediately available community 'representatives' can actually prevent ordinary community members from accessing benefits, in a pattern referred to by Roe et al. (2009) as 'elite capture', which seems common, especially in commercial projects that impact the environment, where monetary incentives are offered to selected people in compensation for the impact. An instance of this happened in 2017 in the Fuleni area just south east of the Hluhluwe-Mfolozi Park in KZN. Here, community leadership supported a proposed coal-mining venture while occupants of approximately two-and-a-half-thousand households vehemently opposed it (Save our iMfolozi Wilderness 2017). This kind of capture by the powerful might often characterise rural parts of KZN, where dialogues about incentives tend to take place in 'higher'-level community structures that are often dominated by men, whilst behavioural change is expected from women as the main land users. Another example of what seems to be elite capture, current at the time of writing, is that of the fuel company Shell's prospecting for gas and oil reserves off South Africa's pristine Wild Coast, a stretch of approximately 250 kilometres of relatively unspoilt coastal ecosystems on the scenic coast of the Eastern Cape province. Shell gained approval from South Africa's Minister of Mineral

Resources and Energy, and from selected community leaders, and started prospecting by way of repetitive seismic blasting of the seabed in December 2021. However, in a landmark judgment for local communities, Shell was forced to halt the survey when, in response to a case brought by activists, including inhabitants of the coast nearest the area of the seismic survey, an Eastern Cape court found that the company 'had failed to meaningfully consult people who would be affected by the seismic survey' (*The Guardian* 2021) and, presumably, by the oil and gas extraction activities that could have followed the survey.

These examples resonate with Habermas's warning (1984) of 'lifeworlds' falling into the power of 'steering media' when, among other changes, traditional forms of life lose coherence, and available rewards are claimed by powerful individuals or groups. It is interesting that in the Wild Coast example, local communities seem to have won at least a short-term victory against a government-supported profit-driven enterprise that threatened the natural environment that is their home. This is unusual, and raises the question of whether the involvement of environmental activists from outside the community and the high media interest in the case were salient factors in the outcome.

Even projects that are ecologically sensitive can be vulnerable to elite capture. Some years ago, Kiss (2004: 234) noted that 'overall … most Community Based Ecotourism projects produce (at best) modest cash benefits, and these are often captured by a relatively small proportion of the community'.

In terms of communities' own impacts on their environment, two decades ago Lewis (1997) cautioned against the blanket assumption that 'so-called community structures' or representatives account to their respective communities. This is particularly important since activities that destroy biodiversity often take place at individual and household level, although their impacts are seen at community or higher level. This underlines the need for people whose learning and behaviour is critical in the preservation of biodiversity to be directly involved in community education initiatives, and for reinforcers of ecologically positive shifts in behaviour and practices to be felt directly by the people who have altered their behaviour. Overall, community representatives should not be assumed to automatically and fully represent constituent communities. As with all social groupings, social dynamics inform how communities are organised and who represents them. Vocal and well-off community members, whose affluence determines community decision-making may well be over-represented amongst the most apparent community representatives (van Heck 2003).

Challenges to cooperation with and among communal landowners and land users

Efforts to achieve desirable collaboration with communities often engage only a few social groups and individuals, and fail to build representation across groups within diverse communities (Margerum & Rosenberg 2003), and dynamics within communities can thwart less powerful community members. In Tanzanian income-generating projects, the required payment of fees and upfront investment of capital effectively excludes poor people (Roe et al. 2009), and in the Makuleke land claim in South Africa (Carruthers 2007), the traditional royal family received a disproportionately large share of benefits from the Common Property Association that made the land claim. Interestingly, most community members there supported this disproportionate sharing, since, because of their traditional beliefs, they saw traditional royalty as the rightful controller of the land. Some would say, ironically, in the context of the colonial oppression in Africa, that this perception is an example of Freire's (1970) 'oppressed consciousness', where oppressed people see their condition as part of normality, which they accept without question.

Thus, as Botha (2004) stated almost two decades ago with reference to a South African study on education for, and implementation of, biodiversity stewardship in a communal setting, it is important to research the history of previous relationships and interventions in the community, and to bear several things in mind. These are that the dynamics of communities might require specialist facilitation skills, that communities might not recognise local authorities, or might have developed a willingness to give up independence and agency in return for handouts (again, an instance of instrumental learning), that they might accept the dominance of oppressors and their own lack of agency, and that it is vitally important to keep all stakeholders well informed so that the process is not derailed. The continued relevance of these points is noted by environmental law specialists Ndlovu De Villiers (SANBI 2019).

Participatory methods involving communal landowners

Biodiversity conservation in communal areas in the apartheid era appears to have been carried out as conservation against communities; initiatives did not recognise communities as agents in conservation but reduced them to objects to be removed from their land in the name of conservation. Such a model of conservation was oppressive towards communities, failing to acknowledge their human dignity. If one draws from Freire and Ramos (1970: 55), then:

> *Any situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment*

> *of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence?*

In Freire and Ramos's (1970) terms, the pre-1994 model of conservation was dehumanising, oppressive, founded on the culture of silence, and not affirming of the communities as role players or as primary users of biodiversity. The South African Constitution, 1996, provides a legal framework that is conducive to a shift from conservation against communities to conservation with communities. Section 7 (1) of the Constitution makes a commitment to respect human dignity. In addition, section 7 (2) of the Constitution states: 'The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.' One of these rights is in section 24(a) of the Constitution, which protects every South African's right to an environment that is not detrimental to their well-being or health. To ensure that the environmental rights that are promised in section 24(a) are fulfilled, section 24(b) guarantees everyone's right:

> *to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that –*
> *(i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;*
> *(ii) promote conservation; and*
> *(iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.*

However, it is clear that these rights are not experienced or enjoyed by many people living in rural South African communities, who, it seems, have yet to realise that, in the post-apartheid era, they have these rights and could access support in exercising them.

Co-learning in participatory community education for environmental sustainability

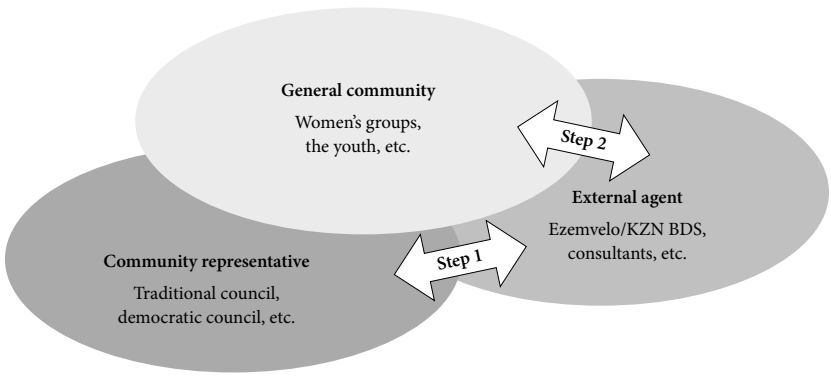
For biodiversity conservation initiatives to emerge from the long shadows of the pre-1994 model of conservation, they need to be truly participatory and explicitly declare commitment to using participatory methods for engaging communities in biodiversity conservation. Any intervention that claims to be participatory has to create a conducive environment for community members to shift their perception of their own position from silent, powerless observers, to discovering their rights, and finding their voice. Transformation is needed for people to cease being self-deprecating and become self-affirming, to cease being spectators and become active actors in matters that affect their lives, and to cease being proxies for others and become autonomous (Freire & Ramos 1970).

Participatory methods involving more than the most immediately apparent community representatives are clearly valuable for the quality of participation and

the resultant long-term benefits of potentially useful initiatives. Both community representatives and ordinary community members can be involved in a truly engaging and empowering process when everyone is involved in learning, empowerment, and negotiating appropriate incentives in the interests of the entire community (see Figure 2). This option obviates influence from biased community representatives, since the external agent communicates directly with ordinary community members and can assess the distribution and effects of incentives. However, there can be no guarantee against bias on the part of the external agent, and, in the case of agents working for conservation initiatives, it is possible that their career choice may indicate a bias stemming from a conviction that 'doing all we can to maintain existing ecosystems is of general benefit'. This might not be congruent with communities' views on their right to use natural resources in their areas in whatever way they wish to. Nevertheless, if the process of co-learning is genuine, the parties should be able to find common ground as they work through differences.

Different participatory community education methods can facilitate participation of ordinary community members. One of these, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), is an action-research strategy utilising techniques such as joint construction and discussion of analytic tools such as Venn diagrams, timelines and time trends to actively engage participants/communities in analysing information about their settings and conditions (Bhandari 2003). With truly participatory approaches, both community representatives and ordinary community members are involved in exploring and learning about issues and the development and determination of incentives. Participatory methods also facilitate local members' engagement and learning by encouraging the inclusive involvement of all community sectors. This does not mean, however, that external stakeholders or change agents must bypass and disrespect local protocol and leadership, as this could jeopardise the implementation of community education strategies and the sustainability of solutions. Figure 2 illustrates the model of communication and interaction suggested for current initiatives to attain true participation while embracing local structures and institutions.

Figure 2: Model of communication and interaction used by KZN BDS



Source: Phadima, Memela and Land

Comprehensive implementation of participatory methods in community education and in devising reinforcers for behaviour required from different parties necessitates particular awareness. A common error associated with this approach is to assume that the presence of ordinary community members in meetings that apparently have the sanction of prominent community members guarantees or translates into their participation; in fact, they may well be present but alienated from what is going on, and from the perception of value in rewards or potential gains, both offered for, and intrinsic to, conservation practices.

Another mistake is to fail to realise that participatory methodologies are open to misuse. In some instances, participatory methodologies have indirectly promoted further marginalisation of communities. As early as 2001, Cooke and Kothari, in their book *Participation: The new tyranny?*, offered accounts by different authors of instances where participatory facilitators unintentionally overrode legitimate decision-making by participants, or where interests of already powerful people were reinforced, or where the use of participatory methods excluded other methods that may have been advantageous.

Participatory methodologies can also fail when facilitators come from organisations that are 'product'-driven, as opposed to 'process'-driven. Pressure to achieve results speedily, and habitual reliance on previously used methods such as set workshops, can result in the mechanical use of strategies with little consideration of sociopolitical factors underpinning communities' interactions and prevalent social networks. If the focus is on the delivery of products within given time frames rather than on the processes of engagement, learning, and empowerment of the community, the result can be a mimicry or pretence of participatory approaches that actually entrenches community disempowerment.

Factors associated with the upholding or adoption of conservation practices

Awareness programmes can sensitise people to the need to conserve natural resources within their reach, alert them to possible gains, and build popular support for conservation initiatives. Planned awareness-raising and community education initiatives improved conservation practices among people living near the Masoala National Park in Madagascar, in forest conservation projects in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia, and in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013).

It is predictable on the basis of instrumental learning theory that conservation practices will be upheld or adopted only if people experience benefits from them (Roe 2017). In new conservation initiatives, if people are involved from the stage of conceptualisation to the stage of monitoring and review, and if people are offered opportunities to expand their understanding, there is greater feeling of belonging, and thereby greater possibility of success. Water-harvesting structures introduced by government agencies in Rajasthan, for instance, were

much less successful than those initiated by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community institutions, because Rajasthani government agencies did not involve the local people in planning and implementation (Kothari 2001). Therefore, they did not lay a basis for Habermas's (1984) 'communicative action', and consequently did not build a base for continuous maintenance. More positively, the recovery of lion and elephant populations in Namibia is attributed to the strong incentive of retention by community conservancies of 100% of the income from ecotourism in these areas (Nelson, Sulle & Roe 2016). However, while emphasis on tangible incentives such as the permitted slaughter of game for meat distribution and short-term employment may work for mobilising people around conservation initiatives, this emphasis can equally diminish rural communities' active learning and participation in, and commitment to, sustained biodiversity conservation in the long run (Pimbert & Pretty 1995). This can happen if communities' dependence on resources in conservation is inadequately understood and/or not compensated for. It can also happen where consumerism is stimulated by development, which weakens cultural management and knowledge of natural resources, actually resulting in increased or over-exploitation of resources (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013). In this case, the reinforcers associated with consumerism have perhaps been stronger forces for the people concerned than the reinforcers of behaviour associated with the conservation of biodiversity.

Another important factor is that ordinary community members might expect or demand incentives that are not within the power of any participating agent to grant. This is to be expected, as rural communities that have access to, and control over, natural resources are often underdeveloped and poverty-stricken, and desire incentives unrelated to conservation of biodiversity, for example agriculture, healthcare, access to grants, and so on. Also, community members will naturally have conflicting interests and varying opinions on what incentives they should negotiate for. For instance, some community members may expect a conservation organisation to offer seedlings and agricultural support, which are unlikely to be within the expertise and resources of a conservation organisation. In these cases, people working within the programme need to explore possibilities of facilitating collaboration with organisations that can offer those incentives, or participants need to pool their resources and ideas in order to generate alternatives that have possibly not been considered before. This strategy is popularly known as alternative livelihoods facilitation, as opposed to provisioning (Wright et al. 2016).

The value of interactive participation incorporating environmental education, skills transfer, human development, and empowerment (Pimbert & Pretty 1995) has long been recognised. Here, people participate in joint analysis and action plans underpinned by multiple information source perspectives, and, where appropriate, the negotiation of incentives as reinforcers of conservation practices. The goal of this kind of community education is to shift rural and communal communities from conservation associated with simple material gains towards

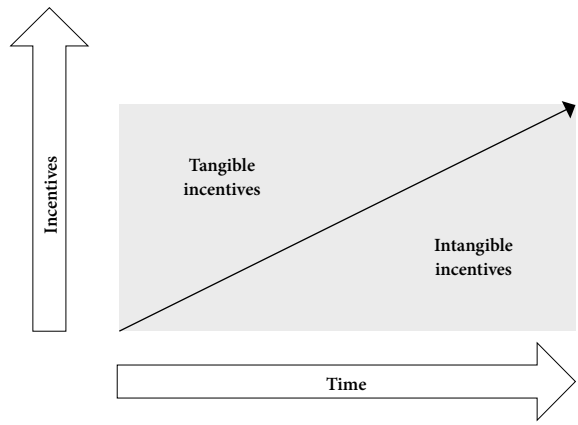
'deeper levels' of conservation. This shift can be seen as an awakening to, and discovery of, their own agency and benefits intrinsic to the conservation of biodiversity. These gains may be less tangible, more subtle, and not as immediate as incentives initially offered by external agencies, which may be crudely seen as simple bribes to elicit conservation. Co-learning, here, is the process that leads from the initial acceptance of 'conservation bribes' to the adoption of practices suited to particular communities and contexts, and to transformed awareness on the part of participants of the long-term, less tangible value of biodiversity conservation to their communities. In Freire's terms, this would be an example of people learning to 'read the world', with a 'critical reading of reality, whether it takes place in the literacy process or not, and associated above all with the clearly political practices of mobilization and organization' (Freire & Macedo 1987: 24).

Thus, material incentives can be ultimately successful in leading people towards long-term commitment to more sustainable practices, although a strong focus on intangible incentives can reduce reasons for participation by communities interested in material gain only. This was the case with the initiative involving KwaJobe community members in north-eastern KZN, who supported the idea of resource-based tourism enterprise on their land only because of the assurance that it would generate economic returns and not because they valued its benefits to conservation (Lewis 1997). More recently, in Benin's Pendjari National Park, successful conservation of biodiversity was attributed to the park authorities working with representatives of local communities, who informed park staff of activities that local people intended to carry out within the park. Because their organisation was acknowledged, people saw the park positively, and, through communication with park staff, they gained understanding of the value of biodiversity conservation for themselves (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013). With reference to information flowing in the other direction, a new source of positive influence in community conservation initiatives is the emergence, notably in Kenya and Tanzania, of civil society organisations active in the sphere of wildlife governance reform. These organisations work to ensure that rural communities affected by conservation initiatives can influence policy and gain greater advantages for themselves (Nelson et al. 2016).

It is vital to appreciate that different types of engagement and different incentives will be appropriate at different stages and contexts of conservation initiatives, which need to take into account current complexities of motivations and political–economic contexts (Duffy et al. 2016). A combination of tangible and intangible incentives – provided that they are actually delivered, and that the system governing them is transparent, clearly understood and accepted by all stakeholders – attracts people to initial participatory exercises and learning, and increases the chances of sustainability because people experience positive impacts on their lives or livelihoods (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013). This may also stimulate their awareness of the long-term, less tangible rewards of conservation such as increased agency on the part of communities. Ideally, tangible incentives should be gradually replaced by intangible incentives as the partnership develops

between a conservation agency/programme and the community. As has long been shown by research in instrumental learning, practices are more likely to be maintained in the long term if rewards become available less immediately, and less regularly (Skinner 1974), or when reinforcers are secondary, that is, when behaviour is strengthened by something that leads to another gain (McLeod 2015). This supports the suggested shift from immediate, tangible incentives towards less-immediate, less-tangible incentives in biodiversity conservation, and increasingly towards people's sense that their own quality of life and freedoms as defined by the Capability Approach (Sen 2000) are bound up with preservation of biodiversity.

Figure 3: Shift from tangible to intangible reinforcers over time



Source: Phadima, Memela and Land

The CAMPFIRE Programme run in Zimbabwe by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (1994) showed that failure to shift to intangible incentives can negatively affect an intervention. While the CAMPFIRE Programme provided incentives such as funding for schools, it failed to provide intangible incentives and development of people's agency in empowering local communities to manage their natural resources. In this situation, communities remained passive recipients of the incentives, acting as spectators instead of participants in processes that affected them.

At the turn of the last century, Emerton (1999) proposed steps towards community education for biodiversity conservation, starting with describing the resource and socio-economic contexts of a community, and ending with implementing incentive schemes. She suggested an ongoing circular process of selecting and implementing incentives, with continual reviewing and redesigning of the plan for education and incentives. This continual cycle of implementation, review and adaptation still seems ideal where the aim is to ensure reflective co-learning, and a shift in a planned and consultative way from short-term, immediate tangible

incentives towards long-term, intangible and 'deeper' incentives and, in terms of the Capability Approach (Sen 2000), the enjoyment of independence and freedoms associated with biodiversity conservation.

The way forward

Unquestionably, there is a healthy conceptual shift from programmes based on externally determined conservation goals and time limits towards programmes that are authentically participatory, are orientated to long-term processes, co-learning and critical reading of reality, and that entail development of the agency of communities and sustainability.

However, to ensure that a community education initiative starts well, it is important to win the confidence of politicians, officials and elites to support, or at least tolerate, effective forms of participation of rural, underprivileged people in development (Muhumuza & Balkwill 2013). The ideal conceptual approach is to adopt a process that speaks to acknowledgement of existing local stakeholders and authority, while bearing in mind that knowledge and detailed insight of the myriad contextual details of any community lie within the minds of its ordinary members. At the core of this fully participatory approach is interaction with all stakeholders and involvement of ordinary community members in all decisions affecting them, free from intimidation from powerful local community members, or dictates as to what appropriate incentives should be for ordinary community members (see Figure 2). Emerging African civil society organisations (Nelson et al. 2016) may well be a positive new source of energy in ensuring that ordinary community members are involved in co-learning, and that they become aware of and more likely to exercise their rights, as they did in the Wild Coast communities versus Shell instance described above. Increased cooperation between ordinary community members and civil society may well ensure that hitherto disadvantaged South Africans find that their voices can be heard, that benefits and incentives are transparently and equably shared, and that opportunities for ordinary community members to develop their critical understanding of biodiversity issues in their areas are maximised.

Obviously, extension workers and educators working with the conceptual model shown in Figure 2 should be aware of, and understand as far as possible, the social, political and economic dynamics of the community with which they are working. The approach to gaining and understanding these issues needs to be methodical, from the initial phases of information-gathering and information-sharing, and establishing and understanding the dynamics and interrelatedness of variables, through the analysis of information and exploration of incentives and their implications for communities and the development of their understanding of biodiversity conservation, to the final mutual identification of

appropriate community education projects for conservation and the benchmarks against which they will be measured.

Throughout these processes, educators and conservation extension workers need to acknowledge that participatory processes are as important as their outcomes, and these should be allowed to unfold fully in order for their potential benefit to be realised. Regrettably, many conservation initiatives remain formulaic in their approach, based on rigid, prescriptive protocols and on tangible incentives such as job creation. For instance, the KZN BDS has been able to increase the area of stewardship estate (land) under conservation, but participation remains mainly elitist with local traditional authorities often determining how representation is constituted and, at times, by whom within the community. This status is a result of a myriad of issues, which include the need for implementing agents to adhere to annual performance cycles that leave little space for protracted community engagement, and the need to speedily show value for money where donor funds have to be invested within relatively short time frames. There is also the unfortunate burden on officials working for state institutions to rush to increase the land area under conservation within tight time frames and without consideration of the opportunities for community learning and the development of critical consciousness and agency on the part of community members. The implications of all of these issues require further research.

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Learning democracy in a social movement in times of COVID-19[1]

Shirley Walters

Abstract

What does 'learning democracy' mean within a social movement in times of COVID-19? This research question is pursued through investigating democratic practices as an imbedded activist researcher within Cape Town Together (CTT). This is a new social movement founded in response to COVID-19 in Cape Town in March 2020. Learning democracy within CTT is referenced back to a study of democratic educational practices in anti-apartheid movements of the 1980s in Cape Town, which helps place it in historical context. While CTT is a modest response to COVID-19, in which an alternative bottom-up approach to the pandemic is enacted, the members are asking themselves how they can use the experiences of CTT relationship-building across the islands of the divided city in order to get ready for the next crisis and the one after that, be it related to health, water, air, fire, gender-based violence (GBV) or poverty. There is a strong sense that building respectful relationships, in a non-affiliated way, which value social solidarity across vastly discrepant geographic, race, sex-gender, class and power divides, is central to 'learning democracy' both for the pragmatic 'now' and into the utopian future. CTT's values and organising practices broadly align with the 'feminisation of politics', and this experience may contribute to an inclusive movement for feminist ecopolitics.

1 I wish to acknowledge very helpful feedback on earlier drafts from Astrid von Kotze, Leanne Brady, Thoko Madonko, Anna James and Taryn Perreira Kaplan.

Introduction

A glimpse into the inside workings of two Community Action Networks (CANs), which are part of a network of 170 CANs of CTT, sets the scene for learning democracy through action during the COVID-19 pandemic across islands of extreme poverty and wealth.

> *A critical dimension of democratic practice is identifying the workings of accountability. One of the co-learning sessions of Cape Town Together (CTT) was on 'organising'. There were 48 participants on this particular Zoom call. One person asked how accountability works in the Community Action Networks (CANs).*
>
> *Each CAN had a system of reporting to its own membership base. In Newlands we had a WhatsApp group of between 80–100 members. Two, three or four coordinators (this varied at different times) were the conduit for decision-making and communications – these were people who stepped up to volunteer. There was a WhatsApp group for discussion on issues and another one for 'update' reporting. There was also a dedicated Newlands/Philippi WhatsApp group for taking decisions on actions. The dynamics between a well-resourced CAN which did the fundraising work and the 'recipient' CAN which did the distribution of the food, clothes, sanitisers, etc., was delicate. The commitment to 'social solidarity' rather than 'charity' was always in tension. Most of the mainly white, middle-class members of Newlands CAN may have been more familiar acting within a 'charity' framework, which is a top-down form of assistance, than one of 'solidarity', which is born out of a recreated sense of shared destiny.*
>
> *One of the ways that helped us to work towards relationships of solidarity rather than charity (a key principle of CTT) was when we began to use an online platform, Common Change, for managing and distributing funds. This is an NPO [non-profit organisation] that helps communities and groups to give collaboratively and manage democratically. Three representatives from each of the Newlands and the Philippi CANs manage the account. By taking accountability to heart, particularly in connection with funds, some level of trust was built between the two groups. This then allowed quick decisions to be taken in relation to emergencies that arose, relating for example to gender-based violence or fires which destroyed homes. Managing accountability in the virtual environment was new for all of us.*
>
> *On the Common Change platform, we were six women: three black and three white; they ranged in age from early twenties to early seventies; their education levels varied greatly as did their experience in community organising. The white members were from a middle-class suburb*

> *and [the] black members from poor and working-class communities. This replicated the racialised, classed, divided apartheid city of Cape Town. Navigating these differences amongst us took commitment to ongoing discussion through careful telephonic, Zoom or WhatsApp conversations, to check that we were understanding one another. While there were moments of tension, frustration and difference of opinion, on the whole, commitment to the task at hand overrode these. In addition, the commitment to enact 'social solidarity', as one of CTT's principles, was critical. We have not met one another physically and we know little about one another's histories or politics – so reference to a common set of CTT principles was essential.*

The CTT network (or as I will argue 'social movement') is the case study for an exploration of 'learning democracy' in this contemporary COVID-19 period. CTT was formed as the COVID-19 pandemic was emerging in South Africa in mid-March 2020. Within two months, there were 160 self-organising CANs with 18 000 signed-up members from across greater Cape Town as part of the network. The CANs exist across the range of Cape Town's spatially separated, extremely unequal neighbourhoods.

The chapter begins with a discussion of social movement learning to provide a framework for exploring 'learning democracy' within CTT. But, first, a short description of the research approach.

Research approach

Using CTT as an exploratory case study, I focus particularly on 'learning democracy'. As Yin (in Rule & John 2011: 4) states: 'A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. An exploratory case study examines a phenomenon which can lay the basis for further cognate studies.

I draw on my experience as an imbedded activist researcher in the new CTT social movement. I am a co-convener of one of the CANs, the Newlands CAN, within CTT. In this capacity, I not only participate in the specific CAN, but also participate in the general CTT Administrative WhatsApp Group and in various CTT general activities.

Since CTT's formation, I have been collecting local media reports, reviewing literature (grey and otherwise), attending webinars, participating in local actions and debating with other scholar–activists, in order to deepen understandings of the COVID-19 crisis and CTT's responses to it. Six CTT activists engaged in a webinar based on a draft of this paper, providing excellent feedback. There is an

active CTT Facebook page which holds the history of much of the action and debates. This is an important source of additional data, as are conversations with key informants within CTT. I have analysed the CTT Administrative WhatsApp conversations over a two-month period to obtain a 'slice of life' of actions and concerns.

I will reference a study of education for democratic participation from the social movements of the 1980s (Walters 1989) and remember practices of popular education in the struggles for an alternative South Africa (Luckett, Walters & Von Kotze 2017). Through these processes, I will draw out insights for the praxis of 'learning democracy' in times of COVID-19.

I am cognisant of the limitations of my research into learning democracy in the CTT, which is a complex, multidimensional social movement with different CANs that draw on various local organising traditions. I was not able to explore these in depth. In addition, CTT is a relatively new and evolving movement which is continually adapting and changing. My hope is, however, that this study will lay the basis for future cognate studies.

Social movement learning

Social movement learning as a concept and area of research has taken off in the last 20 years. As Kuk and Tarlau (2020) argue, this has occurred through the confluence of popular education and social movement studies into social movement learning. A broad definition of social movements is: 'networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities' (Diani in Kuk & Tarlau 2020: 591). It is the interactions of participants that lead to common action and necessitate learning from one another informally or in more structured programmes.

Welton (in Martin 1999: 9) identifies three general characteristics of social movements: they articulate a collective identity, which means that their members subscribe to a cause that is common and is expressed collectively in the movement; they exist in an antagonistic relation to an opposed group or interest; they have a normative orientation, which means that they embody a mobilising ethic, moral code or set of beliefs that reflect shared values and purposes.

In many instances, social movements comprise various smaller, interdependent organisational structures that are working towards a particular social goal. The social movement, in turn, may well form a coalition with other social movements in order to create a united front so as to oppose an issue or promote an idea. Through participation in social movements, people are prepared for change or resistance. Their moral or counter-hegemonic work may become the common

sense of an era. As Martin (1999: 10) states: '[I]n this sense social movements are intrinsically educative both for the participants and for the broader society'.

Eyerman and Jamison (1991: 62) argue that social movements are 'at once conditioned by the historical contexts in which they emerge, their particular time and place, and, in turn, affect that context through their cognitive and political praxis'. To understand the workings of particular social movements, you therefore have to locate them quite particularly within their broader socio-economic–political contexts.

While it is essential to acknowledge the important influence of the broader context on the internal processes within organisations, it is difficult to demonstrate this dialectical relationship. A way which proved useful in my earlier study (Walters 1989) was through the application of democratic theories as analytical tools. Democratic theories pertain to organisational cultures, which include the ways power relations are structured both on a micro level and in the broader structuring of society. Various interpretations of the concepts of *accountability* and *authority*, which are indicative of power relations, were found to be critical differential elements within democratic theories at play within organisations and movements.

Other distinctive and useful elements of internal organisational practices (including approaches to learning and education within organisations) to be used as probes to understand democratic praxis are:

- **Interpretations of 'action':** By analysing these, it is possible to identify how values and priorities play out in practice.
- **Understandings of 'knowledge':** Who has it, who does not, and how is it produced, valued and disseminated? This shines light on democratic theories at play.
- **Attitudes to 'critical reflexivity':** These signal the type of democratic culture that is valued.

Together, insights gained from using these probes help describe the praxis of democracy, and I will use them in the description and analysis of the case study.

Social movement learning includes both learning by people who are participants in social movements, and learning by people outside of social movements through the impact they make (Hall & Clover 2005). Learning in a movement occurs through the action which constitutes the movement. It occurs incidentally through participation and through intentional educational interventions. The educational and organisational practices are intertwined. As Freire (in Horton & Freire 1990) states, it occurs *before*, *during* and *after* organising.

The cultural, sex-gender, class, and ethnic locations of the individuals or groups involved shape the educational and organisational practices, just as they are

shaped by the particular historical conjuncture. An intersectional analysis is essential; however, apart from a rather blunt acknowledgement of how social class, race, sex-gender, geography and age inevitably impacted social relations, a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter.

In order to explore what 'learning democracy' may mean within social movements, a brief discussion follows on different understandings of 'participatory democracy'.

Participatory democracy

'Participatory democracy' is, in broad terms, the primary democratic theory referenced by many social movements. It subsumes 'direct', 'real', 'communitarian' or 'people's democracy'. Pateman (1970) explains that the participatory theory of democracy is built around the assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another. Representation is not considered sufficient to ensure that democracy is operative. Maximum participation by all people is the goal, and in order to achieve this, education and training for democracy must take place. It is understood that the attitudes, capabilities and qualities required can be developed through the process of participation itself. The major function of participation is, therefore, an educative one. Participation also has an integrative effect, as it helps in the acceptance of collective decisions.

Within the broad ambit of participatory democracy, there are various interpretations of the importance of the 'political project' versus the 'educational project', with Holst (in Kuk & Tarlau 2020: 9), for example, identifying differences between 'socialists' and 'radical pluralists'. Some social movements are established as part of a project for revolutionary transformation of society – for example, as part of a liberation movement, there is ambition to overthrow a government where political ends may justify the means. Other social movements may be pressure groups designed to win reforms and to hold governments accountable, be it around housing, water or health. In addition, depending on the context, the 'revolutionary' or 'reformist' orientations of social movements may shift over time.

Within many social movements, including among feminists who argue that the personal is political, there are those who argue that the ends do not justify the means and that means and ends are equally important, with education in action being central.

Liberal democracy, as distinct from participatory democracy, refers to a political method, with a key element being the election of leaders. Elections are crucial for the exercise of control by members over leaders. Participation for the majority is in the choice of decision-makers. Certain conditions are required for the democratic system to remain stable. While this theory of democracy has gained

widespread support, it also has many critics who point to its limitations, including its elitism. There are a number of theorists on the Left who argue that liberal democracies legitimise capitalist inequalities and are the natural system of governance of neoliberal capitalism. As argued by Bello (in Cock 2018: 225): '[T]hey promote rather than restrain the savage forces of capital accumulation that lead to ever greater levels of inequality and poverty.'

Supporters of participatory democracy criticise ritualistic forms of participation, calling instead for 'real democracy' in order to allow for more informed decisions. Participation is seen to have positive effects on citizens, and spaces of participation, like social movements, become 'schools of democracy'. Social movements during the 1970s and 1980s insisted on the legitimacy of participatory democracy. They promoted collective decision-making, which was referred to variously as communitarian, populist, strong, direct or grassroots democracy.

In the 1990s, the global protests against austerity developed new organisational forms to promote alternative forms of democracy. As della Porta (2012) elaborates, these ideas emerged from the Zapatistas in Mexico, and others, to challenge representative and majoritarian models. These approaches that combined participatory and deliberative qualities – a communicative process based on reason that could transform individual preferences and prioritise the public good – influenced the global justice movement. For example, the World Social Forum defined itself as an 'open meeting place' exempting only political parties and those advocating racist ideas or using terrorist means. Production and exchange of knowledge are emphasised with an openness towards 'the others'. The development of inclusive arenas for the creation of knowledge emerged as a main aspiration in the social-forum process.

Inspired by the deliberative and participatory model of democracy of the global justice movement, anti-austerity protests introduced new conceptions of participation from below, combined with efforts to create egalitarian, inclusive public spheres. As Rubio-Pueyo (2017) states, the assemblies held as part of the occupations in Spain were massive, transparent exercises in direct democracy.

As a result of widespread disillusionment with operations of contemporary political and economic structures in many countries, participants within social movements are experimenting with participatory and deliberative forms of democracy. They are places for information exchange, reciprocal learning, individual socialisation, and knowledge-building. They are also pre-figurative spaces to experiment with new models of society where people can participate fully in the social, economic and political spheres.

In summary, the meaning of democracy, including participatory democracy, is negotiated and contested and cannot be extracted from its historical context. Within the history of civil society organisations, including social movements, the ideological struggle over the theory and practice of democracy is alive and well.

The democratic assumptions underpinning the theories and practices within organisations also illuminate assumptions about society and its transformation. As we have seen, there are vibrant movements in many parts of the world that are experimenting with new forms of participatory democracy – the CTT can be placed within this broader context.

In attempting to identify the praxis of participatory democracy, as mentioned above it is useful to use the following as probes: authority, accountability, action, knowledge, and critical reflexivity. I turn now to the presentation of CTT as a contemporary case using these probes.

CTT

CTT was formed as the COVID-19 pandemic was emerging in South Africa in mid-March 2020. A group of health practitioners, activists and community organisers identified the need for rapid, community-led, mutual aid responses (Van Ryneveld, Whyle & Brady 2020): an organisational structure that would mirror the Coronavirus – adaptable, invasive, quick-footed. Like the virus, it had to bridge the 'city's islands' of wealth and poverty. The envisioned structure had elements of the Gramscian notion of 'building the new in the womb of the old' (Gramsci 1971: 207).

The group recognised that COVID-19 combined with the lockdown would have serious impacts on every family, in every community, and that especially the most vulnerable people from poor and working-class homes would struggle. The group began by putting together an online toolkit encouraging people to organise into a network of autonomous, self-organised, neighbourhood-level CANs. The underlying premise was that many of the challenges arising from COVID-19 – both epidemiological and social – were being responded to at the neighbourhood level (Van Ryneveld et al. 2020: 2).

Within two months, there were 160 self-organising CANs with 18 000 signed-up members from across greater Cape Town as part of the network. The CANs exist across the range of Cape Town's extremely unequal neighbourhoods. As mentioned, CANs have grown according to the different histories and conditions of their areas. In some cases, pre-existing neighbourhood structures, such as street committees, faith-based groups, or residents' associations, work alongside or together with the CAN. There are multiple opportunities for CANs to converge around specific nodes in the network, offering spaces to share resources and knowledge and to reflect and debrief on their experiences. There are also a number of thematic CANs working on resolving cross-cutting concerns like building sustainable food systems. There are logistical teams doing fact-checking of health information, and designing materials. These are posted on the Facebook page or shared on WhatsApp for general use.

The structure is decentralised, non-hierarchical and self-organised, and all parts of the structure are autonomous. New thematic CANs grow organically in response to emerging needs, and old ones disintegrate as the energy of the group is needed elsewhere. There have been many challenges along the way, with different CANs operating differently and, sometimes, with difficulty. As some initiators say: 'The approach to organising is often met with confusion or suspicion, as it requires a leap of the imagination away from the hierarchical and highly-structured forms of organising that many are used to' (Van Ryneveld et al. 2020: 2).

The CANs are encouraged to form partnerships across socio-economic areas so that middle- and working-class communities mutually support one another. The philosophy which underlies the network is that this is not individual charity but one of working together in social solidarity – which is in our collective interest to keep one another healthy. Much of the organising has had to be virtual through the use of WhatsApp and other social media. Everyone works on a voluntary basis. There is cross-generational learning, as a CAN may have 18- to 80-year-olds working together. Besides learning how to fundraise, how to communicate within the CAN and across CANs, how to distribute the food and other goods, and how to continually plan and adapt to changing conditions, there are opportunities organised by CTT co-learning coordinators for learning across the network through weekly co-learning events using Zoom software.

The first emergency actions by the CANs were to respond to water, food and health crises. They mobilised food parcels and community kitchens on a wide scale. They were able to respond more quickly and with more agility than government. They also provided hygiene products like hand sanitisers and masks to help protect communities. The Newlands CAN, where I have been active, held various successful, virtual fundraisers in order to support our partner, Philippi CAN, in a working-class area about 20 km away. The community activists there arranged for distribution to the neediest families. While distributing food, they would also convey information relating to COVID-19 and GBV.

COVID-19 context

In South Africa, as in many countries of the world, COVID-19 is a crisis on a crisis. It is a health crisis on top of existing social, economic, environmental and political crises. The crises are all intertwined, as illustrated by COVID-19 being a zoonotic disease.

As a group of public health practitioners describe, every fault line is exposed: those with food security and those who go hungry; those with jobs and the unemployed; those with water and sanitation and those without; those who drive cars and those in crowded public transport; those in well-resourced schools with

small classes and those in overcrowded, under-resourced schools; those who use private healthcare and those who wait in long queues outside under-resourced rural and township clinics; those who have to stay with their abusive partners in confined spaces and those who can escape. There are people who stay in large houses, have food delivered and binge-watch Netflix. And there are many more people who have to try to social-distance with five people living in a one-room shack, and to maintain perfect hygiene where there is no running water and food is scarce.

On 27 March 2020, a hard lockdown was declared in South Africa to try to hold off the spread of the virus – and with that many people's lives were devastated. In less than a month, three million South Africans had lost their incomes and jobs, turning hunger from a problem into a crisis. Two of the estimated three million who lost their livelihoods were women. Inequalities along traditional lines of race, gender, occupation, earnings, location and education have all grown significantly. COVID-19 made it even more difficult for poor and working-class women to feed their families. An existent, unequal national situation has been made much worse.

Within the crisis, with the extent of injustices and inequalities being revealed for all to see, a new social awareness has arisen. There are many examples of acts of human solidarity. One example is CTT (Silwana 2020; Whyle, Van Ryneveld, Brady et al. 2020).

CTT as a social movement

CTT is referred to as a 'network' but has the characteristics of a social movement. As mentioned earlier, a social movement articulates a collective identity in relation to an immediate response. It builds on networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities. Social movements have a normative orientation, which means that they embody a mobilising ethic, moral code or set of beliefs which reflects shared values and purposes. CTT's collective identity relates to COVID-19. It is reactive and is sustained by relationships to health and socio-economic challenges arising from the pandemic. While a common feature of much social movement activity is its oppositional nature, in this case CTT is not in principle opposing responses to the pandemic but is working with others to contain the fallout from the pandemic. It is, however, based on bottom-up, community-based approaches as an alternative to perceived 'top-down' strategies by much of government.

CTT does have a mobilising ethical and moral code, which is reflected in various communications and ways of working. CTT encourages people to promote, inspire and support people in local communities in order to organise around

local challenges while sharing ideas, experiences, skills and resources. Collective action occurs through building relationships of solidarity within communities and across the city. The ten suggested ways of working in each CAN are: network; build solidarity; self-organise; collaborate; be inclusive; encourage initiative; move at the speed of trust; sustain energy; share good information; and work safely (CTT 2020). While social movements are intrinsically educative both for the participants and for broader society, initiators of CTT built learning and education into the organising culture from the beginning.

Democracy in CTT

On the CTT Facebook page, there is a caveat that points to the deliberately evolving nature of the network and its emphasis on participatory democracy (which includes 'direct' democracy) and equality:

> *…it is decentralized, with a horizontal structure that operates without bureaucracies. What may seem as chaotic, however, reveals itself as direct democracy, as each member can speak for her/himself, and decisions are made on the basis of dialogue and consensus. … In signing up to CTT members are signing up to the broad working principles which highlight the decentralized, non-hierarchical structure, where CANs are autonomous, while subscribing to principles of solidarity, collaboration, inclusiveness, building trust through building relationships. Collective decision-making is valued where 'finding consensus' means that nobody strongly disagrees with an idea or direction taken. 'We move at the speed of trust through communication, good faith and genuine connection.' (CTT 2020)*

There is a wide range of CANs which have different resource bases in terms of community-organising experience, socio-economic conditions, political histories and cultural practices. Each CAN has its own dynamics and organisational practices. These differences come through in the co-learning sessions, where representatives from CANs come together and share experiences and information around a particular topic.

Accountability

A critical dimension of democratic practice is identifying the workings of accountability – this signals where influence and power lie within the network. In one co-learning session on 'organising', a person asked how accountability works in the CANS. This was not debated at length but responses are illustrative of the different practices. Some use: regular newsletters to update members; weekly Zoom meetings; and regular update reports on the CAN WhatsApp Group. Some stressed the importance of accountability to the community that is served, through equitable and fair processes used to distribute to those most in need. The vignette of accountability within the Newlands and Philippi CANs partnership presented earlier, is apposite to this discussion.

Accountability to political parties, movements or ideologies, which was so central to South African organising in the 1980s, is not a major issue. In general, many CANs are suspicious of political parties and organise in non-affiliated ways – in some areas, this is more difficult than others. Given that the central focus of CTT is COVID-19, relationships with the Department of Health are important. Particularly for individuals working both in the department and within the CANs, there have been moments of tension in terms of accountability. In our CAN, we were pleased to have the CTT principles to use as our lodestar, and we therefore developed resonating principles for our own functioning. This proved useful when early on we had to 'call in' racist and xenophobic utterances on the WhatsApp Group. Moves to 'decolonise solidarity' were essential (Walters & Butterwick 2017) – unsurprisingly. Given the racialised, sexist and colonial past, racism, classism, sexism and xenophobia hover uneasily and require attention.

The diversity and differentiated nature of CTT's autonomous structures made taking a common stand on politically complex issues difficult. An example of this was a house occupation in an upmarket suburb by a 'queer activist collective' which was advocating for safer and affordable housing for queer people (Mafolo 2020). This widely publicised action was hotly debated on the CTT Administrative WhatsApp Group. Some saw this as a legitimate action which highlighted the unacceptable housing inequality and injustice across the city. Another person argued that, in their community, they could not condone lawlessness – they had seen the dramatic results of people taking the law into their own hands. Others voiced the view that 'the time has come for us to pick sides in the struggle'. Another showed empathy with the collective when she said. 'I have lived in an informal settlement – I know what it's like to be homeless'. In the end, there was a statement which captured the general sentiment: 'I don't see how a joint statement can come from a group of autonomous CANs [which] do not agree on the matter. For example, in my CAN, I can promise there will not be agreement on this topic.' With there being strong disagreement on action, the adopted consensus principle stood, which meant that, after discussion and shared deliberations, a decision could not be taken.

Accountability is to do with authority – who has authority to make decisions and who gives people the authority? Within the CANs, authority rests with the members. There is no election process for coordinators or administrators. They step forward as volunteers and step back when they do not have the time and space to continue. De facto authority for daily operations falls to the coordinators, who keep the members updated. If members are dissatisfied with the coordinators, then they may call them in and make changes; or they 'vote with their feet'. Members need to trust the coordinators or they will withdraw participation; leadership needs to engage and report back regularly to keep that trust. The principle of CTT about 'moving at the pace of trust' is wise. One of the biggest challenges was to keep energies up in the CAN, as, after the first three to four months of the pandemic, fatigue set in. People were wanting to get on with their own lives.

In the central 'connecting CAN' in CTT, the same processes seem to be in play. The majority of the members of CTT are women who, as a generalisation, tend to be collaborative rather than competitive. They are used to negotiating with patriarchal power. There is a recognition that feminist collaborative leadership is necessary where relationship-building and community maintenance are vital.

What does 'action' include within CTT?

By understanding what people spend their time doing, we get a more accurate picture of the priorities of a movement. Social movements constitute themselves through action. What actions does CTT engage in and in what way is CTT a social justice movement?

In order to answer these questions, I have analysed the stream of posts on the CTT Administrative WhatsApp Group over an eight-week period from 24 August 2020 to 26 October 2020. The timing was random. I developed categories of actions from the analysis. These are porous and some actions could inhabit more than one category. The purpose of this was to have a more detailed understanding of what 'action' means within CTT – it is presented as illustrative rather than categorical.

In summary, the action includes starting, running, or engaging in:

- **Service delivery**: for example community kitchens and other food distribution; GBV education and activism; provision of information and health products; and planning food gardens.
- **Relational/care-work** (including both intra- and extra-organisational relationships): for example maintaining relationships with other organisations in the neighbourhood; relating to politicians; relating to government at different levels; working with another CAN in the short and long term; building relationships within CTT through social bike rides, through Zoom processes of getting to know one another, by warning others about scams, by sharing knowledge of resources, through CANs meeting one another physically on a picnic, by co-creating a video and 'Cook book', and by expressing appreciation; enabling participation through data provision; challenging hierarchies of knowledge through co-learning events; and sharing experiences.
- **Reflective practices**: for example regular reflective articles in the popular media on aspects of CTT work; a webinar on collecting data for community-based research; identifying activists as 'professors of the street' as they gather and disseminate community data; and academic papers theorising lessons from the CTT experience.
- **Sharing information**: for example on funding opportunities, homelessness, gangsterism, Alzheimer's or land occupation, mental-health support facilities and other services. (A lot of information was gathered and turned into manuals or toolkits.)

- **Communicating/mobilising**: for example campaigning against government approaches or decisions; highlighting conditions of water and sanitation; advocacy relating to GBV; regular articles in local and national newspapers; radio interviews; and the use of Facebook and WhatsApp to share information, communicate and mobilise.
- **Exploring alternative futures**: for example webinars on a Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG), the circular economy, and alternative food systems; class action relating to the hunger crisis; a project on alternative approaches to food security; and GBV-awareness campaigns.
- **Education/learning**: for example regular co-learning events; webinars on urban water harvesting and water solutions; mapping of neighbourhoods; the Food Growers WhatsApp Group; experiential learning through leading, running community kitchens, fundraising, distributing food, mobilising communities, participating in projects, etc.; educating people about COVID-19 protocols and GBV; and a first-aid workshop.

It is interesting to note the combination of organisational, political and pedagogical work that makes up the 'action' of CTT. The working principles are clearly visible in analysis of the actions, with particular emphasis on inclusion of people across class, education, and geography. The means and ends of organising are both important. The amount of relational, care-work reflects the feminist sensibilities at play. In one of the interchanges about the politics of the work, relating to 'charity' or 'solidarity', the point was made that a situation may demand 'charity' responses, but how these are undertaken is critical, as long-term respectful relationships are key for building social fabric. The set of values and attitudes broadly aligns with the 'feminisation of politics' (Rubio-Pueyo 2017: 13). In conversation with members of the original catalyst group, there was an active choice to counter the aggressive, toxic cultures of some other social movements they had been part of, where, for example, publicly 'calling people out' for perceived 'incorrect' behaviour was the norm. Building a more inclusive-movement culture has been nurtured.

Critical reflection and theorising are integral to the actions – for example, one of the co-learning sessions was on 'democracy in the CANs'. Three different CANs shared their experiences and insights and I was asked to reflect back, drawing on experiences from now and in the past. This was a common format where contextual, experiential and conceptual knowledge is braided together (Cooper 2020).

In addition, the strong emphasis on experiential learning and structured educational interventions reflects the participatory, democratic valorisation of learning and education as integral to the work. The search for alternative ways of organising society is also significant, as are the many acts of radical generosity with a social justice orientation. A manifestation of the action infused with CTT values is captured in a collective publication, *DALA kitchen: More than a cookbook* (Whyle, Van Ryneveld & Brady 2020) It has recipes for cooking and for organising while documenting, reflecting on and learning from the 'magical chaos' of CTT.

Learning democracy in a social movement in times of COVID-19

On the CTT website (CTT 2020), Arundhati Roy is quoted:

> *Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it (Roy 2020).*

Roy (2020) suggests that the multiple crises faced by people and planet provide opportunities for radical hope. In reference to the climate crisis, Cock (2018: 210) writes: 'The climate crisis presents us with a historic opportunity because to solve it we need radical transformative change in how we produce, consume and organize our lives.' She advocates building a 'new' form of socialism that is democratic, ecological, ethical and feminist. The stakes are high – many citizens are disillusioned with the lack of capacity and political will of governments and are wanting to 'imagine their world anew'.

Studies of social movements have pointed to the important role that social movements play in generating new knowledge. Choudry (2015: 9) argues that learning through activism 'contributes to the intellectual work that takes place within social movements'. Eyerman and Jamison (1991: 165) have argued that 'social movement activists develop new ideas that are fundamental to broader processes of human creativity', and that a crucial way in which this new knowledge is produced is by 'recombining or connecting previously separate types of knowledge with each other' (Eyerman & Jamison 1991: 59). The case study of CTT is suggestive of this.

Learning and education within a social movement is dynamic. It is integral to the organising and the politics of the movement. Fenwick's (2010) argument is helpful: real learning processes are of enormous complexity; they are hybrid, indeterminate, deal with fluid boundaries and messy objects, and their status of formalisation cannot be described through static and more or less subjective definitions of informal, non-formal and formal learning. Indeed, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) substitutes 'domains or containers' of knowledge with 'relational networks'. An actor-network sensibility understands knowledge to be generated through relational strategies and through networks, and to be performed through inanimate as well as animate beings in precarious arrangements (Fenwick & Edwards 2013: 56). In ANT, learning is assumed to be a materialising assemblage, and not a cognitive achievement or way of interacting. As Fenwick and Edwards (2013: 54) assert, teaching is not simply about the relationships between humans but about the networks of humans and things through which

teaching and learning are translated and enacted as such. Learning democracy in times of COVID-19 illustrates this clearly – C-19 is an actor in the story, and also a teacher.

This and related approaches (Michelson 2015: 126) see knowledge as of the body as well as of the mind; theory cannot be separated from practice; the knower and the known occupy a shared epistemic plane; and the self and the environment are mutually constituted through situated activity, with knowledge contained within the experience itself. This implies that what a person or a collective learns is infused with the historical, race, class, sex-gender and age relations of the time and place. Nothing is neutral, nothing is universally the same for everyone. Learning democracy within social movements occurs in the action.

Schugurensky (2010: 10) points to the pedagogical dimension of participatory democracy. Historically, there have been many references to the educational effect of participation. However, he says, we have limited empirical evidence of the nature and extent of the educative effect because research on this is still in its infancy. One study by Berry et al. (in Schugurensky 2010: 10) concluded that, when participatory democracy provides opportunities for meaningful involvement in politics where citizens make decisions about the allocation of goods and services in their neighbourhoods, they become more knowledgeable, more tolerant, more efficacious, and more confident. Other studies found participants acquired a variety of instrumental and political skills, from budgeting to accounting, to collective planning and decision-making, and gained important new values and worldviews. In yet another, participants experienced some learning and change in relation to knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and practices. Ngwane (2021: xiv) says of shack dwellers: [T]hrough providing for their communities, [they] 'change not only their circumstances, but also themselves. They learn to see themselves differently, becoming people who organise and provide services for their new communities.' While a study has not been done of what members of CTT have learnt through their participation, from the data presented so far it is possible to identify contours of what they learnt or needed to learn during COVID-19.

As mentioned previously, democratic theory pertains to the way relationships are structured both on a micro level and in the broader structuring of society. Direct democracy, as a form of participatory democracy, is both pragmatic and utopian. Its aim is to enable maximum participation by everyone and to prefigure alternative ways of governing society. It is inclusive and open, encouraging all voices to be heard. The means and the ends are equally important.

CTT is operating in a 'city of islands' of extremes of poverty and wealth, in a time of multiple crises. It has to construct bridges between the islands which enable collective and adaptable responses to the pandemic that challenge the racialised, classed, sex-gendered ways in which the city is experienced by the majority. This has to be done, for the most part, virtually, as COVID-19 is contained through

physical distancing, wearing masks, and sanitising. For four months, the hard lockdown meant that the streets were empty and that all organising had to be done remotely. The first thing most members had to do, in order to participate, was to learn to use WhatsApp more effectively and to use Zoom for virtual meetings and for teaching/learning. As data is expensive, ways were worked out early on to ensure funding for data was available for those who needed it. Learning was self-directed and through peer learning, with the older members amongst us pleased to be assisted by younger members. There is constant exploration of more innovative ways to use the technologies, which are also constantly mutating. Learning democracy within times of COVID-19 embraces technologies to learn and organise in new ways.

Working with people across vast differences of experience, history, politics and economics was possible because the immediacy of the local action was paramount. We were united around a common purpose, that is, a socio-economic and health crisis. Frictions around racialised, sex-gendered or class identities were absorbed, to possibly be confronted later. Different members in the groups had different attributes – volunteers stepped forward to take the lead in areas where they were more experienced, others learnt by following the leader, whether it was setting up, making and distributing food in various ways, fundraising or running a GBV campaign. We were learning through relational strategies, and knowledge was imbedded within action.

Grappling with the notion of 'working in solidarity rather than for charity' challenged understandings of ways of working. In some instances, those from poorer communities were confident about what they needed and wanted and were able to articulate this to the more resourced partners; in other instances, these relationships were more fraught. In mainly middle-class communities, charity as a top-down form of assistance is perhaps more common than solidarity which is born out of a recreated sense of shared destiny – assessing how far CTT's approach has dented this reality requires further research.

The value of inclusivity was also carried through both in responding to data inequality and in challenging contemporary knowledge hierarchies. This is demonstrated in the co-learning sessions, and in the leadership by CANs of different projects, including the regular writing of reflective articles in the media. Cooper (2020: 71) very usefully analyses the knowledge practices within worker education. She highlights the importance of Gramsci's theorisation of the role of organic intellectuals in forging relationships between 'common sense' and 'good sense' – a process which helps transform popular knowledge (common sense) into 'good sense' where knowledge is systematised towards coherence and authority.

Her description, particularly of knowledge use in trade union organisational activity, echoes experiences in CTT. In meetings, workers' experiences were the more important resources drawn upon. As she says:

> *...there was dialectical movement between different forms of knowledge, but with stronger emphasis on making connections between different participants' experiences in order to generate new understandings. 'Experience' was recontextualised via a number of strategies including sharing and comparing; reflecting critically on those experiences in the light of information brought from outside workers' immediate experience; and making connections in order to see 'the bigger picture' (Cooper 2020: 78).*

Rather than relying on those with formal expert knowledge, meetings were places where more experienced members carried 'epistemological authority', bringing their valuable experience into the discussion.

Within CTT, an example of this is the regular co-learning, online events which are structured around particular problems or issues with which CANs are concerned. CANs are encouraged to share their experiences and thinking about the particular issue. Another member (or an ally of the movement) with more 'epistemological authority' on the subject is invited to reflect back and add any additional perspectives. Through these processes, new knowledge is co-constructed and fed back into the CANs and the movement as a whole.

Some of this knowledge is disseminated by members of CANs who take on roles of collecting social data in order to gather local intelligence for the health system. They are sometimes referred to as 'professors of the street' (Walters 2021; Whyle et al. 2020). While gathering data, they also educate people about COVID-19, spreading updated information about the pandemic or about related issues like GBV.

As stated above, direct democracy is both pragmatic and utopian. It is concerned with imagining 'another world'. This occurs both through the experiences of horizontal, non-authoritarian ways of organising, and also through thinking deeply about alternatives. Deliberations on forward-thinking issues like alternative food systems or the UBIG are held through webinars and connecting with other movements – these help members to follow Arundhati Roy's (2020) injunction to use a pandemic as a gateway between one world and the next. COVID-19 has illuminated how deeply implicated health, food, housing, energy, climate, economics and patriarchy are with one another.

In summary, insights for learning democracy within a social movement in times of COVID-19 include the following:

- Learning democracy occurs in action where new knowledge is co-created by braiding together experiential, cognitive and contextual knowledge.
- Learning is integral to the organising and the politics of the movement. It is not neutral but is infused with the historical, race, class, sex-gender and age relations of the time and place.

- The means and ends of organising are equally important, as democracy is learnt through its practice.
- Acting in social solidarity, across vastly discrepant geographic, race, sex-gender, class and power divides through building respectful relationships in non-aligned ways, is central to 'learning democracy' both for the pragmatic 'now' and into the utopian future.
- Participatory democracy occurs both through experiences of horizontal, non-authoritarian ways of organising, and also through thinking deeply about alternatives.
- Learning democracy includes constant exploration of more innovative ways to use and democratise technologies in order to enhance collective abilities to communicate and organise.
- Learning democracy connects ways of organising on a micro level and the broader structuring of society. While it is a political project, it is not affiliated to political parties.
- Organising during COVID-19 teaches that it is not useful to think of single-issue struggles, as health, housing, food, environment, patriarchy, economy, energy, racism, GBV, etc., are all interconnected. By keeping issues separate, we do not necessarily 'join the dots' to understand the root causes of the problems.

Looking forward

My main motive in this final section is essentially political, not theoretical – it is about imagining 'another world' and 'being prepared to fight for it'. The current COVID-19 pandemic is a clarion call to humanity to change how we live. As Oksala (2018: 231) states: '[T]he reason for calling capitalism into question today is no longer merely our exploitative social and economic relationships to other human beings but the immeasurable devastation we are causing to the non-human world.' CTT is one of many networks, movements and organisations around the world trying to prefigure a way of undertaking collective action that is more just, equal and respectful – and contributing to an inclusive movement for feminist ecopolitics.

The Writers CAN of CTT published an article on 'organising in a city of islands' (Mlungwana & Kramer 2020; Writers' CAN 2020). It notes that city-wide organising and solidarity are not well-established phenomena in Cape Town. It is clear from the article that the approach to CTT was deliberate and reflects a politics of direct democracy where a practice of solidarity, radical generosity and collective care are cultivated. There is a rejection of bureaucracy that leads to concentration of power, hierarchy and ossification, and an emphasis on hyper-local, interpersonal, mutual relationships both within and across the CANs. There is constant work 'to call people in' (as opposed to 'calling out' publicly). The CTT is concerned with imagining 'another world'. This occurs both through the experiences of horizontal,

non-authoritarian ways of organising, and also through thinking deeply about alternatives. There is a strong sense that building respectful relationships, in a non-affiliated way which values social solidarity, across vastly discrepant geographic, race, sex-gender, class and power divides, is central to 'learning democracy' both for the pragmatic 'now' and into the utopian future. This is a political project.

The discussion about 'politics' causes disquiet amongst some members of CTT. Feminists understand that 'the personal is political' but amongst others there is often a default understanding of politics as referring to party politics. Given that it was only 30 years ago that the liberation movements were unbanned in South Africa, the memories of those activist times for some members of CTT are relatively fresh. They were times when participatory democracy was encouraged in order to mobilise the masses; they were also times when political authority rightfully lay with the political movements in exile. There was a theoretical confidence amongst the Left of how to overthrow and 'capture the state' – the political project was clear. By the time the African National Congress (ANC) won state power in 1994, many of the mass-based organisations of the 1980s had been immobilised or absorbed into ANC structures, like that of the ANC Women's and Youth Leagues. Since then, many new social movements have grown up and developed, like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) which fought for AIDS treatment for millions who were HIV-positive, or the Fees Must Fall movement of university students who fought for equitable access to and the 'decolonising' of the universities, or Abahlali baseMjondolo, a shack dwellers' movement which campaigns against evictions and for public housing. The social movements, and other local grassroots formations (see, e.g. Ngwane 2021), have been mainly concerned with specific issues and not the challenging of state power.

While CTT is a modest response to COVID-19, where an alternative bottom-up approach to the pandemic is enacted, members are asking themselves how they can use the experiences of CTT relationship-building across the islands of the divided city to get ready for the next crisis and the one after that, be it related to health, water, air, fire, GBV or poverty. There is a strong sense that building respectful relationships, in a non-affiliated way, which value social solidarity, across vastly discrepant geographic, race, sex-gender, class and power divides, is central to 'learning democracy' both for the pragmatic 'now' and into the utopian future. CTT's values and organising practices broadly align with the 'feminisation of politics', and this experience can contribute to an inclusive movement for feminist ecopolitics. The question for those who aspire to ethical, ecofeminist, participatory democratic visions of the future is: 'How do we get from here to there'? As Horton and Freire (1990: 6) urge: '[W]e make the road by walking.'

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Higher education funding crisis and access: Student protests, UWC#FMF, and social movements

Anele Mdepa

Abstract

Inadequate government funding for higher education, a higher education institutional funding crisis, and students' individual financial crises provoked students in 2015 and 2016 to mobilise themselves to protest against fee increases. Propelled by the #FeesMustFall movement which emerged in 2015, student activists demanded free access to higher education and succeeded in securing increased National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding and a 'no fee increase' for 2015 and 2016. The rise of fallist movements such as the #FeesMustFall movement signified new forms of social movements, new ways of mobilisation, and new forms of social movement learning. This chapter focuses on the UWC#FMF movement which emerged at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to protest against the proposed 2015 fee increase prompted by the funding crisis in higher education.

Introduction

The government's policy to redress inequality and to transform higher education, is legislated. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training Act of 2013 are legislated policies that aim to promote an equitable society through the provision of higher education. The South African Constitution of 1996 outlines constitutional obligations that promote social justice by improving socio-economic rights and conditions of vulnerable citizens who were denied access to quality higher education during apartheid rule.

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training of 2013 acknowledges the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) commitment to progressively introduce free education for the poor in South African universities as resources become available (Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET] 2013b).

As the government developed the higher education sector after 1994, contradictions emerged between policy intentions and inadequate resource allocation for higher education institutions. Consequently, conflicts among government, management in higher education institutions and students prompted several student protests over many years.

Rebecca Hodes (2016: 140) describes the success of the South African government and higher education institutions' initiatives to expand access, as follows: '[B]etween 1994 and 2011, the number of students enrolled in higher education in South Africa almost doubled, increasing from 495 356 to 938 201'.

However, the increasing number of students placed a strain on universities' budgets. To meet the financial burden, universities were compelled to diversify their income from different sources such as government grants, student tuition fees and private income (Ministry of Education 2004).

The government's political and legislative mandate for higher education institutions to provide access to disadvantaged students created further challenges. According to Hodes (2016: 141):

> *In the third decade of South African democracy and a constitutional order that guaranteed the right 'to further education, which the state through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible', higher education became more expensive for students and their families.*

As student fees at South African higher education institutions increased over the years, access and persistence at universities were challenging for many students. Limited NSFAS funding could not meet the financial needs of all disadvantaged

students. Consequently, registered students accumulated debt. In addition, political and financial pressure was placed on higher education institutions to allow access to indigent students who could not afford the fees.

Government's inadequate funding for institutional capacities to meet the needs of the increasing university student intake, and limited financial support for disadvantaged students, created an institutional funding crisis for many higher education institutions. Faced with mounting institutional debt, public higher education institutions were compelled to increase student fees. However, the announcement of a fee increase in 2015 ignited student activism and prompted the formation of the #FMF movements. Widespread #FMF student protests occurred across the country, continuing into 2016. Like their peers in the #FMF movement, the UWC#FMF activists were concerned about the increasing student fees at the institution and about accumulated debt resulting from the NSFAS loans that students could not reimburse.

This chapter sketches the higher education funding crisis and, drawing on a study of the UWC#FMF movement which emerged at the UWC during student protests in 2015, analyses this organisation as a social movement response to the funding crisis.

Higher education funding crisis: Implications for disadvantaged students' access

Contemporary crises related to access and higher education have their historical roots in colonial and apartheid policies and practices. The non-racial democratic government elected in 1994 undertook to address apartheid inequalities in higher education. Habib (2016: 113) reminds us about the constitutional imperatives that must guide South Africa through this process: '[T]he preamble of the South African Constitution demands that its public institutions simultaneously address the historical disparities bequeathed by Apartheid and build a collective national identity.'

Since 1994, the government has introduced various political, economic and education policies to expand access to higher education, especially for disadvantaged people. While there have been areas of success as a result of the pro-poor legislation that has been enacted, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training of 2013, there are some barriers that countered the envisioned successes of these policies. In this regard, Badat (2016: 5) states:

> *The reality also is that the post 1994 African National Congress (ANC) government's economic policies, powerfully shaped by neoliberal*

> *prescripts, have not generated the kind of level of economic growth and development that is required, and that could provide the state more resources to invest in higher education.*

In their book, *Comrades in business: Post-liberation politics in South Africa,* Adam, Van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley (1997) shared their reflections:

> *The ANC's intentions were noble; from the clauses of the Freedom Charter to the policy goals of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Foremost among these were the eradication of poverty, inequality and the creation of a government of the people which would epitomise austerity and sacrifice and rid the country of exploitation, greed and corruption (Adam et al. 1997: 160).*

However, Adam et al. (1997) acknowledged that the government abandoned the pro-poor RDP policy in 1996 in favour of a neoliberal market policy, known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), in order to pacify the capitalist system. Citing Harvey (2005), Badat (2016) explains that:

> *[n]eo-liberalism is a 'theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and the skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Badat 2016: 6).*

The government's shift away from its pro-poor policies and resource allocation was also evident in the sphere of higher education. Government's failure to address access to higher education for disadvantaged students more fully, prompted student protests over many years, most notably in 2015 and 2016. Jansen (2017: 28) acknowledges that a decline in funding in higher education institutions was the 'primary driver of the crisis in South African universities' during the #FMF student protests. This argument is also supported by data from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) South Africa's (2015) report which confirms the decline in funding of higher education. PwC's (2015: para 2) report reveals that 'state contributions to university education declined from 49% at the beginning of the century to 40% by 2012, while the burden on students increased from 24% to 31% during the same period'. This data refers to the actual decline in spending by the state on higher education that affected poor students.

Similarly, Badat (2016) alerts us to inadequate government funding for higher education:

> *South African higher education is inadequately funded by the state. One way of measuring the state's contribution is to consider the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is allocated to higher education.*

> *The percentage increased between 2004/2005 and 2015 and 2016, from 0.68% to 0.72%, … in 2012, Brazil allocated 0.95% of GDP to higher education, 'Senegal and Ghana 1.4%, Norway, and Finland over 2% and Cuba 4.5%. If the state was to spend 1% of GDP on higher education, this would amount to R41 billion – an additional R11 billion' (Cloete 2015) (Badat 2016: 3).*

As universities did not receive adequate government funding to absorb the growing student population that was allowed to study without paying fees, this created a funding crisis at many higher education institutions (HEIs). Consequently, HEIs were compelled to increase student fees. As many students from disadvantaged backgrounds could not afford the fees, a fee increase would create a more significant barrier regarding access to higher education.

The unaffordability of student fees was documented as an issue in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) UWC Fees Must Fall (UWC Fees Must Fall Responses 2015) between the UWC#FMF movement and university management. A participant complained that:

> *[f]ees were high and students could not afford [them]. Fees were expensive. (Participant 2)*

Naicker (2016) acknowledges the promotion of the right to further education as one of the fundamental rights which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible. However, higher education has become prohibitively expensive for students from poor families.

The students' understanding of their families' financial positions seem to validate the protests of 2015 and 2016. A participant stated:

> *What is the moral justification to the parents of the students to even come and propose a tuition fees increase by 10%? (Participant 3)*

The call for free education was necessary according to this participant:

> *[The] 10% … annual tuition increase proposal on the table gave rise to the student protests in 2015 and 2016. (Participant 3)*

The government was aware of students' financial crises and established NSFAS to address student funding (Parliamentary Monitoring Group [PMG] 2014). However, Paul Mashatile, the chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Appropriations, acknowledged that funds managed by NSFAS were inadequate to cover all financially needy and academically successful students at universities (PMG 2014). His committee therefore recommended full state subsidisation of poor students and those from working-class backgrounds to be realised progressively (PMG 2014).

Badat (2016) notes that there were significant, but not sufficient, increases in NSFAS funding:

> *The level of state funding for financial aid for students who are academically eligible for admission to universities and meet the criteria of the largely state-funded National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is inadequate to support all deserving students to appropriate … levels for undergraduate and postgraduate study. This is notwithstanding that the funds voted to NSFAS have increased substantially over the years, from R578.2 million in 2004/5 to R4,095 billion in 2015/2016 (Badat 2016: 3).*

Historical debt also became a significant barrier for some students, as they were unable to return to university to pursue postgraduate studies.

The student activists had to put pressure on the government, as indicated by a participant:

> *The students said education must be accessible. But there must be a commitment [from the government] to say by when… . (Participant 3)*

> *To me education is key. It must be accessible to all… . (Participant 3)*

These sentiments are crucial, because the then president of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, in an interview during the period of the #FMF student protests, conceded that free education is indeed possible (Wild & Mbatha 2015). Naicker (2016) also confirms that:

> *the student protests that swept South Africa at the end of 2015, culminating in the fees must fall movement, resulted in a huge victory for university students, when President Jacob Zuma was forced to withdraw plans for a 11.5 percent tuition fee hike for 2016, after students shut down universities all over the country (Naicker 2016: 54).*

During President Zuma's last term in office, he agreed to free higher education for poor students. However, the missing-middle students who are neither poor nor rich enough to afford academic fees at universities were not included.

Habib (2016: 116) asserts that historically black institutions (HBIs) 'have essentially become the educational reservoirs for the children of the marginalised communities in South Africa'. Should the government pursue the model of free education? Habib (2016: 127) explains: 'The Department of Higher Education and Training estimates that the total cost will be in the region of an additional R56 billion per annum, R19 billion for increased subsidy and a further R37 billion increased funding to NSFAS.'

Citing Saul and Gelb (1986), Badat (2016: 1) refers to the South African situation in higher education in 2015 and 2016 as an 'organic crisis because of the existence of "incurable structural contradictions" of an ideological, political and economic nature'. The government's political will and policy mandate stemming from the South African Constitution have created a political conundrum and a financial crisis in higher education.

Fallist movements and student protests

> *I know the government failed the students because free education is one of its promises. For example, the Freedom Charter says the doors of learning will be opened for all. (Participant 1)*

This is an expression of thousands of students' voices. It is my assertion that the #RMF student protests at the University of Cape Town (UCT) were a catalyst for the emergence of the #FMF student protests that erupted almost simultaneously at 23 universities in the country, including in HBIs, in 2015 and 2016.

Gillespie and Naidoo (2019: 1) argue that the 2015 and 2016 student movement protest had two origins and orientations:

> *The first emerged in March 2015 under the sign #RhodesMustFall at the University of Cape Town, demanding that a statue of the British colonist Cecil John Rhodes at the center of the campus be removed. Quickly, this movement developed into a critique of the Eurocentrism and white institutionality of South African universities and called for the 'decolonization' of higher education (Gillespie & Naidoo 2019: 1).*
>
> *The second trajectory of the student movement emerged seven months later, but had a longer, less visible history across the country's poorly resourced historically black universities. It erupted in October 2015 under the sign of #FeesMustFall (#FMF), beginning at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and quickly spreading to universities across the country (Gillespie & Naidoo 2019: 1).*

While the abolition of, or a reduction in, tuition fees was the primary driver of the #FMF formation, student activists soon learnt that contextual factors affected their goals. In his contextualisation of the #FeesMustFall protests, Smith (2015) of *The Guardian* locates the immediate roots of these protests within the UCT student activists' demand for the removal of the statue of British colonialist and arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902) and other symbols of colonialism at UCT. This demand initiated a social movement which the UCT students named the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) movement. Having its roots at UCT, the RMF movement was not limited to this institution. Instead, the 'Rhodes Must Fall

campaign also had resonance with students' (O'Halloran 2016: 188) at Rhodes University (RU) in the Eastern Cape.

The RMF protest movement activities were not limited to protests. RMF activities and activism included students and staff initiating dialogues about free higher education, decolonisation of the academic curriculum, and increasing the proportion of black academics on campus (Andrews 2017). Furthermore, according to the UCT Rhodes Must Fall Movement (RMFM) (2017: 32), 'there were calls for … radical actions by student activists, such as the removal of all statues and plaques on campus celebrating white supremacists, renaming of buildings and roads from names commemorating only white people amongst other demands'. The pertinent message of the fallists was to 'decolonise' the institution. Student activists at the HBIs also joined the FMF movement to share their plight about exorbitant student fees.

Decolonisation was an integral political pedagogical tool used in the FMF call for social transformation in various areas within higher education in South Africa at historical white institutions (HWIs) and HBIs.

UCT students and staff did not unanimously accept the demand for the removal of colonial symbols at the institution of higher learning advocated by the RMF movement. Some regarded Cecil Rhodes as 'one of Cape Town's grandest "sons": mining magnate, former prime minister of the Cape Colony, and conqueror of the colonial "hinterland"' (Luescher 2016: 22). In contrast, others perceived his being celebrated as the perpetuation of the colonial and racist legacy of South Africa (Badat 2016). Badat (2016: 12) reasoned that the black student community at UCT, under the banner of RMF, utilised the personality of Cecil Rhodes as a symbol to coerce the institutional authority to accelerate the transformational project, which included 'decolonization of the university' and 'transformation' of UCT in order to construct an institutional culture that does not alienate black students and staff (see also Habib 2016: 111). However, the students at UCT rejected the university's transformation agenda. According to the Rhodes Must Fall Movement (2017: 31), the students were in favour of a politicised programme of 'decolonisation of the university'.

Local parliamentarians and other social commentators publicly expressed their support for the goals of RMF (Maringira & Gukurume 2016). Thus, early in April 2015, the UCT Council voted to remove the Rhodes statue and management stated that 'the "Rhodes Must Fall" campaign has been a "wake-up call", not only for tertiary institutions, but the entire country, as transformation issues needed to be addressed a long time ago' (Essop 2015: para. 1). The tripartite alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) contradicted itself on the issue of the RMF student protests. Some members expressed support for the student actions, while others disagreed.

Surely, the UCT student grievances and demands were legitimate and necessary? Importantly, the RMF activism approach became an example for the student protests that were about to follow. The RMF movement at UCT adopted the intersectional approach and highlighted this approach in its mission. It defined the approach as follows:

> *We want to state that while this movement emerged as a response to racism at UCT, we recognise that experiences of oppression on this campus are intersectional and we aim to adopt an approach that is cognisant of this going forward. An intersectional approach to our blackness takes into account that we are not only defined by our blackness, but that some of us are also defined by our gender, our sexuality, our able-bodiedness, our mental health, and our class, among other things (Daniel 2021: 20).*

This intersectional approach to student protest initially spread to the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg following an announcement by the university's management that the tuition fees for the 2016 academic year would increase by 10% (Badat 2016). According to South African History Online (SAHO), the #WitsFeesMustFall protests started on 14 October 2015. These protests against the fee increases became the turning point for higher education and student activism in South Africa in the post-apartheid period.

Building on the success of the RMF movement, the embryonic student protests against increasing tuition fees at universities were organised under the hashtag banner of #FMF. FMF activists sparked solidarity action at most South African universities. The FMF movement gained momentum quickly and escalated to other universities across the country. *News24 Online* reported that RU students initiated their FMF protest on 19 October 2015, which resulted in the institution being shut down (Herman 2015). UCT students joined the FMF protest on 26 October 2015 (Herman 2015; Quintal 2015); the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) protest followed in late October 2015 (Langa 2016); the UWC protest began on 21 October 2015 (Qukula 2015); and University of Johannesburg (UJ) students initiated their support action on 22 October 2015 (Lenyaro 2015).

University of the Western Cape: Funding crisis, UWC#FMF, and protests

During the 1980s, UWC became a respected higher education institution attracting progressive anti-apartheid academics to its staff, which resulted in it becoming known as the 'intellectual home of the left' (Bozalek 2004: 2). This ensured that UWC was able to initiate a deliberate 'affirmative action admissions policy which has encouraged students from the "disadvantaged majority" to study at the institution' (Bozalek 2004: 2).

Tapscott, Slembrouck, Popkas et al. (2014: 15) confirm that, '[b]etween 1994 and 2000, student enrolments at UWC declined by approximately one third to below 10 000'. During this period, UWC experienced its own financial challenges in relation to student access and consequently could not continue to enrol students from marginalised communities. Politically, this posed a threat to the government's legislative framework of providing access to poor students at the institution. Tapscott et al. (2014) observe:

> *The period 1994-2000 was extremely difficult for the university. Because of the alignment with the liberation cause, it lost large numbers of its intellectual core to political and public leadership positions in the new democracy (Tapscott et al. 2014: 15).*

UWC's support for the democratic government meant it had to face some serious challenges. Tapscott et al. (2014: 15) claim:

> *The new era also brought a mounting financial crisis. Although UWC tuition fees were among the lowest in the country, it naively heeded the Minister of Education's political call to suspend fee increases and allow indigent students to enrol without paying. This resulted in rising student debt with no relief from the state.*

UWC student enrolment had to gradually increase to meet the government's legislative framework call for access to higher education. Under the leadership of the rector of UWC, Brian O'Connell, student intake doubled to a population of 20 269 students who studied in its seven faculties (Arts, Community Health Sciences, Dentistry, Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Law, and Natural Sciences) (UWC 2017).

The 2013 Report of the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities, which was chaired by Cyril Ramaphosa, confirmed that many of the students who enrol at UWC come from low-quality schooling backgrounds and require extra support to succeed in their studies (DHET 2013a). While UWC's identity can be regarded as a pro-poor university, as it has affordable fees meant for marginalised students, simultaneously the diversity of the UWC student population is a microcosm of the South African population.

The UWC student population mirrors South African society. In 1998, Thabo Mbeki, the then deputy president of South Africa, suggested that South Africa is a country of two worlds. One of these worlds, mainly white middle class, is prosperous and globally integrated while the other, largely black and poor, lives in grossly underdeveloped conditions (Tapscott et al. 2014).

Lalu and Murray (2012) stated that UWC defied racial classification and government policy and, in fact, became the first South African university to officially open its doors to all racial groups. Cele and Koen (2003) described the

nature of student protests in black universities under apartheid as heterogeneous along racial lines as students vented their frustration against the state and institutions of higher learning.

As the majority of UWC students are poor, it can be argued that unaffordability of tuition has been a significant concern from the 1970s to date. This perspective is supported by the South African public intellectual, Jonathan Jansen (2003: 4), in his argument that students 'at HBUs were more uniformly poor, under-prepared and desperate for higher education – but without the ability to pay'.

Was the government aware of the concerns expressed by poor university students? Indeed, there is legislation that speaks to access and success that was promulgated by Parliament, as Badat (2008: 14) points out that the 'Higher Education Act 101 of 1997' calls for 'appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities' to specifically cater for poor students.

Fees Must Fall Movement at the University of the Western Cape: Response to funding crisis

For some, the student protests during 2015 and 2016 were unsurprising. The pressure applied on the state and universities to address the plight of the 'fallist' movement forced the state to respond to the students' call for free higher education.

The call for a #NationalShutdown of higher learning institutions in South Africa led to UWC students joining the national FMF protests on 21 October 2015 (Pretorius 2015). This eventually gave rise to the formation of the so-called UWC#FMF initiative. Unlike FMF at the University of the Witwatersrand, where the South African Students Congress's (SASCO) politically aligned Student Representative Council (SRC) led the movement, student activists associated with the Pan Africanist Student Movement Association (PASMA), the Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command (EFFSC), the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation (DASO), and non-partisan feminist groups led FMF at UWC (Maringira & Gukurume 2016). SAHO also reports that the 'WitsFeesMustFall movement started as a PYA- [Progressive Youth Alliance] led SRC initiative and evolved into a student-led non-partisan movement, where decisions were made by a collective student body'.

As at other institutions, the UWC SASCO-led SRC distanced itself from the FMF movement and called on students to return to campus.

A cohort of PASMA student leaders replaced the SASCO-led SRC in a scheduled SRC election. In October 2015, following the announcement by the Minister of Higher Education and Training that the 2016 university fees increment should not exceed 6%, UWC students joined their mainly black counterparts from Cape

Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), UCT, and Stellenbosch University (SU) 'in a march to Parliament in Cape Town to demand that the Minister declare a 0% fee increase for the 2016' (Ndelu 2015: 14) academic year.

UWC students, like their peers at other HEIs, did not work in solidarity with the SRC to achieve the national student demand for a 0% fee increase. The UWC SRC released a statement to affirm its governance position, stating that '[a]s provided for and mandated by the Higher Education Act of 1997, the SRC is the only structure which is recognised as the vanguard and representative of the interests of students' (SRC UWC 2015).

Consequently, the government offer of 0% was not accepted. Instead, George Mavunga (2019: 93) confirms: 'The Minister of Higher Education and Training reached an agreement with the Minister of Police on the deployment of police to those university campuses rocked by violence.' Authors Rayner, Baldwin-Ragaven and Naidoo (2016: 4) state: 'Indiscriminate or unjustified use of force by the police in the enforcement of the university-imposed curfew' posed barriers to learning for students. Mavunga (2019: 88) writes that, '[i]n addition to relying on the power of the collective, the selected newspaper articles depict the students as perceiving violence as a form of agency through which the conflict in the #FeesMustFall protests could be resolved'.

MyBroadband reported on 28 October 2016 that the situation on campus was volatile, and it led to the destruction of university property such as the residential services building (#FeesMustFall Protestors' Rampage 2016). These events were a barrier to teaching and learning because classes and academic activities were suspended.

Allegations were levelled against private security companies that were associated with the apartheid regime. The crisis was almost reminiscent of the 1970s and 1980s higher education (HE) landscape. Badat (2016) recalls:

> *Writing about the period after the Soweto student uprising of 1976, Saul and Geld characterized the apartheid state as being mired in an organic crisis because of the existence of incurable structural contradictions of an ideological, political and economic nature (Badat 2016: 1).*

Badat (2016: 13) also confirms:

> *In some instances, student demonstrations that took to the streets or where protestors attempted to march to key public building[s], as with the case of the University of the Western Cape students, were treated with an especially heavy hand by police.*

Badat (2016: 20) adds: [O]ther universities such as UWC and CPUT, which have a largely lower middle-class and working-class student body, experienced arson

and damage to buildings running into the millions, were closed early and the final examinations postponed until early 2016.' Ten UWC#FMF activists were arrested on 11 November 2015 (Herman 2015; Lenyaro 2015; Quintal 2015). Even though there were elements of anarchy and violence during the protests that emerged as a response to the militarisation of campus by police and private security, the actions of the student protestors should be studied as revolutionary and as acts of radical student activism seeking radical transformation within social movement learning.

Badat (2016) disclosed that #FMF activists at HE institutions questioned the role of elected SRCs. #FMF activists accused these SRCs of failing to represent the interests of students. O'Halloran (2016: 192) recalled a parallel situation at RU where 'students also questioned the role and legitimacy of the SRC as representatives of the student body', as the SRC was considered 'to be part of the institutional structure and culture and not a real or potential driver of change'. Ntuli and Teferra (2017: 74) put this into perspective by suggesting that the 'internet-age social movements' like #FMF 'are horizontal, broad-based and leaderless, [and] negotiations between the DHET and SRCs were ineffective, as the movements did not recognise formal leadership as their representatives'.

Prior to the 2015 and 2016 FMF protests, UWC student leaders, like their counterparts at other HBIs, were already protesting, demanding student access and funding for tuition fees from management due to a lack of government funding and rising student debt and accommodation fees. However, the 2015 and 2016 protests were different from previous student protests. The student protests were popularised and advocated through social media under Twitter hashtags such as #RhodesMustFall (RMF) and #FeesMustFall (FMF).

Increasingly, from the #ArabSpring uprising, the use of Twitter became an integral part of student protests or demonstrations globally, and #FMF followed the trend nationally. This perspective is confirmed by Castells in the statement that 'demonstrators used the hashtag #SidiBouzid on Twitter to debate and communicate, thus indexing the Tunisian revolution' (Castells 2015: 28).

The #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, UWC#FMF and #WitsFeesMustFall, among others, were nascent social formations that collectively became known as 'fallists' movements and were characterised by the hashtag #...MustFall. According to Ahmed (2019: 5), the term 'Fallism denoted the students' demand to remove the Rhodes statue from UCT; for the statue to fall. But Fallism appears to have several meanings.' Ahmed (2019: 5) shares that 'Fallism is an attempt to make sense of the experiences of black bodies in a white, liberal university, through decolonial theories centred on Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness, and Black radical feminism'.

Student protests at South African institutions of higher learning during 2015 and 2016 were not isolated from student protests that had occurred earlier

internationally. In the mid-2000s, students from developed economies, such as Germany, and developing African countries, such as Kenya and Mozambique, demanded free higher education (Langa et al. 2016). Likewise, these protests followed the 2011 United Kingdom public demonstrations against the exorbitant fees universities started to charge for tuition (Teicher 2011). The local university student protests, which called for free higher education, were influenced by common international demands. Fatima Moosa (2016), of the *Daily Vox*, identified a number of countries globally that experienced protests with similar demands.

The state has promulgated policies that support access to higher education for all. For poor students at HBIs, access to higher education was meant to create possibilities for many South Africans, especially for black citizens. Students at universities across the country challenged the government's status quo in relation to access to affordable higher education in 2015 and 2016.

Higher education funding crisis, social movements and social movement learning

The #FMF social movement in 2015 and 2016 presented a radical approach which involved informal and formal learning. Student activists gained insight into inclusive pedagogy, democratic and radicalised education, and transformative learning, as suggested by Glowacki-Dudka, Jones, Brooks et al. (2012).

Numerous scholars have examined social movements as sites of learning (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Finger 1989; Kilgore 1999; Spencer 1995; Walters 2005). The scholarly literature generally discusses learning as a product of individual engagements with learning tasks (Billett 2001). However, learning and knowledge construction within social movements are generally understood as the outcome of shared activities, collaboration and cooperation among movement activists. The literature theorises social movement learning as a product of collective endeavours (Choudry & Kapoor 2010; Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Hall 2005). Alberto Melucci (1980) adds that collective behaviour as collective action theories also plays an important role in the formation of a social movement.

Theorists that have worked on the evolving nature of social movement learning have theorised learning as cognitive praxis (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Finger 1989; Kilgore 1999; Spencer 1995; Walters 2005), collective learning (Kilgore 1999), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991), collective behaviour (Melucci 1980), and collective action (Melucci 1980).

It is important to note that there are numerous definitions of what constitutes social movements. Morris and Herring (1984: 2) acknowledge that 'social movement' is a contested concept because each definition reflects the

theoretical assumption of the specific theorist. The literature suggests that social conflict and collective activism are two characteristics of any social movement. This is reflected in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* definition of a social movement as a collective that is 'loosely organized but [maintains a] sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values' (Killian, Smelser & Turner 2019: para. 1). This conception is consistent with Diani's (1992: 9) review of multiple analytical definitions of social movements, which led him to conclude that social movements are networks of 'informal interactions between a plurality of individuals and/or organisations' which, through collective activities, develop shared 'beliefs and solidarity' and engage in 'collective action on conflictual issues'. Walters (2005: 3) concurs that social movements have a 'collective identity'; 'they exist in an antagonistic relation to an opposed group or interest', and 'they embody a mobilising ethic, moral code or set of beliefs that reflect shared values and purposes'.

Social movement learning has shown in the case of the FMF movement that crises can emerge when there is a contestation or conflict of political and socio-economic ideology in higher education. As a result, when dealing with matters of social change and social transformation in higher education, intellectual or political tensions may heighten for a social-good outcome. The study has also shown that the conception of social movements dictates that a group of individuals or activists as a collective are capable of challenging the status quo in order to bring about the desired change in society or a community. The desired outcomes are variable, and are prompted by material conditions and social dynamics, and the dire need to collectively address and find solutions to challenges using informal methods to demonstrate against authority.

Some scholars have taken a critical view of the debates about #FMF and believe demand for free education was justified and well intentioned:

> *[A]rguments against free higher education often cite its regressivity, in that it benefits the middle- and upper-middle socio-economic classes to which the great majority of students belong at the expense of the low-income taxpayers whose children are not well represented in higher education, as a reason to charge tuition fees and implement means-tested grant and loans programmes (Marcucci & Johnstone 2007: 37)*

Conclusion

It was not surprising that adult learners at UWC took it upon themselves to participate in the national student protests in order to ensure that the call to access higher education was elevated. The FMF student protests provided an opportunity for the state and institutions of higher learning to reflect on access

to higher education by overcoming some of the financial and systemic barriers to ensuring student success.

Student mobilisation and solidarity played an integral role in assisting the student activists to ensure that there was a unified student voice across the country. Radical student activism elevated the students' call for the fees to fall. Importantly, student activism prompted discussions about a new financial model for HBIs, such as UWC, to receive more state funding for university infrastructure, and a student funding scheme to address the systemic disparities prevalent in HBIs inherited from the apartheid government.

The aspirational demands in respect of post-school education policy do not match the resources currently available to provide access to free higher education for all previously disadvantaged students. To address this challenge, government should conduct research into the phenomenon of the FMF protests from 2015 onwards, and examine all areas in higher education in order to gain credible data that can inform its short-, medium- and long-term planning. Planning should start for a five-year period and extend to a 30-year period into the future. Public and private social pacts looking into funding of higher education should be established; and a new repayment method to reimburse the funds should be explored as part of a national patriotic duty.

Despite the successes of the 2015 and 2016 student protests, the higher education funding crisis deepened. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created barriers to accessing higher education. Some students cannot afford pedagogical tools for online or blended learning. In an online learning environment, students are required to have devices such as tablets, laptops or smartphones to access learning materials provided by lecturers. Jansen (2020: 169) observes that 'there is an emphatic digital divide when it comes to opportunity to learn in the context of online learning and the conditions of a pandemic-enforced lockdown'. There are also issues associated with data costs. Jansen (2020: 170) states:

> *It is reasonable to project, even from the limited data in the stories of disadvantage, that, for most students in South Africa, there are neither devices, data or a connected teacher and this means that online learning – even if intermittent – simply does not exist.*

Badat (2020: 24) agrees, stating:

> *The post-pandemic 'new normal' in higher education could further entrench and create new barriers to transform in and through higher education unless, learning from recent struggles, a coalition of social forces organises for radical reforms within and beyond higher education.*

In 2021, the funding crisis in higher education again came to the fore when students protested by demanding access. According to Macupe (2021):

> *In reply to a parliamentary question in March, Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande said that between 2010 and 2020 more than 10 000 former students were yet to receive their qualification certificates, but this had not happened because they have outstanding fees totalling more than R10 billion. The information is based on submissions made by 21 of the 26 universities.*

Comins (2021) states that to resolve the higher education funding crisis:

> *Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Blade Nzimande has announced the establishment of a task team to find a solution to problems facing the National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding of university education, to help students and institutions which are struggling under a huge debt burden (Comins 2021: n.p.).*

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Funding as a crisis for mature women students: Agency, barriers and widening participation

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Abstract

Drawing on a research investigation into the learning pathways of mature women, this chapter highlights funding as a crisis. Mature women students face barriers to access, participation and success in higher education. Understanding these barriers is crucial for widening institutional access. The analysis in this study indicates that a lack of personal finance and difficulties in accessing institutional funding are among the significant barriers these women experience.

In addition, the findings show that some women overcame their funding crisis and successfully gained entry into higher education, while others remain excluded. Motivation to overcome poverty is primary to the agency that women demonstrate in their efforts to devise strategies to access funding for their higher education studies.

Introduction

Mature women students are marginalised in higher education (Kasworm 1980, 2018; Roosmaa & Saar 2017). The 'widening access agenda' is aimed at expanding access to higher education for marginalised people. However, limitations are evident in this agenda for mature women students seeking entry into higher education institutions in South Africa. Among the many challenges that create barriers to their access and participation, a funding crisis is the most notable.

This chapter reports on an investigation into mature women's learning pathways into higher education in South Africa. The main question is: What are the barriers and motivations in the learning pathways of mature women early childhood development (ECD) practitioners who pursue access into higher education to become Foundation Phase teachers?

A discussion of the literature on widening participation, on motivation and agency, and on barriers to access for mature women students, contextualises the study. The data analysis exposes the barriers that impede widening participation, such as a lack of information about application for entry into higher education institutions, as well as about funding.

A key finding relates to the crisis of funding which six participants experienced during their life journeys from school towards higher education. Data analysis reveals how the participants exerted their agency to overcome funding crises in order to advance their learning pathways towards higher education studies. All participants repeatedly applied for access to higher education at various times in their lives. Three participants gained entry into the BEd (Foundation Phase) programme. Three participants were excluded but remain hopeful as they continue to pursue their journeys toward higher education.

Apart from the barriers to access and participation which are commonly experienced by adult students (Kasworm 1980, 2018; Roosmaa & Saar 2017), data from the present investigation describes the barriers experienced by mature women against the backdrop of widening participation. Mature women students experience a crisis of funding throughout their learning pathways, which either limits their access or denies them access completely.

This study contributes to our understanding of barriers for mature women students (Markle 2015; Zart 2019) and of motivation for adult students (McGivney 2004). It leads to new theoretical perspectives regarding motivation that is rooted in agency and that can persist regardless of the outcome of a pathway which is pursued.

Context and methodology of the study

This study focuses on the learning pathways of mature women who are ECD practitioners in the Western Cape. It defines mature women ECD practitioners as aged 23 years and above who work either as ECD practitioners or Grade R teachers, and who are actively seeking access into the BEd degree in respect of the Foundation Phase of schooling.

The research design of this study included face to face interviews. However, due to COVID-19 and its associated regulations, the author of this chapter gathered the data by conducting and recording life-history interviews using Google Meet.

The following is a profile of the participants:

Pseudonym	Age	Family background	Status of access
Surreya	46	Married, three children	2nd-year student
Elethu	37	Single, two children	2nd-year student
Eileen	45	Divorced, three children	2nd-year student
Lithemba	39	Engaged, two children	ECD practitioner
Nomha	43	Single, one child	ECD practitioner
Babalwa	33	Married, three children	1st-year student (Grade R Diploma)

Adult learning and widening participation

Research shows that there has been an increase in the participation of mature women students in formal education (Kaldi & Griffiths 2013; Reay 2003; Zart 2019). However, this marginalised group still faces various challenges regarding access and participation on a global scale (Desjardins & Rubenson 2013; Roosmaa & Saar 2017; Zart 2019). Despite widening participation efforts in Australia and the United Kingdom, large numbers of adult students cannot access higher education (Webb, Burke, Nichols et. al. 2017). Furthermore, these authors argue that the ability of working-class students to access and participate in higher education does not narrow the gap between the working and the middle class. This means that, while many do not access higher education, for those who do gain access, access to higher education does not necessarily equate to social mobility. Rather, the enduring influence of family background and social class continue to have a greater impact than that of the widening participation agenda. To some extent, it does not matter what an individual student from a working-class background achieves or negotiates in his or her own right, the reason being that enduring constructs such as social background create a sharp difference between middle- and working-class learning pathways (Reay 2003; Webb et al. 2017).

Efforts aimed at widening participation have become crucial in many higher education institutions across the world. In South Africa, where it is especially important to eradicate deep-seated inequalities rooted in the apartheid era, the difference between the working and middle classes when it comes to accessing higher education is based not only on class, but also on race. Leibowitz and Bozalek (2014: 94) describe the challenges students experience in higher education in South Africa and note that 'racial categories continue to constitute a significant descriptor of social background'. More marginalised and poor students tend to drop out of school, and, for those who do gain access to higher education, their educationally disadvantaged backgrounds limit them from gaining epistemological access (Leibowitz & Bozalek 2014). This means that, for students from marginalised backgrounds, access to university is a barrier, participating at university is a barrier, and completing a degree successfully is a barrier. In a study that focused on the journeys of students from working-class backgrounds into higher education, Case (2015) found that the university curriculum is a constraint, as the students in her study struggled to understand and grasp content knowledge. They consistently had to seek additional assistance from lecturers and friends. This author argues that the identities of the students in her study were shaped by a 'tough' university curriculum. Thus, students from working-class backgrounds experience the university curricula as challenging due to having been disadvantaged educationally. In this way, structural challenges continue to impede their journey.

In the context of South Africa, mature women students from disadvantaged backgrounds need to create pathways into higher education through structural barriers caused by race and class. Racial and social class structures have meant that these women experienced a form of schooling which did not adequately prepare them for higher education (Leibowitz & Bozalek 2014), and, due to continuing inequalities, have limitations affecting their institutional and epistemological access, participation and success (DHET 2013).

Access to higher education, barriers and mature women students

Zart (2019: 245) argues that women undergraduate students' lives 'symbolize a puzzle with obscure pieces that do not quite fit together. Education is one piece of that puzzle, while family and work present additional pieces.' She argues that the role of 'mother' complicates the experiences or the pursuit of higher education for mature women students in that the two roles often clash and present challenges that are unique to this group of students. Mature women students are often first-generation students, work full-time, and often fall within the low-to-working-class category (Zart 2019). Thus, these women experience role-conflict and need specific factors in place that will enable them to push toward degree completion.

Reay (2003) argues that adult women students study in spite of severe material and educational constraints. She suggests that studying towards a degree is a risk for mature women students in that their journey is filled with confusion and difficulties. In Reay's (2003) study, the journeys of a small sample of women were investigated to understand the participation of working-class women in higher education and to show the nature of the route they take toward graduation. The study also shows that the route they take is 'hard and painful' (Reay 2003: 308). In her study, mature women students drew a strong connection between survival and education: they had to survive and succeed, and they were determined not to fail, since all of them had experienced failure academically. For these women, failure would be a setback. Most of the women in this study also had a specific desire or were motivated to establish ways in which they could uplift the communities of their childhood. They believed that successfully participating in higher education would put them in a position to do so.

> *These women's accounts of the underlying motivations that prompted their return to education reveal the complexities and contradictions of reflexive modernisation in which projects of the self can be aligned with a strong sense of community commitment and a desire to 'give back'. (Reay 2003: 306)*

Markle (2015) conducted a three-year study into the persistence on the part of adult students in pursuing higher education and found that mature women students are motivated in a unique way to prove that they are capable of success. This study also found that the role of student for mature women:

> *renders them different from other mothers and their parenting role renders them different from other students, leaving them to struggle with the pressures of being a mature student in isolation. Their intense dedication, or will to persist, enables non-traditional women students to overcome countless obstacles associated with their multiple roles in order to persist. (Markle 2015: 65)*

Motivation and agency

McGivney (2004) argues that motivation is essential in contributing to the persistence and success of mature women students. Adult students often feel discouraged, and mostly women students feel a desire to withdraw from their studies, particularly due to role-conflict (Markle 2015).

> *Motivation is a word that is often applied to adult learners. [M]ature students tend to be more motivated than younger students … because they have made sacrifices in order to participate; because they want to prove to themselves (and others) that they are capable of learning and*

> *gaining a qualification; or because they need or are required to study for career or employment reasons. (McGivney 2004: 42)*

A will to persist, or motivation, is thus a primary factor in participation and success for mature women students (Markle 2015; Reay 2003; Zart 2019). Motivation can be seen as an enablement, whereas a lack thereof can be seen as a constraint. It is referred to as the power to move towards a particular goal (Boeren, Holford, Nicaise et al. 2012). 'An adult learner can be said to be motivated if he or she has the intention to put some effort into his or her learning activities and to undertake actions in order to reach learning goals' (Boeren et al. 2012: 249). The literature differentiates between two types of motivation: autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation is self-determined and is a free choice which is dependent on the individual. Controlled motivation is based on the need to comply with external pressures and requirements. Understanding the motivations for adult women students to study in higher education institutions is important in realising goals to widen access (Boeren et al. 2012).

Autonomous motivation, which is a free choice (Boeren et al. 2012), can be connected to Archer's (2003) notion of agency, which, she argues, is the domain where human action and interaction occur. In a study that reviews conceptions of agency, Groener and Andrews (2019) note that 'students' agentic actions to overcome barriers in pursuit of post-school education opportunities confirm Archer's (2003: 7) sociological supposition that 'humans have degrees of freedom in determining their own courses of action' (Groener & Andrews 2019: 44). In this way, autonomous motivation and agency work together, in that individuals use their agency to continuously plot their course along a particular pathway. Motivation is thus rooted in agency. This means that the individual freedom students exercise, their agency, enables them to pursue a particular pathway, even if it is hard to do and even if the outcome is not what they had hoped for. Their motivation fuels their agency. In this way, motivation is rooted in agency.

Motivation that is rooted in agency is an enabler. It enables students to continue pursuing a path regardless of the challenges or obstacles that this may give rise to. It is to this extent that research clearly shows that motivation is important to participation and success for mature women students. Under extreme pressure and effort to fit in, and manage and negotiate various roles, motivation is important in that it gives them a consistent push toward degree completion and, ultimately, graduation.

Findings

Through a narrative analysis, the data was analysed. In this type of qualitative, in-depth analysis, care is taken to read and understand the life accounts of participants in their entirety (Check & Schutt 2012). Elsewhere, Johnson-Bailey

(2004: 334) states that, 'as a method, narrative analysis places emphasis on collecting the story of the participant, while taking care to preserve the holistic nature of the participant's story'. The themes derived from the storied analysis for this particular study were related to the barriers and motivations that cut across the women's life histories, in order to seek answers to the primary interrogation, as highlighted above. The themes that emerged highlighted points at which the participants sought access into both further and higher education.

In South Africa, further education refers to theory- and practice-based educational programmes which are available at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, private colleges, and community colleges in the form of certificates and diplomas. Higher education, on the other hand, refers to education received at a university, generally in the form of a degree. Matric is the final year of basic schooling and is equivalent to Grade 12.

ECD programmes are offered as learnerships to ECD practitioners at TVET colleges on Levels 1, 4 and 5. Level 1 is equivalent to Grade 9, Level 4 to Grade 12 and Level 5 to a certificate. TVET colleges also offer a National Diploma in Educare at the N4, N5 and N6 levels, which are equivalent to Grade 12, to a certificate and to a higher certificate, respectively. The participants experienced barriers at the following three points in their learning pathways:

1. From matric into higher education; high motivation and high barriers;
2. From ECD practitioner into further education; high motivation and low barriers; and
3. From further education into higher education; high motivation, and high and multiple barriers.

The participants are identified as working class and, as such, experienced structural challenges related to their racial and social-class background in South Africa. All participants attended school during apartheid and inherited the disadvantages of being classified *black* during this time. Race determined educational access and opportunities; being classified as *black* meant poor-quality and limited educational access and opportunities for the women in the present study.

Experiences of financial barriers at high school

The participants experienced three barriers during their initial attempts to access higher education: *a lack of parental support*, *a lack of information and guidance* about various institutions and their programmes, and *a lack of funding*. For Lithemba, Nomha and Babalwa, in particular, the lack of parental support had a big impact on the route their lives took after they matriculated from high school. These participants did not receive care, guidance, resources such as food and

shelter, or moral support from their parents. Babalwa related that her high school teachers encouraged her to apply to university and supported her with the application for funding:

> *There was a teacher … that guided me because [she] knew my situation, my family background … ; she said I must write a letter. I remember one day I wrote a letter… asking for assistance. And then they asked me [for] the payslip for my father, the payslip for my mother, [but] unfortunately I didn't have [those]… . I knew that they were working, so I was not accepted that time.*

Babalwa, who grew up in a child-led home, was the one leading the family throughout her years in high school. She played the role of parent to younger siblings. Thus, there was no opportunity to apply for access in spite of a strong desire to do so and a good matric pass. Her own survival, and that of her siblings, was more important.

> *So I was left in my mother[and] father's house with my two sisters coming after me and the last-born… . I was left with three children to raise. It affected me [so] much that I [failed] the class, and it was [the] first time [that I failed].*

Along with her sister, Lithemba had been responsible for providing for her family throughout the years at school by selling sweets.

> *In Standard 6 … I [had] to carry the chips and the lollipops – every day, whether [it was] raining or … not… . [By] break you didn't even socialise … with your friends because we [had] to go and look for … customers all over in [the] school … .*

She recounts that, at the time, she was happy selling sweets, because she was a child. She said:

> *At that time I was a kid. I didn't feel it was bad. I enjoy[ed] it because I [had] to give … respect to my mother but now I realise … that [what] I was doing [was] … too much … . Maybe I would have [got]an A or a B, [which is] much better than what I [achieved] in the end.*

With no parental support and needing to provide for her family, she started working in a series of restaurants as a waitron and in fruit-canning factories. She mentioned that, because of the chances she didn't get, she ended up doing this work although it was not her career.

Nomha's family experienced a series of challenges – 'some personal problems' – during her final year of basic schooling which contributed to her needing to work in the retail environment over weekends, while studying during the week. She

attended school and was 'working at the same time on weekends, working at Diskom, so I had to … become a breadwinner', she recalled. This inevitably contributed to her failing matric: 'When I got to matric, I didn't pass my matric.' She persisted, however, and reapplied to do the matric examination through a finishing school the following year, after which she successfully applied and participated in higher education at the Cape Technikon, now known as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Nomha relates:

> *I only managed to pay the registration fee. My mother was a domestic worker at the time and she managed to give me one thousand rand for the registration, and then I also applied at a place that offered funding in Athlone, and they paid two thousand rand … . [But] I had to drop out because I did not get any [further] funds, and I had to work full time.*

Moving from high school into higher education seems to have been a natural course to follow for the participants in the study, but, as Surreya indicated, a lack of information and guidance was a barrier:

> *When you apply, you don't get in; you feel despondent and no one wants to help you. [Y]our parents [do not have] the means [to provide funding or information for higher education access].*

All the participants stated that succeeding at university was essential to changing their circumstances; access could lead them out of the poverty and disadvantage that was associated with their childhood. Surreya further commented:

> *In our communities, there is no guidance, no one to help the children know where to go. [P]arents are too busy keeping their heads above water; they must work and so they are not even thinking of furthering their studies or pushing their children to do so.*

Both Eileen and Elethu dropped out of high school due to teenage pregnancies. They did not receive support during critical moments of their school careers. Elethu commented:

> *I was not coping [being] at school again where I didn't even accept the position that I was in of me … having a baby; and I couldn't even go to the matric farewell with my fellow [learners]. I couldn't, you do understand? So I was in a place of denial. … I couldn't focus even on Grade 12 and my results were not looking so good.*

On the other hand, Eileen simply stated:

> *I fell pregnant when I was in Standard 7. I just wrote the Standard 7 exams, but I didn't go back; I went to work after that.*

Thus, in these attempts to access education, a lack of parental support, a lack of information and guidance regarding various institutions and their offerings, as well as a lack of funding constituted structural barriers prohibiting access to university for these women.

Funding facilitates access from school to further education

For the participants, the easiest point of access to a programme which offered a teaching qualification was a TVET college through the Educare N4 to N6 and the ECD Level 1, 4 and 5 programmes. At this point of the journey, the women all used their agency to access further education. They were able to do so with ease, because funding was provided by the colleges. Eileen stated that 'Level 1 was … free', and, since these programmes all provided students with a monthly stipend, it was quite beneficial for the women to participate. Babalwa shared that, when she realised that the ECD course was free, she grasped the opportunity with both hands.

> *ECD? I didn't know what ECD [was], what [was] going on, but just because I was so hungry for school[ing] at that time, and because she explained to me that, when you are doing the ECD, you don't have to pay … your fees upfront … you are going to get the stipend … I felt [very] relieved … and then went to Boland College to … apply.*

Nomha shared her experience of participating in the Educare programme:

> *I didn't think of myself [as someone who] could do so well, [who could get] distinctions. I [was] so proud of myself because of that … [that] with so many problems and stress[es] … I could still get those distinctions … . [I]t pushed me to [be someone] who wanted to study more and more until I [became] what I want[ed].*

Surreya started volunteering at her son's school, as he had special needs as a learner. 'Then, in [the] three years that I was helping out at the school, … I applied. The teachers actually motivated me to [apply] and further my studies … .' She applied for ECD Levels 4 and 5 and was accepted into the programmes. She recalled:

> *I actually did very well. My lecturer always pushed me because of how well I did.*

Elethu mentioned that the ECD 'learnership [was] bringing … education [to] ECD practitioners'. She further pointed to a number of employment offers she received after she had completed the ECD Level 4 and 5 programmes. She was appointed as a principal at an ECD centre and facilitated isiXhosa in the ECD programme at a TVET college. She stated: 'I applied and I was called in for an interview. I went in and I was phoned, [and so, with] my Level 5, I am now the

principal of this Community Educare Centre.' In addition, she explained that participating in the ECD programme 'was paying off because even the lecturers [noticed] my efforts, and … I was called in the following year to come and be the lecturer for IsiXhosa'.

However, she stated firmly that all the opportunities meant nothing much for her financially, for, as a single parent, she still had to provide for her family. According to her:

> *There are no good salaries [in ECD].*

Lithemba struggled financially while working in ECD, where factors such as low or no income and unstable employment are common. She shared that, in Vukani (an ECD centre), there was a strike by teachers. They went on strike for more money in October, November and December. 'So … I work[ed] for [these] three months [but was paid] only once in December.' Some of the motivations of the participants to pursue higher education from further education arose from a strong belief that having a degree when teaching in the Foundation Phase would secure permanent employment with a good salary, more specifically a 'government job.' Surreya admitted:

> *I thought to myself [that I really needed to] do something so that [I could get a] job that pays better. Because … obviously you opt for second-best, and then you're struggling and you think to yourself … I didn't actually want this, I really wanted something better for my life and family. I really want … a government job.*

Elethu explains that, through a government job, she wants to use her degree to change the ECD environment:

> *My focus is still [on] … ECD; my heart is still there. But, you know, at the Worcester Boland College, all the lecturers … have a BEd qualification. So, I'm saying to myself that I will be there, I will be one of them. I'll be permanently employed at the Worcester Boland College.*

At these second attempts at access, the participants were able to access further education with ease, since they had good support structures in terms of peers and principals who guided them and provided them with information about the programmes for ECD practitioners. The financial support during the programmes also made access and participation easier for them. All three of these factors, *support, funding, and guidance and information regarding the programmes,* were present during this period of the journey. This, in turn, made access to, and participation and success in, the programmes possible for the women. With these factors in place, participation was widened for this marginalised group.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) facilitates access from further education to higher education

After studying in ECD programmes at TVET colleges, the participants were highly motivated to access higher education. As mentioned previously, three of the participants in this study gained access to higher education at university, and three did not. All six participants had applied for access more than once at various institutions such as UWC, CPUT and the University of South Africa (UNISA).

For the three participants who gained access, the RPL programme at UWC provided a platform for them to do so. It provided a space in which they could freely exercise their agency to access higher education. Eileen was told about RPL by her principal at the ECD centre where she was teaching; and a friend directed Elethu to RPL after she was refused access by the university for not having enough entrance points. In Surreya's case, the following occurred:

> *The first year [that I applied] I obviously didn't get in. [T]hen somebody, one of the teachers … at CPUT [who] was doing a diploma in Grade R … basically said: 'You know, Surreya, because of your age why don't you try to get in through the RPL [programme]?' … and that's what I did.*

However, at her second interview, says Surreya, it was realised that 'she didn't even have to apply through the RPL, because she [had] got through with an exemption …'.

Thus, for Surreya, who was refused access by the university and redirected to RPL, and then redirected to the university again because she had sufficient university entrance points for the BEd (Foundation Phase) programme, applying for access had taken three consecutive years. She accordingly felt strongly that the UWC application process had 'wasted my time'. As shown, initially she was refused entry by the university for an unspecified reason and advised by the academic administration to apply for the RPL programme. After completing a host of activities in order to be successful in the RPL programme, she was informed that she did not need the RPL programme for access, and that a traditional university application would suffice. Thus, after three years of applying, and many phone calls and emails in order to follow up on her application, she was finally accepted into the relevant programme.

Pathways from further education to higher education: Financial barriers/crisis

Access to funding, and to information regarding funding opportunities, is crucial for mature women students at this point of the journey. Eileen, who had been accepted, further explained the challenge for those who are accepted. Of her journey in higher education, she states:

> *The first month of being here [at the university] was stressful. They insisted that I pay [for] registration [but] I wasn't working and I didn't have money. I was here for orientation the entire week and they sent me a message saying that I can't go to class because I haven't paid. I told my student advisor that I need[ed] to go to Wynberg to find out [what was happening with my funding]. I went there and they told me [that] I [was] funded; [so] back the next day [to university] and they said I [was] not funded … . Funding is actually a big problem.*

Eileen was eventually able to access funding and was thus in her second year of study at the time of the interview. 'I finally got funding', she exclaimed. However, Elethu was not able to access funding for the first year of study. She describes her experience of applying to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) as follows:

> *I applied for NSFAS [funding, and] that was a journey! [I went] to the financial office [at UWC] and then I went to Wynberg to their offices. I got a lady to help me … but there was still one document missing. [Even] if you [could] see my paper trail with NSFAS, you [wouldn't] believe [it]. One document missing, my mother's ID. I [had] to take that document personally to NSFAS in Wynberg. Three times [I did that], but the document was always missing.*

Currently in her second year, she owed the annual university fees throughout her first year. She remarked: 'You know, the university opened … for this year [but] I was not at the university because I didn't have money to go there', the reason being that she still owed a large sum for 2019. Fees and a lack of money for food and transport are challenges that Elethu faced. 'There were times that it was really hard. The rainy days; there were times that I didn't even have money to pay [for] the train.' Fortunately, Campus Student Support Services proved to be of help with food parcels. Elethu related how excited her child was when she brought food home from the UWC feeding scheme:

> *And then we got food, groceries from UWC. I will never [forget my boy's face] when I [walked] in with a bag full of food. He was so happy… he was skipping, he was glad that I [could] bring rice, [that] I was bringing noodles… . So, for me, [it was a] sense of … the university …providing for me and now I'm providing for him; do you understand?*

There were many days when she travelled to the university with no money for transport back home, but Elethu is determined to continue. She believes that what she is getting from the university is much more than working in ECD. She says that it is much more than the R5 000 she was going to receive as a principal and the R2 500 as an ECD practitioner:

> *Even if I am 37 at … university …, I am [still] pursuing my dream.*

Eileen indicated that, on making the decision to study full-time, she sat her family down and explained that, for the next four years, there would not be much in the house:

> *My mind was … made up: … sacrifice … or getting nowhere; there was nothing easy; it's about whether you want it.*

The remaining three participants still have to continue the journey in endeavouring to access higher education, in particular the BEd programme. Nomha has applied for university entrance almost every year since the completion of her ECD Level 5, but without success. She does not have enough university entrance points to be accepted into the programme, and was not aware of the access route through the RPL programme at the time of the interview.

Similarly, Lithemba had not heard of the RPL programme at the time of the interview and had applied for access twice, consecutively. In both instances, she followed up on her application and was told that it had been received late; however, she believed that she had applied in time (and provided data/quotations as evidence).

Though her pathway has been filled with rejections, Nomha indicated that she would not let this stop her:

> *I am not going to let them stop me from studying. I am hoping, and I do have hope … I know that one day I will become what I want to become. I'm not going to give up.*

At this point in the journey, it is clear that a *lack of funding* and *limited guidance and information regarding access routes* into higher education are among the key structural barriers that separate those who gain access from those who do not. These mature women students currently pursuing access now have a range of responsibilities. They no longer require parental support to gain access as in their first attempt after matric, since they themselves are parents with the specific responsibility of providing for their children, which makes ii so much harder in pursuing access. The responsibilities of these women can be seen as structural barriers which limit or prevent their access and participation in higher education. As mentioned by Elethu:

> *[It] is a struggle for ECD practitioners to study at university. [T]he university wants full-time students … so the ECD practitioners must leave their work … their homes … their children … their families behind to [study] … . [M]ost of them are sitting here … they cannot be accepted into university because of their education. They say its poor; they say our [NQF] Level 4 and Level 5 [are] only for ECD; they cannot recognise it.*

Discussion

The data analysis reveals that the motivations which drive mature women to pursue access to higher education is located within the context of their lives as poor black women, and as ECD practitioners working in an environment with low incomes and unstable job opportunities. While all the participants love the children they work with and have a passion for ECD, the limitations attached to this environment move them to want 'more' for themselves. In the words of Elethu: 'I wanted more. I looked around and saw that this was not it.' These women desire the security and financial access which is associated with 'government employment', and, for the women, graduating with a BEd degree in the Foundation Phase of schooling will mean just that – secure employment and financial access.

Whilst there are numerous barriers undermining access to higher education, the most significant is the lack of funding. This is a crisis, as it created acute difficulties for the women at each point that they tried accessing higher education. The strain they experienced in relation to this crisis shaped whether they had access to resources, and to information and guidance regarding access routes, and it shaped their participation. The lack of food for their families and transport challenges intensified the challenge of being at university. Thus, funding is the enduring, primary barrier which prevents access and limits mature women's participation.

At their first attempts to access education, the lack of funding led to a post-school learning pathway associated with low-paid jobs. It shaped a deep desire for an improvement in life chances and choices, and the continuous struggle for access. For these mature women, access would have secured a different set of choices for improvement. At their second attempts for access – now much older and ECD practitioners – the participants entered further education with ease, as this particular barrier no longer existed. Funding was provided, which meant they had easier access and could participate more easily. The ECD environment in which they work also provides a network of support and stimulus for the pursuit of higher education in order to graduate as Foundation Phase teachers.

At the third attempts at access, a lack of funding is once again a crisis. Groener (2019) notes that, for adult students in South Africa to gain access to higher education, structural and institutional barriers that are related to funding need to be removed by the government. These barriers undermine the potential of marginalised students to find routes out of poverty through education (Groener 2019). The analysis shows that, for higher education institutions to widen the access and participation of mature women, access to funding as well as accurate information regarding access routes need to be provided for them. The primary motivation for the lengthy pursuit of higher education is the prospect of gaining secure employment and financial access, and, undoubtedly, 'a route out of poverty' (Groener 2019). The key barrier these women face in their journey is the crisis of funding.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an analysis of the crisis of funding which mature women experience, and the ways that they exert agency to mitigate this crisis as they travel along their learning pathways (Archer 2003). The motivation to succeed in higher education is a route to employment and financial security so that they can provide for their families.

The crisis of funding, though deeply personal and individual, is located within broader political, social and economic reality. Similarly, broader socio-economic structural factors limit resources for higher education and undermine higher education institutions' efforts in widening participation. As the findings indicate, some mature women are successful, while others remain excluded. Leading institutions must address critical funding challenges in order to enable mature women to address their funding crises and so facilitate their learning pathways towards access to higher education.

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Towards a socially just continuous professional development model for teachers as adult learners

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Abstract

In 2020, the world experienced an unprecedented pandemic with devastating, lasting effects. For South Africa, it revealed stark inequalities in society and in schools. One such disparity was that between the digitally advantaged and digitally disadvantaged in the workplace. South African teachers, like their global counterparts, lamented about their readiness to teach online and in blended classrooms. This prompted our investigation into how teachers as adult learners experience continuous professional teacher development (CPTD) in times of crisis. An exploratory case study, with a purposeful sample of 26 teachers at an independent primary school in Johannesburg, was undertaken. We discovered that teachers struggled with emotional stress and pressure in their efforts to acquire digital skills and competencies within a limited time frame. Hence, appropriate CPTD to support teachers, especially in a time of crisis, is crucial. We present an innovative model for CPTD, which has the potential to meet the needs of post-pandemic teaching and learning as well as provide for socially just CPTD opportunities.

Introduction

COVID-19 has had a direct and undeniably catastrophic effect on education, training and development worldwide. According to Ali (2020: 16), '[t]he Corona virus has revealed emerging vulnerabilities in education systems around the world'. A United Nations Policy Brief (UN 2020: 2) declared that 1.6 billion learners across all continents had been affected by the pandemic, which has also exposed social and historical inequalities prevalent in their daily lives (Czerniewicz, Agherdien, Badenhorst et al. 2020). The unpredictable future we face as a society therefore requires flexible and resilient education systems (Ali 2020).

Owing to the pandemic, the mode of teaching quickly transformed from traditional face-to-face learning to remote, online learning using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom. Teachers and learners are expected to use this new mode of teaching across the globe (OECD 2020). The rapid transformation to this type of teaching has posed many challenges for teachers as they strive to prepare and deliver quality content remotely. Teachers' pedagogical shifts because of this online learning landscape are also influenced by their pre-existing perceptions of this method of teaching (Pape & Lopez-Aflitto 2020). Nevertheless, in an immediate and urgent response to prepare to teach in a COVID-19 classroom, teachers diligently obliged by figuring out by themselves how best to support their learners. As this way of teaching will become the new normal, teachers need not have to continue to work alone (Hodges, Kerch & Fowler 2020). Instead, teachers need support through relevant CPTD. Guidance, support, and the effective use of resources will go a long way in helping teachers cope and successfully bridge the gap left by remote, online teaching.

For teachers as adult learners, COVID-19 provides a powerful platform to test the potential for online CPTD. Not only does it have the potential to reveal the key limitations teachers may have in terms of digital skills, the correct computer hardware and software components, and an Internet connection to engage in CPTD training, but it also has the benefit of allowing teachers ongoing, flexible training opportunities when face-to-face training is unavailable.

Although digital transformation in education and training is imperative, in South Africa, as in many other developing countries, the stark reality is that many learners and teachers lack access to the Internet, electricity and computer hardware. These components are considered essential conditions for successful online learning (Xaba 2020). This inequitable access to online learning in the education and training sectors brings the issue of social justice to the fore. The social divide is quite clear, as some teachers and learners have access to Internet facilities in order to work online, whereas others have neither the access nor skills to teach, learn and work virtually. High data costs have also impeded many learners from being able to connect to online lessons (Hedding, Greve, Breetzke et al. 2020).

In this chapter, we aim to highlight how current CPTD initiatives fall short in addressing the critical transitioning to online training opportunities for teachers as adult learners. We also address the issue of socially just CPTD and its implications, especially during and post-COVID-19. Finally, we offer an innovative, socially just model of CPTD to train teachers as South Africa moves into a thriving, technologically rich phase of online teaching and learning.

Social justice and CPTD

Social justice is conceptualised as a fair and just relationship between an individual and society. Such a relationship measures both explicit and implicit, fair and equitable access to social privileges, wealth and opportunity. According to Bell (1997: 1), 'social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure'. For him, social justice is both a process and a goal. Social justice in education relates to a concerted effort in challenging social, economic and cultural inequalities experienced by people because of an unequal distribution of resources, power, wealth or privilege. More specifically, in teacher professional development, social justice suggests that teachers are self-governing persons who have their own agency with a determined sense of accountability and therefore need to be dynamic contributors to society (Guthrie & McCracken 2010).

In this chapter, we argue that current CPTD in the South African schooling system neglects issues of social justice on a dual basis. Firstly, current CPTD models are inadequately designed to ensure social justice for both teachers and learners. Badat and Sayed (2016: 139) suggest: 'In sum, the analysis of educational outcomes post-1994 suggests that the cleavages of race, while still noticeable, have become more muted; and inequities of class, gender, and geography have become more apparent.' In both schools and universities, we witness how the inequality of access, opportunities and achievement is directly influenced by the social exclusion of disadvantaged social groups and classes. Secondly, while CPTD has the potential to help teachers navigate social justice issues that they may face in the classroom, this is not happening in South Africa. Instead, many teachers were complete novices to online teaching strategies and assessment methods. Teachers lacked training that would equip them to use online teaching platforms and online tools more effectively. McDonald and Zeichner (2009: 597) point out that 'social justice programmes explicitly attend to societal structures that perpetuate injustice, and they attempt to prepare teachers to take both individual and collective action toward mitigating oppression'. In South African schools, current CPTD models such as workshops, where a trainer speaks and teachers have no active role in training, create conditions that do not optimise learning and development for teachers.

Blended learning for socially just CPTD

Blended learning, by definition, refers to using a variety of methods like face-to-face learning, e-learning and online strategies in order to learn. A strength of blended learning is that it can accommodate various learning preferences, even simultaneously. Van Dam (2011: 16) states: 'Blended learning has become a buzzword in corporate learning. First it was used to mix e-learning (synchronous and asynchronous) with classroom training. Today, organisations also blend different learning technology modalities without a physical classroom.' Blended learning uses a combination of strategies to address learning needs of school-going as well as adult learners. Online learning also has the benefit of offering a variety of learning methods and instruction (Ausburn 2004). Differential learning approaches echo adult learning principles, since adults are the focus of the learning process and product. This is of particular significance for CPTD models, as they cater for teachers who are adult learners.

In the implementation of online learning strategies and the achievement of social justice, some of the issues that need consideration are: access to online learning, time to implement new teaching strategies, and teachers' digital competence. Rasool (2020: 3) indicates: 'Online learning is far cheaper for rural students than building learning institutions, so ensuring that they have online access is essential. Short courses must be recognised as a legitimate form of learning.' Access to online learning can help individuals learn and upskill. However, if access is difficult, particularly due to geographical and socio-economic conditions, it becomes a hurdle to learning and development. Learners reported that funding, technical difficulties, and less social interaction with peers were also barriers to learning online (Adnan & Anwar 2020). Notwithstanding such barriers, a blended learning approach appears to be an effective tool to address issues that South African teachers are facing in the current pandemic, and will face in the post-pandemic period. Electronic learning tools and approaches will be able to promote learning and teaching as the pandemic continues in South Africa and worldwide (Mhlanga & Moloi 2020). Teachers have been encouraged to implement, within a short time frame, a variety of teaching tools like radio, television, digital tools, digital platforms, and learning-at-home packs for learners (UN 2020).

However, in order to do this, CPTD teachers must be equipped to apply a blended learning approach in their teaching in the current global pandemic. Blended learning is an appropriate tool for adult learning and for the delivery of schooling, especially in times of overnight change and high anxiety levels caused by COVID-19. For example, learners were able to listen to radio or watch virtual classes on television in order to continue their education when the COVID pandemic prevented them from attending school with face-to-face methods (Mhlanga & Moloi 2020). However, implementing 'socially aware CPTD' requires a process of continuous reflection on the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. In this endeavour, teacher engagement and

cooperation is essential in combating CPTD that keeps teachers voiceless, and represses their identity and their ideas around effective CPTD. Kohli, Picower, Martinez et al. (2015: 16) stress that 'developing a cooperative space for learning' creates an opportunity for teachers 'to connect and build community'. With this type of learning community, teachers are able to utilise their collective strengths in order to face new challenges and share learning experiences together. This is also necessary for them to cope with drastic change.

Adult learning principles for CPTD

When designing CPTD for teachers and trainers, facilitators and instructors should consider the well-documented approaches to adult learning. Adult learning principles take into account that adults are more self-directed in their learning and have a vast history and experience, and that learning should address a specific need (Collins 2004).

Van Dam (2011) identifies five dimensions of learning, customisation and personalisation for adult learners:

1. **Learning needs:** Personal learning needs are unique and depend on a large number of characteristics, including job/role, career, experience, personal career and development aspirations, professional education background, years within the workforce, recent assignments, and development feedback from manager/mentors.
2. **Learning preferences:** People learn differently. Learning preferences are based on individual learning styles, cultural differences, language difference, and generational differences – for example, for the younger generation, the use of technology-based learning solutions like mobile learning and game-based learning is a given.
3. **Location:** A geographically dispersed, mobile and virtual workforce drives the need to provide learning at any location, all the time.
4. **Time:** Daily business and performance demands, loaded schedules, and competing priorities require people to use their time as effectively as possible. The available time for informal and formal learning differs by industry, organisation, and job/role, as well as from person to person.
5. **Pace:** The pace of knowledge acquisition and the development of new skills differs significantly from one person to another. The more the learning experience is customised to the unique personal learning needs, the more effective the learning process will be (Van Dam 2011: 28).

With well-designed CPTD, the above-mentioned five dimensions should be implemented as tools to make the learning process current and applicable.

Furthermore, two additional adult learning approaches must be incorporated into CPTD to create socially just offerings for learning and development relevancy-orientated content and peer learning. These two approaches are as follows:

1. Relevancy-orientated content and skills focus on addressing social justice issues through the learning of relevant content and knowledge and the acquisition of relevant skills. This requires creating an individualised learning plan for each adult learner; in the present case, for each participating teacher (Valamis Group 2020).
2. The adult learning principle of peer learning ensures avoidance of learning in isolation. It requires an organisational school culture that is directed towards encouraging knowledge sharing, that is, one where teachers can ask peers for help and can share best practice (Valamis Group 2020).

Mannie (2020: 4) states: 'Collaborations are key, and good practice must be shared, for us all to move forward. Learning by sharing is growing. The crises have shown that we can respond to change; people are able to work without being micro-managed.'

Thus, the demands created by the current COVID-19 pandemic have given rise to valuable lessons in terms of adult learning, and societal and individual values. In particular, CPTD for blended learning should adhere to the approaches and principles of adult learning in order to render it effective and compatible with the demands of social justice.

CPTD during a pandemic

In this section, we examine the role and CPTD needs of teachers undergoing the transition from conventional to online teaching and learning – more specifically, as a result of COVID-19 and the education sector thus being forced to evaluate how learning and assessment are implemented (Hedding et al. 2020). This discussion also occurs in the light of social justice issues, with special reference to South African teachers.

Affirming the role of the teacher

Teachers worldwide are being lauded for rapidly implementing new strategies to continue and sustain learning at schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The important role of the teacher in the learning process, as well as the social support that teachers offer their learners, has been confirmed during the pandemic (UN 2020). Ultimately, teachers are responsible for creating learning opportunities for learners (Van Niekerk 1999). When COVID-19 broke out, it led to a rethinking of how to keep learners and teachers safe. Innovative CPTD for the changing

circumstances became a top priority; traditional face-to-face CPTD simply could not take place.

Upskilling of digital skills was deemed an essential step in ongoing teacher training (Xaba 2020). This implementation of blended and/or online CPTD strategies was considered a safe way to upskill teachers and enable them to learn about online teaching and learning.

As a safety measure, many schools closed for prolonged periods, and social distancing was one of the first measures taken to promote the health and safety of individuals during the pandemic. Implementing remote learning and cancelling face-to-face meetings were just some of the changes that schools adapted to (McBride 2020). To accommodate this new way of teaching and learning, teaching professionals required adequate training in transforming their traditional classrooms into learning spaces that represented effective online or blended learning opportunities for learners (UN 2020). Both the efficient use of technology and various online teaching platforms were perceived as the best tools for emergency online teaching and learning. Consequently, the need for adequate teacher training in technology, assessment and pedagogy in order to implement online and differentiated learning methodologies became paramount (UN 2020) – and so teachers as adult learners needed CPTD that was tailored to their specific needs. Where institutions could not fully provide this kind of CPTD timeously, teachers were compelled to locate and access digital learning opportunities by themselves.

Teachers' implementation of self-learning

With the worldwide implementation of safety procedures in the form of lockdowns, individuals were encouraged to update their skills and knowledge remotely. Teachers had to be upskilled not only for content, but also for technical aptitude (McBride 2020). Of benefit was that they could teach and learn from their own homes without leaving their front doors. Gautam (2020: 3) suggests that 'reducing employees' commute time, in-person meetings, and other time-intensive activities at the workplace [affords them] the much-needed time to teach and learn (at work or home), as the top factor that prevents employees from learning, is a lack of time to learn at work'. Another opportunity was that teachers had more time to dedicate to their own learning and development in order to teach more effectively online.

The pandemic forced teachers to move out of their comfort zones to being completely dependent on technology and using online learning as the main tool for teaching. Where schools were unable to respond speedily enough with online CPTD, many teachers resorted to self-directed learning by viewing online videos or podcasts on how to utilise specific platforms for online teaching of their learners. Teachers could also contact their peers for advice and training on how to utilise the latest technology and platforms. This positive development was,

however, accompanied by an accentuation of the divide between the digitally advantaged and the digitally disadvantaged. Digitally advanced teachers and learners have access to virtual learning tools and have the skills to use the platforms effectively. In contrast, the digitally disadvantaged have difficulty accessing virtual-learning tools and may have difficulty using virtual platforms. Mannie (2020: 4) points out that '[t]here is also the problem of the digital divide in South Africa, which has to be overcome as a matter of urgency'. For some teachers, the switch to using only online learning was easy, but, for many others, the transition came with its own set of challenges in implementing this in their teaching. Online learning and blended learning programmes were an overnight saviour for those schools that were accustomed to face-to-face learning strategies (Gautam 2020). However, these schools were not in the majority. Unjust situations such as these further highlight social justice issues in relation to CPTD.

Teacher well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic

Teachers experienced different levels of anxiety, fear and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. The negative effects and feelings of this impeding fear and anxiety will continue in all spheres of life for some time into the future (Fitzpatrick, Harris & Drawve 2020). During the pandemic, many teachers returned to schools eventually, and taught either face to face or using a combination of digital platforms and face-to-face strategies. This was exacerbated by the fear of working in close proximity with learners and colleagues who may have been infected with COVID-19. Again, the issue of social justice came to the fore, since some schools were able to give teachers sufficient psychological support, but others were not able to do this (UN 2020: 15). Teachers were expected to go 'online' and continue teaching within a short space of time while experiencing acute fear and anxiety caused by the pandemic. Many teachers were not proficient in using digital resources for online teaching and this contributed to higher anxiety levels and barriers to teaching and learning (Czerniewicz et al. 2020). Digital learning and training also brought its own range of emotions with it, including stress, anxiety and fear of change that teachers suddenly experienced and had to deal with (Gautam 2020). Teachers were faced with pedagogical and social challenges because of having to teach online during the pandemic (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo 2020). A lack of adequate pedagogical online training and development may have contributed to teachers' pedagogical challenges with online teaching and learning. In addition, the social challenges mainly related to the lack of human interaction between teachers (Ferri et al. 2020).

Teachers and the rapid transition from contact learning to online learning

The time frame for implementing online learning and other types of learning instead of traditional face-to-face teaching during the national lockdown in South Africa, was extremely limited. The turnaround time for many teachers to learn to use and implement new technologies and learning management platforms was

short. This compels us to question whether it would be socially just to insist that teachers with already high levels of fear and anxiety face the challenges associated with implementing new teaching and learning strategies within such a limited time frame. The UN Policy brief states:

> *From the onset of the pandemic, teachers were immediately tasked with implementing distance learning modalities, often without sufficient guidance, training or resources. In many contexts, teacher professional development has moved online or been disseminated via telephone and video applications, but marginalised teachers may have missed out on such support (UN 2020: 14).*

The levels of support for teachers were not uniform. Some teachers had substantial support, whereas others had barely any support from peers or managers. Gautam (2020: 2) states: 'Teams and individuals across functions and levels are wading through uncharted waters, using technology they never had to before and doing things in a way never done before.' Implementing a new learning or teaching strategy, with high stressors and within a very short time frame, is problematic and may result in ineffective teaching or learning. Questions that arise are: Were teachers adequately trained to move rapidly from face-to-face learning to blended learning strategies and online strategies? Did teachers have any say in how they would learn to use online learning effectively? Mohamedbhai (2020) comments:

> *Experience has shown that quality online learning requires that the teaching material is prepared by a professional instructional designer, that the lecturer is pedagogically trained for delivering the programme and [that] the students are equally exposed to the pedagogy of online learning (Mohamedbhai 2020: 2).*

This indicates that teachers need specialised training in the design elements of any online work, tasks and assessments, and that a mere duplication of the physical classroom is frankly just not good enough for effective learning. This investigation aimed to explore the role of teachers as adult learners, and their experiences of CPTD during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conceptual framework

In our argument for a socially just CPTD model for teachers as adult learners, we offer Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) professional-capital framework in order to examine the concepts of CPTD, adult learners and social justice. Essentially, professional capital occurs when human capital – in this instance, a teacher's knowledge, skills and disposition toward education – is supported by social capital that consists of collaborative networks with other teachers and the larger school

community, including parents, in order to arrive at collaborative and collegial decision-making. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012: 37) refer to this as '[using] the group to change the group'. The framework of professional capital relies on opportunities for skill-sharing with peer teachers. The professional-capital framework is able to frame learning and development within a community of teachers and education specialists. Professional capital speaks about using teachers to teach other teachers, and about teachers willing to learn from their peers (Hargreaves & Fullan 2012). Learning does not occur in isolation, and teachers can learn from each other to improve their craft. Applying professional capital to the design of a socially just CPTD model will, we believe, have a positive impact on how teachers learn and are able to apply what they learn in the rapidly changing contexts that they find themselves in. If we were to consider the human capital component of this framework, it would be important to establish not only if the teachers have the necessary know-how (knowledge) and ability to use online and blended pedagogies, but also whether they have the desire or passion to do so. A well-designed, socially just CPTD model would be able to assist teachers in making correct pedagogical decisions in order to ensure effective learning that is learner-centred. Applying the social capital component of this framework would mean that creative, meaningful, collaborative relationships between teachers, learners and the wider school community are forged. Teachers become support structures for each other, thus improving professional and personal support as well as teacher well-being. The final component of this professional-capital framework relates to decisional capital. This is characterised by the acknowledgement, acceptance and respect afforded to teachers in both their individual and collective positions to make informed decisions and exercise sound judgement in relation to the teaching and learning milieu.

A case study: Teacher perceptions of blended learning and CPTD needs during the COVID-19 pandemic

Against the above background, we used an exploratory case study inquiry to gauge teacher perceptions of the demands of the transition to blended teaching and learning, and of their need for appropriate CPTD, in an independent South African primary school in Johannesburg, Gauteng, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a small case study where the focus was on ascertaining the personal experiences of teachers as adult learners and their experiences of CPTD in times of crises. The purposeful sample comprised 26 primary school teachers from the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase. Some teachers teach in more than one phase, for example a subject is taught in both the Foundation and Intermediate Phase. All the teachers were selected on the grounds of their participation in the transition from traditional classroom teaching to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown.

This study aims to investigate how teachers as adult learners experience CPTD in times of crisis. We propose implementing a socially just CPTD model to afford teachers effective opportunities for learning and development during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We obtained prior permission from the school principal to collect data and outlined the purpose and methods to be used in the inquiry. An electronic, online questionnaire was sent to the participants. Ethical considerations included ensuring that the identities of the participants were protected and that the request for voluntary participation was stated.

Using Google Forms, an online questionnaire was designed in order to gather data. Section A of the questionnaire contained closed-ended items regarding teachers' perceptions of the demands of the transition to blended teaching and learning and about their need for appropriate CPTD during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten closed-ended statements and questions were put to the participants. The statements in Section A focused on online technology for learning, on support from school managers, and on feelings/emotions during the pandemic. Participants completed a four-point Likert scale where 1 represented the least agreement with a given statement and 4 represented strong agreement with the statement. Examples of the closed-ended statements were as follows:

1. I was anxious to teach in COVID-19.
2. My assessments were effective and valid for online learning.
3. I felt more comfortable teaching face to face than online.

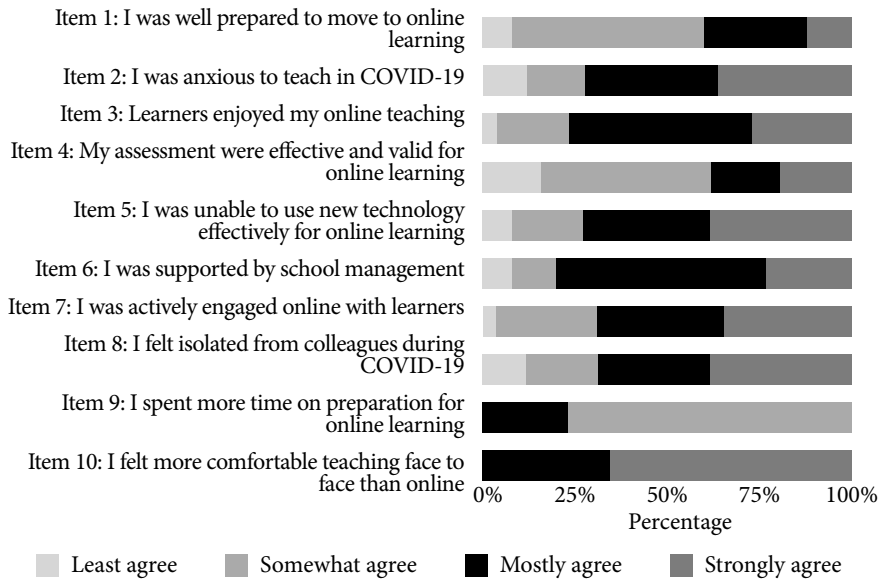
Section B of the questionnaire consisted of six open-ended questions. These questions sought clarification or additional, in-depth information on topics raised in Section A. Section B further sought explanations on teachers' preparedness to teach and assess learners using online learning platforms. Furthermore, it sought clarification on teachers' experiences as adult learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of the open-ended questions were:

1. What (if anything) would have prepared you better for online teaching?
2. Who were you able to contact if you needed help or more training when using online platforms such as Zoom, Teams?
3. What do you think would make blended learning a success?

Results

Quantitative data was analysed using Google Forms. The results of Section A are presented in a scale format ranging from 0% (least agreement with the statement) to 100% (strong agreement with the statement). The results indicate the responses of the teacher participants elicited by the questionnaire. Table 1 tabulates the responses to Section A of the questionnaire regarding blended teaching and learning and the need for appropriate CPTD during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Teachers' responses to closed-ended questionnaire items



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Themes 1 to 5 below represent the results of Section A of the questionnaire. Themes 6 to 8 below represent the results of Section B of the questionnaire.

1. Feelings of anxiety and isolation

Two statements in the questionnaire (Items 2 and 8) dealt with teacher anxiety and isolation (see Table 1). Item 2 stated: 'I was anxious to teach in COVID-19.' Thirty-six per cent (36%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 36% of respondents agreed with the statement. In total, 72% of the respondents felt anxious about teaching during the pandemic. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they did not experience much anxiety about teaching during this period. Item 8 stated: 'I felt isolated from colleagues during COVID-19.' Of the respondents, 38.5% strongly agreed with the statement, while 30.8% of respondents agreed with the statement. In total, 69.3% of the respondents acknowledged feeling isolated from colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Approach to online and blended learning before and during the pandemic

This theme focused on teachers' confidence and preparation when making the transition from traditional face-to-face teaching and the conventional learning context to online and blended learning. It also included facets of levels of training (e.g. the extent to which one was prepared for online learning approaches). Item 1 stated: 'I was well prepared to move to online learning.' Eight per cent (8%) of respondents least agreed with the statement, and 52% of respondents did not agree that they were well prepared for online teaching and learning. Teachers responded that they felt rushed into using virtual learning and teaching platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and that they needed more training to use these platforms effectively.

3. Pedagogy of online teaching and learning

Assessing learners' projects and work during the COVID-19 pandemic had to be done online. Many online teaching platforms have built-in methods of assessment, or allow for assessing in a more traditional way by marking learners' work but using online tools. Item 4 stated: 'My assessments were effective and valid for online learning.' Of the participants, 46.2% least agreed with this statement, while 15.4% of participants did not agree.

Using new technology for the purpose of online and blended teaching and learning required confidence on the part of teachers. Item 5 stated: 'I was able to use new technology effectively for online teaching.' Only 38.5% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement; 7.7% disagreed with the statement, while 19.2% least agreed with the statement. This finding indicates that teachers are not so confident in effectively using new learning and teaching platforms online. This might create opportunities for further training and for exploring non-traditional ways of training.

Item 9 stated: 'I spent more time on preparation for online learning.' In response, 76.9% of participants strongly agreed that they spent more time on preparation for online learning compared with more traditional face-to-face teaching, while 15.4% of participants agreed with this statement.

4. Support systems for teachers

Support for teachers encompasses emotional support, work-related support, cognitive support and promotion of general well-being. To understand how teachers perceived support from their school management team, a statement dealt with levels of support. Item 6 stated: 'I was supported by school management.' Of the participants, 23.1% strongly agreed with the statement, while 57.7% agreed with it. Only 7.7% of participants did not agree with this statement at all. It may be

of concern why these respondents felt that they did not get adequate emotional and work-related support from school managers during the pandemic.

5. Teachers' personal teaching preferences

Item 10 stated: 'I felt more comfortable teaching face to face than online.' A total of 65.4% of respondents strongly agreed that they were more comfortable teaching face to face in the classroom than teaching online, whereas 34.6% mostly agreed with this statement. This result indicates that all teachers agreed that they were more comfortable teaching face to face. However, this does not mean that teachers did not actively engage with learners online. Item 7 stated: 'I was actively engaged online with learners.' Of the participants, 34.6% mostly agreed and 34.6% strongly agreed with this statement. However, 26.9% did not agree that they had actively engaged with learners during the pandemic, and 3.8% least agreed.

6. Preparedness and readiness to move to online teaching

In Themes 6 to 8, we present a description of the qualitative analysis of teachers' reflections on their level of readiness and preparedness to move from face-to-face learning to online and blended learning. In this analysis, we also show how teachers suggest ways in which CPTD could have more adequately prepared them for the shift to online teaching and learning.

Teachers commented:

> *We were thrown in at the deep end. We hardly had enough time to learn how to work [Microsoft] Teams. (Participant 20)*
>
> *Our school trained us in the use of multiple online platforms (Seesaw, Teams, Zoom) and encouraged us to practise with different tasks and apps. I also used a 'buddy system' to try things out with colleagues. (Participant 24)*
>
> *I suggest [that] better technology and equipment was needed, e.g. cameras and projectors. (Participant 12)*
>
> *I would suggest competency training for teachers in all areas, [as well as] competency and skills training for learners in order to utilise ICT devices for academic purposes, [e.g.] how to use platforms to submit, download, print, etc. Teach time management skills, independent-learning skills, communication skills via chat/email/video, etc. [There should also be] training for parents [in] how they need to support their child, [in] how to use platforms to help children, [the] IT equipment required at home … (i.e. printers, tablet, Wi-Fi, etc.), [in] how to communicate with teachers,*

[and in] how to assist their child with time management and other soft organisational skills. (Participant 12)

I felt [as if] it took me longer to prepare for a lesson online than face to face. I had to spend [far] more time [on] my lesson planning. [A]s I was uncertain of the online learning. I had to write all my lessons out in more detail than I would have done [for face-to-face] teaching. I also had to make sure that the learners had the work before the lesson, and that took a lot of time. (Participant 6)

After the first shock, I started looking for [all] possible help. I dedicated lots of hours [to] this mission and if, [I] didn't succeed with one colleague, I begged another one for help. (Participant 7)

My co-worker and I worked every night in preparation for the next day. We worked Saturday and Sunday making sure everything was ready for the children. We pre-recorded many of our lessons and set many creative tasks for the children. (Participant 15)

I had to basically learn everything from scratch. I would sit and practise before my lessons so I would know what to do, which was very scary and stressful at the beginning. Once I got the hang of it, I didn't mind it. (Participant 18)

Teachers reflected that they were initially shocked to move so quickly from traditional face-to-face learning to virtual teaching and learning strategies. The above comments also indicate that some teachers decided to use their peers as mentors and thereby learn from them.

7. The need for appropriate CPTD during the pandemic

Under this theme, teachers expressed their views on their experiences of CPTD during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also made suggestions regarding methods to improve CPTD during such pandemic.

Teachers commented:

I [think] that we needed more one-on-one training. In a group it was very confusing and rushed. (Participant 4)

If we had [had] a Zoom licence to start with, it would have been much easier. There was far too much pressure from the top and I felt that they didn't take into consideration the age group that I teach. (Participant 15)

My mentor was taken away from me to help someone else full-time. Training was offered but never materialised. I reached out to various colleagues

but, finally, I had to figure it out for myself or ask family members. [I'm] very disappointed [about the lack of support. (Participant 25)

Convincing teachers of the benefits and [of] training non-stop, [i]f possible, in small groups of the same-level teachers. (Participant 7)

Online teaching happened so quickly; we had very little [time] to prepare and very little training. More time to prepare and train would have assisted us. (Participant 18)

[I needed] better training from school [onwards]. (Participant 17)

Prior knowledge about the technology [is] needed. (Participant 12)

[What was needed was] more time to plan and training [in the use of] technological tools for interactive teaching and learning. (Participant 18)

8. Teacher experiences of blended and online learning and teaching

Under this theme, teachers reflected on using online and blended teaching and learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers commented:

I believe this would be highly effective, as learners need to be more competent and independent [in] working online and in class, and [in] acquiring soft skills and competency on ICT devices. The benefits [of] developing skills for careers one day are [considerable]. It would allow for blending different learning styles (auditory, visual, tactile, etc.), and ensure teachers do not become complacent/boring in [their use of] teaching methodologies, and [it would] inspire teachers to continuously re-create resources and assessments. Diversity in learning is needed in today's times. (Participant 12)

Very challenging and unsettling for the kids. (Participant 11)

I prefer teaching in the classroom. You have a lot more interaction and can see where a child is struggling. Children [have more confidence] in class to ask questions and to ask for help. (Participant 4)

I believe there is a place for both; however, the entire class would [either] need to be face to face or online. A mix does not work. (Participant 21)

It's tricky to give dedicated attention to both online students and students in the classroom. [Also,] children online miss out on peer interaction. (Participant 25)

I am not for blended learning, just because I feel that seeing the learners face to face makes it so much easier to engage and connect with your class [compared with] online. I would rather stick to classroom learning. Learners will then spend less time on the screen and more time [on] their books and [in] the field doing physical activities. (Participant 22)

I [am strongly in favour of] blended learning because it gives children different learning options. It gives them an opportunity to do what they love. We are working with … Generation Z (Gen Z, iGen or Centennials). They are exposed to technological devices, so why can't we use that to our advantage. Why can't we take what they love and use it to teach them? 'If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow' – John Dewey. (Participant 3)

Discussion

The results indicate that, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit South African schools, teachers and learners had a very limited time frame to move from face-to-face learning to a safer mode of learning. COVID-19 brought challenges in education to the forefront, especially in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector specifically related to online teaching (Kangong 2020). Online learning contributed to sustaining a continuous process of learning during the highest level of lockdown. Later, when the rate of transmission of the virus declined and lockdown restrictions eased, schools could move to a blended learning mode so as to continue the teaching and learning process. Some schools adopted a complete, online learning structure, whilst others used radio and television programmes to continue the teaching and learning process. At some schools in South Africa, cell phones were also used to communicate and send work to learners and their parents. However, this provisioning was very uneven and an examination of learning and teaching using the social justice lens indicates considerable disparity in the opportunities for teachers and learners.

In the present investigation, many teachers commented on the feelings of fear, anxiety and high levels of stress experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A factor contributing to the high levels of stress during this time was learning how to use technology and online learning platforms like Teams and Zoom within a limited time frame. The results indicate that there was a digital divide, in that many teachers stated that they could not use digital teaching modes and platforms proficiently. They noted that more training would assist them in using these. Not only did they have to learn how to use these online learning platforms and their associated technology effectively, but also how to prepare their learners for using this pedagogy. Often, this was accompanied by uncertainty and feeling unprepared to teach online. Other teachers, however, responded that online learning and teaching were opportunities for personal and professional growth and for gaining new knowledge and skills. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) indicate that the needs and the contributions of teachers may affect the professional

capital of education systems. The conceptual framework of professional capital refers to sharing knowledge and skills with peers. It is clear from the results that teachers asked their peers to help with training and gaining skills to use online teaching platforms. This resulted in upskilling teachers and in them becoming more confident in using these platforms. This also links with social capital, as the community of teachers were upskilled and the transfer of knowledge and skills uplifted the community of teachers and learners.

Teachers also indicated that appropriate CPTD was essential in preparing them to move from traditional classroom teaching to online teaching. Most participants in this study participated in CPTD before the nationwide lockdown but noted that, presently, training that was individualised was more relevant than the group approach to CPTD adopted in the past. Teachers called on their colleagues during the lockdown to help with using technology and online learning platforms. Others used the Internet and online videos to train themselves. They considered these as some of the most effective ways that CPTD occurred during the pandemic.

Reframing CPTD

In the light of the literature reviewed and the analysis of the data, it is clear that a CPTD model is needed that not only caters for successful teacher preparation for varied modes of teaching, but also does so in a socially just manner that benefits all teachers equally. It is clear from the results that digitally disadvantaged teachers face challenges in accessing digital modes of teaching and in using these modes proficiently. This is exacerbated by their lack of access to the internet and computer hardware. Thus, our contribution in this chapter includes a CPTD model that is reframed so that it is socially just for teachers in that it better accommodates them with regard to online and blended learning strategies. This holds true for post-pandemic CPTD opportunities too. We present a modified or revised model (Figure 2) of the original, which includes aspects of social justice in the planning of CPTD activities, delivering socially just CPTD, and ensuring teacher well-being.

We believe that, through an application of this model, especially in times of crisis, school managers can ensure social justice practices by providing teachers with the following:

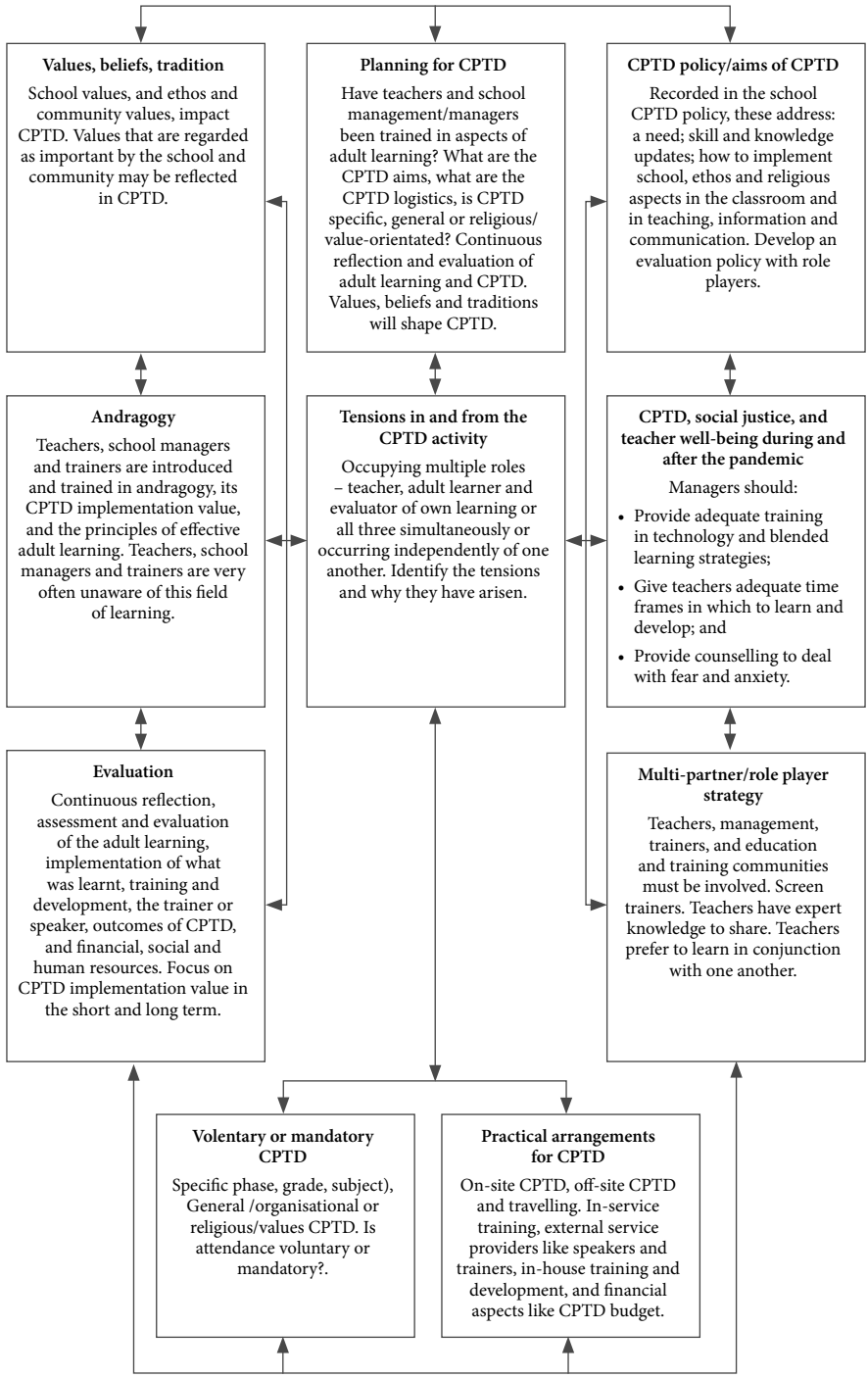
- Up-to-date CPTD in using technology, digital teaching modes/platforms, and blended learning strategies (This includes ensuring that teachers have reliable access to the Internet and suitable computer hardware and software.);
- Reasonable time frames for them to learn and develop, as well as round-the-clock tech support; and
- Counselling to deal with fear, isolation and anxiety.

Figure 2 (on page 163) highlights aspects that make CPTD and adult learning more effective. Implementers of this model need to consider ten steps when planning for socially just CPTD:

Step 1: Planning for CPTD.
Step 2: Establishing CPTD aims and policy.
Step 3: Ensuring that CPTD is socially just and focuses on teacher well-being.
Step 4: Developing multi-partner/role player strategy for CPTD.
Step 5: Practical arrangements.
Step 6: Voluntary or mandatory CPTD.
Step 7: Evaluation.
Step 8: Andragogy.
Step 9: Values, beliefs and traditions of individuals and the organisation.
Step 10: Tensions in CPTD.

A reframing of the original model includes methods that allow CPTD to be more socially just for all teachers. This means, firstly, that adequate training in online and blended learning strategies is crucial during times of change. Teachers should be provided with reliable access in order to feel comfortable when using different technologies and online learning platforms. Secondly, teachers must be given a reasonable time to learn and develop so that they can use technology effectively to facilitate teaching and learning. This kind of support can reduces feelings of being overwhelmed, fearful and isolated. Thirdly, teachers must have access to counselling to deal with fear, isolation and anxiety. Teachers have had to deal with the fear of COVID-19, with feelings of despair, and with fears for their own personal health and safety. COVID-19 has left many teachers feeling isolated – even though their laptop screens have been full of faces of other teachers during online training sessions. It is important to create a feeling of belonging and connectedness in times of isolation (AISNSW 2021). Teachers have had to adjust to online and blended learning strategies to continue teaching their learners, whilst also learning how to use digital platforms to teach and assess learners. Providing teachers with access to skills and up-to-date technology to develop their digital competency, as well as with psychological counselling to deal with feelings of isolation and high levels of anxiety, will prepare them to deal with technical and pedagogical change and to navigate emotional stress during educational crises in the future. Teachers' well-being should be a priority in times of stability but even more so in times of volatility. Finally, teachers have reimagined their vision and expectations of CPTD during the pandemic. It appears that the creation of digital, professional learning communities is a viable possibility for the future. Roberts and Pruitt (2003) argue that the basis of the success of these learning communities lies in the fact that, because teaching is constantly evolving, teachers re-examine their pedagogies to satisfy the needs of their learners. Teachers who continually develop and learn in their communities may contribute to effective schooling and education (Twining, Raffaghelli, Albion et al. 2013).

Figure 2: Revised model to enhance planning and implementation of CPTD



Source: Adapted from Van der Merwe-Muller, 2018

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has exacerbated the fact that many teachers and learners are prejudiced due to a lack of adequate access to technology in order to enable successful online learning. However, this pandemic has, in many ways, also been a catalyst for change in all sectors of society, including the way in which teaching and learning occur. In keeping with Winston Churchill's popularised Machiavellian saying, 'Never let a good crisis go to waste', the present investigation provided us with an opportunity to reflect on how education is able to address the impact of economic, social and cultural barriers in times of crisis.

The intention of this small-scale study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of online and blended learning during COVID-19. The results indicate that teachers felt overwhelmed when moving from the traditional classroom to online learning forums. Such results furthermore show how anxious they felt about their ability to present successful lessons during the pandemic. We were also able to understand the underlying teaching and learning problems that have come to the fore due to COVID-19, such as lack of access to technology, inadequate CPTD to prepare teachers for online teaching and learning, and uneven support to cope in times of crises. McBride (2020: 1) states: 'Throughout history, significant events have routinely played a part in human interaction, even in training and development.' For Huang, Liu, Tlili et al. (2020), too, educational information construction needs active promotion, and both education providers and government need to conduct online teacher training to better equip teachers to help learners. As a solution, we offer a CPTD model that aims at being socially just in its application, especially in times of crisis.

Teachers and learners will continue to seek out innovative ways to navigate the disruptions caused to their learning trajectories in times of crisis. The national lockdown in South Africa forced schools to make rapid changes in the way teachers taught and learners learnt. The pandemic highlighted the severe inequality in some sectors of society, and, as a result, compelled us to take serious note of them and to action appropriate measures to alleviate these inequalities. For teachers, it meant refocusing their role to include educating learners for a future world of work. Innovation in teaching and education should be a priority for all teachers and schools. When teachers rely on outdated techniques, we need to question if adequate teaching and learning for future work are occurring. The pandemic has forced us into acknowledging that newer pedagogies are achievable, especially when adequate training takes place before and during times of fast-paced changes.

School managers and policymakers (UN 2020) must prioritise support mechanisms for teacher training and development. To make the transition from face-to-face learning to online and blended learning more effective, school managers must actively create conditions of equitable provision of, and access to, CPTD in order for social justice to occur. This can be achieved by providing all

teachers with adequate and differentiated CPTD programmes and by utilising a training model as suggested in this chapter. Moreover, teachers as adult learners can generate useful ideas and topics for CPTD and can inform and improve their practice by recommending effective and socially just CPTD activities (Dasoo & Van der Merwe-Muller 2020). As Williams (1983) proposes, in times of challenge, adult learners should turn to learning in order to understand what is going on, to adapt to it, and, more importantly, to shape change. Further studies may include investigations into the long-term adaptation of online and blended learning and teaching models post-pandemic.

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Designing online learning environments in higher education: Building capacity of lecturers to design and facilitate blended e-pedagogy for mature students

Juliet Stoltenkamp & Paul Dankers

Abstract

Amidst the spread of COVID-19, higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa were compelled to offer academic programmes through online learning by utilising digital information and communication technologies (ICT) that were specifically designed to deliver content to mature students who used technology in their learning. This chapter focuses on the effective design of blended-learning environments and building the capacity of lecturers to design and facilitate interactive, blended e-pedagogy for mature students. We use the adapted ADDIE model to illustrate how lecturers can design and facilitate blended e-pedagogy for mature students. In fact, the COVID-19 crisis catapulted blended e-pedagogy to centre stage in higher education and created the need for: e-pedagogy training; the refining of e-tools; collaborative e-tools; and online assessment e-tools.

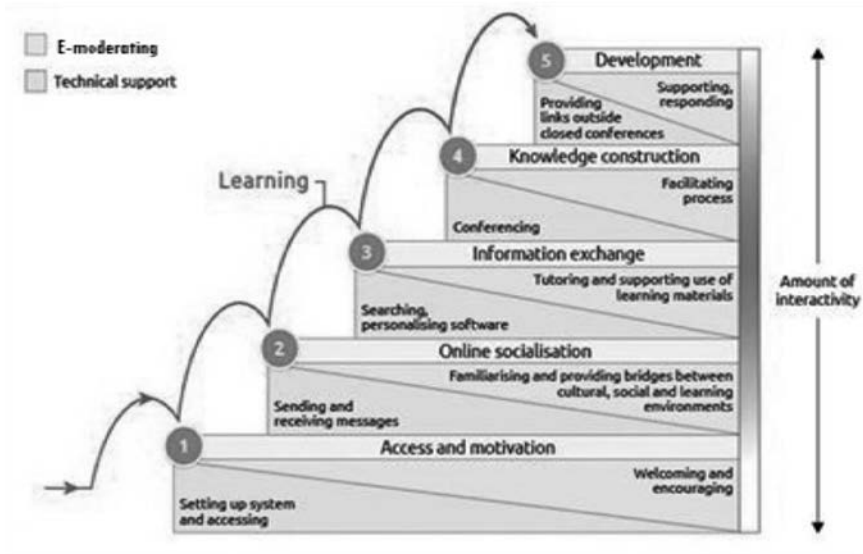
Introduction

Although the COVID-19 crisis impacted higher education institutions adversely, prior to the COVID-19 period, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) had made considerable strides in relation to the adoption of blended e-pedagogy and emerging technologies for teaching and learning. The adoption of blended e-pedagogies necessitates 'integrating e-pedagogy with existing styles of teaching, which must take into consideration pedagogical and technological features to form effective teaching and learning designs' (Alebaikan & Troudi 2010: 510). This focus on design prior to COVID-19 allowed UWC to continue fully online, enabling lecturers to utilise the ADDIE model, and the adaptation of the ADDIE model, to design their online environments and platforms to facilitate blended e-pedagogies for mature students. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to focus on the effective design of blended-learning environments–e-pedagogy and present a framework for online course creation. The framework includes the five stages of the generic *Instructional Design (ADDIE)* model (Figure 1b), coinciding and linking with the stages deliberated by the work of Salmon (2004) regarding online teaching and learning (*e-moderation*). This framework guides the design of online environments, emphasising the provision of the critical first steps, 'familiarisation and socialisation', for e-tools and environments prior to the critical stages of achieving effective online communication and knowledge creation (Salmon 2004).

Figure 1a: Online course creation

Source: Stoltenkamp 2007

Figure 1b: ADDIE model linked with stages of e-moderation model



Source: Salmon 2004

The model enables us to engage with lecturers around the importance of introducing e-pedagogy into activities and recognising the value thereof. Thus, the model presents a *blended e-pedagogy training approach that is technology-based* and integrated with a face-to-face teaching approach within UWC's online learning system. To help lecturers improve the quality of online teaching and learning, HEIs need to facilitate e-pedagogy 'training sessions on the use of ICT', as well as provide 'teachers with the necessary tools and [allocate] them … more resources' so as to accelerate their 'efficiency in blended e-pedagogies' (Jackowicz & Sahin 2021: 277). During COVID-19, online learning has become a 'lifeline for all matters related to teaching and learning, … and can be adopted alongside a face-to-face learning mode as part of a blended learning setup' (Chaka 2020: 6). This teaching approach enables lecturers to manage and take ownership of their online experiences, and effectively engage with e-tools, in order to deliver on their core teaching and assessment activities. It should be noted that any course design based on a blended-learning approach 'which reduces the number of face-to-face lectures and makes learning more accessible, appears to fit into the needs of adult learners in terms of flexibility and time constraints' (Cocquyt, Zhu, Diep et al. 2019: 4).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created its own unique set of problems for mature students and lecturers alike, including access limitations in respect of online environments as well as a lack of technological skills. The structuring of activities, and the type of tasks and the assessment approaches, for the traditional classroom has inevitably become more demanding. Educators

increasingly employ emerging technologies, and, by adopting these technologies, pre-existing challenges are often exacerbated by pervasive and fundamental social factors, such as increasingly diverse student groups, multilingualism, rapidly changing post-study employment opportunities, unequal and deeply debilitating social contexts within which students have to study, and the shift from historically homogeneous higher education classrooms to a very diverse classroom along a complex cluster of intersecting dimensions. It would be erroneous to take for granted that educators will review and plan teaching and learning activities according to the demands of new technologies (Lim & Chai 2008). It is important, therefore, that academics at HEIs adopt e-pedagogy skills in order to respond to the advances of educational technology in supplementing traditional instruction. The development of learning communities for mature learners is dependent on the development of 'skills to assist them with their studies', and, where technology skills 'are less well developed, participation in group activities can also be of huge benefit' (Cornelius, Gordon & Ackland 2011: 388). Technology has become a vital component of education – unfortunately, without prior consideration or assessment of whether it necessarily augments learner-focused activities (Adams & Brindley 2007).

E-pedagogy concepts

As researchers, we contribute to the development of mature students, and to the online teaching agenda, by building the capacity of lecturers to design and facilitate blended e-pedagogy for such students, and enter into dialogue on how important it is for lecturers to grapple with threshold concepts, especially with the concept of e-pedagogy. In designing and facilitating blended e-pedagogy, lecturers should take cognisance that blended e-pedagogy 'goes beyond simply mixing … online and offline elements'. Rather it can be 'conceptualised and operationalised as a mix of structured and unstructured; asynchronous and synchronous; inside curriculum and out-of-curriculum; distance and in-person; [and] ICT-mediated and non-ICT mediated' design (Chan 2021: 3). A crucial distinction is made between e-pedagogy and e-tools in this chapter. When driving the use of emergent technologies for teaching and learning, a threshold concept within this effort is e-pedagogy that intersects with different approaches to teaching online. In most instances, e-pedagogy utilises digital ICT technologies that are specifically designed to deliver content to students who use technology in their learning. In educational practice, various definitions of e-pedagogy have been suggested. In the early stages of its formulation, e-pedagogy was defined as an e-learning pedagogy that emerges from online environments. In fact, lecturers engage with the concept of electronic teaching and learning known as electronic pedagogy (e-pedagogy) (Mehanna 2004). Dempster (2006: 1) broadly defines e-pedagogy 'as learning design that incorporates educational quality, values and effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment activities supported by

technology'. Elliot (2008: 117) maintains that the 'traditional teaching methods' were applied to 'new learning environments', shifting them toward an e-pedagogy. Serdyukova and Serdyukov (2014: 5) refer to e-pedagogy as 'a comprehensive science which integrates all issues related to online education, starting with the theoretical foundations', such as connectivism, constructivism, cognitivism, and behaviourism. Sharma (2015: 2) defines e-pedagogy 'as learning that involves a web-based component, enabling collaboration and access to content that extends beyond the classroom'. More recently, e-pedagogy has been defined as:

> *a comprehensive science, which integrates all issues related to online education, starting with the theoretical foundations, and embracing higher education institutions, pedagogic systems, personal and professional development, principles of teaching and learning, instructional approaches and methods, knowledge construction in online learning, student and instructor's characteristics, educational technologies, course design and process planning (Serdyukova & Serdyukov 2014: 5).*

Based on these definitions Serdyukov (2015) offers a model for e-pedagogy that could support theory in respect of online learning. He suggests that 'e-pedagogy is balanced between classical education theory, psychology, sociology and technology'; that it 'is never static, but constantly evolving and transforming along with the new technologies and social processes, which requires its continuous modification'; and that, ultimately, 'the proof of its effectiveness is the students' learning outcomes' (Serdyukov 2015: 71). Currently, 'the use of information and communication technologies such as electronic media, educational technology, the internet, and computers in the teaching process is defined as e-learning'–e-pedagogy (Elçiçek & Erdemci 2021: 20).

Aligned to e-pedagogies are e-tools, which could refer to modes utilised to facilitate online teaching and online learning practices–e-pedagogy. Generally, an e-tool can be defined as a computer or web-based application intended to make a task easier, such as blogs, Twitter, wikis, podcasts, chat rooms, discussion forums, assessments, 'as well as various social utilities that help to [make] the whole learning process … [an] integral part of communication' (Stoltenkamp & Mapuva 2010: 209). Stoltenkamp and Mapuva (2010: 212) imply that 'in the education sector e-tools have been used to enhance communication, which[,] through globalization, [has made it] easy for interaction to be executed at a very fast rate'. Lecturers are encouraged not to use e-tools simply to enhance the course material but rather to use them for 'pedagogical–didactical justification of the implementation of e-tools – it cannot be limited to mere[ly] using the tool just because such a tool exists' (Vandewaetere 2008: 9.5). We highlight the effective use of e-tools for teaching, learning and assessment, and the quality assurance of online environments, in order to drive e-pedagogy in complex higher education environments, since a change in the use of technology by educators is dependent on a change in their pedagogical approach and the use of online tools (Lim & Chai 2008).

In addition, we highlight: the effective use of e-tools for specific discipline projects; structured and well-designed online environments which attempt to change perceptions and shape knowledge; the provision of spaces for feedback related to challenging concepts; the responsiveness to curriculum design and learner needs and learning styles; and being aware of changing identity shifts as learners have to think about the application of the unfamiliar concepts within their own projects. Lecturers are expected to focus on teaching effectively online, rather than focusing on a list of e-tools available and on which learning management system they prefer. This leads to a transformed way of thinking (Meyer & Land 2003) where lecturers deliberate on the design of an online environment for learning instead of dumping content online.

The use of technologies for teaching and learning has increased exponentially during the pandemic. Some lecturers across disciplines still feel that the notion of e-pedagogy does not relate to their specific discipline. How would we engage lecturers around the importance of introducing e-pedagogy into activities and recognising the value thereof? Kidd (2010: xvii) suggests that the most proficient way to design an online environment for mature learners is by ensuring that 'instructional designers, educators, trainers, and facilitators … pay particular attention to the design of instruction, modes of delivery, instructional and teaching practices, as well as the technologies employed to disseminate the learning to adults'. In addition, as lecturers in education for mature students, 'we are not only responsible for designing content and delivery but also for scaffolding meaningful social interaction and the development of transfer skills' (Roumell 2019: 21). In designing interactive online content, lecturers should pay particular attention to the technology they employ, because a change in the use of technology could suggest a shift in pedagogical approach.

Stages of instructional design (ADDIE)

The ADDIE model enables us to engage with lecturers about the importance of implementing e-pedagogical approaches. The ADDIE model includes five stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. These coincide with the stages deliberated by the work of Salmon (2004) regarding online teaching and learning, and, especially, in enabling students to become self-directed, independent learners, and to develop as knowledge builders through engagement with interactive online courses. Such stages include access, socialisation and familiarisation, information exchange, maintaining substantive communication, and development as a knowledge builder. We deliberate on a blended e-pedagogy training programme in alignment with the model, endeavour to ensure the successful implementation of well-designed and structured online courses, and seek to foster facilitation and enable an online community that is able to navigate and use e-tools effectively. It is essential that lecturers be trained 'to overcome the challenges of online

teaching that most of university instructors' face, and 'e-pedagogy workshops need to be offered to them' (Alebaikan & Troudi 2010: 511).

Stage 1: Analysis

This stage pertains to the online presence of lecturers that allows them to gain access to online platforms and support services available at their institution.

Access to information technology (IT) resources and training

Lecturers should have access to IT resources, to face-to-face and online, scheduled e-pedagogy training sessions, and to one-on-one consultations. They should be able to call on a professional IT support team and have access to dedicated online support. Salmon (2004: 31) noted that lecturers require 'information and technical support to get online, and strong motivation and encouragement to put in the necessary time and effort'. Thus, access to online information for staff and students should be prioritised. Strategies such as blended learning that can mitigate the risk of the effect of the pandemic on teaching and learning, should be in place. Mahaye (2020: 19) suggests that 'blended learning would enable learners [to] have access to online learning materials as well as [be] able to interact with each other and teachers or instructor[s]'. However, lecturers should take into consideration that 'students in rural areas are disadvantaged in terms of access to technology-based learning due to [the] economic conditions of rural areas' (Mahaye 2020: 19). It is the joint responsibility of the professional support team and the lecturers (in particular, those ultimately responsible for online modules/courses) to ensure that learners gain sufficient knowledge about ICT to be able to successfully navigate the e-tools. Moreover, professional 'support for adult learners is an important issue and is particularly important at the outset of a programme, where it is required to help develop a familiarity with the learning process as well as learning objectives' (Cornelius et al. 2011: 388).

While access to online resources is important in order to facilitate learning by mature learners, our society still has an insidious digital divide, and, in most instances, 'not everyone has reliable access to an Internet connection nor the digital literacy skills to engage in self-directed learning in a virtual environment. eLearning can further serve to disadvantage the most vulnerable groups in society' (Boeren, Roumell & Roessger 2020: 203). In these groups where there is such a digital divide because of the shift from face-to-face to online teaching and learning during the pandemic, this shift 'might further exacerbate educational inequalities, due to uneven access to information technology, devices, and connectivity' (Du Preez & Le Grange 2020: 99).

Currently, online learning for mature students continues to remain an important part of adult education at UWC. However, the task remains for UWC 'to learn how to provide a positive "social" environment using an electronic medium' for

mature learners (Cercone 2008: 152). It is no secret that 'technology will continue to change as new technologies are developed' and that 'instructors will need to adapt, change, and continue to learn about how this "electronic" environment can be used' (Cercone 2008: 152). Hence, it is vital that the responsible lecturers acknowledge the importance of e-pedagogy training, and integrate ICT training into their curriculum right from the start. HEIs need to recognise that it is imperative for lecturer training to take place before allowing them to teach online in order that they may be 'thoroughly prepared [as regards] online pedagogy and instructional methodology' (Serdyukov 2015: 67).

In education, when considering the use of technology to accommodate mature students' learning styles, 'distance learning programs require careful and deliberate instructional design steps' in which learning by these students 'should be supported efficiently and effectively with technology that is appropriate for the learners and learning' (James & Gardner 1995: 27). The existence of factors that contribute to the creation of a conducive environment has also been confirmed by America (2006: ii), who extensively explored the association between certain 'antecedent factors and the adoption of a specific technology', such as an e-learning system. America (2006: 80) further emphasised the need for training in order for users to recognise the usefulness of the system. Users who are cynical about the educational consequences of a particular technology can only make knowledgeable decisions through exposure to training and implementation (America 2006). Of paramount importance to students' performance has been the successful incorporation of ICT sessions into programmes, whereby the sessions are not viewed merely as ICT sessions, but rather as subject-matter sessions enabled by ICT. Furthermore, students who are exposed to ICT training during an orientation programme become familiar with the e-tools within a short time frame (Masters & Duffield 2004), thus enabling them to use those tools to benefit their learning. According to instructional designers, 'a good e-tool is easy to use, is time-saving and helps to reduce the amount of paper', and 'e-tools should support an interactive learning process and lead to a more efficient and simple communication' (Vandewaetere 2008: 9.6).

Showcase the design and structure of an online environment

We showcase an example of a structured online environment that emphasises the importance of design, including how a course is structured into manageable units/topics, and provides the students with a course outline, weekly lectures and related course resources, including videos and presentations, past course resources, a course calendar and announcements. A self-directed learning space should also be made available where students can participate in tests and quizzes at their own pace and in their own time (within a specific time frame). To ensure epistemological access, lecturers require pedagogical and technical proficiency, and, 'if any degree of epistemological access is to be ensured during the Covid- 19 pandemic, then it cannot simply be via online

teaching/learning, but ought to be through an expanded notion of emergency remote teaching/learning' (Du Preez & Le Grange 2020: 100). Moreover, the design and structure of the online environment would involve different aspects of e-learning and, 'importantly, students should be actively involved in designing learning programmes through providing regular feedback on their experiences' (Du Preez & Le Grange 2020: 100). This period (pandemic) necessitates the advance of online environments and the 're-design and development in practical terms' by the 'phasing of blended learning pedagogy as a vehicle from the orthodox approach (traditional classroom) to a digital technology approach (digital classroom) to set the rising generation on a calculated [pathway] and direction …' (Mahaye 2020: 20).

Figure 2: Example of structured weekly lectures

Source: Marketing Management Module, EMD616, 2020 within iKamva

It should be noted that we did not start by mentioning a specific online platform or any specific e-tool. The focus was on structure – aligned to the selection of e-tools – for a specific purpose. Hence, we could showcase, as Cousin (2006: 4) highlights, a 'less-is-more' design approach, and the need for lecturers to make good decisions about what is critical in order for their students to 'grasp' the subject. We showcase the design and structure of an online environment and use the opportunity to draw the attention of lecturers to the outcome of the effective use of specific tools for their discipline-specific projects in respect of student learning (Middendorf & Pace 2004).

Develop an instructional strategy

In order to appropriately support learners who are expected to engage in online communication, and with online content and assessment, the professional support team and the lecturer should be equipped with the requisite analytical information and a clear motivation for the creation of an online course. At this stage, the lecturer is made aware of various instructional-design models, including non-linear and cyclical approaches. Furthermore, the lecturer is guided regarding the development of an instructional strategy that provides a detailed breakdown of the specific module/unit – specifically, the alignment of learning outcomes, assessment activities, teaching methodology, learning material and selected e-tools. Emphasis is also placed on the selection of e-tools and design that are in alignment with learning theories. In addition, 'instructors, instructional designers, and other professionals working in the design of online environments for adults must understand adult learning theory, especially in terms of its relationship to distance or online learning' (Cercone 2008: 139). One of the most notable learning theories for mature learners is Knowles' learning theory of andragogy (Knowles 1973). According to Knowles (1973), the learning theory for mature learners should demonstrate a unified model that 'can incorporate principles and technologies from various theories and still maintain its own integrity' (Knowles 1973: 102). Concepts in 'adult learning theories help faculties understand their lifelong learning students and in turn design more meaningful learning experiences for them' (Cercone 2008: 147).

Figure 3: Example of an instructional strategy

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY/PLAN

The instructional strategy gives a detailed breakdown of each chapter /sub-units, listing learning outcomes and content and indicating the types of activities that will be included. Also indicate on your instructional strategy how your learners will be assessed.

Chapter	Sub-Unit	Chapter/Sub-unit Overview/Out-come	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Activities	Content	eTool/s
Introduction to Angles		Learners should be able to work at his/her own pace while interacting with various websites and watching videos. They should be able to suggest reasons why it is necessary to measure angles	Identify angles	Self-Assessment at the end of the video	Angles in our environment	Link to animated video with interactive exercises
Types of Angles	Angles and lines	Identify and compare angles. They should also be able to summarise the rules for the different types of angles by playing games and viewing videos	Identify Angles Draw and measure angles Distinguish between angles which are obtuse and reflex angles	Online Worksheet	Vertex, rays and lines. Naming angles	Uploaded video (Iwi-soft & A-tube catcher)
	Right Angles and Straight lines				90° and straight angles	
	Acute Angles				Angles less than 90°	Link to website; Alien Angle Games
	Obtuse Angles				Angles more than 90° nut less than 180°	*Photostory uploaded to summarise the chapter*
	Reflex Angles				Angles greater than 180° but less than 360°	
Parallel Lines and Transversals	Alternate Angles	Identify and compare angles. They should also be able to summarise the rules for the different types of angles	Identify and compare angles. Measure and classify angles.	MCQ's Online Worksheet *Possibly also an Assignment or participation in Discussion Forum*	Z angles – alternate angles.	Khan Academy Video uploaded (A-tube catcher)
	Corresponding Angles				F angles – Corresponding angles	Video uploaded MathsMaster A-tube Catcher
	Vertically Opposite Angles				Angles formed where two lines cross	
	Supplementary Angles				Angles on a straight line add up to 180°	*Link to interactive activities*
	Complementary Angles				Adjacent angles, angles that add up to 90°	

Source: Science Educator- B.ED. Honours: Computers in Education, 'Design an Instructional Event', Short Course, 2013 within iKamva

Figure 4: Instructional strategy and selection of e-tools in alignment with learning theories (PGDIP: Technical Vocational Training Programme online environment within iKamva) and CIECT online module used as Blueprint for Departmental demonstrations/meetings.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY/PLAN

Workshop: eTools for PG Dip TVET Programme

The instructional strategy gives a detailed breakdown of the module, *PG Dip: Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET)*; and its related phases. Each phase includes learning outcomes, content, activities, reading material and selected eTools. The PG Dip TVET provide a postgraduate qualification tailored to the vocational and post-school teaching environment, for educators currently employed in the TVET college and post-school sector.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this module is to highlight the importance of the application of eTools to support teaching-and-learning practices. The module also aims to demonstrate access from various modes of delivery, namely: Laptop, iPad, Tablet and mobile phone.

Learning Outcomes	Content	Activities	Reading Material	eTools
Create Manageable Learning Units (Lessons)				
The learner will be able to: ▪ Create an online structure ▪ Create sub-units ▪ Embed relevant components (images, text, documents, videos)	The learner will view template of possible online structure according to outline: ▪ TVET, the Economy and Society ▪ Theorists and Theories in TVET and Post-Schooling ○ Week 1: Theoretical Paradigms ▪ Introduction ▪	'Show-Tell-and-Do' Hands-on interactive training and participation	Stoltenkamp, J., Kabaka, M. & Braaf, N. (2014). Lessons Learnt: Support Interventions during a Blended Course for Teacher-Educators from Urban and Rural Settings. http://file.scirp.org/Html/7-6302132_47157.htm.	Make use of eTool: ▪ Lessons

T & L Tips

T&L Tip: Students should have an **active role in the learning process**. The online discussions may assist in this.

T&L Tip: Embedding video clips can assist students to **reinforce** their own learning. Hence, it links to both the **Constructivist and Cognitivist** theories of learning.

** **Constructivism:** the video assist with the **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** focuses on the prior knowledge of students and links to new information provided.

** **Cognitivism:** the process of **assimilation and accommodation** may occur when students watch the video clips.

T&L Tip: Viewing external links to other resources can reinforce learning. A student can explore in their own time and connect their understanding with the knowledge they have attained already. Hence it focuses on assimilation and accommodation which links to Cognitivism.

T&L Tip: The Tests & Quizzes can be used by students to enhance self-directed learning in order for them to assess their own knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities.

T&L Tip: Case Study asignments usually require students to identify problems and issues in a scenario, to demonstrate their developing knowledge of theories, and to make decisions based on these in order to solve the problem or issue presented in the scenario

Source: XXX

tage 2: Design

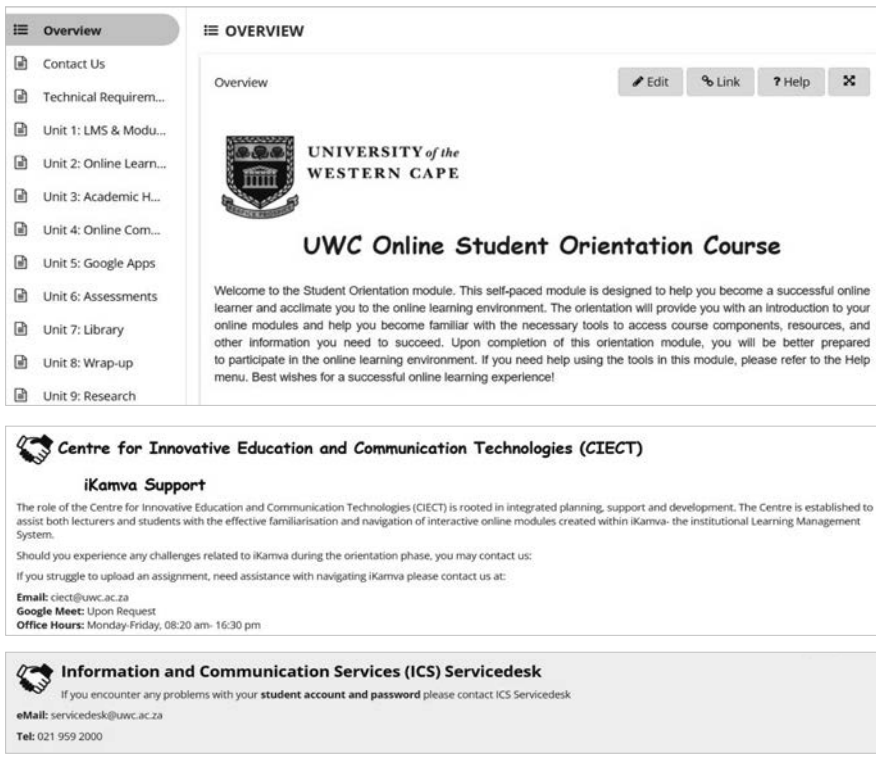
This stage gives clear instructions with regard to socialisation and familiarisation.

Create an orientation section to develop a sense of direction

Student orientation becomes a platform for exposing prospective (and current) students to the online environment that is now available to them. This practice is supported by pertinent literature regarding student orientation (Gottesman & Baer 2006; Laurillard 1993; Masters & Duffield 2004). Research has found that student orientation covers all aspects of university life – including how tuition is going to be dispensed to students (Gottesman & Baer 2006; Masters & Duffield 2004).

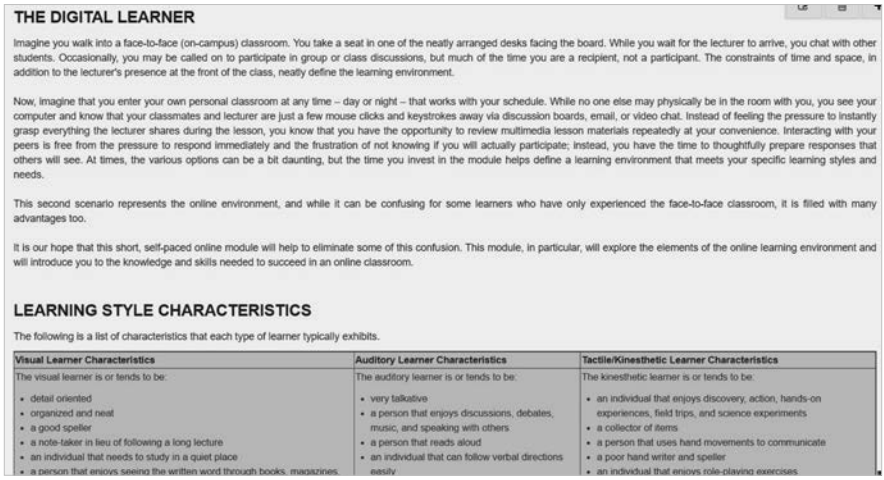
The lecturer/facilitator creates an orientation section at the start of the online course that enables learners to prepare for participation, and to become familiar with the specific services and e-tools and with one another, as they 'need to identify with each other, to develop a sense of direction online, and they need some guide to judgment and behaviour' (Salmon 2004: 35).

Figure 5: Orientation – prepare learners for participation and guide them to support services



Source: CIECT Student Orientation Module, ORI 001 within iKamva

Figure 6: Orientation – identify the 'learning style characteristics'



THE DIGITAL LEARNER

Imagine you walk into a face-to-face (on-campus) classroom. You take a seat in one of the neatly arranged desks facing the board. While you wait for the lecturer to arrive, you chat with other students. Occasionally, you may be called on to participate in group or class discussions, but much of the time you are a recipient, not a participant. The constraints of time and space, in addition to the lecturer's presence at the front of the class, neatly define the learning environment.

Now, imagine that you enter your own personal classroom at any time – day or night – that works with your schedule. While no one else may physically be in the room with you, you see your computer and know that your classmates and lecturer are just a few mouse clicks and keystrokes away via discussion boards, email, or video chat. Instead of feeling the pressure to instantly grasp everything the lecturer shares during the lesson, you know that you have the opportunity to review multimedia lesson materials repeatedly at your convenience. Interacting with your peers is free from the pressure to respond immediately and the frustration of not knowing if you will actually participate; instead, you have the time to thoughtfully prepare responses that others will see. At times, the various options can be a bit daunting, but the time you invest in the module helps define a learning environment that meets your specific learning styles and needs.

This second scenario represents the online environment, and while it can be confusing for some learners who have only experienced the face-to-face classroom, it is filled with many advantages too.

It is our hope that this short, self-paced online module will help to eliminate some of this confusion. This module, in particular, will explore the elements of the online learning environment and will introduce you to the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in an online classroom.

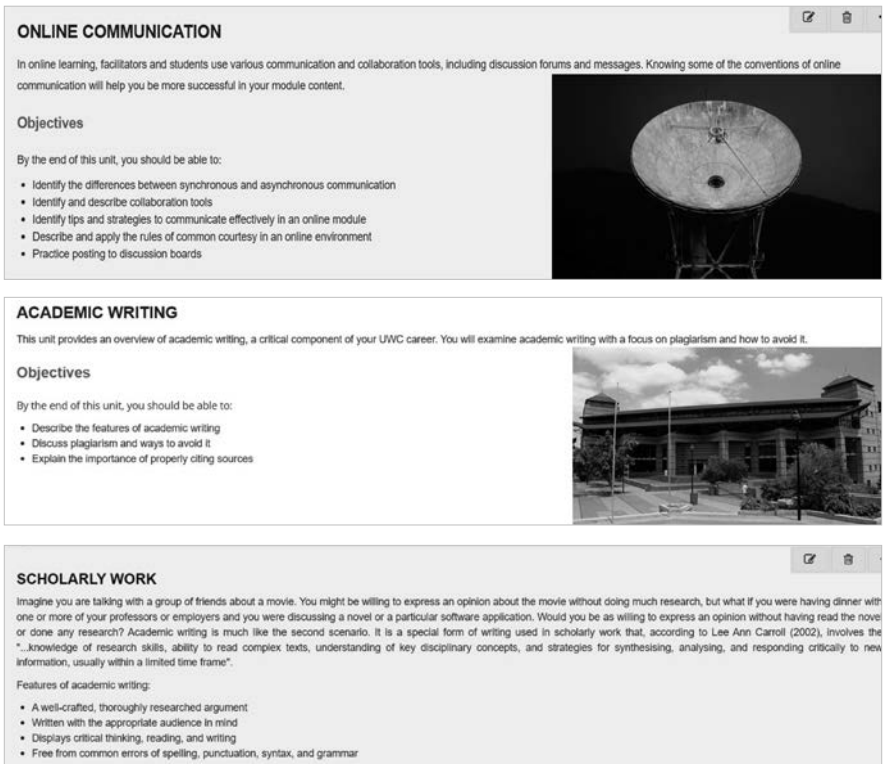
LEARNING STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

The following is a list of characteristics that each type of learner typically exhibits.

Visual Learner Characteristics	Auditory Learner Characteristics	Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner Characteristics
The visual learner is or tends to be:	The auditory learner is or tends to be:	The kinesthetic learner is or tends to be:
• detail oriented • organized and neat • a good speller • a note-taker in lieu of following a long lecture • an individual that needs to study in a quiet place • a person that enjoys seeing the written word through books, magazines	• very talkative • a person that enjoys discussions, debates, music, and speaking with others • a person that reads aloud • an individual that can follow verbal directions easily	• an individual that enjoys discovery, action, hands-on experiences, field trips, and science experiments • a collector of items • a person that uses hand movements to communicate • a poor hand writer and speller • an individual that enjoys role-playing exercises

Source: CIECT Student Orientation Module, ORI 001 within iKamva

Figure 7: Orientation – netiquette and 'academic honesty'



ONLINE COMMUNICATION

In online learning, facilitators and students use various communication and collaboration tools, including discussion forums and messages. Knowing some of the conventions of online communication will help you be more successful in your module content.

Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Identify the differences between synchronous and asynchronous communication
- Identify and describe collaboration tools
- Identify tips and strategies to communicate effectively in an online module
- Describe and apply the rules of common courtesy in an online environment
- Practice posting to discussion boards

ACADEMIC WRITING

This unit provides an overview of academic writing, a critical component of your UWC career. You will examine academic writing with a focus on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the features of academic writing
- Discuss plagiarism and ways to avoid it
- Explain the importance of properly citing sources

SCHOLARLY WORK

Imagine you are talking with a group of friends about a movie. You might be willing to express an opinion about the movie without doing much research, but what if you were having dinner with one or more of your professors or employers and you were discussing a novel or a particular software application. Would you be as willing to express an opinion without having read the novel or done any research? Academic writing is much like the second scenario. It is a special form of writing used in scholarly work that, according to Lee Ann Carroll (2002), involves the "...knowledge of research skills, ability to read complex texts, understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and strategies for synthesising, analysing, and responding critically to new information, usually within a limited time frame".

Features of academic writing:

- A well-crafted, thoroughly researched argument
- Written with the appropriate audience in mind
- Displays critical thinking, reading, and writing
- Free from common errors of spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar

Source: CIECT Student Orientation Module, ORI 001 within iKamva

For lecturers to design a suitable online environment for mature learners:

> *they [the lecturers] must be familiar with the way in which to design an online environment and understand the strengths as well as limitations that are inherent in this type of instructional medium, and balance that with information about how adults learn (Cercone 2008: 143).*

Introductory messages and 'personal' online spaces

In this regard, the learners are encouraged to post introductory messages in which they share something about themselves in a discussion forum. Online lecturers/facilitators design 'non-instructional strategies (e.g. greetings, exchange of personal information)' which encourage social relations (Henttonen & Blomqvist 2005, in Liu, Magjuka & Lee 2008: 843). Learners are also requested to upload their pictures and update their profiles in the 'personal space' within the online platform. The lecturers/facilitators are expected to model this behaviour by uploading their own pictures, as 'it is essential to create an atmosphere where the participants feel respected and able to gain respect for their views' (Salmon 2004: 36). The lecturers/facilitators are also encouraged to avoid using an academic tone at this stage, and to ensure that a private, personal online space is created where even demotivated students can be reached. Salmon (2004: 37) mentions that a good way to do this is through email, curbing 'flame and discomfort'.

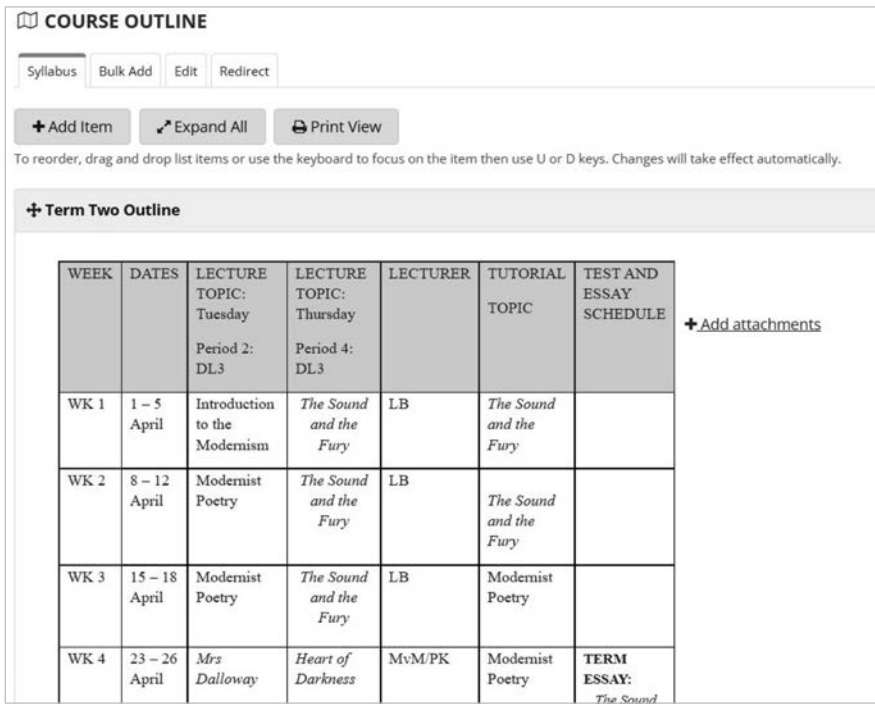
However, enabling the personal online space for students does not mean that each student needs to be taught individually. Rather, it entails managing teaching in order to allow it to fit in well, in diverse ways, with: (a) the personal characteristics of each individual; (b) the consideration of learning styles; and (c) becoming familiar with the student (Dettori 2008: 953). A mutually developed online module based on sound pedagogical principles should enable a student to gain an apt understanding of the e-tools concerned. This will help to enhance the success of online teaching, and will enable students to engage in constructive learning experiences as well as realise the benefits of e-tools (Lim & Chai 2008: 825; Sharma 2008: 952).

Course outlines, and clear instructions and objectives

We showcase how practical and tutorial schedules can be integrated. The schedule highlights the proposed practical activity, the resources that will be used (including digital media), and whether the learner is expected to engage in any activities before attending the practical laboratory session. These pre-lab activities are also structured within the online environment. Thus, learners have access to a structured 'one-stop shop', including a practical-schedule, pre-practical activities, and resources. This design concurs with the work of Salmon (2004: 39), who states that 'lecturers need to ensure that students are not linked to too many outside resources', since this could be confusing.

A course outline created in the early stages of the online course ensures successful navigation and structure. The facilitators and lecturers ensure that expectations, instructions and objectives for the online module are made clear from the start. Within the online course, the students are directed to specific dates linked to relevant information and clear instructions, as it is apparent that learners need clear instructions on what is expected of them when engaging in online activities (Masters & Duffield 2004).

Figure 8: Examples of integrated schedules



COURSE OUTLINE

Syllabus | Bulk Add | Edit | Redirect

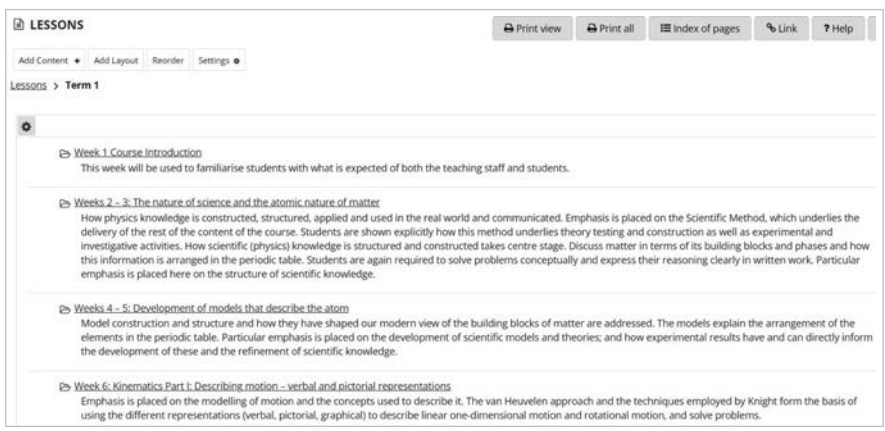
+ Add Item | Expand All | Print View

To reorder, drag and drop list items or use the keyboard to focus on the item then use U or D keys. Changes will take effect automatically.

+ Term Two Outline

WEEK	DATES	LECTURE TOPIC: Tuesday Period 2: DL3	LECTURE TOPIC: Thursday Period 4: DL3	LECTURER	TUTORIAL TOPIC	TEST AND ESSAY SCHEDULE
WK 1	1 – 5 April	Introduction to the Modernism	*The Sound and the Fury*	LB	*The Sound and the Fury*	
WK 2	8 – 12 April	Modernist Poetry	*The Sound and the Fury*	LB	*The Sound and the Fury*	
WK 3	15 – 18 April	Modernist Poetry	*The Sound and the Fury*	LB	Modernist Poetry	
WK 4	23 – 26 April	*Mrs Dalloway*	*Heart of Darkness*	MvM/PK	Modernist Poetry	**TERM ESSAY:** *The Sound*

+ Add attachments



LESSONS

Print view | Print all | Index of pages | Link | ? Help

Add Content | Add Layout | Reorder | Settings

Lessons > **Term 1**

Week 1 Course Introduction
This week will be used to familiarise students with what is expected of both the teaching staff and students.

Weeks 2 - 3: The nature of science and the atomic nature of matter
How physics knowledge is constructed, structured, applied and used in the real world and communicated. Emphasis is placed on the Scientific Method, which underlies the delivery of the rest of the content of the course. Students are shown explicitly how this method underlies theory testing and construction as well as experimental and investigative activities. How scientific (physics) knowledge is structured and constructed takes centre stage. Discuss matter in terms of its building blocks and phases and how this information is arranged in the periodic table. Students are again required to solve problems conceptually and express their reasoning clearly in written work. Particular emphasis is placed here on the structure of scientific knowledge.

Weeks 4 - 5: Development of models that describe the atom
Model construction and structure and how they have shaped our modern view of the building blocks of matter are addressed. The models explain the arrangement of the elements in the periodic table. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of scientific models and theories; and how experimental results have and can directly inform the development of these and the refinement of scientific knowledge.

Week 6: Kinematics Part I: Describing motion - verbal and pictorial representations
Emphasis is placed on the modelling of motion and the concepts used to describe it. The van Heuvelen approach and the techniques employed by Knight form the basis of using the different representations (verbal, pictorial, graphical) to describe linear one-dimensional motion and rotational motion, and solve problems.

Source: ENG 311 & PHY 151 within iKamva

Figure 9: Clear objectives at the start of the course

Source: Constitutional Law (COS 111), ENG 121) within iKamva

Stage 3: Development

This stage illustrates how to produce relevant online material by simulating information exchange.

Contribute to the perception that technology is valuable and practical

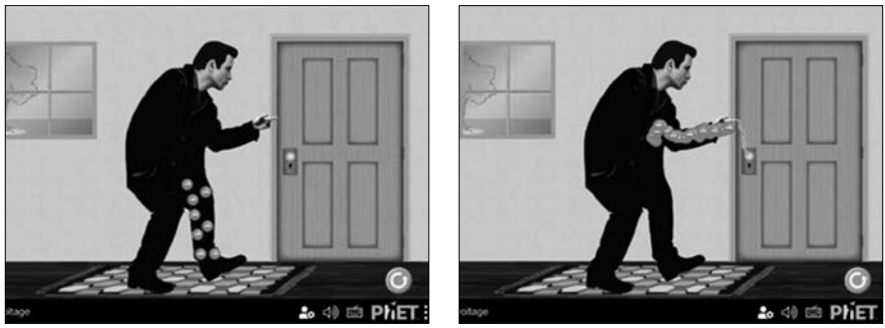
We proceed to showcase how an online structured environment can also cater for different learning styles. The effects of COVID-19 have 'greatly affected the styles in which students learn', and 'learning in a global pandemic has caused a change in the learning styles of students' – which have shifted to individualised e-learning styles (Mahama, Asante, Mensah et al. 2021: 178). Learning styles incorporated in this online structure were videos related to various challenging topics, including quantum and nuclear physics, which could be integrated into the structured online environment – named the Physics Animation Lab (see Figure 10). Online environments that cater for different learning styles have become prevalent at UWC. Therefore, the 'respect for individual differences and knowledge of learning-style idiosyncrasies will undoubtedly improve learning effectiveness if these ideas are incorporated into the instructional design' (James & Gardner 1995: 30). When creating online environments for mature learners, the links between the learning style of mature learners and the teaching style of lecturers have been identified as important contributors for lecturers to be aware of in preparing their teaching material (Cartney 2000). Furthermore, we encourage the lecturers to attend training sessions related to the design of an online environment so that they become familiar and 'feel at ease and competent with the use of technology [in order to] contribute to the perception that technology is valuable and practical [for their discipline]' (Stoltenkamp 2013: 52). Faculty members who develop course material 'with an online component', and who have an 'awareness that adults may value options, variety, and self-directedness in their learning opportunities can help guide effective instructional design that will attract and retain adult learners' (Ausburn 2004: 334).

We also proceed to showcase the integration of a Physics Experimental Laboratory. At this stage, we highlight that it is not necessary for us to recreate sound educational material. This particular Physics Experimental Laboratory has been created by an educational organisation and shared with the public. In addition, we emphasise how learning can be fun, for example one of the animated physics videos, namely 'John Travoltage', can assist a learner to grasp a concept such as static electricity.

Figure 10: Integration of videos and animation to cater for different learning styles (an example of an integrated Physics Experimental Laboratory

Source: https://phet.colorado.edu/)) (Physics module setup on UWC eLearning platform, 2012

Figure 11: 'John Travoltage' simulation – static electricity



Source: https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulations/john-travoltage) (Physics module setup on UWC eLearning platform, 2012)

Hence, lecturers are made aware that a focus on e-pedagogy increases the responsiveness to curriculum design in relation to student needs and learning styles, as well as student choices in the use of such technology (Dusick 1998; Reznich 1997; Spotts 1999; Peluchette & Rust 2005, in Stoltenkamp 2013). In designing the curriculum (open, blended-learning environments) for mature learners, the different learning theories need to be considered, such as the andragogy, constructivism and socio-constructivism theories, motivation theory, self-determination theory, and self-directed learning theory. In addition, the technology-acceptance models and technological-affordance concepts can also be considered, and 'to cover these perspectives in a concise but expandable framework will be worthwhile to guide online blended learning designs' (Diep, Zhu, Cocquyt et al. 2019: 232). Furthermore, in designing the curriculum, lecturers need to pay particular attention to mature learners' different learning styles, as well as the learning styles of students with disabilities. It is generally recognised that 'interactive pedagogical approaches could affect students' individual learning style and enhance a reflective learning style in adult learners' (Li, Aldosari & Park 2021: 1). As regards students with disabilities, it must be taken into consideration when designing the curriculum in relation to student needs and learning styles, that learners with disabilities have certain challenges. These 'limitations pose challenges in selecting the most suitable teaching approaches', which 'creates a situation that requires [the] right combination of multiple possible alternatives', but 'an outstanding educator using his [or her] experience and perception solves this problem' (Thapliyal, Ahuja, Shankar et al. 2021: 6).

Relevant online content, and design of digital media aligned to learning outcomes

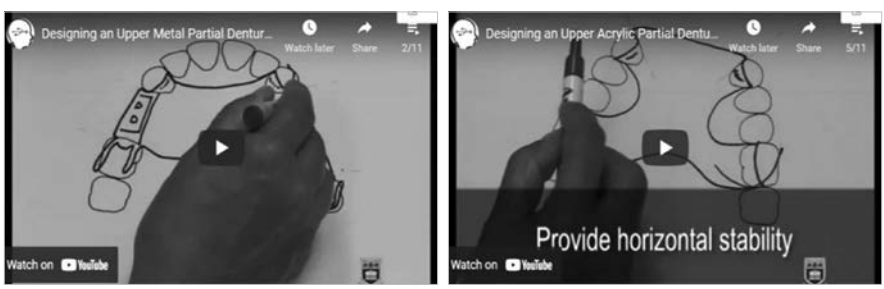
The production of relevant online content is equally important in the use of e-tools. When designing online content, 'the pedagogical model, which focuses primarily on subject content area, is certainly less effective with adults who are

more oriented to tasks and problem solving' (Sendall, Shaw, Round et al. 2010: 83). In addition, online content that is 'presented outside of their most effective learning style can create challenges'; therefore, 'course designers must use various facets of pedagogy to create effective online environments' (Gilpin 2010: 269). It is not sufficient to equip learners with technical skills, for they also need the skills to use the e-tools effectively (Mkhize 2005). There is a link between the use of e-tools and the relevancy of, and familiarity with, the online learning material, as well as the level of competencies and skills of the learners needed to actively engage the e-tools (Mkhize 2005).

The challenge created by COVID-19 perpetuated the need to find ways to embed formative assessments in the new, blended-learning environment. It is thus important that the lecturer create an online course with relevant content linked to communication and assessment e-tools, in addition to digital media, before the actual online engagement takes place. It must be highlighted that digital media (such as screencasts, photographs [stills], audio [podcasts], video [vodcasts], and digital stories) should be effectively used to enhance and reinforce interactive online course content, and to support effective institutional marketing. These can be further supplemented with content from, or links to, other social-networking sites and groups.

However, digital media should be carefully designed to support the learning outcomes. During the current pandemic with the rapidly increasing online environment and online courses, 'even for those with limited digital skills, the development of courses designed for [adult training programs] is necessary' (Andone, Vasiu, Mihaescu et al. 2021: 1). Thus, the online module/course that is mutually designed by the professional support team and lecturers is organised into manageable chunks, thereby ensuring that the students do not have to scroll through large amounts of text – which could be demotivating. The online content is also appropriately linked to other relevant online resources, especially as learners will look to the facilitators to 'provide direction through the mass of messages and encouragement to start using the most relevant content material' (Salmon 2004: 39).

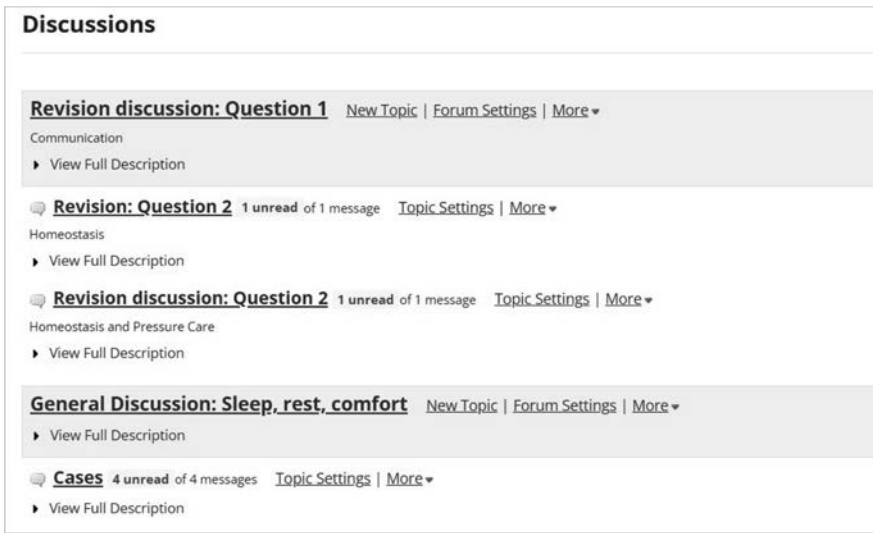
Figure 12: Digital media used in alignment with outcomes



Source: Dentistry online module setup on eTeaching UWC eLearning platform, 2012

The use of collaborative e-tools, such as discussion forums, work groups, wikis and blogs, is encouraged during e-pedagogy training. According to Stoltenkamp and Mapuva (2010: 210), collaborative e-tools are 'technologies that enable threaded discussion groups, chat rooms, synchronous meeting tools', and other collaborative software that is adopted in e-pedagogical environments. The learners are reminded that the asynchronous (accessed at any time and anywhere) discussion tool will enable them to communicate at their own pace, but within a particular time frame set by the lecturer. The learners are also taught how to communicate in a threaded discussion that depicts an evolving argument. Most learners must be made aware that they need to continue with an open thread, instead of opening a new thread. Research indicates that, in non-traditional education, 'online presence can sometimes be felt by the participants as much more intimate than physical presence', and, in most instances, 'attending a face-to-face lecture may only involve one-way communication whereas an in-depth discourse using a text-based discussion forum can be very interactive' (Liang & Chen 2012: 1332).

Figure 13: Learners contribute their own views via discussion forums



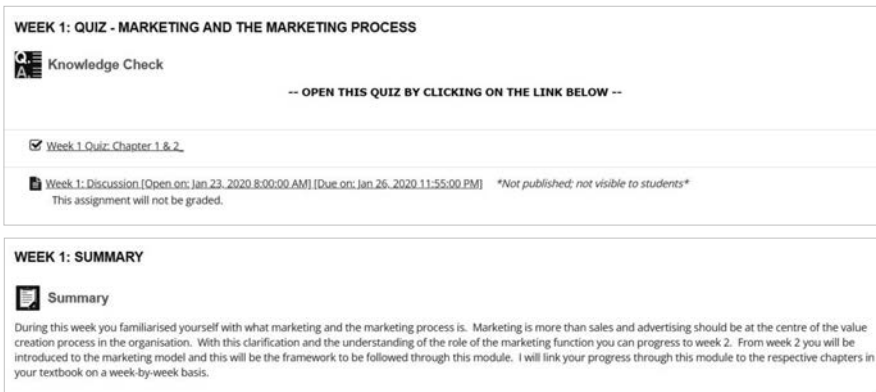
Source: NRS 161 module within iKamva

Lecturers are also encouraged to keep their postings concise, constructive and clear. According to researchers, 'adults need to self-reflect on the learning process and be given support for transformational learning'; therefore, lecturers must provide a space to deliberate on their processes of online teaching and learning – on how to manage this in their online environment (Cercone 2008: 159). Thus, the lecturers/facilitators pose questions as the starting point of a discussion topic, which promotes the exploration of a topic and the development of critical-thinking skills. The facilitator's instructions should always be clear, and the

facilitator should advise students to limit their postings to approximately 200 words, otherwise other students and the lecturers will not be able to cope. Experience suggests that it takes some time for students to realise that they may contribute their own views and share resources via the discussion tool. The lecturer/facilitator should 'celebrate, give value to, and acknowledge contributions to discussion processes and knowledge sharing by participants, and give credibility, authenticity and verification of information offered' (Salmon 2004: 40). Learners are also made aware by the lecturer/facilitator that online discussions and other collaborative online tasks are often intense, and that they need to engage in some research to explore the related discussion topics so that they can engage in a meaningful discussion. This encourages learners to become independent learners, and, in addition, it instils a culture of commitment to the preparatory course activities (e.g. pre-reading activities).

Learners are also made aware at this stage that the lecturer will eventually transfer some responsibility to them. According to Knowles (1973: 71), 'the learning process [for non-traditional learners] is related to and makes use of the experiences of learners – the teacher helps the students to exploit their own experiences as resources for learning through the use of such techniques as discussions'. Students are often requested to summarise a discussion thread, for example by pulling all the main ideas of a thread together and posting this to the group. It is at this time that the training facilitator and lecturer demonstrate how to summarise a discussion and present a model summary, all of which helps to model the learning behaviour of the student. In this way, the lecturer/facilitator initially assumes the leadership, whereafter the students take over the leadership role. This approach is in line with that of Iahad and Dafoulas (2004), who believe that the student-focused approach is established by the need for diverse and new learning techniques for lecturers and students who are not situated in the same geographical space.

Figure 14: Learners can be afforded the opportunity to summarise topics – the lecturer hands over responsibility



Source: Marketing Management Module, EMD616, 2020 within iKamva)

Stage 4: Implementation

This stage demonstrates how to use the online course/project in a real-life context – this is related to substantive discussion towards knowledge construction.

In the implementation of an online course, the lecturer should play an active role. The lecturer is expected to determine the pace and the learning behaviour that is demonstrated in the online classroom. In implementing online courses for mature learners in particular, 'a critical distinction among various learners' is needed, that is, one which takes into consideration that lessons targeted at mature learners 'seem to favour group or collaborative activities with a healthy dose of experiential learning materials as instructional resources' (Tomei 2007: 31). Thus, during the e-pedagogy training sessions, the facilitator/lecturer will be engaged in activities in which visibility and contribution to an online discussion thread or a work group activity can be demonstrated. Consequently, the lecturer/facilitator is able to organise and manage the collaborative e-tools (e.g. the discussion forum and work groups) into topics, subtopics and tasks before the actual rollout of the online module/course. Collaborative e-tools are resourceful 'technological innovations leading to cloud-based collaborative learning, such as blogs, wikis, social media', and tools that 'offer communication and collaboration opportunities in the online environment' (Serdyukov & Serdyukova 2015: 91).

Individual accountability and responsibilities in group work are also very significant in the implementation of online tasks and projects. An ideal e-pedagogy training situation would entail facilitators having time to assign roles in the group activities to the lecturers (e.g. summariser, moderator, and initiator), as well as making use of peer evaluation, where one group evaluates another group's work according to the agreed-upon criteria. Learners and lecturers should feel accountable to the group or particular assignment. Hence, online educators should caution against organising groups subjugated by 'internal styles'. If this cannot be avoided, it would be best to mediate techniques which promote team participation and individual accountability, such as rubrics and peer-reviewed tasks (Liu et al. 2008: 842).

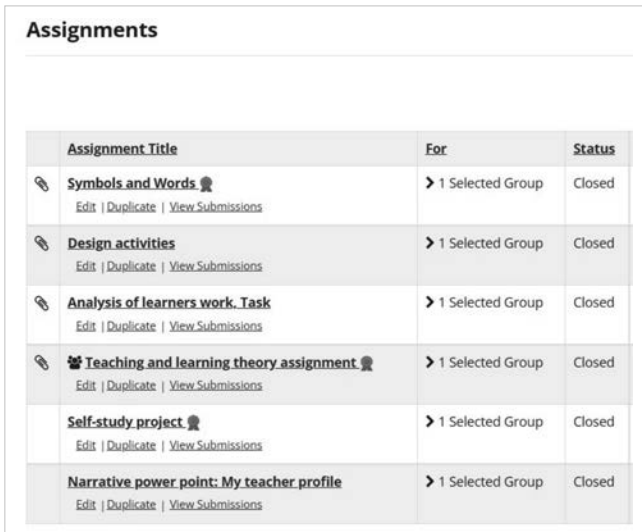
The development of clear group outcomes that promote collaboration and individual responsibility is another important factor in the implementation of online activities/projects. The lecturer/facilitator should provide the group leaders and student groups with clear expectations and deadlines. To enable the enhancement of team responsibility, Liu et al. (2008) suggest the need for a holistic view of the design of group work in terms of: (a) team arrangements; (b) processes; (c) strategies for increasing the degree of trust; and (iv) training students in the collaborative techniques for finding solutions to conflict. Fischer, Kollar, Mandl et al. (2007) state that effective collaborative learning is a commendable target but is difficult to accomplish, and that, if the learners are not adequately guided, the essence of it would never be achieved.

Feedback is yet another factor responsible for the successful implementation of online activities. When addressing various aspects and skills, the lecturer/facilitator makes the students aware that they will receive feedback in the online environment, for instance about content, presentation, writing, communication, teamwork and research. The ultimate objective is to develop the abilities of the learners to embark on self-assessment and evaluation of their own contributions as a result of constructive contributions from the lecturer and the programme. In an online environment, it is important that the facilitator and the learners give feedback on a regular basis.

This calls for thorough planning and progress tracking in a personalised learning environment, which will enable students to become more responsive, develop a positive attitude, and develop cognitive skills. Moreover, it should develop the students' individual strengths and strive to improve those areas in which they are still in need of further development (Dettori 2008).

Peer-to-peer feedback is encouraged, as the learners are urged to give constructive criticism about one another's contributions. Learners are assisted in giving and receiving constructive criticism. Good etiquette and rules for participation are also necessary if these activities are to be successful. Furthermore, it should be made clear to students that they will experience challenges – including, perhaps, their own possible slips into repressive ways. However, the classroom should be seen as a safe space for engaging in these activities in order to prepare them for the different online environments in which they are expected to work (Francis & Hemson, 2007).

Figure 15: Learners engage in substantive discussion and reflection through assessments



Source: TMM 301 module within iKamva

Stage 5: Evaluation – determining both the adequacy of the instruction and development as knowledge builders

This stage deals with evaluation, that is, determining both the adequacy of the instruction and development as knowledge builders.

Changing identity shifts as lecturers think about application within their own disciplines

The evaluation phase vis-à-vis the learner:

> *ensures that instructional objectives have been met and a process of continuous improvement is in place to continually update and revise the lesson based on learner feedback that may take on a variety of forms such as online tests that provide immediate reinforcement to the learner (Tomei 2007: 31).*

At this stage, a practical session should be set up with lecturers during which they are expected to bring along their discipline-specific projects (online environments) and align them to the appropriate choice of e-tools for mature learners' purposes. The lecturers were exposed at the start to the use of various e-tools, and now they are expected to think about their application within their own environments. It should be noted that this evaluation stage could present itself as a liminal stage, whereby some lecturers may hold on to their old perceptions that a session regarding e-pedagogy and its relation to design and the effective use of e-tools, is more aligned to specific disciplines. This liminal stage is critical, as lecturers have to grapple with mindset changes and may become anxious because they are expected to start thinking about application. This liminal state, according to Cousin (2006: 4-5) should be viewed as a strong attempt to remind us that 'learning is both affective and cognitive and that it involves identity shifts which can entail troublesome, unsafe journeys'.

During this liminal stage, it is important that the lecturers are further guided in the appropriate selection of e-tools and their pedagogical value. Thus, during this practical evaluation session, as lecturers are in the process of mastering the threshold concept of e-pedagogy in relation to their discipline, there is a need to revisit authentic examples (conceptual knowledge) related to teaching online. This session, as Cousin (2006) states, can bring the lecturers to a level of focusing on their teaching. It should be noted when teaching mature learners that 'adult learners have a desire for action (praxis) related to their real-life context that will provide them with new experiences to reflect upon', and that 'their teaching and learning experiences must be enriched with several practical ideas for implementation in their everyday working place' (Phillips, Karatza & Tzikopoulos 2010: 190).

Reflect on an ideal experience

It is at this stage that the lecturer/facilitator reflects on the ideal online experience, and that learners gain confidence and can develop themselves as 'knowledge builders'. Lieb (1991, in Cercone 2008: 145) affirms that 'self-reflection is important for the adult learner' and that 'the instructor should provide a space for the learner in an online course that permits carefully guided reflection about his or her performance' academically. The lecturers and professional support team also reflect on an ideal scaffolding experience, whereby training support and assistance were delivered at critical times – and later removed – until the learners could cope on their own. Mature learners can indeed be assigned the responsibility of leading and moderating a discussion forum. In this regard, how groups have collaboratively researched a topic and presented it to the class, can be discussed. Ideally, as Salmon (2004: 48) concurs, it is at this stage where lecturers and students 'are essentially using a constructivist approach to learning', and where 'challenge and argument will foster deeper thinking and reflection'.

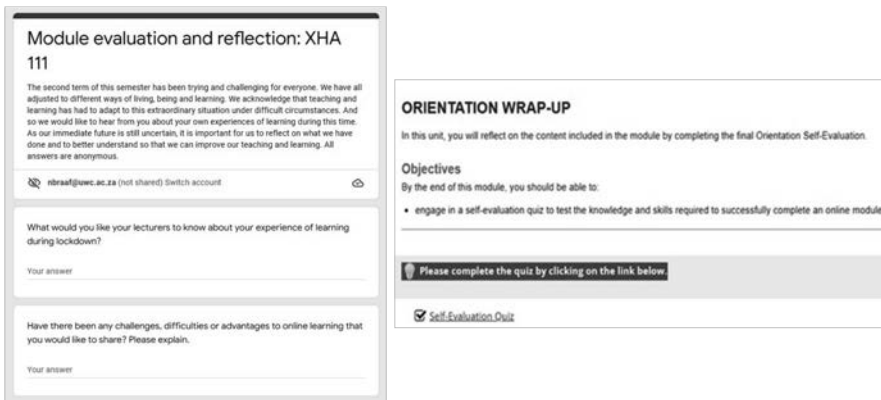
It is also during this stage that the benefits of the online assessment e-tools (such as assignments, essays, worksheets and multiple-choice questions) and other e-tools that could be used – both as communication and assessment tools (e.g. wikis, blogs and discussion forums) – are highlighted for the lecturers. Lecturers must 'plan, identify and implement assessment strategies and methods appropriate to the new blended learning environment', which 'includes an understanding of the affordance of a variety of technology tools so that the quality and effectiveness of learning will be ensured to move learners to be independent and self-regulated' (Chan 2021: 3). Prior to lockdown, the traditional method of assessments was in-class assessments with face-to-face exchanges between students and lecturers/invigilators. However, with the onset of COVID-19, the conventional way of conducting assessments was less feasible, which compelled HEIs to investigate different methods to assess students via online, asynchronous assessment approaches. The reason for this shift was due to the 'new normal', and it 'is difficult to conduct synchronous examinations face to face because they are complex and require significant infrastructural development' (Gupta, Jankie, Pancholi et al. 2020: 3). Researchers note that 'assessment in a synchronous environment is conducted in real time and can be face to face or online, whereas asynchronous environment interaction does not take place in real time [and] can be via virtual or any other mode' (Gupta et al. 2020: 3). Lim and Chai (2008) believe that tests and examinations have a great impact on students' career paths and that the fact that educators are apprehensive about learners' marks is justifiable. In addition, the sociocultural conditions that educators work in are more significant than the pedagogical issues; thus 'it may be easier to shift the assessment system to create a ripple effect on teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices than to challenge teachers to change their beliefs and practices' (Lim & Chai 2008: 825). There is a need for regular assessment and more effective feedback. Online assessment e-tools used for testing, examinations and evaluations 'are among the basic elements of education programs, [and]

have undergone remarkable changes through emergency remote teaching', induced by COVID-19. '[D]uring this process, many tools[,] including synchronous and asynchronous tests, assignments and portfolio tasks[,] were utilized to conduct enriched measurement and evaluation practices' (Yakar 2021: 374).

Integrate course evaluation

We proceed to showcase an example of the integration of a course-evaluation questionnaire. The focus is not on the e-tool but rather on e-pedagogy. In this case, it is noted that lecturers should provide a space for students to give feedback regarding various facets of a course (online), specifically regarding challenging concepts, and, in turn, should provide students with constructive feedback. The learners should be alerted about the course-evaluation results, as results can further assist the lecturers by discovering, together with the students, the threshold concepts that they need to master. By assisting lecturers with this discovery (as they have to deal with an increasing number of learners), they begin to create environments which '[allow] for richer and more complex insights into aspects of the subjects [learners] are studying' (Cousin 2006: 5).

Figure 16: An example of an integrated, online course-evaluation questionnaire



Source: (XHA 111 module within iKamva)

Concluding remarks

We have provided a framework that enables lecturers to grapple with the concept of e-pedagogy and the effective use of e-tools for teaching, learning and assessment. We have raised some essential themes for lecturers to consider regarding effective design of online environments for the delivery of theory, practice and assessment, and the affordances of online teaching/learning in the context of the pandemic. To this end, the present chapter recommends that

lecturers need to be cognisant of the fact that 'it is inevitable that advanced technology will increasingly play a role in higher education', but underscores 'that it should be used to advance rather than encumber social and cognitive justice' (Du Preez & Le Grange 2020: 101). Furthermore, by focusing on the design of the online environment, we emphasise how important it is for lecturers to understand non-traditional learning theories and to be 'able to change and accept change in a dynamic learning environment' (Cercone 2008: 151).

In the light of this, we confirm that the impact of the 'crisis' forced lecturers to consider redesigning online courses and to redefine them for mature learners' teaching and learning experiences. We also reveal that there needs to be a continued focus on readiness for blended-learning practices, but, even more so, a readiness for emergency remote teaching and learning practices. Thus, the crisis generated new considerations concerning preparedness, as we saw an increasing demand for support, through consultations and training, by lecturers for instructional design and professional team assistance. In addition, the crisis generated the need for a professional support structure that forms part of a seamless continuum in digital literacy and online course design for lecturers.

This chapter gives new insights into two praxes. Firstly, it identified that, regardless of lecturers' levels of skills, there was a need for further improving ICT skills, such as the editing of PDF files and the creation of different multimedia-file formats. Secondly, lecturers needed some level of e-pedagogical knowledge, and therefore the crisis demanded an increase in communication skills, as well as content creation, various learning styles, e-tools, and a focus on e-pedagogy around assessment. The focus on effective design concurs with research indicating that online environments can provide the opportunity for mature learners to become 'co-creators of the curriculum where they contribute to the class in a manner than transforms the instructor's role to one of a facilitator' (Moskal, Dziuban & Hartman 2009: 63). There is a need for further research on the increasing demand for understanding: how the crisis propelled the focus on e-pedagogy around assessment to the forefront; professional support readiness for emergency, remote online content creation; and how to create innovative ICT educational environments in response to the crisis. This focus compels the need for readiness of lecturers to identify challenges around design principles when implementing e-pedagogy to support non-traditional learning.

'If adult education is to fulfil both educational and societal goals, adult learners' needs should be the first to be addressed' (Diep et al. 2019: 246).

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Dr Stoltenkamp, Director of the Centre for Innovative Education & Communication Technologies (CIECT) and Dr Dankers expanded of such work in alignment with principles related to mature learners

The images are retrieved from: (a) Dr Stoltenkamp's E-pedagogy Roadshow Online Modules; (b) CIECT's Student Orientation Module; and (c) examples from various modules

The CIECT team collaborates with lecturers in order to design and develop online environments and instructional strategies

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Access to early childhood development qualifications, Extended Public Works Programme, agency, and crisis intervention and hope

Zelda Groener & Natascha Hector

Abstract

Early childhood development (ECD) practitioners play a critical role in addressing children and their families' daily lived experiences of crisis in low-income communities. As crises of one kind or another threaten children's well-being, expanding ECD capacity in low-income communities could support crisis intervention. This case study analyses the findings of an investigation into 20 ECD practitioners who, as matured students, gained access to a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college through the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP), and completed an ECD qualification. Analysing ECD practitioners' access and success through the EPWP's ECD initiatives against the backdrop of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic crisis presents an opportunity to contemplate new theoretical perspectives on the relationships between access to ECD/post-school education and training (PSET) qualifications, employment, and crisis intervention.

Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that focuses on vulnerable adults with low levels of education and skills. This literature problematises relationships between the improvement of qualifications for adults, employment, and the reduction of social inequality in the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden and Russia (Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova 2017; Desjardins 2014; Kilpi-Jakonen, Kosyakova, Stenberg et al. 2012; (Lima 2018). The South African socio-economic context presents an opportunity to problematise the relationships between access to post-school education and training (PSET) qualifications and employment creation, and consider the possibilities of strengthening the relationships between qualifications and employment creation in the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated crises for millions of vulnerable people, including pre-school children. When early childhood development (ECD) centres and home-based care services closed for an extended period under lockdown, the importance of these facilities in low-income communities was illuminated. Some ECD services were forced to close down, while others resumed their activities. It is likely that COVID-19 pandemic-related crises may deepen, and care and education of pre-school children could become more critical. Astute observations by qualified ECD practitioners in low-income communities could prompt timely crisis interventions.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, we analyse the findings of a study focused on the successful experiences of 20 community-based ECD practitioners who completed an ECD qualification offered at a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college in partnership with the Department of Social Development's EPWP as well as the Western Cape Education Department. Although the study was conducted prior to the onset of the pandemic, ECD practitioners' success as mature students provides hope for building ECD capacity, which is critical in addressing the daily lived experiences of crises facing young children and their families in low-income communities. Although the data was collected prior to the COVID-19 crisis, understanding ECD practitioners' agency and their overcoming of personal crises during pre-COVID times in pursuing a qualification – which expanded their capacity to build the community-based ECD sector – is instructive when it comes to projecting their future roles in addressing crises. Constructing theories about agency have been central to theorising social theory for a long time. There is a myriad of theoretical perspectives which analyse different dimensions of 'agency' (Giddens 1979), the constitution of society (Giddens 1984), culture and agency (Archer 1988), realist social theory (Archer 1995), critical realism (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier et al. 1998), structure, agency and the internal conversation (Archer 2000), the reflexive imperative (Archer 2012), and the philosophy of critical realism (Bhaskar 2016). For analysing the data and inferring the future agentic crisis-intervention capacities of ECD practitioners, 'agency' is the primary concept.

Following the first non-racial democratic election in 1994, the South African government allocated resources for several initiatives in order to redress historical race, gender and class inequalities related to unemployment. Among these was the establishment of the EPWP in 2003 as a social security initiative aimed at creating employment for disadvantaged people. However, as events unfolded, the EPWP has focused more on training than employment creation. We recognise the EPWP's limited success in respect of addressing unemployment, but we assume, as our starting-point, the EPWP's success in providing access to ECD practitioner training programmes.

Albeit coincidental, by offering skills development, learnerships and qualifications for ECD practitioners, the EPWP education-related initiatives should be considered a contribution to the efforts aimed at achieving the goal of 22% of South Africans aged 15 to 64 completing a PSET qualification by 2030 (National Planning Commission 2012).

COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions prevented young children from attending early childhood education centres, forcing ECD practitioners into short-term and longer-term unemployment. However, more significantly, the restrictions drew attention to the precarious nature of the labour market in the ECD sector.

The EPWP, through support from the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA), pays stipends to participants when they participate in learnership programmes. This should not be construed as employment creation. However, it appears that there is an opportunity for the EPWP to facilitate employment creation by aiding the registration of ECD centres where graduates of ECD learnerships are employed or volunteer. Formalising these facilities could contribute to the creation of employment.

We reach a conclusion that the relationships between accessing qualifications and gaining employment will be tenuous until a more stable ECD employment sector is established. Through its success in facilitating access to ECD qualifications, the EPWP has an opportunity to create new community-based ECD initiatives which could absorb ECD practitioners who have completed learnerships. These initiatives will place ECD practitioners as first responders who can identify children and families in crisis and source appropriate assistance.

ECD qualifications and access to PSET

The Occupational Certificate: Early Childhood Development Practitioner (NQF Level 4 – (SAQA ID 97542) is an entry-level qualification. Vocational qualifications in ECD, Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Educare include: the Further

Education and Training Certificate: Early Childhood Development (NQF Level 4 – SAQA ID 58761) (offered by TVET colleges); the National Certificate Vocational: Early Childhood Education (offered by TVET colleges); the National Diploma: Early Childhood Development (NQF Level 5 – SAQA ID 64650); and the National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) programmes in Educare. The NATED programmes include the N4, N5 and N6 certificate programmes in Educare and an N6 Diploma in Educare. The duration of the certificate programmes is six months, and that of the N6 Diploma is 18 months.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) creates learning pathways for ECD practitioners to access qualifications after completing the EPWP ECD training programmes. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has developed ten higher education qualifications for Educators in Early Childhood Care and Education, including initial professional qualifications, post-professional qualifications, and undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. These include entry-level initial certificates and diplomas, which articulate with an undergraduate degree.

EPWP ECD skills programmes, learnerships and qualifications

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) have registered qualifications for ECD professionals and practitioners which are offered by post-school education institutions, including TVET colleges and universities. In addition to these qualifications, private providers, non-government organisations (NGOs) and SETAs provide training programmes for ECD practitioners. Further, as indicated above, the NQF creates learning pathways for ECD practitioners to access qualifications after completing EPWP ECD training programmes.

The EPWP was established by the government in 2004. The EPWP ECD offers 'a progressive learning path from NQF 1 to NQF 5', distinguished as: NQF Level 1 learnership and skills programme; NQF Level 2 and 4 skills programme; NQF Level 4 learnership; and NQF Level 5 qualification (Parenzee & Budlender 2016: 37-38). This implies that, if these learning programmes are available, people who are employed, and/or supported by the EPWP, can gain access to skills programmes, learnerships and qualifications, and can progress from entry-level to higher education qualifications.

This chapter focuses on a study of ECD practitioners who participated in a learnership. According to Antonopoulos (2009: 6), 'the social sector has been primarily focused on facilitating skill upgrading through learnerships'. Budlender, Mapker and Parenzee (2015: 5) describe the features of learnerships as:

- *combin[ing] theoretical and practical learning, with the latter accounting for at least 70% of the time;*

- *[being] based on an agreement between the learner, the employer, and the training provider;*
- *[one where the] learner does not pay any training fees; and*
- *[one in which the] learner must be paid an allowance or wage while studying.*

The ETDP SETA describes the inter-institutional arrangements for delivering learnerships as follows:

> *Provincial education departments, through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), together with the SETAs, are attempting to address the lack of supply in terms of skilled and qualified ECD training provision, by awarding learnerships for training at TVET colleges, which is in line with public policy (ETDP SETA 2019–2020: 48).*

In this chapter, we acknowledge the criticisms of the EPWP's focus on skills upgrading rather than on its job-creation mandate. Given that there is an enormous need for skills upgrading in the ECD sector, we also acknowledge the importance of the training opportunities which the EPWP offers in the ECD sector. The data presented in this chapter conveys the successes of twenty ECE practitioners who completed a learnership at the College of Cape Town.

EPWP, and ECD practitioners' access to ECD qualification at the College of Cape Town

Our study focused on ECD practitioners (adult students) registered for the Level 4 learnership offered by the College of Cape Town, in partnership with the Department of Social Development's EPWP and the ETDP SETA. The Level 4 qualification offered over 18 months is described as:

> *an entry-level qualification for those who want to enter the field of Education, Training and Development, specifically within the sub-field of Early Childhood Development (ECD). Many of those who will seek this qualification are already practising within the field, but without formal recognition. This qualification will enable recipients of this qualification to facilitate the all-round development of young children in a manner that is sensitive to culture and individual needs (College of Cape Town 2018: paras 1–2)*

The ECD practitioners (mature students) who were recruited into the learnership programme through recognition of prior learning (RPL) met the following criteria: South African citizenship; a minimum of five years' work experience in the ECD field; Grade 9 qualification; and actively involved at a registered or partly registered ECD site.

Methodology

The research was conducted at the College of Cape Town. Using an interview guide, the qualitative data were gathered though semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place at places that were convenient for the participants. We interviewed twenty TVET students who had been accepted through the RPL and who were registered for the NQF Level 4 learnership in ECD.

Profile of ECD practitioners

Number of participants	20.
Age range	From 27 to 53.
Volunteering / employed	All participants were employed, except for four who were volunteers at an ECD site.
Gender	One man and 19 women.
Highest grade passed	One participant had achieved a Grade 8 pass, two had completed Grade 9, five had completed Grade 10, four had completed Grade 11, and eight had completed Grade 12.
Marital status	The marital status of participants varied: seven were single mothers, eight were married, two were divorced, one was separated, one was engaged to be married, and one was a single male.
Language	The home language of participants was isiXhosa (six), English (five), Afrikaans (three), Sotho (one), with the remainder speaking English and Afrikaans (five) as their home language.
Location	Participants resided on the Cape Flats in Silvertown, Bridgetown and Belgravia; the southern suburbs of Grassy Park, Retreat and Capricorn; and the northern suburbs of Ravensmead. Mitchells Plain and Ocean View. Other participants were located in Crossroads, Nyanga, Khayelitsha, Langa and Samora Machel, all townships in the Western Cape.
Participant ECD sites	Participants' ECD sites were in Mitchells Plain, Philippi, Samora Machel, Greenhaven, Athlone, Bellville, Gugulethu, Grassy Park, Ocean View, Crawford, Silvertown, Khayelitsha, Langa, Belgravia, Retreat and Lower Crossroads.

Participants/ECD practitioners

All participants were experienced ECD practitioners who had been active in ECD for between two and 20 years. Their roles varied: six were teacher assistants; seven were teachers; three were principals; and four had performed multiple roles as ECD practitioners.

Early life crises, situational barriers and incomplete schooling

Early life crises changed the course of participants' lives when they were forced to leave high school prematurely. As they attest, financial crises featured most prominently as a situational barrier:

> *I wanted to finish Grade 12, but I did not have the money, because of my mother being a single parent. (Respondent 12)*
>
> *Yes, but due to the financial strain of my parents, I couldn't study further. My desire would have been working with people. (Respondent 3)*
>
> *Yes, I always wanted to go study. I wanted to become a surgeon or gynaecologist but when I finished school my family went through a difficult time. My parents' companies were liquidated and there was no money for me to go study. And when I applied, I was too late. (Respondent 15)*
>
> *Yes, I did not have the money because my mother was a single parent and I left school at Grade 11. (Respondent 12)*
>
> *I was one of the A learners, but I dropped out at Grade 11, because my mom had a divorce and she had three children and I was the eldest and I wanted to help out with the others. (Respondent 5)*
>
> *The conditions [at] that time [were] very bad; there were riots and all those kinds of things and I had to repeat a grade, and that wasn't nice. (Respondent 13)*
>
> *To get up in the morning and they teach you what to do. But when I got to high school it was [difficult] for me but I pulled through. For personal reasons I dropped out. (Respondent 19)*
>
> *It was a matter of making bad choices. I fell pregnant in Grade 11 and then I had to leave school, so I had to go work to take care of my child, but I told myself that I will go back. (Respondent 11)*
>
> *There was a desire; in 2012 I went to go do Marketing for one year and I passed. [At] that time I was pregnant and then I didn't go back. (Respondent 8)*
>
> *I always wanted to study, because education is very important. The teacher at the time passed away, so I had to drop out. (Respondent 5)*
>
> *I'm grown up and my family struggles to raise me, so I told myself I must work hard so one day I can give back to my family. (Respondent 2)*

Access to RPL and ECD qualifications: Agents of change and intentionality to overcome early life crises

For several participants who had accumulated up to 20 years of experience as ECD practitioners, the opportunity to gain a qualification was a long-awaited expectation. When the College of Cape Town offered access to the learnership through RPL and recruited experienced practitioners, they seized the opportunity. Several participants said that 'RPL chose them', which symbolised their way of explaining that they were recruited to apply for the learnership through the RPL admission processes at the College of Cape Town:

> *RPL [chose] me; they phoned me last year. (Respondent 6)*
>
> *The RPL [chose] me, because my principal offered me the chance to do it. (Respondent 7)*
>
> *The RPL [chose me], because my principal [chose] me to do it because of my experience. (Respondent 8)*
>
> *The RPL [chose me]; because of my experience, I was chosen to do it. (Respondent 9)*
>
> *I was working in the ECD Centre, so the principal told me to apply at the College. [And] then the RPL [chose] me. (Respondent 12)*
>
> *RPL [chose] me. It was the first time ever that I attended college; it was a great experience for me and I grabbed it with both hands. (Respondent 20)*
>
> *I registered a long time ago and there was a waiting list; and then I was chosen to do the RPL. (Respondent 9)*
>
> *I needed to start from the lowest age, so RPL was the only option for me due to my qualification. (Respondent 18)*
>
> *I [chose] RPL because it was a necessity for running the ECD. [Y]ou had to have a Level 5 certificate and it [RPL] came [at] the perfect time. (Respondent 14)*
>
> *It was presented to me as an opportunity … I was already working in the industry and fell into a bracket where I could qualify, and [I] grabbed the opportunity. (Respondent 1)*

It is clear that participants were brimming over with 'intentionality', which is described by Bandura (2001: 6) as 'a representation of a future course of action to be performed. It is not simply an expectation or prediction of future actions but a proactive commitment to bringing them about.'

As the evidence suggests, the participants were recruited into the learnership. However, it is also clear that they welcomed this opportunity enthusiastically, as they would be fulfilling a long-awaited desire to study and gain a qualification. This indicates that an intrinsic 'capacity for agency – for desiring, for forming intentions, and for acting creatively – is inherent in all humans' (Sewell 1992: 20). It was, therefore, an opportunity to continue the education they were compelled to abandon because of early life crises. As agents of change, they displayed the intentionality to overcome a crisis and steer their lives in a direction that realised previously-thwarted aspirations. Illuminating is Archer's (2003: 6) thinking that 'people possess the intentionality to define and design courses of action in order to achieve their own ends'.

Agency, agents, and capacity for optimism amidst crisis

Participants' feelings of excitement and optimism about the possibility of achieving a qualification were moving:

> *It is better to study [at] my age [32]. When you are young … you don't know. It feels nice when you're older. (Respondent 12)*
>
> *I was excited – raring to go and ready for it. (Respondent 1)*
>
> *I was excited. (Respondent 3)*
>
> *I was over-excited. I was seeking the information. (Respondent 8)*
>
> *Excited and also grateful for the opportunity … . (Respondent 11)*
>
> *I was also excited. (Respondent 2)*
>
> *I was very excited because I was going to learn more and get a certificate at the end of the day. (Respondent 15)*
>
> *I was excited and curious, because it was my first time. (Respondent 17)*

Participants' capacities for enthusiasm/optimism displayed in their responses indicate their capacities for embracing hope in order to overcome early life crises.

Moments of crisis, agents of change, agency, and overcoming dispositional barriers

Although participants expressed excitement at resuming their incomplete high school education and completing the NQF Level 4 qualification, they experienced several dispositional barriers on the road to success. It is the case that, when students are engaged in studies, they experience many academic challenges, and dispositional barriers often emerge. Participants revealed moments of crisis in which they struggled to overcome these barriers:

> *During the first few months, the work was too much. And they had to assess you on how you interact with children and [that] pressure was too much, but I didn't [realise all this] until now. (Respondent 18)*

> *The fear of being a failure, especially failing my kids and not being educated for them. (Respondent 11)*

> *I didn't think that I was going to do it. Sometimes I was [mentally] tired and there [were] too many demands, but I [couldn't] give up. I had to do it. (Respondent 8)*

> *It was hard for me; everybody was looking at me because I [am] a man. (Respondent 18)*

'Fear of failure' is a common dispositional barrier. A 'lack of confidence' in academic abilities can have a significant impact. Further, uncertainty can be a symptom, or element, of crisis. The uncertainty expressed by the participants exposed moments of crisis when they questioned their dispositional capacities and contemplated their chances of success.

However, these moments of crisis did not deter them. As the evidence shows, they searched deep within themselves and discovered dispositional capacities for resilience that empowered them to pursue success in the face of adversity:

> *Yes, I discovered things I didn't know about myself, and you are never too old to learn. (Respondent 3)*

> *Yes, a lot. I told myself I can do it, and then I do it. (Respondent 4)*

> *Yes, I did grow, although I had to work at it all the time. (Respondent 19)*

> *It [confidence] has grown over time. (Respondent 7)*

> *It [studies] boosts your self-esteem, [and] makes you more confident in speaking to other people. (Respondent 6)*

> *I had … low self-esteem but now I believe in myself; … I know I can do it and [I] say to myself I am capable, and I have done an awesome job. (Respondent 10)*

> *[I have] so much confidence now; I can't wait for my diploma. (Respondent 13)*

> *Definitely the studies, because you have the confidence knowing that it is not just my own thing that I am sucking out of my thumb; it is based on theory and knowledge as well. [It forced me] to interact and it became natural after a while. (Respondent 1)*

The manner in which the participants exercised their agency in order to overcome their dispositional barriers suggests some agentic capacities and capabilities to intervene as first responders in crises. Sewell portrays agents as having innate capacity for agency, stating that 'humans are born with only a highly generalized capacity for agency, analogous to their capacity to use language. … But a capacity for agency is as much a given for humans as the capacity for respiration' (Sewell 1992: 20). Interpreting capacity for agency as instinctual supports our supposition that participants, as ECD practitioners, have intuitive capacities to navigate crises.

Agency, intentionality, enthusiasm, and achieving a qualification

Although the EPWP's emphasis on skills development and learnerships is criticised, ECD practitioners' enthusiasm about achieving a qualification abounded:

> *It didn't make a difference that I was older [when I started studying]. (Respondent 6)*

> *Like I said, I had to. It is all about the qualification that [is] behind it. That piece of paper gave me an opportunity. (Respondent 14)*

> *[I am] very excited to get my certificate. (Respondent13)*

> *Being your own person, and it [has] got mostly to do with that piece of paper that I needed to get. (Respondent 14)*

> *I was finally doing something that I enjoyed doing. And, for my business, it's motivation for my staff. (Respondent 1)*

Most participants were spurred on by their desire for a Level 4 qualification, and to ascend the ladder of qualifications towards a Level 5 qualification:

> *I don't like [not to] finish things, so RPL allows me to finish my Level 4 qualification. (Respondent 16)*
>
> *My desire to always graduate; it was always something that I wanted to do. [I am] looking forward to Level 5 and my certificate. (Respondent 1)*
>
> *[I was] overwhelmed because I did Level 1, and coming from Level 1 to Level 4 was [also] overwhelming. (Respondent 10)*
>
> *I wanted to finish my Level 5. (Respondent 19)*
>
> *I am doing my Level 5 and it is so amazing. (Respondent 18)*
>
> *[I have] so much confidence now; I can't wait for my diploma. (Respondent 13)*

Despite their many battles with situational and dispositional barriers, participants expressed excitement about studying. Such a positive disposition suggests that participants were not just 'surviving' moments of crisis, but enjoyed the rigours of studying.

The positive attitudes of the participants in this study may therefore be viewed as an indicator that their lives would probably improve in many ways after the completion of their studies – not only because of the practical effects of a qualification, but also because of the changes experienced within themselves.

Agency, agents of change, and service to children: Hope amidst crisis

The optimism that the ECD practitioners displayed demonstrates their positive disposition to provide children and families in crisis with hope. Their desire to improve their capabilities as practitioners, their love for children, and their responses to abused children's crises are evident from the following:

> *Yes, I wanted to study nursing but I wanted to work with children especially. I applied at colleges but my grades were not so good. (Respondent 19)*
>
> *I was helping my aunt in my spare time because she had an ECD Centre; then I [fell] in love with the children … I went to apply for a loan for ECD to make a career out of it and … they called me to apply for RPL. (Respondent 11)*

> *For me it was [about] getting more information and learning more [about] how to develop a child and [so obtain] the certificate. [It was also about being] more experienced. (Respondent 17)*
>
> *I like to learn and, because I work in an ECD centre, I wanted to empower myself so that I can be a better practitioner [for] the children that are in my care and [for] ECD itself. (Respondent 15)*
>
> *Because of the drive I have [to assist] children. I do love children and so that drives me to do this course. I am doing my Level 5 and it is so amazing. (Respondent 18)*
>
> *Yes. I doubted myself at first but my situation is different. At my workplace, we work with children that are abused and neglected and we wanted to teach them … basic understanding. Their [developmental] delays are emotional and social, and I had to work a lot on [those]. (Respondent 20)*
>
> *It's for my daughter; she was abused at the centre … she was attending and that motivated me to make a difference. My main thing is at least, at the centre where I am working, I can [assure] the parents that there will be one teacher that will protect their children because of what happened to my daughter. (Respondent 10)*
>
> *Very much; [from 2015] till now we have achieved tremendously, becoming a beacon to other schools. (Respondent 5)*

It is clear that the participants have confident dispositions, a wealth of experience, and a range of capabilities that determine their agency for crisis intervention. However, real-life crises will reveal 'the practical-evaluative element' described by Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 971), that is, 'the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations'.

EPWP and access to ECD qualifications: Building capacity for crisis interventions

The sudden imposition of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and the immediate loss of jobs and livelihoods exposed the precariousness of work in the community-based ECD sector. A strategy to strengthen the sector's capacity to address future crises is to expand the provision of qualifications for ECD practitioners.

The EPWP is a social security intervention intended to address poverty and unemployment among low-skilled, unemployed people (Biyase & Bromberger

2015; Bokolo 2013; McCord 2005). However, several scholars have criticised the EPWP for not addressing unemployment through job creation, instead focusing on skills upgrading. Antonopoulos (2009: 6) states that 'the social sector has been primarily focused on facilitating skill upgrading through learnerships'. McCord (2005: 564) alerts us to the fact that only 14.2% of people in the EPWP's home community-based care (HCBC) programme and 34.3% of people in the EPWP's ECD programme were participating in learnerships on offer back then. While these numbers are considered low, we acknowledge the importance of these learnership opportunities.

In her critique of the EPWP's failure to create employment, Budlender (2009: 32) states:

> *When the EPWP was introduced, it was agreed that the immediate need in the sector was not for new employment creation, but instead for skills upgrading – and accredited training in particular – of those already in the sector. Already at this stage, there could have been questions as to whether this was really a public works programme, or something else that – while laudable – deserved another name given that the public works programmes are about employment creation that provides useful assets or services.*

Sharing international, comparative perspectives on public works, Hemson (2007: 18) observes that 'one of the most unusual features of the EPWP is the commitment to training, particularly accredited training'. According to him:

> *the Logframe states: 'As far as possible, all training must result in NQF-accredited certification. Among poor people, non-accredited training is regarded as inferior and the EPWP makes an attempt to place trainees at the bottom rung of a ladder leading to further learning (Hemson 2007: 18).*

Interestingly, Parenzee and Budlender (2016: 5) point to an anomaly: 'While EPWP II as a whole saw less emphasis on skills development, within ECD, EPWP training was expanded beyond the 0-4 year age category.' They continue: 'Despite the data challenges, there are clear indications that in the EPWP II the ECD sub-sector has continued to focus on training rather than creation of job opportunities.'

EPWP, access to ECD qualifications, and employment and income

While we acknowledge the EPWP's contribution to delivering qualifications for early childhood educators, we are also critical of its limited role in creating employment in this sector. Bokolo (2013: 2) identifies a relationship between training and employment, saying: 'Some public works programmes have a strong training component that allows participants to gain the relevant skills needed for them to gain permanent employment.' Albeit tenuous, the empirical data point to

relationships between access to qualifications and employment being identifiable in the EPWP ECD. The empirical data also reveal that the Department of Social Development, through the EPWP, offered learnerships to ECD practitioners who were employees or volunteers in the informal ECD labour market.

According to Parenzee and Budlender (2016: 37), the training offered in the EPWP does not necessarily lead to employment: the 'EPWP ECD is unable to contribute towards addressing poverty and unemployment' for poor women. However, they acknowledge a relationship between EPWP ECD practitioner training and employment, saying that: 'In practice this means that when people are trained, they move out of practising as ECD practitioners for 0-4 year olds and take up positions as Grade R practitioners, where salaries are better' (Parenzee & Budlender 2016: 37). In this regard, participants' responses corroborate the relationships between the EPWP ECD training and their positions in the community-based ECD centres:

> *I didn't choose it. It was one of [the] requirements because of my position at my work. I went on the Internet and saw the course online at [the] College of Cape Town and applied. (Respondent 3)*

> *It was a requirement for me in the position that I was as principal. I used to help out at schools and I discovered a passion for it. (Respondent 3)*

> *I was working in the ECD centre, so the principal told me to apply at the College; and then the RPL [chose] me. (Respondent 12)*

One participant associated the completion of the qualification with seeking a higher income:

> *My husband was very nasty after the divorce, so I dropped out. I didn't have anything (no work, no school); I only had my Level 1, and they pay little money for a Level 1 qualification. [S]o that's why I went back and filled out the forms to finish my Level 4. (Respondent 6)*

If the aim of the EPWP is to provide employment through job creation, why has it not focused on the latter? Why is the link between training and job creation so insignificant? Unemployment is a structural problem. The EPWP is a 'structural solution' to address unemployment, yet it yields few successes. We admit that, for those with low levels of education and income, access to PSET cannot solve unemployment. However, PSET can contribute to addressing unemployment if it is combined with other socio-economic and political strategies and interventions.

The sudden imposition of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and the immediate loss of jobs and livelihoods exposed the precariousness of work in the community-based ECD sector. A strategy to strengthen the sector's capacity to address future crises is to provide qualifications for ECD practitioners. However, the

relationships between access to qualifications and employment will be tenuous until a more stable ECD employment sector has been established.

Drawing on the debates in the literature, we show the relationship between access to ECD learnerships, employment creation and income. According to Parenzee and Budlender (2016: 37), 'the practice indicated that EPWP ECD was more often about training and not job creation, with the provision of stipends during training referred to as "job opportunities"'.

For cash-strapped ECD practitioners, a learnership stipend may provide a new source of income, or it may augment income. The receipt of a learnership stipend demonstrates a tenuous relationship between access to ECD qualifications, employment and income. The implementation of the EPWP shows that, while access to qualifications may improve access to learnership stipends, this is not sustainable income. Therefore, the EPWP reproduces an unstable ECD labour market.

EPWP and access to employment: Possibilities, limitations and dilemmas

What does this study teach us about relationships between access to ECD/PSET qualifications and employment? The EPWP cannot solve structural unemployment. If it is combined with other employment-creation strategies and initiatives, the EPWP can contribute to solving structural unemployment.

Is the EPWP merely palliative? In its current form of delivery, the EPWP is palliative. Does a crisis change our thinking about the importance of palliative interventions during times of crises? Do we heed Lima's (2018: 228) call 'to avoid the institutionalisation of education and training, with merely palliative and crisis-management aims, seeking only to dampen the most dramatic negative impacts of insecurity and high levels of structural unemployment'? or should we overlook the palliative shortcomings of the EPWP, yet acknowledge learnerships as gateways to qualifications that can build ECD practitioners' capacities for crisis interventions and for building social cohesion?

Conclusion

As the COVID-19 lockdown unfolded, ECE services collapsed in many low-income communities, revealing the critical importance of early childhood education in many respects – nutrition, safety, security, and social cohesion. The unfolding COVID-19 crisis illuminated the importance of early childhood educators, and their training. It also highlighted their potential role as first responders in crises. For ECE practitioners, access to training opportunities and qualifications is often limited. However, for 20 ECD practitioners, the EPWP facilitated access to qualifications through a learnership programme offered by the College of Cape Town.

Empirical evidence shows that the 20 ECD practitioners completed the qualification successfully. Evidence also shows that the ECD practitioners displayed capabilities for overcoming barriers in order to achieve academic success. We argue that these capabilities point to competences that could enable them to act as first responders in order to identify crises affecting young children and their families in low-income communities. Further evidence revealed that the ECD practitioners demonstrated resilience in overcoming dispositional barriers. This suggests that practitioners have also built agentic crisis-intervention capacities that are necessary to support young children and their families through crises.

As the government and various institutions seek strategies to address unemployment in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, a renewed examination of the EPWP may be instructive in considering its usefulness for creating employment in the social sector that could address crises in low-income communities.

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Workplace literacy in a time of crisis: A narrative account of palliative care workers' learning in dealing with adversity

Gillian Newton & Liezel Frick

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic created a need for more competent front-line healthcare workers globally. Most people see these workers as those in emergency rooms and intensive-care units. Palliative care workers were, however, also called on to help patients with COVID-19, including those with chronic diseases who were at risk of contracting the virus. Yet, we know little about how this group of healthcare professionals – who are often volunteers and thus experience precarious workplace security – acquire the necessary workplace literacy skills to function effectively in a time of crisis. This chapter focuses on how four palliative care workers who treated patients with life-threatening and chronic diseases acquired the workplace literacy required to do work that was often beyond the scope of any training they had received previously. A narrative approach was used to explore what the storied accounts of this small group of palliative care workers in South Africa tell us about the workplace literacies that are gained during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Transformative learning theory was used as a lens to explain the ways in which the participants in this study obtained knowledge and skills during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excerpts from the participants' storied accounts of their workplace literacy acquisition were used to illustrate their transformative learning journeys. In this way, the chapter aims to contribute to our understanding of the development of workplace literacy as a key, lifelong learning concern for healthcare and particularly palliative care professionals.

Introduction

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, António Guterres, in the foreword of the COVID-19 Global Response Plan, stated: 'The world faces a global humanitarian crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations — one that is spreading human suffering, crippling the global economy and upending people's lives. COVID-19 is threatening the whole of humanity' (United Nations Coordinated Appeal 2020: 3). The COVID-19 pandemic is a humanitarian crisis which has placed large sections of the world's populations in danger and has caused havoc in even the most developed countries. The health, safety, security and economy of most countries have been placed in jeopardy. South Africa has not escaped the crisis and, according to the government, its impact has been exacerbated by financial as well as social factors that were already under severe strain.

While humanitarian staff and aid organisations in both the private and public sectors might have had the necessary healthcare and allied health services skills to care for communities in need and were able to understand the complexities of delivering care in dire circumstances, palliative care was not something that was done routinely (Coghlan 2020). Palliative care workers working for non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations and in a few state hospitals, normally provide care in controlled environments. Therefore, they are not necessarily trained to deliver care during scenarios like the COVID-19 pandemic, and often need to improvise as there are no existing guidelines or protocols that they can access. Yet, in times of crisis, palliative care workers must often continue to deliver care to their patients under trying circumstances.

There is not a lot of research specifically dealing with the way in which palliative care workers acquire the skills and knowledge needed to deliver care to their patients during a crisis. This chapter addresses this gap in our knowledge on adult learning by exploring how palliative care workers acquire workplace literacies that enable them to carry out their daily work during a crisis. Each of the participant's stories was presented as authentically as possible. In order to ensure this, we had to be aware of our own experiences, beliefs, and frames of reference. For this reason, we feel it is incumbent on us to identify one of the authors as a person suffering from a life-threatening disease as a way of identifying her locality in relation to this research and her disease. She has been a Type 1, insulin-dependent diabetic for 41 years and has never had the need for palliative care, as her disease has been well controlled and she has an extensive support network. She, however, understands and recognises the value of the work that palliative care workers offer diabetics, as she has heard anecdotal evidence of this from diabetics, both young and old, who would not have been able to manage the disease without palliative support.

This research used a narrative approach, with a naturalist stance as described by McAlpine (2016). We studied and interpreted each participant's individual story, trying to determine, if and how, disorientating dilemmas may have influenced

their acquisition of workplace literacies, and what may have hindered this acquisition. Unstructured interviews allowed us to acquire a deep appreciation and comprehension of the phenomenon being investigated (Ahmed, Aziz & Opoku 2016). We started each interview with questions such as: 'What drew you to palliative work?' Participants were not forced into a specific direction with this type of question and could take the interview in the direction in which they wished it to go. The use of unstructured interviews was particularly suited to this research, as it focused on an area of palliative care which had not been studied extensively before and was approached inductively.

The participants who agreed to tell us their stories included three women and one man, who all had professional qualifications. Two were nursing sisters, one was a lawyer who retrained as an aromatherapist in order to offer aromatherapy to patients needing palliative care, and the fourth was a qualified medical doctor. The two nursing sisters, as well as the medical doctor, had previously worked during the HIV/AIDS pandemic, while the remaining participant had not previously experienced a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The stories told by the participants provided us with their personal experiences of working and of providing healthcare as well as palliative care during a crisis. The information gleaned from the analysis of the data was organised according to themes in order to help understand each participant's learning journey. Transformative learning theory was used as an analytical lens to gain an accurate and deep understanding of the learning path that the participants undertook.

We therefore listened to the stories told by four palliative care workers in South Africa and what their narratives revealed about the workplace literacies that were needed, acquired and developed during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, we offer a unique perspective on adult learning during a crisis in the South African context.

Palliative care in context

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) defines palliative care as:

> *an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual (WHO 2019: 1)*

This type of care offers treatment to people who have serious medical conditions that are incurable or where the progression of the diseases cannot be prevented. The patients' symptoms, whether these progress insidiously or rapidly, are

controlled so that their quality of life is optimised. The treatment is all-encompassing and includes symptom management as well as meeting the social, spiritual and psychological needs of patients and those involved in their lives (Krau 2016).

In an ideal world, an integrated approach to palliative care should be offered to all patients with life-threatening illnesses. In times of crisis, however, this is often not the case. Improved education and communication regarding the scope of palliative care could increase the use of palliative care for all people that could benefit from it (Mittmann, Liu, MacKinnon et al. 2020). The Palliative Care in Humanitarian Aid Settings and Emergencies Network (PalCHASE) was established to respond to palliative needs of people affected by disasters and humanitarian crises, which included the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Two of the challenges faced by the network were the lack of knowledge among palliative care workers who had not worked in a crisis before, and the lack of standards, guidelines, training and protocols (PalCHASE – Primary Care Unit 2020). A recent review of literature published between 2005 and 2017 on palliative care in humanitarian crises (e.g. disasters, armed conflicts, epidemics) supported this notion (Nouvet, Sivaram, Bezanson et al. 2018) Crucial elements that were found lacking include substantiated evidence of the identification of palliative care needs and the fulfilment thereof in a crisis. The review also found that the demand for palliative care in a crisis could have been difficult to determine, and that the stage of the crisis influenced this factor. The authors stated: 'Palliative care that is provided typically occurs in sub-optimal conditions due to a lack of training, guidelines, and resources' (Nouvet et al. 2018: 10). Research has been conducted into the education palliative care workers need and receive in terms of spirituality and compassion required by the work they do (Brito-Pons & Librada-Flores 2018; Evangelista, Lopes, Costa et al. 2016; Simone II 2017), as well as into the need for health literacy in palliative care (Alper 2016; French 2017; Noordman, Van Vliet, Kaunang et al. 2019). Research has also been conducted regarding the need for education in palliative care (Best, Leget, Goodhead et al. 2020; Bugge & Higginson 2006; Quinn, Hudson, Ashby et al. 2008). However, evidence of how workplace literacy is acquired by palliative care workers during a crisis could not be found at the time of undertaking the literature search. This chapter is based on a study that focused on the ways in which palliative care workers acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to provide care for patients during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Palliative care workplace literacy

When adults learn, they do not merely add information to their existing bank of knowledge. Adults make sense of what they have experienced, and this could lead to changes in their beliefs, attitudes or perspectives (Merriam 2017). Palliative care workers do not only need basic literacy to effectively deliver care to patients. These workers, while working during a crisis, need to read and

understand texts in specific ways that relate to the tasks that may have previously fallen outside of their workplace literacy ambit. The ways in which the information is interpreted depends on the different circumstances of the patient and those which the COVID-19 crisis may have brought about (Gee 2015). Workplace literacy encompasses the capacity, abilities and proficiency that individuals need in order to complete conventional tasks associated with their jobs. Initially, in terms of workplace literacy, the COVID-19 pandemic forced workers in all sectors to determine what they needed to do to adjust to conditions that changed quickly and act accordingly so that they fulfilled their workplace roles. The adjustment included acquiring expertise and skill (Agrawal, De Smet, Lacroix et al. 2020).

Critical literacy can be viewed as a microscope that allows a person to look beyond that which occurs daily and is commonplace, and to recognise that language and texts as means of communication have some kind of undercurrent that is predicated on ideological belief and perspectives. These undercurrents can be deliberate or unconscious (Norris, Lucas & Prudhoe 2012). Some critical literacies, such as critical health literacies and critical media literacies, are related to workplace literacy and may be helpful to palliative care workers in times of a health crisis. The notion of critical literacy can be interpreted in many different ways. There is, however, one common perspective that is used, namely that all human behaviour is facilitated by some kind of communication such as language and other symbol systems within a particular cultural context (Foley 2015).

As healthcare workers, palliative care workers have to sift through information to decide what is relevant and what is irrelevant to themselves and their patients. In the COVID-19 pandemic, with the reduced face-to-face communication it brought, a lot of information dissemination was done electronically and via the media. Palliative care workers need to look critically at what media sources are reliable, as the information regarding the virus can change rapidly. This necessitates the use of critical media literacy. A person who is critically media literate is able to question, analyse and evaluate the information critically while understanding the underlying power of the sender of the message (Ligocki 2017).

Palliative care workers who have medical training would also make use of the knowledge and literacy they have gained in terms of healthcare, that is, health literacy. The United States National Library of Medicine defines health literacy as '[t] he degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions' (Fincham 2013: 41).

Learning by palliative care workers in crisis situations as described above could be linked to workplace literacy, as the skills and knowledge gained by the workers in their drive to deliver care to their patients contribute to their workplace literacy. The knowledge and expertise acquired would form part of their workplace literacy tapestry. Newly gained workplace literacy needs to be acted upon immediately within the context of the pandemic. Such workplace literacy becomes

part of palliative care workers' everyday lives, even in post-pandemic times.

The ever-shifting nature of the literacies required during the COVID-19 crisis demands a re-evaluation of workplace literacies, including that of palliative care workers; and workplace literacy re-evaluation demands transformative learning.

The role of transformative learning in developing workplace literacy

If a person is confronted with an experience that is incompatible with their belief or value system, the exposure to this discrepancy could lead the person to question their value and belief system and cause a shift in the way they see themselves and their world view (Cranton 2013). The COVID-19 pandemic has, in many ways, created a crisis for palliative care workers and demanded both critical and workplace literacies not covered in their formal training. Palliative care workers are forced to offer palliative care services under different conditions because of COVID-19 protocols, thus needing to adjust to workplace perspectives that are incompatible with their belief or value systems.

New perspectives and knowledge could bring about changes in the way in which palliative care services are offered post-pandemic, thereby transforming palliative care workers' learning and practice. All the participants in the present study disclosed feelings of fear and uncertainty and recognised that, at times, they felt very lost. Their feelings of uncertainty were exacerbated by the fact that there were no existing conventions that could be used as guidelines. They thus had to use their initiative to solve any problems that could compromise patient care.

Mezirow (2003: 58–59) defines transformative learning as:

> *[]earning that transforms problematic frames of reference — sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) — to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.*

Mezirow (1978) identified ten phases within the transformative learning process, namely:

- Phase 1 – a disorienting dilemma;
- Phase 2 – a self-examination with feelings of guilt and shame
- Phase 3 – a critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural or psychic assumptions;

- Phase 4 – recognition of one's discontent as well as the process of transformation are shared and it is realised that others have negotiated a similar change;
- Phase 5 – exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
- Phase 6 – planning of a course of action;
- Phase 7 – acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;
- Phase 8 – provisional trying of new roles;
- Phase 9 – building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and
- Phase 10 – a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspectives.

Individual and independent thinking is necessary for individuals to make principled decisions in situations where change occurs rapidly (Mezirow 1997). Similarly, critical literacy requires an individual to consider and evaluate information in an independent way to determine what the relevancy of the information is for the given circumstances. In a rapidly changing world, adult learners need to engage with, utilise and mould information instead of only obtaining it. The way in which palliative care workers process the information can foster transformative learning (Mezirow 1997).

Disorientating dilemmas are integral to adult learning, as they force people to take stock of their current situation and find ways to resolve newly encountered and existing dilemmas. It must be kept in mind that adult learning can be facilitated by the dilemma, but that adults need to be self-motivated and driven by a desire to learn, acquire knowledge and grow (Mezirow 1985). The forced, different way of thinking challenges the status quo but also enables people to create new frames of reference. Dilemmas help adults orientate their lives, make sense of their disrupted pasts, and move into the future with hope and direction. Dilemmas are furthermore deeply embedded in the context in which they occur (Cox & John 2016).

Transformative learning during times when there is no crisis often occurs gradually and incrementally (Tisdell 2008). According to Mezirow (1991), the ten stages of transformative learning must be completed before transformative learning can occur. Therefore, there has to be a period of time between action and any transformative learning during which reflection and the re-evaluation of perspectives can occur. During the acquisition of workplace literacy, this time is used to acquire new skills and expertise (Sakinofsky, Amigó & Janks 2018).

In times of crisis, however, we assert that, for palliative care workers delivering care, transformative learning (as well as the increase in critical and workplace literacy) would have occurred more rapidly, as the evolving crisis demanded the expeditious acquisition of knowledge and expertise. Despite the increase in pace,

we propose that, as the critical literacy (particularly in terms of critical media literacy and critical health literacy) and workplace literacy of palliative care workers increased during the COVID-19 crisis, they would have experienced transformative learning.

We argue that palliative care workers delivering care during a crisis are faced with a disorienting dilemma that serves as a catalyst for transformative learning and the development of workplace learning. As transformative learning extends beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and encompasses changing an individual's worldview, the subsequent shift in the frames of reference could lead to innovative thinking and creative problem-solving. The changes in perspective are integral to the immediate application of skills and knowledge acquired (Choy 2009). The immediate transfer and application of new knowledge would be especially useful to palliative care workers during a crisis. As the participants experienced disorienting dilemmas, they would realise that there was a vacuum in their knowledge banks. Tett (2013) postulated that, when a person realised that there was a gap or vacuum in their knowledge, they at least knew that they did not know something. Recognition that knowledge was lacking did not make a person inferior in any way. Instead, the acknowledgement of the knowledge gap empowered a person and, if they were sufficiently motivated, they could learn new skills and gain new knowledge (Tett 2013).

A storied account of palliative care workers' workplace literacy development during a crisis

The four palliative care workers who participated in the study all faced some kind of disorienting dilemma. In facing these disruptions, the participants needed to use critical questioning and dialogue to revise the way in which they thought about and lived out their lives, similar to that described by Cox and John (2016).

In terms of *self-examination*, Jackie's position of privilege allowed her to keep herself as safe as possible, and she had the means to isolate if necessary, whereas other staff did not have that luxury. She also had access to a good Internet connection and , unlike people from lower socio-economic levels, was able to obtain the necessary information through self-directed learning. Jackie said this was a cause for concern:

> *And [a thing] that has worried me, concerned me a lot, is that, you know, we're expecting everybody to work at this extra level, but we're not taking into account the social circumstances that the bulk of our workers are working in.*

The *critical assessment* done by Jackie as a result of the situation she was in was that – despite having worked with staff from different socio-economic groups

before – the extreme pressure that all the staff worked under made her realise that the discrepancies could be life-threatening.

> *For me it's easy. I get up in the morning, I have a shower, I put on clean clothes, get in the car, go to [an old-age home] and work there, come home. I can shower, I change my clothes. I work with care workers that live in Botshabelo. They get up at four o'clock. They take a bus, then the taxi and walk to get here. Then they've got to change. Then … they're tired already by the time they get here. And you can't blame them because they leave work at seven, they've got to get a bus and a taxi and walk; they get home at ten o'clock.*

Her position of privilege allowed her to keep herself as safe as possible and she had the means to isolate if necessary, whereas other staff did not have that luxury. This was a stark reality for her.

> *Then they're working and it's so easy for them to slip up. And I've worked in the townships for 33 years. I've worked with community healthcare. I trained the first community healthcare workers in [her home province]. I mean, it's not that I don't know that, but I think it's brought it even more into perspective.*

Felicity, an aromatherapist who offers massages to patients and their families to relieve pain and stress, says she did a lot of self-reflection in this time and *recognised* that she needed to have some form of plan to help herself emotionally and boost her feelings of self-worth.

> *So, I like to be occupied and I need structure in my life; it's better for me on every level to be able to get out of bed, get dressed, you know. So, there was this sense that I don't like to feel I'm getting a salary for doing nothing.*

Felicity said that, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it led to a sense of doubt about the value she added to the organisation for which she worked.

> *I literally had nothing left that I could offer […]. I mean, a bit of counselling, but it was not my priority. So, that was when I really started pushing my counselling skills. They also asked me to help with a food parcels project. But we realised that all the people who finance NGOs [non-governmental organisations] wanted to finance COVID-19-related stuff. So, I did have a few bad moments when I thought, if we ran out of money … who are you going to keep, a doctor or an aromatherapist? And I kind of knew which one they would pick.*

Emma felt that the sense of responsibility she carried and the load of caring for so many people were immense.

> *So, that was tough. It was really tough. And remember that I'm the CEO of two organisations[:] … the hospice providing palliative care in the home, and then [a childcare facility,] which is a resource centre. So, juggling these two with [the resource centre] we kind of knew that we had to provide meals and feed children, and with hospice we knew that we needed to continue to see the sickest patients because they couldn't go to the hospitals at all. So, the question was, how were we going to look after our staff and, on the other hand, provide a good-quality service?*

Emma says she *explored* various ways of ensuring that the staff were safe, as this was her number-one priority.

> *Many of our home-based care staff come in via taxi. Then I realised, well, one of the biggest areas of infection is taxis. So we organised that all of our staff got fetched at home and got taken home again. Now, that's, that's a huge expense. We fetched staff and, and took them home, for both [the resource centre] and the hospice. I think that was a really important thing to do on various levels.*

In *planning a course* of action, Jackie says the discrepancies between palliative care workers and community healthcare workers, and the higher risk of infection of community healthcare workers, made the latter a greater risk, so she took extra care with staff rosters and kept all interactions of staff with patients and colleagues to the bare minimum. She also tried to find resources to help with training of the community healthcare workers.

> *And that's when we wrote a field manual for palliative care and humanitarian crises, and it was an Oxford University Press book. I actually contacted the editors, [because] I contributed, and I said to them, can we not ask Oxford University Press if they would make it open-access? Because then anyone can download it. And then they did.*

As the pandemic unfolded, Clive had to *acquire new skills*:

> *And during the course of this year I've learnt that I need to shut up more in order to give a moment of silence. And in keeping quiet that allows the patient to say something. … [F]or doctors, silence is uncomfortable. But, actually, in palliative care silence is allowing the patient to digest, to absorb what's been said and then to hopefully have something to say.*

Clive said that, in the midst of all the negativity surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, there were also some positives that emerged:

> *My palliative care sister is over 60 and so she wasn't allowed in the hospital. So, that resulted in us not having our standard palliative care*

> *service at a time [when] we actually required more service. But that was also very good, because it meant that every single doctor in the hospital and nurse in the hospital had to start practising palliative care principles, and it's something I've been trying to get them to do for years. So, COVID-19 forced them to do it.*

However, sadly, this silver lining in the dark COVID-19 cloud turned out to be temporary.

> *But just after the surge they forgot to wear their PPEs, they forgot to do the standard scoring that we did on every single patient with COVID-19, and they forgot to phone the family. So, all these lessons that we learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic that was second nature, unfortunately was second nature only during COVID-19.*

Felicity considers herself fortunate in that she was able to *try new roles*. She was given guidance and encouragement by her colleagues, especially the family counsellor that she worked with:

> *I mean, I work with a really nice team, and they were really encouraging and saying to me, 'go for it', you know, 'you can do this', 'go and check in with this person'. I think, to be honest, I think now that the family counsellor [is] kind of coming back to work [I] probably won't … [have] as many people [referred to me] for counselling, but the family counsellor is very supportive… . So, I give her … the really difficult stuff, [and] try and keep the easier ones for myself.*

In the *building of competence and self-confidence*, Jackie says that the knowledge that was gained through the webinars and self-directed learning was incorporated into protocols that were used by the staff:

> *And, you know, part of it is just saying a little prayer and having faith and the other part is just bringing into practice all the theoretical knowledge that you have.*

Felicity says she was able to *reintegrate* her new-found sense of worth into her daily activities. She says the new skills she acquired were the direct result of having to move out of her comfort zone.

> *But I would say that … not being able to massage, and then being able to massage less than normal, definitely gave me the space to increase that counselling side of me. I feel a lot more confident now than I would have at the start. You know, I'm still seeing some of those parents, patients that I've seen, and I feel more confident that I'm probably doing the right thing.*

From an examination of the data provided by the four participants' stories, it was evident that two factors contributed greatly to the way in which they acquired workplace literacies, that is, previous workplace literacy and self-directed learning. Knowles (1975) described self-directed learning as follows:

> *[A] process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles 1975: 18).*

We assert that the self-directed learning that palliative care workers undertake during a crisis is not learning that offers no value to them. The participants recognised where they had a gap in their knowledge and then made the decision to fill the gap with the knowledge required to carry out their work. Self-directed learning, in essence, is learning in which learners manage the control that they have over the direction the learning takes. The palliative care workers therefore also had the responsibility of determining whether the learning in which they engaged was sufficient to fill the knowledge gap or whether additional learning or a different approach was necessary (Brookfield 1994).

The success of self-directed learning depended on the participants understanding the learning on which they had embarked through the lens of their own life experiences, on their own terms. It was a learning journey in which the participants sifted through their experiences and accurately evaluated those experiences in terms of any new knowledge they had accumulated. This enabled the palliative care workers to use their own initiative if they came across a stumbling block when working during a crisis, instead of consulting someone who had the requisite knowledge (Brookfield 1994).

Three participants had had previous healthcare training, and this training provided them with a scaffold onto which they could build new knowledge and skills. This enabled them to fall back on basic healthcare training and focus on acquiring skills necessary to care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data gathered enabled us to identify the fact that self-directed learning was an essential way for the four palliative care workers to learn.

Our data corpus revealed that all four participants underwent a transformative learning journey. Jackie's disorienting dilemma was the realisation that the COVID-19 pandemic affected people from different socio-economic circumstances in different ways. Felicity's transformative learning experience was kick-started by the disorienting dilemma that she was unsure of her worth and that, as she was not a medical professional, she believed she had nothing to offer her employer. Emma experienced a disorienting dilemma when she felt it was her personal responsibility to keep the staff, patients and children that were under her care, safe. The number of people that she felt depended

on her leadership to keep them safe, cared for and fed, was frightening, and she realised she had to take the reins. Clive's transformative learning journey began with a disorienting dilemma brought about by the staff at the hospital where he worked not being fully prepared to offer palliative or hospice care to COVID-19 patients.

These disorienting dilemmas brought about a change in the world views of the participants. Felicity, however, was the only participant who used her disorienting dilemma as a springboard to increase her acquisition of workplace literacy. She harnessed the feelings of having nothing to offer her organisation in terms of skills at that stage of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to serve as a motivator to acquire new knowledge and skills. Her feelings of inadequacy in terms of counselling skills led directly to her embarking on, and completing, a course that specialised in counselling skills. Felicity was thus able to bolster her competence level and, in this way, contribute to her organisation once again.

Emma, like Felicity, followed the transformative learning steps in the precise sequence as detailed in Mezirow's ten-phase explanation. Her disorienting dilemma was in the form of having to take charge of keeping her patients and staff safe. We argue that this, however, did not increase her workplace literacy as it were. Her transformative learning journey was instead a journey in self-discovery, and she utilised this to build her confidence and sense of worth. While she did acquire new skills, the skill set was more one of managerial and delegation skills, as she recognised that she could not carry the burden of keeping everyone safe on her own.

Jackie's disorienting dilemma centred on the needs of others. The dilemma was brought about by her realising that the COVID-19 pandemic affected people from different socio-economic circumstances in different ways. Despite having encountered these discrepancies before, Jackie experienced a dilemma because these discrepancies, in the time of COVID-19, could lead to serious illness and even death. She used this sobering experience as a springboard to motivate others with knowledge, to share this knowledge. In the course of her transformative learning journey, Jackie skipped the phase in which she was supposed to try out new roles or systems. (see Phase 5 – exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.) She did not have the luxury of time to complete this phase. She instead combined this phase with that of building competence and self-confidence.

Clive experienced a disorienting dilemma because the staff at the hospital where he worked were not fully prepared to offer palliative or hospice care to COVID-19 patients. His disorienting dilemma was the most costly in terms of the pain he went through before he realised that he had to change his perspective. As a senior clinician in the hospital, Clive had to ensure that his staff were administering the best care possible to patients, and this included palliative care. He was also tasked with making some very difficult and emotionally taxing decisions, and he eventually

experienced a breakdown. His breakdown and subsequent recovery constituted the catalyst that brought about the realisation that he had to be cognisant of the fact that he had limits to what he could do as an individual working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The change in Clive's world view brought about a change in the way in which he worked. In a similar vein to Emma's journey of self-discovery described above, Clive's transformative learning was one of self-care. By recognising his limits as a physician, it may have changed the way in which he practised medicine in that he did not allow his job to consume all his time, but it did not lead directly to workplace literacy acquisition. A parallel to Jackie's transformative learning journey could be seen in the skipping of a phase (see Phase 9 – building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships). Clive did not have the luxury of time to build competence and self-confidence.

The rate at which the transformative learning took place was accelerated for our participants, as they did not have the luxury of going through Mezirow's (1978) ten phases of transformative learning at their own pace. The context in which the learning took place was stressful and often did not leave any time for contemplation. However, if the participating palliative care workers were in a position to question their roles during the COVID-19 pandemic and their way of doing things, they would have gained insight that emboldened them to take action from within or in their communities or society, as suggested by McAllister (2011).

Six predominant themes which were factors in the acquisition of workplace literacy were identified, namely: confusion and uncertainty; information overload; the role of previous workplace literacy; self-directed learning; support during the pandemic; and a sense of palliative care being a calling.

The participants described the situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic as one of confusion and uncertainty, as the situation was unknown to everyone. The novelty of COVID-19 added to the confusion, as those with medical training could not use their earlier training to manage the disease. There were no pre-established protocols in place, which also contributed to the confusion as expressed by Clive (which is also emphasised by Sederer 2021):

> *I think uncertainty during the last year in the pandemic was almost the norm.*

The participants did, however, realise that they had to overcome the fear, as there were patients who depended on them. The situation led to a steep learning curve, which was not always clearly defined. Difficult decisions had to be made that could make the difference between life and death, and these added to the confusion and uncertainty. The loss of patients and the loss of self-confidence exacerbated these feelings of confusion and uncertainty. There was also uncertainty about whether they were contributing enough as palliative care

workers, and, for some of the participants, this created anxiety – as Jackie explained:

Information is wonderful, except when there is too much.

The participants felt the burden of a constant information overload regarding the pandemic. The worldwide impact that COVID-19 had also led to a deluge of information that constantly changed. The instantaneous availability and constant barrage of information in this pandemic via various social media platforms, broadcast and online media, printed media like medical journals, and webinars, meant that it was often difficult to scrutinise the validity of the information (Valika, Maurrasse & Reichert 2020). In spite of the information overload, three of the participants considered themselves fortunate to have had health training, as it helped them to filter the information, adapt it to fit the South African context, and then disseminate it to other healthcare workers and to patients. This process of dissemination was impacted by the unique context and situation of each patient. As a result of new protocols that were introduced on an almost daily basis, the participants had to be agile in terms of their approach to patient treatment, as Emma explained:

I've learned certain ways of dealing with a crisis.

Three of the participants relied heavily on experience gained during the HIV/AIDS pandemic to deal with the new and uncertain situation, and thus emphasised the role of previously acquired workplace literacy. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, they brought theoretical knowledge into practice. The daily work activities that the participants undertook while working during previous pandemics were intrinsically linked to workplace literacy acquisition, as this is where workplace skills and knowledge are advanced and strengthened (Cacciattolo 2015). These skills became the foundation which the participants used to navigate new challenges.

They used their previous experience to create documents that could be used by staff members that did not have this practical knowledge. This proficiency also helped them to avoid panic and do what was necessary, as aptly illustrated by Clive's comment below:

If I can read, I can learn.

However, all their previous experience did not prepare them for the inevitable changes in their world and in practice. The participants had a deep need to understand the disease and did not only rely on official memos and protocols. The steep learning curve they were forced to take necessitated self-directed learning, and they used their own initiative to obtain information that was pertinent to specific patient profiles and demographics. Mezirow (1985) stated that self-directed learning was a central component of adult learning. The

participants took control of what they learned and managed the direction the learning took. They thus carried the responsibility of ascertaining if the knowledge they gained filled the vacuums in the knowledge banks, or if they needed to engage in further learning, exemplifying Brookfield's work (1994). They considered themselves fortunate to enjoy learning, and harnessed this aptitude to address gaps in their knowledge.

All the participants were unanimous that some form of support network was integral to getting through the worst of COVID-19, as portrayed by Felicity's story:

You create your own family of support.

A support group can loosely be defined as a group of people that have gone through similar experiences and who provide support and encouragement to each other (Viswanathan, Myers & Fanous 2020). Each participant found a support network that suited their needs and personalities, and these networks helped them to feel connected to people that were in the same boat. This type of support helped them to minimise stress linked to their jobs, and the support from people that were suffering in the same way had a profound effect on their self-confidence, as described by Alnazly, Khraisat, Al-Bashaireh et al. (2021). The nature of the networks were both academic, in which knowledge was exchanged, and personal, in which participants could share their experiences.

All the participants had personal experience of palliative care or the need for it at an early point in their lives. They all seemed to have a sense of calling to do palliative care work, as Clive explained:

I think palliative care chooses you and you don't choose palliative care.

Their interest in palliative care work stemmed from a desire to practise holistic medicine. They thus had an interest in caring for more than just the disease and rather treating the whole person and his/her family. They expressed frustration that this care remains the sole responsibility of palliative care workers and feel that all healthcare workers should provide palliative care when called upon to do so.

Transformative learning was evident in all the participants' stories, but their stories highlight that the process may not have been as linear and protracted as outlined by Mezirow (1978). As noted above, we postulate that palliative care workers would not have had the luxury of going through the ten phases of transformative learning at their own pace. In some cases, the process may have taken place within a relatively short space of time. As two of the participants did not follow all ten phases of Mezirow's transformative learning journey, the reasons why phases are skipped should be sought. One possible factor could be that transformative learning theory was outlined by Mezirow as far back as 1978. Living in a much faster-paced world with collaboration and communication made easier, learning has become more accessible and inclusive.

Given the nature of delivering care during a crisis, palliative care workers could have faced many disorienting dilemmas simultaneously However, facing these dilemmas could have helped the palliative care workers orientate their lives, adopt a new way of thinking, as well as help them move into the future (Cox & John 2016).

Conclusion

The research described in this chapter granted us the opportunity to listen to the stories told by the four palliative care workers. We were humbled by their generosity in terms of time and willingness to share, as the interviews were done in the middle of both the first and second COVID-19 waves. We came to realise that all of the participants wanted their stories to be told, as they welcomed research into their field. Their genuine openness about their experiences and the challenges they faced during the pandemic were both a privilege to witness and a sobering indication that South Africa, as a country, still had a long way to go in terms of offering palliative care to its population.

Listening to the participants, it became apparent that they had all undertaken a transformative learning journey. This journey has changed their world views and, in some cases, enriched the lives of the palliative care workers.

The stories that the participants shared were an illustration of individuals that were anxious and at times intimidated by the scope of what needed to be done to continue caring for their patients. Their fear may have been paralysing at first, but the desire to offer care to their patients outweighed any trepidation they had. If the literacies and skills that the four participants acquired while working in the COVID-19 pandemic are taken into account, it becomes apparent that the knowledge gained would be utilised as workplace literacies. This type of literacy enabled them to carry out their daily functions. The literacies that were gained were completely self-driven and, at times, derived from sources not traditionally used as sources for learning material, for example support groups.

This research has demonstrated that training for palliative care workers having to deliver care to patients during a crisis, should be strengthened as a matter of course. The training should also be extended to community healthcare workers, as they could be an invaluable asset in low- resourced areas when dealing with a crisis. Although the sample group was small, the experiences of the four palliative care workers could form the base on which training programmes centred on giving palliative care workers the tools to continue delivering care during a crisis, could help communities during a crisis. The training should become a process that is updated regularly and done according to need. Any new information that is pertinent could thus be disseminated to palliative care workers and could become part of the workers' continued professional development, as this type of

regulation would ensure that the training that is given has been mandated by the palliative healthcare workers' statutory body.

This chapter sought to provide a perspective on the workplace literacy acquisition of palliative care workers that cared for their patients in a time of crisis. The narrative data serves as a foundation on which further research into the learning journeys of healthcare workers in a crisis can be based.

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Transcending crisis and trauma through mindfulness and embodied learning

Liza Hamman

Abstract

Adult learning often occurs when people are faced with situations that they do not know how to deal with, such as crisis and trauma. These experiences, and the complicated emotions that accompany them, can create emotional barriers to learning which may prevent adults from taking advantage of opportunities for learning and transformation. This chapter proposes that emotional barriers to learning can be addressed through embodied learning prompted by mindfulness, and can enhance learning environments whose primary focus is on rational processes which constitute learning. It sets out to show that a more holistic approach to learning, which includes emotions, is necessary to address emotional barriers to learning.

Narrative interviews were used to collect data from participants in a Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme in South Africa. It explores, through narrative analysis and transformative learning theory, how embodied learning through mindfulness influenced the lives of two learners who experienced crisis and trauma.

Introduction

Adult learning often occurs when people are faced with situations that they do not know how to deal with, such as a crisis that can be described as a particularly challenging or traumatic experience. Supporting this view, Jarvis (2006) posits that learning takes place when a person is aware of discomfort in relation to a particular experience and is no longer able to cope with the situation based on previous experience. Many people do not know how to manage this new situation, or crisis, requiring new solutions, and this lack of knowledge triggers a need for learning and the transformation of attitudes, beliefs and world views that are no longer applicable.

When people are faced with new situations that they do not know how to cope with, like a traumatic experience, this can be considered a 'disorientating dilemma' as defined by Mezirow (1978) when he developed transformative learning theory. According to Laros **(**2017: 86), a disorientating dilemma can be described as 'a significant personal event' that usually denotes a life crisis. This crisis will then initiate the questioning of assumptions and the transformative learning process. In this chapter, to support the creation of new knowledge and transformation, transformative learning theory is explored and linked to concepts such as embodied learning and mindfulness in order to suggest a new way to overcome emotional barriers to learning caused by crisis and trauma.

Trauma in South Africa and emotional barriers to learning

South African society is characterised by many instances of crisis and trauma. It is among the most unequal societies in the world, and many of its people live with poverty, unemployment and the associated trauma. South African learners are confronted with trauma caused by high levels of crime, domestic violence, and substance abuse that are often an everyday occurrence in unequal societies (Ebersöhn 2019). Masiero, Mazzocco, Harnois et al. (2021) predict that inequality is likely to increase in the future and highlight that this unbalanced situation may result in an increased risk of anxiety and depression, substance abuse, and panic disorders in low-income families.

From the literature, it can be concluded that crisis and trauma represent a social problem in a South African context, and that trauma, and the symptoms associated with trauma, can cause emotional barriers to learning. Wartenweiler (2017) states that 'acknowledging the impact of trauma on learning is of great importance if we want to create a more socially just education system and not disadvantage traumatised learners'. Traumatised learners display symptoms such as depression, guilt, shame, lack of confidence, disturbed sleep, inability to

concentrate, chronic stress conditions, and panic attacks. For adult learners who are traumatised, learning is obstructed by anxiety, fear and poor concentration (Kerka 2002). Adult learners who suffer from chronic or traumatic stress are often more concerned with survival than learning (Morton & Berardi 2018), which makes it crucial to deal with these emotional barriers to learning and thus facilitate the occurrence of learning.

Emotional barriers to learning caused by crisis and trauma have received limited attention in the academic literature related to adult education and learning. A literature search revealed that, although there is some recognition of the effect of trauma in other educational settings, the impact of trauma on adult learners has remained relatively unexplored and only recently acknowledged (Wartenweiler 2017). Stanistreet, Elfert and Atchoarena (2020) note that the impact of a traumatic event is cause for significant concern in education, while Tortella, Seabra, Padrao et al. (2021) recognise the need to investigate negative emotions that cause emotional barriers to learning. In the South African context, John (2016) illustrates how emotions caused by trauma can impede the learning process.

Thus, there is a need to address crisis and trauma, and the associated negative emotions in educational settings. Crisis and trauma affect the mind, body, emotions and spirit, and a learning environment which puts the focus of education exclusively on the mind, has a limited ability to deal with the challenges that traumatised learners face (Kerka 2002). Kerka (2002) suggests a holistic approach to education, which includes the body and emotions, to address the needs of traumatised learners who struggle with emotional barriers to learning. Creating a learning environment for adult learners who are highly stressed or traumatised can be difficult (Perry 2006), but embodied learning through mindfulness has the potential to address this need. Tortella et al. (2021) share this belief and argue that mindfulness practices can lead to positive effects on individual stress problems and can facilitate learning by reducing the cognitive blocks caused by stress, thereby activating the potential for learning.

In support of this view, academic studies show that mindfulness can lead to greater adjustment following trauma and can alleviate the symptoms related to trauma which constitute the emotional barriers to learning (Ortiz & Sibinga 2017; Thompson, Arnkoff & Glass 2011). Symptoms related to the trauma described above, such as stress, anxiety, depression and the inability to concentrate, often cause people in a Western society to turn to mindfulness. Many authors assert that teaching people to live in a mindful manner will reduce stress, anxiety and depression and improve their ability to focus attention (Conversano, Di Giuseppe, Miccoli et al. 2020; Ortiz & Sibinga 2017; Shapiro, Brown & Astin 2011). This confirms the potential of mindfulness, through embodied learning, to address trauma and the associated emotional barriers to learning in adult education and learning settings.

Mindfulness and awareness

Siegel, Germer and Olendzki (2009) point out that it is sometimes easier to understand mindfulness by referring to what it is not. Mindfulness does not refer to a blank mind; the goal when cultivating mindfulness is simply to be aware of the activities of the mind. It does not imply that the person becomes emotionless; rather, it cultivates the ability to notice emotions. Mindfulness does not require withdrawing from life, but rather experiencing every moment. It is not the search for bliss either; rather it is the ability to accept experience, whether pleasant or unpleasant, without rejecting the unpleasant or clinging to the pleasant. Mindfulness in daily life thus means to notice and experience what we are doing in a given moment, even in mundane everyday activities such as walking, eating and driving (Siegel et al. 2009). Therefore, mindfulness inspires awareness.

Mindfulness is described as an awareness of thoughts, feelings and physical sensations, and it fosters the individual's ability to notice, observe and accept these thoughts, feelings and sensations (Brady 2008: 94). According to Siegel et al. (2009: 18), 'awareness is inherently powerful' and just cultivating awareness of what is occurring in our body, emotions and mind can help one to deal with difficult emotions, such as those caused by trauma and the subsequent emotional barriers to learning. The purpose of mindfulness is to develop insight into the workings of the mind, and it is a way to address thought patterns that cause negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, fear and guilt.

Mindfulness is a critical concept in relation to crisis and trauma, which cause anxiety and depression in society. Since mindfulness offers helpful tools and practices to face depression and anxiety, it can support mental health and well-being (Behan 2020; Belen 2021). Furthermore, authors such as Behan (2020) and Belen (2021) believe mindfulness can inhibit negative emotions that constitute emotional barriers to learning, thereby promoting learning.

Embodied learning and awareness

As described in the previous section, awareness of the body and emotions is significant when considering the concept of mindfulness, and is a central concept when it comes to embodied learning. Freiler (2008: 40) describes embodied learning as 'being attentive to the body and its experiences as a way of knowing', while Sodhi and Cohen (2012: 124) define it as 'knowledge that is held within the body and is manifested as physical sensations'.

However, embodied learning is not limited to awareness of the body; awareness of emotions is also central to embodied learning. Norris (2001: 122) refers to 'the intelligence of body and emotions' and views mindfulness as a link between the

body and awareness. Norris (2001) explains this as follows: 'Emotion must be included in a discussion of body intelligence because it is one of the means by which our bodies communicate knowledge to conscious awareness. Emotions are a link between body and mind'. Lawrence (2012: 8) confirms this view by stating: 'Knowledge is present in the body before it reaches our conscious awareness. For example, tension is first experienced in the body as a stiff neck, queasy stomach, or a tight jaw.' Lawrence (2012: 8) continues by affirming that 'many of our strong emotions include a physical component'. Dirkx (2008) corroborates the importance of emotions and contends that, in the context of adult education and learning, the role of emotions, and emotional barriers to learning, occurs within a broader focus of embodied learning.

Although interest in embodied learning has increased in the academic literature related to adult education and learning, its role was marginalised at first. However, current debates in the academic literature on adult education and learning reveal that alternative perspectives are present, such as those of Dirkx (2008) and Shahjahan (2015) who call for a more holistic approach to learning. Yet embodied learning is seldom prominent in theorised learning. This is particularly evident when one considers transformative learning theory, a popular adult education and learning theory.

Transformative learning theory and awareness

Transformative learning theory, as introduced by Mezirow (1978), has resulted in a wide body of research. This theory proposes that when an adult encounters an experience or a problem for which there is no apparent solution based on past experience and knowledge, it will lead to reflection. This is referred to as a 'disorientating dilemma' in the literature. A disorientating dilemma is an experience individuals may reflect on (what happened), the process (how it happened), and the premises (beliefs and assumptions that guided our actions). When an individual reflects on these premises, they are engaged in the process of critical reflection during which they challenge their norms and assumptions (Mezirow 2000: 8). According to Mezirow (1990), critical reflection can lead to a transformation in the way that a person perceives the world.

It is the experience of the individual that provides the basis for reflection (Mezirow 1995), and, according to Mezirow (1981: 7), adults have a natural tendency to move toward new perspectives, which can be described as a 'quest for meaning'. He equates making meaning to the learning process (Mezirow 2000: 3). Meaning is an interpretation of experience. and. to make meaning, Mezirow (1991) believes that meaning perspectives are employed. Meaning perspectives are habitual expectations, created by ideologies, beliefs, assumptions, cultural and social norms, and are used to control what is perceived, understood and remembered (Mezirow 1991).

Transformation occurs when an existing meaning perspective is transformed and integrated into an individual's life (Eschenbacher & Fleming 2020; Mezirow 1981, 2009). Newman (2012: 37) highlights that changes in observable behaviour are often viewed as indicators of perspective transformation. Cranton and Kasl (2012: 395) concur with Newman's (2012) perspective that new behaviour in itself cannot be considered evidence of transformation; it has to be linked to consciousness, or a changed habit of mind.

For this transformation to transpire, an awareness of experience as cultivated by mindfulness and embodied learning can be useful. Mezirow (2000: 7) confirms the importance of awareness and asserts that there are two levels of individual awareness. Firstly, individuals become aware of their own thoughts and feelings, and then gain an awareness of the context and source of their knowledge, values and feelings, which enables the person to reflect on these assumptions. For transformative learning to occur, an individual needs to be able to observe personal viewpoints and accept that the new perspective may differ from what was previously assumed to be true (Shapiro et al. 2011).

Transformative learning theory has been critiqued for its emphasis on rational thought by authors such as Orr (2002), Duerr, Zajonc and Dana (2003) and Mälkki (2012), who contend that transformation that is pursued through intellectual methods alone will not result in a deep level of transformation. Duerr et al. (2003) claim that emotional and intuitive factors should also be taken into account, and, similarly, Orr (2002: 480) states that transformation cannot be limited to an intellectual level. In his later work, Mezirow (2000) recognised the importance of these aspects in the process of learning, acknowledged that 'this criticism of the theory was justified', and declared that the emotional aspect of the theory needed further development (Mezirow 2009: 95).

In line with this view, Orr (2002: 80) states that it is on a physical, emotional and spiritual level that an individual experiences the most resistance to change; therefore, transformative learning cannot be limited to rational thought and intellectual methods. Based on these arguments, I propose that embodied learning through mindfulness can expand the scope of transformative learning theory to include other forms of knowing, by promoting an awareness of the experience of the body and emotions. Furthermore, I believe that transformative learning can play a significant role in overcoming emotional barriers to learning.

Research site

The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme is a well-known mindfulness-based educational programme that was developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn and is offered worldwide. It is an attempt to develop mindfulness formally and informally and consists of an eight-week programme comprising nine sessions and daily mindfulness practices. Behan (2020) asserts that the MBSR programme is a proven way to reduce stress and anxiety, which are negative emotions that may cause emotional barriers to learning. Therefore, exploring the learning process during an MBSR programme can reveal valuable knowledge that can be applied to support learning which addresses emotional barriers to learning.

In the curriculum of the MBSR programme, a distinct focus is on awareness of the body and emotions. According to Cullen (2011: 192), 'a hallmark of MBSR is embodiment'. She explains that, during the MBSR programme, adult learners are invited to 're-inhabit' the body. In other words, adult learners are encouraged to observe their bodies and the sensations that arise in their bodies in order to cultivate body awareness. Practices such as the body scan meditation and mindful yoga are specifically designed to support and encourage body awareness. During the eight weeks, adult learners are encouraged to continuously turn their attention to the body and the experiences of the body (McCown, Reibel & Micozzi 2010). Acknowledging bodily experiences paves the way for new possibilities in experiencing emotions (Didonna 2009).

The goal of mindfulness, as cultivated during the MBSR programme, is the ability to pay attention to any aspect of the human experience with calm attention (Kahane 2009). It is proposed in the literature that, if a person cultivates the ability to observe negative thoughts and emotions, it will be possible for them to choose whether or not to focus and act on an experience. In this way, mindfulness discourages an individual from reacting impulsively and destructively (Brady 2008: 94), and it enables the individual to hold painful thoughts and feelings, such as those caused by traumatic experiences, in balanced awareness (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick 2007: 209).

In this chapter, the stories of Irene and Sharon, who participated in the MBSR programme offered in South Africa, are explored. Both Irene and Sharon enrolled in the MBSR programme to alleviate symptoms of stress and anxiety resulting from crisis and trauma, which can result in emotional barriers to learning. Their enrolment was in line with Kabat-Zinn's (2013: xxvi) view that the programme was developed to help and heal people who are in crisis. He notes: 'It was clear that there is something about the cultivation of mindfulness that is healing, that is transformative, and that can serve to give our lives back to us' (Kabat-Zinn 2013: xxvii).

Methods and methodology

Narrative interview

A narrative interview was used to collect the data, because a narrative interview enables a researcher to explore meaning as well as historical context in more detail (Roseneil 2012). During the first part of the interview, the participants were asked to tell their life story, and, during the second part of the interview, when the interviewees had completed the narration, they were asked to elaborate on certain events mentioned during the narrative as well as on issues that had not been mentioned.

Narrative analysis

Recently, transformative learning has become more informed by narrative explorations (Fleming 2021). In line with this development, narrative analysis was employed during this research study. In narrative analysis, an account shared by a person, based on past and present experiences, enables the researcher to explore the human experience at a deeper level (Georgakopoulou 2006). Butler-Kisber (2010) describes it as a way in which people make sense of their experience and explain their actions. It is valuable because 'stories reveal the truth about human experience' (Riessman-Kohler 2008: 10).

Riessman-Kohler (2008) claims that, although a narrative analysis focuses on a particular experience, it can be generalised in order to promote the process of theory-building. The theoretical framework enables the process of theory-building during a narrative analysis and can provide tools to focus the narrative not only on individual aspects, but also on social aspects. During a narrative analysis, the focus moves from a particular, unique story to the general (Huber, Caine, Huber et al. 2013; Riessman-Kohler 2008).

During narrative analysis, it is accepted that the researcher participates in the creation of the narrative. The interpretation by the researcher plays a role, so that the same story can produce different narrative accounts (Butler-Kisber 2010); interpretation is influenced by the researcher's specific focus and theoretical interest (Emerson & Frosh 2004). It is acknowledged that the researcher's interpretation is not the only possible interpretation of the text and that there may be other interpretations. Therefore, it is important to note that the narrative analysis in this study was influenced by a theoretical framework focused on transformative learning and might have been interpreted differently by another researcher. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge my role as a qualified and experienced mindfulness trainer in the production of the stories that were presented during the narrative analysis. I have not only participated in the MBSR programme, but have also facilitated it, which gave me insight into the structure, method of facilitation, and curriculum of the programme. I believe that my own experience helped me to relate to participants

during interviews and improved the data-collection and data-analysis process. However, it is important to note that I did not know the research participants prior to the interviews and was not involved as a facilitator or participant in the MBSR programmes that they were enrolled in.

The narrative analysis process

During the narrative analysis process, the researcher constructs the stories based on the data. As with other research methods, different approaches can be identified. The approach used during this study was developed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), and is a three-dimensional structure which includes temporality, sociality and place. These dimensions were considered continuously throughout the data-analysis process. The first, temporality, means that events and experiences from the past, the present and the future should be taken into account. Usually, considering the future means investigating what is implied for the future (Clandinin & Connelly 1998; Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr 2007; Wang & Geale 2015).

The second dimension is sociality. Using this approach, a researcher will analyse a story in terms of the experience of the storyteller, the social environment, and the interactions with other people (Clandinin et al. 2007; Wang & Geale, 2015). The third dimension is place, which is included by considering the situation of the storyteller and the environment that may have influenced the storyteller (Connelly & Clandinin 2006; Clandinin et al. 2007; Wang & Geale 2015).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), identifying the story is the first step during a narrative analysis. The summary of the basic story is the message that the researcher believes the narrator is trying to bring across. Therefore, the first step during the narrative data-analysis process in this study was to identify the story. The second step was to examine temporality, and, in the third step, I analysed sociality. Finally, in the fourth step. I considered the place and background information.

Validity and reliability of a narrative analysis

In terms of validity, trustworthiness – rather than the positivist notion of truth – is important in narrative analysis (Butler-Kisber 2010). Authors such as Trahar (2009) point out that one of the critiques of the narrative analysis process is that it does not represent a clear route to the truth. Trahar (2009) acknowledges that a narrative analysis does not bring forth one 'truth', because it is believed to be impossible for two people to interpret a story in exactly the same way. It is acknowledged that interpretation will be influenced by the researcher and his/her specific theoretical interests; therefore, it is impossible to identify one objective 'truth'. Yet, the interpretation has to be plausible if the researcher wants to influence theory and practice. To ensure trustworthiness and plausibility, the interview text must be displayed. Plausibility is enhanced when the voice of the

participants is clear in the text and a substantial body of text has been provided (Butler-Kisber 2010). In this chapter, excerpts from transcriptions of the interviews are reproduced to enhance trustworthiness.

Stories of healing after crisis and trauma

The experiences of two adult learners, Irene and Sharon, who enrolled in the MBSR programme to alleviate the symptoms of stress and anxiety, were selected for analysis in this chapter because they both experienced crisis and trauma, and experienced negative emotions associated with traumatic experiences. Therefore, their experiences could inform knowledge creation related to overcoming emotional barriers to learning and transformation.

Surviving an abusive marriage: Irene's story

Irene was an adult learner who was the victim of domestic violence and turned to mindfulness to deal with the resulting stress and anxiety, symptoms that are associated with trauma and emotional barriers to learning as identified by Kerka (2002) and Tortella et al. (2021). The abuse resulted in a lack of energy and in feeling burnt out, and it seemed that she also believed that, if she stressed less, she would enjoy her life more: 'I want to learn how to handle my stress and enjoy life more.' Although she did not refer to the trauma caused by domestic violence as her reason for enrolling in the mindfulness programme, as the course progressed, she became aware of negative emotions that were linked to crisis and trauma from her past. This is how she described it:

> *Negative emotions. There were things (pause) when we got to the third class it just started feeling that things are just getting too much. I started thinking a lot about things that happened in the past.*

When encouraged to elaborate about 'things that happened in the past', Irene told a story of ignoring her own emotions in order to survive an abusive marriage. She divorced her abusive husband and remarried at a later stage, but she still had to deal with the trauma of her previous marriage. During the MBSR programme, through embodied learning that increased her awareness of emotions, Irene learned that she had to acknowledge and deal with her emotions if she wanted to let go of her past and heal the trauma that she experienced during this crisis.

Irene was 45 years old at the time of the interview and worked as an occupational nurse. She preferred meeting me at a coffee shop after work for the interview, and seemed comfortable and at ease in the environment. She told me that, at the age of 19, she met and fell in love with her first husband, and, by the time she was 20, they were married. A year later, she fell pregnant with her first daughter, and a second daughter followed two years later. Unfortunately, it was an unhappy

marriage, as Irene's husband was an alcoholic and later became physically abusive. She explained:

> *My ex-husband was an alcoholic, he had a split personality. He was the nicest guy when he was sober but it happened less and less in the 18 years that we were married. But my thing was, you know, we are married for better and for worse.*

Irene related that she stayed in the marriage not only because of the commitment she had made to her ex-husband, but also for the sake of her children. She said:

> *I was aware that I was being abused but I just pushed it down and tried to push on. If I think back now I realise I should have left when the kids were three and five years old. It would have been easier for them. But it is easy to say that afterwards, you just do what you think is the best at the time.*

She eventually realised, when her children were in high school, that it would be best for her children if she left her husband:

> *I had two small children and I was trying to hide things from them. All the time I was just hiding things from them, and trying to protect them. At the time I thought I was doing the right thing, I just wanted them to grow up in a normal house, or at least it looked that way from the outside. But it started getting to me when they started growing up and they actually started telling me that they can't bring friends home because daddy will embarrass them. And then I realised they do notice it; they do know what is going on. So later, with time, he became physically abusive but I wanted to stay until the kids were done with school. When they started high school I realised that it was getting really bad and I had to get out. Also financially, I don't think the kids would have been able to go to school if I stayed in that relationship. So yes, it was the right decision to leave but it was really, really difficult.*

For many years, Irene's husband and daughters were her priority and she always did what was best for them while ignoring her own needs and emotions. Even when she made the decision to leave her husband, she did not do it for herself but rather for the sake of her children. After divorcing her husband, Irene started the difficult process of rebuilding her life after crisis and trauma. She managed to get back on her feet and later met and fell in love with her current husband. However, Irene never really processed the trauma of her first marriage, and, during the MBSR programme, it became apparent that it was still causing her anxiety. She noted:

> *I am realising this for the first time now. I don't think I was always this anxious, so uncertain, it was because of the relationship.*

When Irene, through embodied learning prompted by mindfulness, learned to pay attention to herself, her body and her emotions, it seemed that experiences from the past started returning to her, awakening her awareness. She said:

> *I think there are lots of things that happened in my previous marriage (pause). Bad things that I didn't deal with (pause) and I was in a survival mode for a long time and I didn't deal with it (pause). I had to survive for the kids and then I fell in love and now it is starting to pop up. So now I have to start dealing with all the hurt that I didn't deal with before. It came up and I just realised I have to deal with these things.*

This was not an easy process. She continued:

> *It was really difficult and traumatic. I felt a bit depressed (pause). I was really wondering if the course is really good for you. I was really doubting whether I should continue with it.*

She explained:

> *Negative things started coming up. There were things, emotions from the past. So I had to decide either I deal with it or I put it aside.*

Irene admitted that the process of embodied learning through mindfulness, and becoming aware of her emotions, was not always an easy process. However, she persevered and eventually was grateful that she completed the MBSR programme, saying:

> *I am glad I did. I had a breakthrough. I just realised you know this is coming up, I have to deal with this (pause) and I spoke to my husband about some of these things. Just to get rid of it and it really helped. I could really face it for the first time.*

During the MBSR programme, Irene had to learn to stop ignoring her own needs and emotions that formed during the years that she was in an abusive marriage. Once she found the courage to acknowledge these emotions, the experiences from the past that were previously ignored started coming back to her awareness. Irene realised that she had to find ways to deal with these experiences and found that talking to her new husband or writing about her experiences helped her to process what had happened in the past. She acknowledged that this process was continuous and that there were still things that she had to deal with in the future:

> *I do realise there are more things that I have to deal with. I have realised that these things that I am not dealing with are causing anxiety in my life. So I have to deal with these things to just really be able to let go of it and really be at peace with it. I just want peace and quiet.*

In the preceding statement, Irene indicated that she wanted to 'let go' of the trauma she experienced, although she might not have been able to do it then. It appears that Irene learned the value of acknowledging her emotions, which changed the habit of simply ignoring her emotions and indicates the transformation of a meaning perspective. Therefore, it seems that cultivating mindfulness and embodied learning helped her to deal with stress and anxiety. During the MBSR programme, Irene finally found the courage to bring awareness to her emotions, which then initiated reflection about events from the past and her abusive marriage. She realised that she still had to deal with the crisis and trauma from her past, which she thought she had left behind. In this way, reflection brought awareness to things she was unaware of. It also revealed to her how crisis and trauma from her past were still influencing her, which, according to Mezirow (1981) and Cranton and Roy (2003) can be linked to a process of transformation.

The experience of emotional awareness and embodied learning was central to the process of transformation, as demonstrated by Irene's story. Instead of ignoring her emotions, Irene found new ways to deal with them, such as talking to her new husband. The data show that, as a result of emotional awareness and embodied learning, she decided to deal with the consequences of her abusive marriage for the first time. Cognitive, rational knowledge did not inspire Irene to take action to deal with and let go of her past; it was her new-found emotional awareness and learning about emotions that prompted these new actions, indicating a new perspective. Irene's story aligns with the theoretical position that transformative learning theory should include emotional knowledge-creation processes that can address emotional barriers to learning. It is emotional knowledge, not cognitive, rational knowledge, that changed Irene's habit of ignoring her emotions, and this points to transformation.

Irene's transformation was prompted by the experience of stress and anxiety, which are emotional barriers to learning as identified by Kerka (2002) and Tortella et al. (2021). After participating in the MBSR-programme, Irene reported a decrease in stress and anxiety and demonstrated a new awareness of her body and emotions, or of embodied learning through mindfulness. Irene's story of transformation and overcoming emotional barriers to learning, caused by domestic abuse, can be useful in exploring new ways of dealing with emotional barriers to learning in South Africa.

Facing the past: Sharon's story

Sharon was another adult learner, like Irene, who, prior to the MBSR programme, was unable to acknowledge and express her emotions, which had led to a drinking problem and her dropping out of university. The suppression of emotions, such as anxiety, resulted in a crisis for Sharon, but embodied learning through mindfulness enabled her to be more aware, to acknowledge her emotions, and to

learn from them. She learned how to deal with her negative emotions in a constructive way, overcoming emotional barriers to learning and directing herself towards transformation.

Sharon chose to meet me in a coffee shop for her interview. She was 24 at the time and living with her mother. Sharon grew up as an only child with a single mother, as her father left when she was young. She revealed that her father was not involved in her upbringing and, although she tried to reconnect with him, he was not interested in a relationship with her. Sharon was studying accountancy through UNISA. The year before, she abandoned her studies at another institution, without completing the same course, because of a drinking problem. She explained:

> *I was in Durban for three years and in my third year I dropped out due to a very traumatic experience with my grandma passing (pause) not naturally. I had problems before (pause) but that kind of spiked things. I never really cried, I never really went through it. I kind of, I mean if I see someone who I don't know going through a hard time I will experience their emotions but my own I can't. I blocked it so (pause) and then I landed up drinking. Because that was kind of the only way I could get my emotions out. My drinking got to a point where I pushed my friends away. I pushed everyone away. And I actually embarrassed myself to a point that the people I were drunk around I actually didn't want to see because I made a fool of myself.*

During the MBSR programme, Sharon learned how to work with her negative emotions in a more constructive manner, although she acknowledged that this was not an easy process. During the interview, Sharon clearly described how, previously, she was unaware of her body and emotions, but mindfulness, which stimulated embodied learning, encouraged awareness of both her body and emotions. She described it in this way:

> *I actually find it does help me to be aware of it (pause) because then I can almost (pause) I take a step back and then I say in this situation I feel like physically I want to run away. Or I want to lash out at someone. I want to do something. And then I take a step back because I have identified anxiety. And then once I have done that I can say why am I feeling anxious? So I am pinpointing. So for me that process helps me to deal with it. Understanding what is going on.*

In this extract, Sharon clearly describes how bodily and emotional awareness, or embodied learning, starts the process of reflection, which is central to transformative learning theory. Once Sharon became aware of how she previously ignored her emotions, she explored the reasons why she developed this habit, realising that this was as a result of childhood experiences. She explained:

> *I linked this to childhood experiences because I grew up without a father and then I met him and then he didn't want to see me again. I have got a very hard mother, a very difficult mother who doesn't experience emotions so she is very withdrawn from the world and stuff.*

In the preceding extract, Sharon recognises how her mother set an example for her that emotions should not be acknowledged or dealt with, and she assumed that this was the correct way to deal with her emotions, which created a meaning perspective. It is clear from the data that embodied learning as a result of mindfulness, including reflection on her emotions, changed these assumptions.

However, she also mentioned that the experience was not always easy:

> *But I am still aware of how I am feeling (pause) which recently hasn't been that (pause) it is not nice. It is obviously good for you but it is difficult. Just to kind of be aware and know you are feeling something. And it might just be something silly but you are aware of it and you have to work through it. It is a lot more effort than not being aware. Which is obviously good (pause), I mean I needed that but (pause) it is something you can't unlearn. I mean once you are aware you are aware.*

She continued:

> *So it has helped … but like I said it is difficult. It is more difficult to deal with my emotions now. I was someone who kind of blocked my emotions. I never dealt with it which then caused a lot of other issues. So this was perfect for me but I am 24 now and I haven't dealt with emotions properly. So now it is coming in waves. And it is just sitting down and trying to identify them and try to understand them. And (pause) because my first reaction will always be anger and then realising the anger is hiding something else. So I am getting there but it is a long process because I have never felt emotions before.*

In the preceding extract, Sharon explains how embodied learning and the process of reflection as a result of her new awareness of emotions were often a challenging process for her. Although authors such as Mezirow (2000), Mälkki (2010), and Mälkki and Green (2014) recognise that transformative learning can be a difficult and emotional experience, they do not explore an approach that could encourage awareness of emotions and support the adult learner during the process.

It seems that mindfulness itself may have helped Sharon through this challenging process and she demonstrated 'acceptance', one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme as suggested by Kabat-Zinn (2013: 27). She said:

> *I have changed but I must admit one thing (pause) I don't have (pause). I had a lot of guilt when I went into this course because of what I have*

> *done in the past and it has helped me to accept myself. So I know I have a lot of faults but …. accepting yourself and just saying you know what, this is who I am. And just getting rid of the shame, the guilt. That was a very big thing for me to let go of. So I have learned some stuff but at the same time I have also learned to accept that.*

As can be seen from this extract, she learned to let go of emotions such as shame and guilt that were related to her past. Traumatised learners often display symptoms such as shame and guilt, which create emotional barriers to learning. The data in this example suggests that embodied learning through mindfulness can support learners in dealing with these emotional barriers to learning.

Sharon's story highlights that, although it was difficult and challenging, she learned how to acknowledge her emotions and to create new knowledge as a result of this new awareness. In this way, embodied learning through mindfulness created the possibility of the transformation of a meaning perspective that she formed as child, when she was taught to ignore her emotions. This new perspective enabled her to deal with the negative emotions caused by trauma and to overcome emotional barriers to learning. Furthermore, this new awareness of emotions, or embodied learning through mindfulness, represented a new consciousness which can be linked to transformative learning (Dirkx 2012). Sharon's story reveals the notion that embodied learning through mindfulness is an aspect of transformative learning that needs further consideration. Furthermore, embodied learning through mindfulness paves the way to a new consciousness, which is necessary for transformation to occur.

Stories of mindfulness, embodied learning and transformation to overcome emotional barriers to learning

The stories of Irene and Sharon illustrate how embodied learning through mindfulness prompted a new awareness of the body and emotions, especially an awareness of emotions associated with crisis and trauma such as anxiety, guilt, shame and fear that can cause emotional barriers to learning. They explain how the experience of emotional awareness and embodied learning was central to the process of transformation and dealing with negative emotions after experiencing trauma, and show that it is emotional knowledge, not cognitive, rational knowledge, that inspired transformation and the process of addressing emotional barriers to learning. Authors such as Berila (2014), Shahjahan (2015) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015: 246) propose that educational theory needs to be expanded to include embodied learning, and this study supports this view. It can be argued that embodied learning through mindfulness fosters conditions that can support transformative learning, and research that investigates

mindfulness in relation to transformative learning theory can make an important contribution to the existing body of literature.

Although there is evidence of current debates on embodied learning in academic literature, there is little evidence of practical suggestions on how to introduce embodied learning into the adult education and learning environment. In South Africa, the University of Cape Town has included mindfulness in its MBA programme. This approach could be expanded to include other programmes for adult learners offered at the university. Furthermore, it would be beneficial if other South African universities followed a similar route. Stellenbosch University offers a postgraduate certificate and a master's programme in mindfulness aimed at developing mindfulness trainers, but it does not include mindfulness training in other adult learning programmes. The inclusion of mindfulness in adult learning programmes offered at universities would introduce more people to alternative forms of learning, such as embodied learning through mindfulness. These alternative learning forms could possibly complement cognitive, rational knowledge and, for some people, address emotional barriers to learning.

The stories of Irene and Sharon strengthen the perspective of Berila (2014), Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) and Chari (2016) that mindfulness represents a way to introduce embodied learning into pedagogical practices. Furthermore, they support Belen (2021), Matiz, Fabbro, Paschetto et al. (2020) and Tortilla et al. (2021), who suggest that mindfulness has the potential to help people cope with stressors and negative emotions which can cause emotional barriers to learning. In adult education and learning settings, Pfefferbaum and North (2021) suggest that supportive interventions, designed to promote wellness and enhance coping and stress management in society, should be emphasised. The stories of Irene and Sharon show that embodied learning through mindfulness during a MBSR programme can be considered such an intervention.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates how embodied learning through mindfulness has the potential to generate the emotional knowledge needed to deal with difficult emotions resulting from traumatic experiences, and how this knowledge has the potential to result in transformation that can transcend crisis and trauma. Dealing with crisis, trauma and emotional barriers to learning is of particular importance in South Africa, where some learners face 'chronic trauma' (Ebersöhn 2019). The chapter highlights the potential of transformative learning theory and practice to address this need, and supports the view of authors, such as John (2016), who argue it should be examined in a context, such as South Africa, where deprivation, violence, fear and trauma are widespread and where many learners are potentially affected.

The two narratives explored above suggest that embodied learning through mindfulness could benefit adult learners in South Africa, especially those who have suffered trauma and need to overcome emotional barriers to learning. It demonstrates the value of an integrated, holistic approach to learning in transcending crisis and trauma. Further research is needed to explore how embodied learning through mindfulness could inform transformative learning theory and practice. This type of research and academic engagement could promote a more holistic approach to learning which includes the mind, body and emotions.

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Dr Paul Dankers is a Researcher at the University of the Western Cape's Centre for Innovative Educational and Communication Technologies (CIECT). His research intersects at various areas in e-learning and hybrid learning approaches, such as: the continuing practices of flexible learning; the value of blended-learning technologies; and online teaching practices at higher learning institutions.

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Natascha Hector completed her MEd (AL (Adult Learning and Global Change)) at the University of the Western Cape. She has over 30 years of expertise in education within the 0- to 6-year scope, ranging from primary school, to NPO (non-profit organisation) and TVET (technical and vocational education and training) lecturing. She is currently Head at the University of Cape Town Educare Centre, and has a passion for adventure.

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Liza Hamman

Liza Hamman holds a PhD in adult education and is currently a department manager at Boland College. She has been working in the education sector in various roles since 2008. She is a qualified mindfulness facilitator and has developed, and facilitated, mindfulness courses for educators and learners in the South African education sector.

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With a research focus primarily on language and literacy development in isiZulu and English, Sandra Land has worked in adult and community education since the 1990s, first at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Adult Education, and, more recently, at the Durban University of Technology, where she set up the Adult and Community Education Unit at the Indumiso Campus near Pietermaritzburg.

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Vusi Mncube is a Professor in Educational Leadership Management and Policy and currently serves as Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare. His research focuses on good governance, with a special focus on school governance, democracy and education, democracy for education, and social justice. He has published several research reports, articles and books. He is co-author of three books, the most recent being *Violence in schools: South Africa in an international context*, which won the prestigious Hiddingh-Currie Award at the University of South Africa.

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Babawande Emmanuel Olawale is a PhD graduate from the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. His research interests include, but are not limited to, Mathematics Teacher Education, Fourth Democratic Citizenship, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and the Qualitative Research Approach. He is a member of a number of professional bodies in both Research and Mathematics Education.

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Shirley Walters is Professor Emerita of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. She is President of PIMA, an international network of adult education and lifelong-learning practitioners and scholar–activists. She has been active within social justice-oriented civil society organisations for over 40 years, both locally and globally.

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Kaylianne Aploon-Zokufa is a PhD candidate and lecturer in the Institute for Post-School Studies at the University of the Western Cape. Before joining the University, Kaylianne taught, trained and facilitated adult education and training (AET) programmes in workplaces, and early childhood development programmes at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges.

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