

INTRODUCTION - RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THEORIES

The previous chapter examined “cross-cultural effectiveness” conceptualized as “problem-solving”, “learning as growth” and “perspective transformation”. These three perspectives have already been demonstrated to be underpinned by the assumptions, constructs and methodologies (paradigms) of behaviourism, cognitive psychology and critical theory (particularly Mezirow’s work on “transformative” dimensions of learning). Further evidence will be provided from the written discourse of adult and community educators in general and of cross-cultural educators in particular, and recent milestone events in these fields of practice which underscore the centrality of these three theories .

“Studies in Continuing Education” is an internationally refereed journal, published by the University of Technology, Sydney, which receives contributions worldwide, “from those working in all aspects of continuing education”. A content analysis of ten biannual issues from 1990 to 1994, using the concepts contained in their abstracts and conclusions and the authors cited in their references indicate the following theoretical orientations:

Humanistic (4%); Behaviourist (14%); Cognitivist (24%); Critical Theory (50%); and atheoretical (generally “historical” or “descriptive” (8%). This journal is characterized by its widely international representation, a predominance of theoretical and research-based articles and a predominance of writers with cognitivist and critical orientations.

The “Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education” is not as research-oriented as “Studies in Continuing Education” , is not a refereed journal, and while publishing a number of overseas writers, represents more the Australian practitioners as “an official publication of the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education”.

A similar content analysis of twelve tri annual issues since 1991 in such themes as “Community Education”, “Economic Rationalism”, ‘Adult Learners, “Workplace Education”, and “Gender” indicates the following theoretical orientations:

Humanist (2%); Behaviourist (8.5%); Cognitivist (13.5%); Critical (22%); and atheoretical (54%). A major difference between these two journals is that the latter is significantly less theoretical and contains a large proportion of case studies of “good practice”. The three perspectives chosen are nevertheless the most frequently adopted by writers published.

The Conference themes chosen by the Australian Association for Adult and Community Education are also a significant indicator of key issues for the sector and the healthy tensions between the liberal, behaviourist, cognitivist and critical traditions.

They have been:- “ACE: Its Contribution to the Australian Economy” (1988); “Fanning the Winds of Change: Crisis or Opportunity” (1989); “Striking the Balance” (1990); “Australia: Will it Work?” (1991); “Adult Education for a Democratic Culture” (1992); “Learning from the Centre” (1993); and “Adults, Education, Families” (1994).

The only conference of the Network for Intercultural Communication (NIC) attended by the researcher was in 1993, in Brisbane. Its theme was, significantly “Cultural Diversity - Pathway to Productivity and Profit”. NIC is a national network of cross-cultural trainers and educators working with all the key client groups identified in Chapter 1. Many are of non-English speaking backgrounds themselves, studying for higher degrees, and work in government departments, particularly Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Their conference proceedings (1993) represent a significantly atheoretical approach (55%) with only one presenter adopting a cognitive perspective, (40%) a behaviourist perspective - they, like UTS, depend on DEET funding, albeit in a different way, and recognize the dominant, government endorsement of “competency” approaches - and not one, with the exception perhaps of Mary Kalantzis, attempted a critical theory analysis of the rather “economic rationalist” theme. Further analysis of the discourse of cross-cultural trainers and educators will be undertaken in the field study component (Chapter 5) but there are further reasons for choosing the three perspectives which follow as “relevant” to this study.

In February 1994, Whyte published “Frameworks for Competence in the Management of Adult and Community Education” and acknowledged (1994:8):

The National Training Board (NTB), the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the National Training Council (NTC) have been established to coordinate

planned expansion of vocational education and training and to open up the training market to a wider number of providers and learners. The approved method for this expansion is competency-based training... this provides a challenge for adult educators and their students, because increased funding and formal recognition of courses and outcomes of learning are largely contingent on working within Training Reform Agenda (TRA) policy and later (1994:9)

In this climate adult educators responding to community interest cannot escape competency standards without potentially disadvantaging themselves and some of their clients... Along with the other sectors ACE is being swept up in the TRA.

In the 1993 NIC Conference Proceedings two researchers from the University of Sydney, Joanne Travaglia and Sandy Degrassi, who were funded by DEET to develop competency standards for adult educators working in multicultural environments (mainly with people of non-English speaking background) argued in their paper "Cross-Cultural Competencies" for Adult Educators and Trainers (1993:11)

It seems impossible nowadays to talk about training or adult education without talking about competencies... the CBT framework provides a useful way of broadly outlining what occurs in practice.

Their next statement is deeply embedded in the discourse of behaviourism (1993:12)

Since the operative definition of learning is a change in behaviour, and since shifts in behaviour can only be maintained through changes in attitudes, then how can we say we are effective as trainers if we do n't change behaviours?

The AAACE has been "watchdog" for the sector on the "competency" debate and its choice of invited overseas speakers for Adult Learners' Week in September 1995 reflects its interest in critical theory as a balance to the dominant "economic rationalists". So far, the confirmed overseas guests include Dr Paul Belanger, Director, Institute of Education, UNESCO; Jack Mezirow; Mechthild Hart and Jane Thompson, radical feminist.

The case for selecting these three orientations is complete.

To assist in the analysis of the discourse of cross-cultural practitioners the three selected theories will be described and critiqued under the headings of “historical background”, “key concepts”, “protagonists” and “critics”.

1. THE “COMPETENCY” APPROACH AND BEHAVIOURIST LEARNING THEORY. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION

The major antecedents of twentieth century behaviourism were “determinism” (all behaviour is pre-determined) and “materialism” (all reality is material) with Hobbes as their major protagonist; “scientific realism and empiricism” (the inductive examination of sensory information) in the tradition of Bacon, Locke and Bertrand Russell; and “positivism” (knowledge through scientific observation and measurement) proposed by Comte and further developed by philosophers like Ryle, Descartes, Pavlov, Darwin and Thorndike.

John Watson propounded that psychology was the science of behaviour but it was Burrhus Frederick Skinner whose work on “operant conditioning” and “reinforcement” laid the foundations for modern behaviourism. His major goal was to understand, predict and control human behaviour. Educators were to be “contingency managers” “environmental controllers” and “behavioural engineers”. These views spawned “behavioural objectives” which became very popular in teacher education in the 70s; “accountability” ensured by such practices as “performance contracting” and “educational vouchers”; “program development models” (Tyler (1949) and later Knowles (1970) and Foulé (1972)); “programmed instruction” and, of course, “competency-based education” particularly in adult vocational education, continuing education, and adult basic education (including literacy and numeracy) so his influence has been profound since the 1930’s.

Garrick and McDonald (1992) described the impact on vocational education in Canada, the USA and the UK as being similar in that all define training roles, cluster “competencies”, define levels of achievement, set performance criteria and define the context of “competence” with some significant differences. The UK (on which they believe the Australian system is largely based) is criticized for being “largely behaviourist or a specific tasks approach... with 2 key purposes, 5 key roles, 38 elements for each and 105 standards (This is for “industry trainers” only) (1992:175). The Canadian model is an “integrated” or “task” and “attribute approach”, while

the US model uses a “behaviourist and generic skills or attributes approach”. (These concepts will be explained in the next section.)

Collins, writing on the Australian scene, (1993:4) agreed that:-

In other countries where competency-based approaches are being explored (Canada, the United States and Britain), the target group for competency-based learning policies remains the training sector. Australasians (Australia and New Zealand) stand out in seeing this as an approach which is relevant across the education of the whole post-16 age group, including senior high school and university students.

This development has been the result of the intervention of the Federal Government into educational practice recommended by many reports e.g. Dawkins and Holding (1987); Dawkins (1988); Finn (1991); Mayer (1992); Morrow (1992); VEETAC (1992); Carmichael (1992) and by the National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition which funded the work of Gonczi, Hager and Oliver (1990) and others in establishing “competency based standards” for the professions while Mayer’s “generic key competencies” now reach deep into the secondary schools.

Two critics have reminded us of the cyclic nature of behaviourism’s influence and its pre-eminence.

Winning (1993:111)

This is not the first attempt to control education through tightly-prescribed behavioural objectives. They were first introduced in the 1920’s, then reintroduced in the 1960’s when they were fashionable in response to the USA’s shame over Sputnik.

Stevenson (1993:96) produced a table of “historical patterns of concerns in education” which identified the high-water marks of behaviourism as:-

1. The early 1900s - Stimulus-response Associationism (Thorndike, 1906).
2. The 1920s - Post-war reconstruction to the great depression - Bobbit and Charters (1924) - routinized automated manual dexterity - the era of Fordism.
3. The 1960s - Depression - Skinner (1954), Mager (1962) - behavioural objectives.

4. The early 1980s - Depression - fast responsive needs analyses and functional competence at work.
5. The 1990s - Recession - high levels of youth unemployment - the above reports - observable measurable performance to industrial standards.

Critical theorists would make much of this cycle as did Victor Soucek (1993:1265).

As Gramsci (1987:105-6) pointed out:-

At times of conjunctural crises, the state tends to assume a hegemonic role on behalf of capital in order to reorganize the social relations of production, social reproduction and distribution.

This view provides a plausible explanation for the cycles argued above.

KEY CONCEPTS

The central concept is clearly “competence”. Collins (1993:3) indicated the behaviourist connection:

Competent is a descriptor, an adjective which is assessed through overt behaviour.

Competence is inferred from the visible, tangible world to which the behaviourists cling.

“Competencies” on the other hand, are defined by the Mayer Committee as “mindful, thoughtful, capabilities” (1992:4) which involve both skills and underlying knowledge resulting in “the skilled application of understanding” (1992:5).

Such attempts at a holistic conceptualization however do not seem to be easily translated into the operational level.

“Surgery and hairdressing are much easier to rate than psychiatry and childcare.” (Collins: 1993:4).

Gonsci, Hager and Oliver (1990:9) attempted to define competence in a more holistic way in their DEET-funded research paper, “Establishing competency-based standards in the professions” in which they defined a “competent professional” as “having the attributes (such as knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes) necessary for job performance (of a role or set of (relatively general and relatively specific) tasks) to the appropriate standards (levels of

achievement). They went on to analyse the work of pharmacists, nurses, lawyers, doctors and engineers using this approach (the “integrated” approach).

This concept of “general attributes” is akin to Mayer’s “generic key competencies” defined as “generic strands of human capability” which required both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations i.e. they are “generic” in the sense that they apply to work generally rather than just to a particular occupation. This development represents a distinct retreat from the behaviourist tradition and an attempt to embrace a more holistic approach. An example from Gonczi et al. of an “attribute” for the medical practitioner of “problem-solving skills” (1990:26) is directly equivalent to the Mayer “generic key competency” of “capacity to make decisions and solve problems”. However as Whyte (1994:52) reminded us:

Others argue that once competency standards become holistic they lose their purpose (employment-related competence) and become synonymous with general education.

This is largely because of the problems of assessing and measuring them.

There is also some evidence (Beevers: 1993) that while some industries have developed a large number of modules addressing skills to perform individual tasks (Task Skills) and even skills to manage a number of tasks within a job (Task Management Skills), few have been developed to address skills to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routines (Contingency Management Skills) and even fewer, skills to deal with the responsibilities and exceptions of work environments (Job/Role Environment Skills) and apply new skills in new situations and work environments. These categories come from the NTB’s “Guidelines on Setting Competency Standards”(1992). Many of these modules he described as “old wine in new bottles” (1993:90) in his Chapter “Rhetoric and Reality” in Collins (1993). The extreme difficulties being experienced in operationalizing concepts of “competency-standards” suggest, as the following critical section will confirm, that the whole edifice of competency-based-education has foundations of shifting sand.

IN SUPPORT OF A COMPETENCY APPROACH

Whyte (1994:53) summarized the strengths claimed for CBT as:

the focus on educational outcomes, the application of knowledge and skill to an agreed standard of performance, ... ridding us of the time-serving concept of education, and challenging the qualification gatekeepers (through recognition of current competence).

Hager and Gonczi (1992:36) claimed the following benefits for their “integrated approach” to establishing competency-based standards for the professions:

a balance between specific and higher-level competencies; manageable testing procedures (time and cost); suited to different levels; simultaneous focus on both essential tasks and competencies; adaptable to both entry level and outstanding performance assessment; and amenable to setting of different standards.

Travaglia and De Grassie have already been cited (1993:12) as seeing the “competency” approach as of opportunistic benefit to cross-cultural adult educators (See introduction to this Chapter).

Garrick and McDonald (1992:181) identified the practical uses of “competency standards” as specifying required competencies, assessing and developing trainers; guiding professional development; guiding those training trainers and assisting in certification, guiding organizations in their conception of training; and making explicit the training role in other occupations.

Athanasou, Pithers and Cornford (1993) carried out an empirical study of the role of generic competencies in the description and classification of occupations and concluded:

Results from this study do tend to support the use of generic competencies in matching individuals to occupations (p18).

Brennan (1993:53) in the same Conference Papers listed “positive features of the competency approach” in the way that it addresses practice as it occurs rather than how it should occur; as a means of measuring and assessing professional performance (with some reservations); as a way of linking the three stages of professional education (initial training, induction and Continuing Professional Education (CPE)); and as a way of identifying “generic competencies” across professions.

Farmer (1993), a Scottish Further Education academic, reported on the use of competency-based teacher education in favourable terms particularly at Level 5 (the highest level) with its concepts of “an unpredictable variety of context;”, “personal autonomy”, “responsibility for the work of others” and “personal accountabilities”.

Gunning, another Scot, reported (1993:14) that:

During the process of the introduction of Scottish Vocational Qualifications the approach to teaching, learning, and assessment has become much more learner-centred.

Hager and Gonczi (1993:36) warned, in the same journal that:

There has been a tendency for people to think about competence in a narrow way that threatens to undermine many of the benefits of adopting competency standards.

Levick (1993:35), a New Zealander, from the Qualifications Authority, concluded that:

A learning outcomes approach favours providers who are learner-centred, innovative, and prepared to re-examine traditional structures, systems and modes of delivery.

She hailed the approach as a means of “transformation” of New Zealand society.

Watson (1993) evaluated competency-based programs in TAFE and industry in N.S.W., Queensland, South Australia and Victoria and concluded that:

Most of the personnel interviewed believed that the introduction of a competency-based system had led to better quality of training outcomes” (especially those who offered self-paced, individualised and flexible delivery modes).

Winning and Dungan (1993) in “Search for the Silver Lining” claimed for CBT such benefits as the integration of academic and vocational studies and education and work; more interdisciplinary, less class-biased curriculum development; the empowerment of Recognition for Prior Learning; greater access to elitist universities, the growing status of blue-collar occupations, the opening-up of career pathways; enhanced dialogue between the education and training sectors; increased interest in Vocational Education and Training research; the broadening of senior secondary education but

It is important that educators .. build a new discourse, challenge the bureaucracy, avoid the trap of heavy cynicism or apathy ... and recognize the “transformative potential” of some of these reforms (in Post-Compulsory Education and Training) (1993:138).

Murray (1994) has no difficulty in identifying three criteria for the competency-based assessment of communication skills in Vocational Education and Training provided the assessment is “multi-dimensional”, “integrative” and “evaluative of person perception”.

Even a scathing critic of CBT like Newman (1994) in his recent book “Defining The Enemy” admits some advantages:

- a) The emphasis is shifted from time served to outcomes.
- b) Training can be delivered in a variety of modes.
- c) Trainees may proceed at their own pace and choose their own paths of learning and
- d) They can be given recognition for their prior learning whether on or off-the-job, but there are problems.

The next section looks at the problems which Newman summarizes in this way (1994:117):

It (the discourse of CBT) is a discourse of mediocrity, conformity and control.

THE CRITICS OF THE COMPETENCY APPROACH

The vast majority of critics of the competency-approach are grounded in the perspectives of cognitive psychology or critical theory. Others are conceptual analysts like Bagnall (1993), Marxists like Newman (1994) or drawn on a number of compatible perspectives to balance their critique e.g. Tennant (1995), Brennan (1993) and others who will be identified.

First to some of the cognitivists.

Preston and Walker in Collins (1993:122) looking at “Competency Standards in the Professions and Higher Education” include among their concerns with the Australian Standard Framework:

It is the fragmentation of knowledge and other attributes implicit in the format which provides the basis of the position that a competencies approach is inevitably behaviourist and does not deal adequately with knowledge.

They prefer the “integrated”, holistic approach.

Stanley (1993:153) cautioned:

There appears to be good grounds, from existing cognition research, to be sceptical about the likely efficacy of the generic competencies enterprise in the form currently proposed by the Mayer Report.

Ashworth and Saxton (1990) raised the following objections to competency-based standards. They believe that “competence” is better viewed in terms of the characteristics of individuals that underlie performance (“attributes”); that the task approach is “atomistic”; that it assumes

there is one correct way to perform a task; that it ignores higher level aspects of competence like critical reflection; that the assessment of competence is falsely claimed to be objective; that standards are often vague; that competencies are excessively individualistic; that they neglect “context”; and that things like critical thinking as a personal quality cannot be specified as a competence.

Chappell (1993:69) suggested:

The development of a new competency paradigm for TAFE..” An example here might well be the problem-based curriculum approach used by some universities e.g. Hawkesbury.

Cornford (1993:83) cautioned that:

Current interest in competency and assessment of it in fact betrays an obsession with the end product and the “quick fix”.

Canadian, Jackson (1993:55) concludes that:

The evidence is overwhelming that (under CBT) institutional processes become more bureaucratized, more cumbersome, more time-consuming, more costly, more frustrating and puts more power in the hands of those who are furthest removed from, and know the least about, education and training.

Stevenson (1993:100) accused CBT of leading to:

The disaggregation of knowledge because it de-emphasizes and leaves to chance the acquisition of knowledge needed to summarize, integrate and synthesize separate modules and knowledge which transcends or draws upon separate modules.

Winning (1993:319) is concerned that:

The technocising of trades and the technology of CBT strips away the creative and aesthetic dimension of work, pride in workmanship and aesthetic expression and sense of commitment to work with a profound effect on quality.

Winning and Dungan (1993) express a number of concerns in their “Silver Lining” article to balance the positives. They are concerned that CBT is instrumental, technocratic and

controlling; de-professionalizes teachers; has a limited conception of “learning” and “education” (excluding transformative views); and represents an industry-driven push for national uniformity.

Biggs (1994:11) concluded that:

At best competency-based education and training will address some important prerequisites of competence but not competence itself.

He conceived the third (and most complex) stage of learning as the “qualitative” or “relational”.

(Stevenson’s (1992) “third-order procedural knowledge” as “expert” knowledge requiring higher-level cognitive abilities to restructure one’s knowledge-base as the goal of education.)

Stevenson and McKavanagh (1994:19:) concluded their Chapter on “Development of student expertise in TAFE Colleges” in “Cognition at Work”:

The design of learning tasks and assessment task will be crucial if CBT is not to replace expertise with the abilities of TAFE graduates to perform routine tasks and groups of tasks.

Bevan (1994:223) in the same publication supported this view:

A CBT curriculum forces teachers to focus on outcomes but largely ignores the knowledge and processes associated in getting students to apply known skills to unfamiliar tasks.

There is a clear consensus among the critics cited above that CBT has some serious deficiencies in terms of low-level outcomes. It is interesting and relevant to note that Whyte (1994) reported that new recruits and part-timers (ACE managers) found it easier to think of their work in terms used in Framework A (instrumental behaviourist) while many practitioners with substantial years of service preferred Framework B (holistic). Could this reflect the “novice” - “expert” continuum of the cognitive psychologists and the ASF levels and appropriate ways of achieving them?

The critical theory group of critics coming mainly from a sociological base or a “perspective transformation” position are united in their condemnation of other aspects of CBT.

Jackson in Collins (1993:159) concluded her Chapter entitled “Competence: A Game of Smoke and Mirrors?”:

We find ourselves caught inside a discourse which is not our own, the unwilling and often unwitting practitioners of a new social order in which we have a lot to lose.

Soucek, also in Collins (1993:166) asserted:

In the arena of public education this conflict (between the economic/administrative system and the lifeworlds of private citizens) issues as an attempt by the corporate sector to promote systems-maintenance skills.

Soucek is here identifying the ‘colonization’ or ‘takeover’ of the individual’s agenda by the dominant group for its own purposes in the same tenor as Jackson.

Smyth, cited in Whyte (1994:25) saw the shortcomings of CBT as “a failure to address the ethical, social, political, cultural, philosophical and collaborative aspects of work.”

Field, cited in Hager and Gonczi (1991:25) posited that: “the competency system aims to combine this selection function with that of socialisation, by attempting to convince society that in a period of rapid change, work-focused education is essential ... by developing a ‘pedagogy of labour’ in which the subordination of labour occurs and also a shift in values towards allegedly desirable economic goals.”

Kell (1993:190) further confirmed this view:

Whilst always conforming to the dominant discourse of capitalism, TAFE has changed from being a working class organization towards a hegemonic vehicle for the corporate sector .. In a corporate alliance of big business, big unions and executive government have defined the terms for change.

Winning (1993:109) analysed the contribution of CBT thus:

Its greatest strength however lies in its political saleability - it reinforces that status quo rather than promoting real change ... its content is determined by a panel of ‘experts’ and monitored by a panel of ‘experts’ who happen usually to be employers.

Foley, cited in McIntyre (1993:46) asserted similarly:

Post-compulsory education, both formal and non-formal is being restructured by the state as it responds to the imperative of global capitalism.

Robinson (1993:140) wrote:

CBT discourse positions teachers as powerless receivers of knowledge, uncritically subject to powerful others.. There is a need for a counter discourse ... a need to shift the NTB to a more holistic definition of “competence”.

Mezirow has delivered a number of criticisms of CBT:

Education cannot be defined by a simplistic preoccupation with fostering behaviour change (1977:160).

There is nothing wrong with this rather mechanistic approach to education as long as it is confined to task-oriented learning (1981:17).

Simplistic conceptions of needs assessment ... almost never permit learners to indicate the extent to which they understand the reasons for their needs and interests (1985:148).

The behaviourist approach has so many features amenable to bureaucratic control, such as accountability, measurability, and focus on anticipated behavioural outcomes (1991: xi).

Brookfield (1988:213) warned:

It will often be the case that the most significant personal learning adults undertake cannot be specified, in advance in terms of objectives to be attained, or behaviours (of whatever kind) to be performed.

The critical theorists seems to be in agreement that a macro analysis reveals CBT to be a servant of powerful interests outside the discourse and practice of learners and educators.

The final group of critics appear to be unaligned to these two major blocs.

Bagnall (1993:30) concluded:

From a post-modernist perspective CBT is primitive, simplistic and oppressive... We may look forward to the marginalization of competence-based-education as an irrelevance of misguided modernist reformist zeal.

Tennant (1988:114) in a balanced evaluation of all major learning theories, which earned him the Houle Prize, concluded:

The discourse of behaviourism appears to be sterile and mechanistic ... it is particularly favoured among educationalists and others with an interest in behavioural control.

And finally to Newman, another Houle prizewinner and a radical humanist in his Chapter in *Defining the Enemy* (1994) entitled “Competent forms of control” outlined his reasons for describing CBT as “a discourse of mediocrity, conformity and control” as:

1. To be “competent” is “to achieve the ordinary”.
2. The implication is that the work force is “incompetent” and needs remedial training.
3. Workers are the ones who must change not managers.
4. “Standards” imply “standardization” or control.
5. The raft of government bodies ensure that “the rhetoric of individual choice becomes a discourse of centralised power”.
6. Educators who, in other contexts, might be concerned with mystery, discovery and emancipation are making lists.
7. Lists can be manipulated and reduce all items to the same level.
8. Competency-based-training can easily lead to a return to Taylorism.
9. The shift from a welfare state to a competitive state can lead to exploitation of workers and a loss of conditions and rights.

In summary, Newman (1994:124) argued cogently that:

the competency movement is in the service of an economic-rationalist, market-force driven, profit-motivated, competitive hegemony, helping shift our attention from people to products and outcomes - the ‘human capital approach’.

The above legion of critics are united in their agreement that CBT is not only of limited utility in achieving its espoused goals but represents a serious threat to individual well-being and liberty in its service of power elites.

2. **THE COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH** **COGNITIVE STRUCTURES AND SKILL FORMATION** **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

According to Morris Bigge (1964) cognitive-field psychology is based on the thinking of Kurt Lewin. Others who have contributed are Barker, Bayles, Bigge, Bode, Bruner, Combs, Dewey,

Snygg, Tolman and Wright. At that time Bigge contrasted cognitive-field theory as “relativistic” in comparison with “absolutistic, mechanistic ways of viewing man and the learning process .. reducing all human activities to movements, usually in terms of stimuli and responses” (1964:176) - behaviourism. On the other hand, in cognitive-field theory, “learning is a relativistic process by which a learner develops new insights or changes old ones”. (1964:177). By “relativistic” he meant that psychological reality is defined not in “objective”, physical terms but in psychological, perceptual terms i.e. sensory-perceptual subjectivity.

Stillings et al. (1987) in “Cognitive Science: An Introduction” assert that the philosophical roots of cognitive science are to be found in the seventeenth century with the work of Descartes and Hobbes. Descartes contributed concepts of “representations”, the “dualism” between mind and body (mental and physical) and Hobbes suggested that thought can be understood as “a kind of calculation, perhaps often unconscious, using formal operations on symbols stored in the mind”. (1987:307).

In the early 1950s behaviourism was seriously challenged by cognitive psychology. Linguistics in Chomsky’s Cartesian form and computer science emerged as disciplines in their own right.

“Computer scientists began the quest for artificial intelligence. Cognitive science was conceived.” (1987:308).

More than anything else the view of the mind as “an information-processing system” is what enabled the field to move beyond behaviourism’s limitations to gain a greater understanding of complex cognitive capacities.

Cognitive science is essentially an interdisciplinary field drawing on the insights of psychology, linguistics, computer science, philosophy and neuroscience. Its practitioners “seek to understand perceiving, thinking, remembering, understanding language, learning, and other mental phenomena.” (1987:1).

More recently Glaser (1990) reported that much current work attempts to understand how the learner constructs his/her environment in order to learn.

Stevenson (1994) in “Cognition at Work” has examined the nature of vocational expertise and its development. So what are the key concepts that this perspective can contribute to conceptualizing “cross-cultural effectiveness”?

KEY CONCEPTS

“Technical expertise” is defined in Stevenson (1994:9) as:

The ability not only to perform routine technical skills, but also to generate and evaluate skilled performance as technical tasks become more complex and as situations and processes change; reason and solve technical problems; be strategic; innovate and adapt. (This includes “far transfer” (when the task being undertaken is dissimilar to the task used in the original learning).)

“The knowledge” needed for real-world tasks (Gott: 1989) is:

- . procedural (how-to-do-it) knowledge.
- . declarative (knowledge that) of the object (system or device knowledge), sometimes called “propositional knowledge” - knowledge of information, facts, theories and principles).
- . strategic (how-to-decide-what-to-do-and-when) knowledge.

Evans (1993:15) argues that real “competence” involves a potential to use all three in solving the problems of non-routine practice.

Another useful concept is that of “higher order procedures” for achieving general goals (Stevenson: 1991).

- . “First order Procedures” are procedures for achieving specific goals e.g. hammering a nail.
- . “Second order procedures” operate on specific procedures to achieve more general goals e.g. solving a new kind of physics problem.
- . “Third order procedures” control cognition by switching between first and second order procedures.

Stevenson and McKavanagh’s (1992) study found that TAFE classes did not generally focus on the development of such higher order procedures. Cross-cultural classes will be similarly observed in the field study.

The concepts of “novices” and “experts” are extremely useful in showing how some cognitivists perceive problem-solving.

Evans (1994) draws on the work of Dreyfus (1982) who postulated five stages in the development of competence:

1. “novice” (limited, inflexible, rule-governed behaviour).
2. “advanced beginner” (learning situational aspects but has difficulty recognizing which features are most important).
3. “competent” (sees actions in goals and plans; can select important features to consciously guide action).
4. “proficient” (able to select seemingly unconsciously best plan from large repertoire but actions still governed by rational processes).
5. “expert” (acts apparently intuitively from deep understanding; performance fluid; flexible and highly proficient).

No wonder the cognitivists have such contempt for “competence” as defined.

Sweller (1980) designates the development of conceptual understanding as “schema acquisition”. The concept of a schema as a cognitive structure in memory which represents knowledge and allows problem recognition led to his approach of teaching problem-solving rules (developing “schemata”) by teaching many worked examples.

Perkins and Salomon (1989) advocate the creation of learning situations where there is a rich mix of “propositional” and “procedural” structures so they become associated and lead to the development of such schemata.

Pea (1987), by studying the first five years of life when transfer is miraculous and prodigious, identified some vital socio-psychological concomitants of effective transfer viz.

- . in a meaningful context with immediate feedback
- . with access to modelling, linking and the highlighting of task-relevant information and
- . with functional outcomes to aid understanding of the functions of information for problem-solving.

The concept of transfer is key in understanding the above and refers to the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and cognitive skills in new situations other than the context in which they were originally learned.

The next set of concepts relate to the context of cognitive learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) studied cross-cultural learning and concluded that learning should be “situated” in a community of practice” with an emphasis on “identity formation” This concept is central to this study. As Stevenson (1994:25) put it:

Their growth in expertise is associated with transformation of their identity. Learners are new-comers, in the process of becoming old-timers . Expertise is conceptualised as becoming a member of a community of practice.

These concepts of “newcomers” and “old-timers” are similar to those of “sojourners” and “host-culture members” in the cross-cultural literature.

The “culture of practice” refers to the activities that comprise and distinguish a practice and the social relations within that practice.

Further to the concept of ‘attributes’(already discussed at length in relation to CBT in its revised form) is the useful concept of “dispositional knowledge” i.e. values and attitudes (Prawat: 1989) as it is clear that the values and attitudes which underpin skilled performance are crucial (Billett: 1994:69).

Evans (1994:43) referred to a concept of “scaffolding”, derived from Vygotsky (1978) and others which is used to describe “external social support that allows the learner to function, with help, at a level beyond that he or she is capable of alone” in order to achieve “successive approximations.”

Collins, Brown and Newman (1989:457) coined the useful phrase “cognitive apprenticeships” which means guided experience on cognitive and metacognitive, rather than only physical, skills and processes. In their words “conceptual and factual knowledge are exemplified and situated in their contexts of use.”

One final concept which is becoming important in this field and should be useful in this study is:

“Cognitive holding power” which is defined as “the press from the setting for students to engage in first or second order cognitive processing” (Stevenson, McKavanagh and Evans: 1994:202). This concept should assist educators to design learning tasks that require the use of second-order problem-solving procedures e.g. asking students to diagnose a fault in a motor vehicle.

The above concepts are at the centre of the extensive discourse on ‘skill training’ and now ‘workplace learning’ as ANTA prefers it to be called.

The next section will report how exponents of this approach have employed these concepts in analysing teaching and learning, particularly “skill learning”.

IN SUPPORT OF A COGNITIVE APPROACH

Stevenson and McKavanagh (1992) studied forty-nine theory, practical and integrated lessons across five trade areas in five Queensland TAFE Colleges, using instruments to measure teacher and student actions, classroom environment, and cognitive structures (videotapes, interviews and questionnaires) and found that theory classes are predominantly teacher-centred, whole group-focussed and present information. Practical classes are more diverse, involve more teacher-student interaction, demonstrations, practice, knowledge about skills (procedural) and teacher monitoring. They concluded (1994:193):

Classes need to be more student-centred, more resource-centred and more concerned with a deepening of conceptual understanding, practical skills and problem-solving strategies” i.e. higher-order procedures.

This approach, according to these writers, is to achieve greater transfer of learning in new situations.

Preston and Walker in Collins (1993:119) contrast behaviourist and holistic approaches to competence in this way.

The behaviourist approach treats “knowledge” as inferred directly from behaviourally defined competencies. The cognitive approach views “knowledge” as existing and able to be understood separately from the exercise of competencies. Knowledge and understanding can be understood as having a complex and coherent structure in their own right.

Also in Collins, Evans (1992) is cited in relationship to his model of “competence in action” which indicates the dynamic nature of knowledge (and competence) as feedback, reflection and

self-management are activated. This, of course is Schon's (1987) knowledgeable, reflective practitioner.

Stanley, in Collins, writes of the contribution of cognitive psychology to the literature on "expertise" in highlighting "the necessity of focusing on knowledge acquisition in becoming competent rather than on the demonstration of generic abilities or general problem-solving and learning strategies" (1993:150). This, he links with Gagne's (1965) "structurally organized knowledge" or "content principles". He also recognizes the contribution by writers like Holyoak (1991) to the literature on "transfer" with his insight that reasoning by analogy is a central mechanism in the transfer of knowledge. However he warns that ways of thinking applicable for one domain of knowledge may be inapplicable in another (Snow and Swanson: 1992).

Billett (1993) in his booklet "Learning is Working when Working is Learning: A Guide to Learning in the Workplace", describes the four phases of "guided apprenticeship" learning as "modelling", "coaching", "scaffolding" and "fading", as well as conditions to enhance these processes and the "mentoring" role of vocational learning facilitators in the workplace.

Billett (1993), in his paper presented to the "After Competence" conference, reports a study of learning arrangements in a mining and secondary processing plant in central Queensland. He examined on-site planned formal and informal learning arrangements and concluded (1993: 46-48):

Those aids to learning which were not embedded in the culture of practice (learning guides, computer-based learning, and videos) are less likely to be generative of effective learning outcomes than those that are (instruction, everyday activities, observing and listening, and other workers)" i.e. in terms of the development of higher order procedural knowledge.

Cornford (1993) cites Anderson's (1982) "Cognitive Skills Learning Theory" and finds it wanting because of its being limited to theoretical procedural knowledge (knowing how to) and not recognizing or describing the processes underlying practical performance procedural knowledge (being able to).

Berliner's (1988) five stages of expertise, building on Dreyfus (1982) were used in his study of workers in a wide variety of trades and professions concluding that (1993:87):

The amounts of time and practice required to develop proficiency or expertise (and probably even competence) have been severely underestimated.

Cornford posits that studies which involve the comparison of novices and experts permit the identification of best practice.

Evans (1994) identified a number of strategies for utilizing the best of workplace learning in more formal settings. These are cognitive apprenticeship, problem-based learning, action learning, reciprocal teaching, feedback processes, and exploration and discovery. He concluded:

All of these approaches position the teacher as a facilitator rather than instructor and provide more direct access to situated experience.

Finally Beven (1994) used the Cognitive Holding Power Questionnaire, developed by Stevenson, McKavanagh and Evans (1994), to examine the kinds of cognitive processes students in a TAFE (travel) course were actively utilizing - the CHPQ measures the effects of the learning setting in activating different levels of procedural knowledge (first, second and third order). He found that classes differed significantly in second order cognitive holding power ("second order cognitive processing" being those procedures used for more general purposes such as problem-solving, monitoring and new-learning) and that there was some second-order holding power and performance on a (far) transfer task - an unfamiliar task involving a problematic situation of a broken journey.

From the above applications it can be seen that there is a growing body of research steeped in the discourse of "cognitive psychology" which has yielded a wealth of "concepts" found useful in analysing teaching and learning.

CRITICS OF THE COGNITIVE APPROACH

The critics of this approach in the extensive literature consulted were limited in number. The behaviourists would, of course, criticize the foundations of cognitive psychology as has Gilbert Ryle in "The Concept of Mind" (1990 reprint: 17-32):

The dogma of the Ghost in the Machine (Descartes dualism) is entirely false ... in principle ... it represents the facts of mental life as if they belonged to one logical type or category when they actually belong to another (a category mistake) e.g. what distinguishes sensible from silly operations is not their parentage but their procedure, and this holds no less for intellectual than for practical performances... thinking what I am doing does not connote 'both thinking what to do and doing it .. I am doing one thing and not two'. This 'mechanistic' or 'materialist' analysis has much in common with the behaviourists although Ryle reminds us 'it has not been part of the object of this book to canvass the special hypotheses of this or that science (p310).

Skinner's views on "reinforcement" seems to have been adopted by the cognitive psychologists but his views on "learning" as "behaviour change" are totally incompatible with the cognitive view of "learning" as the development of appropriate cognitive structures.

Hart (1990) was actually criticizing Habermas and Mezirow when she wrote from a feminist ethical theory perspective of their "rationalist masculinist" bias. She attacked (1990: 135-6): "the cultural or ecological sterility of an overemphasis on cognitive processes" preferring "non-cognitive" or "non-linguistic" aspects such as a "relationality" and "caring" as basic ethical sensibilities. She contrasts these with "masculine" preference for a "fair decision". Perhaps this criticism of an intuitive versus an analytical bias could be levelled at the cognitivists but I suspect they are interested in both right- and left-brain functions anyhow.

My reading of cognitivists like Stevenson and Evans is that they would like major changes across the post-compulsory sector encapsulated in Stevenson (1994:112):

Universities have, so far, managed to survive the CBT movement by arguing, essentially, that the movement is fine in some areas of education such as VET, (or, in their view technological education) as long as it is not accepted in universities (or, in their view, conceptual education).

They seem to be arguing, as is DEET, for the convergence of vocational and general education reconceptualized within a cognitivist framework. The movement of DEET towards a generic key competencies approach is the best evidence of this change of direction but there is much refinement to be done and the task needs to be wrested from industry behaviourists and restored to a more representative and sophisticated group of midwives, including academic cognitive experts.

3. **THE PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION APPROACH**

The last perspective to be reviewed for its theoretical and conceptual base is the one least frequently adopted by cross-cultural practitioners but the most frequently cited by writers (mostly university academics) analysing the Adult and Community Education sector “Studies in Continuing Education” (1991-94). It was also regarded as the highest level of “cross-cultural effectiveness” by a number of writers in Chapter 2. So what is its appeal and why have Jack Mezirow and Mechthild Hart been invited as major contributors to Adult Learners Week in September 1995?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jack Mezirow is currently chairman of the department of Higher and Adult Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, NY. He received his B.A. in social sciences and his M.A. in education from the University of Minnesota in the mid forties and his EdD degree from UCLA, in adult education, ten years later. One of his most influential, but frequently criticized, works was “Last Gamble of Education” (1975) on adult basic education. His most recent contributions have been “Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning” (1990) which he edited, and “Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning” (1991).

In the preface of the last-mentioned book he identified the influences on his writings as being George Kelly’s (1963) construct psychology: the reconstructivist aspects of developmental psychologists Chomsky, Piaget, Gould and Kohlberg; sociologists such as Habermas; and philosophers like Bateson and Cell. He also mentions the impact of constructivism, deconstructivism, critical theory, cognitive psychology and psychotherapy on his work. Frequent references are made to Habermas and Freire although Mezirow keeps claiming that he has adapted their ideas and gone beyond them. In “Dimensions” he draws freely on writers from the fields of philosophy, psychology (developmental, cognitive, counselling and psychoanalytic), sociology, neurobiology, religion and education in exploring his key concepts “as well as, of course, presenting my own thoughts about the dynamics of making meaning, reflection, and transformative learning” (1991: xv).

He engaged, in his earlier professional life, as an adult educator in community development and adult literacy, in the United States and overseas. In the early 70’s his own perspectives were

transformed by his exposure to the writings of Freire and Illich. At about this time he carried out a major national study of women returning to college and the work force which helped to sharpen his emerging concept of “perspective transformation.” The final formative influence, he claims, was a sabbatical working with psychiatrist Roger Gould, famous for his work on life transitions. So what are these concepts that have had such an impact on adult education worldwide?

KEY CONCEPTS

A review of books and journal articles at key points in the development of the “perspective transformation” approach (Mezirow, 1977, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1990 and 1991) has yielded the following key concepts:

Meaning schemes(which in 1995 he now calls Points of view) are “sets of related and habitual expectations governing if/then. cause/effect, category relationships and events sequences ... habitual implicit rules for interpreting (1990:2).

They are made up of “scientific knowledge, beliefs, value judgments and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience (1991:5-6).

Meaning perspectives(which in 1995 he now calls Habits of the Mind) are “Higher order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal-orientations and evaluations... the structure of assumptions within which each new experience is assimilated and transformed by one’s past experience during the process of interpretation” (1990:2) i.e. “frame of reference” or “paradigm”.

Distortions in meaning perspectives can be epistemic (nature and use of knowledge) e.g. “reification” of the belief that war is, forever, beyond our control (Freire’s “naive intransitive” stage of consciousness.); sociocultural (taken-for-granted belief systems pertaining to power and social relationships) e.g. the belief that “all blacks are lazy”; and psychic (presuppositions which generate unwarranted anxiety which impedes taking action e.g. the belief that “sex is dangerous and dirty”. If we have had a lifetime of social conditioning, what hope is there of breaking out of this crippling psychological “straight-jacket”?

Mezirow believes that the act of “reflection” on one’s own premises can lead to “transformative” learning - more concepts.

Reflection enables us to correct distortions in our beliefs.

Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs are based (a potential “paradigm shift”).

Learning (as opposed to the behaviourists’ “behaviour change”) is conceived as “the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action” (1990:1).

Mezirow defined perspective transformation in 1981 as:

the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings (1981:6).

Ten years later in “Dimensions” (1991:167) only a few words have changed, mainly words of elaboration:

the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting on these new understandings.

So how does this “transformation” occur? By means of “perspective-taking”, “dialogue” and “consensual validation” - more concepts.

Perspective-taking he defined (1977:157) as:

Taking the perspective of others; .. not simple role-taking for it also implies a conscious recognition of the difference between one’s old viewpoint and the new one and a decision to appropriate the newer perspective as being of more value.

However “Transformational learning is not a private affair involving information-processing, but an interactive and intersubjective one from start to finish” (1990:63) i.e. it is “dialogic”.

It is through the process of dialogue that we attempt to understand - to learn - what is valid in the assertions made by others and attempt to achieve consensual validation for

our own assertions (1985:143). The term “discourse” is used synonymously with his term “dialogue”.

Consensual validation - “to seek a consensus we turn to those we feel are best informed, least-biased and most rational to assess the evidence and arguments and arrive consensually at the best judgment ... any informed, objective, and rational person who examined the evidence and heard the arguments would agree (1990:10-11).

Needless to say the critics have had a ‘field day’ with this concept. (More of this later.) The ideal conditions for “rational discourse” are that participants have accurate and complete information; are free from coercion and self-deception; have the ability to weigh evidence, evaluate arguments and be critically reflective; have equality of opportunity to participate, and will accept an informed, objective and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity (1991:198). The major impediments are “imperfect knowledge and distorted insight” (1985:147). To these we might add false consciousness (via Marx; and Freire’s “naive consciousness” i.e. false meaning perspectives due to erroneous assumptions and understandings of the nature of knowledge, social functions and one’s motives which he also calls ideology in the pejorative rather than descriptive sense.

What then is the role of the adult educator in perspective transformation or “emancipatory education”?

In 1981(22) Mezirow declared:

When perspective transformation is combined with the concept of self-directedness as the goal and the means of adult education, the essential elements of a comprehensive theory of adult learning and education have been identified.

In the same article he developed a ‘Charter for Andragogy’ which goes well beyond the humanist-behaviourist influenced “self-directed learning contracts” of Knowles (1980) Tennant (1988:147) sums it up this way:

Self-direction should include the element of critical awareness of the social and cultural constraints impinging on one’s behaviour.

Mezirow's ten phases (or elements) of 'perspective transformation, reflect heavily on his early work on women's re-entry to study (1975) and his later work with Gould on "life transitions", and played a major part in shaping his views on adult educator roles. They are (1991:168-9):

1. a disorienting dilemma
2. self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. a critical assessment of assumptions
4. recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions
6. planning a course of action
7. acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing this course
8. provisional trying of new roles
9. building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships, and
10. a reintegration into one's life on the basis of one's new perspective.

The "phases" are matched by the concepts of others in the field viz. Taylor's (1989) "trigger events"; Musgrove's (1975) "marginality"; Keane's (1985) "transcendent experience"; Brooks' (1989) "critical reflectivity"; Bridges' (1980) "new beginnings" and Hart's (1990) "phases of consciousness-raising groups".

The role of the adult educator is that of "empathic provocateur" and "role model" Mezirow (1991:26) but not that of "indoctrinator" or "formal leader" Mezirow (1990:362-3).

It is this view which has inflamed a number of his critics (See last section of this chapter).

Mezirow's "Charter for Andragogy" (1981) and "Ethical Considerations" (1991) spell out some of the role parameters.

According to Mezirow the adult educator should:

- . progressively decrease the learner's dependency
- . help the learner engage in reciprocal learning relationships
- . assist the learner understand the cultural and psychological assumptions shaping his/her perceptions of needs
- . assist the learner plan objectives and programs and evaluate their learning
- . facilitate taking the perspective of others with alternative views
- . relate to current personal problems, concerns, and understandings

- . encourage increasingly inclusive differentiating and integrative criteria for judgment
- . foster learner decision-making
- . foster a self-corrective reflexive approach to learning
- . facilitate problem-posing and problem-solving
- . emphasize experiential, participative and projective methods (including modelling and learning contracts)
- . make the moral distinction between helping the learner understand his/her full range of choices and encouraging the learner to make a specific choice.

The latter “dictum” is amplified in the next list.

According to Mezirow, it is unethical for an educator to:

- . intentionally precipitate transformative learning without making sure the learner understands that such transformation may result
- . facilitate a transformation whose consequences may include dangerous or hopeless actions
- . decide which of a learner’s beliefs should be questions or problematized
- . present his or her own perspective which may be unduly influential
- . refuse to help the learner plan action which conflicts with his own values and
- . make interventions when psychic distortion are impeding progress if he/she is not a trained psychotherapist.

On indoctrination he asserts (1990:362)

Even Horton and Freiere are careful to differentiate between assuming a leadership role in social action situations and helping to prepare learners to assume such a role.

His choice of the concept empathic provocateur is clear in the statement (1991:208):

Adult learning transforms meaning perspectives not society ... the way to assure cultural transformation is to encourage personal transformation .. education is the handmaiden of learning not politics.

IN SUPPORT OF PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION

Stephen Brookfield (1988:213-4) writes of “the most significant personal learning” in his book, “Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning” as:

That learning in which adults come to reflect on their self-images, change their self-concepts, question their previously unchallenged internalized norms (behavioural and moral) and reinterpret their current and past behaviours from a new perspective. It is somewhat akin to “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1978) or “conscientization” (Freire, 1970) though it may be less apocalyptic or staggeringly revelatory than the latter term implies.

A number of Mezirow “Associates” have had no difficulty in translating the above concepts into “approaches” or “strategies” to achieve “transformative” and “emancipatory” learning, detailed in “Fostering Critical Reflection” (1990):

Kitchener and King developed the “Reflective Judgment Model” which devises learning tasks that cause critical reflection on the learner’s current meaning perspective and require skills more typical of the next highest reflective judgment stage (seven stages in the development of “knowing” are identified) e.g. using two quite different accounts of a battle in the Vietnam war to heighten scepticism and bring about perspective change.

Brookfield uses Critical Incidents (brief descriptions written by learners of significant events in their lives) to explore their assumptions e.g. to analyse the political assumptions in a television news report. He reports that this often leads to welcome displays of emotion and consequent self-reflection.

Dominice uses Life Histories as a tool for helping the learner identify phases in their social development. this is done in groups in which theoretical questions become an existential debate.

Lukinsky uses Journal Writing as an introspective tool. Many educational uses are propounded including dialogue with historical figures and unsent letters (e.g. to a deceased family member).

Brookfield also helps learners Analyse the Mass Media as a means of exposing distortions, de-reifying authority, and becoming aware of the selective portrayal of events.

Green demonstrates Literature's Emancipatory Potential by exposing learners to minority writers who are able to estrange their readers from the "normal" or "taken for granted", arouse their indignation, and mobilize them to action

Candy's Repertory Grid approach (based on Kelly) helps the learners to focus on their attitudes, constructs, inconsistencies and ways of thinking as a tool for becoming aware of and then transforming "meaning perspectives".

Deshler's Metaphor Analysis focuses on key metaphors in use and the values, beliefs and assumptions embedded in them with a view to create new and more appropriate ones, to create "counter hegemonies", and promote action.

Peters' Action - Reason - Thematic Technique helps learners to examine past problem-solving practices, the assumptions underlying them, and alternative techniques.

Deshler's Conceptual Mapping helps learners to reflect critically on their concepts, relationships between them, and the assumptions underlying them and then to redraw these tree diagrams ("charts of the mind" or "mind maps") to reveal shifts in values, reducing flaws and increasing clarity.

These educators and researchers have found a number of creative ways of translating theory into practice. What then of the critics of Mezirow's theoretical foundations?

CRITICS OF MEZIROW'S APPROACH TO PERSPECTIVE TRANSFORMATION

Collard and Law (1989) found the following problems:

1. The lack of a coherent comprehensive theory of social change. "The liberal conservative bind ... an evolutionary, moderate way of addressing problems of power and inequity" (1989:102).
2. The adult educator's role as "organizer of enlightenment". How does one recognize those who have a more critical awareness?
How does one identify the psychocultural assumptions which shape one's history and experience?

What is the relationship between these psychocultural assumptions and their social origins?

3. Mezirow's theory allows for a greater degree of political detachment.. (he) is never clear about the nature of collective action.
4. He fails to acknowledge the difficulty of fostering conditions of ideal learning in a social environment in which structural inequalities are entrenched.

In his response to Collard and Law in the next edition of "Adult Education Quarterly" (1989:170) he accepts:

that they are reading what I have written from a different meaning perspective or paradigm seems self-evident. and replies (989:172)

The educator can be a partisan but only in a commitment to fostering critical reflection and action; the what, when and how of the action is a decision of the learner.

Another critic of Mezirow is Hart (1990) who offers a feminist critique as follows:

1. His treatment of the issue of power and relationships of dominance is uneven and somewhat non-committal (1990 127).
2. Mezirow's superior meaning perspective is in the "rationalist-masculinist" tradition (1990:134) and Hart criticizes "the cultural sterility of an overemphasis on cognitive processes at the expense of non-cognitive aspects" (1990:135-6).
3. He has set up a "false dichotomy" between "indoctrination" and the educator's role of "fostering critical reflection and action" (p136).

She opposes "rigid boundaries separating education from social or political action." (1990:37).

Tennant (1988:146) concluded, along with Collard and Law, Hart and Newman:

There is something incomplete about Brookfield and Mezirow's analysis of critical awareness .. they have depoliticized the idea. They focus inwardly on the liberation of the learner and they very much stand on the fence when it comes to organizing collective action.

Another concern Tennant has is that (1988:148):

There is an implicit liberal tradition in their writing, that more perceptive and better educated (in their sense) individuals magically produce a more just and equitable society.

Newman (1994:45) goes even further:

Mezirow's early work focuses on "transformation of the individual woman" but not on the "patriarchal society that may have oppressed her".

Newman asserts (1994:47) that:

His (Mezirow's) stance is unambiguous. He asserts that perspective transformation is a personal activity that constitutes the starting point to political action. He then cites Mezirow (1991:20) to prove it:

Transformation theory - and adult educators - can promise only to help the first step of political change, emancipatory education that leads to personal transformation, and to share the belief that viable strategies for change will evolve out of this.

The last belief seems to be a classic example of Freire's "naive consciousness" and Mezirow's own "sociocultural distortions in meaning perspectives" epitomized in this incredibly naive assertion in his response to Collard and Law (1989:171-2):

In some repressive authoritarian dictatorships, the only course open may be revolutionary. In modern democratic societies where, at least by comparative standards, the rule of law, respect for civil and human rights, and a goal of social justice pertains, and there is an opportunity for dissent and social change, active collective effort to more fully realise the ideal conditions for participation in critical discourse and for social democracy will take a reformist rather than revolutionary character.

Is Mezirow describing the United States of 1989 when this was written? Is this the "superior meaning perspective" he describes as the ideal, arrived at by "consensual validation"? Might he not enrol in some of the classes described in "Fostering Critical Reflection" (1990) to examine his own psycho-cultural assumptions?

At least Mezirow's conceptual tools have been useful in examining his own "discourse" as they will be in analysing that of the cross-cultural practitioners to be mapped in the field study.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter has compared three major perspectives which stand out in the discourse of cross-cultural practitioners from the point of view of key concepts and theories (assumptions), applications and criticisms which should enable a more systematic analysis of the "discourse" of the four practitioners to be examined "in situ".

The next chapter reflects on the methodology chosen for this “discourse analysis” in search of the practitioners’ “espoused theories” and “theories-in-use” or “theories in action”. The final chapter will draw on the lessons of this chapter in deriving some possible implications for learning, particularly for the development of “cross-cultural effectiveness”, in the ACE sector.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON OF THREE MAJOR LEARNING THEORIES

ELEMENT KEY	BEHAVIOURISM	THEORY COGNITIVISM
CONCEPTS	Competence Competencies Generic key competencies Performance Standards Recognition of Prior Learning Task Skills Task Management Skills Contingency Mgmt. Skills Job Environment Skills	Cognitive science Cognitive capacity Technical Expertise Procedural, Declarative, Strategic & Dispositional Knowledge Higher Order Procedures Novices & Experts Schema Transfer of Learning Situated Learning Culture of Practice Scaffolding Cognitive Apprenticeships Cognitive Holding Power
APPLICATIONS	Teacher as Behaviour Engineer, Contingency Manager, Environmental Controller Accountability for Outcomes (Contracts & Vouchers) Program Development Programmed Instruction (Computer-Assisted) Flexible Delivery Competency-Based Self-Paced Training Guide to all stages of Cont. Prof. Ed. Certification Accreditation Learner-Centred	Teacher as Model, Coach, Provider of scaffolding feedback & fading, learner reflection & self-mgmt. Holistic Knowledge distinct from Performance Informal, embedded, situated learning Focus on expert knowledge & skill Problem-based learning Action Learning Reciprocal Learning Exploration Discovery Problem-solving Cognitive Development

CRITICISMS	Inapt for non-trg. sectors (Collins) Prescribed narrow outcomes Difficult to assess Mediocrity (lower level skills) Conformity (Industry-led) Control (Status Quo) Fragmentation (Atomistic) Neglect of context Bureaucratization Teachers Disempowered	Intangible & not measurable (Ryle) Falsity of “dualism” mind & body (Ghost in the machine) Learning is about observable and measurable behaviour change not inferred cognitive development Downplays non-cognitive & non-linguistic aspects of learning Rational approach masculinist bias (Hart)
	Instrumental Technocratic Mechanistic Discourse of Global Capitalism Primitive Simplistic Oppressive	degrades intuition and creative right brain hemisphere functions.

ELEMENT THEORY

KEY TRANSFORMATION
Meaning schemes
(Points of view)
Meaning Perspectives
(Habits of the Mind)
Epistemic, sociocult.
& Psychic Distortions

CONCEPTS
Critical Reflection
Learning as reinterpretation of experience
Perspective Transformation
Perspective Taking
Rational Discourse
Consensual Validation
Charter for Andragogy
Self-Direction
Ethics

APPLICATIONS **Adult Educator as
Role Model &
Empathic Provocateur
not Indoctrinator or
Formal Leader
Roles parallel to
phases of Perspective
Transformation and
ethics
Education as Han Imaiden
of Learning (Personal Transform)
not Politics (Social Transform)
although this should follow
Significant Personal
Learning (Brookfield)
Critical Incidents
Life Histories
Journal Writing
Emancipatory Literature
Repertory Grid
Metaphor Analysis
Conceptual Mapping**

CRITICISMS **Liberal Conservative
Reformist
Political detachment
from structural inequalities
Rationalist
Masculinist
False dichotomy
indoctrination &
fostering critical
reflection &
action
Focus on individual
not collective
action
Naivete re US “democracy”
Need for reform
not revolutionary change
Focus on Personal not
Social Transformation**

INTRODUCTION:

Reading for, thinking about and writing the previous Chapter on “Learning Theories” was as much about clarifying the writer’s **values** in relation to research methods as it was to finding theoretical justification for the next big decisions, namely what is the most appropriate approach to finding out about the ways practitioners conceptualise and theorize about “cross-cultural effectiveness” and what to do with this knowledge and understanding to help them improve their practice.

PURPOSES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It has been foreshadowed a number of times that Argyris and Schon’s concepts of “theories of action”, “espoused theories” and “theories-in-use” have driven earlier chapters on key concepts in the literature of “cross-cultural communication” and “learning theories” particularly as they relate to the field of cross-cultural training / education / development within the broader field of adult and community education. It is now time to relate these concepts to the emerging research questions on which this chapter is based.

Schon (1987:33) in “Educating the Reflective Practitioner” contrasts the technical- rational view of “professional competence” as “the application of theories and techniques derived from systematic, preferably scientific research to the solution of the instrumental problems of practice” with that of an alternative “constructionist” epistemology. In this view, which forms the basis of his theory,

human beings in their interactions with one another design their behaviour and hold theories for doing so. (1987:255).

These “theories” he calls theories of action which include the values, strategies and underlying assumptions that inform individual’s patterns of interpersonal behaviour. Such theories operate at two levels:-

Espoused theories are used to explain or justify our behaviour. They represent the world view and values we believe we follow in our behaviour. They are indicated by what we say we do.

Theories-in-use are implicit in our patterns of spontaneous behaviour with others. They represent the world view and values implied by our actual behaviour. They are tacit and likely to be unknown to us. Often they are motivated by unconscious forces which are often in conflict with our conscious reasoning processes. They are discovered by observing what we do rather than what we say we do. As Schön expressed this dilemma (1987:256):

Often we are unable to describe them and we are surprised to discover, when we do construct them by reflecting on the directly observable data of our actual interpersonal practice that they are incongruent with the theories of action we espouse.

Effectiveness, then, consists of developing congruence between theory-in-use and espoused theory; increasing the consistency of conscious and unconscious motivations. This process is akin to learning to practise what we preach and can be achieved by changing either our “espoused” or “in-use” theories and/or behaviour.

Dick and Dalmau (1990:4) describe the concept of “dissonance” as “the feeling of discomfort when we become aware that there are inconsistencies between or within some of our ideas, attitudes or behaviour”. This feeling may result in denial, compartmentalisation, reinterpretation, behaviour change or attitude change. It appears, then, that this “dissonance” is a precursor to change similar to concepts such as the “disorienting dilemma”, the “trigger event” and “the transcendent experience”, from earlier Chapters. Dick and Dalmau conclude that processes to surface these forces must first generate the incongruencies and then help the individual to resolve them. If these inconsistencies are at the core of many teaching and learning difficulties, particularly in cross-cultural contexts then, and this is consistent with “perspective transformation” theory, the researcher can help people make contact with their assumptions as a first step to understanding, challenging and possibly correcting them.

The practitioner is usually too busy doing the job to “espouse” anything much in the way of theory in a systematic way and her “theories-in-use” are largely beyond her awareness so the research challenge becomes one of:

- (a) aiding the practitioner to clarify her espoused theories,
- (b) assisting her to become aware of her theories-in-use and

- (c) assisting her to understand, challenge and correct both theories and behaviour, if necessary, by making her aware of alternative theories and practices available in her field of endeavour (cross-cultural learning).

It is to these three “tasks” rather than questions that this research project will now address itself.

The overall aim becomes, then, to assist colleagues involved in the research project to become more “reflective” practitioners in the pursuit of transformational goals, both personal and social.

Schoen (1987: xi) describes this as “a new epistemology of practice” so another benefit of such an understanding could be to help the researcher develop a new model of practitioner preparation. Schoen states it clearly (1987: xii):

Professional education should be re-designed to combine the teaching of applied science with coaching in the artistry of reflection in action (the thinking of what they are doing while they are doing it).

The writer’s “espoused” theories of research, which are already becoming increasingly explicit, will be made much more so in the following sections dealing with his “ideology” and preferred methodology.

CONCEPTS CENTRAL TO RESEARCH DECISIONS

Before launching into ideological and methodological matters some basic terminology needs to be defined so that it can be consistently used and understood.

A concept has been defined by Deshler (1990:350) as the word or words “we use to constitute reality”. According to “Ausubel (1968:506):

Because of the influence of ‘concepts’ within his cognitive structure, man (sic) experiences a highly simplified, schematic, selective and generalized conscious representation of reality, rather than a complete and faithful sensory representation of it.

There seems to be some agreement here between a perspective transformationalist and an earlier cognitive psychologist (both schools have much in common) that a “concept” is a linguistic representation of reality. Concepts in combination, form the next level of “propositions” which build on one another in the development of “theories”.

Theory in the view of Macridis (1980:4) is “the formulation of propositions that causally link variables to account for or explain a phenomenon.” An example would be Schon’s “theory” that “dissonance” is explained by the “incongruence” between “theories-in-use” and “espoused theories”.

A construct comes from the same perspective as Schon’s view of “reflection-in-action” and, according to its originator (Kelly: 1963:8-9):

Man (sic) looks at this world through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. Let us give the name “constructs” to these patterns that are tentatively tried on for size.

They are ways of construing the world .. in general man seeks to improve his constructs by increasing his repertory, by altering them to provide better fits and by subsuming them with superordinate constructs or systems.

At first it seems that the terms “concept” and “construct” are interchangeable, but later in his seminal work “A Theory of Personality - The Psychology of Personal Constructs” (1963), he defines a “construct” as (1963:105):-

A way in which some things are construed as being alike and yet different from others” and his method of identifying people’s “constructs”, the “repertory grid”, depends heavily on bipolar constructs for its efficacy. Thus the “construct” is a particular kind of “concept”; the way in which two things are similar and thereby different (but not opposite) from a third or more things. It will be particularly useful in identifying “espoused theories” because of the way one’s “personal construct system” reveals the “paradigm” or “perspective” one holds and which, when brought into consciousness can be the first step towards “paradigm shift” or “perspective transformation”.

A paradigm is clearly defined by Kuhn (1962:73-187) as:

Something shared by communities .. the disciplinary matrix composed of symbolic generalizations (definitions); metaphysical paradigms (beliefs in particular models); values; and finally shared examples (“exemplars” - the concrete problem-solutions learned by students of the discipline).

Discourses are variously defined by Gee (1990: xv) as:

“Integral combinations of saying;-doings-thinkings-feelings-valuings” ... “an integration (peculiar to a specific community or social group) of words, actions, interactions, values, feelings, attitudes and thinking in specific and distinctive ways” (xvii).. representations of one of our ever multiple identities (e.g. the discourse of “academics” and “scuba-divers”, two roles the writer currently occupies) (xix)... “Ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes” (142) but his clearest definition is: A socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling believing, valuing and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’ or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful ‘role’. (143).

Fairclough (1992) operates from the same critical discourse analysis perspective and uses the term to mean:

Language as discourse, as action ... professions as institutions whose conventions are ideologically shaped by social relationships (constituted in large measure by struggles for power) and realised through particular discourses” (vi) and later” I shall use the term “discourse” to refer to discursive action, to actual talking or writing. (29).

This concept of “discourse” will be useful in identifying both “espoused” and “in-use” theories, in particular the “discourse” of cross-cultural practitioners which includes both what they do and what they say they do; the academic discourse of the field and the daily practitioner discourse (espoused and in-use).

“Discourse” therefore is inclusive of “concepts”, “constructs”, and “theories” and is derived from a particular “paradigm” or “ideology”.

The final key concept is ideology. Fairclough (1992:2) uses “ideology” in the sense of “common-sense” assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not aware ... embedded in the forms of language that are used .. a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power.”

Gee (1990:23) defines “ideology” as “a social theory (tacit or overt) which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which goods (jobs, wealth, status, power, control etc) are distributed in society.” For tacit social theories we can read “theories-in-use”. Gee concludes (1990:20):

The job of explicating such tacit theories I will take to be part of the field of discourse analysis, a branch of linguistics.

The conceptual “tools” have now been spread on the workbench but before making decisions about how to use them in achieving the purposes of this project, some thought needs to be given to making explicit the researcher’s ideology which will determine these decisions.

THE RESEARCHER’S IDEOLOGY

Usher (1993), writing in “Studies in Continuing Education” makes a strong case for “personal reflexivity” in the research process as opposed to the view held by researchers in the natural sciences (the “normative” paradigm) that their roles are to be detached observers, analysts and interpreters who control and manipulate the conditions in which they are interested. By this he means (1993:103):

the researchers own identity as an individual, a woman and a feminist ... whose research is often an expression of personal interests and values .. which determines not only the choice of subject or topic researched, how the research is carried out, how ‘data’ is generated and how its significance is evaluated.

This view sees social interaction not as a “problem” but as a “resource” (Baker: 1986:9) by “examining how we can be seen to have influenced the interaction” ie “researchers make their own understandings an object for enquiry .. the context is brought sharply into focus” (McIntyre (1993:93). Usher (1993:112) calls this “researching our research, including ourselves as researchers.”

Usher (1993) reflects in his postscript on his conscious intentions in writing his article on “research reflexivity”. Budd Hall, in the same issue, declares in the article “Centering adult education research”, his personal history, the influences on his work and his core values of the “reconstruction” and “transformation” of the so-called “third world”. Gee (1990: xii-xiii) relates key influences on his writing and his dedication to exposing the fraudulent claims of ‘mainstream culture’ in relation to schooling. Fairclough is even more explicit (1992:5):

I write as a socialist with a generally low opinion of the social relationships in my society (the UK) and a commitment to the emancipation of the people who are oppressed by them.

Fairclough writes this in preference to “affecting a spurious neutrality about social issues”. Because this “subjective” context is crucial to decisions about appropriate research strategies as well as being an integral part of the research story, the author of this study offers the following context in the first person, another decision about his relationship to the reader, dropping the “spurious neutrality” of third-person writing. Usher reports Woolgar (1991) who describes this, particularly when it is separated from the rest of the report as “benign introspection” and “fieldwork confessions” (particularly in ethnographic writing). However the inclusion of this contextual background is a genuine attempt at “researcher reflexivity” to self-consciously explain the research process exposing the “rootedness of discourse in the common-sense assumptions” (of the researcher) in the words of Fairclough (1992:167).

THE WRITER'S IDEOLOGY

I have been a socialist since 1970, an active social democrat since the Whitlam years, radicalized during the Bjelke-Petersen years to become more of a “scientific socialist” (Marxist-Leninist) and today more attuned to the principles of the Green Party, the New Left Party and the mass movements against racism, nuclear armament, sexism and other forms of oppression. My recent review in the “Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education” shows that I am clearly not a pacifist. My links with internationalist groups in Chile, Cuba, Vietnam, Ireland and South Africa indicate the extent of my commitment to a nuclear-free, economically-sustainable planet with indigenous peoples and their colonizers working together to liberate the oppressed and prevent any further exploitation of people and resources in ways that damage this fragile eco-system we inhabit. This is relevant because my teaching and learning goals derive directly from these values as will my research approaches. I teach in areas of cross-cultural communication, organizational and social change, experiential learning and values and ethics in adult and vocational education and have done so for the last twenty years. I prefer to set up processes for self-directed and experiential learning which respect cultural differences, including differences in learning styles. My assessment methods include self-directed learning contracts and action research, encouraging resubmission and self-evaluation. My teaching methods encourage cooperative learning, problem-posing, and collective action to ameliorate real-life problems in both workplace and community. At this stage of my worklife I am utterly devoid

of ambition in the promotional arena. If I was “ambitious”, I would be breaking my back completing a PhD instead of enjoying a more leisurely MEd(Hons) thesis. This “opus magnum” represents the completion of a long, sometimes painful intellectual journey; an opportunity to reflect on my experience, clarify my values, and begin to plan the remainder of my contribution to life-quality and social justice on this planet. (“Praxis” - reflection and action in the Freirean sense, at its best.) The decisions I reach about appropriate research strategies will be an extension of these personal ‘espoused’ and ‘in-use’ ‘social theories’ or ‘ideology’

ETHICAL ISSUES

In arriving at a personal code of research ethics I draw heavily on an article published in a Griffith Institute for Higher Education publication, “Developing as Researchers” (1994), particularly an article by Isaacs, Massey and Singh, who declare themselves as operating from “the socially critical paradigm of research”. They have identified, among others, the following fundamental tenets of research:

- . Knowledge and research activity are not objective.
- . Research is undertaken by people and therefore incorporates the interests and values of those people.
- . Research is undertaken through social interaction and is thus historically, culturally, politically and economically located.
- . Research and knowledge should serve emancipatory ends.
- . Knowledge is produced for social justice through critique and collaboration.
- . Theoretical accounts are developed to explain events and experiences.
- . Research should not be undertaken for individual promotion or gain, but to enhance social well-being and
- . The relationship between researcher and researched is negotiated in terms of power relations.”

They go on to describe critical research as aimed at furthering the process of self-reflection (enlightenment) and dissolving the barriers to self-determined development of the human species (emancipation). These views are entirely congruent with the values made explicit in the preceding ideological statement. The following sections address a number of key questions which will help shape the final methodological proposal.

QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE OR BOTH?

In the AAAE Research Network's collection of papers on "Qualitative Research" (1986:i) Emery reminds us:

Qualitative research .. is an ancient and ubiquitous human activity. Curiosity about others and the worlds in which they live has always been displayed through conversation, asking questions, working together to see what happens after different kinds of actions are performed, talking or gossiping about others to tease out intentions and other reasons for behaviour, clarifying and understanding circumstances; all are fundamental research functions."

Varieties include ethnographies, participant-observation, field studies, case studies, interviews and text and conversation-analytic work and are generally based on such theories as "phenomenology", "symbolic interactionism", "ethnomethodology", and often use the unobtrusive methods of content analysis, thematic analysis (grounded theory and narrative analysis), and semiotic and discourse analysis (Kellehear: 1993).

Quantitative research, on the other hand, derives from the "positivist" school which views "social reality" as existing objectively and people's behaviour governed by laws which are discoverable by importing the methods of the natural sciences, that is, by observation and experimentation. Laws or propositions are extracted, comprising a theory from which specific predictions can be derived. The researcher looks for relationships among variables, ultimately cause-effect relationships which govern behaviour. The researcher attempts to stand outside the domain of phenomena being studied, to collect data which provide the evidence for the testing of hypotheses, and to control and possibly eliminate 'subjectivity' in the process of enquiry. This view prefers quantitative methods e.g. as in survey research and national polls since measurement is essential to its logic.

The decision, based on the researcher's values, already revealed, is clear-cut. Qualitative research methods have the following advantages identified by Baker (1986:5-9):

1. Reality is socially-constructed (Berger and Luckmann: 1967) so we need to gain the insider's view not impose the researcher's constructs i.e. they capture "subjective meaning" in all its "richness" and "depth".

2. They collect, record and analyse written and spoken materials (discourse) and observe in naturally occurring settings i.e. they respect contexts.
3. Most rely on the presence and activity of a researcher as a social participant in the study providing a window on the participant's reality outside the specific context of telling.

Foley (1993:75) reports on the shift in adult education research:

from taking experimental science as a research model, to looking to anthropology, literature, women's studies, cultural studies and history for insights into the practice of research ... as an interpretive activity, and as a social and textual practice. He concludes (1993:78):

If adult education research is to be seen as a reflexive and textual, it must be seen not in some detached intellectual way, but in a manner which foregrounds the social effects of research.

This confirms the writer's decision to work qualitatively, in line with the personal values expressed above, but qualitative-quantitative blends are still compatible.

"Triangulation" is identified by Denzin (1970) as being of five kinds: - time-triangulation-longitudinal studies; space-triangulation-cross-group studies; investigator-triangulation-multiple observers; within-methods triangulation-replication; and between-methods triangulation-multiple methods". The latter can involve qualitative-quantitative combinations.

Cohen and Manion (1980:43) argue:

Social scientists have come to abandon a spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data and are now concerned with what combination of both makes use of the most valuable features of each.

Long (1986:62-66) advocates a "multifaceted approach" i.e. quantitative approaches need to be "buttressed by research methodologies whose major thrust is qualitative."

The writer's last few funded research projects have combined a qualitative round first which established the extent of "consensus" or "intersubjectivity", i.e. some kind of "consensual validation". The reverse order would seem likely to swamp the insider with the researcher's "constructs" and "discourse" rather than capturing their own. This study will therefore triangulate, increasing validity and reliability, by using a combination of qualitative methods.

WHICH OF THE QUALITATIVE APPROACHES MATCH BEST WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purposes of this study, and the personal values of the researcher, are directed towards research for personal and social “transformation” i.e. they have an “emancipatory” goal.

Deshler and Selener (1991) are cited in McIntyre (1993:91) because of their attempt to identify tests for “transformative” research.

Transformative research should be ethical through serving specific universal ethical standards in the conduct of research in the public interest with attention to human rights, social justice, reconciliation and the preservation of environmental sustainability. It should be emancipatory through reducing or eliminating social, economic, political and technical oppressive operations, structures and situations. It should be empowering through serving the emergence of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. It should promote the conservation and proliferation of different forms of life. It should be holistic through emphasising, identifying and revealing the relationships between: parts and wholes, subjectivity and objectivity, micro and macro contexts and local and global decisions and forces.

McTaggart (1991) cited in the same article provides a further test:

(Critical) social inquiry cannot simply explain or merely understand the sources of problems people face.... collaborative inquiry must be oriented to transforming the way both workers (cross-cultural practitioners) and academics (the researcher) see themselves, their situations and their understandings so that factors frustrating their social goals and purposes can be recognised, engaged and changed or eliminated.

The most compelling warning about pseudo-emancipatory research comes from Usher’s article, “From process to practice: research, reflexivity and writing in adult education” (1993:112):

Even when we think our research is useful or even emancipatory we are still ‘objectifying’ still speaking for others, and education is full of people who speak for others in the name of doing good for them. Thus an awareness of reflexivity enable us to interrogate our own practice of research, in terms of how it can become part of dominant and oppressive discourses or its ‘pragmatic’ usefulness or its ‘emancipatory’ potential - and in terms of how we contribute to such discourses despite our best intentions. As

long as we keep on taking textuality for granted, as long as we keep on seeing writing as merely a neutral vehicle for describing and theorizing an outside world, for capturing 'reality' clearly and transparently, we will just keep on doing this.

The challenge is clear!

Groundwater-Smith (1986:24) sets the following "conditions of work" for "transformative", "collaborative research":

1. That the relationship between the external researcher and the practitioner seeks for symmetry;
2. That either party may initiate the research;
3. That during the research project's life either may raise significant questions as to the direction the project may take;
4. That the exchange of information between both parties is negotiated and the purposes which the information will serve are openly disclosed and;
5. That the roles of teacher, learner and researcher are available to all parties.

(Writing this down has made this researcher a little "anxious". Because of the imperative for shared control of the research process, the researcher's well-laid plans could be overturned or drastically modified at any time. The researcher is already experiencing "dissonance" because of the "incongruence" between his 'espoused theories', i.e. "participatory research" and "theories in use", i.e. preference for control and structure in teaching and research. Mutual-reflexivity could be extremely beneficial to all parties.)

An evaluative review of some "appropriate" (to the above values) methodologies follows before a final choice is made and "floated" with the potential participants in the study.

Grounded theory is the process of letting theory grow out of data. Some of the problems identified by Anderson (1986:18-21) are:

1. The experimenter may bias responses.
2. The respondent will tell the researcher what they think she wants to hear.
3. The experimenter may stretch the data to fit a theoretical explanation and

4. There is a problem in presenting results that “the scientific community” will regard as valid.

He then presents a case study of adviser-farmer decision-making which largely overcomes these problems (86:21).

The best test of ‘grounded theory’ is not that respondents agree with the proposition put but that they can add supporting detail which fit and round out the theoretical propositions.

Long (1986:64) confirms:

A theory must be readily modifiable, based on ever emerging notions from more data.

Usher (1993:108) is critical of “ethnographical and grounded research” in terms of their flimsy attempts at “benign introspection” and “fieldwork confessions” (discussed elsewhere in this chapter) “by seeing reflexivity as something to be accounted for subsequently rather than something always present, it merely serves to reinforce the separation.”

Besides theory-building may be a means to personal and social “transformation” but it is only one of many possible outcomes to be negotiated with research “participants” (“co-researchers” matches Groundwater-Smith’s valuable guidelines much better.)

Ethnographic studies have been carried out by the researcher on a number of occasions since 1976. These are attempts to understand the commonsense meanings and experiences of the participants of a social system, using the multiple methods of the field-based anthropologist including observation, interviews and the study of physical artefacts. These studies often result in “grounded theory” as above. This method has been influenced by empirical “naturalism” (out into the world); “phenomenology” (the insider’s point of view) and “symbolic interactionism” (the way people interpret the world).

Post-structuralist (also known by the equally ambiguous label post-modernist writers (Kellehear: 1993:28) go further and seek

to rewrite the narrative (culture is conceived as a network of narratives or stories built on the hidden agendas people have about their world) by uncovering (“deconstructing”)

those hidden but powerful elements. The major influences on this perspective are phenomenology, symbolic interaction, psychoanalysis, “semiotics” (the study of symbols in text and all facets of human interaction to uncover (deconstruct) all hidden, distorted and repressed messages and relations) and literary theory. One can readily see the appeal of this approach to feminists and researchers interested in combating racism, ageism, poverty and other contemporary malaises.

McIntyre (1993:89) laments the way in which “ethnography” was uncritically adopted by adult education researchers who neglected to criticize the “power of the institutional context”. Usher adds (1993:108) a criticism that ethnographers generally regard “reflexivity” as a problem.

“Ethnography” still seems too researcher-controlled to meet the criteria for “collaborative” and “emancipatory” research - even if it is of the “critical” variety. The writer of this study has therefore decided to seek further for a more compatible methodology.

Action research has long appealed to this writer who will be reporting on an action-research project he facilitated in 1994, at two Conferences on vocational education, later this year.

Grundy (1968:31) has constructed three scenarios of action research and extracts the following characteristics:

1. The project is controlled by all the participants (stakeholders).
2. The action-research process is continuously retrospective and prospective. There are strategic moments of action and reflection.
3. During the process there is a fundamental shift towards empowerment of the participants.
4. Projects are often initiated by participants in the situation and are thus inherently democratic.
5. Reflection is carried on within a critical community, informed by critical theorems about ideological distortions of consciousness.
6. Projects are of practical interest to all and generally result in greater self and group awareness and improvement in the situation being researched.

Marshall and Reason (1993:117) identify a range of methodologies and perspective within the rubric of “collaborative action research”.

Our students may set up a co-operative inquiry group engaging with a group of people fully as co-researchers. They may draw on the perspectives of action science (Argyris et al., 1985) and action inquiry (Torbert, 1991) to explore their own personal practice in detail. They may initiate cycles of inquiry using methods appropriate to each phase of their research questioning. They may incorporate an appreciation of gender and related power issues in their work.

Usher is concerned about the “mechanistic” nature of most “action research” (1993:104):

I may want my research to be emancipatory and I may as a researcher be very conscious of the need to act in an emancipatory way, but the kinds of method I use and the implicit values I hold may result in a completely opposite effect. Most action research, for example, tends to be like this (Kosmidou and Usher: 1991); a kind of mechanistic (going through the stages) activity which works to negate any empowering intent.

The basic methodology of “action” research will thus be adopted but with much greater participant control than is usually the case.

The case study, according to Cohen & Manion (1980:120) typically “observes the characteristics of an individual unit (an adult worker, a clique, a class, an Adult Evening College, or a community). The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs.” This is of about as much use to this project as theory-building in the grounded theory mode. Generalisable characteristics and understandings are not germane to “emancipatory” research, or are they?

Jennings (1986: 11-15) defines case study as:

Intensive investigations of single cases which serve both to identify and describe basic phenomena, as well as provide the basis for subsequent theory development.

She goes on to identify four types (according to Stenhouse: 1985).

1. The “ethnographic” (of social groups).
2. The “evaluative” (of programs, policies, curricula etc).
3. The “educational” (critical incidents) and
4. The “Action research” (a conscious attempt to change the situation).

In the same article she cites Walker (1983) who criticizes “case studies” on the grounds of their being an intervention in the lives of others (intrusive); a biased view of the way things are (researcher bias); and essentially conservative (embalming the status quo).

Jennings recommends the critical case study which -

is not a legitimation of existing practice, but rather to provide individuals with the capacity to reconstruct their present practices in a way that will indicate the kind of action required for improvement and change.

Critical case study workers can use the same tools as qualitative methodologists using techniques such as participant observation, documents and recordings but they differ on two levels (1986:15).

1. They provide an opportunity to understand society as an interconnected set of social relations, shaped by an historical context ... a perspective which relies on a theory of social change and a concept of social structure that exists beyond the participant's perception of it ...both the case studyworker and the participants come to a realization that making sense of reality is itself a social act.

[This view is entirely consistent with the goal of “perspective transformation” elucidated by Mezirow in Chapter 3 of this study.] and

2. They allow both the case studyworker and the participants of case study to become active and conscious change agents in their contexts through the processes of ideology critique and self-reflection.

[Again consistent with the goals of emancipatory research, critical discourse analysis and perspective transformation.]

Given the adoption, subject to participant analysis and acceptance of this approach, which qualitative techniques best lend themselves to the mutual analysis and action-taking of the “espoused” and “in-use” theories of cross-cultural practitioners? Two techniques seem to meet all of the criteria set so far.

1. **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

According to Fairclough (1992:243-4) the outcome of “critical discourse analysis” is:

a matter of the systematic de-structuring of existing orders (of discourse) and restructuring of new experiences, our growing critical awareness of language, and our growing capacity to engage in purposeful discourse.

Gee (1990:24) shares this view of the function of “critical discourse analysis”:

To the extent that all ideologies (social theories) are tacit, removed (influenced by less direct sources than our own thought and research) or deferred (appropriated from “experts”) and self-advantaging, they are the root of human evil and leave us complicit with, and thus responsible for the evil that is in the world. We cannot, perhaps, remove the evil, but we can remove our moral complicity. We do this, I believe, by doing a species of linguistics, namely discourse analysis (explicating our tacit and removed / deferred theories, especially our tacit and removed / deferred ideologies. This is why linguistics is a moral matter and why, in the end, to me, linguistics matters.

These concepts of “tacit, removed and deferred theories and ideologies” are identical to the “espoused” and “in-use” theories of the cross-cultural practitioners this study sets out to map. Furthermore the writer has found two robust procedures for analysing the mass of qualitative data which is their “discourse” - the content of oral discussions of their work (beliefs and practices (espoused); the content of their written curriculum documents (espoused); and the content and process of their work behaviour (classroom and office) (in-use).

The first is thematic analysis discussed in detail in Kellehear (1993:42) “The Unobtrusive Researcher: A Guide To Methods.” This goes well beyond content analysis which develops categories prior to searching for them in the data, and then carries out frequency counts. The disadvantages are obvious. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, derives much of its approach from Glaser and Strauss (1987) which identifies emerging themes which are meaningful to the subject. This is a more subjective and interpretative approach overcoming the defects of content analysis, i.e.:

1. It maps the insider’s (not the researcher’s) view of the world.
2. It does not view all events or items as having equal value or importance and
3. It does not accept that frequency is, in itself, a valid or reliable indicator of importance.

The mind-numbing hours of work needed to analyse a vast quantity of data manually has now been eliminated with the advent of an Australian computer program called NUDIST

(Nonnumerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing) which is now accessible to the researcher and which he is being trained to use. An analysis of this kind ought to reveal key/central “theories” and “concepts” as required by the study.

The second is Fairclough’s (1992: Chapters 5 and 6) procedure for “critical discourse analysis” involving phases of “description”, “interpretation”, “explanation” and analysing the “position of the analysis” (“researcher reflexivity”) including the declaration of the researcher’s “ideology” (social theories) - See earlier section.

The “description” phase analyses the knowledge and beliefs, the messages about social relations, and the messages (embedded) about social identities embedded in the vocabulary, the grammar, and the textual structures (Detailed questions are asked at each step.)

The “interpretation” phase interprets the con-text (the ‘situated’ autobiography of the researcher and participant -all that defines pre-understandings); the pre-text (that which is before the text - textual strategies, conventions and rhetorical devices); the sub-text (that which is beneath the text - the operation of power - knowledge formations in particular discourses disseminated through text); and the inter-text (that which is between the text-traces of other texts, the network of absent and present citations and the interpretive culture which gives the text its historical voice) (Usher: 1993:114).

Fairclough (1992) focuses on the “surface of utterance” (knowledge of language - phonology, grammar and vocabulary); “meaning of utterance” (using the interpreter’s own resources (prior experience as prototypes”) to work out implicit meanings for whole propositions; on “local coherence” (coherence relations between utterances); and on “text structure and point” (how the whole text hangs together and a summary interpretation of the text as a whole).

The “explanation phase” examines the discourse as “part of a social practice” i.e. showing how it is determined by social structures and, also, what reproductive effects it can have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them.

Given the time constraints on completion of this thesis by the end of 1995 and the level of the award (MEd (Hons)) the researcher will probably only carry out a “thematic analysis” at this stage, and follow up with a complete “critical discourse analysis” at some time in the future.

One further strategy remains to assist the collaborative “reflection-in-action” process and act as a form of validation for the finding of the thematic analysis.

2 **THE REPERTORY GRID - MAPPING PERSONAL CONSTRUCT SYSTEMS**

The first time the writer saw a “repertory grid” devised by Candy in Mezirow (1990:279), it looked just like “a cross between Q sort and Semantic Differential - in short it looked like a classical quantitative survey instrument. On closer examination Candy’s assertion is supported (1990:279):

It is ... “a conversational strategy that seeks to externalize and, to a degree, to objectify salient aspects of a respondent’s personal construct system; that is, his or her thinking and feeling about a set of objects, ideas, people or events”. (273).

Its potential for “transformative learning.” is seen as:

1. Its drawing on real life experience.
2. Its encouragement of the respondent to express his or her point of view in personally meaningful terms.
3. Its user-friendliness in providing insights both to respondent and his/her adviser or helper.
4. Its opportunity for the identification of different ways in which the respondent could view the situation if he/she chose to do so (perspective transformation).
5. The possibilities for enhanced self-understanding, particularly of values-clarification.
6. Its use “before” and “after” a learning event to reflect on changes in ones construing.
7. For a group (e.g. the four women in this study) to examine points of difference and similarity in their construing as the basis for collective action and even social transformation.
8. As an aid to the individual in identifying his/her taken-for-granted assumptions and assisting in critical self-reflection. (Candy: 1990:273-288).

These advantages clearly satisfy the requirements of “emancipatory research” propounded earlier. Its theoretical base is described by Candy (1990:280):

A theory of role occupancy ... ahead of its time ... elegant and complete ... and congruent with recent trends in phenomenological and constructivist research paradigms (e.g. semiotics).

In practice the procedures required are eminently suitable for even the untrained interviewer:

1. The respondent is asked to write on cards the names of all key co-workers and complete three cards with the names of (a) the most effective cross-cultural communicator / trainer I have ever worked with; (b) the least effective; and (c) self.
2. The helper (researcher) writes the given names of colleagues in “1” on a repertory grid form.
3. The cards are shuffled and three of them placed on the table. The respondent is then asked: “In what way are two of these people similar and thereby different from the third person?” “Give me a word or phrase that describes the similar people ... and the third person.” These are then entered at opposite ends of the repertory grid form. (They may not be dictionary opposites. It is the constructs that matter - they are accurate for the respondent.)
4. I want you to arrange these people along an imaginary continuum from construct A to construct B - e.g. “helpful” to “destructive”.
5. Together a score is allocated from 1 to 7 on each “bipolar construct”. The respondent also allocates herself a score.
6. Together relationships between constructs are examined e.g. If you know about construct X, can you predict construct Y?
7. The respondent is then encouraged to engage in critical reflection on such things as attitudes, inconsistencies, and dysfunctional patterns of thinking (e.g. self-fulfilling prophecies, stereotypes, etc).

This process has the potential to (1990:279):

reveal implications of construing things in particular ways, and demonstrate alternative and perhaps preferable ways of understanding the world and relating to it.

Candy points out that the method (“the triadic elicitation procedure”) produces numbers which can be subjected to a variety of rather sophisticated statistical manipulations such as principal components analysis, multidimensional scaling, hierarchical cluster analysis, and non-parametric factor analysis but none of these will be attempted in this study. The goal of this study is “critical self-reflection” and transformative and emancipatory learning” (the title of Mezirow’s (1990) collection in which Candy’s article was published not theory-building (correlational and inferential statistical analysis).

Candy being a “reflective practitioner” himself identifies some of the limitations of repertory grids (1990: 288-9):

1. It is unrealistic to believe that simply completing the grid will inevitably lead to significant personal learning - hence the intention of using this to complement the thematic analysis.
2. Constructs need not be bipolar (unipolar constructs will also be sought. Candy calls these “emerging poles”).
3. Respondents may create ‘constructs’ to meet the demands of the elicitation process (the thematic analysis will provide confirmation or disconfirmation).
4. Supplied constructs may be as good as those elicited (researcher “intrusion” seems likely here).
5. Constructs are not necessarily “linear”.
6. There is a need to account for the “subjective” and “fuzzy” nature of construing. (Words are like that but constructs can be revealed using objects instead of words, e.g. pieces of sculpture).
7. Some forms of grid analysis are more appropriate than others (The researcher will restrict this study to respondent-controlled critical self-reflection only) and
8. Grids are inadequate to the task of capturing and representing the dynamic and constantly shifting nature of people’s constructions (The respondents will be taught how to carry out repertory grid analysis for themselves, and one another, and be encouraged to map these “shifts” for themselves).

CONCLUSION

The search for appropriate (defined according to the “emancipatory” and “transformative” goals of this study) ways of knowing, understanding and taking action (“research methodology” in

another paradigm) has yielded a multiple-method qualitative way of “surfacing” the “espoused” and “in-use” theories and constructs of four cross-cultural practitioners (i.e. their “meaning perspectives”, “frames of reference”, or “paradigms” with an invitation, and the offer of unobtrusive facilitation (mostly by ‘reflective listening’ - a powerful counselling, teaching and child-rearing tool), to take the next step and engage in personal and/or social action. To do more, in the eyes of Mezirow but not Newman is to indulge in “indoctrination”(See previous Chapter). To Newman, and this researcher, to do less is naivete, cowardice and irresponsibility. However, on this occasion, the learners will set the pace, which I think is exactly what Mezirow and Brookfield are advocating. Candy expresses the outcome this way (1990:291):

Although the dominant focus of the Repertory Grid is with individuals transforming their own perspectives and world views, the end result is a community where reflective self-awareness is the norm and where both individually and collectively, people are free to become masters of their own destiny.

The researcher will now proceed to invite four “effective” practitioners to become involved in the collaborative processes outlined above. They will receive a copy of this entire Chapter, the informed consent form which follows, and the agreement form also included in this Chapter.