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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Humanities**

**What counts as useful knowledge?
Perceptions of a group of Adult Learners in Higher Education**

**A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of adult learners in higher education. In particular, it seeks to examine what adult learners value as useful knowledge regarding the course they have done.

The study focuses on a group of part-time adult learners who are, or have been, studying adult education at the Diploma and Advanced Certificate Levels, and who are themselves experienced practitioners.

My investigation is referenced against a body of theoretical literature, which surveys the complexities facing higher education within a context of globalisation. The ambiguous link between higher education and the world of work, which currently faces each adult student, is also explored, as well as the literature on increasing participation of adult learners in higher education.

The methodology involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, which best suits the incremental way in which data has been progressively gathered from a small sample of respondents. Methods included the use of a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews.

Using a form of grounded theory, the following categories were extracted from the data: personal growth, academic advancement and workplace requirements. The main findings are:

1. Respondents predominantly found the courses extremely valuable for building confidence and self-esteem, as well as for developing and exploring individuality;
2. A large number of respondents also placed a high value on the opportunity the courses gave them to explore areas which could lead to continued study within a higher education setting;
3. While many respondents placed a high value on the usefulness of the courses in workplace settings, findings suggested that for a large number of respondents their employment status was only marginally altered, and a few remained unemployed.

The study concludes that groups of adult learners in higher education contexts may value a range of different things in higher education. This is so because their needs are as diverse as the traditional students already in the system.

The study also suggests that both adult learners and traditional learners within higher education contexts may have to revisit conventional expectations of what the world of work is able to offer graduates within the context of globalisation.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of a group of adult learners in designated adult education courses at the University of Cape Town. This exploration has a comparative dimension because my interest in how adult learners experienced their courses stemmed from my own reflections on the adult education course I had done on a part-time basis in 1996 and 1997. The focus of the study is primarily an examination of what students found useful from the course offerings, and how they have integrated these perceptions of usefulness into their lives.

In this chapter I develop the context of my research by beginning with an outline of the stated aims of the main Adult Education programmes/ courses on offer at the University of Cape Town (UCT), as well as the rationale for my choosing the Diploma and Advanced Certificate Courses in the Education Department as the focus of my study.

1.2 Focus Area

UCT offers courses for professional development of adult educators at three levels: initial diploma, advanced certificate and masters. Layers of adult learners at both Diploma and Advanced Certificate level constitute my area of study.

Information derived from annual reports¹ of Diploma and Advanced Certificate courses assisted in shaping the student profile I have of the group of learners who became the object of my study. The students range in age from 35 to 50 years, and a high proportion are women. These adult learners are largely a non-traditional, culturally diverse group drawn mainly from the following major community sectors: education, training and development, community health, educare, trade unions and political organisations.

The following summaries of the course content pertaining to the Diploma and Certificate Courses have been paraphrased from the Department of Education's website, at UCT, and are reproduced here for ease of reference.

1.2.1 Diploma in Adult Education

Formerly known as the Certificate in Adult Education, Training and Development, the Diploma in Adult Education offers initial professional education for practitioners who have previously worked in adult education and training but with no prior study in higher education. The stated aims of the course include developing an overview of the fields of adult education, community education and workplace education and training within the ambit of the social and historical context of a developing South Africa. The course aims largely to improve professional practice, and it also aims to build communicative competence as one way of preparing students academically for continued university study.

Extended over two years of part-time study or one year full-time study, the curriculum offers three modules in its first year: introduction to adult learning, organisation

¹ Annual and Bi-annual Reports, spanning approximately a five-year period (1997-2001), were obtained from one of the course convenors of the adult education course.

development, and designing and facilitating learning events. The three modules offered in the second year are foundations of adult learning theory, fields and sites of ETD practice, and field study.

In the first year this course introduces learning theory, and is linked to the practical development of facilitation and design skills. By locating practice theoretically and professionally in the second year, the course aims to enhance professional competence. Academic development takes place throughout the duration of the course.

Students are assessed by means of assignments and projects. Classes are held weekly, and include workshops and seminars. Students experience about 240 contact hours over a period of two years.

1.2.2 Advanced Certificate in Education (Adult Education)

The Advanced Certificate in Adult Education (formerly the Advanced Diploma for Educators of Adults) is aimed at adult education practitioners who already have a three-year Diploma or Degree. This course aims to develop adult educators in three key areas: theoretically, with particular reference to educational practice in a South African setting, to enhance students' own learning and practice in adult education, and thirdly, to provide an opportunity for students to construct a curriculum most suited to their needs and interests.

The Advanced Certificate in Education is a two-year part-time programme. The modules in the first year introduce the discourses and practices, which have influenced processes of adult learning, and in turn the broad field of adult education. The course intends to provide students with enabling theoretical frameworks so that

students can engage with a range of adult education practices. The first year also aims to enrich students' specialised roles in education, training and development by extending their repertoire of professional skills for work in changing contexts.

The second year focuses on theories, which attempt an explanation of the shifts in the organisation of learning and society. This is followed by contextual study in a site of practice. The second semester focuses on research. Evaluative research is introduced, followed by project-based research work, which returns to aspects of professional practice.

The assessment methods for this programme are by assignment, project and examination.² The course also involves weekly seminars with 240 hours of contact time spread over two years.

While I am aware of other adult-directed programmes on offer at UCT,³ for the purposes of my study I have focussed on the courses outlined in this section because I had come to know them when I was an adult education student on the Advanced Diploma Course in 1996 and 1997. My own experience of the course I had completed then was seminal in leading me to choose a similar group of adult education students as the object of my study.

² Further information about the Diploma and Advanced Certificate courses can be obtained from the Department of Education's website: <http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/educate/dipae.htm>

³ Another example of an adult education programme at UCT is the Associate in Management (AIM) course, which targets applicants who are at least 25 years of age and with a minimum of five years work experience. This programme aims primarily to transfer learning and practical skills "back into the workplace (specifically into management practices) and not in developing generic and discipline-specific academic literacy," (Bond in Angéllil-Carter, 1998:66). Established in 1991, this programme specifically

1.3 Roles and Research

Contextualising this study requires me to examine my roles both as an adult learner and educator. My experience of teaching adult learners at St Francis night school in Langa, in the early 1990s, led me to enrol in 1996 on a part-time basis for the University of Cape Town's then Advanced Diploma for Educators of Adults specifically to scaffold my theoretical and personal development regarding adult teaching and learning.

As an adult learner on this course, I felt a distinct sense of personal achievement even though it was not immediately apparent how the success I had experienced on the course would be translated into the future academic and workplace scenarios I had envisaged for myself.

Concepts I had internalised pertaining to globalisation and the knowledge society (Burton-Jones, 2001) led to much introspection about the kind of "knowledge worker" the new world order appeared to need and the kind of knowledge worker I wanted, or could be expected, to be. This personal conundrum led me to garner insights from other Certificate or Diploma adult learners with respect to their experiences of the Adult Education courses on offer at the University.

1.4 Refining My Research Question

Earlier formulations of my research question starkly signalled my engagement with the literature pertaining to the nature and effects of globalisation. I therefore placed the concept of globalisation as the central part of my research interest. At the time I

aims to develop "functional skills, integrated knowledge, personal awareness and self-confidence needed to manage effectively in an environment of diversity, uncertainty and change," (ibid).

wanted to find out to what extent an understanding of globalisation had led other adult learners (within the ambit of the Certificate and Diploma courses) to their designated courses. Therefore, my very first attempt at stating my question was framed accordingly:

How do students on the Advanced Certificate and Diploma courses in Adult Education at UCT view their acquired academic literacies in relation to current workplace needs and the knowledge economy?

However, I realised that adult learners may well enter the portals of a university for a variety of reasons, and that workplace considerations may not necessarily be primary in this regard. It was also likely that a significant number of the learners I wished to consult had experienced, to a varying extent, the country's racially segregated, and inferior, schooling system. As a result of poor schooling, many of these learners, like myself, may not have been offered a place at a university directly after completing high school. Many years later, therefore, the mere experience of studying at a prestigious university could in itself be of unparalleled value to some learners.

A re-examination of the assumptions contained in my first formulation led me to a more informed and nuanced way of thinking about my area of study. The concept of "usefulness" remained central to my question. Although I still wanted to examine how adult learners in higher education perceived the usefulness of their courses, I now framed the research question more openly:

In terms of the perceptions of a group of adult learners in higher education, what counts as useful knowledge?

1.5 Outline of the Study

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This introductory chapter has attempted to contextualise my study, and has also tried to put forward the relevance and importance of my research topic.

Chapter 2 reviews the scholarship in terms of my research question. This literature review chapter highlights the difficulties involved in attempting to describe the complex relationship between higher education and industry as a result of worldwide processes of globalisation.

The methodology, in Chapter 3, motivates the need for my using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods as my research tools. This chapter also reveals how I have used a modified form of coding processes as explained by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

My data, collected by means of questionnaires and interviews, is presented in Chapter 4. Here I have presented the data in terms of the categories I've generated in the open and coding stages referred to in the methodology chapter.

In the analysis section, Chapter 5, I have drawn on the works of scholars, who have engaged in similar research, to explore and amplify the rich data I have gathered by both quantitative and qualitative means.

The final chapter offers concluding comments in terms of my main findings. While the study does not aim to produce conclusive findings, it does aim to contribute richly towards a growing academic conversation between similar texts regarding adult learners' experiences in higher education.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Drawing on the work of Kasworm, Sandmann and Sissel, Imel (2001) reports that adult students, defined as those who are 25 years of age and over, presently represent almost one-half of credit students enrolled in higher education in the United States. Her report also shows that, during the past thirty years, adult student enrolment in postsecondary education increased from 2.4 million in 1970 to 6.5 million in 2000. Imel notes that in this period, the number of women learners increased threefold, and the number of adult learners, who are 35 years and older, increased more than two and a half times.

Imel (2001) has also found that most adults enter postsecondary education for reasons related to their careers, but family reasons also influence a return to learning for many.

The scholarship regarding groups of adult learners in South African higher education is a growing, but relatively new, area of academic interest. Specifically in relation to my area of study, I note the work of McMillan (1997), which focussed on the learning experiences of adult learners entering higher education for the first time.

My study also focuses on the experiences of adult learners but differs from the McMillan study in two key respects: I am specifically interested in how useful respondents found the courses, and secondly, while McMillan specifically focuses on first-time adult learners in higher education, the respondents in my study may have experienced higher education prior to enrolling for the courses at UCT.

Much of the literature on adult learners in higher education focuses predominantly on work-related requirements. The major part of this chapter therefore attempts to review the scholarship primarily in terms of the complex link between higher education and perceived workplace needs, mainly as a result of the changes brought about by globalisation. The relationship between globalisation and popular beliefs about the value of attaining a high level of literacy is also relevant to my study. In this regard concepts arising from the theoretical approach known as the New Literacy Studies and an overview of what is regarded as “the literacy myth” are discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Accordingly, this chapter comprises two main parts. The first part attempts to survey the key debates pertaining to notions of literacy, and tries to delineate key areas of argument concerning how certain notions of literacy have been foregrounded within a globalised context. The conceptual framework, which is the second part, highlights the debates pertaining to globalisation both in higher education and workplace contexts. Notions of ‘retooling’ are also discussed here. This chapter ends with an outline of the kind of contribution this study could be expected to make in terms of my research question.

2.2 Globalisation and New Literacies

The kind of value that respondents attach to courses bears a relation to the competencies, and literacies, they feel they have acquired, and need to have in order to be successful in modern-day workplaces. It is therefore necessary to situate my

research question partly in terms of the theoretical framework known as the New Literacy Studies.⁴

With reference to commonly held beliefs about the benefits of literacy, Prinsloo and Breier (1996) make the point that “popular and prevailing conceptions of literacy equate its acquisition with positive and unproblematic outcomes.” They explain that Brian Street’s critique of the autonomous model of literacy (1984) challenged the popularly-held notion that, irrespective of context, literacy was regarded as an agent for generating universally benevolent effects. Upholding this autonomous view therefore meant that:

... literacy *did* things to people regardless of context. For example, it was said to raise their cognitive skills, enable them to be detached, and develop in them a meta-cognitive understanding or rational outlook that was crucial for progress. (1996: 17).

As a way of introducing the rationale behind another model of literacy (known as the ideological model), Gee (1996) draws on the study of Graff (1979), which details the role of literacy in nineteenth century Canada. In that context he recounts that the framework for the teaching of literacy was severely controlled, which in turn necessitated special ways of controlling the pedagogic process. In this regard, he makes the following interesting remarks:

While the workers were led to believe that acquiring literacy was in their benefit, Graff produces statistics that show that in reality this literacy was not advantageous to the poorer groups in terms of either income or power. The

⁴ Formative influences in this field include the work of “Brian Street in anthropology, Harvey Graff in history, Shirley Scribner and Michael Cole in psychology, Shirley Brice Heath, Mike Baynam and James Gee in sociolinguistics, and Kenneth Levine in sociology,” (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996:16).

extent to which literacy was an advantage or not in relation to job opportunities depended on ethnicity. It was not because you were illiterate that you finished up in the worst jobs but because of your background (being Black or an Irish Catholic rendered literacy much less efficacious than it was for English protestants). (1996: 58-59).

In our present context, globalisation is fundamentally linked to considerations regarding the kinds of literacy workers are expected to perfect so that they can perform optimally within the global economy.

Graff's extract above reminds the reader that the acquisition of literacy is neither context nor value-free. He also impels the reader to consider from whose point of view literacy, or any other skill, is regarded as a benefit.

In terms of my study it is relevant to establish the contexts in which respondents have perceived the courses to be the most useful. The contexts I have chosen were determined by the ones I had reflected upon in terms of my own situation. My questions were therefore shaped accordingly. How have respondents' newly-acquired competencies spoken to their multiple roles and identities? And have the courses usefully met the skill requirements of the world of work? In addition, how have respondents perceived a sliver of higher education as valuable?

Because the context of work is changing all the time, it becomes important to consider how the changing nature of work has played a role in shaping the kinds of literacies workers may currently be seeking. The introductory extract below forms part of Kelly's (2000) sketch describing the nature of employment and concepts of work in the new global economy. Kelly argues that although work would always be

with us, globalisation has brought about “a threshold question of definition” (2000:6) concerning what the nature of work will be in the future:

The indications are that society may be dividing into Spartans and Helots – the former an elite of Robert Reich’s “symbolic analysts” locked into onerous responsibilities and work pressures, the latter surplus to requirements in part because of intrinsic incapacity for the requisite conceptual and technical mastery (Rifkin, 1995). Does it all appear so heinous that they might as well be pensioned off at the beach? (Kelly 2000:24).

The reference to Spartans and Helots above forces the reader to sense something unfamiliar, different and uncertain about the future nature of work. Kelly also sketches a future society that may well require only two kinds of worker, and possibly only two kinds of literacy. In order to advance, society may require highly skilled workers who can both produce and analyse symbols, accompanied by workers who are flexible generalists - in all likelihood functionaries who are needed to enforce and maintain what has been produced by higher order symbolic analytic work. It would seem, therefore, that society would be dividing into a new elite: where the symbolic analysts, as the highly-skilled and highly-remunerated few, would be requiring the services of a larger pool of flexible generalists, who would be required to be multi-literate but would nevertheless carry out pedestrian tasks at a relatively low level, by comparison to high-level symbolic analytic work. It also does not seem required that flexible generalists should ever need to know the literacies of the symbolic analysts.

Given this future scenario, what kind of literacy would be considered most valuable?

A key interest in terms of my research question is the extent to which adult learners in higher education position themselves in relation to becoming, or remaining, either

'Spartans' or 'Helots' within their workplace contexts. Equally interesting is how they might approach their retooling so that they are not pensioned off at the beach.

The literature points to a crucial debate concerning the kinds of literacies needed by the new world of work. Key among these is the role and influence of fast capitalist texts. In this regard, as Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) point out below, they *are* influential:

It is old news that, during the past twenty years or so, the realm of work has changed dramatically across the developed world as part of a profound global economic restructuring. It is important however to ask how much of the new capitalism and its attendant new work order is already a reality and how much of it is as yet only on paper. (Gee *et al*, 1996: 24).

This extract forms part of Gee, Hull and Lankshear's explanation of what they term fast capitalist texts. The authors advise that fast capitalist texts are not without authoritative persuasion:

... - their vision and influence have deeply informed contemporary calls for reform both in adult education and training and in schools across the developed worldAnd they are changing the way in which people think about relationships among business, society, education, government and society at large. (ibid: 25).

To illustrate the point, one example of recent fast-capitalist literature is the landmark study conducted by Rosen *et al* (1999), where both the introductory remarks and the concluding comments sustain their unrelenting aim of customising the desire for attaining what they term the new global literacy:

Literacy matters. And the worst thing for adults in the twenty-first century is being unable to read in the world. ... To fully participate in the global society, we need a common vocabulary, syntax and grammar, and a rich base of knowledge. ... Global literacy is our new language for the twenty-first century. ... It's the world's youngest economy, fuelled by the spread of free markets and democracy around the world. (1999:16).

Global Literacies is the twenty-first century leadership competency. It is the fresh lens, new language, agile software, and set of tools required for tomorrow's leaders to be world class at home and abroad. ... We are truly living on a precipice. Time is of the essence. The choice is yours. You can choose to become globally literate, or be left behind. Welcome to the new leadership language of the twenty-first century. (ibid: 376).

While the quote above clearly signals the urgency for acquiring the twenty-first century leadership tool-kit, the audience is not identified. By inference, those who have manufactured the leadership tool kit should not need it. So it remains unclear who should use it. And assuming that some have acquired it, it is still not guaranteed that every global citizen could access a rich knowledge base by using it.

2.3 Trends in Workforce Skills

This section surveys the kinds of skills employers are possibly seeking. It also surveys in broad brushstrokes how education and training programmes have sought to prepare individuals to perform adequately in rapidly changing workplaces.

South African labour legislation, post 1990, shows its alignment with workforce skills required by the global economy. The Skills Development Act of 1998, the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, as well as the more recent national human resources development initiative, commonly known as the Skills Development Strategy (to be rolled out for implementation between April 2001 and March 2005) attest to South Africa's intentions of becoming a competitive nation in the global arena. In a recent address regarding the National Skills Development Strategy, the Minister of Labour emphasised the competitive edge South Africa requires to be successful in the global economy:

Skills development will need to embrace activities other than those that are job specific. In addition to job competencies many workers seek literacy and numeracy skills and there is much to be done to improve working practices, including health and safety. ... This Strategy charts the ways in which South Africans can build its skills to enable it to compete more successfully in the global economy; attract investment; enable individuals and communities to grow and eradicate poverty and to build a more inclusive and equal society. It is based on the conviction that we have the means and the will to make progress to ensure a better life for all. (2001).

Drawing on Bailey (1997) and Packer (1998), Overtoom (2000) reports that since 1986 the dual challenges of competing in a world market and rapid technological advancements have necessitated a redesign of the workplace into an innovative work environment known as the high-performance workplace. It expects workers at all levels to solve problems, create ways to improve the methods they use, and engage effectively with their co-workers (Bailey 1997; Packer 1998).

She also refers to Askov and Gordon (1999) and Murnane and Levy (1996) and indicates that knowledge workers who demonstrate this highly skilled, adaptive blend of technical and human relations ability are regarded by employers as their primary competitive edge. Job-specific technical skills in a given field are no longer sufficient as employers scramble to fill an increasing number of interdependent jobs.

In the context of the United States, two national studies – one by ASTD, the American Society for Training and Development (Carnevale, Gainer and Meltzer 1990) and one by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS 1991) – are regarded as foundational works in identifying employability skills, often used as benchmarks or beginning points for other international, national, state, regional and local studies.

The ASTD had emphasized six skill groups across all job families:

- (1) Basic Competency Skills – reading, writing, computation;
- (2) Communication Skills – speaking, listening;
- (3) Adaptability Skills – problem solving, thinking creatively;
- (4) Developmental Skills – self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, career planning;
- (5) Group Effectiveness Skills – interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation; and
- (6) Influencing Skills – understanding organisational culture, sharing leadership.

Corporations recruiting employees seek people who are capable of managing themselves, people and tasks, and who possess strong communication skills. It appears that such organisations are desirous of employees who must be able to institute innovation and understand the concept of lifelong learning. Globalisation also requires that corporate employers presently strive for a workforce of employees

with the expert knowledge and competence to effectively manipulate technology effectively, solve complex problems, and clearly communicate with diverse populations on a global scale.

2.4 Higher Education and the Market

The link between 'the market' and higher education is pertinent to my study in so far as adult learners may be seeking higher education as a means of competing favourably in the job market. What counts as useful knowledge has resulted in a creative tension both within higher education and workplace settings with respect to which agency ultimately generates the kind of knowledge and information needed to sustain society's advancement.

The literature reveals how scholars have positioned themselves in relation to these questions. In addressing the question regarding the kind of graduates higher education will be expected to produce in the 1990s Meyer-Dohm (in Wright 1990:66-67) cautions that even if the universities were to be regarded as fundamental catalysts for economic development, the impression should not be created "that the institutions of higher education should be made the servant of business." In his view, Meyer-Dohm defines the social function of the university by two concepts, namely, receptiveness and detachment. He explains that receptiveness is evidenced by the active interest shown by a university to its environment – "the preparedness to address problems, by which is meant the entire breadth of the 'problem landscape' outside of the university." He defines detachment as "the requisite degree of aloofness of science from everyday problems, the more fundamental apprehension of problems, the preoccupation with questions of generality." Meyer-Dohm asserts that scientific knowledge is achieved in many areas only when distanced from practical problems and at the same time cautions that one should not make the

mistake of “confusing detachment with the ivory tower: that is not detachment, but isolation,” (ibid:67).

With reference to the evolution of academic entrepreneurship, Etzkowitz et al in Jacob (2000) point out that certain types of scientific and technical knowledge produced in the university have been “redefined as intellectual property with commercial value”, (56). Etzkowitz et al amplify by stating that the capitalisation of this knowledge to generate new companies

and to channel a flow of research funds from existing firms into the university is changing the purpose of the university, making it an engine of economic development as well as a vehicle of socialization, cultural memory and research. ... Academic entrepreneurship involves a shift in the way that research is viewed, from a sole focus of advancement of knowledge to a dual focus on advancement and commercialisation of research. (ibid).

The foregoing contributions form part of a conversation regarding the nature of higher education, and usefully serve to illustrate the complexities regarding higher education’s role within a context of a new work order. Other scholars have articulated the links between learning and industry.

The following contribution amplifies what learning might mean within a globalised context. Describing the ‘new business of learning’, Symes and McIntyre (2000: 4) point out that in the last few years capitalists have “popularised the notion that learning can be profitable for business”, and organisations which therefore encouraged their employees to seek education were likely to be more competitive than their counterparts, who chose not to. Additionally, they assert that alongside the fact that ‘working knowledge’ is increasingly being academicized via competency approaches to learning, “the principles of Taylorism, which saw learning as inhibiting

productivity,” are now being rejected with disdain. Further, Symes and McIntyre advance the view that a key feature of this change is the extent to which over the last decade universities have been “vocalized, and are now offering more occupationally specific credentials,” (ibid).

Kishun (1999: 61) reports that the ‘market’ ideology influences the nature of the university towards what has been termed the ‘market university’, and notes that the primary characteristic of the ‘market university’ is the commodification of knowledge which can be manufactured, bought and sold. Similarly, Gibbons (1999:73) asserts that the massification of higher education has become an irreversibly entrenched phenomenon, and that universities are beginning to acknowledge that they have become merely one player, “albeit still a major one”, in a vastly expanded knowledge production process.

Gibbons also advances the view that the global dimensions of the distributed knowledge system bears additional challenges to higher education to provide new types of skill, and the rise of a knowledge economy will require different kinds of ‘worker’: “...Important kinds of knowledge are now being produced not so much by scientists or technologists or industrialists as by ‘symbolic analysts’, people who work with the symbols, concepts, theories, models and data produced by others in diverse locations and configure them into new combinations,”(ibid: 79).

Gibbons persuades that the distinction between ‘researchers’ who create knowledge and ‘symbolic analysts’ who configure it points to the fundamental difference between ‘knowledge-based’ and ‘knowledge’ industries. In the former ‘products’ are still the entities that are bought and sold, whereas for knowledge industries the knowledge itself is the commodity being traded, and is now being produced in a variety of places such as universities, think-tanks and government laboratories.

In Gibbons' view, "firms in knowledge industries compete with one another in terms of the ingenuity with which they configure knowledge. ... The massification of higher education provides the base from which knowledge industries can emerge," (ibid: 79).

An outline of the globalised higher education landscape is an important backdrop against which to make sense of how a group of adult learners experienced a part of higher education. It might reveal insights into both how globalisation has shaped the form and content of higher education, as well as how a group of adult learners have experienced being part of a such as landscape.

As a way of arriving at a knowledge scenario that is appropriate for post-twentieth-century universities, Hager (in Symes and McIntyre 2000: 54) firstly identifies for consideration five fundamental elements which have had a globalising imprint on higher education as we know it:

1. a pronounced shift to mass higher education;
2. the emergence of the knowledge society;
3. advances to technology leading to rapid changes in workplaces;
4. globalization leading to a 'corporate model of higher education';
5. moves to alternative and flexible modes of delivery.

Hager argues that these factors, overall, are leading to "valuations of knowledge that reject the various academic knowledge scenario assumptions. Instead they demand flexibility in who learns, what is learnt, how it is learnt, and how learning is assessed," (ibid: 57). In his view this means a dramatic changing set of relationships between

universities, knowledge and society, and he therefore proposes that a different sort of knowledge scenario needs to be developed.

Usher (in Symes and McIntyre, 2000: 104) makes the interesting argument that the workplace is now being constituted as a discursive domain – “where it is understood and articulated as a site of learning, knowledge and knowledge production outside traditional sites of knowledge production.” Put another way, Usher sees the workplace no longer as merely a site to be researched; rather as a site where research and knowledge production itself takes place.

Usher on the one hand remarks that what universities have experienced is “a gradual loss of their status as primary producers of knowledge and, correspondingly, their monopoly position as certifiers as competence in knowledge production,” (ibid: 105). He balances this view on the other by observing that work-based programmes do not lead to boundaries disappearing, “without any framing. Rather the framing is different, certainly more local and specific and certainly more complex, contested and fluid but nonetheless very present,” (ibid: 109).

Winter (in Smyth 1995:129-130) makes the refreshing point that although there are attempts to “impose an industrial, profit-oriented logic on to higher education, this is not without real educational opportunities, both to shed some of the oppressive practices enshrined in higher education's traditional forms and to begin to realize some innovative and progressive opportunities.” He amplifies this point by stating that contradictions do not only create ‘problems’ – they also create spaces “within which power can be contested and reforms can be won,” (ibid).

Winter also notes (in Smyth 1995: 139) that there is a real sense “in which a market decision-making structure can liberate citizens from subjection to elitist cultural

authority by enfranchising them as consumers with 'money votes'. But it is equally clear that a market orientation (for educational processes as for anything else) involves not simply a rational function of relevance but a systematic distortion of meaning, an evasion of questions of value, need and ultimate purpose."

Gibbs (2001:86) makes the interesting distinction between 'education for the market' and 'markets for education', and suggests that the latter is the one that matters for higher education. He notes that the compression of intrinsic educational goals to extrinsic market performance indicators has to some extent led to the vocational instrumentation of curricula and of a skills agenda in higher education in the 1990s:

They replace the aim of 'what ought I to do?' with the imperative of 'what do I need?' and lead to the commodification of education in skills packages to be managed through market principles, rather than under the pedagogical guidance or the morality of fairness. They turn students into consumers, and educators into service providers, in order that the market might work its wonders. (ibid: 87).

2.5 Adult Learners and Higher Education

Although there are many nuanced concepts regarding Adult Education, four key concepts are commonly recognised: adult education, non-formal education, continuing education, and lifelong education (NEPI 1993). The concept of lifelong education is pertinent to this study, and is regarded as being a more comprehensive and visionary concept than continuing education, and includes "formal, non-formal, and informal learning extended through the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life," (ibid: 9).

Although not immediately apparent from a snapshot of South African university life currently, the literature in the United Kingdom and Europe points towards a growing acceptance and understanding of the notion of Adult Education in university contexts, hence the term, "Adult and Higher Education".

However, it needs to be stated that, presently, the notion of the adultification of higher education seems to be understood differently from one country to the next. In addition, references to adult education in higher education settings have also changed. Although the significance of the change is not clearly established, Moore (2001: 1), reporting from the vantage point of Finnish higher education, observes that in the 1980s the concept of the adultification of higher education predominated in educational discourse but this had in fact changed in the 1990s, where the distinct difference in the university student population was marked by a new concept of the adult university (Bourgeois et al, 1998).

Moore also makes the interesting remark that for adults studying at a university today it would appear that their engagement in formal learning is fast becoming a compulsory activity, and in his view further suggests that "in late modernity lifelong learning becomes the necessary condition for survival," (ibid).

The latter remark is relevant in terms of my study: most scholars would agree with Moore that burgeoning numbers of adult learners are changing the nature of university populations all over the world. In terms of my own study I would nevertheless like to test what is suggested by Moore in particular: Are adults seeking a university education because they perceive this to be a survival strategy, or will other reasons, with an equally important status, emerge?

Bourgeois et al (2001) convey similar points of view concerning the change in the student population in European higher education institutions. Primarily brought about by a transition to a 'knowledge society', Bourgeois et al (2001:3) indicate that lifelong learning and social inclusion are presently uppermost on the agendas of the European Union as well as national governments across Europe. An amplification of this sentiment is that if Europe is to remain competitive economically within a global realm, then it follows that "a wider range of people need to be given the opportunity to access knowledge at university level," (ibid). Some interesting key questions are raised by the authors, most notably: "Has widening access resulted in more opportunities for those traditionally excluded from universities or is it about more of the same groups?"

Bourgeois et al also inform that while "the rhetoric and policy discussions on lifelong learning within Europe share a common language, practices are diverse," (ibid:5). Their research in this respect revealed that European countries are at different points of the continuum concerning the access of non-traditional adults to higher education: while some countries, for example Spain, are merely starting out with very few adults participating in higher education, there are other countries such as Sweden and the United Kingdom where adults are commonly regarded as the norm in some institutions.

In terms of definitional clarity regarding the age of mature students entering higher education, Rautopuro and Vaisanen (2001:2) note that definitions such as 'adult', 'mature', and 'non-traditional' are problematic "since they are context bound and vary considerably both within countries and between countries." They also point out that neither do younger students at university make up a uniform category in that it is quite commonplace these days for the traditional-aged student to discontinue their

studies for a while, or to become at some stage part-time students owing to employment or family reasons.

With reference to the age of mature students, Bourgeois et al point out that the United Kingdom and Ireland “have a nationally recognised age for mature students at undergraduate level; 21+(UK) and 23+ (Ireland), “ (2001: 6). They have also found that in Sweden the term adult student is less familiar in that people often elect to enter higher education in their mid-twenties, and in Germany many undergraduates are also older owing to the length of their degree courses. This is unlike Spain and Belgium, where it has been commonly acknowledged that younger students are demarcated from adult students at the age of 25.

Another important aspect pertinent to the conceptual framework of my research question is to look at student perceptions of their academic advancement. A related question is to gain an impression as to whether or not adult students cope academically in a higher education setting. In a discussion regarding the maintenance of standards and boundaries of higher education, Usher (in Fulton 1989: 74) observes that adult students with non-traditional qualifications “do no worse generally than students coming straight from school with A levels. But their actual number has been and continues to be small for this kind of evidence to have much of an impact.”

In addition, Usher also remarks that higher education’s academic standards form part of a “paradigmatic network of practices involving power and knowledge in an intimate and interactive relationship,” (ibid: 74). He amplifies this point of view by stating that higher education is concerned with the creation and distribution of ‘worthwhile’ knowledge, a knowledge which “creates, indeed is, power, because it can create

'difference' and enforce boundaries, defining who can legitimately possess it and who cannot," (ibid: 74).

Historically in South Africa, higher education institutions made a very small but nevertheless significant contribution to adult education, in the form of Departments of Adult Education (and in some cases, Extra-Mural Studies). With reference to universities as one of the adult education providers in South Africa, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI 1993) pointed out that several "of the centres for adult and continuing education at universities and technikons function more like NGOs than university departments," (34). The NEPI report also states that these centres were key role players in advancing adult education in South Africa, and specifically training, and sometimes employing, a core of professionals in the field.

Amplification of NEPI's report is relevant to my study; the report mentions that these departments and centres generally emulated British model-type extramural units, and predominantly trained educators at post- and pre-graduate levels, as well as in adult literacy and basic education work. The report reveals that in 1993 there were only three South African universities which had chairs of adult education, and this was suggestive of the low status most of these institutions had accorded adult education at the time. The report also highlights the poor financial situation of most of these departments and programmes:

With current financial pressure on the universities, the adult and continuing programmes are increasingly market-driven, run as businesses, and expected to pay increasing levies to the universities for the use of the infrastructure. If there is one portion of the university that requires enhanced funding it is these departments, which should be expected to play a crucial role in policy development and training of adult educators and educator trainers. (1993:34).

2.6 Conclusion

If anything, the review of the literature has attempted to show that the relationship between higher education and the market is a difficult, and ambiguous, one to chart. The literature reveals, however, that scholars have positioned themselves clearly in terms of the tensions that have arisen with regard to roles and functions of universities, and what specific role universities ought to have with regard to the production of knowledge.

Closing comments are taken from two scholars in higher education in the United Kingdom. The first, Morley (2001: 132) asks the following about what she has termed the reductive definition of the purpose of higher education:

Has utilitarianism eclipsed intellectualism in UK universities? Do universities exist simply to meet the needs of modern capitalism and are students being constructed solely as future workers, rather than fully rounded citizens?

In the ensuing extract Gibbs comments on the problems of extending the metaphor of the market to higher education, and argues that the University's currency needn't be lost by defining itself differently in this present phase. Gibbs (2001: 88) indicates:

... And this is the rub. To sustain the economic market, consumers need the competencies to question the drivers of the market and, in a civilised society, that informed position means more than economic self-interest, it requires a moral understanding of our humanity. ... If trust is only defined by the market, once trust is lost by the state in its relationships with higher education, then the role of higher education in creatively questioning, and thus shaping, the nature of the state is also in danger of being lost. Given the force of the

financial rather than the intellectual, the dialogue between higher education and the state becomes a one-way monologue of ideology.

The literature also reveals that groups of adult learners are experiencing issues of access but may also be experiencing general uncertainties regarding the identity and role of higher education institutions presently.

While the literature review has mainly focussed on the link between higher education and the market, a few scholars make equally significant observations about the gap that continues to grow between the supply of graduates and how they are absorbed into the South African labour market. Lundall notes that because unemployment in South Africa is generally widespread “among the lower educated population, graduate unemployment has received much less public prominence and remedial intervention at a macro-economic level,” (1998:143).

He also points to a contradiction that while several considerations about unemployment have generally been silent on the “graduate component of the problem”, (ibid: 143), it is in fact the graduate sector in South Africa that has predominantly been proposing ways in which graduates “can be absorbed into the world of work and still play a significant social contribution to uplifting under-privileged communities,” (ibid: 143).

Similarly, Gultig (2000: 85) notes that the marketisation of higher education in South Africa has done poorly in making South Africa a strong global competitor. A significant proportion of South African universities continue to “preserve their ‘core’ face-to-face graduate work from the pressures of ‘massification’ by locating many black students in distance education courses, In almost all institutions the bulk of

their growth has been in the development of shorter, non-graduate, professional courses," (ibid: 85).

The literature review has emphasised the relationship between higher education and the market. It has also foregrounded the ambiguous link between higher education and the world of work. In terms of my study it has suggested that adult learners may be seeking new forms of literacies, from a higher education context, in order to be successful in workplace environments.

University of Cape Town

3.1 Broad Approach

My reflections and experiences of the Advanced Diploma Course for Educators of Adults in 1996 and 1997 (now known as the Advanced Certificate) made me want to know how other adult learners experienced similar courses. In particular I wanted to know what was valued most, and how this value was translated into aspects of learners' personal lives. I was especially interested to find out what value the course held for individuals in terms of their workplace and future academic scenarios.

In terms of my research question, I did not have an hypothesis to test from the outset. That is to say, I did not have any preconceived notions about how learners may have, or should have, experienced the courses. Essentially I sought a comparison between learners' experience of the courses and my own. My personal reflections focussed predominantly on the kind of value my higher education qualification might have in the world of work. I also wondered how other learners had valued their qualifications in terms of prospects for academic advancement.

My method of collecting data needed to match the incremental way in which I wanted to explore the perceptions of adult learners regarding the courses they had done. I chose an approach which would appropriately accommodate a random spread of respondent perception (by means of surveys and questionnaires) as well as focussed and detailed views (via interviews) from a smaller group of targeted respondents.

I anticipated that the generalisations emerging from the data I collected would be formed progressively via a set of questionnaires and interviews with respondents. I did not expect my findings to contribute to a theory of adult learning, or any other

theory. I intended my study to add rich descriptive and conceptual perspectives to the burgeoning academic interest in the experiences of adult learners in higher education contexts.

3.1.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

From the outset I knew that my research approach would be largely qualitative. To this end I adopted a mixture of qualitative methods because I felt that a combination of open-ended interviews and the use of documents obtained from designated adult education course lecturers would best enable me to engage with the contributions from respondents. The following are key questions covered in the interviews with adult learners:

- Why did you decide to enrol for the [Diploma or Certificate] Course in adult education at UCT?
- Has the Course met your expectations?
- Are there any areas of the Course where your expectations had not been met?
- Do you feel that your experience of the course has encouraged you to study further?
- Was the Course personally satisfying? If so, in what ways?
- Has the Course helped you in your area of work? If so, in what ways?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about the Course?

Regarding the lecturers interviewed, some of the questions covered were the following:

- Broadly speaking, what are the aims of the [Diploma and Certificate] course at UCT?
- Some learners who have done both the Diploma and Certificate courses have experienced "a gap" between the two courses. What is the academic challenge for learners in this respect?
- The majority of learners I know, and the few I've interviewed, all indicate that both Courses have contributed enormously to their personal growth and confidence. Would you like to offer any comments in this respect?"

There is also a quantitative component to my research. Silverman (1993) indicates that quantitative researchers generally aim to produce reliable evidence about a large sample. Accordingly, fixed-choice questions are “usually preferred because the answers they produce lend themselves to simple tabulation, unlike “open-ended” questions which produce answers which need to be subsequently coded,” (1993:10).

My decision to use a quantitative dimension as part of my research method was not to fulfil the aims generally associated with quantitative researchers. I planned to secure an overview of a relatively small sample. I used a quantitative component as a way of obtaining a random overview of a cross section of respondent opinion over a five- year period. I believed that quantitative information of this kind would usefully serve to contextualise the qualitative information I would be extracting via semi-structured interviews, and would better enable me to interpret the qualitative data.

3.1.2 Grounded Theory

I used a modified form of grounded theory as a method by which to organise the information I had gathered in the interview stage. The kind of progressive focussing used was not intended to build theory. The rigour of the method and the richly iterative process of ordering and categorising data allowed me to engage with respondent perception in a multiplicity of ways.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that the central feature of grounded theory is that the theory would emerge from the data because it has been “systematically gathered and analysed through the research process,” (1998: 12).

The grounded theory method is defined below by Strauss and Corbin:

"... theory denotes a set of well-developed categories (e.g., themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon. ... In addition, theories have various properties, and when analysed, they can also be located along certain dimensions and ordered conceptually," (1998: 22-23).

Understanding what constitutes a theory in this respect appears to be built upon a layer of prior steps. In Strauss and Corbin's terms, it requires the reader to note a differentiation between another set of terms: description, conceptual ordering and theorising. Strauss and Corbin (1998:25) outline these concepts as follows:

... *describing* is depicting, telling a story ... without stepping back to interpret events or explain why certain events occurred and not others. *Conceptual ordering* is classifying events and objects along various explicitly stated dimensions, without necessarily relating the classifications to each other to form an overarching explanatory theme. *Theorizing* is the act of **constructing** ... from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship."

This key concept of conceptual ordering is regarded as being pivotal to the process of developing grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin explain this process to mean the organisation of data 'into discrete categories (and sometimes ratings) according to their properties and dimensions and then using descriptions to elucidate those categories,' (1998: 19). Further, conceptual ordering is explained as being the precursor to theorising in that an evolved theory "is one in which the concepts are defined according to their specific properties and dimensions. What we call conceptual ordering also is the desired research end point of some investigators," (ibid:20).

The first phase of the grounded theory method, or progressive focussing as it is also called, offered a structured and rigorous way in which to organise and make sense of my data. I therefore used the open coding stage to assist with categorising interview information.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Data Collection

Initial data was obtained in 2001 by piloting a set of survey-type questions in two adult education classes at UCT: the Advanced Certificate and Diploma courses. These courses were chosen because the most recent adult education students were enrolled there, and it was also likely that some may have done both courses.

Further data was collected from a wider group of respondents spanning a 1995 to 2001 period. This data was collected by means of scheduled interviews, as well as a postal questionnaire, which overlapped the interview processes approximately mid-way. Documentary sources were also consulted.

a. Questionnaire Survey

(i) Initial questionnaire:

In October 2001, I received permission from the Diploma and Advanced Certificate course convenors to ask the adult learners in their classes to complete an initial questionnaire. In this way I could begin to situate my research question in terms of the data I was likely to receive from a wider pool of respondents. The aim of the

questionnaire, attached as Appendix 1, was to derive very general information from respondents, and in broad brushstrokes to try to gain a picture of how they have situated themselves in relation to their respective worlds of work.

These questionnaires were completed in two main settings. In the Diploma class the convenor allowed the students to fill in the questionnaire during the extended break period in class. I then collected these questionnaires once they had all been completed. In the Advanced Certificate class, the convenor allowed me to address the class concerning the purpose of the questionnaire. I then left the questionnaires, together with self-addressed envelopes for each learner, and awaited their replies via the mail. A total of 26 out of 40 questionnaires were received from the Advanced Certificate and Diploma respondent pool.

Based on information received in the questionnaires, I began to make appointments with present and past adult learners for semi-structured interviews (Appendix 3), and I also proceeded to formulate a set of refined questions which would point me more accurately to what I wanted to know. The revised questionnaire (Appendix 2a) would be posted to a cross section of adult learners who had done the Certificate and Diploma Courses since 1995.

(ii) Postal Questionnaires:

In mid-June 2002 a postal questionnaire was sent to about 250 past and present adult education students, who had completed either the Certificate or Diploma courses at UCT over the past five years.

The contact details for each learner came in the form of self-adhesive labels already prepared by the University. Together with the revised questionnaire I enclosed a

stamped self-addressed envelope into slightly bigger envelopes addressed to prospective respondents. The last postal response was received on 5 August 2002, and this brought the total number of postal questionnaire responses to 50, which translated into a disappointing response rate of 20%.

On a weekly basis, usually on a Friday, I typed up the information that I had received from the postal questionnaires for that week.

b. Documentary Analysis

(i) Class Lists

In late 2001, I began to form a picture of the kinds of work roles adult learners were presently occupying, and began to put this picture together on the basis of what I could garner from some of the class lists available to me via lecturers who had convened the Certificate and Diploma courses. Information from these class lists gave me an overview of the level at which these adult learners/ educators worked in their respective work places, as well as the sector from which most of the adult learners came.

Of particular interest was the type of occupation learners held when they first enrolled for their courses, and equally significant was whether or not any of the enrolled students were unemployed at the time. Workplace information was significant in two main respects in terms of my research question: the level at which adult learners were occupying workplace roles as well as the sector in which they were currently employed.

(ii) Annual Reports

The information in the annual reports I obtained from one of the course convenors helped me to understand the kind of students who were enrolling for the courses between 1997 and 2001.

The evaluation section of these annual reports provided an overview of what learners found useful. This information was used comparatively with my own findings in the data analysis section of my study.

c. Interviews

Silverman's question (1993:108), posed below, offers a useful insight into the nature of interviews:

Must we choose between seeing interviews either as potentially 'true' reports or as situated narratives?

I chose to regard interviews as an enabling means to gather a range of information from respondents, who chose to give an account of, and sometimes justify, their perceptions of the courses they had experienced.

The adult learner interviewees were selected because I felt that they would be able to communicate comfortably with me because they knew me as someone who had also experienced one of the Courses at UCT. A few of the adult learner interviewees also worked at UCT, like I do, and I thought this would give me insight into how the Courses might have enriched their respective areas of work.

The three lecturers interviewed were chosen because of their specialization areas in adult education, and I felt they could provide rich insights into what the academic challenges are for adult learners in a higher education context.

The eleven interviews I conducted spanned a seven-month period, from 24 October 2001 to 24 April 2002. Although not intended, the interviewees were overwhelmingly women, with an age range of thirty years to seventy-five years. This was reasonably representative of the profile of the majority of students enrolled for the Diploma and Certificate courses.

None of the interviewees were strangers to me prior to the interview. As a student I had been in contact with three of them when I had enrolled for the Advanced Diploma for Educators of Adults course from 1996 to 1997. I had given tutorial support to three of the interviewees who had been enrolled for the 2001 Advanced Certificate course. One interviewee had been an ex-colleague of mine at a previous place of work. For a short while, she was also a Masters candidate with me before she elected to deregister from the course. The 1995-1996 Certificate respondent is a relative, who has invited me regularly over the past two years to consider teaching literacy voluntarily at the Wynberg Library in the southern suburbs area of Cape Town. Two of the lecturers interviewed have become colleagues at the University's Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), and were also lecturers on some of the modules I had chosen on the 1996/97 Advanced Diploma course. As a basis

for comparison, I had also interviewed a colleague in CHED who had completed in 2001 the Associate in Management (AIM) course at the University.

Two of the eleven interviews were joint interviews. Another two were additional interviews of respondents I had already interviewed.

Interviews were conducted predominantly at the homes or workplaces of the interviewees. Two interviews were conducted in my office at work over the lunch period.

At each interview I asked respondents whether or not I could tape record the interviews, and I offered to show them the transcribed account should they wish to see it. I also gave interviewees my undertaking that their confidentiality would be assured. Permission to record was willingly granted at each interview session, and some respondents indicated that they didn't mind being identified via whatever quotes I might use in my study.

Recordings were transcribed and filed. Two interviewees had their earlier transcriptions shown to them both as a means of verification but also as a basis for the follow-up interviews. As a preparatory document for the lecturers I interviewed, these lecturers received synoptic quotes and paraphrases from the other interviews I had done.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Qualitative

I started to make sense of my data by applying the first of the coding procedures put forward by Strauss and Corbin (1998): open, axial and selective. In their terms, the following definition distinguishes the function of each type of coding:

In open coding, the analyst is concerned with generating categories and their properties and then seeks to determine how categories vary dimensionally. In axial coding, categories are systematically developed and linked with subcategories. However, it is not until all the categories are finally integrated to form a larger theoretical frame that the research findings take the form of *theory*. Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories. (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:143).

Open Coding

With reference to my interview and questionnaire data, open coding gave me the opportunity to generate categories and properties from all the data I had collected thus far. My attempt at open coding led me to break down my data into “discreet parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences,” (ibid:102).

Silverman (2000: 147) reminds the reader that a good coding scheme would “reflect and search for ‘uncategorised activities’ so that they could be accounted for, in a manner similar to searching for deviant cases.” During the open coding process I therefore added another category, “Personal Growth”, to my original areas of research interest, which were, “Workplace Requirements” and “Academic Advancement”. This proved to be a significantly large category in terms respondent perception.

Silverman's observation also helped me to look out for and subsequently record incongruencies I found in my data. For example, some respondents intimated that they found the courses to be extremely useful in terms of workplace requirements and at the same time indicated that they weren't happy with career prospects at work, or were presently unemployed.

3.3.2 Quantitative

The data I collected via the postal questionnaires was recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, and analysed by means of a pivot table so that I could obtain a variety of comparisons in terms of how respondents perceived the usefulness of their courses. This method enabled me to analyse single variables and also allowed me to cross tabulate variables against each other.

3.4 Validity

The concept of validity points to the "truth" of my findings. At the outset of my study, I secured a number of mechanisms to ensure validity. I have already noted that survey questionnaire was an attempt to contextualise the interview data, and in this way deepen its validity. During the interview stage of my data collection I was very aware that my identity as an ex-adult education student at UCT could either enable or disable interviewees to varying extents. It was challenging to maintain a relaxed, conversational style and yet remain sufficiently impassive so as not to alter the intended relationship of interviewer and interviewee. On some occasions interviewees sought affirmation of what they were saying, and would say something like: " *You* know what I mean". The "*you*" becomes a minefield to unravel since it could connote an array of qualities about who I am in all of the following my roles: mother, wife, ex-wife, part-time Masters student, ex-adult education Diploma student,

occasional adult education tutor, UCT staff member and formerly historically disadvantaged South African.

3.5 Reliability

It was not intended that my small quantitative sample would be generalisable, and replicable in other contexts.

3.6 Research Ethics

Consent and confidentiality informed the ethical considerations of my study. I have met both these requirements.

I have also noted standards and procedures of the University's Code of Ethics⁵ for Researchers involving Human Subjects and, where applicable, have aligned my methodology with these considerations in mind.

With regard to my relationship with my interview subjects, I believe that my desire to keep the investigation open and unrelentingly curious about what I might discover in the data have assisted in providing a balanced final product. I acknowledge that my multiple identities have a role in indelibly shaping the way in which I've conveyed my findings.

⁵ Ethics for Researchers involving Human Subjects: Standards and Procedures.
<http://www.uct.ac.za/uct/policies/ethicscode.pdf>

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION of DATA

The first section of this chapter contains the presentation of my data, which has been obtained in three main ways: through semi-structured interviews, via pilot questionnaires completed by respondents enrolled in 2001 for Certificate and Diploma courses in Adult Education, and also by means of a postal questionnaire sent in 2002 to approximately two hundred and fifty present and past learners on the Adult Education programme over the past five years.

My own experiences as an ex-Diploma student doing the adult education course at UCT are also reflected in this chapter, and these are used as a way of further engaging with the research question.

The data presented in this section developed during the process of open coding, and is presented according to three main categories: personal growth, workplace requirements and academic advancement.

Each theme refers to my findings based on the data obtained from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the details of which have already been dealt with in the previous (Methodology) chapter. In terms of the postal questionnaire, the response rate (20%) is considered average in relation to postal surveys generally and similar surveys conducted by the University.⁶

Where categories of data have been grouped into smaller sub themes, these have been identified and expanded upon in the ensuing discussion.

⁶ This average response rate is in line with the Graduate Follow-up Surveys conducted among graduates and registered students at the University of Cape Town.

4.1 Category: Personal Growth

Data obtained from the postal questionnaire revealed that a high percentage of respondents (75%) rated the Certificate and Diploma courses “extremely useful” in engendering personal growth, by comparison to a significantly smaller proportion (20%), who had experienced the courses as “fairly useful” in these terms. The data also revealed that a tiny percentage of respondents (5%) rated the courses as “not useful” in this respect.

Sub Themes

The data pertaining to personal growth was then grouped according to three sub themes, which had become evident in terms of all the responses. The first is ‘self-confidence’, the second ‘self-awareness’ and the third, ‘sense of purpose’.

4.1.1 Self-confidence

More than half of the respondents (60%), via the postal questionnaire, rated the Certificate and the Diploma courses “extremely useful” in boosting their self-confidence. Significantly more than a third (35%) rated the course as “fairly useful” in this respect, and a marginally small number of respondents (5%) rated the course as “not useful” in terms of building their self-esteem.

Although the courses did not explicitly set out to make learners confident, as a stated aim, the majority of respondents (via the postal questionnaire) indicated that their confidence levels had increased dramatically while doing these courses. This view is

further borne out by the interviews I conducted, as reflected by extracts of two interviewees below:

... you know we all had these problems in our teenage years and in our childhood, and I had a few problems in my teenage years I would say with self-confidence and self-esteem and I must say I realised that, in a group of other adults, that I was doing quite well in spite of everything, this course was such a confidence builder. Truly! You know, when I went to work at Medical School ... they employed me immediately on that letter of application... I went for that interview, and they asked me when can I start. ... At one stage I felt frustrated because I thought that groups of people were always getting certain marks, okay, and we did raise that in a group forum and that was ironed out, and it was also very difficult for us adults to go to school after such a long time to put up your hand to say something and then it comes out wrong and you know that it wasn't valuable and that, so I had problems initially with the course, the first few months, the first six or seven months with adjusting and that, to being an adult learner, a bit intimidating, you know, ... and I don't think that course takes that into consideration, those kinds of feelings that people might have, but once you're over that, I think after that first year, I think you're more confident. (Interview One).

It helped me a lot! ... I recently wrote my Xhosa first language in matric and before I always thought it was so difficult because I got an F for Xhosa, which is my first language. ... I read the book, it was so, so easy and so simple. When it came to writing the composition and the letters, it was like I was doing Standard Six work. ... It has helped me with my confidence and my capacity. And in terms of expressing myself. (Interview Three).

4.1.2 Self-Awareness

Personal growth was also expressed by a few respondents in terms of personal satisfaction, and the extracts below are examples of these.

The respondent below derived personal satisfaction from the course, which in her view had given her an opportunity for making a contribution towards society:

Yes, yes, since I've retired I haven't had a paying literacy job, everybody talks these days about being paid, but that wasn't my idea in the first place, I wanted to make a contribution to society and that's just what I did. It's given me a lot of satisfaction but now I am tired, I want to rest. (Interview 2).

The following extract belongs to a respondent who displays a remarkable self-awareness, and exudes self-confidence. It would appear that the self-awareness that the course had engendered in her played a catalytic role in making her understand her learning situation in relation to other learners in her class. In this extract she eloquently balances her perceptions of her academic brilliance as an individual against what she perceives as the ordinary status of her achievements by comparison to her peers, and persuades that the adult education courses engendered a level of self-awareness, and interdependence, that she hadn't realised before:

I remember when I started ...I would just come... I knew that I was bright to start off with... but I didn't even know what was expected of me... I knew that I was brilliant and that I was going to master it ... But when I got into class, for the first few weeks, I realised that I was displaced here... I've got all these

people who have something to say... I used to be irritated by [...#...] who would tell me that I had a very good argument that I was making but why did I think that every situation must be as I say?... God, do they think that I'm stupid, I know what I'm talking about, why do I have to explain myself to them? And ... I used to be this person who knows that what I'm saying is right. And the others have changed me in a way. And I was not a very good listener, if I believed in a particular theory I didn't hear what the next person thought but it changed me to able to listen to other people, it changed me to...

Interviewer: Why did it change you?... Why did you feel you needed to listen?

I needed to listen because I realised that by thinking that I know everything I am missing out on important information that I'm supposed to be getting. ... Because there were people who were far better than I was.. but when I first entered the course I thought I was the best... But when I saw the change in them and how they were growing in the course I realised that I had to be on par with the other people ... and I have to [...unclear...] myself and become the same person that everybody was... to be prepared to compromise, to negotiate meaning as well because I used to be this person who was always right, always right, but people would tell me that " ... as much as you understand it to be this, why don't you look at this option". That was a very good way of putting it, of trying to say no to me! [laughter] Then I thought, okay, there is another way of learning, which is listening, and trying to find meaning together with the other people. And it helped me a lot. Ehm, by being a better researcher, I mean when I entered UCT I didn't have any research skills at all because my work didn't include it... there wasn't any time

when you could sit back and look from a distance.. so the course gave me that opportunity. (Interview Seven).

Equally significant is the insight that the respondent feels compelled to negotiate meaning with her peers in these learning situations. Interestingly, the personal and academic growth of her peers seems to be the instrument by which she has measured her own academic success, and initially she found that she had indeed fallen short by those standards. This respondent was however sufficiently tenacious and academically rigorous to “catch up” with the group to which she felt she belonged, and feels that the adult education courses have made her sufficiently self-aware to excel in academic terms.

4.1.3 Sense of Purpose

Some respondents felt they had grown in their professional lives. In this regard one remarked:

It has boosted my ability to perform even more better and professionally. It has given me direction. (Health Educator, 34 years old, Xhosa fluency).

Others linked personal growth to an understanding of what it meant to be part of a particular community environment, as well as to work there effectively. One respondent's view is expressed below:

This course boost my self esteem and developed me a lot as a person and also for community members. It is very good, it touches everything that the person is doing outside and also it is practical you learn to know lots of people

and organisations because at times you have to go and do research to them.
(Community health worker, 42 years old, Xhosa/English fluency).

Some respondents intimated their career plans as evidence that they had grown personally, and the following respondents expressed interesting and independent choices regarding their study and career options in this respect.

I would like to continue training in printing. But, er, my career plans are ... what I find strange is that people, here, they only study further, they only go to schools and colleges after promotion. It is very rare to find someone who says: "I'm going to do this course before I'm going to be promoted. ... So as a result, I find that a couple of guys, after getting promotion, they are supervisors and now are rushing to college, and they are the very ones who were saying: "No". I now am finishing studying this year, and they say, 'Oh, I still have four years to go.' ... [laughter]... South Africa has very open policies regarding education. But people are not taking advantage of the chances. (Machine operator, 35 years old, Shona/ English fluency).

The co-respondent in this joint interview found that the adult education courses she had enrolled for had developed her personal capacity to such an extent that she now felt sufficiently confident to re-channel her academic energies into what she had originally wished to do as a much younger student:

The career options open to me is that I could do the bridging course at one of the colleges and become a Sister ... either Tygerberg or Groote Schuur ... [but the Bachelor of Education that I want to do] won't enable me to become a Sister; it will take me into another direction of training in the hospital. That is actually where I want to be. I found that ... before I even did the Certificate

Course, I found that I could explain things, like when I went to meetings and so on, they always preferred me to go back to meetings because it was as if they were in the meeting when I gave feedback, ... and my direction shifted a little bit from what I was having in mind because of the problem of what I saw in those years with the patients having a problem communicating with the doctors. These people were very sick so it was impossible for me to teach them something like reading or writing so I shifted from my direction, instead I helped the workers at the hospital, like the general workers, to be able to read and write, and now I'm doing voluntary classes for them. ...I think the Certificate and the Diploma has made me a better person in terms of explaining things to other people. (Interview 3 – Joint Interview).

For the respondents above, it would appear that the affirmation they received on their adult education courses had led them to believe that their own, distinctive, future options and plans could be realised. Equally interesting is the sense of independence contained in the unconventional choices they make: the former has a passion for learning and therefore does not learn expressly for workplace requirements; similarly, the latter feels driven to pursue a career of her choice, and accordingly begins to chart her own learning path in this regard, even at the expense of, it would seem, securing a likely, and fairly immediate, promotion opportunity at her place of work.

In terms of this indicator, the contributions above are also significant at another level. They represent a cross section of learners in terms of age, which suggests that in almost every age category learners were pleased with the outcome of the courses in terms of self-confidence.

More generally in terms of this indicator, more female respondents (73%) than male (55%) perceived their courses to be useful in terms boosting of self-esteem. A similar

proportion of male (36%) and female (33%) respondents considered the courses “fairly” useful in building self-confidence.

4.2 Category: Workplace Requirements

In terms of the results of the postal questionnaire, it emerged that approximately half of the respondents were currently working, about one fifth were unemployed and nearly a third were currently working and studying.

Interestingly, significantly less than half of the respondents (35%) found that the courses had been “extremely useful” in leading them to more meaningful employment, while an identical proportion of respondents rated the courses as “not useful” in this respect.

The postal questionnaire also revealed that when respondents had originally enrolled for the Certificate and Diploma courses, slightly less than half (45%) were involved in workplace activities along the lines of training, teaching and lecturing. The second largest group of respondents (35%) indicated that they were involved in community work at an administrative level.

Since the time of enrolment, respondents intimated that less than half (40%) had changed jobs once, and a smaller proportion (20%) had not changed jobs at all. An even smaller group of respondents (10%) had changed jobs more than twice since that time.

“Most Useful”

In contrast with the postal questionnaire, the pilot questionnaires conducted in October 2001, generally revealed that respondents had found the courses “most useful” for the purposes of their present and, possibly, future jobs as encapsulated in the following quotes:

It has made me a better nurse how I communicate and how I see the problems that are facing the patients. Also to help them and to get to terms with their illness and also to educate them about their illness.

(Senior enrolled nurse, 47 years old, Xhosa/ English fluency.)

The course has been most useful in terms of my own workplace skills development in training of apprentices and junior machine operators.

(Machine operator, 35 years old, Shona/ English fluency.)

I am currently managing a small company. The course is useful to me especially project management and the research part of the course.

(Company manager, 43 years old, Xhosa/ English/ Zulu fluency.)

It has given me validation that I can teach well. It has given me some tools with which to improve my teaching skills.

(Holistic therapist, 31 years old, English fluency.)

In getting me to reflect on my roles as an adult educator. It has helped me to move beyond thinking of training in terms of skilling people to be competent in

their job to a more thorough/deeper approach – based on reflection and learning (adult education principles).

(Human resources manager/consultant, 31 years old, English fluency.)

The responses below suggest the ways in which this group of learners had found the courses useful in terms of their current workplace requirements:

How to deal with group dynamics, team work. I manage to deal with difficult students, I learn to understand their dynamics, enforces team spirit.

(Site facilitator, 34 years old, Xhosa, English, Zulu fluency.)

This course helped me to know more about SETAs [Sectoral Education and Training Authorities] and the role of the NQF [National Qualifications Framework].

(Educator, 39, Xhosa/English fluency.)

At my job I'm able to run teachers workshops and running life skills at High School level which means I've gained a lot to be assertive and be confident. About future job I would like to have my own project because I've the strength and experience.

(Health worker, 42 years, Xhosa/ English fluency.)

In my community, already there is a feel that they are reaping off the goods.

(Labourer, age not disclosed, Xhosa fluency.)

To understand how adults learn.

(Unemployed, 30 years old, English/ Afrikaans fluency.)

For the future it will help me with the education of adults, and to understand the theories that go with it.

(Nurse, 47 years old, Afrikaans/English fluency.)

“Not Useful”

A minority view among this group of students reveals that the course is perceived to have a minimal workplace use value:

Present job- minimally other than keeping me motivated. Future job -???

Evidence of keeping me up to date, evidence of studying – becoming more conversant in contemporary topics – commerce.

(General registered nurse and midwife, 38 years old, English fluency.)

Sub Themes

Respondents who had completed the pilot questionnaires generally revealed that the courses were particularly useful in terms of their current workplace requirements.

With reference to adult education in particular, respondents felt that the courses had assisted in giving insight into group dynamics and teamwork, learning to know lots of people and organisations, running workshops and life-skill programmes, understanding how adults think, understanding how adults learn, understanding adult education theory, knowing more about Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and development.

More specifically in terms of the data, three sub themes began to emerge, and respondents' perceptions pertaining to workplace requirements have therefore been explored further under broad categories, the first of which is 'community

development', the second, 'workplace skills', and the third called 'future skills. The first sub category is associated with the skills needed to do effective community development work. The second refers to the kind of skills likely to be required by a corporate setting, and the third sub-category shows the perceptions of respondents with respect to being adequately skilled for changing workplace requirements.

4.2.1 Community Development

At the time of answering the postal questionnaire, a quarter of respondents indicated that they were currently involved in community development work, a smaller group (20%) were lecturing and an identical proportion was currently engaged in research.

Career moves envisaged were mainly in the field of adult education, where the largest group of respondents (35%) expressed a wish to do work which involved "facilitating" and "working with" adult learners, as well as "studying" and "lecturing" in the adult education field. A smaller group of respondents (15%) expressed a wish to consolidate careers in community work, while an even smaller proportion (10%) saw future careers for themselves in human resources management and training.

A high proportion of respondents (85%) indicated that the courses had been "extremely useful" in terms of present and past work requirements. Motivations from respondents for their overwhelming affirmation in this regard included the following factors: promotion, personal growth, confidence, better able to assist the community, increased understanding of adult education theory and practice, as well as enhanced research skills.

For the respondent I'd interviewed, it appeared that having a university qualification automatically gave her currency in her community, as well as a special authority to

assist community members in a multiplicity of ways, as evidenced by her insights, which follow:

Interviewer: And how has this course helped you to help other people?

In many ways, in many ways, Because.. you know what I also learnt about these courses: they are not assigned to a certain discipline, they just open the whole world for you. They just open this broader horizon, they give you this kind of flexibility, you can play so many roles at the end of the day: you become this community developer, you become this psychologist, you become ...you end up having so many roles and it is amazing in fact how people... they don't become dependent... but they rely on you for information, for resources..No matter how I try to disassociate myself from this kind of thing but it still comes, they hang on to you... you went to UCT therefore you should know A,B,C, D and E – even if it's not my area of work, in my scope of education. ... So you become this multiplayer at the end. (Interview 7).

The above quote lends weight to the general perception amongst respondents that the adult education courses had assisted them in preparing more effectively to respond in a multiplicity of ways to the varied development needs of the communities they work with.

4.2.2 Workplace Skills

In terms of professional development, some respondents revealed significantly varied accounts concerning how the courses could be usefully applied in terms of both present and future jobs, as reflected by the following examples.

Of the respondents I interviewed, the extracts below substantially represent the frustrations experienced in their respective workplaces. Respondents reveal that the Certificate and Diploma courses, over time, had better enabled them to recognise workplace complexities. It would seem, however, that most respondents still felt powerless to influence workplace dynamics to the extent that they could become accepted and valued for their decision-making contributions:

Interviewer: “ And how would you say the Course has helped you in your present job, if at all?

It actually does, it helps me make comparisons, I'm so much more aware of the different hierarchical types you can find, and how people manage, I can compare the way the manager operates here and the way the manager operates in another department where I've been, ... from [laughter] ...from my reading I can see the differences and where it should change perhaps...you know, in that way it has helped. It has made me very aware of people and the whole learning kind of thing...

Interviewer: And in terms of building on your existing competencies?

Not necessarily workwise, but more looking at the structure of the Department, and I have ideas about how to change the structure, but workwise, not really, my work is very specialised...

Interviewer: Workwise, would your innovations be taken seriously, at this point?

Ehm, I'm not sure, it's very early to say at this point, I'm only here six months...I don't know I could ... it is very much a top-down thing here...ideas have to come from a certain end ... you're just meant to do what you're supposed to do, and that's it ... so personally I don't know how long I would stay... it's not what I expected... the impression is given of a very open kind of environment, a flat structure...

Interviewer: But a line is still a line, whether it's up or sideways?

Definitely. ... The course has actually made me aware of all these things: what exists out there, what can exist, and what should exist...

(Interview 4)

A similar sentiment is expressed by respondents in a joint interview, who felt that even though they had excelled academically on the courses they had done, they had still not managed to become part of their respective workplaces as a valued, decision-making members:

- 1 It is not a problem of the course, the structure of the course is okay, the problem is at workplaces, where that shift from control and power to change to allow the skills of an individual to be explored and exposed, they still think that people who talk have got the thinking capacities, whereas people on the floor they don't think, they must just follow instructions.
- 2 It is the same at my work, there is still that hierarchy, and you've got to go through channels when you want to do something... what I like about the Diploma Course is that the course is based on the current things that are happening, what is presently happening, like in the education system,

transformation of the education system and also the workplace, how is education regarded at the workplace, do they encourage the workers to perform better by allowing them to take extra courses...

(Joint Interview 3)

A marginal but nevertheless significant view of workplace requirements was expressed by a sixty-year old respondent, who had intended enrolling for a Masters degree once he had completed the course:

What has become more and more important in today's society are symbols. For people it's part of the package ... you are not assessed by what's in the packet – since more [and more people] are incapable of making this assessment. So you are judged by your packaging. I require this piece of paper which the course offers.

The notion of re-inventing one's life at sixty is intriguing and complex, and will be explored in greater detail in the data analysis section of this chapter.

4.2.3 Future Skills

Interestingly, a quarter of the respondent pool chose not to indicate what their career plans were.

Most respondents felt themselves to be adequately skilled for any future demands their respective places work may require them to have, as is borne out by the contributions below:

Interviewer: Do you have any fears about possibly not having the right set of skills for the future?

No, I don't, I've always functioned to upgrade myself as I needed to. ... I've always been motivated by what's happening in the work environment, in that particular work environment, ... I think I'm a bit ambitious too, in a quiet way, ...[laughter]... I am a kind of person who puts her heart into something, like at the moment I'm busy with AIDS training at the church, I like church, I like socials, and I like the social aspect of church, so I'm involved in teaching little children about HIV AIDS, teaching them words, and to take care, and to say no, that kind of thing. (Interview 1).

The issue of being highly-skilled as well as being accepted by senior management in the workplace is key in this respondent's view:

Interviewer: Do you have any fears for the future that you might not be adequately skilled even though you are quite highly qualified already?

To me it's not a question of skill, it is a question of acceptance ...one comes up with a suggestion, but they can only take a suggestion that comes from the top...

Interviewer: So you say that one could have a PhD but if you not accepted at the top, then...

That is why I say it is still residing in theory, what the policies say about being qualified and that and that, and that you will hold a particular position, but the

people who are already holding those positions ... there is no opening anywhere to accommodate a skilled man...

(Interview 3).

4.3 Academic Advancement

Slightly less than a third of respondents (65%) rated, via the postal questionnaire, the Certificate and Diploma courses as “extremely useful” in increasing their academic capabilities, while a small proportion (15%) rated the courses as “fairly useful” and “not useful” in these terms.

The postal questionnaire also revealed that two respondents were currently engaged in fulltime study at the University of Cape Town. Nine respondents were currently engaged in part-time study in the region, nearly half of whom were enrolled at the University of Cape Town. A small number of respondents (17%) were studying part-time at Masters level either at a university or technikon in the region.

The language profile shows that a high proportion of respondents (89%) consider themselves to be proficient in English, while a smaller number (50%) consider themselves to be proficient in both English and Afrikaans, in sharp contrast to an even smaller monolingual cohort (28%), who consider themselves to be proficient in English only. In addition, a small group of respondents (10%) consider themselves to be proficient in Xhosa and English, and an even smaller respondent pool (7%) consider themselves to be proficient in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. Two respondents indicated that they were proficient in Xhosa only. Another indicated that s/he was proficient in four South African languages: English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Sesotho.

Sub Themes

Data pertaining to academic advancement is presented from two main perspectives. The perceptions of Certificate and Diploma students in this respect are grouped in terms of 'academic success', as one category, and 'study plans', as another.

4.3.1 Academic Success

A few respondents who had done both the Certificate (now called the Diploma) as well as the Diploma (now called the Advanced Certificate) courses cautioned against what was perceived to be the huge chasm regarding the difference in content and teaching support between the two adult education courses:

... and I remember there was a great divide in the class. There were a number of literacy tutors ... they couldn't see themselves out of that... getting a perspective on what it was they were doing was quite a thing for them ... I really thought the Certificate was nice because it was linked up with what I knew, I actually saw it was a validation on what I was doing. ... But there is a big gap, I must say, between the Certificate and the Diploma Course ...

Interviewer: And what was that gap?

...I'm not sure if a large part of it was teaching style – that was really a kind of night and day thing – if you remember, people [on the Certificate Course] really struggled because we went from a kind of nurturing environment ...to... you know, there were a whole lot of people who got relatively good marks in the Certificate Course... and then I got 62% for my first assignment in the Diploma Course ... I was depressed, hey! ... and then there were a whole lot

of people who didn't get any marks ... and there wasn't, anymore, the kind of feedback that we got on the Certificate Course .. they must find a way of closing the gap...

(Joint Interview 5)

Another respondent felt that her present challenge was still to increase her skill regarding the academic language required from the courses she had done:

... My worst nightmare. ...I was not a good writer. Also

Interviewer: How do you know you were not a good writer? ...

No, language was not my problem: academic language was my problem. To me academic language is the language UCT really needs from you, I assume. The language that the material is written, the language that the text is written, you have to find meaning before you can come to terms with it, especially then, it was quite complicated for me, and there was no such a way of getting it, reading it and understanding it, ... you really have to struggle to find meaning, you really have to struggle to locate what this writing is about... even though you're [...unclear...] on the subject, but still when it came to analysing written material, they were highly academic for me in my view, and ...

Interviewer: What is "highly academic"?

Highly academic to me is like using the unusual English words, to start with, unusual English words. The way sentences were constructed, to me it was the opposite of any reading... any English used in a magazine. That was my

block, it was quite a blockage for me to go through. I phoned [...] and I said to her listen I think I have a problem, I don't think I understand this academic language that these things are written with, then she said to me ... it helps sometimes to read an article more than two times before you understand, and that's how I helped myself... and also getting into groups and by discussing what each of us understands also helps a lot because I could take my understanding and mix it up with other people's understanding and then come up with my own meaning, together. And in fact I realise this is a problem for other students as well that is why I am able to support them to a certain degree.

Interviewer: Do you feel you've mastered academic writing to some extent?

In some way but I do not believe that I'll ever master it. I believe mastering academic writing requires a lot of writing, it requires constant reading and writing. ...

Interviewer: What are your challenges in this regard?

My challenges..most academics have their own style... If you look at the paper by [...] called the [...], that paper is much too complicated for me. It is quite complicated for me. But if you look at the issues that are entailed in the paper, and just use one issue related to the paper, it does make sense. Even [...]s] paper, no it wasn't his paper, it was just a paper he introduced to us...But when I look at the two writings they are so different, yet the subject is not that much different. And my challenge is to come to terms with the style of writing of the person... but I believe it will enhance my understanding of what is required. ...

Interviewer: Do you feel that you're academically successful?

Not really but I'm [getting] there! You know ... in fact that question is quite ambiguous because the other part of it ... I mean I'm not really sure of what it means in the broad sense but my understanding is I am able to reflect over the past years. If this is the question then I'm getting there because I mastered by Diploma in Adult Ed, I did my Certificate in Higher Education, I dropped out of the Masters programme and I got back to it, I think I'm getting there, I am going up the ladder of the academic world and also I am prepared to learn. That is what is helping me and I am prepared to say I don't know. And I think I have achieved something and I'm going to achieve more. What was the question...? [laughter]

(Interview 7)

With reference to the provision of a theoretical base that the course has provided, one respondent had perceived the value of the course in the following way:

Interviewer: ... You say the course provided a theoretical base..

Ehm, well for instance, if I look at the research I've done now, that was very practical, but in order for me to have made some recommendations, which I did, I had to go back to what had already been researched, and a lot of it came from the literature ... and also, if you look at all the techniques to do research, you can't just do it, you have to go back to the literature ... in order to do something...

(Interview 4).

4.3.2 Study Plans

The respondent below indicates that she has found the courses useful in enhancing her academic capabilities. But she wasn't sure whether she would continue studying:

[The course] has helped me in my writing ability...I didn't realise I had the ability to.. I mean ...I've left school many years ago, I didn't have a university education...25 to 30 years ago ... [laughter]... after matric I started working, I went into various jobs... enskilling myself along the way, I had no formal sort of education... until I had a daughter and realised that I actually have to do something because although I was moving within the university, I had no formal qualifications...I just felt I had to prove something to myself, that I could do it, it's been very tough in the sense that I feel often that I can't do it, that I'm neglecting my child, her schoolwork, never mind trying to read something, and she'd say "Mom, I need something..", you know, ...a pull between her and work... I would love to have done this fulltime... I think I would have gained far more...because I haven't put everything into the course... I just feel I didn't do justice to the course... but to me personally , I've actually come through it, I've learned from it, it made me feel that I am actually capable. In another sense, I look at my daughter, I look at which she's doing at school, the whole learning situation that I've been exposed to in the course, I can look at the way she's learning, how their curriculum is laid out, and I can make comparisons, and even judgements.

Interviewer: Do you have any immediate study plans?

Er, you know, some of the students were encouraging me to somehow do the BEd, ... but I've got to weigh up so much... I would love to do it ... but I also have to look at giving my child a lot more time.

(Interview 4)

Slightly less than two thirds of respondents (64%) of respondents felt that the courses had been extremely useful beyond the parameters of the questions of the pilot and postal questionnaires. For example, one respondent felt that the course had been a life-changing experience. Another respondent, a female more than forty years old, indicated that:

...because in my life it was my first time to attend in a University especially UCT, because of that I was appointed to facilitate in a women's conference in Parliament which was a challenge and a learning experience. For me even to step into parliament was something I wanted for a long time.

Another respondent revealed the following in her interview:

... this was my chance to get a university qualification that would benefit me financially and academically ... in that way ... and once I put my foot in here, I could do so many other things, I could then apply to the Associate in Management Course, which I completed now.

(Interview 10)

4.4 Perceptions of usefulness in terms of my own learning experience

My recollection of being an adult education student in 1996 and 1997 underscores the positive perceptions of self-confidence, as expressed by the majority of

respondents in this section. Obtaining relatively good marks for assignments and being valued as a good speaker during class discussion made me grow in self-esteem, and had certainly made me want to continue studying.

The adult education courses had engendered a far lower level of self-awareness in me by comparison to the experiences of the respondent in Interview Seven. Reflecting on that period, I desperately sought an academic validation from the courses I had chosen to do. The level of my self-awareness was at having “a correct” position on any topic, and I would seek academic content in support of my views in this regard.

The sense of purpose I felt during the 1996-97 period as a Diploma student in adult education led me to hatch plans of obtaining a Masters Degree in Adult Education, with the view to working, as soon as possible thereafter, in an adult education field.

In terms of workplace requirements, my own recollection of that time was that most courses were useful in providing a theoretical frame for looking afresh at troubling situations both at work and in terms of my personal development. Even though I was not able to effect many practical applications in terms of my area of work, obtaining this qualification from the University seemed to have currency in itself, and was therefore seen by more senior colleagues as an appropriate way of further enskilling myself for my key areas of responsibilities at work.

In terms of community development, my recollection of how I'd felt at the time is different from the dominant perception offered by respondents in this study. Having worked in a non-government organisation since the late eighties, I savoured the space afforded within a university setting to explore definitions of “community” and what “community development” could mean in terms of intervention by non-

governmental organisations. The courses I had chosen had also given me the scope to explore my own identity in relation to community work, as well as to examine why so many community development projects had taken an inordinately long time, if at all, to reach the intended successes desired by donors and non-governments institutions of the day. Unlike the respondents pool, I didn't feel that the universities had enskilled me in a multiplicity of ways to further develop communities. Instead I had gained, for the first time, an understanding as to why social projects on a massive scale could be expected to fail.

In terms of skills development, the insights offered by the respondents, in Interviews Three and Four, resonate sharply with my own experiences, both as an adult education student in 1996 and 1997 and later as both an adult education student and as a member of staff, working and studying at the same institution, from 2000 onward.

I had chosen to enrol for the Diploma Course (now known as the Advanced Certificate) at the University as one way of understanding my area of work at the non-government organisation where I was working. Reflecting on that time, I think the courses had increased my professional insights in terms of what my job at the time required of me. In some respects the courses had also increased my professional capacity to meet those requirements.

I relate easily to the insights offered by the two respondents in Interviews Four and Three, respectively. I have experienced similar frustrations in at least three workplaces since I had completed the Diploma course. In terms of my own experience there seems to be a complex set of requirements, often unsaid, as to when one is likely to be accepted into the decision-making echelons of any

workplace. My perceptions in this regard will be further elaborated upon in the data analysis section of this chapter.

In terms of being adequately skilled for workplace requirements, both from the point of view as an adult education student and as someone who is currently working and studying at a university, I find that I empathise completely with what has been conveyed by the two respondents in Interviews Four and Three. It would seem that issues pertaining to widening of participation and access are equally applicable for higher education as they are for industry.

As a Diploma student I felt that I had succeeded in terms of a fair amount of what had been required of me in terms of academic reading and writing. I felt inspired to meet the challenges in this regard because the adult education courses were designed in such a way to have my own voice shine through regularly in the form of reflecting on my personal experiences and factoring these into the body of adult learning theory.

University of Cape Town

5.1 General Remarks

My data analysis attempts to comment critically on information derived from respondents regarding the value they placed on courses, and the varying extent to which courses were experienced either as useful or not useful. The differences and similarities arising from these patterns of perception reveal significant information about the relationship between the courses and the contexts in which they are being most usefully applied.

One fifth of the total respondent pool completed and returned the postal questionnaire. This information was used primarily to contextualise and complement the interviews I conducted. The ensuing analysis, therefore, does not attempt to generalise findings in a representative way. Instead, the analysis sets out to show how differences and similarities in respondent perception may lead to an enriched understanding about how a group of adult learners experienced one aspect of higher education.

Based on the postal questionnaire, the indicators describing self-confidence, personal growth, employment options, academic capability and study options yielded wide-ranging insights into how respondents perceived the usefulness of the courses they had chosen.

Among these indicators there is a similar response pattern between four of them, namely, self-confidence, personal growth, academic capability and study options. A high proportion of respondents indicated that they found the courses extremely useful

in engendering self-confidence and personal growth, in particular, as well as enriching their academic capabilities. The courses were also perceived as extremely useful in motivating respondents to study further.

In sharp contrast, and with reference to the employment indicator, more than half of the respondent pool expressed dissatisfaction, and consequently felt that the courses had not been useful in leading them to more meaningful employment. A very low proportion of respondents considered the courses to be extremely useful in enhancing their employment options.

5.2 Category: Personal Growth

McGivney (in Edwards et al 1993) indicates that much of the emphasis in participation research has been on what motivates people to learn. She notes that there are instrumental and expressive motives on the part of participants in this regard. In this respect she refers to the study of Beder and Valentine (1987), which distinguished between extrinsic (for example, job advancement) and intrinsic (for example, self-improvement) benefits of participation. McGivney also notes a third component, offered by Percy (1988), which points out that people often become involved in voluntary education for other than educational reasons.

The majority of respondents found the courses "extremely useful" for enriching aspects of their personal lives. It is significant that the majority of respondents had experienced their courses to be the most useful in terms of aspects relating to personal growth. This finding suggests that the courses had given this group of learners a chance to explore several aspects of themselves while they were engaging with the course content. They were able to discover and identify many identities, which were personally important to them. And this in turn suggests that the

courses were instrumental in some way to facilitate among respondents an exploration of the multiple identities all of which constituted the sense of who they were, or had become.

The sense of self-confidence that the courses were perceived to have facilitated was not restricted to an academic arena. It appears to have spilled over into a multiplicity of avenues regarding respondents' personal activities, perhaps the most significant being that one respondent felt more capable now than before to express herself more clearly in her first language and mother tongue, Xhosa, than she was able to before she had experienced her designated course.

The currency and prestige of having a university education for a significant section of this group of respondents seems in itself to have built confidence. Unpacking what respondents perceive as useful, marks the variety of reference points from which respondents have reflected upon the courses they have done. That is to say, the sense of purpose and direction, which the courses appear to have made possible, are propelled by a number of identities, which are important to this group of adult learners. In addition, the choices they make for themselves seem to be informed by an impressive sense of independence and even adventure. What respondents perceive to be a newly-found confidence has led them to captain a multiplicity of directions that they now feel confident to pursue. Directions which seems to be informed by a range of personal, and not necessarily workplace, plans.

5.3 Category: Workplace Requirements

In terms of my findings, McGivney's observations have much relevance in that people who engage in voluntary learning often have more reasons than surveys would sometimes suggest:

Research into participation occasionally contradicts widely held assumptions. Hedoux's 1982 survey in French mining companies disclosed that 90 per cent of working class adults participating in education in their leisure time were engaged in learning activities that were totally unrelated to the work or job-related concerns. In the UK, the Consett education scheme for redundant steel workers also confounded expectations: although participants generally cited retraining or the financial allowance as their motives for enrolment, many eschewed the purely vocational activities and became engaged in a whole range of general and more academically-demanding learning options (Holmes and Storrie 1985). ...In the Scottish survey (Munn and MacDonald 1988), 41 per cent of respondents also cited a personal interest or hobby as their main reason for participation. This confirms another of Cross's (1981) findings: that people are increasingly engaging in education for interest and personal development. (1988:23-24).

With reference to this indicator, a key finding was that one fifth of the respondent pool indicated that they were unemployed at the time of answering the questionnaire. This finding might support the broader finding that the majority of respondents found the course less than useful in terms of workplace requirements.

Exploring this contrast in perception could suggest some traits about the respondents who completed and returned the postal questionnaire. It is possible that respondents who had positive associations about the courses returned the questionnaire.

It is therefore not easy to explain why this already confident respondent pool found the courses "not useful" in meeting their workplace expectations. It would seem that even though the courses had appeared to have enriched respondents in terms of

added self-confidence, personal growth and academic advancement, this combination of higher education benefits still did not position them favourably in terms of the kinds of workplace scenarios they had envisioned for themselves.

With reference to the observation that a large proportion of respondents did not consider the course useful in terms of workplace requirements, the following speculations are made as to why this could be the case. On the one hand, it is possibly a mistaken assumption that the majority of adult educators had expressly sought workplace skills from the courses they had done. Perhaps they were perfectly happy with the usefulness of the courses in terms of the other indicators. On the other, perhaps learners had in fact sought valuable workplace skills but were disappointed with the outcome.

Respondents who have found the course useful indicate that the courses have helped to consolidate existing competencies. That is to say, those who already had jobs expressed the view that the courses had helped them to understand and enrich their perspectives with regard to what they were currently doing. Within this group, it would appear that the course also helped them to explore different aspects of their personal roles and identities within the respective job roles. For example, one respondent felt she had now become “a better nurse”. When one thinks about her explanation one realises that she has not in fact become better in the more technical aspects of nursing. The course appears to have offered her an opportunity to affirm other aspects of herself, and has helped her to combine many other parts of herself into her workplace role. She therefore feels confident to fulfil a community interpreting role in the hospitals, as an “add on” to her conventional nursing duties. This sense of satisfaction makes her feel that she has now become “a better nurse”.

Respondents' dissatisfaction about the course in terms of workplace requirements can be looked at in another way. As one respondent signalled: "It is not a problem with the course, the problem is being accepted in the workplace." His comment potentially opens for discussion one of a range of complexities about the relationship between higher education and work. For industry it suggests that contradictory messages are emerging about the globalised requirements of workplaces. While industry signals that workforces have to be re-tooled in order to meet internationally competitive requirements, it appears not to have made adequate provision for integrating a re-tooled work force into the decision-making structures of industry. One result could possibly be a growing number of under-utilised, under-valued and under-acknowledged South African graduates in workplaces presently.

5.4 Category: Academic Advancement

Most respondents placed a high value on the usefulness of the courses in providing a solid theoretical frame in their respective areas of academic interest. Some generally wanted to continue part-time study but were held back from doing so owing to financial constraints and childcare considerations. Two respondents were exploring their plans doctoral study in adult education.

Most learners valued both the theoretical perspectives and underpinnings of the courses they had done. Some learners remarked that the learning demands of the certificate and diploma courses were significantly different, and perceived this to be an "intellectual gap", between the Diploma and the Advanced Certificate courses. They measured their academic success by the way in which they were able to negotiate that gap.

What is academic success and how does one know when adult learners are excelling in these terms? In the following extract, a lecturer on one of the adult education courses shares her experiences in this regard:

Writing skills and processes connected with academic judgement ...the classrooms now are extremely diverse, the last cycle now was quite a tricky cycle ... because we have many more Certificate students now than previously and we have RPL students, in the last two cycles, and we have people from industry ... many more people are taking the courses ... because of AIDS ... teaching AIDS in informal contexts ... and the usual postgraduate students ... so the class was extremely uneven in academic ability ... and so what I did was to separate the certificate students from the others and took them through a scaffolding process of learning ... taught them what was expected in the Advanced Diploma ... and it was very difficult for them and they felt very alienated...

Interviewer: what was the gap there for them?

The intellectual gap... not so much thinking about what to do in the field but rather what to do in the Academy ... how to write ... how to put across your points of view ... how to use references ... how to abstract...when those students get those skills then I feel great .. I taught them something ...they can actually progress in their academic careers ... for the other students.. when they reach a level where they can go into a Masters course then I feel they have progressed .. that's how you measure them.

(Interview 9)

Imel (2001) reports that in their study of adult undergraduates, Kasworm and Blowers (1994) revealed that students wanted to balance two different types of knowledge and knowing:

The first was academic learning that included theory and memorization and the second was real-world learning that could be applied directly to their daily actions. When adults first returned to the classroom, they experienced the apprenticeship role of learning to be a student again but then entered into a deeper approach to learning and to making meaning between what they were learning in the classroom and their adult roles (Kasworm 1997). They tapped into cognitive structures rich with previous knowledge and experience and connected this to new information they were learning in the classroom (Donaldson et al. 2000; Donaldson and Graham 1999, Donaldson, Graham, Kasworm, and Dirkx 1999).

Imel explains further that the adult undergraduates in her study mainly did not regard learning as a process of knowledge reproduction. That is to say, they did not engage with knowledge as passive recipients, but rather as active agents in constructing meaning from classroom resources applicable to the broader context of their lives.

The quotes confirm the opinions I have formed about the way in which respondents valued the courses in academic terms. For many respondents the value of their qualification for their community was a key 'academic output' and the courses were accorded high currency if that output appeared achievable.

5.5 Conclusion:

Harris (2000) states that Knowles' fourth assumption of andragogy is that adults wish to apply newly acquired skills or knowledge to their immediate circumstances. It is also indicated that Brookfield (1986) differed with this point of view, and believed that Knowles may have underestimated the extent to which adults learned simply because they enjoyed it. Harris also points out that other researchers (Aslanian and Brickell 1988) believe that adults learn primarily because they want to use the knowledge they gain in other contexts, such as their respective workplaces.

The wide-ranging opinions about what adult learners may look for in higher education settings are relevant to the group of respondents in my study. On one level there are signals that respondents perceived value in an expected way: if courses directly assisted community development, then these courses are valuable. In a similar vein, if courses directly assisted in improved workplace prospects, then they are valuable. But there are also significant, unexpected, responses, which stand out. Many learners placed an unprecedentedly high premium on the courses simply because they enjoyed the experience of being higher education students. Others placed a high value on courses because an enabling environment was provided to explore and develop additional roles and identities, and build on their personal confidence.

It remains a complex task to amplify why exactly respondents valued courses in the ways in which they have. This complexity might point to an underexplored notion in this study - that there may have been instances where respondents experienced the courses in ways more associated with a traditional cohort of students, as opposed to the group of largely non-traditional higher education students they constitute.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

My conclusion is divided into two parts. The first part below is a summary of key findings in the data presentation and analysis sections. This summary informs my concluding remarks in the second section.

6.1 Key Findings

6.1.1 Personal Growth

Respondents, resoundingly, placed a high value on the kind of self-confidence they acquired, and developed, for the duration of their period of study. Greater self-confidence made them feel eminently more capable of making rich contributions in many different contexts of their lives. It was also the catalyst for the development of other roles and identities, which are linked in varying extents to respondents' common mature learner status in a university context, and possibly to other shared identities as adult educators in the field.

Generally, respondents also indicated that the direct, and more often than not, sole, beneficiaries of their developed self-confidence was undoubtedly the community contexts in which they presently worked.

6.1.2 Workplace Requirements

Respondents attached a varying value to the usefulness of their courses in terms of current workplace requirements. Respondents generally placed a high value on the overview the courses provided on workplace processes and current innovations as a result of globalised workplace practices. Some respondents found value in the

theoretical frame the courses provided in terms of understanding their own positions at work. A large proportion attached a very low value to the currency of the courses in terms of securing both better and future corporate employment.

Many respondents felt adequately skilled for community work contexts. The kind of skill they found most useful was measured in terms of the extent to which the community could benefit from it.

The main conclusion is that whereas courses were not valued highly for the corporate, or industrial workplace, they were useful for community-based work. There is, however, ambiguity as to what “community-work” means.

For most respondents the term refers to community development and training. In a smaller sense, there is reference to the corporate world, and how respondents could creatively implement in industrial training situations what they have learnt on the university courses.

Some respondents do engage in “community work” in addition to their formal work, Voluntary work is associated with the more dominant community-specific view of adult education. This study has revealed that many of the respondents who are currently unemployed continue to do voluntary work either in the communities where they live, or work in the city as unpaid court interpreters, for example, as a way of assisting their communities.

6.1.3 Academic Advancement

Most respondents valued and enjoyed the opportunity to have studied in a higher education environment. The majority have also confirmed that they feel that they had advanced academically. Although some respondents remarked on the intellectual gap between the Diploma and the Advanced Certificate Courses, solutions to bridge the gap were not articulated.

6.2 Concluding Remarks

The finding that I've reflected on the most is the expectation the group of respondents had about what the courses would be able to give them. In many ways this expectation was connected to a wider and more complex conversation regarding the relationship between higher education and work.

This finding also lent weight to significant observations made by Lundall (1998); that the expectations of groups of adult learners were very closely aligned, and sometimes completely so, with the expectation of traditional learners within the higher education system. Their hopes and fears about future work prospects, their notions of academic success are very much the same, and are all framed by changing and uncertain workplace scenarios, and the growing realisation that a university qualification can no longer be considered a guarantee for economic prosperity.

In this respect, he makes the following remarks:

Finally, graduates themselves have to undergo a conceptual metamorphosis in revising traditional expectations and entitlements about rewards associated

with graduate employment. ... Higher education credentials are not automatically associated with equivalent increases in remuneration. (Lundall, 1998: 146).

In terms of my findings, and with reference to the literature review, the discourse of globalisation seems to touch these respondents in economic terms but not in ideological terms. That is to say, respondents still appear to be charting their own workplace priorities, in very familiar and traditional ways, in terms of what they feel is needed in communities, and where they feel they could be making the best contribution in those terms.

It remains unclear how globalisation has really spoken to different groups of respondents. One does have to ask then: to whom does the discourse of globalisation speak, and is it meant to say different things to different people? And are scholars correct when they note that much of global plans for re-tooling and new literacies remain only on paper?

The most positive finding, and on reflection the most promising for a healing nation, is the overwhelming way in which many respondents have begun to find their own voices on the Diploma and Advanced Certificate Courses.

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University of Cape Town

Department of Adult Education and Extramural Studies/Faculty of Education

1. Diploma in Education (Previously Certificate in Adult Education, Training and Development); Bi-annual Report: 2000-2001;
2. Certificate in Adult Education, Training and Development; Annual Report: 1999;
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Appendices

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your information will greatly assist me in understanding my area of research. You do not have to give your name. Many thanks ☺ Wed 3/10/01

What has been your most satisfying work experience? Why do you say so?

.....
.....
.....

My present occupation is :

OR: I am not working presently, and my previously held position was:

.....

What is the one skill *you would most like to have* in order to enhance your work prospects?

.....
.....
.....

What do you understand by the New World Order/ New Work Order?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What do you think these concepts above mean for you personally?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Where has this course been the most useful for the purposes of your present job/ for a future job? In what way(s)?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Considering all the skills you have, list one of your skills you could best convey to someone else:

.....
.....

Where did you acquire this skill?

.....
.....

Do you intend studying further? What will you study, and where might this be?

.....
.....
.....

Some more about you:

How old are you?

What is your gender?

List the languages do you speak:

What is your most fluent language?

.....Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

.....
.....

thank you

I really appreciate the time you've taken to complete this questionnaire. Would you be willing to be interviewed, should this be necessary?

No.

Yes, my details are:

Name:

Tel:

Email:

University of Cape Town

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your information will greatly assist me in understanding my area of research. You do not have to give your name. Many thanks ☺ Wed 3/10/01

What has been your most satisfying work experience? Why do you say so?

At the moment I am in the middle between satisfying & disatisfied, otherwise working with children is amazing feelings:

My present occupation is : HEALTH WORKER

OR: I am not working presently, and my previously held position was:

What is the one skill you would most like to have in order to enhance your work prospects?

PROJECT MANAGER

What do you understand by the New World Order/ New Work Order?

To me this New order will give more opportunities to disadvantages rural areas communities because each skill a person get will be recognised the SAQA

What do you think these concepts above mean for you personally?

It gives me more hopes & opportunities for my dream come true to become what I wanted in life

Where has this course been the most useful for the purposes of your present job/ for a future job? In what way(s)?

At my job I'm able to run teachers workshops and running life skills at High School level which means I've gained a lot to be assertive and be confident. About future job I would like to have my own project because I've the strength and experience

Considering all the skills you have, list one of your skills you could best convey to someone else:

listening skill

Where did you acquire this skill?

Empilweni which is under UCT & even from this course

Do you intend studying further? What will you study, and where might this be?

Yes; I would like to studying on Social worker in Development if there is.

Some more about you:

How old are you?

42yrs

What is your gender?

Female

List the languages do you speak:

English Xhosa

What is your most fluent language?

English

Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

thank you

I really appreciate the time you've taken to complete this questionnaire. Would you be willing to be interviewed, should this be necessary?

No.

Yes, my details are:

Personal information

Withheld

University of Cape Town

.....
5. What kind of work were you doing when you originally enrolled for the Certificate/
Diploma Course?.....

- 5.1 How many times have you changed your job since then?.....If applicable, what are you doing now?
- 5.2 Do you envisage a career move for yourself in the near future? What would this be?.....
- 5.3 How USEFUL has the Certificate/ Diploma course been in terms of your present, or past, work requirements: (Please tick one & suggest a reason for your choice.)

Extremely useful because:

Fairly useful because:

Not useful because:

6. How well have the Certificate/ Diploma Courses met your expectations?

in all respects mostly fairly not at all

(Please tick one & suggest a reason for your choice.)

7. In your view, were there any weak areas of the Certificate/ Diploma Courses which could be improved? What would you suggest in this regard?

8. *Thank you very much* for all your effort, I really appreciate this. If there is anything else you'd like to say, please use the space below. And should you be willing to be interviewed, please would you supply your contact details:

your name:

email:

contact number:

Interview Schedule

- Interview 1** Advanced Diploma Student, 1996-1997
24 October 2001
- Interview 2** Certificate Student, 1995-1996
28 October 2001
- Interview 3** Advanced Diploma Students, 2000-2001
29 October 2001, Joint Interview
- Interview 4** Advanced Diploma Student, 2000-2001
6 November 2001
- Interview 5** Advanced Diploma Students, 1996- 1997
9 November 2001, Joint Interview
- Interview 6** Course Convenor/Lecturer in Education Dept
5 December 2001
- Interview 7** Certificate and Advanced Diploma Student, 1997 & 1999
17 January 2001
- Interview 8** Course Convener/ Lecturer in Education Dept
21 January 2002
- Interview 9** Course Convener/ Lecturer in Education Dept
21 January 2002
- Interview 10** 2nd Interview with Interviewee Number 5
27 March 2002
- Interview** AIMS Student, 2001
11 April 2002
- Interview 11** 2nd Interview with Interviewee Number 7
24 April 2002

Notes on Data Summary, 08/02

1. Response Rate: 20.4%
2. Respondents are mainly:
 - a. women: 80%
 - b. 2001 Diploma students (14), 1997 Diploma students (6)
 - c. 1995 Certificate students (7), 1996 Certificate students (6).
3. Average age of respondents: about 35 years
4. Age range: 20 -70 years youngest: 20+ and oldest: 70+
5. Number of respondents who are
 - a. working: 23
 - b. working and studying: 16
 - c. unemployed: 7
 - d. Studying fulltime at UCT: 9
 - e. Studying part-time at UCT: 8
 - f. Other part-time study: UWC (1); UNISA (2), Stellenbosch (2), Bible Institute of SA (1)
6. Usefulness of the course in terms of improving:
 - a. Self-confidence:

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----|--|
| i. Extremely | - | 29 | |
| ii. Not useful | - | 3 | |
 - b. Personal Growth:

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----|--|
| i. Extremely | - | 32 | |
| ii. Not useful | - | 4 | |
 - c. Employment Options

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----|------|
| i. Extremely | - | 11 | 22%* |
| ii. Not useful | - | 13 | 26%* |
 - d. Academic Capability

| | | | |
|--------------|---|----|--|
| i. Extremely | - | 25 | |
| ii. Fairly | - | 7 | |
 - e. Study Options

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----|--|
| i. Extremely | - | 27 | |
| ii. Not useful | - | 9 | |
7. Usefulness of the Courses in other respects:

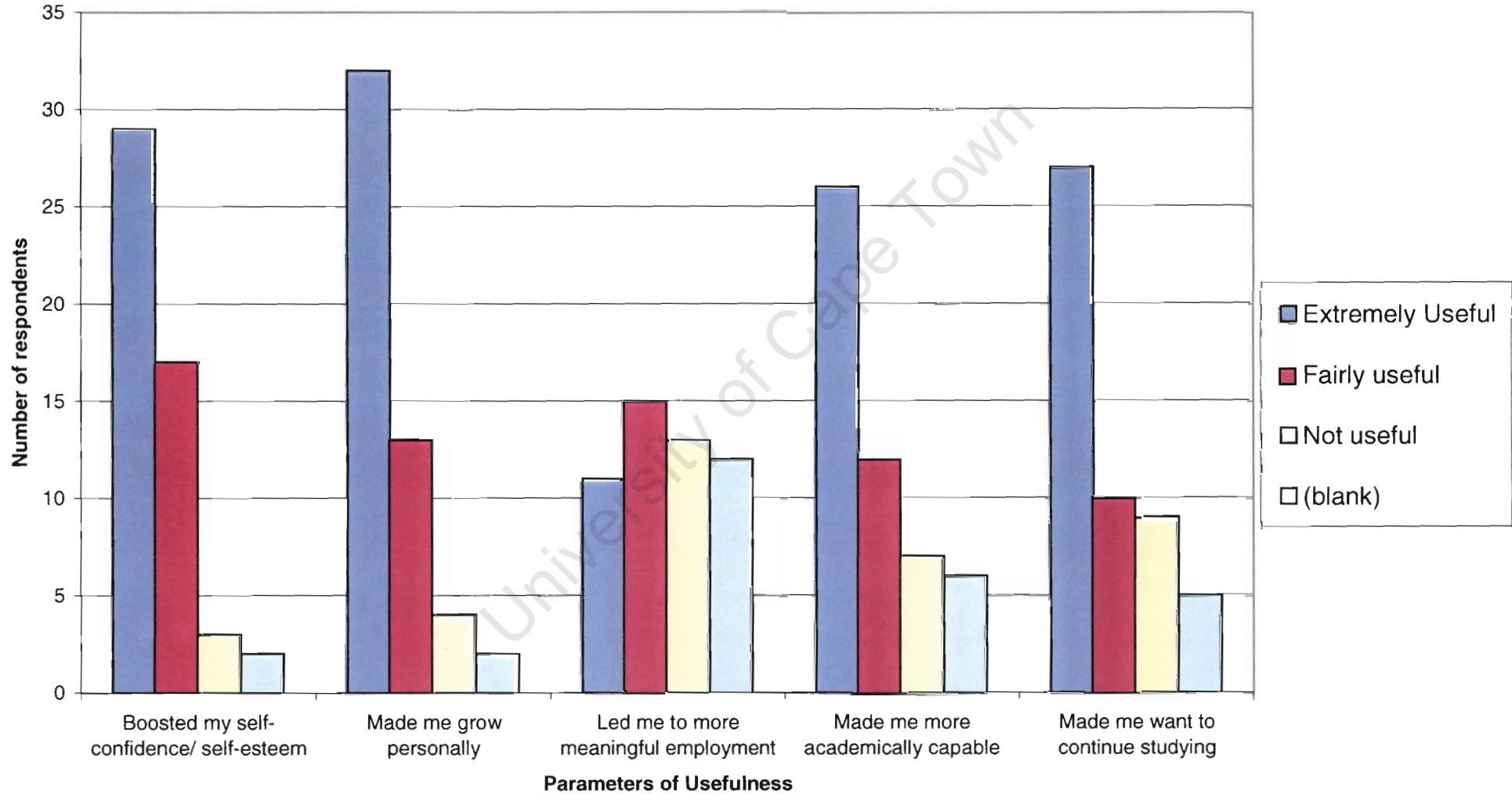
| | | | |
|----------------|---|----|--|
| i. Extremely | - | 32 | |
| ii. Not useful | - | 4 | |
8. Level of skill on enrolment:

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----|--|
| i. Highly skilled | - | 3 | |
| ii. Skilled | - | 38 | |
| iii. Semi-skilled | - | 7 | |
| iv. (unemployed) | - | 1 | |
9. Level of skill currently:

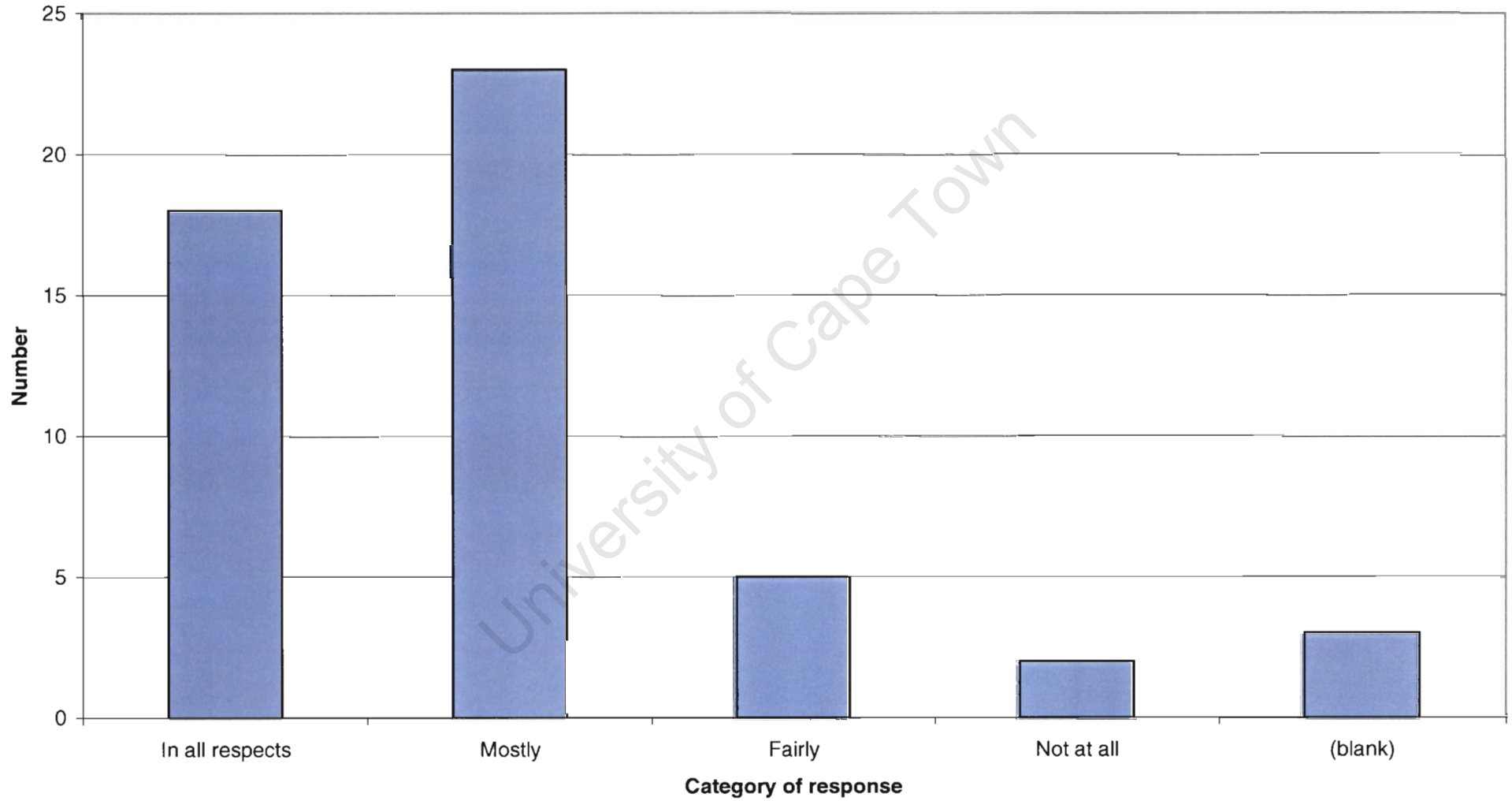
| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----|--|
| i. Highly skilled | - | 9 | |
| ii. Skilled | - | 19 | |
| iii. Semi-skilled | - | 2 | |
| iv. (unemployed) | - | 1 | |
10. Have the courses met expectations?

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|----|--|
| i. In all respects | - | 18 | |
| ii. Mostly | - | 23 | |
| iii. Fairly | - | 5 | |
| iv. Not at all | - | 2 | |

Usefulness of adult education courses



Degree of Expectations met by the Courses



| | Type of Work on Enrolment | Type of Work upon completing Postal Questionnaire | Type of Work when telephoned in August/Sept 02 |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Handyman | Administrative assistant | |
| 2. | Administrator | Divorce court volunteer | Divorce court volunteer (paid busfare only) |
| 3. | Sales consultant | Daycare at home | Unemployed |
| 4. | Teaching | <i>Blank</i> | ad-hoc social work |
| 5. | Library assistant | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 6. | Factory floor worker | Community worker | Unemployed, currently doing voluntary work at Radio Atlantis |
| 7. | Lecturing at Damelin | Lecturing at Cape Tech | |
| 8. | Community Work | Community development | Working with elderly people, in all the townships. |
| 9. | Community Development | <i>Blank</i> | Part-time lecturer at Pen Tech |
| 10. | Training women | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 11. | Language Practitioner | Studying and Tutoring | Studying and Tutoring |
| 12. | Clinical nursing | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 13. | Lecturing | Senior lecturer: curriculum/development | |
| 14. | Residence supervisor | Residence supervisor | Residence supervisor |
| 15. | Training | <i>Blank</i> | Training Manager |
| 16. | Market research | Research assistant | Research assistant |
| 17. | Training officer | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 18. | Training women | <i>Blank</i> | Training Coordinator |
| 19. | Health Professional | <i>Blank</i> | Health Professional |
| 20. | Unemployed | Voluntary teaching, ABET classes | Still unemployed, teaching 6 learners ABET (these learners are between 51-57 years old). |
| 21. | ABET practitioner | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 22. | Academic literacy advisor | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 23. | Administrator | Manager | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 24. | Programme administrator | Personal assistant | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 25. | Reproductive health advisor | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 26. | <i>Blank</i> | <i>Blank</i> | Organisational Development Consultant (CDRA) |
| 27. | Administrator | Management | Head of Admin, Provincial Legislature, currently studying part-time with GSB, (AIM |

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| | | | course). |
| 28. | Training Consultant | <i>Blank</i> | |
| 29. | Managing NGO training centre | <i>Blank</i> | Managing NGO Training Centre |
| 30. | Teaching | Teaching | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 31. | <i>Blank</i> | Workshop facilitator | |
| 32. | Teaching reflexology | Teaching reflexology | Owner of a beauty clinic |
| 33. | Running a preschool | Running a preschool | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 34. | Mental health worker | Mental health worker | |
| 35. | Teaching | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 36. | NGO development | <i>Blank</i> | Executive Director & part-time consultant |
| 37. | Pastoral worker | Pastoral trainer | |
| 38. | Technical lecturer | Senior lecturer | |
| 39. | Senior rehabilitator | Unemployed | Still unemployed (spoke to a relative/ son) |
| 40. | Health promotion | <i>Blank</i> | Works in a local authority/ City of Tygerberg |
| 41. | Regional ABET coordinator | Project officer at a German donor | |
| 42. | Training Coordinator | ETD practitioner and consultant | ETD practitioner and consultant |
| 43. | Coordinator in aftercare group | <i>Blank</i> | Running an educare centre from home. |
| 44. | Teaching | <i>Blank</i> | <i>(no contact details)</i> |
| 45. | Seamstress | Educating adults | |
| 46. | Business trainer | National coordinator | |
| 47. | Pre-school principal | Pre-school principal | |
| 48. | Community Development and Liaison officer. | Undergoing a retrenchment process | Formerly worked as a community development liaison officer, and then resigned. Now works as a tour operator. |
| 49. | ?Community health worker | Self-employed | |
| 50. | Teaching | <i>Blank</i> | |
| 51. | Nursing | <i>Blank</i> | Nursing. Also want to resume her studies because there is a lot that must be done in the community. |