Transformative and reciprocal learning experiences in previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in learning: A case study

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is on an exploration of reciprocal processes of learning experienced by previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners, engaged on a Prince's Trust course at one college of further education. The research addresses the question: What learning processes influence the transformative learning experiences of 'hard to reach' young adult learners? The theoretical framework is comprised of four learning perspectives: transformative learning (Mezirow 2000), reflective thinking (Dewey 1933), critical thinking (Glaser 1941, Brookfield 1987) and self-efficacy (Bandura 1986). An understanding was sought of how these may, or may not have reciprocity, at the micro and experiential levels of learning. An interpretivist stance was adopted, using semi-structured interviews to collect experiential information. Participants were interviewed at their first point of engagement on a 12 week course and again in the final week. A constant comparative analysis produced emergent propositions that were then considered for indications of reciprocity in learning processes. The findings suggested that 'hard to reach' young adult learners within the context of this study were in a process of change even prior to engagement with the course, but that this change was not fully consistent with Mezirow's categorisation of transformative learning. Processes of reciprocity were evident for reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. However, the nature of the processes was too complex to attribute to transformative learning, and the theory itself was not substantial enough to account for the learning that had taken place.

An emergent design enabled a flexible response so that a later interviewing of course tutors was conducted, in order to access and triangulate their experiences with the findings from the students. The conclusions of this thesis are that the movement into engaging in learning does not rest on reflecting on discontent alone but necessarily involves the invoking of memories of previous experiences of self-efficacy. Changes in students could not be equated with transformative learning, but there were indications of reciprocal processes of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. Learning was supported by an attitude of respect and valuing of the students by the tutors, suggesting that the context for learning itself had changed in terms of tutor/adult learner relationships being on a more equal footing, so that a more fulfilling experience of personal potential was gained. This thesis adds to the learning knowledge base through providing a focus on the importance of the particular quality of the tutor/student learning relationship that is necessary for previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners to engage in and sustain learning, and the complexity of the pre-engagement in learning process. It also indicates a gathering or clustering of memories of previous experiences of self-efficacy as being a motivating factor that stimulates an impetus for enquiry into learning.

To my grandchildren to whom the future belongs

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

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1.1 The Focus of this Thesis

The role of this chapter is to introduce the concepts of adult 'hard to reach' learners and inclusivity, then to relate these to learning policy, the theoretical framework and the research questions addressed in this thesis. It further functions as a bridge to introducing the remaining chapters and the main themes they contain. The research programme reported in this thesis seeks to identify aspects of learning processes that may contribute to the understanding of the experience of previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in education. It is concerned with what processes have influence on the initial space within which any transformative experiencing takes place. This chapter begins by considering the social locus of the 'hard to reach' learner in a modern democratic society and examines the central notion of educational inclusion and exclusion. It considers the advantages of inclusion and the disadvantages of exclusion both at an individual level and also in terms of the greater context of society. At the individual level it is concerned with the rights of individuals to fair and equal opportunities. At the societal level it is concerned with increased social cohesion and the creation of a society to which people feel they belong and within which they are valued. To this end, learning is viewed by the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE 2000) as a means for experiencing personal development with regard to such qualities as self-esteem, confidence and identity. Exclusion has been understood as previously being against a backcloth of long standing inequalities in the distribution of wealth and

power, brought about and reinforced by the inequalities of economic and class systems. The root cause of social exclusion according to NIACE (2000) is poverty. How poverty is addressed through government policy varies according to where prevailing political ideology considers the root causes of poverty to lie. From an educational perspective this then determines whether the emphasis in education policy is given to economic or social concerns. Wilson and Train (2006) point out that whilst education is not the sole means of effecting an inclusive, equal, fair and cohesive society, it may through enabling the development of an informed awareness and skills, contribute considerably to developing such a society within which individuals develop and are active participants.

The thesis looks at learning from four main theoretical perspectives: transformative learning; self-efficacy; reflective thinking and critical thinking. It considers the combined light that these perspectives might throw on our understanding of the nature of the learning transition for previously 'hard to reach' young adults into learning. This consideration gives rise to the notion that there may be points of reciprocity between the concepts of transformative learning, self-efficacy, critical thinking and critical reflection.

1.1.1 The Prince's Trust Organisation and programmes

The Prince's Trust was established in 1976 and is a youth charity that currently runs seven programmes which are delivered throughout the United Kingdom through colleges and community learning centres. These programmes aim to help and encourage young adults to be autonomous and responsible, and to build a life of their own choice. The Prince's Trust is open to what it refers to as disadvantaged 'young people' from the ages of 13-30, including those who are struggling at school and at risk of being excluded, or adults who are unemployed. It also helps young people that are leaving care, are homeless, face mental health issues, or have been in trouble with the law (Prince's Trust 2013). The majority of these programmes are delivered to young people aged 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The research for this thesis was conducted with teams of young adult learner participants engaging on a 12-week Prince's Trust programme called the *Team Programme* that is particularly aimed at 16-25 year olds who may be leaving care, young offenders, educational underachievers and the long-term unemployed. It therefore met the characteristics of the purposive sample that the research intended to focus upon: that is 'hard to reach' young adults who had experienced social disadvantage, exclusion and marginalisation.

The *Team Programme* enables participants to: uncover hidden talents, develop responsibility, develop team working and communication skills, develop confidence and motivation, increase awareness of their local community and how they can contribute to it, and gain nationally recognised qualifications. To achieve these, the team members spend a week away at a residential

activity centre, undertake a project based in their local community, complete a work placement, participate in a team challenge involving caring for others, and finally stage a team presentation during which they recount their experiences. Over 115,000 young people have taken part in the *Team Programme* since its start in 1990; above 70% of unemployed participants go on to jobs training, or education within three months of completion (Prince's Trust 2013). The programme appeared to be suitable as a vehicle for answering the research questions (which are presented in Section 1.1), because the nature of the programme delivery suggested that it facilitated a process of change that might be indicative of a transformative learning process.

1.1.2   The author's positioning as researcher

The author's experience as a further education lecturer on person-centred counsellor training courses, has involved the facilitation of change and development in adult learners. This experience has yielded awareness of how social disadvantage and inequality might impact both upon an individual's mental health and well-being, and consequently have a depreciative effect on the fulfilment of human potential. This experience has also included working in an outreach community college with adult learners, delivering short courses in what were termed 'building self-esteem', "building self-confidence" and "learner enrichment", which additionally contributed to the author's awareness of the impact of social disadvantage on an adult engagement in learning and some formulation of a notion of 'hard to reach' learners, and of the attempts being made to reach out to them. However, this did not amount to any fuller concept of the term; such a concept arose from subsequent searching of the literature on 'hard to reach' adult learners. Following searching the literature pertinent to transformative learning theory, it was a small step to considering these concepts together as forming a possible basis for research. The culmination of this process presented the concept of 'hard to reach' as a term which expressed a genuine attempt by educational institutions to reach out in an effort to stimulate and enable adult engagement in learning for such laudable reasons as promoting autonomy and democratic involvement, whether couched in a social or an economic discourse. As such, 'hard to reach' remained a term which had a central place in this research, and one which the author considered had enabled educators to begin to delineate and develop understanding of the process of connecting with the phenomenon of disadvantaged and marginalised individuals or groups. The author began this research having moved from the College of Further Education, which was later to provide the context and sample of Prince's Trust learners, to lecturing in higher education at Chester University. As such, the author's positioning as a researcher in relation to the Prince's Trust *Team Programme* and the College of Further Education at which it was delivered, was that of an outsider.

1.2 The Organisation of this Chapter

Section 1.2 of this introductory chapter considers the relationship between social inclusion and adult learning. It introduces the notion of 'hard to reach' learners and the need for inclusivity in learning that is foundational to producing a fair, equitable and therefore cohesive society. Section 1.3 introduces the lifelong learning education policy in the United Kingdom, and the current tensions existing around the ideas that education should be about training and be skills focussed, and the alternative notion that education should have a social community emphasis. The competing discourses arising from these tensions are highlighted in this section, and their influences in shaping education policy brought into view. Section 1.4 introduces the theoretical framework and presents four learning theory perspectives of transformative learning, self-efficacy, reflective thinking and critical thinking. This section draws upon the notion of reciprocity as represented in Bandura's model of triadic causation and introduces the basis for considering the possibility of a reciprocal relationship between the four theoretical learning perspectives. Section 1.5 identifies the knowledge gap that was discovered from conducting the Literature Review that forms the basis of this research (see separate accompanying Literature Review document) and develops the hypotheses which generate the research questions that are the basis for this thesis. Section 1.6 provides an account of the author's positioning in the research. Section 1.7 provides a summary of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1.3 Social and Educational Inclusion

This section considers two types of inclusion, namely social inclusion and educational inclusion. These two types of inclusion are considered to be interrelated in their potential impact on the degree to which an individual may experience forms of social deprivation. Kluzer and Rissola (2009) consider forms of social deprivation to include diminished social resources, which impact on such things as socioeconomic opportunities and health and well-being, and that income-poverty is an indicator of being at risk of social exclusion. Social exclusion can manifest in individuals, families and groups from a cluster of connected economic and social difficulties such as unemployment, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments and family breakdown.

Social inclusion is concerned with engaging individuals and groups more fully in society and educational inclusion is considered as an important component in the fostering of an inclusive society (Department of Health 2003). The fostering of social inclusion through education is viewed by Ballti et al. (2009) as being more than just the responsibility of the education system but also to involve collective partnership across government sectors, community groups and industry. These authors consider the notion that a new perspective on education has been opened up which enables

stakeholder partnerships to have a collective, collaborative responsibility to deliver education into social spaces, thus fostering the development of networks and consequently, of social capital and social inclusion. They state:

"There seems to be a belief that providing education and training as part of wider efforts to increase social inclusion is a collective responsibility and ultimately in the best interests of industry and community." (Ballti et al. 2009 p38)

The concept of educational inclusion can be set within a wider social context and includes the notion of a cohesive society. The effect of educational inclusion goes beyond the classroom; it may be viewed as a concern to promote the right to equal opportunity as a fundamental value of a fair and just society. In addressing the inequalities of access to participation in education suffered by socially excluded learners of all ages, this concern is mindful of exclusion due to differences, such as minority religious and ethnic groups, asylum seekers, travellers, teenage mothers, gender and sexual orientation (OFSTED 2002).

An understanding of the processes leading to inequality of opportunity for individuals and groups is captured by the notion of what Ball (2003) refers to as 'class strategies'. These class strategies operate as a means to defend, hold and improve individual class position in society. Class strategies, according to Preston (2004) may involve the civic inclusion of favoured groups and the civic exclusion of others who are members of different social groups. These strategies incorporate more than just an economic, income or occupational senses of class, but may consist of a combination of such categories as class, race and gender. Such combinations may then be a means of identifying those that 'belong' and those that do not, those that are included and those that are not. The excluded may then become 'hard to reach' through having a diminished sense of belonging to, or involvement in, a wider society. Approaches towards inclusion in learning are primarily concerned with redressing this imbalance and fostering equal opportunity.

As indicated by Brackertz and Meredyth (2008), the term 'hard to reach' can be used to refer to sections of the community that are difficult to involve in public participation, be it educational or civic participation. In the context of this thesis, the concept of 'hard to reach' is concerned with empowering a process of equality and social justice through inclusivity in education. The term 'hard to reach' is difficult both to define and operationalise; seemingly this difficulty is reflected in an apparently increasing list of persons who fall into this category. 'hard to reach' may include sections of or individual members of minority groups, such as minority ethnic people, gays and lesbians, or homeless people, who meet with barriers to engaging in learning through the view that society has

of them being 'other', or indeed that a perception of being other is one that they hold of themselves. The construct of other is considered by Beauvoir (1946) to be as primordial as consciousness itself, so that a group having its own identity has an inherent tendency to set up any other group as other. This involves a power dynamic which produces a perception of difference, invoking dualistic notions such as superior-inferior, of value-of no value, strange-familiar, and threatening-non-threatening. These dichotomies form the basis for inclusion and exclusion. The empowerment through education of members of society, deemed as on the margins, or deemed as 'other', can conceivably enable their fuller participation in society, a fuller belonging and a fuller realisation of individual potential; consequently the potential for both social cohesion and economic competitiveness is increased.

1.4 Lifelong Learning Policy in the United Kingdom

Initially the promotion of lifelong learning formed a significant element of New Labour's Social Reform Programme. Arising from the Social Exclusion Report (Social Exclusion Unit 1998), it proffered, as a part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, a combination of initiatives to address perceived deficiencies in adult basic skills. Together with a commitment to lifelong learning and the Aimhigher programme it seemed to indicate a renewed energy for the re-introduction of access programmes (Diamond 2008). The Aimhigher excellence programme was initially set up in 2001 (West et al. 2006) as a series of national initiatives. Its intention was to enable an inclusivity of more young people from under-represented groups and backgrounds in access to higher education (McCaig et al. 2006). Whilst the primary group was 13-19 year olds, it was also intended to widen participation to adults under 30 years of age (DfES 2003). It was accompanied by a shift from the previous emphasis on organizational reform, to a view that change could be effected through four key aims (West et al. 2006):

1. By developing strong ties and partnerships between further education, local communities and employers.
2. To increase funding to higher education institutions to reach out to more young people.
3. To provide clear information and improved marketing of the route to higher education.
4. To pilot new forms of financial help to young people.

Potentially the first aim may have brought about a sense of locality and community which would have addressed concerns regarding social cohesion, but according to Diamond (2008) whilst community education has developed at new sites, funding for further education [FE] colleges and community learning initiatives has diminished. One consequence, as contended by Shaw (2008), is a

process of marginalisation of adult education, which whilst engaging disadvantaged groups has become disadvantaged itself. This to some extent is a dislocation between on the one hand, widening participation and access to Higher Education, and on the other, adult learning and neighbourhood renewal. Diamond (2008) argues that both adult education through FE colleges, and as part of regeneration at community education sites, can coexist whilst having separate learning locations.

Vickers (2008) considers that the New Labour Government presumed that economically driven education for adults will, of itself, foster inclusion. As Vickers further points out, given this belief it therefore seems unlikely that government policy would give credence to the notion of funding social purpose education purely for its inherent value. Social purpose education is viewed by Martin (2008) as being that education which is designed to improve justice, equality and democracy and wherein education is considered as central to the struggle for social change. The contrasting view of education for economic purpose views education policy from a framework of neo-liberalism (Jackson 2007); it focuses attention solely on education as being the transfer of knowledge for the purpose of productivity. Jackson considers this focus to be education for the purpose of training and as such, to be a diminishing of education from the traditional values of learning. Jackson (2009) invokes the notion of 'diaspora' to describe the scattering and exiling of these values which, Johnston (1999) considers, provide more potential for adult education to equip individuals and groups with the knowledge to challenge inequalities in society in order to make a world which is just and fair. Education for training with its emphasis on technical knowledge and skills training is concerned with adaptation to a global market (Jackson 2010). Its emphasis on mere technique is considered by Freire (2004) as impoverished and emptied of those dreams which originally inspired a fight for social equality and that were the initial aspirations of a liberal adult education.

There is also a diminishing of the parameters of what passes for lifelong learning, so that as the influence of a hegemonic economic discourse becomes dominant in education, it presents a narrowed focus with an inherent intolerance which excludes, reduces and fragments the ideals, values and norms of lifelong learning and education for social purpose. The inference from the dominant neo-liberal market discourse is that within its parameters exists the norm, the utopia, the ideal, in which a value is placed only on that learning which directly serves its purpose. Without those parameters exists the 'other' and what is of no value, learning that does not serve its purpose. The experience of being exiled is experienced by those who adhere to the exiled values; in terms of education it is experienced by those educationalists for whom learning encompasses a more holistic vision of human beings and their location in society, above and beyond an economic utility.

A solely economic education discourse may create new, whilst perpetuating existing, barriers to learning. Such an education may be one that does not take cognisance of what Wilson and Train (2006, p.1) refer to as "the less tangible outcomes of the impact of adult basic education", the dismissal of which may result in an impoverished learning experience. Economically-driven education policy, whilst preparing a workforce fit for purpose in a global economy, may also contribute a negative effect in part, on adult learning through a devaluing of that learning which has inherent social contribution.

Initially the promotion of lifelong learning formed a significant element of New Labour's social aspects of learning; for example, learning for social purpose, which does not reflect the norms and values of an economic paradigm; this was followed however by a trend towards greater economically driven education. The current Conservative, Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, maintains a considerable focus on education and training for the purpose of national economic competitiveness, as apparent in their policy document 'Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills' jointly produced by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department of Education (2013). A central thrust of this policy is to remove bureaucratic obstacles that have been argued to constrain the response of colleges to meet the needs of employers. A statement is made in the document which reflects the tone of its focus "if a qualification is not a passport to a job or a level of higher qualification it has no purpose" (p5), evoking a response from NIACE (2013 p4) that the statement is "wrong, or at best an over-simplistic interpretation of the research". NIACE further point out that the document gives no consideration to the contribution that knowledge acquisition through lifelong learning may make to the development of human potential and to social and community cohesion. NIACE's contention being that education should have a fuller and more inclusive vision than labour market learning. An outcome of the present government 's policy may be a low priority being placed on those groups who find themselves unable to adapt to the prevailing economic skill values, thus increasing the marginalisation of individuals and sections of society. It seems inevitable that in any competitive environment not everyone can be winners in economic terms. It appears of concern therefore that the hegemony of an economic discourse may be limited in its capacity to be inclusive of those deemed to have little to contribute to increasing UK economic competitiveness. As a consequence of an emphasis on competitiveness, education policy is likely to be dictated to by the need for economic utility, rather than that of human personal and social growth.

The notion of lifelong learning suggests a lifelong learner narrative process, which as an ideal, overlooks the complexities of disadvantage in its early stages. The Department of Education and

Skills' (2013) policy for improving education for pupils outside mainstream school, in its consideration of alternative education for children amongst the most vulnerable to exclusion, aims to address socio-economic deprivation; however the policy falls short of tackling the roots of such deprivation. Consequently, it may still overlook more urgent needs of physical, emotional and mental security, which are prerequisite to effective learning. The education system in failing to address these needs effectively at an early stage, contributes to perpetuating the development of the 'hard to reach' marginalised and disadvantaged status of future young adult learners. A further earlier contribution to the creation of 'hard to reach' young adult learners may be the imposition of Government Statutory Assessment Tests [SATs], the impact of which is potentially to reduce the self-esteem and dignity of the most disadvantaged pupils, thus serving to marginalise them further. Such concern is raised by Polesel et al. (2012) in considering the impact of high SATs on school pupils and their families, to possibly produce a diminution of a sense of well-being in those pupils who score poorly. Bartlett (2008) also recognises the potential for such tests to neglect the early educational needs of the vulnerable and marginalised. This raises ethical considerations around principles of equity and beneficence concerning such tests and the compounding of disadvantage through the construction of narratives of failure.

Dewey (1916) considered that a diminishing of democracy occurs when the aims of education are disproportionately dictated from outside. When this occurs, as in the current economic hegemony in learning discourse, this may not, as indicated by Carneiro et al. (2010), necessarily result in a more economically productive person, and may merely be a use of education as an expensive sorting device, to enable employers to identify apparently more able individuals. Dewey (1916) further contends that in such a context the aims of learners do not arise from the free growth of their own experiencing, but are the external aims of others, so that their learning serves the ulterior aims of others rather than serves their own aims. There appears in the United Kingdom to be a move towards a more functional role for adult education with no space for what Mayo and Thompson (1995) refer to as 'transformative learning', in which learners are involved in reflecting upon their own assumptions and beliefs as part of the transformative learning process (Mezirow 1991). According to Christie (2009), when paradigms or a single paradigm dominate, at either the individual, group, institutional or state level, it is probably time to begin to question, if not subvert, them. Christie suggests that the best way to do this is to train people to think for themselves.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The transformative learning theory of Mezirow (2010) provides a central perspective from which previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners' engagement in learning can be viewed. Other learning

perspectives will be considered together as forming a quadratic theoretical framework with transformative learning theory. These include Bandura's (1986) self-efficacy theory, reflective thinking theory (Dewey 1933), and the more definitive theory of critical thinking (Glaser 1941); this latter theory arose from Dewey's reflective thinking theory and has been referred to as the cornerstone of the critical thinking movement by Yildirim and Ozkahraman (2011). The intention is that from a consideration of the role that these learning approaches have in the learning process, a more extensive understanding and perspective on learner transformation can be developed. The development of an extended understanding, according to Mezirow (1997), involves an individual changing their frame of reference regarding their assumptions and beliefs, and putting into action plans which enable new perspectives on how they perceive the world and their relationship to it. These four approaches share a common notion of potential shifts in self-perspective leading to self-improvement as a result of the development of what Richard Paul describes as an ability to think about your thinking, while you are thinking (Paul 1993).

1.5.1 Transformative learning theory

Mezirow (2000, 2010) identifies ten stages of the learning process which together constitute the transformative learning experience. The progress of the learner through these stages is one that potentially takes them through a process of critical thinking about their own context and location in terms of such things as attitude and belief. These stages are identified as:

1. An awareness of discontent.
2. A self-examination accompanied by feeling of fear, guilt and shame.
3. A critical assessment of assumptions.
4. A recognition of one's discontent, a realisation that others have negotiated a similar change and the experience of the process of transformation, are shared through discussion.
5. Exploration of new roles and relationships.
6. Planning a course of action.
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.
8. Provisional trying of new roles and ways of being.
9. Building up competence and self-confidence.
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by ones new perspective.

Taylor (2008) draws attention to the transformative learning process as taking place within a pre-existing frame of reference consisting of structures of assumptions and expectations which influence an individual's personal perspective and tacit understanding. These assumptions thereby influence

their thinking, beliefs and actions. Together, the revision of a frame of reference and reflection on experience achieve a transformation in the individual's internal frames of reference. The main aim of transformative learning according to Christie (2009), and also the most difficult step, is to change both any invalid assumptions through which an individual interprets the world, and the behaviour that is based on them.

1.5.2   Reflective thinking and critical thinking

The concepts of critical thinking and reflective thinking are frequently used synonymously. According to Halpern (1996), critical thinking is specific and goal directed towards problem solving and intended outcomes. Reflective thinking is an element of the critical thinking process and is the attempt to understand and analyse what has happened; it looks at the knowledge and belief basis of experience and includes attempts to make sense of the implications and legitimacy of such knowledge and beliefs (Dewey 1933). Whilst critical thinking and reflective thinking are different, they are together necessary for the completion of an on-going process of effective learning. As such, reflective thinking may be perhaps considered as informing critical thinking; the two are intricately and reciprocally woven together so that it is difficult to assert one without maintaining cognizance of the implications for the other.

1.5.3   Self-efficacy

Bandura's (1986) triadic theory of reciprocal causation (Figure 1.1) considers that environment causes behaviour but that behaviour also causes environment, and suggests a triadic relationship between three factors argued to contribute to an individual's sense of self-efficacy:

A. Personal factors comprised of experiences of performance, cognitions, affect and biological events.
B. Behaviour.
C. Environmental influences.

Figure 1.1   Triadic reciprocal causation (adapted from Bandura 1986 p24)
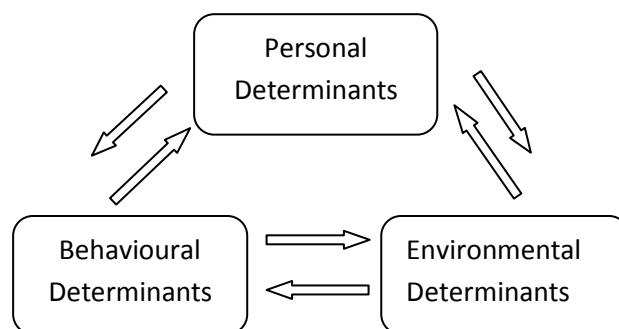
Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about his/her capabilities to succeed or perform well at specific tasks (Bandura 1986, Schunk 2000). Such self-belief also incorporates a belief in an ability to mobilise personal cognitive resources to meet and master the presenting situation. It also has an inherent predictive component of how much energy will be applied to completing the task (Mitchel et al. 1994). The idea that arises from this is that self-efficacy beliefs may enable an individual to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions and what an individual thinks, believes and feels affects how they will perform or behave. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory has this triadic reciprocal causation model as the central framework for understanding, predicting and changing behaviour. This model emphasises the role played by cognition in human awareness and the importance of a capacity for reflective thinking. The component of reflective thinking suggests reciprocity with similar aspects of the process of transformative learning, since as referred to earlier (section 1.5.1) Taylor's (2008) consideration is that reflection on experience is essential to a transformative learning process in which assumptions and belief are challenged leading to changes in behaviour.

1.6 The Research Questions

As discussed earlier, the four perspectives of transformative learning, critical thinking, reflective thinking and self-efficacy share common concepts of reflective thinking and critical thinking. This suggests that they may have a reciprocal effect on each other. This research therefore seeks to investigate the possibility of reciprocity between the four learning processes in the context of previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners initial engagement in learning. An understanding of whether or not there is reciprocity may provide an indication of where some synthesis between these learning perspectives may be achieved in order to increase learning. This is particularly relevant to the engaging and retaining of previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners, who through the reciprocal development of a capacity for reflective thinking, critical thinking, and self-efficacy may have an enhanced opportunity to experience transformative learning. This can foster the creation in the learner of autonomy, and encourage further engagement in learning, together with a sense of belonging to society in which 'hard to reach' learners can have more active participation.

Figure 1.2 depicts the space where reciprocity may occur. It has been depicted as liminal space. A liminal space is understood conceptually here as a space on the margins, betwixt and between, where one thing meets another and one concept is recognised not as separate but as a part of the whole.

Figure 1.2   Liminal space: a reciprocal location for learning
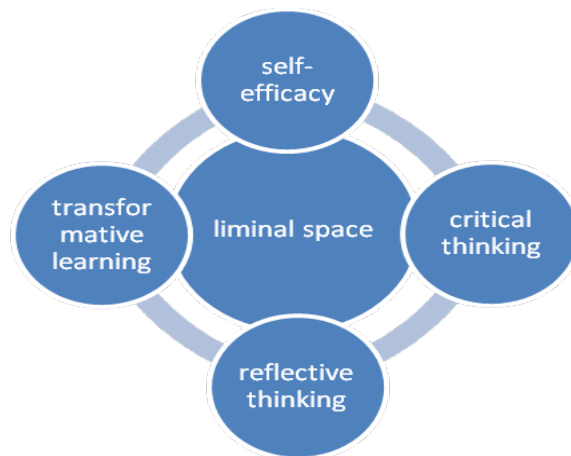
Turner (1969) proposes that liminal space has transformational capacity. This thesis considers what may be indicators and signifiers of the experiences of change from a learner's perspective, as to what comprises the vehicle or combination of vehicles with regard to a question of reciprocity with transformative learning, reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy that may enable for valuable and meaningful transformative learning to occur, as depicted in Figure 1.2. The Literature Review undertaken as preparation for this thesis concluded that knowledge of such learner experiencing of engagement and reciprocity of transformational learning with the processes of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy, is absent from previous research on previously 'hard to reach' learners. This thesis therefore seeks to contribute to the knowledge base theoretically, and to inform learning practice. In response to this, the core questions addressed by this research are:

1. Are previously considered 'hard to reach' young adult learners experiencing transformative learning on their initial engagement in learning?
2. If so, by what process does this occur?
3. For those who do transform, what is it about this experience that sustains them in learning?
4. How do the learners conceptualise this experience in terms of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy?
5. If transformative learning is occurring, does the experience have reciprocity with processes of critical thinking, reflective thinking and self-efficacy?
6. What are the implications of the findings to the above questions for sustaining previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners in the learning process?

1.7   Summary of Remaining Chapters

In answering these questions, this thesis presents a number of chapters. Chapter 2 provides an explanation of the methodology upon which this research is based. The methodology for this research is located within a qualitative paradigm. Chapter 2 therefore explains the concept of a research paradigm and the ontological and epistemological perspectives regarding what constitutes reality within these perspectives, and the relationship of the researcher to that reality. It provides an explanation of the method of data collection by semi-structured interview and the justification for the adoption of this method. Additionally it considers the ethical dimensions of data collection via interview and the treatment of that data. It further provides details of the sample of participants and the development of the interview schedule. Details are also given of the development of the structure of the interview. A rationale for the subsequent interviewing is presented, as is an exposition of the constant comparative method of analysis as applied to the interview data.

Chapter 3 presents the findings arising from a constant comparative analysis of the student exit and entry interviews. The findings begin with the introduction of each outcome proposition and then these are discussed together with their relative subsumed emergent propositions. Chapter 4 presents the findings arising from a constant comparative analysis of the tutor interviews. The findings begin with the introduction of each outcome proposition and then these are discussed together with their relative subsumed emergent propositions. Chapter 5 discusses the findings from Chapters 3 and 4 and relates these to the theoretical concepts of transformative learning, critical thinking, reflective thinking and self-efficacy. It further relates them to the six key research questions and the role in learning of the central concept of reciprocity. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions that are drawn from the discussion and the contribution to knowledge made by this research. It also presents the implications for the initial and continued engagement of previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners in the learning process. The limitations of the research are discussed and potential trajectories for future research are highlighted.

CHAPTER 2   METHODOLOGY

CONTENTS

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is focused on transformative learning and reciprocal learning processes as experienced in previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in learning. It is concerned with what learning processes have influence within the initial space in which a transformative experiencing of learning may be taking place. This chapter provides an explanation of the methodology upon which this research is based. It is divided into six sections. Section 2.2 outlines the concept of a research paradigm and explains the ontological and epistemological perspectives regarding what constitutes reality and the relationship of the researcher to that reality. Section 2.3 provides an explanation of the method of data collection by semi- structured interview and the justification for the adoption of this method. Additionally it considers the ethical dimensions of data collection via interview and the treatment of that data. It further provides details of the sample of participants and the development of the interview schedule. Section 2.4 gives details of the development of the structure of the interview and the rationale for the subsequent interviewing of the relevant tutors. Section 2.5 provides an exposition of the constant comparative method of

analysis which will be applied to the interview data. Section 2.5.3 introduces the concept of the reflexive journal and its active role in the research process and presents the rationale for its use by the researcher. Section 2.6 is a concluding section providing a synthesis of the main points in this chapter.

The research uses a semi-structured interview method to collect data around the learning experiences of adult, previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners on Princes Trust courses at one college of further education. In subjecting interview transcripts to a constant comparative method of treatment, this research seeks to determine whether transformative learning is experienced and if so, whether there is reciprocity with self-efficacy, critical thinking and reflective thinking. It aims to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of those processes that may have influences on learning. The researcher considers this knowledge to be accessible from the subjective experiencing of individuals engaged in initial learning processes, and endeavours to understand this knowledge from an interpretivist position (as will be discussed in the following section). The research intends to represent these experiences through the identification and consideration of emergent core themes. This is in order to offer tentative statements about the contextual subjective truth of the learning experience and how this does or does not relate to the research questions presented in Chapter 1.

2.2 Research Paradigms

There is a distinction in the research literature between what is termed the 'methodology' and what are termed 'research methods' (Blaxter et al 1996). Methodology involves the philosophical underpinnings of the approach and paradigm within which the research is located, whilst research methods concern, in the main, the tools of data collection or techniques such as questionnaires and interviews. An understanding of the tasks of data collection and analysis, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), arises from a sound knowledge of the alternative perspectives or paradigms from which research may be approached. It is central to research that the chosen methods of data collection and analysis are in accord with the philosophical postulates or beliefs which underpin the research paradigm.

The paradigm as a particular lens through which the world is viewed, has within it particular methods of finding out about that world (Hillier and Jameson 2003). According to Kuhn (1996), a paradigm consists of the underlying assumptions and intellectual structure upon which research and the development of inquiry are based. Guba (1990) considers a paradigm to consist of an interpretive framework which is guided by a set of beliefs about the world, how it should be understood and how it should be studied. Denzin and Lincoln (2001) identify three categories of beliefs that comprise a research paradigm, namely ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs. These

categories are consistent with the research paradigm as considered by Lincoln and Guba (1994) as consisting of basic beliefs which arise from the responses to three core questions:

1. The ontological question – What is the nature of reality?
2. The epistemological question – What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known?
3. The methodological question– How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understandings?

This study responds to these three core questions as follows:

2.2.1 The ontological question – What is the nature of reality?

The ontological question can be understood as the differing stances of realism (positivism) and constructivism (interpretivism) (Lincoln and Guba 2000). These two stances give rise to two research paradigms: the quantitative and the qualitative.

The quantitative paradigm

Based on what is referred to as realism or positivism, the quantitative paradigm adopts a perspective expounded by Rene Descartes in the pursuit of certainty (Magee 2010). It is a view which governs empirical scientific research and in which what is considered to be the truth is comprised of phenomena that have been reduced to empirical indicators (Sale, Lofeld and Brazil 2002). External reality is viewed as existing independently of our understanding. Physical and social realities are considered to be independent of those who observe it; it is an objective perspective from which truth is considered to exist independently of human perception. Research that is grounded in a positivist epistemology adopts the perspective that reality is singular, tangible and fragmentable. It considers that the rules governing this reality are time and context free and thus can be generalised, and that real causes are temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effect. The researcher is independent and separate from what is being researched and epistemologically can therefore observe and measure the relationship between one entity and another without having any influence on the entities themselves. The measurement is therefore value free and as such is an independent truth.

The qualitative paradigm

In contrast to the quantitative paradigm, the qualitative paradigm has central notions derived from phenomenology that considers reality to be subjectively shaped by human consciousness. Ontologically a view is taken of reality as having no separation from human experiencing of it. The view is taken in the qualitative paradigm that we subjectively construct our own unique realities and

truths (Guba and Lincoln 1994). The separation therefore of the researcher from the object or entity being researched never exists since all experiences are subject to an individual's interpretation. This interpretation may be influenced by subjective values and meaning related to the context within which it is experienced; knower or researcher and the subject of the research are interactive and inseparable. The view is that reality as experienced by a researcher and the subject of that research, are in an ongoing mutual and simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to separate cause from effect. This evokes the further consideration that any inquiry is value bound (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

An accompanying assumption that is inherent in this perspective is that change is by morphogenesis, in that changes that take place are complex and organic rather than linear, mechanical or an assembly of parts (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). As such morphogenesis does not hold to any anticipated process or form, although the processes leading to change have origin in the intent and agency of the researcher. By implication therefore, it is deemed that researchers themselves may experience unanticipated changes related to the processes of research they are engaged in, since they are a part of the whole system of the research. An assumption of morphogenesis allows for a deeper exploration of the organic experiences of change and transformation that occur in previous 'hard to reach' learners engagement in learning. To conduct research without taking into account the ontological assumptions that accompany a phenomenological perspective is considered by Kraus (2005) to be tantamount to a violation of the fundamental view of the individual.

Interpretivisim is one overarching perspective that plays a determinate role in forming our understanding of research (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). The interpretivist perspective has its focus on how individuals understand and make meaning out of their experiencing. This perspective is one which views the person and their experienced world as co-constituted, there is no separation from the person and the world and the world does not exist apart from the person (Valle and King 1978); it engenders an ontology that contains a priori assumptions about the nature of reality. The research presented here adopts the interpretivist perspective and holds to the ontological assumptions that reality is subjectively constructed by individuals out of their experiencing and interaction with it. This assumption considers that an individual's world as experienced will influence their understanding and the interpretation they arrive at of events which they encounter on a moment to moment basis. This is in keeping with Patton's (1991) notion of a phenomenological approach being one that is concentrated on understanding the meaning that events have for people.

The interpretivist stance is considered by Richie and Lewis (2003) to consist of three particular assumptions:

1. The researcher and the social world impact on each other, so that researcher and participant are always in relationship with each other, that is, each experiences the other.

2. Research is never value free. The researcher's values, perceptions and meanings are operative in the research. This necessitates the transparency of the researcher regarding personal perspectives and values that may be influential on any interpretation or meaning generated.

3. Knowledge of the social world is formed through mediation with the understanding and meaning held by other people.

In conducting interpretivist research, the influence of the process of research on the researcher, brought about through the interaction with participants in this study, is considered to be an integral part of the data generated. Therefore an aspect of such research involves the development of an understanding of this influence, since it has implications for the way in which understanding is generated and interpreted.

This research presented in this thesis stands upon a qualitative ontology and is rooted in the philosophy of Hegel and Heidegger (Packer 2011). In his (Hegel 1977) *Phenomenology of the Spirit'*, Hegel's method concerns the understanding of consciousness' experience of itself and its objects. In Heidegger's (1962) *Being and Time*' the notion of being in the world is one which does not consider an object/subject split. This perspective is one that gives credence and place to a concept that considers that reality is constructed and given meaning by individuals. The experiencing of the same phenomenon may bear unique nuances in understanding and meaning for each person, or bear close resemblance. The assumption is made that if there are identifiable similarities in a collective experience then this provides a basis for an interpretation of the phenomenon that permits tentative inferences about the nature of the reality as commonly experienced and understood. It also permits a place in the research for the emergence of an individual's unique experiencing which may contribute to an overall comprehension of the research.

An interpretivist position is adopted in this study from which it aims to understand the phenomenological world as experienced and constructed by the individual research participants from moment to moment. As such, it favours the participants individual personal constructs of reality and acknowledges that these may be influenced by their interaction with and within their social environment. Such a position is one which holds to the view that we can never know the essence of the phenomena that we encounter but do construct meanings for ourselves from our interaction with them. On this basis it is taken that phenomenological events shape each other and that multidirectional relationships can be discovered. It is recognised that these relationships are

likely to be time and context specific and propositions that arise from them, as a consequence of the research process, may not be generalised to other times and context.

2.2.2 The epistemological question – What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known?

As Kraus (2005) points out, the word epistemology has its historical root in the Greek word episteme and is their ancient word for knowledge. Epistemology in its contemporary context refers to the philosophy of knowledge or, as expressed by Trochim (2000), it is concerned with how we come to know. Epistemology is understood by Kraus (2005 p758) to be " intimately related to ontology and methodology; as ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality is, while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it". Kraus offers three fundamental questions from which an epistemology may be derived:

1. What is the relationship between the knower and what is known?
2. How do we know what we know?
3. What counts as knowledge?

The epistemic position of this research is in keeping with an interpretivist posture and adheres to the notion that the inquirer and the phenomena which are being inquired into are interlocked or fused together. This fusion is to the extent that what counts as knowledge is emergent from the inquiry process and is a creation of that process. It supposes that during this process the knower and the known are co-created and constructed (Al-Zeera 2001), and gives credence to shared norms that cluster and constellate socially and culturally and become manifest in such things as language meanings and ritualistic meanings. Knowledge is considered to be attained through a process of an emergent understanding (Schwandt 2000).

Knowledge for the purpose of this research is therefore considered to be found in the related meanings, values, experiences, thoughts and feelings of the participants. Whilst these do not provide a basis for any interpretation or representation that could make claims about absolute truth, they nevertheless can enable the representation of an understanding of a truth or truths, as facets of a larger multiplicity of meanings.

2.2.3 The methodological question – How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understandings?

The ontological assumptions about reality raise questions as to what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is obtained and determined. The adoption of a quantitative orientation or of a qualitative

orientation determines the methodology that a researcher utilizes as a means to obtain information concerning the aspect of reality that is being inquired into. It is from this information that new knowledge will be formed. The various methods of research enable an understanding of different phenomena (Deetz 1996), or an understanding of the particular form in which phenomena are manifest and experienced. The methodology chosen is determined by what one is attempting to know about, and is not predetermined by a commitment to a particular paradigm (Cavaye 1996). Thus, the methodology employed must match the particular phenomenon of interest.

The quantitative research orientation engenders a quantitative epistemology which presumes that knowledge consists of a truth which is accessible through objective measurement. Knowledge of this truth can be confirmed through replication of measurement of what is empirically discernible through the five human senses; it excludes the subjective experiencing of the researcher. A quantitative enquiry considers the researcher to be separate from the object of inquiry: that researcher and the object of research should not influence each other and that the desired objectivity can be achieved through the appropriate research strategy (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). These strategies include the use in positivist empirical science of experimental designs which attempt to minimise and exclude all irrelevant variables. This is in order to observe and measure cause and effect between those entities being investigated. The use of statistical analysis is also used to determine degrees of meaningful and significant relationship. Knowledge about the truth of objective reality is produced in the form of facts or significant probabilities, which are shown to be consistent through replication of the same means of inquiry producing the same results. Factual knowledge of objective reality may then be considered as generalisable to the broader population (Flick 2006, Dubberley 2010). According to Flick (2006), quantitative research uses a deductive approach. It begins with a theory, formulates a hypothesis or research questions and defines the variables and measures, or observes these through an appropriate instrument to obtain a numerical measure or score.

The realisation has developed that such an approach can lack relevance for everyday subjective experiencing, since it does not take account of the context or subjective interpretation of experience. In contrast, qualitative research begins by gathering information through interviews or observations. The use is made of open-ended questions put to participants. The data gathered by this means is analysed to identify themes, these themes are then formed into categories. From these categories broader themes and patterns are identified and finally, the researcher posits generalised theories or propositions. The process is inductive and what is emergent from the data is interpreted and given meaning by the researcher. Contemporary research finds itself in an era where science

does not produce absolute singular truth, but offers an understanding that may be further interpreted in differing contexts. The starting point for qualitative research addresses the fragmentation of truth into subjective truths, as indicated by Flick (2006 p16) "Qualitative research is not based on a unified theoretical and methodological concept...Subjective viewpoints are the first starting point".

Dubberley (2010) considers the qualitative research epistemologically to involve the attempt to understand subjective processes, experience and meaning. What constitutes reality is the subjective experience of individuals. Qualitative research involves the researcher interacting with the research participants. It therefore has the added dimension of the influence of the researcher's own subjectivity on the participants and also on any interpretation of the material gathered. The research design can take account of this interface between the researcher subjectivity and the research process by incorporating a section on researcher reflexivity.

2.3 Research Design

The research presented here aimed to look at the learning experiences of previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners initial engagement in learning. The sample consisted therefore of adult learners from a college of further education who were considered to be 'Not in education, employment or training' (NEETs). The Princes Trust course is designed to give specific focus to learners, who previous to engaging on the course, had not been in education, employment or training. Such students therefore provided a potentially viable adult learner sample for the purposes of capturing their learning experience of engagement in education.

The research questions for this thesis are concerned with the learner's subjective experiencing of transformative learning processes, and the unique critical thinking and reflective processes of the participants and their experiencing of self-efficacy. The research adopts an ontological perspective that is thus based on the notion that reality is subjectively constructed. What counts as knowledge through which the research questions may be addressed are the subjective experiences of the learners. This necessitates a means of capturing the experiencing and construction of an individual's phenomenological world as it changes, or remains static within the research process. It also necessitates a means of gathering information or data about subjective experiencing and the changes that individuals experience as happening in the process of their learning. Participant experiences are accessed in this research through the use of the semi-structured interview process.

The use of semi-structured interviews to obtain phenomenological experiential data is one that has been widely utilized in other qualitative research into lifelong learning and widening participation in 'hard to reach' and disadvantaged populations (e.g. Staley and Barnett, 2006, Ivanic et al. 2006,

Mackenzie 2010). The method to translate those experiences into a meaningful whole is the constant comparative method. This research takes an interpretivist posture towards the translation and analysis of the data, and is mindful of the role that researcher subjectivity may play in the whole process.

This research design involved conducting semi-structured interviews with young adult student participants on the Prince's Trust course. Generally, participants were interviewed twice, with entry interviews taking place at the beginning of the course and exit interviews taking place at the end. The process of obtaining a voluntary sample entailed the researcher, in initially meeting each cohort, to verbally inform them of the research, in the presence of the course tutor, and then provide both tutor and students with a research information leaflet (appendix 2.1). The age range for students' enrolment on the Prince's Trust course as preset criteria of the course was a minimum of 16 years and a maximum of 25 years. An emphasis was given at this meeting to the right to withdraw at any time, and that volunteers must be between 18 and 25 years old, thus ensuring that the sample consisted of young adults in keeping with the research focus on young adult learning; the maximum age of 25 years was preset by the criteria for acceptance on to the Prince's Trust courses.

2.3.1 Sample

The courses are 12 weeks in length and the learner group are referred to as teams. The sample of participants for the pilot interviews and all subsequent interviews were selected on a voluntary basis. The researcher explained the research to each cohort in the first week of the course and then invited volunteers to participate. According to Mathew et al. (1994), opportunity sampling and voluntary sampling are often considered to be so similar as to be viewed the as the same. However, Mathew et al. (1994) consider that there may be a crucial difference between the two types of participants, suggesting that a participant who volunteers to be in a research study is not necessarily the same as one who volunteers because they have been asked. The sample of learners for interviews was taken from four cohorts A, B, C and D (Table 2.1). Consideration was given to acquiring an equal gender representation but in actuality the sample was closely balanced with regard to gender differences. Eleven participants were White British; of these, four were female and seven were male. There was one female Asian British participant. Each cohort interviewed had one lead tutor delivering the course content. Across the four cohorts incorporated in this research, there were three lead tutors, two male and one female (one male tutor was the lead tutor for both cohort B and D). These three tutors also participated in interviews.

Table 2.1 also contains information on the participants' gender. The inclusion of additional information on individual ages was deemed unnecessary on the basis that any individual uniqueness

within so small an age range would not actually be attributable to differences in age. Although the Prince's Trust *Team Programme* includes 16 and 17 year olds, these were not included in the sample on the basis of Mezirow's (1997) contention that transformative learning is an experience peculiar to adult learners, since they have a developed capacity to reflect on their own assumptions, values and beliefs. In contrast, whilst adolescents have developed a capacity for hypothetical thinking and can be critically reflective of information, they have not fully developed the capacity to identify personal assumptions, values and beliefs and to engage in micro-reflexive critical thinking regarding how these might affect, shape and maintain habitually and personally held perspectives. Similarly, an effective engagement in critical discourse is considered by King and Kitchener (1994) to be attainable only in adulthood.

Table 2.1 Participant characteristics and interview dates

Participants: S = Students T = Tutors	Cohort	Gender: M = Male F = Female	Date of entry interview	Date of exit Interview
S1 - Andy	A - pilot	M	5.11.2010	DNA
S2 - Helen	A - pilot	F	5.11.2010	25.1.2011
S3 - Rick	A - pilot	M	5.11.2010	25.1.2011
S4 - Peter	B	M	3.12. 2010	DNA
S5 - Chris	B	M	3.12.2010	DNA
S6 - Annabel	B	F	3.12.2010	DNA
S7 - Tony	B	M	3.12.2010	24.2.2011
S8 - Stewart	C	M	3.2.2011	7.4.2011
S9 - Lauren	C	F	3.2.2011	7.4.2011
S10 - Tommy	D	M	15.7.2011*	DNA
S11 - Maria	D	F	15.7.2011*	7.10.2011
S12 - Danielle	D	F	15.7.2011*	DNA
T1 - Gill	A	F	2.6.2011	
T2 - Matt	C	M	2.6.2011	
T3 - Sam	B and D	M	15.6.2011	
Note: DNA indicates that the students 'did not attend' for interview. This was due to two reasons, leaving the course early (1 student) or failing to keep the interview appointment (5 students). All participants' names are presented as pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity. * Indicates that no entry interview was arranged.				

The ages of participants are not included in Table 2.1 as part of the participant characteristics, since the *Team Programme* itself makes no differentiation between the age range of 16 -25, and views all team members as potentially having a capacity to successfully complete the programme regardless of age. The exclusion of age from the individual student profiles is given further consideration in Chapter 6, Section 6.4: Limitations. Previous educational qualifications were also not sought for

inclusion in the characteristics of the sample, as to have obtained this information from participants may have influenced the quality of their engagement in the interview process. It was deemed too sensitive a topic to ask for the qualifications of disadvantaged and marginalised 'hard to reach' participants.

2.3.2 Procedure and ethical considerations

The Princes Trust course is a full time course and therefore student research participants would have access to tutor and college support services if, in the unlikely event, the research process proved too emotionally demanding. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the college Human Resources Department and course tutors for each cohort were made aware of the research interviews and kept informed of the research process.

Young adult learners enabled a potentially more ethically robust sample in which an informed autonomy could be considered to be more fully exercised. Students completed participant consent forms (Appendix 2.2) prior to each interview. Their right to withdraw from the interview was restated and affirmed. To further maximise a full and informed consent, participants were invited to clarify with the researcher any points which they might be unsure of. After completion of the interview they were again invited to clarify anything they did not understand. Emergent from the entry interviews was an apparent need for the research to access information concerning the participants' experiences just prior to their being accepted onto the course. In consideration of the possible sensitivity concerning students being put off by being met with the formalities of research at such a crucial initial point for them of engagement in learning. It was deemed ethically more acceptable to interview the three tutors delivering the course in order to access their experience of potential students at this initial point of engagement. Consequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three tutors concerned, who volunteered to participate. Prior to interview all tutors signed interview participant consent forms (Appendix 2.2), in which they acknowledged that they were fully informed of the interview process and their right to withdraw. They were reminded again of their right to withdraw also at the end of the interview. Opportunity was given at the beginning and the end of the interview to clarify any points of concern.

Student participant interview questions were aimed at gathering information around participants' experiences of change. It could, however, be anticipated that this might stimulate thoughts and feelings which they may be uncomfortable with. Whilst the participants were not vulnerable in a psychopathological sense, they nevertheless possessed vulnerability in their decision as previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners to engage in learning. It was important therefore that they were

all at least 18years old, that their consent to be interviewed was a voluntary and fully informed one and one which fostered a principle of participant autonomy. Participant autonomy was further addressed by reminding them, before the interview, of their rights to withdraw from the research at any time without the need for any explanation. This was conducted with regard to the British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines (BERA 2011) and in particular with consideration of researcher responsibilities to participants and the principle of respect. Ethical considerations were additionally informed by other professional codes and frameworks that had been encountered and professionally experienced by the researcher, such as The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework (2010) and the experiencing of democratic cultures within which an ethical consciousness could be embedded.

Data storage was an important aspect of the ethical approach adopted in this research. All digitally recorded interviews and subsequent analysis were stored on a password protected computer and signed consent forms were stored in a securely locked cupboard. All interviews and transcripts were anonymised. The latter became of particular importance with regard to the three tutors since they were potentially more identifiable. It was necessary therefore, to ensure that all participants were able to provide fully informed consent for the use of the information they contributed in the interview.

2.4. The Interviews

2.4.1 Initial development of the interview schedules

The semi-structured interview provides a partial instrument to maintain a focus on the research questions. At the same time it offers some movement laterally so that this focus does not fully limit the range and depth of the interview or limit access to potentially rich and appropriate sources of experiential data. The remainder of the partial instrument is the researcher (Patton 1990). Whilst the interview may be considered an act of co-creation, the interviewer is to some degree a student, an active listener who facilitates people to describe their experiences in their own terms. The qualitative researcher's philosophy determines what is important, what is ethical, and in the final interpretation, determines the completeness and accuracy of the results (Rubin and Rubin 2005). The semi-structured interview may potentially enable access to an immediate depth and richness of individual meaning and experiences, referred to by Blaikie (2000) as thick, rather than thin information, which is not readily afforded by any other methods. The semi-structured interview provides a space to both sense and be sensitive to the moment, with flexible facilitating of the interviewees' expressions of their experiencing. The dialogical nature of the interview will allow scope to probe beneath the surface of meaning and into its texture.

As a structured conversation the interview is a combination of main questions, follow-up questions and probes (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Different interview schedules were developed for the student interviews (entry and exit interviews) and the tutor interviews. The interview schedules were arrived at by designing interview questions which arose from the research questions. An interview schedule of core open questions was used on a thematic basis and potential further open probing questions were arranged under these themes (Appendix 2.3). The use of probes was to search at more depth for the quality in the participants responses. The use of the semi-structured interviews incorporated the concept of funnelling in which initial general questions move to being more specific, in-depth and probing, enabling the participant to feel more relaxed and minimising a sense of intrusion (Minichiello, 1998, Cohen et al. 2007). Funnelling also enabled a focus to be maintained on the aim of the research. The semi-structuring of the interviews also allowed for the possibility of more spontaneous questions that might arise during the interviews.

2.4.2   Scheduling of interviews and further development of the interview schedules

Volunteer adult participants were asked to take part in digitally recorded interviews that would last up to 45 minutes. All interviews were planned to take place during course time, between 9am and 4pm, on college premises or on premises that were being visited by the learner group. The interviews were scheduled so that the entry interviews took place within the first week of the courses and the exit interviews within the last week of the courses. The choice and scheduling of cohorts for interviewing depended on researcher availability and the time needed for the researcher to assimilate to some extent the information provided by the interviews. Initially it was planned to interview participants from three cohorts. The process yielded a sum total of nine entry interviews and five exit interviews, obtained from Cohorts A, B and C. The high drop-off rate of 50% for exit interviews necessitated that a further cohort (Cohort D) be included, which increased the entry interviews to 12 and the exit interviews to six. Six participants did not attend for exit interviews as arranged. Five of these had completed the course and one (S4) left before completing the course.

As members of a team on the Prince's Trust course, the learners are engaged in a diverse range of activities and experiences. Sometimes these might take place in a classroom setting, at other times it might involve activities in both an indoor and outdoor community context. The intent was to capture a richness and thickness of data at these two points that would best supply information about experiences of change that may have taken place. If indeed it was the case that such experiences had taken place, then the data generated might reveal or not, reciprocity in the learning processes by which these changes might be understood.

Interviews – Cohort A (pilot interviews)

A pilot study with three participants from Cohort A two males and one female, to assess the suitability of the interview schedule and identify any aspect of the process that needed to be further considered. Following the pilot interviews, the interview questions and structure were deemed fit for purpose. The structure of the main questions, for both entry and exit interviews schedules (Appendix 2.4), provided a solid framework which allowed some flexibility with probing questions, without coming detached from the main focus of the research. The interview schedules for entry and exit interviews were different, the entry interview schedule through core open questions and probing questions, being aimed obtaining information specifically related to the experience of engaging in learning, and the exit interview schedule, through core open questions and probing questions, was aimed at obtaining information on the experiences of the processes of learning and change. The pilot interviews served the purpose, as indicated by Bloor et al (2001), of ensuring that the semi-structured interview would maintain a focus on the core research questions. Additionally they provided the researcher, as suggested by Holloway (1997), with some indication of the level of competency with which the interviews were being conducted. A number of conclusions were drawn from the three pilot interviews:

1. The arranging and conducting of interviews in the field might literally mean in the field. The entry pilot interviews took place in an open field where that day's wood craft activity took place. Therefore there was a degree of unpredictability about the location of the interviews, if they were to be conducted in the first week.

2. The structure of the interview questions both in order and content did provide a focus on the research questions that facilitated the participants in communicating their experiences of engaging in learning. Questions were on the whole understood and responded to following minimal clarification by the researcher.

3. The timing of the interviews at the beginning in the first week of the course appeared to be capturing the initial experience of engaging in learning.

4. The aim was to interview 12 volunteers to provide enough data for analysis. Using three volunteers for the pilot interviews suggested that this would require interviews to be conducted across at least four cohorts of learners.

Exit pilot interviews were conducted in the final week of the course which was as close to the end of the 12-week course as possible. A schedule of core open questions was used structured on a thematic basis and potential further open probing questions were arranged under these themes.

Interviews – Cohorts B, C and D

The pilot interviews did not identify any need to alter the structure of questions or their order and therefore the data collected in these interviews were included in the final sample. They did provide the researcher with an understanding of the need to plan ahead regarding the scheduling of interviews and the choice of cohorts. This enabled attention to be given to minimising any overlap between cohorts so that the number of interviews being conducted was manageable. Subsequent interviews across Cohorts B, C and D took place mainly on college premises in pre-arranged interview rooms. Other interviews involved the researcher in finding safe and appropriate spaces at supermarkets or park information centres, where students were engaged in community activity.
The interview scheduling in the main remained the same for Cohorts B, C and D.

There was a small change for cohort D; when exit interviews arranged for the last week of the course were not attended, further arrangements were made for the week following the end of the course, but in the event, only participant S9 arrived for interview.

Interviews – Tutors

Emerging from initial consideration of the entry interviews, was the sense that prior to participants' engagement in learning, and even prior to any contact with the college to enquire about the Prince's Trust course, participants were already engaged with the notion of being learners. This appeared to suggest that there might be a process of engagement operating a priori and that there was perhaps a process of transformative learning already taking place and was something which necessitated a change in the research design. In an effort to investigate this further, the idea of interviewing applicants to the course as close as possible to their first contact with the college was considered, but decided against due to the delicate and sensitive positioning of 'hard to reach' young adult learners in engaging in learning. This may have made any attempt to engage them in research at this stage an intrusive experience.

Further consideration was given, therefore, as to how some understanding could be gained of what was happening for potential learners prior to or at the point of inquiry into applying to attend the course. It was concluded that the tutors themselves were a potential source of accumulated information regarding that early engagement of applicants, since they were often involved in that first contact, initially speaking to applicants on the telephone, assessing their suitability and inviting them for interview. Therefore interviews were conducted with the three individual tutors who had taught Cohorts A, B, C and D (one tutor taught both Cohorts B and D), in an effort to shed light on the process of learner engagement at the first point of contact.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and consisted of a scheduled series of structured open questions (Appendix 2.5), addressing themes of how the tutors assess someone's readiness and suitability to attend the course, the tutor-learner relationship, and what indicators might inform tutors that change has or has not taken place in a learner. The questions focussed on attempting to capture something of the tutors' experience of the learning process they were initiating and fostering, and their understanding of when the learning process might begin.

2.5 Method of Analysis

2.5.1 Introduction to the constant comparative method

The approach adopted for the qualitative data analysis used in this research is in keeping with that described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). This is an inductive approach developed by these authors from the constant comparative method of data analysis which in itself was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for theory building. An inductive approach differs in its analysis from a deductive one. The deductive approach generates hypotheses to be investigated in the research and involves mathematical analysis to determine degrees of proof and probability. The inductive approach in contrast, entails the collection of data around the focus of inquiry, and the process is an emergent one in which meaningful themes and relationships between data are revealed to the researcher. It is an approach which seeks to understand more about the phenomenon being researched by drawing upon the subjective qualities of the human experiencing. The constant comparative method utilizes an inductive category coding involving a simultaneous comparison of meaning across all units of meaning. This involves producing a category from a unit of meaning and then checking all other units to see if they might be included or excluded from this category so that the category consists of similar units of meaning. In what becomes a simultaneous and emergent process, those units of meaning that are excluded give rise to other categories into which they may be placed. This is ongoing until all units of meaning have been categorised.

The constant comparative method is applicable to this research since the intention is to gain a greater understanding of the experience of engaging in learning, and the possible reciprocity between learning processes as experienced by the learners. The constant comparative method is one which can effectively handle the quantity and quality of the data generated by semi-structured interviews and one that provides a "rigorous and systematic" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994 p.126) inductive process of data analysis in order to arrive at a set of propositions.

There are six stages of analysis:

1. Transcription of interviews and their initial coding
2. Creation of a discovery sheet
3. Provisional coding categorisation and identification of emergent relationships and themes
4. Refinement of categories and rules of inclusion
5. Emergent and outcome propositions
6. Integration of data

All stages involve immersing the researcher in the data as part of the inductive process of qualitative analysis. These are discussed in turn below.

Stage 1. Transcription of interviews and their initial coding

Interviews are transcribed as an initial preparatory phase to analysis. This enables each piece of data to be traceable to its source if necessary, also allowing them to be seen in their location within the larger context of the interview.

Stage 2.Creation of a discovery sheet

The use of a researcher journal is utilised to inform the research process. It may contain such things as the researcher's ideas, thoughts and themes. Following a reading through of the transcripts a discovery sheet is created onto which themes and notions identified from the journal and the transcripts are placed. The discovery phase is the first step to identifying prominent themes from the data (Maykut and Moorhouse 1994).

Stage 3. Provisional coding categorisation and identification of emergent relationships and themes

The next process is one of identifying units of meaning in the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this to be a process of unitizing the data. Units of meaning are placed into categories on the basis of similarity. The names of the categories are emergent from the themes suggested in the data. The placing of units of meaning into categories continues through careful reading of the coded transcripts until all units have been assigned to a category. This process is informed by the discovery sheet.

Stage 4. Refinement of categories and rules of inclusion

This stage of the comparative analysis concerns the subsuming and refinement of the categories through the use of rules of inclusion. This is a process whereby a distillation of the meaning contained in the category is condensed to make a rule for inclusion in that category. The rule for inclusion amounts to a proposition or, according to Taylor (1984), a general statement of fact underpinned by the data from which it is emergent. The refinement begins to reveal what is being

understood about the phenomenon, and as such may be considered as a process of meaning-making. It is more than a process of deconstruction and reconstruction, which is limited to its constituents. It is a process from which new meaning may be emergent and represented in the form of a number of propositional statements, which are emergent from the subsumed categories and their data which have been filtered through the statements of inclusion. These propositions at this stage are considered by Maykut and Morehouse (1994 p.143) to be "roughly formed outcomes of the study so far". They are as yet without meaningful relationship to each other. A scrutiny of these propositions can lead to the identification of patterns and relationships between them. These related propositions may give rise to another proposition beneath which they are subsumed, referred to by Maykut and Moorehouse (1994) as outcome propositions.

Stage 5. Emergent and outcome propositions

This stage involves looking at all emergent propositions and noting which ones stand alone and those which have discernible relationship and patterns with others. Those propositions which are related may be brought meaningfully together to form what Maykut and Morehouse (2005) call outcome propositions.

Stage 6. Integration of data

The final stage is to integrate what has been discovered from data into a meaningful whole. This involves a prioritising of the propositions by the degree to which they relate to the focus of inquiry and weaving them into a narrative synthesis which faithfully represents what has been discovered.

In keeping with a qualitative paradigm, this research proffers no hypothesis prior to enquiry and no prior categories into which data will be placed. The analysis of the data by a constant comparative method is an analysis of what is emergent from the data via a process of inductive reasoning.

2.5.2   Implementation of the constant comparison method

This section describes the process of using the constant comparative method of analysis in this research. Each set of interviews were conducted, transcribed and subjected to a constant comparison analysis, in keeping with the six stages as set out by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). This was done in order to inform an understanding of the process of a transformative learning experience over a period of time. Each set of interviews is discussed in turn below.

The method is discussed for all three sets of interviews – student entry, student exit and tutor. Each set of interviews uses a differing number of stages. The data will be drawn together in Stage 6 and presented in the following chapters.

The student exit interviews were subjected to Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.The emergent themes and patterns at Stage 4 were subsumed under the previous entry emergent propositions using the same existing rules of inclusion for the entry data. All exit data was subsumed and no additional emergent proposition manifested, so that stages 5 and 6 were not needed. A continuous process of refinement was conducted at each stage throughout and involved a constant comparison of units of information to identify similarities of pattern and meaning. Quotes from students, which are typical of the student responses, are included in each of the emergent propositions and provide an illustration of the emergent process from which the definition of each outcome proposition is manifested. Exit interview provisional categories are presented as subsumed under the entry emergent propositions.

The tutor interviews were also subjected to a constant comparison method following Stages 1to 6 as described above for the student entry interviews.

Student entry interviews

Stage 1.Transcription of the interviews and their initial coding. Entry interviews were transcribed and sentences and phrases initially coded as individual units of meaning.

Stage 2.Creation of a discovery sheet. Information in the interview transcripts and from the researcher's reflexive journal (Appendix 2.6) was considered, and ideas and reflections were generated and noted on a discovery sheet.

Stage 3.Provisional categorisation and identification of patterns and themes. Through an on-going process of immersion in the transcripts and discovery sheet, emergent themes and relationships were identified and provisionally coded into categories. The nine coded entry interview transcripts formed 47 provisional categories (Appendix 2.7).

Stage 4.Refinement of categories and rules of inclusion. The 47 provisional categories were collapsed and subsumed using rules of inclusion which produced 15 emergent propositions (Appendix 2.8).

Stage 5.Emergent and outcome propositions. Through further refinement, five final outcome propositions were achieved (Appendix 2.9). Four of these were a result of collapsing 14 of the 15 emergent propositions. One emergent proposition (Proposition 13: A question of money) was not subsumed under any outcome proposition, but following the refinement process stood alone both as an emergent proposition and therefore as an outcome proposition; this became Outcome Proposition 5: A question of money.

Stage 6. Integration of data. The outcome propositions and their subsumed emergent propositions are presented in detail in the Entry/ Exit Interview Findings chapter (Chapter 3).

Student exit interviews

In order to achieve a synthesis between the student entry and exit analysis, the provisional categories formed by the exit interviews were subject to the same rules of inclusion established for the 15 entry emergent propositions (Stage 4 above). All exit provisional categories were subsumed, so that there were no additional emergent propositions that materialised from this process.

Stage 1. Transcription of the interviews and their initial coding. Exit interviews were transcribed and sentences and phrases initially coded as individual units of meaning.

Stage 2. Creation of a discovery sheet. Information in the interview transcripts was reflectively considered for identification and generation of potential new themes and patterns of meaning.

Stage 3. Provisional categorisation and identification of patterns and themes. Through an on-going process of immersion in the transcripts, emergent themes and relationships were identified and provisionally coded into categories. The six coded exit interview transcripts formed 24 provisional categories (Appendix 2.10).

Stage 4. Refinement of categories and rules of inclusion. To enable an integration of the entry and exit categories, the 24 exit provisional categories were collapsed and subsumed using the same rules of inclusion under 15 entry emergent propositions (Appendices 2.11 and 2.12). This integration was considered a means to enriching the entry emergent propositions with the information from the exit interviews and effectively capturing the learning process from beginning to end.

Figure 2.1 provides an illustration of the process of the constant comparison method of analysis for student entry and exit interviews. The figure shows how through the various stages, the entry and exit interview provisional categorisations map on to the rules of inclusion to enable a synthesis to capture the whole of the learning experience from beginning to end. The combined information from the categories, governed by the same rules of inclusion becomes concentrated and substantial in the emergent and outcome propositions.

Figure 2.1 Student entry and exit interviews: Constant comparison analysis emergent pathways
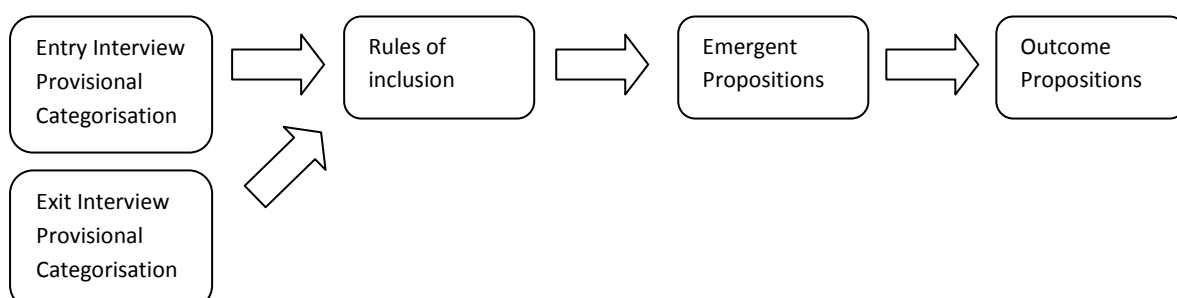
The findings from the tutor interviews are presented in Chapter 4.The data provided by the tutors were also subjected to constant comparative analysis.

Stage 1.Transcription of interviews and their initial coding. The tutor interviews were transcribed and sentences and phrases initially coded as individual units of meaning.

Stage 2.Creation of a discovery sheet. Information in the interview transcripts was reflectively considered for identification and generation of potential themes and patterns of meaning.

Stage 3.Provisional categorisation and identification of patterns and themes. Through an on-going process of immersion in the transcripts, emergent themes and relationships were identified and provisionally coded into categories. The three coded tutor interview transcripts formed 24 provisional categories (Appendix 2.13).

Stage 4.Refinement of categories and rules of inclusion. The 24 provisional categories were collapsed and subsumed using rules of inclusion under three emergent propositions (Appendix 2.14).

Stage 5.Emergent and outcome propositions. The three emergent propositions did not lend themselves to further collapsing into outcome propositions and therefore stood alone as outcome propositions.

Both the student and tutor analyses were used to inform the findings (Chapters 3 and 4), and the discussion (Chapter 5) regarding the learning processes of the students. Figure 2.2 illustrates the process of the constant comparison method of analysis for tutor interviews. The figure shows the links between the various stages, and how the provisional categorisations map onto rules of inclusion, which govern the content of the emergent propositions.

Figure 2.2   Tutor interviews: Constant comparative analysis emergent pathway
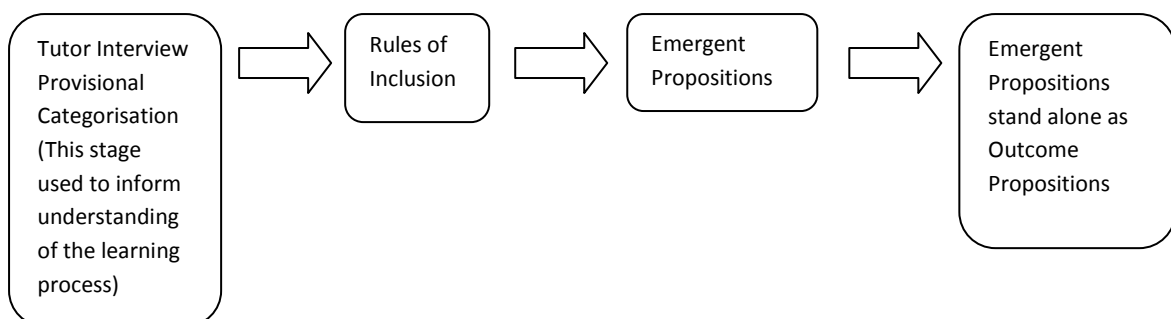
2.5.3   Researcher reflexive process

The researchers positioning in this qualitative research can be construed as paradoxical (Maykut and Morehouse 1994), since it involves a process of resonating with and being attuned to the experiences and realities of others. It also requires the researcher to raise awareness and be mindful of personally subjective responses to the research process. The subjective experiencing of the researcher may both enhance or distort the research process therefore it was deemed of value for the validity of this research that a reflexive journal be kept in which to record thoughts, beliefs and assumptions that the researcher may have in trying to understand the research experience. A reflexive element as a component of this research may potentially assist in identifying researcher prejudice to achieve a more faithful representation and interpretation of the data. It is of importance to the interpretive quality of the research therefore, that the author is able to raise to awareness those aspects of experiencing that may lead to a distortion of the process of emergent understanding. This raising of awareness is a process of 'Epoche' (Katz 1987, cited in Maykut and Morehouse 1994 p123), involving a setting aside of one's own viewpoint in order to see and experience the phenomenon for itself. It is a position assisted by engaging in a reflexive process, which according to Harris (2003) invites the researcher to look behind the whole process. This research thesis holds to the view of reflexivity being an invitation for the researcher to be self-emancipated from habitual thought processes at a subjective micro-level, as depicted by Lipp (2007). The use of a reflexive journal is a means to assisting such an open emancipatory reflexive process. Epoche is not exclusive of subjective influences, since these may also prove to offer a particular insightful perspective, but enables a suspension of subjective presuppositions which may create blind spots in the research process.

With a view to promoting transparency in the qualitative research process engaged in by the author of this thesis, an account of the assumptions values and beliefs is presented in the final concluding chapter (Chapter 6). This discusses elements of the images and feelings which are considered pertinent to offer for scrutiny as having had influence on the author's interpretations and considerations of the data throughout the research process.

2.6   Conclusion

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) the goal of qualitative research is discovery. Mason (2002) suggests that included in the discovery should be a transparent explanation that leads from the inception of the research process to its completion, and demonstrates how this movement has been attained. This transparency is particularly pertinent in considering the concept an emergent design. This chapter has provided a rationale for the research presented here to be located within a

qualitative paradigm, setting down philosophical basis and ontological and epistemological assumptions that are foundational to the study. The research design and method used to respond to these questions has been detailed. The constant comparative method of analysis has been outlined and an explanation provided for addressing the research questions through the adoption of an interpretivist position in which "the human-as-instrument is a primary source of all data collection and analysis" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994 p26). As such the researcher may meet with a flexible response the subtleties of continuing movement that are the human experience and the province of qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The findings arising from the constant comparison analysis of the student entry and exit interviews are presented in the following chapter (Chapter 3). The findings from the tutor interviews are presented in Chapter 4. Together, they illustrate the flexibility of the research method in response to the emergent processes that are identified and considered within this study.

CHAPTER 3   ENTRY/EXIT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

CONTENTS

3.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings arising from the process of the constant comparative method as applied to the interview coded transcripts for the entry and exit interviews. The findings begin with the introduction of each outcome proposition and then these are discussed together with their relative subsumed emergent propositions. Table 3.1 illustrates the Outcome Propositions and their related subsumed Emergent Propositions.

Table 3.1 Entry outcome propositions and their subsumed emergent propositions

Outcome Proposition	Emergent Propositions subsumed
1. Dissatisfaction and untapped potential	1a. Prior self-dissatisfaction 1b. Non-progressive previous learning experiences 1c. Untapped potential and motivation 1d. Possession of a sense of an ability to do things successfully 1e. A notion of confidence
2. A decision to engage in learning despite fears and anxieties	2a. decisive action 2b. A sense of purpose and change 2c. Overcoming fears to engage in learning
3. Previous experience of trust	3a. Trust, respect and the valuing of self and others 3b. Previous experience of trust 3c. Self-worth and the perception of others 3d. Acceptance and motivation
4. Where and what learning will lead to	4a. Future purpose 4b. The value of being alone to think at times
5. A consideration of money	5a. A question of money

A total of five outcome propositions resulted from the analysis: *Outcome Proposition 1: Dissatisfaction and untapped potential*; *Outcome Proposition 2: A decision to engage in learning*

despite fears and anxieties; Outcome Proposition 3: Previous experience of trust; Outcome Proposition 4: Where and what learning will lead to; Outcome Proposition 5: A consideration of money. A detailed illustration of the emergent pathway for each outcome proposition is presented in Figures 3.1-3.5 (insert sleeve). Each outcome proposition, and the emergent pathway associated with it, is discussed in more detail under the discussion of the findings presented below.

Quotes which are typical of the student responses for the subsumed provisional categories are included in the discussion of each of the emergent propositions. All participants' names are presented as pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity. Quotations from the entry interviews are indicated as '[pseudonym, Entry interview]', and those from exit interviews are indicated as '[pseudonym, Exit interview]'.

3.2 Findings

3.2.1 Outcome Proposition 1: Dissatisfaction and untapped potential

<u>Definition</u> – **Prior to engagement in learning, students had derived a sense of dissatisfaction and discouragement from previous learning. They had a sense of untapped potential in themselves and an awareness of some aspects of their lives where they considered themselves to be, or to have been capable of developing their education or a career.**

This proposition is derived from students' sense of unfulfillment in themselves prior to engaging in learning. This took the form of a general feeling of dislike of the childhood school experience or was linked to a sense of regret. Previous learning experiences were not pleasant and discouraged them from accessing further learning as adults. However, this was not necessarily to an extent which suppressed a sense of themselves as having untapped potential which could be developed, or to an extent that prevented the development of an existing sense of ability. Indeed, a sense of being able to deal and cope well was something that was being experienced in other contexts outside of education. Students were able to identify aspects of themselves that they valued and that had been developed prior to their engaging in learning on the course. At the end of the course whilst students considered new aspects of potential development for themselves, they also identified the potential for the further development of abilities and interests that they believed they already possessed, for example; learning from the internet, or developing new roles such as, in addition to being a mother, to having a job; a pre-course development of cooking skills that were considered skills that could be further developed-post course, with a view to employment. A pre-sense of being able to relate effectively to people in caring role was realised more definitively during the learning experience and provided a foundation for one student to consider becoming a carer. Both a need and desire to

change were indicated in students' comments as existing in their awareness prior to engaging in learning.

The emergent pathway associated with Outcome Proposition 1 is shown in Figure 3.1 (in insert sleeve). There are five emergent propositions for this outcome proposition: (1a) *Prior self-dissatisfaction* (1b) *Non-progressive previous learning experiences*, (1c) *Untapped potential and motivation*, (1d)*Possession of a sense of an ability to do things successfully*, and (1e) *A notion of confidence*. The figure illustrates the entry and exit provisional categories that are included in each emergent proposition and the rules for inclusion of these provisional categories.

Emergent Proposition 1a: Prior self-dissatisfaction

Responses were included in this emergent proposition if students had experienced dissatisfaction with themselves prior to engaging in learning. Dissatisfaction was evident in a number of students and manifested in various ways. These included such things as a sense of feeling that life was meaningless and without a definitive time structure. As if nothing mattered in life and nothing happened; or an experiencing of themselves as being unable to engage meaningfully in life and having no response to effectively change this uncomfortable experiencing, as illustrated by the following students comments:

> *It got to the point where I was not even bothering to go have a shower, have a shave, there was no purpose. I use to drink myself asleep and getup at two o'clock in the afternoon.* [Rick, Entry interview]

Another student described the dissatisfaction in the following way:

> *It was horrible like, and I was just getting bored with nothing really do.* [Peter, Entry interview]

One student reported:

> *I have had no meaning in life, like an empty body. If you know what I mean?* [Annabel, Entry interview]

and provided a further image of the sense of emptiness:

> *Just a shell*. [Annabel, Entry interview]

Some students reported a sense of wanting to alter the uncomfortable way in which their lives were being experienced, they reported being aware of a desire for movement and change. The nature of this change had not been clearly formed but amounted to a sense that something must alter in their

selves to bring about this movement. This was accompanied by a sense of a prolonged time without change in their lives and without purpose. Entering education seemed an answer to effecting change. For example, one student stated:

> *I needed to change. I don't want to go on any longer stuck like this.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

Another student stated:

> *I wanted to change because I had been stuck in this rut for so long... I just started thinking about it* [entering education] *because I wasn't doing anything, just sitting at home playing on the play station.* [Tony, Entry interview]

One student's comment expressed a sense of immediacy and urgency in the desire to get out of being stuck:

> *Before it gets too late, basically I'm 25 now I've got to start* [learning]. *If I hadn't have been able do it now I don't think I would have been able do it in a few years' time so I'd have been stuck with what I'm doing. I still live with me parents so it was now or never really.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

For another student, getting into a rut was a familiar and repetitive experience:

> *It's that rut you get into again.* [Lauren, Entry interview]

At the end of the course the memory of the pre-course self-experience was recollected by one student:

> *Before that* [engaging in learning] *I was just looking down a misty tunnel, there was no light, there was no direction.* [Rick, Exit interview]

By the end of the course students had experienced themselves differently, as the following statements express:

> *Well before the course I didn't think I would go complete a course or anything like that especially when it's like every day but I have done.* [Helen, Exit interview]

> *... and then there was that transition period of a couple of months where I was not doing anything with my life. I was getting up at two p.m. sitting around, not getting dressed, getting drunk in the middle of the day. But to come back here and have a reason to actually come into the college and make the effort, because I*

also want to take away from this a record sheet that says that I had 100%
attendance and my time as well, to prove that I can do it when I apply myself.
[Rick, Exit interview]

…before I came on this course I was just an existence in life. I was just plodding
along and this course has just learned [taught] *me to live life and go for what you*
want to do and be the best you can. [Tony, Entry interview]

Emergent Proposition 1b: Non-progressive previous learning experiences

Responses were included in this emergent proposition if students identified previous learning experiences which were not progressive for them. The responses were consistent across gender and age groups. Some students had had various unsatisfying overall experiences of school. Some of these were related to the manner in which they experienced being treated by tutors, which made learning difficult for them. The following statements indicate this:

... in the school they used to give us, teachers use to give us a lot of grief. If I didn't
work and wasn't working right then they shouted at me. I can't work under
pressure well, I never used to be able to work under pressure, so when the
teachers were giving me work to do I couldn't do it because I knew they wanted
me to do it. [Andy, Entry interview]

It went alright but I just didn't like the tutors they were too strict, it was just like
oh yeah do this and do that. [Tony, Entry interview]

However, some students identified their own attitude and age as having been a barrier to previous learning at school:

I was too young to take things serious. [Helen, Entry interview]
I enjoyed it, it was good, it's just that at the time I was too young and I wasn't
bothered about education then. [Helen, Entry interview]

Some students had a shared experience of learning as something which they had given no thought to getting involved in. For example, one participant stated:

I have never done education. [Andy, Entry interview]

Another student recalled a lack of interest in learning as indicated in the following statement:

No I used to find it difficult in class in communication. I don't know. I was naughty at school. I wasn't interested in work. I didn't enjoy it at all. [Annabel, Entry interview]

One participant recalled a very strong feeling about learning at school:

I hated every minute. [Stewart, Entry interview]

A lack of engagement in learning and no qualifications did not necessarily exclude students from pursuing work and developing abilities in manually skilled employment. One student stated:

Nothing at all [no qualification gained in previous education] *I just went straight in as a plasterer's labourer and worked my way up from there soon as I left school, literally four or five weeks after leaving school.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

Whilst a non-progressive learning experience was a dominant feature among students there was an exception to this. One student had studied at A level:

I went to the sixth form where I did media studies and English Lit, after that it was straight into a job. [Rick, Entry interview]

Students recalled their experiences of learning at an earlier age and found them to be in contrast to their current experience as adults re-engaging in learning. Where there had been previous dissatisfaction, the re-engagement in learning was experienced positively. At the end of the course students considered that they had got what they felt they had needed from their learning. They further felt that this changed their view of education and had given them a developed sense of a freedom of choice and increased energy. The following statements relate this experience. The following two comments are typical of those made by other students in summing up their overall learning experience as:

Brilliant. Because I've got me confidence up and I'll be able to go on [to do] *other things after this.* [Helen, Exit interview]

It's been a kick start basically, where I was before I came here, it's reinvigorated my kind of interest in being in a learning institution... The way it's impacted on me is it's basically it's got my sparkle back. [Rick, Exit interview]

Students expressed a sense of positive change in themselves, in contrast to previous learning experienced prior to the course, as indicated in the following statements:

> *The course, the Prince's Trust course, it's been an experience, an experience I'll never forget. No not at all* [not the same person at the end of the course]*.* [Tony, Exit interview]

Having the freedom to engage or disengage in learning without any sense of coercion, was an important factor that encouraged initial engagement for one student, as expressed in the following statement:

> *It's not a conscription you're not forced into it. You have got the option of leaving if you feel uncomfortable at any time.* [Rick, Exit interview]

Emergent Proposition 1c: Untapped potential and motivation

Students' responses were included in this outcome proposition if they gave an indication of experiencing a sense of their untapped potential and motivation to learn. For example, one student stated:

> *I did an accountants course but you had to pay for the exam because it was part time. I would have got it back if I was able to come up with the money but I wasn't able to come up with it.* [Peter, Entry interview]

For another student learning in some form was considerable part of life, as expressed in the following statement:

> *When I wasn't working I had these quiet days. Fortunately I had access to the internet and I was forever on Wikipedia learning about all my interests. I mean I am a bit of a square, I like steam engines and steamships and stuff. Learning how triple expansion engines work. Learning is something I like to do, but not just plain learning about a subject, I like learning about other people.* [Rick, Entry interview]

Emergent Proposition 1d: Possession of a sense to be able to do things successfully

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they appeared to possess a self-perception of their ability to do things prior to engaging in learning, or they expressed a desire to do something with their lives and to engage in defining their own future. They experienced the contrast between how life had been for them and how they wanted it to be. An awareness of unlived, wasted potential was experienced by some students that resonated with a realisation of untapped

aspects of themselves. This was accompanied by a sense of discontent in their lives. For example, one participant stated:

> *I could have done something with myself. I have wasted opportunity.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

Challenge at the beginning of engaging in learning was viewed by some students as stimulating and desirable and they considered themselves capable of meeting the ways in which it might present to them on a day to day basis. This presentation was considered as not necessarily restricted to being singular in occurrence, but there was anticipated, or imagined to be a plurality of challenges that would occur in the future and during the course of daily living:

> *...I want do something like the tutor does, do you know what I mean? I'd like something like, something that gives you challenges each day.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

The idea of challenge was accompanied by one of determination. To have the will to get things done was for one student something that had only been acquired recently:

> *That's a new thing that's come to me, it has been recent the determination that I have got now and what I had before.* [Peter, Entry interview]

The trajectory of this determination for another student was towards the goal of completing the course:

> *I am determined to do things. If I set myself a challenge then I will do that challenge. It's like if I say to myself 'Now I am challenging myself to complete this course I will do'.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

Skills developed prior to engaging in education were identified by some students and considered as a possible basis for additional learning and career choice. For example, one student reported that:

> *I have really got into me cooking and thinking of going into that, but that maybe because it's the only thing I can think of. So by the time it gets to there* [getting a job]*, to work, I have really got to choose what I want.* [Lauren, Entry interview]

Another student believed that they had possessed a capacity to learn at school at an early and thought that this could have been developed to a higher education level:

> *If I could turn the clock back to that time now I would make myself learn and I would enjoy it and get myself in university or whatever.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

One student valued the opportunity to prove to herself that she was capable of being more than a mum and housewife, and had a belief that she could be effective in doing things in the wider world, outside of the familiar role as a mother:

> *It is just to prove to myself that I can do these things, get out and do something else rather than just being a mum and a housewife.* [Helen, Entry interview]

There was some satisfaction experienced at the end of the course in looking back at what had been done and a sense of completion was expressed. The successful completing of the course was not too surprising for some of the students who had held a belief in the possession of personal qualities prior to the course:

> *Well I've always known that I've been reasonably intelligent do you know what I mean.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

> *I knew I was a people's person I knew I would be good at all that working for the NHS and all that.* [Lauren, Exit interview]

A particular prior self asset was considered by one student to be the ability to make friends; this had found a fuller expression on the course as expressed in the following statement:

> *They haven't seen me obviously* [friends prior to the course]*, so here they haven't seen me with people outside like my mate when I was at the care home, she saw me with those people and said I got on brilliantly with them and she didn't think I would but I did. I'm quite sympathetic when I want be.* [Lauren, Exit interview]

Reflecting on the course at the end provided a sense of the movement that had taken place through the experience of learning. The following student's statement gives expresses to this:

> *It made you realise how much you had done when you're doing it you don't think about it but when you were writing down you would see that you had done a lot more than you thought you had, it gave you chance to reflect as well.* [Maria, Exit interview]

And as a part of a continuity of experience and movement at end of the course, this projected into an anticipation of future actions, directions and considerations, as expressed in the following statement:

> *And it's kind of helped me figure out what I want to do next like job wise and things. So it's given me the confidence to go after that and look into going to college and that, rather than sitting at home not doing anything.* [Maria, Exit interview]

The experience of engaging in learning provided an expansion of what students termed confidence, this was accompanied by a sense of greater self-motivation and the desire to identify what needed to change. The following students' statements provide examples of this:

> *One thing I haven't been able to do in the past is write a cover letter, I haven't got a clue what context, so I went to the library to find a 'how to write a letter' book, so I find an area that I'm struggling with or I'm weak on and I will try and self improve, if not ask for feedback.* [Rick, Exit interviews]

> *I've got the skill, the ability, confidence now to go into an interview and make an impact and that is all down to this twelve weeks because beforehand, I probably would have walked into a place and interview with head down muttering. I wouldn't have been able to speak probably or gesticulate properly as well. I would have been very, very, nervous as well.* [Rick, Exit interview]

Students account for some of the change they have experienced by use of the term 'confidence'; the following student's statement typifies this:

> *There's been a change in me like... I've learnt that confidence is a good way of learning, if you've got the confidence...If you've got the confidence to try something you know you might not succeed straight away, but just the confidence to try things.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

Emergent Proposition 1e: A notion of confidence Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they demonstrated that the student had a notion of confidence as understood in their own terms, and some understanding of themselves in relation to this notion. The students used the word confidence in relation to various contexts, such as meeting or being with others and learning. A notion of confidence was also expressed in more general terms as something

which had been lost and had to be recovered. For one student the development of confidence was associated with the experience of engaging with friends again:

> *I lacked in confidence, a lot of confidence plus with being in and out of jail you don't really meet people do you because you spend most time behind your door and when you are out you are just with your mates again so you don't really meet people. Now my confidence is building back and I am doing well.* [Andy, Entry interview]

An anticipated gain in self-confidence as a direct result of being on the course was associated with the idea of attaining qualifications for some students, for example:

> *Now it will give me the confidence and the qualifications.* [Helen, Entry interview]

> *Gaining some qualifications, building me confidence up, stop being shy basically.* [Tony, Entry interview]

One student used the term confidence in recognition of something which they had once possessed and related it to their forward movement in life to get somewhere. It was a reminder of a time when the possession of what was felt to be confidence, was not an issue and the thought that it had been something that had been possessed made it something that needed to be retrieved. The participant made the following statement:

> *But I really want to get my confidence back. I want to be where I was in 2003 when I was leaving high school. I was so full of confidence, nothing could stop me. Even my grandma pointed out a few months back, she got my school photo and she said "Look at you; you are full of confidence there* [in that photo]. *What has gone wrong?"* [Rick, Entry interview]

There were specific contexts which were identified as being challenging to students. Loss of what one student referred to as 'confidence' was linked to a lack of movement in the following statement and a diminished ability to act:

> *When* [the tutor] *goes on about telephone donation I am not looking forward to that because I am not very confident on the telephone and that. It's like when I am having an interview over the phone or something, I freeze up and I lose what I am about to say even if I have got it written down on a pad. I am not too good at the phone interviews and that.* [Peter, Entry interview]

Whilst there were specific contexts in which a lack of what students referred to as 'confidence' could be identified and anticipated, there was also a belief that this could be changed and that such confidence could be built up in preparation for a future event. One student expressed the discomfort in considering a future task, but also allowed for the possibility that confidence may well be there to a greater degree when it came to the actual event:

> *Probably just the presentation at the end because nobody likes getting up in front*
> *of loads of people because you have got to build your confidence up haven't you?*
> *But hopefully I might be able build me confidence up over the next eleven twelve*
> *weeks. I might be very confident when it comes to it but at the moment I am not*
> *looking forward to it*. [Stewart, Entry interview]

3.2.2 Outcome Proposition 2: A decision to engage in learning despite fears and anxieties

Definition – **Students were motivated to act in order to engage in learning that is accessible to them. This is accompanied by an inner movement from a sense of no purpose to one of meaning and purpose. The inner movement occurs despite fears and anxieties surrounding the anticipated learning experience.**

This proposition is derived from students' comments on the experience of their own process of engaging in learning. They commented on their sense of movement and awareness of an inner change that was related by the students to having a sense of purpose in life, a sense of meaning and of future. The experience of engaging in learning was itself accompanied by fears and discomfort. This sense of movement and motivation led, for some students, to decisions to quickly contact the college, and for others a process of consideration was entered into prior to making contact. These considerations involved such things as contemplating the actual decision to engage in learning, actively making arrangements for child care or purposefully redirecting attention away from established networks of friends. There was a sense in the students of an irreversibility of change being experienced. The pre-course encouragement of others such a family members or friends, was for some students believed to be a key element in the decision to access learning. The continuation of the experience of encouragement that was provided by other students on the course was valued.

The emergent pathway associated with Outcome Proposition 2 is shown in figure 3.2 (in insert sleeve). There are three emergent propositions for this outcome proposition: (2a) *Decisive action,* (2b) *A sense of purpose and change,* and (2c) *Overcoming fears to engage in learning*. The figure illustrates the entry and exit provisional categories that are included in each emergent proposition and the rules for inclusion of these provisional categories.

Emergent Proposition 2a: Decisive action

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if there was an indication of a motivation to take action to engage in learning. This motivation for some participants resulted in a quick response to the opportunity to enter into learning, whereas others spent time reflecting on the possibility before making a decision. For some students having made a decision to apply for the course, it was then a question of how they might organise their life around the course. The decision to engage in learning was generally one made autonomously without any immediate consultation with others. For example, one student recalled taking time to consider their choice to apply for the course:

> *I had a couple of weeks' notice of it, that's when I started thinking about it and rang [a tutor] and got an interview and I got in.* [Tony, Entry interview]

Another student stated clearly that the decision to apply for the course was one which ultimately, was made on their own:

> *No I decided it myself.* [Tony, Entry interview]

For another student the decision to take action and apply for the course involved diminishing the influence of past experiences and of others:

> *I just switched off to them* [friends] *and thought 'Right this is me now, my turn to shine. So whatever has happened then and whoever I have known I have got to put them to the back of my mind, because I need to do this for myself'. That's how I basically did it.* [Andy, Entry interview]

Circumstances at an earlier stage in life had been a barrier to engaging in learning but the possibility was held onto and when the time was ripe, was put into action. For example, one student stated:

> *I just saw the advert for this in the Sentinel and it is something I have wanted to do for a long time. I was supposed to do it when I was 16 but I found out I was pregnant. I thought I'd come back now my children are in school.* [Helen, Entry interview]

For this same student the decision to engage in learning was not necessarily a simple process but had a broader context of responsibilities to be considered in planning around the decision:

Just getting people to pick my children up from school on days when I am doing
something like this, otherwise I would go home earlier to pick them up but it was
things like that fitting it around my children. [Helen, Entry interview]

Whilst the course tutors were flexible in meeting the needs of students for this student, attending the course involved important decisions around the care of children. The capacity to make decisions and to organise a daily routine for this student, were not necessarily derived from engaging in learning but were already developed prior to this.

It's just good because I've got children and they've [the course tutors] let me work
it around that so I've still been dropping them off at school and I can pick them up
and so the course sort of works around that. [Helen, Exit interview]

Emergent proposition 2b: A sense of purpose and change

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they indicated a shift or movement from a sense of no purpose to one of purpose on engaging in learning, and if there was indication of a belief in their capacity to change. The anticipation of change was one which was generally experienced by all students, as indicated in the following statements:

Yeah it is going to change me as a person. [Andy, Entry interview]

Because it is going to change me. [Annabel, Entry interview]

Because I have been in and out of prison all my life and I have been homeless as
well and I moved into the Salvation Army and they told me about the course. It is
an opportunity where I can just do something with my time, do the course just
keeping busy. I know it is going to change me as a person. [Andy, Entry interview]

A sense of change and purpose manifested in various ways for students but was generally linked to the doing of something. For example, one participant stated:

Making new friends. They are all a great group. I mean I can get on with a lot of
people, but what else I want to get out of it, I want to get a sense of purpose.
[Rick, Entry interview]

... it [coming to college] *can get me into a routine and that as well, waking up*
early, getting out. [Peter, Entry interview]

Or as expressed in the following statement by another student:

> Its [coming to college] *playing a good part, I'm getting out the house. Just doing*
> *stuff every day, instead of sitting there.* [Tony, Entry interview]

The sense of change and purpose was for some students projected onto future hopes of getting a job. One participant found the idea of going to work stimulating:

> *Something exciting that I can do. It would be exciting to wake up each morning*
> *and get up to work.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

Students identified an awareness of the contrast between not doing anything and doing something. One student stated:

> *The fact that I know what it is like to be doing something with your life I know in*
> *work and training and stuff like that, and I know what it is like to not be doing*
> *something with your life and it far outweighs not doing something with your life,*
> *so it was take the bull by the horns. It seemed like a perfect opportunity to do that*
> *sort of thing.* [Lauren, Entry interview]

In contrast, for one student an awareness of doing nothing was not something that had always been present, but dawned as a new insight or perspective on life as it was being lived:

> *It's like I say I just woke up one day in my life and just realised I am not doing*
> *nothing.* [Peter, Entry interview]

At the end of the engagement in learning students expressed a sense of change or movement in their selves as a direct result of the course and of future purpose. An understanding of this change was described in differing ways as related in the following statements:

One student's sense of change was expressed both dimensionally and with some conviction in the knowledge that a movement had taken place which was not reversible:

> *I think it is like a big change because I would probably have been a 'stay at home*
> *mum' all my life type of thing, but when I've done this [The course]I know I'm not*
> *going to.* [Helen, Exit interview]

Some students expressed more practical aspects of the change they had experienced and pointed to future possibilities and aims and considered these as being realisable. For one student this meant getting a job and having a clear idea of what kind of job, as expressed in the following statement:

> *The up and coming one I've got now is trying to get into the work I want to do, that's working with the youth team leading groups with children, out in the community doing different projects.* [Tony, Exit interview]

The sense of movement for one student was experienced as forward motion. This shift did not necessarily involve a change in a fundamental belief in one's self, but that such belief had direction and movement and could be concretely represented. The following statement conveys the size of the shift experienced by one student:

> *Well I did have belief in myself before but there's wasn't much point having that belief with nothing to do to believe that I could do it sort of thing and this course has definitely one hundred per cent given me a forward motion like, and an idea of what I'm going to do, and what I want to do and how to going about doing it. And I've got a plan written up, and there is really no way it can go wrong if I carry on going sort of thing.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

A sense of movement at the end of the course was experienced as something that felt right in contrast to what was being experienced prior to engaging in learning, as presented in the following student statements:

> *I'm always out about doing something* [now] *I don't like sitting at home because when I am unemployed I'm sitting at home I'm never having a good time.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

> *It's been good* [The course] *because I'm not sitting at home basically... Realising that I can do more with my life and I know what I want to do now.* [Lauren, Exit interview]

Emergent Proposition 2c: Overcoming fears to engage in learning

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they expressed fear and anxiety around facing the challenges of engaging in learning. The overcoming of these fears at this initial time for those who took part in interviews, was indicative of the beginning of a process of change.

Apprehension about coming onto the course was experienced to some degree by all students. The following are examples in which students made statements about their fears:

> *Well I am one of them people who if I feel a bit scared I will just run away and I won't bother doing it...My past, because of the things I have done in the past I think people are going to judge me on what I have been like, it was big thing.*
> [Andy, Entry interview]

Facing this fear was also a point of self-affirmation and purpose, as expressed in the statement of one student, whose anticipation of change and identification with it enabled the decision to engage in learning to overcome his fears: in the following statement the student recalls an ambivalent experience of the process that resulted in crossing the threshold to engaging in learning, the student's notion of 'transitions' seeming to be instrumental in the choice made to enter into a new learning experience:

> *Yes, I was apprehensive at first because when my dad dropped me off on the Monday, I had my rucksack with me, I turned up a little bit early because I thought I will go and sit in the park next to the college and have a cigarette. I was humming and r-ing, because I saw all the people going into the college and I thought 'Transitions there for me' and I thought 'No I have got to do this course'.*
> [Rick, Entry interview]

> *Actually coming to the course because I haven't got the confidence coming to the course and meeting new people but I just decided that I need to do it for myself. The biggest challenge really is myself.* [Andy, Entry interview]

Although one student did not identify any experience of fear or anxiety about engaging in learning and stated:

> *No really, no, it was pretty straight forward.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

Fear and anxiety was experienced at differing stages of the course and was met by action and movement towards engaging with the source of fear. The following statements made by students are examples of this:

> *I just went and sat by the table and started talking to people.* [Tony, Entry interview]

Just get up and do it, like today I've got the task for next week , we are all going
away next week and I've got the task of sorting all the shopping out and today I've
had to stand up in front of the class and sort it all out with the class. Putting your
hand up for different activities like that. [Tony, Entry interview]

At the end of the course students were able to identify difficulties they had experienced in engaging in learning. These difficulties were sometimes aspects of their lives that were with them prior to engaging in learning and remained with them at the end. These difficulties seemed not to prevent the learning experience being one that was valued in its own right. For example one student stated:

There is the hindrance that I've got, a problem with alcohol. That is one that I'm
trying to get assistance with. It's a slow long process and I will be the first to admit
that I have fallen off the programme a couple of times. That is one of the hardest
things I need to battle. This course has really given me a lot more positivity. The
only thing the course can't do for me is get rid of my insomnia. [Rick, Exit
interview]

Another student identified difficult emotional responses that had not been helpful to engaging in learning, but were personally owned, in that there was a sense o responsibility and accountability for finding more constructive means of expression. Learning from the course was considered to have made this possible and achievable:

Before the course, before I'd done this course I've had problems and I just go up like a
bottle of pop and this course has shown me how to deal with it in different ways,
different problems and how to deal with them. [Tony, Exit interview]

Despite an alcohol problem the commitment to engage in learning was sustained for another student, as expressed in the following statements:

I didn't come in drunk but I come in hung over and it must have been on my
clothes... Once I was over that I was back to normal sort of thing and I could deal
with the things they were asking of me. [Stewart, Exit interview]

The encouragement of others was identified at the end of the course as an important element in overcoming difficulties and fears of engaging in learning:

...like climbing the rock wall, I was thinking like no, not with my chest but no, they
managed to talk me into it and support me and encourage me, and before I know

it I'm at the top of the rope. I just won't look down, so it is challenging. [Rick, Exit interview]

One student felt that the course itself had been centred on overcoming anxieties and fears:

…the course is designed to test people and make them challenge themselves and face their fears sort of thing and I've definitely done that a lot. [Stewart, Exit interview]

One student expressed some acceptance that things do not always go according to plan and of having and identified a personal familiar pattern of response to this:

Everybody gets frustrated … The task goes out the window. Basically, everything just does go out the window. I tend to just go off on one, I do let them know and I can't help that. [Lauren, Exit interview]

3.2.3 Outcome Proposition 3: Previous experiences of trust

Definition – Students have previous experiences of trust prior to engaging in learning which enable them to make constructive and meaningful relationships with other learners. Acceptance, trust, support and feedback of other learners are valued and sought for, and are experienced as stimulating and motivating.

Students had experience of some form of trusting relationships prior to engaging on the course. These relationships varied and included trusting relationships with friends, relatives and partners. These trusting experiences enabled them to engage with others on the course, to an extent that it enabled an acceptance of the feedback offered by others. Feedback was sought, highly valued and experienced as rewarding. It encouraged and led to increased self-worth and motivation. The acceptance experienced from others on the course was considered as a stimulant for mutually expressed respect amongst students and tutors. How a student felt they were perceived by others was important to their sense of valued engagement in learning.

The emergent pathway associated with Outcome Proposition 3 is shown in Figure 3.3 (in insert sleeve). There are four emergent propositions for this outcome proposition: (3a) *Trust, respect and the valuing of self and others*, (3b) *Previous experience of trust*, (3c) *self-worth and the perception of others,* and (3d) *Acceptance and motivation*. The figure illustrates the entry and exit provisional categories that are included in each emergent proposition and the rules for inclusion of these provisional categories.

Emergent Proposition 3a: Trust, respect and the valuing of self and of others

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they indicated a developed notion of trust and a belief in the value of others which enables them to begin to form constructive relationships and affirm or develop a valuing of self. This reciprocated valuing is fundamental to the fostering of a receptivity and openness to constructive evaluation of self and evaluation of self by others. This particularly manifested itself through the experience of teamwork. For example, one student stated:

> *A lot a lot of team work. It is all team work building exercise basically, helping others if someone is struggling then you go and help them. If I am struggling then I know someone will come and help me. It is just talking to them as well, if their head is not really with it on the course then it's taking them to one side and having a word with them and getting their head back on the task in hand.* [Andy, Entry interview]

The respect and valuing of others was expressed through an empathetic consideration and gesture. For example, one student stated:

> *Obviously there are friendships, you can make friends and it is always nice to have friends and knowing that you have successfully completed your role in that team, if you have got a task like we are doing today. Me and another student are team leaders and I said 'Come on let's give them a five minute break'.* [Rick, Entry interview]

A sense of trust, value, the ready acceptance of other people's viewpoints, and a willingness to share and communicate their own was shared by all students:

> *Yea it shows that you can trust other people* [on the course] *because I don't trust, it's a big thing for me I don't trust people too often.* [Peter, Entry interview]

For another student, the development of a close communication between group members was experienced as operating effectively at a non-verbal level:

> *We are kind of getting to that point now where we know just by looking at each other to shut up.* [Rick, Entry interview]

At the end of the course students reported generally that they had expanded their networks of friends. The nature of these relationships varied, but for some the context was the course and did not extend into other aspects of their lives, for others relationships were not limited to the duration

of the course. An increased ability to make friends was thought something that could be extended beyond the course. For one student it was a new experience to find that it was possible to relate positively to a number of people who were all different. This is conveyed in following statement:

I just didn't think I used to get on with many people like but then when I've come here and it's all different types of people and I've got on with them all. [Helen, Exit interview]

Another student noticed a shift away from a pre-course group of friends; this was understood as being necessary for maintaining well-being. The ability and confidence to make new friends was considered to be transferable to other contexts:

Well the thing is my set of friends I've had to distance myself from because they're very small minded in terms of activities. They will just sit in the pub every night, and now I can't afford to do that. My health has actually suffered because of doing that, so I've distanced myself away from that … I'm going to use the confidence that the team gave me to try and make new friends because obviously, you don't want to be in a strange city all alone for three years …it's not going to happen, so yes my ability to make new friends has increased tenfold via this course. [Rick, Exit interview]

One student expressed a strong sense of the context of friendship being limited to the course, and a central defining sense of personal individuality as being uppermost in importance:

I've been friends with all of them throughout it, but I wouldn't say I've made any lifelong friends because I come on to this course for myself. Not to sound horrible, but I came on the course to try and change my ways and better myself, so I've not really been interested in making lifelong friends. Each day I've come in I've just been interested in myself and achieving as much as I can do. [Tony, Exit interview]

One student experienced a shift in the nature of the student group from the beginning to the end:

At the beginning of the course we were more separated as a group, two people would go off with each other and another two people would go together, but by the end of the course it was more of a big group and we would all go off. [Maria, Exit interview]

The new networks were considered to be fostered in a number of ways as expressed in the following student statements:

> [Building new networks through] *just talking… It was quite easy*. [Helen, Exit interview]

For other students it was shared time and experiences which fostered the forming of relationships as described in the following statements:

> *The second week of the residential, it's when we go away for a week. It either makes you or breaks the group. So if you can last that week with your group you're going to be friends with them, because they put you through some real tough challenges.* [Tony, Exit interview]

> *I went out drinking with them and one of them had a skate board. I'm not allowed skate board at the minute but I did have a bit of skate round on it sort of thing and went a music gig, watched a band play.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

One student refers to the quality of the relationships formed, and a sense of their continuity not being contextually limited to the course:

> *Yes we are all pretty close friends now so it's nice, and we're all keeping in touch with each other, so it's nice to know that just because the course has ended you haven't lost the people.* [Maria, Exit interview]

Emergent proposition 3b: Previous experience of trust

To be included in this emergent proposition, students' statements needed to indicate a notion of trust derived from social networks established prior to engaging in learning. There were indications of substantially bonded, reciprocally trusting relationships, which had been experienced prior to engaging in adult learning. For example, one student stated:

> *Being social is a very good aspect of life but as opposed to friends relying on people for stuff like when you are younger not so much anymore but yeah. I cherish me friends and I respect them.* [Lauren, Entry interview]

The mutuality is expressed in the following two statements by students:

> *Yeah we help each other out with each other's kids. If have got to go somewhere they will help me out and they support with this I am doing. They have all got*

children too young, they are not in school yet but they support me with that.
[Helen, Entry interview]

Looking out for me mates like. I think the same as they do about me. I like having people around me. I don't like being on my own. [Annabel, Entry interview]

Emergent Proposition 3c: Self-worth and the perception of others

Statements made by students were included in this emergent proposition if they contained a sense of respect arising from how they believe others perceive them. For example, one student stated:

They [others on the course] *look up to me because I am a bit older and I know about stuff. They respect me.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

Another student recalled what it was like to have been alone without interaction with others. This experience of being alone was contrasted by this student with what it was like to have the reassurance of being with others: As expressed in the following statement:

You are up in the morning you have got something to do, you are with people, you have got people wherever you are give you that reassurance that you are on the right track. It's all positive feedback when you are doing something like that as opposed to what your brain can do to itself when you are sitting alone in a room with a can of beer in your hand, to be completely honest. [Lauren, Entry interview]

One student experienced acceptance and encouragement from friends outside the course and an affirmation of choice to engage in learning was afforded by the sense of their benign envy of him as expressed in the following statement in referring to their friends:

They've just gone 'Yeah man you can do it'. They were a bit surprised actually what this course is, what it is about and what it offers. They were shocked as I was telling them 'Well this is a part of it and this is a part of it, we will be going and doing this like the residential thing, and you get a free bus pass'. They were all going ' I wish I'd rung them up' [the student's friends wished they had rung the college too]. [Lauren, Entry interview]

Emergent proposition 3d: Acceptance and motivation

Statements were included in this emergent proposition if students referred to an experience of their acceptance by others or of respect from others such as friends or relatives, which influenced their

decision to engage in learning. Such acceptance was reported by students as coming from various sources and was something which was present prior to engaging in learning and sustained following students engaging in learning. A sense of being accepted was important for the motivation to stay engaged in learning and to consider future employment possibilities. The tutors in particular, were experienced by all students as accepting and motivating. The following student statements are typical examples of motivation from tutors:

> *Well* [the tutors] *mainly go on about it and it's like they say when you practice at something you do get gradually better and better at it.* [Peter, Entry interview]

> [The tutor] *told me about what I would be doing, the different sort of things, it's a bit of everything like so I should be able find out what sort of career path I want to take. So I am not just basing it on one thing, I am going over everything on this course...Something like in the future I would like do what people are doing for me now, like my team leaders, helping me see things a lot more clearly and stuff.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

And the experience of being accepted by a tutor is expressed by the following student statements:

> *And if I need a break* [On the Prince's Trust course] *I can have a break. When I was at school I couldn't, I had to do it* [the work set by the teacher in the classroom] *there and then. My head doesn't work under pressure like that..Yes I had to have an interview and I told them all about myself and they didn't judge me on my past, they just let me on to the course.* [Andy, Entry interview]

> *You are just comfortable around them.* [The tutors] *help because they don't judge you. They said the first day you are in here we don't know your background why you act the way you do. So we* [do not]*... judge you as a person.* [Peter, Entry interview]

Acceptance from others outside of the course came from a number of different sources. For one student it was in the form of encouragement from a family member:

> *Well my mum's been mentioning it to me for a while* [The Prince's Trust] *that it might be useful, it could be helpful for me.* [Annbel, Entry interview]

For others, the encouragement came from friends and peers. The following students' statements are typical examples of peer acceptance:

Quite supportive actually [participant's friends]*. I don't know what they would think, just alright with me, they don't make any judgments about it or nothing.* [Peter, Entry interview]

My mates they said it's a good *thing do, it's supposed to set you up for life, it's a good experience like.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

They'd [friends] *be alright with it. They ask me every day how my day has been.* [Tony, Entry interview]

Students at the end of the course expressed the value of working with others which was beneficial on a number of different levels. An appreciation of difference was expressed and an understanding that the cultivation of relationship required developing skills. Relationship also required mutual giving. For example one student stated:

Before I used to do everything I did on my own, I had friends like, but not people of all different ages and backgrounds and stuff like that. You can get on with other people and that you can work in a team and you have to like listen ….We've all helped each other with things. [Helen, Exit interview]

The forming of relationships for one student had meant effecting changes in attitude towards others as related in the following statement:

One of the main difficulties that I had to overcome was my intolerance of others … But my tolerance levels of other people and other cultures and different backgrounds has been raised slightly, you know I've been able to speak to people from the Asian community, people who are street smart. I learnt a lot of different phrases from them. So it's more of just a social understanding, so that's one thing I had to break down my barrier. This course has helped via integration with the group. [Rick, Exit interview]

Students expressed some sense of the motivation gained from working others and a sense of the learning from others that can take place:

Learning with others I think is a lot more effective than learning on your own …You can just have a look at different learning types, different peoples' ways of learning, and try different ways of learning yourself, with help of the other people and try which way suits you best. [Tony, Exit interview]

I just really enjoyed the course and I knew by the end of it I would gain something out of it, and the other people on the course kept me motivated as well and I didn't want to let them down …Not sure really I think just having the other people around me …Yes I think it's just the other people on the course …So they just pushed you along and didn't let you get yourself down… [Others were on the course]*who always tried to help you and be positive about you so then you become positive about yourself.* [Maria, Exit interview]

To witness others' failings was reassuring and normalized personal experiences of failure so that motivation to engage in learning was less diminished by thoughts of failure. As one student stated:

It's been good [learning with others] it's good to see how other people learn and that other people struggle as well and don't necessarily get things right all the time and that people aren't perfect all the time, and just cause you've got something wrong or you don't know something it isn't that bad because everyone gets something wrong sometimes. [Stewart, Exit interview]

Another student also identified seeing the skills of others and how they worked as useful for their learning:

I like seeing other peoples' skills and abilities, like what they are good at and what they can do because it's always different, so they might be able to show you something and teach you new skills as well. That's probably the most interesting one just learning about what other people have got to offer. [Maria, Exit interview]

The benefit of working with others was not necessarily one of directly expressed encouragement but was motivating for one student at a more practical level, as related in the following statement:

Yes I don't mind working in a team …No it doesn't really matter to me [encouragement from others]*…The company I think [is a positive aspect of*

working with others], and they help you solve the problems that you can't. …I like
people around me but when I'm doing a task, I [also] like working on my own. I
work a lot quicker and a lot better, [others] *…kind of hold you back.* [Lauren, Exit
interview]

3.2.4 Outcome Proposition 4: Where and what learning will lead to

Definition – Students from early on in their engagement in learning have thought about and developed ideas of what they want their learning to lead on to. The opportunity to think is valued.

This proposition is from the experiences expressed by students of their awareness of knowing the direction in which the course was taking them. The trajectory was towards employment or education and there was indicated by some students, an accompanying orientation and desire to developing an understanding of their own individual person. Students expressed a sense of future purpose on this basis of having realised some direction to their lives and goals became refined goals towards the end of the course. Some students gave an emphasis to a value of being with others on the course and a preference for this, some also referred to the value they placed on having time alone for contemplation.

The emergent pathway associated with Outcome Proposition 4 is shown in Figure 3.4 (in insert sleeve). There are two emergent propositions for this outcome proposition: (4a) *Future purpose*, and (4b) *The value of being alone to think at times*. The figure illustrates the entry and exit provisional categories that are included in each emergent proposition and the rules for inclusion of these provisional categories.

Emergent proposition 4a: Future purpose

Statements made by students were included in this emergent proposition if they were concerned with the idea, or development of an idea, of what the student was aiming for early on in their learning. Also included were those statements which expressed a belief in the positive value of learning. An overall sense was conveyed of learning as fulfilling a purpose and as having a role in shaping a meaningful future following the completion of the course. A sense of future purpose was possessed by all students, as illustrated in the following examples:

> *If I can get the qualifications I can get back into work hopefully. I am going learn*
> *new things that I didn't know before.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

For one student the future purpose was towards working with young people, a desire to help others was conveyed and understood as arising from the student's personal adverse experiences, so that others might be assisted at an earlier age, as expressed in the following statement:

> *I want to be a youth worker and help others who are in a similar situation the same as me. Obviously if I can catch them before they are as old as I am now.*
> [Andy, Entry interview]

For some students the future was less defined. For example one student stated:

> *A fresh start is mainly what I want to get out of the course.* [Annabel, Entry interview]

For other students, not wanting to go back to previous experiencing was a motivator to defining a new future. One stated:

> *When the course finishes in January I don't want to slip back into my old ways of 'Oh well that's it' and just sit back in bed and drink. I want to be able to get up on the first morning after the course finishes and go job searching, ringing up and getting confidence to go and say look I am the man for this job.* [Rick, Entry interview]

Another stated:

> *...it will help me to know what I want do for a future job because I don't want to go back into plastering, what I've been doing since I left school.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

At the end of the course students had defined goals concerning their future and were planning towards concretely realizing these. There was an understanding that for the future, work and education were not necessarily separate entities, but linked. One student reported on the on-going preparation being made for both continued learning and consideration of a future job:

> *Just going back into education and college really that's all... Well we had careers interview so I've got like the application form and prospectus now so I'll be able to do that ready for September*. [Helen, Exit interview]

Another student was aware of the broadening change in opportunities available and conveyed a sense of new opportunity, possibility and considered planning:

But I've also got my own goals and targets that I want. I probably would, rather than sitting and looking at the idea of going into higher education and think about getting a graduation. I would be just scrolling the warehouse operator jobs in the paper and working on them. [Rick, Exit interview]

Students were actively engaged in pursuit of their goals and had considered ideas of how to go about achieving them. There seemed to be a willingness to return to learning if interviews for jobs were unsuccessful and a resiliency to not immediately succeeding, as expressed in the following statements made by students:

Well I've just got it today, [Future course job information from the tutor] so I'll be going home later on and I'll be making a phone call enquiring about the course… I don't know as much education [taking education further] but course-wise, well I'm going to be looking at a lot of courses after this. [Tony, Exit interview]

Well I think the best way to go about it is once I've finished this course, is apply to them and look for a job straight away but don't think there's much point, well if I get a retail job. I mean nine to five, then there's no point doing six months on a retail course on a NVQ when I can just go to Tesco and with what I've got [In qualifications and experience from the Prince's trust course]. *They would give it me* [A job]. *But if it's not enough then I'm going to try these things sort of thing* [Keep on persevering in learning and looking for a job]. [Stewart, Exit interview]

So if that doesn't come through for me [a job following interview], *then it's definitely back to College, to do an apprenticeship in Health and Social Care Level two, then a care home*. [Lauren, Exit interview]

The future whether in terms of learning or employment was not something that was taken for granted, but it was recognised as needing personal planning and action, as depicted in the following statements from students:

A lot of CV's… looking for work and hopefully getting into a position where I can do a college course and hopefully fund some training sort of thing. [Stewart, Exit interview]

Before I even went to college I knew what I wanted to do, but I didn't know how to do it so I just needed a plan basically, and I went the connections in college when all of us went up and she did me a plan… obviously I didn't know how go about it… But obviously I do now and I'm in the process of doing it now… I mean I went for an interview the other day. [Lauren, Exit interview]

The following statement is typical of the student group, conveying the sense of expanded opportunity and the willingness to move into unfamiliar contexts and experiencing:

I'm a lot more confident more interested in going out and doing things and trying new things and just [being] *more directed and know more what I want to do and where I want to go in life. Before I was just trying to get any old job and not really focused on a career as such, just looking for a job. So I would probably stay more focused, setting myself goals and then achieving them and then setting new ones as well. That, I didn't really do before.* [Maria, Exit interview]

At the end of the course students reported a willingness should difficulties be encountered in pursuit of their future goals and aims, to seek help and gather information from others such as peers or tutors. Students expressed an open attitude to feedback from others and they valued the feedback process as a means for learning, both on practical and a self awareness personal levels, as related in the following statements made by students:

Because they [tutors] *give you a lot of feedback as a group people feedback a lot so they say 'You could do it this way next or go about it a different way'.* [Maria, Exit interview]

Probably now I would like to ask somebody rather than thinking 'Well I don't know'. So don't doing anything [Not take any action or be motivated to ask others to find out the answers to questions], *but now I know there are people there for help, you like, so you can ask them for information… Well like most things really you've got* [to] *check what you're supposed to be doing sort of thing, what's expected of you in whatever you're trying do, so we've had to sort of do that all the way through like.* [Helen, Exit interview]

For one student the experience of feedback affirming learning given by the tutors was highly valued:

My folders are always up to a high level and I always get good praise from our tutor and so I like to think that I have [Been successful on the course]. [Rick, Exit interview]

Just asking people how you could have done it better. [Maria, Exit interview]

For one student the ideal was to be able to develop self-awareness, in addition to feedback from others:

I think that's the main one; feedback off people. Another one is [to] *try and recognise them* [personal unhelpful behaviours and attitudes] *myself if I can. It's useful really [having feedback from others], because then you learn more about how to go about things rather than just someone tells you how to do it…* [Tony, Exit interview]

By the end of the course students were expressing clear goals and their plans to achieve them, as illustrated in the following statements:

Hairdressing… I'll be trying to get an NVQ in hairdressing. [Helen, Exit interview]

One student indicated the new skills that would be transferable to a future context and a sense of future challenge that could now be met through the personal change experienced on the course:

… But now six years on, realizing that I'm 24 years old and knowing where I want to go, and I have to get a degree. I am kind of looking forward to those kind of challenges just to be able to adapt to them, and I'm hoping now that with taking what I've taken away from here, I will continue to use it in a workplace environment, because since when this course finishes I will need some kind of employment, up until, if I get into uni. Then obviously when I get into uni, it's using these skills I've honed to integrate with other people and make friends, obviously as well to find employment in the said area that I go… and I'm just a completely different person. I take pride in myself, I get up in the morning, brush my teeth. I've got a better outlook, a better standing. I've got a goal, I've got a plan and I'm going to follow it, and that plan is quite simply, despite factors getting in the way, is after here, get some form of job and do a bit of voluntary care, and fingers crossed, by September or October. [Rick, Exit interview]

Another student considered independence to be an incentive for further their learning, and had a clear long term aim in mind:

> *I definitely want to be in a position where; well I've always been able to rely on my mum and dad for years but my mum's passed away and my dad's ill and it's like the one thing that I really want, which is one of the things that's driving me, is to, I will be packing my bags, going to University, sticking to those courses for three years, graduating, PGCE and then move into higher education.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

One student's future plans were expressed as a drive for independence accompanied by a newly experienced confidence that was apparent at the onset of engagement in learning:

> *...be self-sufficient... But I do it, I'm signing on, but I'm not doing it with money that I've earned. I do everything I need to do, but I want to get to the point where I'm earning my money and I'm one hundred per cent self-sufficient... people could see that I wasn't working and I must have without even realising it, hung my head, but a week into this course and I walked down the street and looked up a lot more confident.* [Stewart, Exit interview]

For one student the aim to get a job was a broader one and familiar, and the challenge of attaining employment remained undiminished:

> *Getting settled in a* [future purpose] *that I can enjoy and see myself doing until I retire. That's my biggest challenge I think, I've been trying to get a job now for a year so that's the biggest challenge I'm facing at the moment.* [Maria, Exit interview]

Emergent Proposition 4b: The value of being alone to think at times

Students' statements were placed in this emergent proposition if they included taking time to think alone. For example, one student made the following statements:

> *Yes I'd prefer being on my own...You can work at your pace there's no need to work faster or slower because it's just you. It's your ideas and it's what you feel and how you act to things.. I only prefer to be on my own when I am working. If I am working I am more solitary but when I am outside and I am not working I will*

talk with anyone. I like being with others, I like socialising, I socialise a lot. [Peter, Entry interview]

Time alone was valued by one student for providing a space to think in:

I do like working with people but I do like my own space as well. I do like to get away sometimes, lie on me bed, let things roll through my mind and think what has happened. [Annabel, Entry interview]

3.2.5 Outcome Proposition 5: A consideration of money

Definition – Money is a factor which has to be considered by students in their decision to engage in learning.

Emergent proposition: 5a is the only emergent proposition that is not subsumed under any Outcome Proposition. It is therefore is considered to 'stand alone' and to be an Outcome Proposition in its own right. In this case it becomes Outcome proposition Five.

Students initially engaging in learning gave expression to the difficulties experienced in having no money. A lack of money was considered to be a barrier to engaging in substantial learning that might for example enable a job to be secured. Additionally for one mother, any money earned from being employed would be negated by the cost of child care fees. There was expressed a need and willingness to learn and to be employed, but this was against a backdrop of the realities presented to the students of not having enough money, and which they considered had blocked their way to engaging in learning. By the end of the course a notion of a lack of money was absent from the discourse in the Exit interviews.

The emergent pathway associated with Outcome Proposition 5 is shown in Figure 3.5 (in insert sleeve). There is one emergent proposition for this outcome proposition: (5a) *A question of money*. The figure illustrates the entry and exit provisional categories that are included in each emergent proposition and the rules for inclusion of these provisional categories.

Emergent Proposition 5a: A question of money

Students' responses were included in this emergent proposition if they made reference to the role that money played in their lives. Students experienced a lack of money as being a barrier to engaging in education, thus excluding them from participating in education. The form in which a lack of money impacted on their lives varied. For example, for one student the education that was accessible on an informal and part-time basis was not the kind of learning that was useful to improving their life circumstances, as captured in the following statement:

It would help if child care was cheaper you could do some education while you have got children and they can go to child care while you do something, but you can't do that. They say "you can do first aid for a couple of hours". I have done things like that since I have had the kids but it doesn't bring you out of the rut that you are in if you know what I mean. [Helen, Entry interview]

Students expressed a desire to bring about change in their lives and were active in looking at potential courses, but the process to engage in learning was one which was experienced as thwarted through a lack of money. For example, one student stated:

No, I was always looking at different courses and it was just the start dates that I had to wait for and then come September I was looking at the courses and that, but I had no credit on my phone and I didn't know anyone who had a house phone that I could use apart from one that were four miles away and that... and with having no money at all, because I had no source of income at all whatsoever. [Peter, Entry interview]

They concluded that money was the means to bringing about a change in circumstances:

Well without money you cannot do nothing, can you? [Peter, Entry interview]

Another student stated:

I've looked at it before [education] *but I've always been over the age where you have had to pay for it. That came to a problem then because they are not cheap courses either.* [Stewart, Entry interview]

A belief that education was inaccessible led to a life of crime for another student:

Yes, I got into more crime since I couldn't get back into college or in school I just got into crime. I didn't find any other way to make money. I didn't have the brains to make any money, so the only way of making money was through crime. [Andy, Entry interview]

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of the constant comparative analysis of the student entry and exit interviews. Each of the five outcome propositions are illustrated together with their relevant

subsumed emergent propositions. Indicative quotations from the analysis of entry and exit interviews have been used to support the commentary on the findings.

In summary, the findings suggest that students' experience dissatisfaction prior to engaging in learning and have had previous learning experiences which have discouraged their involvement in learning. However they also possess a sense of untapped personal potential. The decision to engage as an adult in learning is one that is made despite fears and anxieties. The move to engage is experienced as having purpose and meaning. Previous experiences of trusting relationships are foundational to developing a sense of value and worth both of self and of others. The building of trusting relationships deepens and motivates engagement in the learning process. The students develop, at an early stage in learning, ideas about their future. These ideas become more defined and concrete over a prolonged engagement. A consideration of money is a factor considered by students in their decision to engage in learning, but this was not a prominent feature by the end of the course.

There were indications of a possibility that a transformative learning process had begun prior to engagement in learning. It was not possible to gain access to students following their point of first contact or at the time of application. This was due to their potential sensitivity as 'hard to reach' young adult learners at the preliminary stages of enquiring about learning. It was therefore considered that assessing the tutor experience might contribute to a fuller understanding of the students learning process. In order to address this possibility, interviews were conducted with tutors who had taught on the Prince's Trust courses attended by the student sample. The following chapter (Chapter 4) presents the findings from the tutor interviews.

CHAPTER 4   TUTOR INTERVIEW FINDINGS

CONTENTS

4.1   Introduction

Chapter 3 presented the findings arising from a constant comparative analysis of the student interviews conducted at the beginning and end of their engagement in learning. The process of analysis of students' entry interviews had indicated that change was occurring for students prior to engaging in learning; consequently this led to the interviewing of tutors. This chapter presents the findings arising from the process of the constant comparative method as applied to the coded transcripts for the tutor interviews. The chapter is divided into 3 sections. Section 4.1 the introduction, links the chapter with the rationale as to why tutor interviews were deemed necessary. Section 4.2 presents the findings in the order of the outcome propositions 1 -3. Each outcome proposition is discussed together with their relative subsumed emergent propositions. The tutor analysis and findings are intended to inform the discussion of the students learning process through the experience of the tutor's perspective as source knowledge of the learners' experiencing. Section 4.3 concludes the findings indicating that the tutor experience is that students can and do change, and that this was fostered by the quality of the tutor-student relationship.

The process of analysis and findings of the student entry interviews (chapters 2 and 3), suggested at an early stage, that there was a process of personal transformation occurring for the potential students prior to any contact with adult learning provision, which had implications for how this might be understood in terms of what might be anticipated by the theory of transformative learning (chapter 1). The emergent design of the research enabled a focus on this possibility of pre engagement in learning change. To investigate this would have required that students were interviewed for the purposes of the research, as soon as possible following an initial contact with the learning institution. Consideration of conducting these interviews deemed it potentially too intrusive at such an early sensitive stage in a 'hard to reach' young adult learners' engagement in learning. There was a possibility that the research process might have a negative effect on their decisions to engage in learning, this was considered too great a risk to justify interviews at such an early stage.

However an alternative means to accessing and obtaining information about the phenomenon of student initial engagement, was through interviews with the tutors, in order to view it from their perspective and experience. Such interviews were consistent with the episteme of an interpretivist approach. The tutors were involved in the process of engaging 'hard to reach' young adult learners from the first onset of contact. It was they, the tutors, who received the telephone enquiries, responded to questions and information about the course, invited people for interview, conducted the interviews and decided on suitability for the course. The three tutors, who had delivered the courses, were therefore interviewed.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the emergent pathway for the comparative analysis of the tutor interviews, beginning with the provisional categorisation, to the emergent propositions governed by rules of inclusion and ending with the outcome propositions.

Figure 4.1 The emergent pathway for the comparative analysis of the tutor interviews:
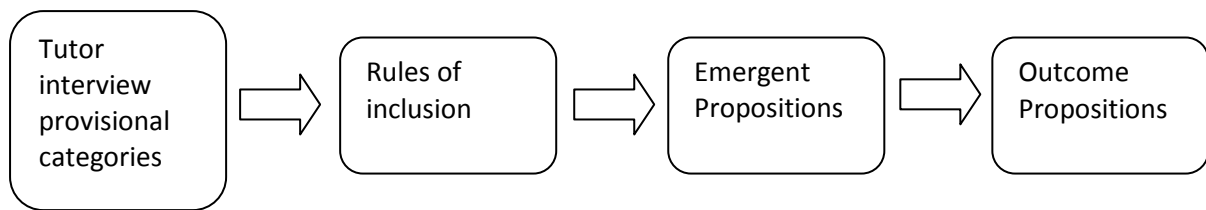
Table 4.1 illustrates the Outcome Propositions and their related subsumed Emergent Propositions. A total of three outcome propositions resulted from the analysis: *Outcome Proposition 1: Previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners can and do change; Outcome Proposition 2: The forming of an effective learning relationship is foundational to a process of change and indicative that change is likely to happen; Outcome Proposition 3: Change is more than a piece of paper it is a fundamental change in the person.* Each outcome proposition, and the emergent pathway associated with it, is discussed in more detail under the discussion of the findings presented below.

Table 4.1 Tutor interview propositions and their subsumed emergent propositions

Outcome Proposition	Emergent Propositions subsumed
1. Previous 'hard to reach' learners can and do Change	1a: Tutor belief in learner's ability to change 1b: Transformative experiences that others may experience too 1c: Instilling a sense of direction 1d: Presenting the empowering choice 1e: Running with the risk of change
2. The forming of an effective learning relationship is foundational to a process of change and indicative that change is likely to happen	2a: Reaching out 2b: Suitability to be on the course is ongoing 2c: Non-suitability 2d: The limits of suitability 2e: Making a connection 2f: Predicting engagement in learning 2g: Building empathetic rapport: human all too human
3. Change is more than a piece of paper; it is a fundamental change in the person's self.	3a: A process of looking at one's self 3b: A slice of life again 3c: Unique individual pre-learner experiences 3d: Change is more than a piece of paper 3e: Some people change 3f: Change through overcoming a poor self concept 3g: Early leavers 3h: Completing the course 3i: The unemployment factor 3j: Being real 3k: Change at the beginning and ongoing 3l: Changes in confidence

4.2 Findings

Tutor interviews: outcome propositions

The three coded tutor interview transcripts formed 24 provisional categories. These categories were collapsed and subsumed using rules of inclusion under three emergent propositions. These three emergent propositions each stood alone without subsuming any other emergent propositions. As with the previous findings, responses given by the three tutors are indicated by pseudonyms.

4.2.1 Proposition 1: Previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners can and do change.

Definition – Tutors hold a very strong belief that the previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners can and do change and transform and that they were empowered through choice; though making choices carried risks for the learners since as they changed, others in relationships prior to engaging in learning may not do so.

This proposition encapsulates the evidence from the interviews indicating that tutors hold with great conviction the belief that the young adult learners they encountered on the courses could change and transform themselves through their learning engagement. This belief arises from the tutors' personal life experiences and also of experiences gained from the role of team leadership on the Prince's Trust courses. They were able to identify with the learners and have a sense of the importance of the opportunity being offered to them for engaging them in learning. They further believed in the empowering of learners through facilitating choice. Tutors carried an awareness of the consequences that change may have for the learners with regard to previous relationships. There were five emergent propositions subsumed under this outcome proposition: tutor belief in learners' ability, transformative experiences that others may experience too, instilling a sense of direction, presenting the empowering choice, and running with the risk of change.

Emergent proposition 1a: Tutor belief in learners' ability to change

Tutor responses were included in this category if they expressed a belief in the ability of previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners to change. This belief was based for two tutors on their own experience of being a learner themselves on the Prince's Trust course. Their completion of the course had led to changes in such things as their self-confidence and willingness to face challenges. For example one tutor stated:

> *My experience as a tutor came from actually completing this course myself many years ago and as a result of completing the programme I then got the confidence to go and try new challenges in life...* [applying for a post as tutor on the Prince's Trust course] *though I'd got no teaching experience and I was up against quite a few in the interview room as they were all qualified teachers but I got it on the strength that I'd got programme experience.* [Gill]

Another tutor similarly reported:

> *Well it all started when I was on the Prince's Trust team as a student myself and a job vacancy became available* [For a tutor on the Prince's Trust course] *and I decided to apply for it, a lot of people influenced me into the job role and it seemed very interesting at what I could achieve, I'd got quite a decent knowledge of what the Prince's Trust is all about and what people feel when they're on the course.* [Sam]

The communication of a passionate belief in others to be able to change was understood as stemming from being motivated about what learners can do, this involved having a deeper interest

in them as people and of wanting to hear what learners have to say about their lives as indicated in the following tutor's statement:

I'm very very passionate about young people and what they can do, so I think that comes across quite a lot in what I do. I like the challenge sometimes it's tiring but I like the fact that I help people and that kind of motivates me which then motivates them. So I think that quite often young people haven't had a positive role model or a positive influence or person that has listened to them in their life and I would like to think that if that was the case, that was what I could offer them. [Matt]

Tutors expressed the idea that what they provide is a non-judgmental belief in the learner and that this may be what the learner is attracted to. This is expressed in the two following tutor statements:

…homeless and refugees and asylum seekers and I guess for the people like that they've probably never had anyone who is actively working on their behalf before a kind of, actively ambassador if you like for them and giving them that belief that is the difference. [Matt]

This second statement includes a sense of the tutor belief in the learner as being the factor that brings about change noticeable in shifts in confidence:

I think that the main thing is that somebody believes in them and somebody is giving them the opportunity to be responsible for something and believes that they can do it and that is what brings about the change I think. From the beginning they own something, they can make something work and that's what starts the change making them, taking them out of the comfort zone and giving them experiences that they wouldn't get normally in the residential weeks that makes a massive change in confidence. [Matt]

The notions of tutor confidence in the learner and belief in the learner were closely linked by tutors with the fostering of learner belief and confidence and to some extent the notions of confidence and belief in themselves were synonymously and interchangeably used. For example one tutor stated:

…giving them [the students] *the chance to believe in themselves and empower themselves and get what they want from it.* [Sam]

An early communication of a sense of valuing the learner by meeting with them at their convenience was considered by one tutor to be linked with fostering the learner sense of self-belief and self-value, as expressed in the following statement:

> *…we offer something unique and different and we try to put them in the most important position we can, so I think it makes them feel important. If you are dedicated to get them an appointment as soon as possible and sometimes if that includes early mornings or late nights or going to somewhere different to meet them. I think it makes a great difference because you are showing them that you believe in them and you want to give them the opportunity which is what it's all about.* [Sam]

This tutor further believes, as indicated in the following statement, that the instilling of confidence and belief opens up the wider world to the learners' choices:

> *I think the main one is confidence, belief in themselves that they can actually achieve something with their life …we offer them so much encouragement and support; that the world is their oyster they can go for what they want …so that changes in themselves. I know I can get a job, I can go and study and be this person that I want to be.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 1b: Transformative experiences that others may experience too

Tutors who had been learners themselves on the Prince's Trust courses felt they could draw upon their own experiences of personal transformation and change to inspire and give hope to the learners they tutored. For example one tutor said:

> *I've actually got a lot out of the programme and what it did for me and how it changed my life. I like to try engage people and inspire them with: look I wasn't the best person in the world up to this point and then look at all the things I've achieved and you seem to be impressed by that well what's to stop you from also going through that transformation and changing your life and really try to sell it on well this was me and this was what I got from it and this is where you say you want to go and well don't you give it a try.* [Gill]

The uniqueness of the course was considered by one tutor to be central to its ability to effect change as expresses in the following statements:

I describe it [the course] *as a personal development programme that's like no other personal development programme …I have never, in all the teams that I have worked with and ran and supported, I have never come across a young person who hasn't got any benefit from it at all.* [Matt]

We are trying to be so different. I think it's something that no other programme offers. I think that's why it's necessary; it would be pointless having a life changing programme if it was no different than anything else. [Matt]

This belief in the unique transformative efficacy of the course itself was consistent across each of the tutors interviewed. As one tutor reported:

I always describe it as a once in a life time opportunity that will transform your life and I stick by that because I really believe it does change people's lives. [Sam]

Emergent proposition 1c: Instilling a sense of direction

Tutors initial contact with potential learners was seen as the beginning of a process which presented an alternative more satisfying way of living. Tutors saw themselves as fostering direction through informed choice in this. This directive role is expressed in the following statements made by tutors:

…predominantly young people will say yeah I've easily wasted 60 days and I go well in that 60 days you could have done three months voluntary work in the community, you could have got six new qualifications, you could be more confident, you could be more enthusiastic you can have direction and you can have something really good on your CV … [Gill]

…this job is like no other job, you do everything. You are like their friend, their confidant, the tutor the person who gives them a push, the person who gives them a telling off when they need it, you are the person that sorts things out for them, the person who signposts them on to other things. [Matt]

I try to explain that as soon as possible on the phone, it's a programme that will help you identify where you want to go in life, give you new skills, give you new confidence and it kinds of homes in on 'well actually that's quite good for me because I need this, this and this', so that's what happens on the first call. [Sam]

Emergent proposition 1d: Presenting the empowering choice

Informed choice meant presenting potential learners with the stark reality and consequences of choices and this was considered by tutors as an empowering process. For example one tutor stated:

> *...give them a choice: do you want that future or do you just want to keep going on about the past, but your choice.* [Gill]

and further, emphasised the importance of this choice being presented within an emotionally supportive and safe environment:

> *I think it's giving that young person the space and the security to go 'well what do you want?' not 'what you can do', not 'what game you can play?', 'What do you want?', 'This is what you can have and this is what you've got. What do you want?', your call and then I give it back to them and then, you know, I try empower them, yeah I could waste more time or I could get more out of life.* [Gill]

Emergent proposition 1e: Running with the risk of change

One tutor identified the difficulties that some potential learners have in making the initial choice to engage in learning and considered it to be linked with a sense of vulnerability in being exposed to a process of change, as expressed in the following comment:

> *...others [learners] still are kind of assessing whether they feel vulnerable and whether they want to take that risk and change. I think they are afraid of the people they have to go back to every day when they leave here and I think they don't want to risk bringing more harm or disrupt any kind of relationship with people. It depends how bad they feel and how much they want to change it.* [Gill]

4.2.2 Proposition 2: The forming of an effective learning relationship is foundational to a process of change and indicative that change is likely to happen.

Definition – Tutors value learners as human beings with potential to change and transform. The degree to which tutors are able to form a constructive learning relationship with a learner together with learner's motivation, are considered indicative of the likelihood that the learner will successfully complete the course, that is be able to complete the criteria for attendance and be successful in completing the assessment tasks. In this relationship honesty and empathy are fundamental in maintaining an ongoing learning process. An inability to form or maintain an effective learning relationship or a diminished motivation may become manifest and identifiable at any point in the learning process and is dealt with from a position of honesty and empathy through dialogue with the

student concerned. The tutors hold to a belief that the timing of the students attempt to engage in learning may be unfavourable, due to varying adverse circumstances the student may be experiencing, which have a detrimental effect upon the quality of the tutor learner relationship. The implication is that the difficulty lies with the student but that the tutor remains open to the formation of a learning relationship, if and when the student's circumstances are more favourable. To some extent then the attempt at engaging in learning is not construed as a failure, but as part of a process that may potentially lead to a future engagement.

This proposition is formulated from the evidence of the tutor interviews and indicates that tutors engage learners from a conviction that the learner has the potential to change. Fundamental to this process of change is the quality of the learning relationship which is defined through mutual honesty, empathy and motivation. The reality that some learners are not successful is acknowledged, as are the difficult adverse personal contexts within which individual learners may be located. The belief that all learners have the potential to change is a large motivator for tutors to make all efforts to maintain learner engagement. In the event that a learner leaves the course a tutor's sense of the individual's potential to change at some future point is undiminished. There were seven emergent propositions subsumed under this outcome proposition: Reaching out, Suitability to be on the course is ongoing, Non-suitability, The limits of suitability, Making a connection, Predicting engagement in learning, Building empathetic rapport, Human all too human.

Emergent proposition 2a: Reaching out

Responses were included in this category if they gave expression to a desire to make contact with potential learners. One tutor conveyed a sense of the scope and energy that tutors as a team put into stimulating an initial contact in the following statement:

> *We know they are a "hard to reach" network in the city of young people, we try and tap into that and bombard them with e-mail and phone calls … when we're at the presentation we will always ask the people in the audience if you know of anyone who you think might benefit … so we try and spread it out as much as we can.* [Gill]

And another tutor conveyed a sense of reaching out as expressed in the following comment:

> *…homeless and refugees and asylum seekers and I guess for the people like that they've probably never had anyone who is actively working on their behalf before a kind of, active ambassador if you like for them and giving them that belief that is the difference.* [Matt]

Emergent proposition 2b: Suitability to be on the course is ongoing

From an initial contact with the potential learner, tutors decide their suitability to benefit from engaging in learning at that point in time. Whilst formal assessments are used, it also involves a sense of relationship and connection with the potential learner. It is this sense of connection which supports the tutor's belief that the individual will successfully engage in the leaning process and change as a result. The following statements illustrate the importance to the tutors of a continuing assessment of suitability and the central role the quality of the student/tutor relationship plays in this:

> *OK, I decide by the interview that I hold with them … I think what I'm looking for when I meet the young person is that they think they can work with me, because I try to be very transparent with them … if I think I can help them to move to the next point then that also has got to be in there as well, if I think there's no way I can enhance this person or they don't want to move forward then there would be no point me working with them anyway.* [Gill]

Other tutors expressed a similar belief through the following statements:

> *… if somebody came for an interview with me and didn't like me it would be pointless them signing up to the programme, wouldn't it? They've got to buy into me... because they can't go any further until they've bought into you.* [Matt]

> *I think when you're going through the questions and they are giving you the answers, they're not perfect but you can see a kind of spark I think a lot of team leaders say it's your gut feeling that you know whether someone is right or not …We're looking for people who are motivated to do it and are dedicated and they really want to change their lives.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 2c: Non-suitability

There is recognition by tutors that some people may be found unsuitable to carry on with the course; this can be for unacceptable attitudes and behavior as related in the following statements:

> *… people that just want to see the world set on fire they had no love, they were just there for themselves and what they could get out of people via extortion, or threatening behaviour or intimidation… they couldn't see a future, they didn't care about a future, they only cared about drugs, making money out of people, abusing other people.* [Gill]

This does not mean that a potential learner has no further access to the learning on offer, when circumstances become favorable so does access to learning as stated by one tutor:

> *There've been a few people that have not been successful on one team and they've come back on another team.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 2d: The limits of suitability

When a learner is not engaging in the course various attempts are made by tutors to make a point of contact with them which will enable a reengagement in the learning process. Attempts are made to understand all influences on the learner and a position of flexibility is taken. Sometimes this is not enough, the learner is just not in a position themselves to engage and change. The belief that learners can change motivates the tutors' attempts to support the learner through critical challenges to staying engaged. The following statements from tutors express their commitment:

> *I try and take all the factors into consideration before I have to do the thing of 'look we've come to the end of the road' with them and I have to let go. I will try and put as much support and make as many allowances as I can to keep them on board or to keep them engaged.* [Gill]

> *...some people we find it's too soon, they are not quite ready for all the challenges that are ahead, as well as working in a group of young people they've got other things going on so it's not always a success story.* [Matt]

> *It's not an easy decision because our ethics is that we kind of believe in everyone that everyone can succeed and we give everyone the opportunity and it's so hard taking that opportunity away from them and it's not a decision that we make lightly.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 2e: Making a connection

Making a personal connection with a potential learner is sought from the first point of contact. It is considered that this can only be achieved if the learner has already arrived at a place within themselves that enables this to happen. It suggests that this position has been attained by the potential pre course and prior to any contact with staff. As one tutor explained:

I say if you connect with that person psychologically then they're there anyway, they want to already want to work with you and they get there. So I'll speak to them on the phone arrange the time with them for the appointment. [Gill]

In the following statement another tutor gives an indication of themselves as a sustained point of contact from the beginning and throughout the duration of the learning experience. Some further indication is provided of the multiple roles the tutor may be involved in; all of which have a common denominators of 'encouragement' and a sense of presence in 'being there' for the learner.

> *… from that very first phone to right the way through the course I'm always there hopefully as a point of contact in encouraging them and getting them through what they are going through and I hope that's clear right from the start that I am not just a tutor, I am a tutor, I am a mentor, I am there as a friend, I am there as a counsellor.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 2f: Predicting engagement in learning

In one tutor's experience it was almost a foregone conclusion that if, following an initial telephone contact with a potential learner, that individual wanted to meet in a face to face interview, then they almost certainly would engage in learning. This was further backed up if the individual gave an indication that they genuinely wanted to change their life. The tutor expresses this in the following statements:

> ***…****those that go 'I want come and meet you', I'm pretty certain I'm going to sign them up there and then… I'm looking to see if what that person is about and whether I'm going to work with them and whether they're really serious about changing their life.* [Gill]

Emergent proposition 2g: Building empathetic rapport: Human all too human

Tutors in considering their relationship with the learner from the very beginning of contact to be an important factor, felt that the key qualities which enabled a relationship to be formed and sustained were those of empathy and compassion. The following statements from all three tutors illustrate the value placed on the relationship, and a sense of the personal difficulties that learners have to struggle with:

> *I think it's all about the relationship this programme, because their experiences of life might be really different but the one thing they will have experienced is disappointment, rejection. All the people that enter our doors… wouldn't have had*

the best experience of life so far [They have been disadvantaged as learners in the past]*, or if they were so confident and they were really happy and they know where they were going they wouldn't be here. So there's this instant familiarity with them* [The students]*, because there are certain reasons why you* [the students] *end up on our door step and that is you've either lost your track, you don't know what you want to be in life, you've had a couple of bad experiences and you are not engaging properly with people and you* [as a student] *are isolated and your excluded. So there's common theme that runs through them and it's just sort of gathering those people together and going "ok, well look, this is where you've been and this is where we're going to go. Is that appealing"?* [Gill]

You've got to have empathy and compassion and passion and understanding to be able to do this job. [Matt]

Kind of a caring relationship really, that we do care about what's going on in their life. We do care how they act, we're not just blanking everything out and ignoring things. We do take it into account, we are trying to do everything we can to help that person whatever the costs, whether that's setting up meetings for them, housing issues … that role of being there for them that central point of caring for them. [Sam]

4.2.3 Proposition 3: Change is more than a piece of paper; it is a fundamental change in the person's self

Definition – change that takes place in a learner is facilitated by deep and honest self-reflection. Reflective thinking is sustained as an ongoing practice throughout the engagement in learning and considered a basis for movement towards effecting change. The change that takes place is visible as movements from being discontented to demonstrating enthusiasm, from low confidence to a desire to get engaged in life. It appears as being more than the sum of the parts of the course and results in learners taking hold of aspects of their life with more confidence and with a developed sense of their own value as human beings.

The proposition arises from the statements made by the tutors regarding their experiencing of personal change in learners, and the underpinning contribution that they believe reflective thinking has made to a meaningful and sustained engagement in the learning process. The reflective process is viewed as being one that enables unsatisfactory aspects of an individual's life to be identified and

considered action to take place to change this. An accompanying process is one of increased self-value, this can be achieved despite previous adverse experiences. The change that takes place can be clearly seen over the period of engagement in learning as is shown in the provisional categories subsumed under this proposition. There were twelve emergent propositions subsumed under this outcome proposition: A process of looking at one's self; a slice of life again; Unique individual pre-learner experiences; Change is more than a piece of paper; Some people change; Change through overcoming a poor self concept; Early leavers; Completing the course; The unemployment factor; Being real; Change at the beginning and ongoing; and Changes in confidence.

Emergent proposition 3a: A process of looking at one's self

The process of change for learners is assisted by an open and honest reflective look at themselves and demands a forthright admission that change is wanted as expressed in the following statement by tutors:

> *...getting them to start thinking about themselves and I want them to start looking.* [If the learner concludes *"ok well am I happy with that picture of me"... and if they're not then this course is going to help them change that.* [Gill]

> *We try to get the students to reflect on every opportunity that they can, so when they come into the first interview they are reflecting on what they are good at, what they are bad at, what they need to improve on and that's the format we go through throughout... their qualifications are all about reflecting on practice so they do an activity and then they reflect on it, so it's a huge part of their personal development.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3b: A slice of life again

The change that occurs in learners is evident in the way they become energised and they are eager to live a fuller life, as expressed in the following tutor's statement:

> *From the person they are when they first come into us on week one and the transformation and the change that's taken place, the confidence, the enthusiasm how engaged they are where their inspiration has come from, how they've adopted role models, they want success in life, they want to go and achieve something they want a slice of life again... that change, and that's clear to see.* [Gill]

The form that this 'slice of life' might take is not judged by the tutors, but is supported and encouraged as an individual's chosen goal, and encouraged by conveying acceptance of the student's choices. As one tutor put it:

> *Someone might aspire to be a street performer but as long as that is something they aspire to be and they want to do and that's going to bring them some money in at fairs and carnivals then that's something they should be supported in. That's what I believe personally and maybe it's that attitude that they don't necessarily get from the parents. Parents always want what's best for the young people, they don't necessarily want what's right for them if that makes any sense.* [Matt]

The initial engagement in learning is not an isolated event but viewed as the beginning of the beginning, from which new possibilities for exploration may open up after the course is completed. This notion is captured in the following tutor's statement:

> *The majority of people that come on to the course want to do the course because they want to achieve something. They want to move on with their lives, so it's kind of a process that they need to go through to help them and they see it as a spring board that if they can get on this Prince's Trust for 12 weeks get loads of skills, knowledge and qualifications and then they can go and explore other bits.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3c: Unique individual pre-learner experiences

The backgrounds that learners come from are varied and unique, some have had it quite rough and these past experiences may present barriers to the rate of engagement and the building of trust as stated in the following:

> *I think you've got those like I say, that have been through the system and have been knocked from pillar to post... so I think everyone takes different* [times to change] *depending on what they've been through, before they get through.* [Gill]

> *The older learners seem to have something like a stumbling block that maybe happened a few years before and it's triggered something that has gone 'I need to do something now I'm getting a little bit older, pressures of other people have got jobs and family so I need to do something else.'* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3d: Change is more than a piece of paper

The process of change is more profound than can be represented in successful completion of the course. It is not always immediately visible but may emerge at a later time, post-course. It seems to defy being framed fully in familiar concepts such as self-esteem and to be more complex as described in the following three statements:

What changes people? Giving someone a piece of paper saying they've got a qualification doesn't change them personally. It might improve their self-esteem, it might do something for them that way, but it won't get them less shy, more engaged, it doesn't give them that personal development. [Gill]

It is really difficult to pin down but I think that the main thing that they learn is what it's like to be in a system where you need to turn up at a certain time and you need to be up to turn up at that certain time and then everything else kind of comes on top of that. [Matt]

... everybody changes some more than others I find that some people you think haven't changed... you see them three months, six months later down the line and something has just clicked and they go "you know when you said this and I said no well I got it wrong" and that's quite a big thing that you forget that sometimes you'll say things and you'll try your best to try things out and they won't necessarily take it on board then, but later on down the line something will just trigger and they will start to change. [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3e: Some people change

One aspect of change that is noticeable is that individuals become more resilient to others' disapproval of their new way of being and that this is an indication of being more the independent authors of their own life. This resilience and freedom opens them up to new learning in a zest for new experience, as expressed in the following statements:

They will get the hook, they will get the bug whatever you want to label it as and they want that change they are more determined to get that new life and they realise that if somebody says no it's not the end of the world and that rejection doesn't kind of phase them anymore. You know what their parents' perceptions or expectations they've had of them, they kind of go 'I'm free from those shackles for a bit and I'm going to go and do what I want to do and they run with it. [Gill]

I think of them as a sponge because some people just soak in everything they can, everything that you tell them just goes straight in and we just fill them with everything that we can. [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3f: Change through overcoming a poor self-concept

A poor self-concept is not necessarily visible to others, but can come into evidence in differing contexts and in complete contrast to how a learner has previously presented themselves. So that in one context, the learner may appear "bright" and "sharp" and in another less certain and less responsive. The tutors recognise moments when the face that students present to the world is removed revealing, unexpectedly, a sense of the degree to which previous experience had diminished student's self-esteem and self-efficacy throughout their lives, as related in the following responses by tutors:

In one group, that were really engaging, there were some really boisterous characters in there and they were really good and really effective. They were bright, they were sharp and they took my humour on board and you know they were engaged. The exercise I did was self-esteem and all they had to do was to write two positive qualities about themselves. It took nearly an hour for this group of young people to write two positives about themselves. I was stupefied and I was really knocked off my track, because I would have thought for such a good group with loads of exuberance and energy in there, this would not have been an issue. It really surprised me, that my assumptions that these would be alright. It just knocked me for six. I was really shocked that I'd really aimed way too high, by asking a young person to say something positive about [themselves], I didn't realise that some peoples esteem could be even lower. [Gill]

I think the main one [difficulty] *is confidence, confidence and self-esteem, because even the really confident young people have no self-esteem. It's very difficult, we see more and more young people now coming through the door that have been told lots in their life that they are bad, that they are no good, they are thick, they are rubbish and we really have to try and build that up in them straight away... just by getting to the end of the first week and telling people they've got a place we've had people cry because they've never been given positive feedback before. That's quite heart breaking really, but so just getting them to believe in themselves as much as we do, that's the first main hurdle I think and then once*

that's happened getting them motivated to keep coming, getting them to be communicative with other people. [Matt]

It's just about making sure they understand that they do belong as part of something and they are worthwhile, they are fantastic people they just need to start believing in themselves. [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3g: Early leavers

The main reasons which cause an individual to leave the course are usually to do with difficulties and lifestyles external to learning becoming too overwhelming such as having to cope substance addictions, or when the whole notion of sustaining engagement in learning for the required period of time is too great a commitment and one for which they feel ill prepared. The process of change and sustaining learning under those circumstances is too great a one to complete. However, this does not prevent them being reconsidered in the future if circumstances become favourable. The following statements from tutors illustrate the difficulties some learners encounter:

...if they've got chaotic life styles, you know they're clubbing all week end, they've got a massive drug addiction or alcohol addiction or you know I've known young people who are prostitutes at the weekend, you know there are lots of different things. I've known people that they've got to that realisation point that it's going to be a massive jump for them and they know that they are not ready yet and they will disappear and they won't come back. [Gill]

Some people leave the course if they are not quite ready, because they've got massive things going on outside of here, things that are too much for them to be dealing with, then they leave the course. We try not to say that's it, [Tutors encourage the student to come on a later course, when they feel they are better positioned to do so] *there's always the chance to come back... we do try and keep in touch with people like that just to see when they are ready, just to let them know that they've got somebody who believed in them and one day when change is ready they can come back and try again.* [Matt]

Emergent proposition 3h: Completing the course

There are many facets that make for a successful completion of the course, these include the learner having formed a higher sense of value of themselves as a person but also may be the ability to

believe enough in themselves to be able to let go of the learning relationship, as expressed in the following statements by tutors:

> *I think I would like to think it's because they realise that they've got a bit of value and they deserve it now.* [Gill]

> *You've got to try and be everything to them that they need without over stepping the mark, so they can leave you after 12 weeks because the last thing you want is to make someone completely dependent on you ...I want to be respected and have that mutual respect but I want them to know that I'm leaving them and vice versa.* [Matt]

Emergent proposition 3i: The unemployment factor

One tutor remarked on the changing landscape of referrals, that with unemployment being so high learning offers an opportunity to increasing their future chances of employment:

> *We used to have a lot more referrals then from probation and places like that and we used to work with really hard core prolific offenders and I think the drop-out rate was much higher, whereas nowadays the catchment the local area there isn't any work. Education has changed throughout the system so there are a lot more people that enter the course, in the sense that there are less opportunities for them, so this seems a good gap filler for them now.* [Gill]

Emergent proposition 3j: Being real

The importance of being real, honest and genuine was referred to consistently by tutors; the tutors wanted change for the student to be a real experience and not just a surface appearance. If change was not happening they felt that it was important to convey this realistically and congruently to the student. In being real with the student it enables the student to be real with themselves fostering a deeper self-reflection. The students being real with themselves is a prerequisite to their changing and sustaining the movement of that change. The following statement is an example of the tutors understanding of this:

> *...we can tell you exactly how it is and I always tell them that at the interview. We will tell you exactly how it is, we won't fluff things up we want you to change so we are here just for you, to help you move forward... tell them, be as honest as you can. I think if it's someone you can see an awful lot of potential in it is just about the timing* [Of the students engagement in learning] *not being right, it's about telling them exactly that and being honest.* [Matt]

Emergent proposition 3k: Change at the beginning and ongoing

Change was viewed as something that did not happen at one single moment but was an evolving process, though a significant change was considered to be apparent by the second week of the course. The process of reflective thinking was considered to be an ongoing process and was one that is important to be undertaken by students on each day of the course. Reflective thinking is viewed as important in fostering a process of change because it the process which enables the student to identify what has been learnt and the meaning of this to them in terms of the way in which they are changing, as related in the following statements made by tutors:

> *...from the beginning to the end because I think like I say when they've bought into you and the programme they do get a little bit more confident and excited about things but I would say that the real change, the significant change, doesn't happen until I'd say the middle of the second week and then it's really noticeable.* [Matt]

> *They are always identifying what skills they've learnt and that element of reflection is really important because we reflect every day on how the team are being* [doing], *what's their contribution been, what you've learnt about yourself today and that's a good element that we've got to the programme.* [Sam]

Emergent proposition 3l: Changes in confidence

Tutors referred often to the notion of self-confidence and considered it to be central to the learning process. The development in a learner of a broadening base of self-confidence was viewed as evident in the degree to which a learner was seen to increase their interaction with others in the team. As the following statements indicate:

> *I think the confidence one is very deep because it might be a stumbling block they had a few years ago that totally knocked their confidence and they haven't been able to do things so giving that confidence is a massive thing that I think will carry on for a very long time...Its gradual I think [growth in confidence], some people come out of their shells right at the beginning, week 2 or week 3, some people don't get it till week seven or week eight. You can tell the people that are really unconfident about social situations, and you can tell the people that are really confident... we you can see people developing confidence and just in the social time as well, when they are out at lunch and they tend to stay together in the same group, you can see people coming out of their shells a lot more.* [Sam]

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of the constant comparative analysis of the tutor interviews. Each of the three outcome propositions are illustrated, together with their relevant subsumed emergent propositions. Indicative quotations from the analysis of entry and exit interviews have been used to support the commentary on the findings.

In summary, the findings suggest that tutor's perception of the student experience is that they can and do change. The tutor's experience of the learning process that is undergone by students gives rise to the belief that this change is transformative. The vehicle for change they consider to be the making of choices, which empowers students. These choices may involve relationships established prior to engaging in learning, in as much as while the student changes others in the relationship may not have. The forming of an effective learning relationship is foundational to a process of change and indicative that change is likely to happen.

Tutors value learners as human beings with potential to change and transform. They place a lot of emphasis on the quality of the relationship between tutor and student. That relationship they considered pivotal to the student being successful in effecting change. In this relationship honesty and empathy are fundamental in maintaining an ongoing learning process. An inability to form or maintain an effective learning relationship, or a diminished motivation may become manifest and identifiable at any point in the learning process. If it arises it is approached by the tutor from a position of honesty and empathy, and with a belief that time and circumstances may not for now, favourable for learning. Such a non-favourable context may be comprised of a number of interrelated influences such as personal and environmental. An implication is that, a potentially successful learner may have a pre course mind- set that enables a process of learning and change.

Tutors believe that a deeper process of change takes place that is beyond differing contextual boundaries and which involves fundamental changes in learners' beliefs in their own potential and capacity for self-determination, which are effected in part, through tutor facilitation of student self-reflection. The quality of this reflective process is deemed be dependent on the degree to which the student engages in honest self-reflection. Reflective thinking is embedded in the learning experience and considered a basis for movement towards in-depth change. The change that takes place is visible as movements from being discontented, from having a lack of confidence, being unconfident. The depth of change appears as being more than the sum of the parts of the experiencing of the course; it results in learners taking hold of aspects of their life with more confidence and with a developed sense of their own value as human beings. This can be achieved despite previous adverse

experiences. The change that takes place can be clearly seen over the period of engagement in learning. Further discussion of the notion of change is detailed in chapter 5.

Chapter 3 and chapter 4 have presented the findings of the analysis of the student interviews and of the analysis of the tutor interviews respectively. The following chapter (Chapter 5) draws upon the evidence of these findings and through discussion, addresses the research questions that were set out in the introduction to this thesis, in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 5   DISCUSSION

CONTENTS

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis was introduced as seeking to identify aspects of learning processes that may contribute to the understanding of the experience of previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in education. Its concern is with what processes have influence on the initial space within which any transformative experiencing takes place. The research programme set out to look at learning from four theoretical perspectives: transformative learning; reflective thinking; critical thinking; and self-efficacy. Its intention was to consider the combined light that these perspectives throw on our understanding of the nature of the transition for previously 'hard to reach' learners into adult learning. This consideration gave rise to the notion that there may be points of reciprocity between the concepts of transformative learning, self-efficacy, critical thinking and critical reflection.

The preceding chapters present the findings from the interviews of students and tutors and demonstrate the emergent pathways which gave rise to the outcome propositions. Chapters 3 and 4 present those outcome propositions and the main subsumed themes which underpin and support them. This current chapter aims to provide a synthesis of the tutor and student findings and to identify any reciprocal relationships between the four learning processes of transformative learning,

critical thinking, reflective thinking and self-efficacy. This chapter, through discussion of the findings, generates answers to the original research questions raised in the Introduction chapter of this thesis:

1. Are previously considered 'hard to reach' young adult learners experiencing transformative learning on their initial engagement in learning?

2. If so, by what process does this occur?

3. For those who do transform, what is it about this experience that sustains them in learning?

4. How do the learners conceptualise this experience in terms of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy?

5. If transformative learning is occurring, does the experience have reciprocity with processes of critical thinking, reflective thinking and self-efficacy?

6. What are the implications of the findings to the above questions for sustaining previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners in the learning process?

5.2 Transformative Learning

This section is aimed at answering the first three research questions and utilises the ten transformative learning stages proposed by Mezirow (2010) as presented in Chapter 1. This sequence of stages provides a useful initial framework within which to view the learning experience of the students. Mezirow proposes that the transformative learning process occurs and is experienced in a set, predictable order. Within this order there are stages that anticipate processes of reflective thinking and critical thinking. Having this template of a set sequence will enable the identification of any similarities and differences in the pattern and nature of the learning processes as they happened over time. The findings arising from this research are not fully supportive of Mezirow's stages, in particular they suggest that the 'hard to reach' young adult students may have undergone some transformative experiences immediately prior to engaging in learning.

The first question addressed by this research asks whether previously considered 'hard to reach' learners are experiencing transformative learning. Prior to engagement in learning, students reported that they had derived a sense of dissatisfaction and discouragement from previous experiences of learning. Dissatisfaction was of a general feeling of dislike of their childhood school experience. It was also linked to a sense of regret. Previous learning experiences were not pleasant and discouraged students from accessing further learning as adults. This finding is consistent with Stage 1 of Mezirow's theory: *an awareness of discontent*. The findings of this research are also

supportive of the broad process of change anticipated in Mezirow's stages. The final stage (Stage 10: *An integration into one's life based on conditions dictated by one's new perspective*) anticipates that change will have been made to invalid assumptions and the behaviour based upon them; it is suggested by Christie (2009) that such change is the most difficult step to achieve. The research presented here evidences that those student research participants who completed the course, experienced changes in perspective and assumptions. The indication is that these students viewed themselves as being able to achieve in the future; their feelings of discontent had diminished and there was a sense of purpose about how they viewed their future in terms of job prospects and continued acquisition of new skills. There is an awareness of change expressed by these students at the end of the course. The movement from a position of limitation of possibilities to one of greater increase in future possibilities and purpose is therefore in keeping with the students having experienced a process of transformative learning.

The second question asked in this research is that if transformative learning is taking place, by what process does it occur? The evidence from this research is that there are a number of identifiable means by which a process of transformative learning as experienced by the students occurs. These include: engaging in tasks on the Prince's Trust course (such as planning a shopping trip), and using organisational abilities, reflective thinking and critical thinking in their planning, and self-efficacy in their implementation. Also, students took on new roles, such as team leadership, which again required their engagement in processes of reflective thinking and critical thinking in their planning and evaluation, and the development of perceived self-efficacy in their ability to carry out and fulfil the tasks and roles assigned to each of them. This both invited and exposed students to the taking of risks by their being in unfamiliar roles, and also to the experience of feedback from others on their performance, which in itself necessitated a development of openness to such feedback. This enabled an expansion of perceived self-efficacy so students felt that they were capable of completing other tasks with which they would be presented during the course of learning. The processes involved, as experienced by the students, are consistent with the stages of reflective thinking and critical thinking as proposed by Brookfield (1987), and the concept of self-efficacy as proposed by Bandura (1986).

There are indications in this research suggesting that the transformative learning process has reciprocity with processes of critical reflection, critical thinking and self-efficacy. The students' learning experience was not without fears and anxieties when engaging with new tasks in new contexts, but there was also a motivation to experiment and learn from the experience which is indicative of an increase in perceived self-efficacy. Students were also able to experience transformative experiences which were brought about by 'powerful performance attainments' which

can, according to Pajares (2002), strengthen self-efficacy in unrelated areas of one's life. One of the first experiences of powerful performance attainments reported as experienced by these students, was passing the initial interviews successfully and being offered a place by the tutors on the course. What was significant about this was not just their performance at the interview, but the non-judgemental acceptance of them by the tutors for who they were, which challenged their expectation of being rejected due to having personal histories such as having a criminal record, alcohol dependency or a general feeling of not being of value in an educational context. This experience of acceptance, of being valued by the tutors, was a particularly universal, consistent and memorable one, which students reported as strengthening their belief that they could successfully complete the course, because it was understood as being an indication that it was alright to fail and try again.

The third question that this research sought to address was what it is that sustains those learners who have experienced transformative learning in the learning process. This research evidences that learning was sustained for students through a number of processes. Peer support and feedback was particularly experienced as encouraging and supportive, and considered as enabling an emotionally safe learning climate in which it was acceptable to fail and try again. As well as experiencing support and encouragement from others, students also experienced and valued being able to give support and encouragement themselves to their peers. This was an affirming experience of themselves as having value to others. Such an environment was also experienced as encouraging interaction, which Bandura (1987) considers as promoting overall deeper reflective thought processes about the task in hand.

5.2.1 A question of transformative learning

There are indications from the findings of this research that the process of transformative learning is a more complex phenomenon than it may at first appear to be and suggests that transformative learning is not linear or a singular event. A sense of the complexity is heightened when considering Stage 1 of Brookfield's (1987) five-stage model of critical thinking, which anticipates a specific triggering event to the process of this stage. There is no clear evidence to support the notion of such a triggering n event within the context of this research occurring pre-engagement in learning. This is not to discount that there may have been triggering events which were not evidenced, since this research was limited in its scope to collect information around the pre-engagement in learning experience. The findings further raise questions concerning the concept of transformation that is suggested in Mezirow's theory. There are additional processes identified as happening pre-

engagement in learning that are not accounted for in current transformative learning theory, but are necessary for a transformative process to commence. These will now be discussed in detail:

Transformative learning is non-linear

The evidence collected suggested that there was no discernible order between the experiencing of discontent and a reflective process as anticipated in Mezirow's transformative learning process. Although Brookfield's hypothesised critical thinking Stage 2: *A period of appraisal accompanied by an uncomfortable feeling of doubt*, is supported by the evidence presented here as occurring prior to engaging in education. In this respect there were some indications of reciprocity with the process of transformative learning if *discontent* and *doubt* are considered to be related experiences, however discontent and doubt are not, as evidenced in this research, the only experiences that are occurring pre-engagement in learning.

Untapped potential

The evidence from the data suggests that the process of reflective thinking, occurring at this first stage of transformative learning, is stimulating and informs a process of critical thinking. However, whilst there was an implicit self-reflective process prior to engaging in learning, that gave rise to uncomfortable feelings, there was also an accompanying sense of personal untapped potential, which was not identified in Mezirow's stages. Whilst Brookfield's model suggests that the process is driven by an attempt to resolve this discomfort, this research evidences that the motivating factor of untapped potential arising from reflective thinking also stimulates a critical thinking process. This motivation does not necessarily have the genesis of its drive in an attempt to resolve discomfort related to past or present contexts, but is more teleological in its trajectory of a potential for future personal growth and fulfilment. Whilst this too could be construed as an attempt to resolve discomfort, the motivation seems to originate from a more positive sense of personal quality and ability rather than one of failure.

Gathering together memories of self-efficacy

The evidence from the data collected indicates that students prior to re-entering education felt a general lack of confidence: a lack of self-efficacy. With reference to a feeling of discontent anticipated in Mezirow's transformative learning Stage 1, the evidence from the research is that accompanying the sense of discontent is a general diminished belief in participants' ability to be able to relate effectively to others outside of familiar contexts in which they habitually interact with friends and family. To some extent this discontent was thrown into relief by the contrast it bore to memories of past experience of feelings of self-efficacy. This awareness of students' of such a contrast, is indicative of a process of self-reflection in looking back, as a cognitive precursor to

forethought and as such bears consistency with the reflective examination of thoughts and beliefs necessary as a preliminary activity for the development of self-efficacy. The process is consistent with Bandura's (1986) and Pajares' (2002) understanding of the role which self-reflection and the ability to look into one's mind plays in the process of changing thoughts and beliefs. It is as if the reflective process prior to engaging in learning was a means of gathering momentum, but without a sense of the direction of personal trajectory.

There are indicators suggesting that prior to engagement in learning, the students, whilst experiencing discontent were engaged in a preliminary reflective process which involved reviewing their position in life, so that their discontent actually involved a process of reflective thinking, through which they identified experiences in which they felt they had developed self-efficacy and which had previously given them some purchase on life. These included roles, occupations and pertinent skills. This is in keeping with Dewey's (1933) notion of reflective thinking as being an attempt to understand and analyse what has happened; in a sense looking at the knowledge and belief basis for understanding. The process of reflective thinking at the preliminary stage, prior to engaging in education, involved reflecting on both the elements of previous successes and failures whilst simultaneously experiencing discontent.

5.2.2 Reasons for doubting a transformative learning process

The evidence from this research did not indicate that during self-reflective processes students experienced feelings of fear, guilt or shame, as suggested by Stage 2 of Mezirow's transformative learning process, in terms of such considerations as past experiences, past roles or current state of their education. Although there was a substantial acknowledgement of fear and anxiety prior to engaging in learning which reflected the initial stages of a transformative learning process. These fears and anxieties were about engaging in learning after being away from it for some time, or anxieties about how they might get on with other learners.

What was additionally evident in the pre-engagement learning, which is not anticipated in the initial stages of transformative learning theory, was that prior to engaging in learning, there was a significant awareness reported by students of personal untapped potential. This awareness did not appear to be as a result of an overt concerted self-examination, reflective thinking or of a critical assessment of assumptions, as predicted respectively in stages 1 and 2 of transformative learning theory, but seemed to be an awareness which was present prior to the consideration of entering into learning and was an influence on the motivation to engage in learning. Indeed, it was through such personal perspectives that these 'hard to reach' young adult learners had sustained some self-credulity or assertion of self-value in their lives up to the stage of pre-engagement in learning.

This inconsistency with transformative learning theory raises a question regarding when or whether such a learning process begins and when or whether it ends. It does not seem accurate to explain it as a singular linear process or alternatively as a number of overlapping transformations in process. There appears to be a possibility of transformation taking place prior to engaging in learning which, although not as clearly visible as that upon engaging in learning, results in an individual's prior summoning up of self-efficacy to make that initial enquiry into the possibility of learning, and the possibility of themselves as a learner. This would seem to suggest that there has already taken place a re-visioning of themselves, or of the learning opportunities available: an on-going or culminating process has challenged previously held self-assumptions prior to engagement in learning.

5.2.3 Acceptance as a key factor in the learning process

Student's critical assessment of their own previous assumptions did occur following engagement in learning; this involved the reassessing of negative views of learning. This was as a result, in part, of exposure to tutor attitudes, which contrary to previous experiencing were found to be affirming and empowering for the students. Students' sharing of the details of their own background was not required by the course, but what was an important and overriding factor was that they were accepted for who they were.

There was a minimal indication of feelings of shame and guilt felt by students pre-engagement in learning, in contradiction to Mezirow's Stage 2 (see Section 5.2.2). This appears to be because the accepting attitudes of others towards them (particularly those of the tutor at the interview), was enough to negate any feelings of shame and guilt that had been carried from previous experiences. This diminished the need to discuss personal details in depth following the interviews with tutors. The research evidence indicates that the tutors believed they were extending an attitude of acceptance or to some extent unconditional positive regard. The evidence from the students is that they experienced being accepted for who they were without prejudice by both the tutors initially and then by other students on the course. This appears to be because in the interviews, some students took the opportunity to reveal aspects of themselves that they feared may be rejected by others, such as alcohol problems or past criminal conviction. To this extent there is consistency with transformative learning theory, since sources of discontent are discussed and initially shared, albeit with tutors, prior to a fuller sharing with the rest of the learning group. This suggests that it may be part of a transformative process to begin to share uncomfortable aspects of one's self in a more secure setting before risking a larger group disclosure. Also, those tutors who had been students on Prince's Trust courses themselves shared this personal information with the learning cohorts in discussions.

The key element therefore for fostering the process of transformation for the students on engagement in learning, was not so much an emphasis on a process of critical assessment of assumptions, but one of a learning environment of acceptance. This, although tacitly experienced, led to the critical reassessment of previous assumptions as anticipated in Stage 3 of Mezirow's model. These assumptions were particularly about learning and about the attitudes of others towards them. It suggests that acceptance, belonging and trust are important aspects of the context within which transformative learning took root for these adult students. Additionally, the interviews which potential students have with tutors, informs them about the personal transformation experience of students who have previously completed the course. There is a realisation through discussion with tutors at the pre-engagement stage in learning, that others have negotiated a similar change; this is in keeping with Mezirow's Stage 4: *The experience of the process of transformation is shared.* As the students progressed over the course of 12 weeks engagement in learning, they shared in the experience of that processes of change, in which they bore witness to each other's successes, failures and reattempts to succeed, which they were able to identify with and talk to each other about. As an overall process of gathering information this has reciprocity with Brookfield's critical thinking Stage 3: *Exploration, an acceptance of movement towards change and a gathering of information about options and the experience of others.*

Whilst those tutors who had themselves completed Prince's Trust courses shared their experiences of this with the learners, this was not necessarily a mutual exchange in the full group context, in that learners did not necessarily share as fully with the group what they had shared with the tutor. Significantly, learner group cohesion arose from the knowledge that they had general aims and purpose in common with one another. The process of transformation as applied here certainly took place through discussion, but additionally there was an element of shared emotional experiencing, which was another key element to the process of recognition that others had negotiated a similar change. There was also implied a tacit perception and understanding that other student cohorts had preceded their own student cohort and had achieved success. However, the degree of cohesion achieved may also be in part a result of the withdrawal of those students who did not share the dominant culture and did not engage, or left the course prior to completion. Indeed this may also be the case for those students who did complete the course, but did not attend the arranged final research interviews. Notably, arising from the tutor interviews is the importance placed on being able to form a tutor/student learning relationship. The question arises as to what barriers may exist that prevent or discourage that relationship. In particular, in considering the notion of dominant discourses and cultures which are operable in the politics of education and funding at a national macro level, it poses the possibility that at the micro level of individual student engagement the

discourse governing the criteria for belonging may be discouraging to, or exclusive of, some 'hard to reach' young adult learners in their attempt to engage.

For those who were able to negotiate the initial phase of engaging in learning successfully, becoming or being a newly engaged student entailed the development of a role as student in itself. The evidence from this research indicates that this necessitated the developing of relationships with other learners and with tutors, which required trusting others. Indeed the research further evidences the tutors as emphatic in their belief that the ability to form trusting relationships with tutors was a reliable predictor of whether a student would successfully complete the course. Students experienced new roles and relationships as a part of the process of learning, which included roles of administration and team leadership and roles in which they engaged in discussion and debate. The foundation to the successful development of these roles was the trusting relationships developed with others, and within these roles was developed an ability to receive and analyse the relevance of feedback from others. Whilst there is an E*ngaging in and experiencing of new roles and relationships* as is predicted in Mezirow's Stage 5, an underlying factor is the trust placed in others. Trusting relationships enabled the expression of opinion and the openness to, and consideration of, feedback from other students and tutors. Whilst students did not engage systematically in a reflective process, there were indications that reflective thinking was happening at a level of unconscious competence.

It was through direct engagement in tasks and activities that experience was gained, through the risk of taking on unfamiliar roles and tasks, and moving into and experimenting with the unfamiliar. The formation of new relationships was an inherent aspect of engaging in learning and was necessary to sustain support and approval. Importance was placed by students on the value of relationships for support and feedback; for some these relationships were meaningful only for the duration of the course, whilst others visualised relationships continuing post-course. Also apparent was a sense of an individual changing the relationship that they had with themselves; as they began to realise that possibilities could be made realities in terms of such things as jobs and further learning, their vision of what they could achieve in life expanded.

Interpretation of the research data evidences students as having a more clearly developed sense of purpose and future. They identified aims in life and objectives by which they would attain goals. These were for some clearly defined and for others defined to a lesser degree, but with a common movement towards an increased sense of direction. This ability to formulate objectives towards attaining set goals is consistent with the transformative learning experience as described in Mezirow's Stage 6: *Planning a course of action*, and Stage 7: *Acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans*. Students were presented on a daily basis, as a part of the course

programme, with tasks which required them to plan courses of action. Also on a larger scale, the evidence from the research indicates that students were making more expansive plans about life, education and career trajectories. The formulation of objectives and goals for future long term aims was informed by the acquisition of knowledge and development of the skills needed for identifying sources of appropriate information, such as newspapers, tutors and education and careers advisors. The data provided evidence that students gained new knowledge and skills with which to put plans into action. This included such knowledge as an understanding of how to encourage, motivate, support and lead others and the development of practical skills such as use of the telephone, organising a shopping trip, interviewee skills for job applications and skills in writing CVs.

Students took on new roles and were open to feedback and experimentation in these roles. They developed an understanding of where their strengths lay and were aware of the strengths of others. Students discovered personal aptitudes that they possessed which they were eager to develop further and which led them to consider how their ability may be put to use to serve their future aspirations, such as an aptitude for caring or leadership skills, or an awareness of undeveloped academic ability. This movement into engaging in unfamiliar experiences is consistent with Stage 8 of Mezirow's transformative learning process which anticipates *Provisional trying of new roles and ways of being.* This was also evident amongst those students who imagined themselves in new future roles beyond their current learning context, such as chef and university student, and were stimulated into preparing and planning for this. However, the suggestion that this stage incorporates *'new ways of being'* is not identifiable from the evidence. This is not to exclude such a possibility, but seems due to such a concept being itself too vague and esoteric. It is difficult to conclude whether what may be construed as a new way of being is in actuality new; it might feasibly be a past way of being that is less habitually used.

Whilst it is not evident that new ways of being are actualised, there is evidence from the research data that the roles that students entered into involving new experiences for them also provided a means for fostering their build-up of self-efficacy and competences. The sense of renewed confidence was readily voiced. The increased sense of competence, and the development of belief that they could achieve, was apparent and is in keeping with what is anticipated in the transformative learning process at Stage 9: *Building up competence and self-confidence*. However, not only was a sense of increased confidence related to particular specific contexts, but self-confidence also seemed to consist of clusters of confidences which together enabled new risks and possibilities to be contemplated. To some extent this mirrors what this thesis posits is happening at the pre-engagement stage, namely a clustering of previous experiences of self-confidence which

alongside the sense of discontent (suggested at Stage 1 of Mezirow's transformative learning process) provides the momentum to begin the process of engaging in learning.

To differing degrees students experienced the learning process as life-changing or as a renewal of enthusiasm and sense of personal potential. The learning experience enabled an expansion of how they visualised themselves, the world in which they lived and the possibilities that it now afforded them. This was achieved to varying degrees by individual students but their experience did reflect a transformative learning process, a re-visioning and transformation of the internal frame of reference (Taylor 2008) and the changing of assumptions, which were no longer valid, through which the world was interpreted and responded to (Christie 2009). The evidence from this research data concurs to a great extent with Mezirow's transformative learning process as depicted at Stage 10: *A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.* The students spoke readily of experiencing a change in their selves, but whether this change amounts to a completely new perspective in the fundamental sense that is suggested at Stage 10, is difficult to discern from the data. However, the experience of the students is collectively consistent in evidencing a sense of change which is described as having more confidence to plan towards the fulfilment of ambitions that had seemed remote possibilities prior to engaging in learning. It is important though to have an understanding of the nature of this change – perhaps by stating what it is not.

In order to do this it is necessary to refer to the concept of 'emancipatory conscientisation' (Friere 1970). This is Freire's (1970) contention that education serves students through a process of freedom through reflection on their personal world and consequently the desire to change it; he uses the term emancipatory conscientisation to depict a raising of consciousness that can lead to political liberalisation and freedom from oppression. According to Dirkx (1998), transformative learning enables us to name the processes that we are subject to and to construct our own meaning. The change experienced by students in this research is not one of such emancipatory conscientisation, but remains within the framework of the contemporary educational value system and contemporary educational policy discourse. The process of transformative learning which takes place does so within this framework. What at first sight may be considered a *new perspective* arising out of the transformative learning process, as initially evidenced in this research, may in actuality be learner changes that are a process of conformity, especially when consideration is given to the dynamic of acceptance as a precursor to an effective learning relationship. This is not to diminish the acceptance fostered by the tutors, but to acknowledge that there is a vulnerable and dependant dynamic which may also be operating for previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners. Such consideration of the

dynamic of acceptance as being more complex provides some balance to it being idealised in the discussion.

Since in the context of this research there is no evidence to suggest that the process of change referred to by students is one of an emancipatory empowerment of 'hard to reach' young adult learners that enables them to criticise or challenge the circumstances (political, educational, social and/or economic) which marginalised them in the first place; there is no process of transformation implied. In a critique of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, Inglis (1998) considers that true emancipation is not conceivable within the confines of transformative learning theory, since it is limited to changing learner beliefs and values within the established learning discourse, and as such is merely a process of reforming, proffering no emancipatory means to challenge or change the institutions and organizations through whose power learner's lives are shaped. The limitations of transformative learning are considered by Inglis to serve and perpetuate a narcissistic process within the theory itself. Whilst students may have practiced reflective and critical thinking skills, their contextual limitations raise a consideration that an alternative perspective, which appears as being a successful reintegration of learning experience into their individual lives, may also involve them in a process of being reintegrated and accepted into a collective economic and political system. The shift in their perspective then suggests the possibility of some aspects of social conformity rather than of transformation; so that the process towards fulfilling the desire to attain future employment as expressed by students may be misinterpreted as a transformative learning process. The perspective on learning and employment that becomes manifest is not necessarily a new one for the students, but one which has found a means to come to the foreground of students thinking because it now as a possibility has meaning – in that students recognise that they now have prospects in terms of their future employment

In answer to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, the research data therefore evidences a process of change occurring in learners which is largely, but not wholly, in keeping with the transformative learning experience anticipated in Mezirow's theory. The research provides evidence that is in keeping with what Mezirow (2000 p12) considers to be the purpose of learning, namely, the effecting of "a change in perspectives, habits and mindset". However, that theory does not encapsulate the depth or complexity of the process that the students underwent. Whilst the stages of transformative learning theory provide a framework for viewing an overall process of change, the theory is not detailed enough to give consideration to a fuller account of what the evidence of this research data indicates is entailed in the learning process. Whilst those students who transform are sustained by an on-going process of set tasks, planning, implementation of plans, reflective thinking

and critical thinking, these take place within a team context. Success in achieving these goals has meaning to the students, both in terms of the immediate experiencing of doing well and in terms of longer term aims that are anticipated as a result of completing the course, such as employment and further and higher education. It is evident that support and feedback from others plays a large part in the process of transformative learning, and that the quality of human relationships and society is fundamental to sustaining engagement in learning within the learning context.

5.2.4 Transformative learning: Necessary but not sufficient

In conclusion, the research indicates that students experienced a change in perspective which could equate to a process of transformative learning. This process begins pre-engagement to learning and with a sense of discontent, but this is not the only process in operation at this point: another was one of a gathering of memories of self-efficacy in differing contexts. Where the process of transformation begins and ends is not clear, or whether there are many transformative processes in operation at simultaneous or differing times, nor whether they indeed reach forms of completion. The transformative learning process would seem to require more than is accounted for in Mezirow's depiction. Post-engagement in learning, the process of change was supported by a learning environment which fostered a value of 'acceptance' that was communicated with consistency throughout the learning experience by the tutors. An environment of acceptance contributed to the willingness of students to support and encourage each other, to the willingness to take risks, to the development of resilience to failure, and following reflection, to considered re-attempts at failed tasks. Whilst the stages of the process of transformative learning seemingly taking place appear necessary to effect changes in perspective, the stages are limited in recognising, appreciating and valuing other interpersonal processes that contribute to the learning context; a fundamental one of which is an attitude of acceptance. Transformative learning may imply a learning process, but it is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive account of the human elements that in no small part contribute to a process of learning.

5.3   Conceptualisation of Experience of Transformative Learning in Terms of Reflective Thinking, Critical Thinking and Self-efficacy

This section is aimed at answering the fourth question addressed in this research: that of how and to what extent do learners conceptualise a transformative learning experience in terms of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy? The evidence from this research indicates that learners conceptualised their experiences in terms of change, planning, tasks, goal setting, developing confidence and learning new skills. These terms as expressed by students are consistent with the theoretical concepts of transformative learning, reflective thinking, critical thinking and perceived

self-efficacy. Other terms used were support, motivation, future and purpose, through which were communicated a sense of personal change. The research evidences a reflective process which includes reflection in a broader sense on past experiences, on future possibilities and reflection on post-task experiences on the course. The latter, reflection on post-task experience, is not defined clearly or systematically engaged in by students, although it is present by implication. Reflection on imagined future possibilities was accompanied by a determination to attain and make real what was imagined, such as employment. These reflections were precursors to critical thinking processes, which this research evidences in the students' identification of goals for the future, and plans of how to attain them. This was discernible in such critical thinking processes as preparing CVs for future job interviews, planning for job interviews and applying for university places, as well as having alternative plans in the event of being unsuccessful. There was indication of students engaging in a critical thinking process which was informed by an accumulation of knowledge and experience from the course. Particularly discernible was the increase in perceived self-efficacy expressed by students; students consistently used the term 'self-confidence' to refer to a belief in their ability to succeed in future tasks and goals after completion of the course. This increased self-efficacy for performing tasks they set their minds to achieving contributed directly to the ambitiousness of the task undertaken and the motivation with which the students engaged in it. To this degree, perceived self-efficacy was a motivating factor behind the choice of goal and the quality of the reflective and critical thinking which was being applied to achieving that goal which together is indicative of these processes being reciprocal. It is as if the students had developed an expanded imagination of themselves and their personal capabilities. Students related an experience of overall change in themselves to an increased confidence or perceived self-efficacy, suggesting that there is reciprocity between transformative learning and self-efficacy (the issue of reciprocity is discussed in detail in Section 5.4).

From the previous discussion it can be concluded that a process of transformative learning is being experienced by students in their initial engagement in learning. Learners in describing a sense of change that they felt they had undergone, used a number of terms that eluded to the concepts of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. Reflective thinking was considered as looking back, and critical thinking equated to problem-solving and planning for the future. Processes of reflective thinking and of critical thinking were in evidence from the research data, and students could make some connection between these processes and experiences of personal change. However, the details of the impact of reflective thinking and of critical thinking on the process of change and future aims did not appear to be conceptualised in detail in student's minds. So although there was acknowledgment of the role of reflective and critical thinking in the change they had

experienced, which has a reciprocal relationship to transformative learning, the evidence from the research suggests that this was operating at a more tacit level of awareness. Hence the setting of aims and planning action and reflective thinking was not a new experience as such, but the context within which these processes took place was an unfamiliar one, as was the type of aims and goals that were formed. In this respect, there was a sense that students already possessed a developed capacity for reflective thinking and critical thinking. However this does not detract from the possibility that there is reciprocity between Mezirow's Stage 6: *Planning courses of action* and Stage 7: *Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans*, which have some resonance with the process of reflective and critical thinking described in Brookfield's (1987) Stage 4: *Finding alternatives, a transition stage when old ideas are left behind or clarified and new ways of thinking or acting are started.*

What is more clearly evident from the research data, is that students readily identified experiences of change in themselves through the use of such terms as determination, challenge, confidence and a willingness to have a go at something, or they conceived of the notion of possessing the skills to succeed. In consideration of their post-course future, it was with a belief that they would attain their goals regarding jobs and education, being self-sufficient and a willingness to acknowledge and accept the challenges that may lie between them and their goals. Such belief in their ability to succeed is in keeping with Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy in which individuals possess self-beliefs about their ability to succeed. The research indicates that there was a shift in students' self-beliefs away from self-defeating thoughts and beliefs to those which anticipate success. These thoughts were qualified by a realistic understanding that it would take effort and planning to achieve their goals.

5.4   Does Transformative Learning have Reciprocity with Reflective Thinking, Critical Thinking and Self-efficacy?

The fifth question this research seeks to answer is whether transformative learning, if occurring, has reciprocity with reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. This has to some extent been addressed in the response to research question two, which suggests some consistency between the student experience and the transformative learning process as depicted by Mezirow. There are indicators that the process of change experienced by students is related to the reciprocal effects of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. The learning processes are inseparable, as expressed through the experiences of the students, and as such are consistent indicators of reciprocity.

5.4.1 Pre-engagement transformative learning

The evidence from this research supports the phase of pre-engagement in learning as being one which involves potential students in a process of building-up competence and self-confidence which is supported by a process of reflective and critical thinking. However, the evidence suggests a renewal of confidence arising from a sense of competency based on past experiences and past positive self-assumptions. New competencies are not being developed at the point prior to engaging in learning, but previously established competencies are being drawn upon and form a basis for actions. These actions include such things as contacting the college to make the initial enquiry and planning attendance at interview. Whilst the evidence presented here suggests that students are engaged with purpose in reflective thinking and critical thinking prior to engaging in learning, any sense of personal trajectory arising from a newly developed perspective on life and on self at this point is in an imaginary reflective thinking form. It is as if there is a gathering or clustering of past experiences of self-efficacy which energises a movement towards engaging in learning. To some extent, critical thinking and an action plan to attend for interview are an expression of this movement towards realising a new sense of self-value and potential. There is evidence from the research that increased self-efficacy in new contexts is at an early stage of realisation, it is delicately balanced and dependent on the success of the initial context of interactions with the tutor during interview. The interviews provide an affirmation, acceptance and further impetus to the movement that has arisen in the student pre-engagement. The indication is that it is success at the interview with tutors that enables the process of the development of a new perspective which potentially will afford the development of self-efficacy in differing contexts. There is some evidence to support the notion that some students had already transformed their view of themselves pre-engagement in learning, and were actually acting on this with some belief in their abilities. For these particular students, engaging in learning was an objective to attaining longer term goals such as going to university or gaining employment. Whilst a reflective process served to re-establish, reaffirm and remind students of previous experiences of competency and self-efficacy, the notion of a specific triggering event as suggested at Stage 1 of Brookfield's (1987) five-stage model of critical thinking, is not evidenced in the data, although Brookfield's *Stage 2: A period of appraisal accompanied by an uncomfortable feeling of doubt*, is supported by the evidence from this research as occurring prior to engaging in education, and in this respect there are some indications of a reciprocity with both Mezirow's Stage 1 and the self-examination aspect of his Stage 2.

With regard to pre-engagement in learning, the indication is that students were engaged in reflective thinking and critical thinking; processes which are in keeping with Brookfield's critical thinking model Stage 3: *An exploration, an acceptance of movement towards change*. However, there is little to

support the notion that student's pre-engagement in learning was reflecting in an explorative way on a decisions to engage in learning, as might be suggested by Brookfield's model. Instead, students appeared to be in some state of primed momentum which had been set into motion and whose origin was not readily identified. Their movement towards change, as suggested in Brookfield's Stage 3, was more than accepted by students, it was indeed embraced with an enthusiasm for personal possibilities. Similarly here, the evidence does not support student's pre-engagement in learning as being involved in a conscious process of an assessment of assumptions as suggested by Mezirow.

The research indicates that pre-course the students recognise the opportunity to change offered by an engagement in learning; this results in their movement towards considering it as a possibility. It is however, a sense of perceived self-efficacy in their ability to make a success of engaging in learning that overcomes previous inertia. This movement takes place despite doubts, fears and anxieties regarding how they might be perceived by others. It enabled action in making initial enquiries about the course. That the students made enquiries about the course is indicative of a perceived self-efficacy about being able to access learning. To this extent it is in keeping with Bandura's (1986) triadic model of reciprocal causation, since it is a stimulus from the external environment which prompts a movement towards enquiry; a change of behaviour in itself towards that aspect of self-efficacy associated with risk taking. This has to some extent reciprocity with Mezirow's Stage 3, since it can be construed as contributing to an on-going assessment of self-assumptions and beliefs, as well as having reciprocity with the gathering of information anticipated in Brookfield's model at Stage 3. The attempt to gather information involves arranging interviews with tutors.

The indication is that this process requires that potential students have enough perceived self-efficacy to plan and arrange the interviews in the first place. The attendance at an interview suggests that the students have some degree of perceived self-efficacy that they will be successful in their performance at interview. Having such perceived self-efficacy enables a student to engage in the process of attending the interview and of information gathering. Information gathering is an aspect of critical thinking and as such, this suggests a reciprocity between self-efficacy and critical thinking processes.

Brookfield's Stage 3 of the critical thinking model anticipates that information gathering will involve identifying and considering options and the experience of others. At an early point of their consideration to engage in learning, the students meet with a tutor. This involves them in an intense gathering of information; the evidence presented here indicates that both students and tutors bear witness to the important influence of these meetings upon the students' decision to engage in learning. These stages of reflective and critical thinking have reciprocity with transformative learning

in as much as it is at these interviews that, in addition to the more factual information about the course, some of the experiences of tutors are shared with the students and the students begin to share information about themselves. This sharing is in keeping with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Stage 4, in which the learner has *a recognition of their discontent and shares the process of transformation* and his Stage 5, which entails the learner's involvement in an *exploration of new roles and relationships.* The evidence from the student and tutor experiences suggests that the *gathering of information* is in keeping with Brookfield's Critical Thinking Stage 3, *the sharing of personal information* in consistent with Mezirow's Stage 4, and the *exploration of new roles and relationships* is as anticipated in Mezirow's Stage 5 are reciprocal in particular because they are processes which share a common element anticipated by both learning theories of 'others' for them to be in operation. It is this interaction with others which fosters both the simultaneous gathering of information and the sharing of the process of transformation, identified as necessary pre requisites for the stages of critical assessment of assumptions (Mezirow 2000) and the clarifying of new ways of thinking, leaving behind old ideas (Brookfield 1987). This thesis further posits that this encounter with tutors is in itself a crucial transformative moment. The interview with the tutor is the liminal space where reciprocity brings about a change. The sense of the interviews being successful is in keeping with the notion (Pajares 2002) that transformative experiences result from powerful performance attainment; which in turn strengthens beliefs. Following a successful interview, students had an increased perceived self-efficacy that they can be successful on the course. What is also evident is that the tutors have high perceived self-efficacy in their ability to foster change and that there is reciprocity between the self-efficacy of the student and that of the tutor in their differing roles. The evidence suggests that these interviews were significant in providing a safe environment, which diminished the likelihood of a sense of failure. The interviews had involved students in taking the risk of leaving their familiar comfort zones and trying out new roles, and experimenting with the possibility of leaving behind old ideas and assumptions and exploring new ways of behaving and action. This suggests that self-efficacy at this preliminary stage has reciprocity with *Mezirow's* Stage 5, as the students begin to further *contemplate and experiment with new roles and relationships pre-engagement in learning.*

The research indicates that as a result of reflective thinking and critical thinking a plan of action is formulated prior to engagement in learning. This plan is not particularly detailed but may simply be a plan of gathering more information, such as how to make enquiry about the course and who to speak to. Following initial enquiry this may then entail arranging an interview and arranging the means to get there. For some students the commitment to such an arrangement was a new experience in contrast to their habitual daily living. There is further evidence to suggest that it gave

rise to a sense of purpose and meaningfulness to life, so that it was with some sense of perceived self-efficacy in their ability to make a success of the interview and be accepted onto the course, that students, pre-course, are motivated into actions to enquire and attend for interview. The tutor interviews are supportive, encouraging and affirming of a student's potential to succeed; this encourages a sense of success in the self-efficacy of forming new relationships. The experiencing of the potential for an enhancing learning relationship with the tutor at this preliminary stage contributes to the beginning of movement towards a changing perspective on self and education; this is suggestive of reciprocity between self-efficacy and transformative learning.

5.4.2   Transformative learning and the emperor's new clothes

This thesis contends that a process of change has been completed pre-engagement in learning, which could be construed as the culminating stage of a transformative learning process. Changes appear to have been experienced by the potential students and they stand pre-engagement, about to engage in learning, having formulated what is referred to in Mezirow's Stage 10: as *conditions dictated by one's new perspective*. This does not preclude the following process of engaging in learning from itself contributing to further transformative experience, as indicated in the discussion of the evidence from the research supporting this. However this raises the question of what transformation actually means, as it is not clear that a transformative learning experience has occurred at all on closer consideration. This is discussed below.

Mezirow (1985) posits that transformative learning can take place in the form of a large and immediate shift in perspective or that it can occur more gradually through an accumulation of experience over time. This provides a very wide scope for claims that transformative learning has occurred and suggests that as a process, it is what is to be expected anyway as we progress through life. It is contended here that the ideal that Mezirow's model presents, may well be akin to the illusion represented by the notion of the 'emperor's new clothes'.

The metaphor of the 'emperor's new clothes' was emergent from the author's own reflective process. This process was triggered by failed attempts to comprehend and discern transformative learning processes clearly in the findings, and thereby to reconcile the findings with theory. It involved drawing an image in the reflective journal, of a tangle of threads to conceptualise and capture the author's thought processes in the form of an image of the felt experience of the phenomenon of transformative learning in the research thus far. It further involved the author in an immersive process of reflection in which a focus was made on the image of the tangle of threads; some closely woven, others untied loose ends, and others that began at one end but were cut off part way through, or began part way within the complexity of threads and continued to the end. This

led to the beginning of a consideration that an argument supporting transformative learning theory could be made for any aspect of this image of process. This raised doubts that transformative learning theory could have made accountable and explicable, all the learning processes that each thread might represent. The theory that initially had been substantive now appeared threadbare to me. Further contemplation was given to the empty gaps between the threads, and in keeping with a process of morphogenesis an image of the 'emperor's new clothes' was constellated in the author's thoughts. The culmination of this reflective process had implications for the way in which there now began to develop an understanding of transformative learning within the context of this research and the author's ensuing interpretation of the findings: transformative learning theory appeared to be there, but there was a lack of substance.

Indeed Vickers (2007) points out that transformative learning is not as clearly discernible as a linear process when the realities of contextual influences such as community, culture and beliefs are operating. These influences can when not acknowledged within transformative learning theory, still lend their selves to the suggestion that the theory is an accurate depiction of learning. When made visible as part of the learning context they then serve to challenge the depiction of the transformative process posited in Mezirow's stages. The implication of this is that without acknowledging other influences, research is made to fit the theory, and does not take into account that there are enough changes that happen in the course of a lifetime, since individual life experience is naturally one of on-going change on a number of fronts. The suggestion arising from this is that transformative learning may be more of a norm than an exception, so that the concept of transformation is too loaded with expectation for what in reality are processes of ordinary occurrence. What is more concretely discernible however, from the evidence of the student experiencing, is their developing perceived self-efficacy, together with their sense of acceptance by the tutors and their peers.

There is a strong suggestion of reciprocity between self-efficacy and acceptance. An additional consideration that follows from this is that, it is not the learners who have transformed, but the learning environment and climate to which they have been exposed in contrast to earlier non-enhancing experiences of learning. It is this learning climate of acceptance which enables previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners to be who they are, to risk questioning who they are, as a normal consequence of a learning experience. In contrast to a transforming experience, the learners move, develop, adjust and orientate towards who they wish to become, without there being a transformative basis to their change. A lack of evidence for processes of transformational learning is posited by Newman (2012), who contests the status of transformative learning as being a special or

unusual phenomenon that is any different from changes that ordinarily occur from experiences of learning. The suggestion is that there is no evidence to confirm that transformative learning occurs, and that it has no value as a term for describing a process of learning. Newman further argues that it is not necessary to refer to transformative learning theory to explain the profound changes that are experienced by learners, such changes in attitude and perspective being something of the norm for learning experiences and not involving a metamorphosis or emancipatory change in perspective, as implied by Mezirow.

5.5 Reflective Thinking and the Constellation of Memories of Success

The sixth and final research question regarding the implications for sustaining previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners engagement in learning can now be addressed. The evidence collected in this research suggests that there is movement in the thinking process from which the motivation of adult 'hard to reach' young adult learners to engage in learning arises; this in part stems from a reflective thinking process on previous experiences of successes in life. The recall of these successes form a constellation of perceived self-efficacies in students that they can achieve success on the course, and this provides the impetus to a critical thinking process, which includes such things as the gathering of information, and in turn gives rise to a plan of action towards attaining the goal of engagement tin learning. In the initial move towards engagement in learning the interview with the tutor plays a key role in encouraging engagement through the tutor's communication of acceptance without judgment of the student. It is this acceptance that affirms the sense for the student of being valued in an educational context that encourages and sustains an engagement in learning. An attitude or climate of acceptance in the learning environment and in the relationship between learner and tutor fosters to some considerable extent an experience of learning as an enhancing one. The emotional climate of the learning environment is largely created by the tutors. The quality of acceptance, and the degree to which acceptance is communicated by tutors, is instrumental to the development of a learning relationship that supports a learners development of perceived self-efficacy, through the developing capacity to learn from taking risks and performing in unfamiliar roles, relationships and contexts. Acceptance enables an increase in the development of openness to feedback, critical reflection and critical thinking. The implications of this research for sustaining learning are that movement towards learning is enhanced by an emotionally secure and accepting environment.

The students, pre-engagement in learning, are not without a capacity for effective reflective and critical thinking, as demonstrated in their managing of the process that led to the initial interviews. The implications for sustaining learner engagement are that an overt acknowledgement of the

students existing capacity to attain goals and the means they utilised to do this may go some way to increasing perceived self-efficacy, thereby encouraging initial engagement and sustaining an on-going process of learning.

With regard to transformative learning, there is no substantial or consistent evidence to support a conclusion that a process of transformative learning occurs. Whilst processes of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy appear to have some reciprocity with a transformative learning process, the transformation in perspectives does not happen, so that what at first appears as reciprocity is actually a mirror imaging. The implications for sustaining learner engagement are that changes in perspective, for example towards the role of education in their lives, do not have to be transformative for a learning experience to be successful for 'hard to reach' young adult learners in the context of this research. It is more the case of an expanded awareness of both themselves as learners and the possibilities that future learning has to offer: they do not have to transform in any way to achieve this learning. It is perhaps important for the learning discourse that the notion of change and transformation may imply that there was a lack, a need, or deficit in the learner, rather than a more encouraging view of the learner as being in an on-going process. This latter view offering a more of an encouraging basis for a perspective which views the students' perceived self-efficacy as a continuum, and has as implicit, the tutor's communication of a non-judgmental attitude of acceptance.

The themes discussed in this chapter form the basis for the conclusions of the thesis which are set out in the following and final chapter, Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6   CONCLUSIONS

CONTENTS

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has looked at the reciprocity between the learning process of transformative learning, reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy, in the context of previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners engagement in a Prince's Trust Course at one college of further education. This concluding chapter presents the implications of the findings. These are set out below under the five headings of *Implications for Theory*, *Implications for Learning, Limitations of the Research and Future Directions, and Researcher's Reflexive Process.* The sequence of the headings is presented as a movement from the more abstract theory to the more concrete application to learning, based upon the theoretical implications. The sequence then moves on to acknowledge those aspects in which the research has been limited, so that any claims to knowledge are understood and contained within the parameters of these limitations. However, these limitations may also lend themselves to the future directions of research, along with future movement towards in research arising from what can be seen on the horizon from the location of this thesis. The researcher's reflexive process is a final means of looking back at the research process, in order to identify potential aspects of the researchers personal phenomenological experiencing that may have clouded the interpretatvist perspective.

Evidence accrued from student experiencing in this research indicated initially that transformative learning had taken place in students and that there was justification to suggest that the process has some reciprocity with self-efficacy, reflective thinking and critical thinking. However, what unfolded from a continued consideration was an overall sense that the theory of transformative learning itself becomes more and more limited as a means to understanding the complexities of learning. This was evident to such an extent that the theory began to be inconsistent with the realities of the student experiencing within the learning context, so that what appeared to be indications of reciprocity became uncertain, since the number of changes occurring that might be identified as transformative learning processes appeared to be on-going at different stages of both pre-engagement and post-engagement in learning.

The evidence indicates that whilst reflection on dissatisfaction occur pre-engagement in learning, a motivating factor that stimulates an impetus for enquiry into learning is a gathering or clustering of memories of previous experiences of self-efficacy. This impetus is not primarily a reflection on discontent, but contains elements of an awareness of unfulfilled potential. This suggests that reflective thinking, pre-engagement in learning, is not confined to a focus on feelings of discontent or dissatisfaction as the single initial primary process of transformative learning, but that the discontent may be a necessary but not a sufficient factor in the initial stage.

It is at this pre-engagement in learning phase that it becomes apparent that a possible shift, change or transformation has occurred prior to engagement in learning and that this is shortly followed by another process of transformative learning after engagement. Consequently, within the context of this research, transformative learning theory begins to be unwieldy and strained in its usefulness in enabling an understanding of the complexity of the learning processes taking place. There is no clear indication of when a transformative learning process begins or ends, or whether there may be more than one transformative learning process in operation. Indeed it is conceivable that a transformative process in itself can be occurring at any one moment, be at a different stage of transformation, and be of a different, unrelated transformative process to any other that may be taking place. It is therefore not clear whether such processes may be related, or whether they are linear and singularly follow their own separate sequence of transformative learning stages as proposed by Mezirow.

There is evidence for reciprocity between self-efficacy and some of the stages of transformative learning, in particular where an emphasis on reflective thinking and critical thinking are indicated. However, the case for the completion of a transformative learning process rests ultimately on evidencing a critical evaluation of previous assumptions, leading students to changes in perspectives. That learning and change occurred is apparent, but that this was transformative learning, and led to changes in perspective, is more obscure. Pre engagement in learning, students may for example have established assumptions arising from earlier adverse learning and life experiences of being rejected or excluded. This may be as a consequence of having for example a criminal record or an alcohol addiction. These are not necessarily inaccurate assumptions or interpretations on their part, but may be realistic views, formed on the basis of what past real experience, as opposed to imagined or assumed experience of exclusion has yielded. So their fears of rejection that have prevented their engagement in learning may well be the result of effective reflective thinking and critical thinking processes.

Within the context of this study, the changes that students experience as a result of engaging in learning do not readily equate to a transformative experience, but rather to an informative expansion of understanding; the students' previous assumptions that they will not be included within a learning context or educational setting, may still hold true and be borne out in some other life contexts. A consideration arose from this research that the change experienced by students may be conformative rather than transformative; there is no evidence to support this, but it is resonates with Newman's (2012) notion that what we interpret as the development of personal agency as a result of transformative learning, may only be responses to trends, social conditioning and pressures within the context of the day. It is the notion of contexts that has a central place in the conclusions of this research regarding what contributed to enabling the learning to take place. The indications are that the learning took place within a climate of acceptance created by the tutors, which effectively undermined the unhelpful assumptions that students may have had about themselves and how tutors might interact with them. The previously held assumptions of the students, that could have potentially adversely shaped the learning experience into one of a self-fulfilling prophesy, were displaced largely by the tutor attitudes, which conveyed an acceptance, a valuing of, and a belief in the student's capacity to succeed. It was the sustaining of such an attitude of acceptance by the tutors that was the consistent backdrop to the fostering of quality learning experiences, which in turn sustained the previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners in their learning process, through the creating of a safe and secure environment, one within which learners risked performing, experimenting and learning with minimisation of concerns of being adversely judged. Hence the transformation is not in the learners but in the learning climate to which they are exposed. There appears a case therefore for investigating the possibility of reciprocity between tutor acceptance and student self-efficacy, and for identifying what human elements constitute an effective learning environment for 'hard to reach' young adult learners and what will sustain them in learning; this point is expanded upon in Section 6.5.

This thesis has identified in discussion, reciprocal aspects of the learning processes in previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in learning that may contribute to a fuller understanding of what enhances that learning experience, and what theories may also contribute to our understanding of such experiencing. Points of reciprocity between transformative learning, critical reflection, critical thinking and self-efficacy have been identified, but also of consequence in this study is that its emergent design enabled flexibility in responses to the information accumulated from the initial interviews, which led to a greater focus on pre-engagement in learning processes. This flexibility has been important in enabling the pursuit of emerging information, so that a more complex tapestry of the learning processes involved has been revealed. This added detail has,

through the discussion of the findings, led to the conclusion that transformative learning theory is limited at its best and of no consequence at its worst, in supporting an adequate understanding of the learning processes in the context of this research. Other processes, not acknowledged within transformative learning, cannot be readily excluded from a fuller understanding, but are important to recognise as contributing to that understanding of the learning process as a whole. These include a sense of unfulfilled potential, previous experiences of self-efficacy and a consistent climate of acceptance, which play a fundamental part in enabling learning processes of critical reflection, critical thinking and increasing perceived self-efficacy to develop.

6.2 Implications for Theory

Theories of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy, as presented within the context of this research are discernible from the students' accounts of their learning experiences; which have references to their developing perceived self-efficacy that include or allude to the use of reflective thinking and critical thinking in their attempts to be successful and attain a degree of mastery over tasks they have been set. The development of such mastery was accompanied by a reframing of the meaning of what it meant to be unsuccessful, so that a notion of failure and the unhelpful feelings engendered by lack of experience diminished in importance and were replaced by one of determination to try again, having learned from the new experience. Hence students developed robustness and resilience in maintaining their desire to achieve. The role of critical reflection and critical thinking in developing perceived self-efficacy, although not referred to as such, was more tacitly understood and implied. This does not diminish the sense of reciprocity existing within these processes, but rather indicates a possible lack in the students of a familiar discourse with which to refer to their use and experience of reflective thinking and critical thinking. The tasks they completed were readily described and related; in contrast the use of reflective thinking and critical thinking skills were more obscurely referred to in communication.

The theoretical implications arising from this are that learning may be enhanced for 'hard to reach' young adult learners if they are enabled to develop an extended vocabulary through which they could symbolise and signify their understanding and experience. This is not to make life easier for researchers, but to enable the students through language to bring their experience from a tacit to a fuller awareness. This also has implications regarding what Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) first referred to as the 'Pygmalion effect', in which the high expectations that tutors' have of students is reflected in the higher achievement they attain. With regard to previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners, it raises questions concerning the extent that the application of learning theory is limited in practice by the degree of expectation of what is achievable. It is perhaps appropriate here

to keep in mind that two of the previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners in this research considered themselves capable of going into higher education at some point, and in this respect demonstrated perceived self-efficacy in their potential for future learning.

Evident in this research are indications that the theories of reflective thinking and critical thinking are borne out regarding their part in bringing about learning and change. Three key elements of critical thinking that are considered by Fisher (2001) to enable its effectiveness are that the person is of a mind to engage in the process, that as a skill it is honed through habitual practice, and that critical thinking is deemed to be of value to the person. There is some room here to consider elements that might contribute to learning to be an effective critical thinker, such as the type of learning environment which best promotes and fosters in the student the desire to reflect and think critically. Additionally significant, is the extent to which this desire might be contingent upon the meaningfulness to the student of the particular topic being given attention. Of further importance is the degree to which critical thinking has become embodied or habitualised by the student as a mode of learning. These considerations are in keeping with the distinction made by Bailin et al. (1999), between non-critical thinking and critical thinking, being determined by the quality of the process and not just by entering into the process in itself. There are also parallels here with perceived self-efficacy regarding the relationship of a learning environment which encourages performance and the meaningfulness of the task to be performed. The changes related by the students seem to be in keeping with what Pajares (2002) considers to be transforming experiences of self-efficacy, brought about by the experiencing of powerful performance attainments which as anticipated by this notion, strengthen self-belief in differing and sometimes unrelated areas of an individual student's life. The reciprocity of reflective thinking and critical thinking with perceived self-efficacy is similarly contingent on the task in hand having personal individual relevance, and the degree to which the processes involved in developing self-efficacy are in themselves valued by the learner.

However, with regard to transformative learning theory, as explained above, there is less indication that a process of learning has led to transformation, so the theory is not consistently substantiated within this research context. A process of transformative learning appears as too abstract to account for the complexity of the learning evidenced from the learners' experiences. There appear some possible points which allude to transformative learning having reciprocity with other accounts of learning as discussed here (reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy), but not to a degree that a conclusion of reciprocity can be justified in the face of the complexity that emerged. What transformative learning theory has to offer to understanding does not appear to go beyond a mirroring in some of its stages of these other accounts of learning. This could be misconstrued as

reciprocal when it is not. If transformative learning is not actually taking place then there is no justification for arguing that it has made any contribution through reciprocity. It appears as too much of an overarching theory to encompass the intricacies of the learning process in light of what becomes apparent in this research; for example, transformative learning at Stage 1 of Mezirow in anticipating reflection on discontent, does not provide a full, adequate or sufficient picture of the subject of reflection that leads to motivation and movement towards learning.

In Chapter 1, Figure 1.2 depicts liminal space and reciprocal locations for learning, and the point is made that liminal space as considered by Turner (1969) has transformational capacity. The conclusions of this research do not support a transformational process for learners; however it evidences the reciprocity of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy. Thus by implication there is an indication that conceptually there is shared liminal interface through which the processes of change rather than transformation have unfolded.

6.3 Implications for Learning

The positive influence of a climate of acceptance in which previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners can flourish, has implications when considering that 'hard to reach' young adult learners' past experiences of learning may not have been ones in which there was a nourishing relationship with tutors. In regard to the evidence from this research indicating the climate of acceptance that was fostered by tutors, it raises the notion that it may not be previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners that will change through a new process of learning, but that such changes may be as a result of a differing learning context. An element of this learning context may well be the tutor's communication to the learner of an   attitude of acceptance, through which a sense of valuing the learner fosters the learner's experience of inclusivity. The identification of acceptance as an important element in the tutor learner relationship is one which has been earlier proposed by Rogers and Freiberg (1993). Additionally, whilst the tutors' belief in the ability of the students to succeed is reminiscent of a Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968), a point to be considered is that such belief in students and high expectations of them, may be limited by the learning context, so that if training and employment are the central agenda then expectations will likely be limited to this. This infers that if there is no agenda for emancipatory conscientisation, then there will be no emancipatory discourse, no expectation of emancipation and therefore no transformative learning.

A paucity or absence of such discourse in learning may have implications for democracy, so that the emperor's new clothes, that initially in this research were considered to be worn by the theory of transformative learning, may be metaphorically a wider indicator of a contemporary state of the illusion of the contemporary relationship between learning and democracy. A further consideration

arising from this concerns the possible assumption, indeed possible illusion, that educators are themselves conscientiously emancipated, which alludes further to a possibility of degrees of emancipation, or degrees of an illusion of emancipation. This recalls the earlier notion of Dewey dictated from outside; an implication may perhaps be drawn that if learning itself is not emancipated, then the notion that learning can emancipate is illusory.

The student's recollection of past memorable experiences and impressions of effective performance and self-efficacy at the pre-engagement stage of learning plays a part in motivating pre-engaged learners to contemplate engaging in learning. It seems therefore an important consideration for the continuity and retention of learners that this is acknowledged and affirmed early in the engagement in learning. This would be a recognition that previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners do not engage on a course empty handed, but already possess an ability to reflect, critique and act with confidence based on belief in their ability to succeed. At an individual micro-processing level, this might be achieved initially through a student identifying, prior to engagement in learning, their successful and unsuccessful past performances, identifying the skills and attitude that enabled this success or were needed to be successful, and the sharing and discussion of these experiences with others, so that the student as a whole, past and present, more fully occupies their space within the learning context. At the group level this would contribute to the learning experience by fostering group cohesion and belonging through shared experiences. Learners may well benefit from being introduced to the theories of reflective thinking, critical thinking and self-efficacy in a form which is understandable, so that they are provided with an informed knowledge baseline from which to develop a sense of value in their own capacity to develop the skills. On the basis of there being reciprocity of reflective thinking and critical thinking skills and perceived self-efficacy, there would seem to be advantages in encouraging the learner towards developing a disposition or inclination towards applying such skills.

6.4 Limitations of the Research and Future Directions

There were no interviews conducted with 'hard to reach' young adult learners prior to their engagement in learning, so that conclusions about processes of change and engagement were based on tutor and student information which signified what such experience entailed. The inference is that the extent to which these students were actually 'hard to reach' is not known, or whether indeed, the term 'hard to reach' can be extended to cover their pre-engagement in learning life contexts. However, the definition of 'hard to reach' learners in terms of the Prince's Trust course and adopted for the purpose of this research, is that defined by NEET's (Not in education, employment or training); a term within which what may be lost in the breadth of its definition, is compensated for in

its inclusiveness. Also, since the learners who participated in the research were self-selecting, the sample was not representative, in particular, in view of the consideration of self-efficacy in this research; those who had the lowest perceived self-efficacy in their ability to successfully engage in learning may have avoided participating in the research. Additionally, due to only some students returning for final interview, the sample was not fully representative of those completing the course at the exit interview stage. Despite these limitations, the information gathered from students regarding pre-engagement in learning suggested that there were processes in operation, such as a realising of unfilled potential and a gathering of memories of past experiences of self-efficacy. An understanding of these processes might have been more richly informed if earlier access to students had been possible as part of the design of the research.

Interviews were not conducted with learners who did not complete the course. Had they been included in the research, they may have helped to provide insight as to the reasons that students left the course; this might well be in contrast to the experiences of those learners who successfully completed the course. Consideration here is to whether their leaving was because they did not conform to the group norms and expectations and so their leaving actually contributed to the cohesiveness of the remaining learner group, in that they did not share the dominant culture and their leaving was the only effective means of challenge – an act of *kenosis* or empty protest. Whilst this limitation may diminish a more expansive understanding of the students' total experiencing, it does not diminish the thick and rich information that was collected and the conclusions drawn about those students who successfully completed the course. Future research should however be mindful to incorporate exit interviews with non-completers; and also mindful that such exit interviews are in themselves contextually different. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that there is a possibility that interviews with non-completers may possibly have yielded important information regarding recruitment and retention.

Of those students who provided entry interviews and consented to provide an exit interview, only half attended for their exit interviews, five others who had consented did not turn up for the exit interview. This was possibly due to the exit interviews being conducted in the last week of the course. It would have enriched the information on the learning experience if these exit interviews had been undertaken following course completion, so that the experience of these students might also inform the research. It is noticeable that whilst the entry interviews included seven male and five female students, in the exit interviews the genders were equally represented by three male and three female students. Gender differences were not taken into account in the research as it was

primarily about whether transformative learning took place or not. However gender difference may be significant and future research could be designed to take account of this.

The research conclusions are drawn from information collected over a 12 week period. It therefore does not take account of what changes might take place after this time. A more longitudinal study could address whether the changes previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners experienced during the course are sustained and durable over time, and whether the learning is, if not transformative of the individual, then life changing in other ways or not; or whether indeed transformation occurs post course. Such longer term possibility may be understood in terms of the concept of 'sleeper effects', which refer to the changes in attitude that occur at later time in response to earlier experiences and that at some time in the future may influence learners to travel in unanticipated learning and life directions (Seitz, 1981; Feinstein and Peck, 2008). The research may also have been enriched if a number of other learning institutions which provided the Prince's Trust Course had been involved. This would then lend enable the potential collection of a broader range of data and a possible comparative study.

A pen portrait of each of the participants was not provided on the basis that it might have implications for confidentiality, particularly when considering the consequences of disadvantaged backgrounds that may have contributed to criminal conviction or drug misuse. As the researcher, the author was sensitive to not exploiting these circumstances in order to glorify the research as identifying some learning process that could in any way be misrepresented, or misinterpreted as having redemptive qualities. Such representation was considered by the author within the context of the research, to be potentially diminutive of the efforts of the participants when applied to their own learning and development. On reflection however, the author considers that this may have been too an extreme and limiting position to have adopted, as it was to the cost of presenting the participants as real, vibrant and living human beings, with identities that would enable the reader more readily to relate to their human experiencing and learning journey. It also brought a consideration that one cannot, on the one hand, give emphasis to the importance of the continuation of personal narrative for 'hard to reach' young adult learners' initial engagement in learning, and then on the other hand and in contrast, give minimal attention to pen portraits of the research participants. This consideration will influence the value that is placed by the author in future presentation of research so that it might best convey something more of the unique human differences and qualities of participants.

The key finding arising from this research is the central role that a climate of acceptance had in encouraging learners to engage and sustain that engagement, and further to plan to develop a future

beyond the end of the course which had meaning and purpose. It suggests a need for research to further explore the role of acceptance in learning contexts, and in the forming of an effective learning relationship with tutors. There is a need to make a clear definition of what is meant by the term 'acceptance', so that it can be separated out from other concepts such as the 'Pygmalion effect' which, as proffered by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) is concerned with the influence on performance through the tutor adopting and communicating an attitude of high expectation. The acceptance referred to in this research is one which has its genesis in a fundamental valuing of others. In Rogerian terms (Rogers and Freiberg, 1993) acceptance has a number of synonymous signifiers including respect, unconditional positive regard, warmth, valuing and prizing of another; Rogers also describes acceptance as a non-possessive love. Future research would involve a literature review of what is understood already regarding an attitude of acceptance in the context of learning relationships between tutor and student. There may also be value in future research that considers whether an attitude of acceptance can be enhanced in tutors. Research aimed at developing a more comprehensive understanding of acceptance could be designed within a qualitative paradigm. Whilst information may be gathered through interview methods, this could be enriched through the use of focus groups and semi-structured questionnaires specifically related to the experiencing of acceptance.

There is also a suggestion from this research that an enhanced climate of acceptance is enabling of the development of perceived self-efficacy. There is a need for research into the possibility of reciprocity between tutor attitudes to learners and the development of perceived self-efficacy, aimed at providing further understanding of their possible combined influences in learning. Furthermore, research exploring a possible reciprocity of self-efficacy with acceptance would provide a trajectory for future research that extends beyond this thesis. This would need to consider, additionally, the design and application of specific questionnaires for this purpose, as a means of measuring acceptance and self-efficacy with a view to investigating whether or not there was reciprocity. Consideration would have to be given as to when such data collection methods would be applied; this may involve researchers in having more of a presence in the classroom in order to apply the questionnaires in moments just prior to and just after learner performance of specific tasks, to collect more immediate information concerning student experiencing.

A further question arising from a consideration of this research concerns the continuity of a student's self-narrative. Students' personal histories often involved experiences that were outside the acceptable norms of society, such as crime and alcohol misuse, and this raises consideration of whether when previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners engage in education, and whether there

may be a hiatus between the student's pre-engagement personal self-narrative and the new experience of learning. Questions arising from this possibility would need to address whether or not there is a hiatus, whether or not this has consequences for the learner in the present or future, and what might be the possible personal, social, political and educational dynamics of such a hiatus. Included in such considerations might be a potential tendency to exclude an individual's past experiencing through an emphasis on change and future aims, and thereby prompt their dissociation from it. Such research may consider the potential consequences of the production of such an hiatus in personal narrative, with regard to the limits this may have in enabling an individual a fuller expansion of understanding which takes cognisance not only of the way in which someone is included in society and learning, but also supports a more personal process of the integration of past experience with current learning and future aims. Such research enquiry would perhaps be paradoxically reversing the thrust of this research by considering the question: If previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners do not experience transformative learning, why might this be? Such a question may then begin to differentiate between what is meant by, conforming and transforming, and whether education for previously 'hard to reach' young adult learners in any educational context realistically embraces the concept of emancipatory conscientisation and provides fertile ground for such realisations, or indeed thwarts and undermines it, by offering no learning space, voice or discourse for such development?

6.5 Researcher's Reflexive Process

Reflexivity, through an acknowledgement that the researcher has *a priori* sets of values, beliefs and assumptions, offers the researcher's subjective process to the personal scrutiny of the researcher, and to the scrutiny of peers. This is in keeping with Heidegger's (1962) contention that it is undesirable to exclude the researcher's subjective presuppositions from the process, better to acknowledge and include them as being an inextricable part of it. I deemed it important therefore to include and present as part of this qualitative research, those values, beliefs and assumptions I have become aware of as potentially having influence on my interpretive process.

When conducting qualitative research it is recognised that the subjectivity of the researcher can influence adversely the interpretations of the data, leading to the presentation of distorted meanings which impact on the value and integrity of the findings and conclusions drawn. The researcher's engagement in a process of reflexivity may address such a possibility of distortion and misrepresentation. Reflexivity as indicated by Finley (2002), seeks to present a research process that is open and transparent and thus able to provide a basis for establishing the research as trustworthy. This is not a process of 'Husserlian *epoche*' or 'bracketing' (Husserl 1970) in order to achieve an ideal

of non contamination of the interpretive process, but is in some ways its opposite since the reflexive process is one which lays bare and accepts that there will be human elements of the researcher's subjective phenomenology that are essentially and inseparably running through the fabric of the research process. Reflexivity is considered by Lipp (2007) to operate at a micro individual level of process; it is further considered to have a potential for developing emancipatory knowledge. Lipp (2007 p18) further considers reflexivity to incorporate "…a *deeper dimension of reflection".* This involves a necessary shift in the researcher's perspective from a reflective to a reflexive intent. Such intent would seem to be reminiscent of that suggested by Bailin et al. (1999) regarding the quality and rigour of critical thinking being contingent upon the desire to apply it effectively. This desire is itself contingent upon the degree to which a process of reflexivity has meaning for the researcher rather than it being a mere exercise.

Transformative learning is the central theory in the theoretical frame work of this research thesis, and in itself also incorporates a notion of emancipatory conscientisation (Mezirow, 1990) as emanating from an expansion of knowledge and understanding; it construes such raising of consciousness as involving changes in beliefs, values and assumptions. It seems appropriate therefore to give some consideration as to whether or not as the researcher I have experienced a process of transformation or change, and if so how such change may be understood within the theoretical frame of this research. My intent as the researcher in engaging in a reflexive process is to demonstrate transparency through an open *re-searching* of the landscape of personal beliefs, assumptions and values in relation to my experiencing of the development of this thesis. This *re-searching* is undertaken with regard to the completion of a hermeneutic circle, as depicted by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009); it is only at the end of the research process that I am positioned to more fully purvey the whole. From an end position I may better be able to identify those salient aspects of my personal experiencing which have influenced aspects of my forms of thinking, interpretation and understanding.

My personal motivation for conducting this research had a number of sources which include a sense that there are many individuals who are disadvantaged in our society through no choice of their own, but were born into social contexts which afforded multiple limitations in opportunity and therefore multiple disadvantages from the outset. This perspective stimulated a sense of social injustice as it seemed to be an affront to the meaning of democracy in that some sections of society appeared to be more liberated than others, the degree of liberty being in part based on knowledge and informed choice. It raised the question and consideration of the human right to knowledge and reciprocity between human rights and liberal democracy, as posited by Starkey (2005). Other aspects

of my own phenomenology shaping my perspective might be considered to be more extraneous to the parameters of the research. These included an appreciation of the notion that individuals can transform, which was largely influenced by Jungian literature around transformative processes, in which archetypes of the collective unconscious, as manifest in imagery depicted through dreams symbols and Jungian processes of active imagination, foster the expansion of ego consciousness leading to increasing individuation (Jung 1959), and Rogers's (1957, 1961) concept of the self-actualisation tendency, as the inherent force which pushes the individual towards their realisation of individual potential as a fully functioning person; and in particular the ways in which this tendency can be thwarted by internalised conditions of worth, in which self approval and value is adversely contingent on meeting the expectations of others. The notion of transformative learning fitted well with my assumptions and beliefs in processes of change at the onset of this research; I held a belief that profound change is possible for individuals. On the other hand, I had also been influenced by Giegerich's (2009) notion that the empirical person is not the subject of the individuation process, and that as such, individuation was not observable or visibly manifest in any person. This may have influenced and supported in me a shift in perspective from one of observing what was thought initially to be transformative learning, to one in which doubts began to develop as to whether any transformation was in fact taking place. At some level I held and tolerated two opposing beliefs regarding the notion of transformation.

Prior to my first interviews with previous 'hard to reach' young adult learners I anticipated that the NEETs students would, as disadvantaged individuals, possibly be unconfident, reticent in communicating their experiences and a little subdued or limited in their means to articulate their experiences. This assumption was somewhat shattered by the interviews, as I found the students to be enthusiastic with a sense of belief in their future and an intent to complete the course. It was this difference or dynamic between my assumption and reality which I believe prompted the desire to discover what processes might be operating for 'hard to reach' young adults prior to engagement in learning. I had also anticipation that learners would likely demonstrate a transformative process because the literature on transformative learning seemed so well established and overwhelmingly in support of this phenomenon, and largely accepted as a 'given' in educational contexts. This expectation, I suspect, led to my seeing in the findings initially, evidence of such a transformative process; there was a danger here that I might interpret the information provided by the students in a way which fitted the expectations of the theory and the unconscious prompting of my personal assumptions, and thus distort and misrepresent the student experiencing. It is not possible to give a full account of reflexivity, especially when it may involve unconscious processes, but it is plausible that a personal interest in Jungian perspectives on myth and fairy tale offered up a challenge to my

initial interpretations of the findings. Hence, the story of the 'Emperor's New Clothes' provided a more expansive way of understanding metaphorically the meaning of the findings, enabling me also to *dis-locate* from my habitual patterns of thinking (which in retrospect I consider to have previously limited my understanding), and enabled a more discerning critique. This critique was not limited to concluding that transformative learning did not occur within the context of the research, but began a process of critique of the notion of transformative learning itself which led to a sense of its limited usefulness, and then to an understanding of the complexities of learning. This was not an easy perspective to adopt as I felt I would be going against what was accepted understanding. However, once the alternative interpretation had constellated it would not be dismissed, so I took what felt like a risky leap in the dark in pursuit of it.

A further assumption I held was that the relationship of the tutors with the students was not something which would merit any attention as it would likely yield nothing new concerning the learning process. I thus dismissed the tutors as being an epistemologically valuable source; this too was challenged when the need for information concerning students' experiences prior to engagement in learning arose, and the tutors came into focus as a potential source for this information. Consequently the interviews with tutors, intended in part to throw light on student experiences pre-engagement in learning, were serendipitous to developing an understanding of the importance of the tutor/student relationship, and to the communication of an attitude of acceptance and valuing of the student. I am aware that the concept of acceptance arises from my understanding and experience of the application of Rogerian theory; whilst this may have lent itself to providing an undue focus on the phenomenon of acceptance, I would contend that in the event it provided me with a means of identifying and naming the phenomenon of acceptance, and to understanding something of the quality of the tutor/student relationship. It further prompted consideration of the Pygmalion effect with regard to tutor expectations of students, and on a macro level, of the expectations that society has of them.

If I have changed through the experience of conducting this research, it is in the sense that I assumed I was conscientiously emancipated, but a fuller consideration of this concept compelled me to re-evaluate this assumption and to expand my considerations from an individual micro processing level to a macro societal one. From this latter level I began to question the extent to which society is free and emancipated in differing contexts and at differing levels. My conclusion at this point is that there seems to be more than one dubiously clothed emperor at large, and I now consider it somewhat my duty through research to uncover such illusions and break the spell of their enchantment, thus exposing them to scrutiny.

The findings of this research have had implications for changes to my own teaching practice as a lecturer in higher education on an undergraduate counselling skills programme. There is recognition from this research of the importance of improving retention that is afforded through the expression of the personal narratives of students in the initial phase of the first weeks of the first year of a degree. The author has now built into that phase a number of exercises which give greater emphasis to enabling students to share with others who they are, and thus to have a better opportunity to develop their sense of belonging and identity in an unfamiliar university setting away from home. There has also been incorporated in the discourse of the lectures, seminars and assessments, an increasing emphasis on critical reflexivity as an emancipatory process, both in conducting research and in professional 'helping' relationships that involve the use of counselling skills. From a more developed understanding of self-efficacy arising from the research, the author has given an added emphasis in students counselling skills practice to relating this practice to the theory of self-efficacy, in particular with regard to taking risks and seeking accurate feedback from peers, and to the role that critical reflection and critical thinking have to play in enhancing the development of such skills. Additionally, the process of the research leading to the findings has engendered a mindfulness that being stuck in one's process of understanding can be an important phase of that very process, holding in abeyance what is an expected outcome whilst an alternative view emerges into consciousness following its incubation at an unconscious level.

Whilst the evidence in this research does not support the occurrence of transformative learning in the context of the educational setting examined here, the concept of 'emancipatory conscientisation' has been one which has impacted considerably on my understanding of the value and purpose of learning. It seems that whist there are valid and laudable reasons that learning enables previously 'hard to reach' young adult individuals to increase their opportunity as human commodities in the job market, it nevertheless may fail them in not providing them with a means to critique a society which may have enabled and possibly constructed their disadvantageous social context and location. It has raised further personal consideration that learning may fail 'hard to reach' young adult learners to some extent, in not having expectations enough of them and belief enough in them, as individuals, to be able to contribute more fully to the processes of a liberal democracy beyond having a job. I do not consider that changes in my beliefs, values or assumptions represent or reflect a process of personal transformative learning. What I do consider to have expanded my understanding, however, is the exposure to new concepts and my 'grappling' with trying to comprehend them within the context of this research. Perhaps my professed understanding is in itself an illusory garment, but with the difference that I consciously invite the scrutiny of others to break the spell in order to stimulate my own learning still further.

Whilst my personal background may on the one hand be seen as influencing the interpretation and conclusions of the research, it may also be seen on the other hand, as a means of drawing upon personal knowledge and experience which potentially give rise to added insight and perspectives to understanding; so that this reflexive element of the research serves the purpose of describing the path I have attempted to tread between the two. The visibility afforded in this presentation of personal process is offered in a spirit of transparency, in the hope that it puts into clear view the interpretative processes running through this thesis.

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APPENDICES

Adult Learning Study

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Paul Wagg and I am a student at Staffordshire University

What this study is about?

We are collecting information about how you feel about entering into learning and your experiences of changes that take place in the way you see yourself by the end of the course. The information gathered around what has been of benefit to you, will help in the understanding of the nature of experiences of change in learners. Future courses may use this information to inform the way in which courses are delivered to learners.

Who has been chosen?

A selection of twelve learners will be chosen for interview

What does taking part involve?

Taking part in this stage of the research involves participating in a short face to face audio recorded interview lasting about 45minutes.

We will be asking you how you feel about the course and your views of yourself as a learner

What will happen to the information provided?

Access to the data will be limited to the researchers involved in the study. Your tutors will not find out how you have responded

All your responses will remain completely confidential

Any information produced in reports or related documentation will be anonymised – participants will not be identified by name at any time

Who are the study team?

The study team are being supervised by **Nick Adnett and Amanda Hughes based within the Institute for Education Policy Research at Staffordshire University**

If you have any questions about the project please contact **Paul Tel: 01538385884/ e-mail paulwagg7@aol.com**

Adult Learning Study

Interview consent form

Participant Name...

Date...

Has the purpose of the research project been explained to you?   **YES / NO**

Have you been given an information sheet about the research?   **YES / NO**

Have you been given opportunity to ask questions about the project?   **YES / NO**

Do you understand that you are free to leave at any time without giving
an explanation?   **YES / NO**

Do you understand that you have the right to ask for the recorder to be
switched off at any time?   **YES / NO**

**I confirm that this information has been provided prior to the research
interview**

I agree to take part in this project

Signed...

Date...

Researcher...

Appendix 2.3   Entry interview schedule

EdD Interview questions. time 30-45 minutes

Research questions that frame the interviews

Guidance notes for interviewers

- Inform interviewee of confidentiality boundaries, their right to ask for the recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview, and that they do not have to answer questions if they do not wish to do so.
- The interview schedule is organised by the main questions (**in bold**) followed by further prompts. Prompts may not be needed if the interviewee covers these points in their response to the main question.

Framework	Main questions (followed by prompts)
The student	**When did you begin the course?**
Decision to engage in learning (critical thinking and critical reflection)	**1. What is it that made you want to go to college?** How did you go about making your decision? Was it a difficult decision to make? Why now? **2. Why did you decide to take this course specifically?** Was it your idea or was it suggested by someone else? How did you find out about the course? What did the course offer that appealed to you? **3. What did you have to consider in order to do this course?** What issues impacted on your decision to do the course? How did you deal with these issues? (to access critical thinking and reflective processes)

	Is there anything that you are specifically looking forward to on the course? Is there anything you are not looking forward to? Why?/ Why not?
Educational Inclusion and society inclusion	**4. What was the last thing that you did in education before coming on to the course?** Did you enjoy school/college/ most recent education? Has this impacted on your decision to take/ not to take your education further? What would have helped you to take it further? **5. Are friends important to you?** What things are important in your life that you share with your friends? Do you feel that your life gives you chances to meet others and to learn? How might your friends describe you? How might they view you coming onto this course? **6. Have you had the opportunity to enter education at any time?** What impact has being involved/ not being involved in education had on you? Has it affected the way you live your life? Has it affected the way you view education? What part do you think education it can play in it now?

Belief in self to complete and succeed (Self-efficacy)	**7. What do you hope you will get out of this course?** Where do you hope this course will take you? What do you feel you have about you that will help you succeed on the course? What do you feel you need to develop about yourself? How will you develop these? **8. What so far has challenging for you (given that you have only just started the course)** How have you met these challenges so far? How do you think you will deal with similar challenges if they arise again? How will you know that you are meeting these challenges? **9. What kind of teamwork is involved in the course?** Do you feel happy working in teams with others/ or do you prefer to work on your own? Do you spend time with others during breaks or do you prefer spend them on your own?

Appendix 2.4   Exit interview schedule

PILOT EXIT Interview questions. Time 30-45 minutes

Research questions that frame the interviews

Guidance notes for interviewers

- Inform interviewee of confidentiality boundaries, their right to ask for the recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview, and that they do not have to answer questions if they do not wish to do so.
- The interview schedule is organised by the main questions (**in bold**) followed by further prompts. Prompts may not be needed if the interviewee covers these points in their response to the main question. Exit question are set below entry questions and are in red.

Framework	Main questions (followed by prompts)
The student	**(When did you begin the course?) When does the course end for you?**
Decision to engage in learning (critical thinking and critical reflection)	**1. What is it that made you want to go to college?** How did you go about making your decision? Was it a difficult decision to make? Why now? **1a. What has coming to college been like for you?** How did you go about deciding that you wanted to keep coming? What difficulties did you experience on the course? How did you go about resolving these? Have you kept a journal or diary? In what way were you able to use this? How did you go about understanding your experiences on the course? In what ways do you think you were able to learn? Did the course present you with any problems? How did you go about dealing with these?

What difficulties do you anticipate in the future?

How will you tackle these?

Has your ability to deal with difficulties changed since doing the course?

How do you account for this?

2. Why did you decide to take this course specifically?

Was it your idea or was it suggested by someone else?

How did you find out about the course?

What did the course offer that appealed to you?

2a. How do you go about finding out things you are interested in?

Is this different from when you first started the course?

How did you decide what things you needed to develop about yourself?

How has your awareness of this changed over the course?

How do you go about raising your awareness of your needs?

3. What did you have to consider in order to do this course?

What issues impacted on your decision to do the course?

How did you deal with these issues? (to access critical thinking and reflective processes)

Is there anything that you are specifically looking forward to on the course?

Is there anything you are not looking forward to? Why?/ Why not?

3a. In what ways has the course impacted on you?

What has impacted the most on you during the course?

Why do you think that is?

What has impacted the least?

Why do you think that is?

How has the course influenced your ability to live your life?

	4. What was the last thing that you did in education before coming on to the course? Did you enjoy school/college/ most recent education? Has this impacted on your decision to take/ not to take your education further? What would have helped you to take it further? **4a. What do you feel education has to offer you?** What have you done on this course? Has your view of education changed/how? Why has it changed not/ changed? What do you think about learning with others? Will you want to take your education further? In what way has your experience on this course influenced your view of learning with others?
Educational Inclusion and society inclusion	**5. Are friends important to you?** What things are important in your life that you share with your friends? Do you feel that your life gives you chances to meet others and to learn? How might your friends describe you? How might they view you coming onto this course? **5a. Have you made friends on the course?** How did you go about this? What was difficult for you? Do you think it will influence your making friends after the course? How might your friends describe you after being on this course? How would you describe yourself? **6. Have you had the opportunity to enter education at any time?** What impact has being involved/ not being involved in education had on you?

	Has it affected the way you live your life?
	Has it affected the way you view education?
	What part do you think education it can play in it now?
Transformative Learning	**6a. Do you think you are the same person after completing the course?**
	How do you know this?
	What do you think you experienced on the course that brought this about?
	Is this change completed or ongoing?
	7. What do you hope you will get out of this course?
	Where do you hope this course will take you?
	What do you feel you have about you that will help you succeed on the course?
	What do you feel you need to develop about yourself?
	How will you develop these?
Belief in self to complete and succeed	**7a. Do you feel successful at this point in the course?**
(Self-efficacy)	Where do you think ending the course will take you/ what is next for you?
	What do you feel you have about you now that will help you succeed in your next goal after the course?
	Has your belief in yourself to complete an succeed in the things you choose to do changed?
	How would you describe your belief in yourself to complete and succeed on the course?
	How would you describe your belief in yourself at this moment to complete things and succeed after the course?
	How does this belief affect your life?
	What do you feel you need to develop about yourself?
	How will you develop these?
	What belief do you have in yourself about developing these?

What has contributed to you having that belief?

8. What so far has challenging for you (given that you have only just started the course)

How have you met these challenges so far?

How do you think you will deal with similar challenges if they arise again?

How will you know that you are meeting these challenges?

8a. What has been challenging for you on the course?

How will you meet challenges in the future?

What challenges are you aware of for the future?

How will you prepare to meet them?

How will you know you have met them?

9. What kind of teamwork is involved in the course?

Do you feel happy working in teams with others/ or do you prefer to work on your own?

Do you spend time with others during breaks or do you prefer spend them on your own?

9a. What team work have you experienced on the course?

Do you feel happy working in teams with others/ or do you prefer to work on your own?

What do you like/don't like about working with others?

Has this changed at all since doing the course?

Do you spend time with others during breaks or on your own?

What have you developed about yourself?

How have others contributed to this development?

Appendix 2.5   Tutor's interview schedule

EdD Research: tutor interview core questions and probes

1. **Do you consider that people change as a result of doing this course?** What changes do you
perceive taking place in the learners on the Princes Trust courses?   In what ways do they
change?   What do you think helps bring about these changes**?**   What do learners do that
enables this process?   What do you think may get in the way of these changes?

2. **How (fundamental) deep do you think these changes are for learners?** What indications
provide you with a sense of early changes?   When do you think that these changes first
begin to take place?

3. **To what extent do you feel that initial contact with a team member influences a process of
change prior to engaging on the course?** To what extent do you believe contact at the
interview stages may effect change?   What kind of changes do these contacts stimulate at
these stages?

4. **What do learners experience or do that helps to bring about change for them?** What do
you do that helps this process?

5. **How would you describe your role as a tutor on the Prince's Trust Courses?** What do you

consider to be the key things you have to offer as a tutor to a learner? What makes them of

key importance to you? How would you describe the relationship that you hope to establish

with a learner? What kind of things do you do to enable this process to take place that are

not readily visible?

6. **To what extent do you think that a learner's change on this course is a lasting one?** What

supports your conclusions on this? How do you decide who can come on the course? What

influences this decision?

Appendix 2.6   Entry interview discovery sheet

Discovery Sheet – themes arising from entry interviews.

Perceived self-efficacy – SE

Sustained perseverance, mastery experiences, vicarious experience through social models, social persuasion.

Reflective Thinking – RT

Articulate a contextual awareness of one's own position, through identifying the impact of one's influences and background; identify one's own values, beliefs and assumptions; consider other perspectives or alternative ways of viewing the world, i.e. being able to identify what perspectives are missing from one's own account; identify how ones views can have a particular bias that privileges one view over another. Perceive contradictions and inconsistencies in one's own story or account of events; and imagine other possibilities, i.e. a capacity to envision alternatives. Reflective thinking is the foundational activity that supports and cultivates such perspective transformations.

New meaning perspectives, new frames of reference, new habits of mind and new world views.

Critical Thinking – CT

Active, logical reasoning based on facts and evidence.   A desire to learn. a high value be placed on learning in order for learning to be useful. The skill of critical thinking is learned by doing and by an inter-change of information and ideas with others who are assessing the same things. In this way one's ideas and arguments can be presented and evaluated. Being actively involved in exchanging thoughts and ideas. Gather complete information. Understanding and defining terms. Questioning the methods by which the facts are derived.   Questioning the conclusions.   Looking for hidden assumptions and biases.

Questioning the source of facts. Examining the big picture. Examining multiple cause and effect. Understanding own biases and values.

Transformative Learning – TL

Elaborating Existing Frames of Reference Learning New Frames of Reference Transforming Points of View Transforming Habits of the Mind course. Variation of phases include:

A Disorienting Dilemma: loss of job, divorce, marriage, back to school, or moving to a new culture. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame. A critical assessment of assumptions. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions. Planning a course of action. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans. Provisional trying of new roles. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

Objective Reframing – involving critical reflection on assumptions of others encountered in a narrative or task oriented problem solving
Subjective Reframing – involving critical self-reflection of one's own assumptions about narrative (applying reflective insight from someone else's narrative to one's own experience, a system (economic, social or educational), an organization or workplace, feelings and interpersonal relations (counselling or psychotherapy) and the way we learn.

Discovery Themes and potential association to modes of learning

SE – Self- Efficacy
RT – Reflective Thinking
CT – Critical Thinking
TL – Transformative Learning

Speed of response to hearing of the opportunity to engage in learning **RT**

Already in a transformative process prior to engaging in learning **TL**

Want to change life **TL RT**

Speed of ease directness of route to get what is wanted (qualification) **RT CT**

Opportunity driver **SE**

Anticipation of fundamental change as a person/ turning life around **RT TL**

Rejection of old life **RT TL**

Leaving friends **RT CR**

Anything that's on offer (desperation) **TL**

Action from information **CT RT**

The glorification of learning (of the learning process)

Attitude changes **RT CT**

The learning of the vocabulary of learning and applying it. **SE RT CT TL**

Be myself **RT**

Personal sacrifice

Keeping busy

Skills **SE**

Team leader role and skills **SE, TL**

Seeing change in others **SE**

Basic needs and rules

The gang influence **SE**

Confidence and mates **SE**

Early exclusion **RT**

Pressure and free will

Meeting people **TL**

Having a goal **TL SE**

Empathy and altruism **TL**

Self awareness **CT**

Self improvement **CT**

Arrangements for children **CT**

Challenges/ self challenges **SE**

Fear **TL**

Acceptance of others **TL**

Support

Being with others

Another chance **RT**

The right time

Easy decisions if you know what you want **RT**

Sources of motivation **SE**

Variety

Prior Planning thinking processes **RT CT**

New territory **SE**

Nothing to do **TL**

Give it a go **SE**

Told it would be good for me **SE**

Its good to decide

Isolation/Being involved **SE TL SE**

Decision making process **CT RT SE TL**

Anticipation of good end result **SE**

Future learning **SE RT CT**

Enjoyment of learning

Education as normal/ no life impact

I want a normal life **RT**

Indicators of success **SE RT CT**

Team/ individual **SE TL**

Getting a job **SE CT RT TL**

Will I get on with people? Coming out of a shell **SE TL**

Depression/ no meaning in life/ empty/ existential themes **TL**

The meaning of qualifications **SE RT CT**

A second chance **SE RT CT TL**

Varied activity

Get out of a rut/a hole **SE RT CT TL**

Planning transport/ child care **RT CT**

School unhappy experience **RT CT**

Learning from the past **RT CT**

Isolation and friends **SE**

Educational opportunity/ roles **SE RT CT TL**

Confidence **SE**

Feedback **SE**

Laughter

Previous experience of learning **SE RT CT TL**

Thinking about coming on to the course **CR CT TL**

Communication **SE RT CT**

Decision making **SE RT CT**

Changes in behaviour **SE RT CT TL**

Importance of friends **SE RT CT TL**

Trust

Open to new experience **SE RT CT TL**

Alert to opportunity **SE**

Urgency and age **CR CT**

Challenging SE

Leadership **SE RT CT TL**

Hope

Getting involved **SE**

Learning as a need

Nothing changing

Missing out **RT**

Imitation learning SE

Success and feeling good and confidence **SE**

Bonding **RT CT TL**

Thinking reflecting **SE RT CT TL**

Life changing experiences **TL**

Open to change/try it for myself **SE TL**

Responding to information/further enquiry **SE RT**

Sets you for life for the future/ visualising the goal **RT TL**

Get up and do it/ volunteering **SE**

The role of others **SE**

What could have been **RT**

The cost of learning **RT CR TL**

What could have been **RT CR TL**

Widening the job net **SE CR RT TL**

Motivation to learn **SE**

Boredom **RT CT TL**

Loss of self respect **RT CR TL**

Clusters of negativity **SE RT CT TL**

Theories and action ways of being **SE RT CT TL**

Self assessment **SE RT CT TL**

The decision making process and the feeling component and gathering information **SE RT CT TL**

Reflections mulling it over **RT**

Trying new things **SE TL**

Practice to improve **SE**

Scripts motivating and de-motivating **RT CT TL**

New faith in people **TL**

A direction in life **TL**

Substantial learning

A sense of meaningful success **SE**

Anticipating success **SE**

Supportive learning environments **SE**

Fun and enjoyment in learning

Affirmation acceptance and belief of others and belief in self (nascent) **SE**

Breaking habits and new structures **RT CT TL**

Consideration weighing up of the expense of learning (risk) **RT CT TL**

Not succeeding can begin to get you down **SE**

The instillation of practice, practice, practice and the opportunity to. **SE**

Money and the freedom to learn **RT CT**

Appendix 2.7 Entry interview provisional categories

PROVISIONAL CATEGORY CODING OF CODED TRANSCRIPTS TO FORM 47 CATEGORIES (1-3 are illustrative examples of process)

1. REALISATIONS (LINKS TO SENSE OF COMPETENCY)

4.125.1 I am determined to do things. If I set myself a challenge then I will do that challenge it's like if I say to myself now I am challenging myself to complete this course I will do. That's a new thing that's come to me it has been recent the determination that I have got now and what I had before

6.100.1 Yea it could have because I could have done something with myself I have wasted opportunities.

7.55.1 Its encouraged me to start my own football team up.

7.118.1 I need to change my attitude sometimes

7.120.1 Stop me swearing, be more polite to people.

8.2.1 Well I just saw this course and I was interested in it. I had been told all about it before. What different life changing experiences it does for people. So I thought I'd just come experience it for myself.

8.30.1 Yea I just didn't want do what I was doing. I still don't know what I want do now but I know It's not working on a site plastering. I want do something like Rob does do you know what I mean I'd like something like something that gives you challenges each day.

8.44.1 No because I just didn't want to learn because I didn't thing I had to but obviously when you grow up you can see things a lot more clearly. If I could turn the clock back to that time now I would make myself learn and I would enjoy it and get myself in university or whatever.

8.76.1 I feel like I've missed out. I've missed on what I could have been now. I could have been anywhere I wanted really I reckon if I had gone college, to university and tried harder at school I perhaps could have picked any job in the world to do.

8.78.1 It probably has well it's just led me to a different style of living life.

9.21.1 Oh yes these theories and these ways of being .

9.23.1 Oh Yes I am consciously trying to work things out. The only way of doing it is by doing it trying to work things out. You just get up and do it sort of thing.

1.90.1 It has now yes, since I have come to the prince's trust it has give me that big confident boost that I needed just to go out and meet people now.

2. BLOCKS TO ENGAGING IN LEARNING

4.63.2 I did an accountants course but you had to pay for the exam because it was part time. I would have got it back if I was able to come up with the money but I wasn't able to come up with it.

4.79.2 No I was always looking at different courses and it was just the start dates that I had to wait for and then come September I was looking at the courses and that but I had no credit on my phone and I didn't know anyone who had a house phone that I could use apart from one that were four miles away and that.. and with having no money at all, because I had no source of income at all whatsoever.

4.81.2 Well without money you cannot do nothing can you

4.83.2 Its money isn't it.

7.61.2 If I had stayed in college

3. A SENSE OF CHANGE AND PURPOSE

1.20.3 Yea it is going to change me as a person.

3.18.3 This past week with the exception of one day is the longest I have been without alcohol. Purely for the fact that I have got to get up, I have got to get there.

3.20.3 When I wasn't working I had these quiet days, fortunately I had access to the internet and I was forever on Wikipedia learning about all my interests I mean I am a bit of a square I like steam engines and steamships and stuff. Learning how triple expansion engines work. Learning is something I like to do, but not just plain learning about a subject, I like learning about other people.

3.23.3 Making new friends. They are all a great group. I mean I can get on with a lot of people, but what else I want to get out of it, I want to get a sense of purpose.

3.68.3 Obviously there is friendships you can make friends and it is always nice to have friends and knowing that you have successfully completed your role in that team, if you have got a task like we are doing today. Me and another student are team leaders and I said come on let's give them a five minute break. Lets organise you know they are going to do those kind of trees, just knowing that we have been part of the team, that our roles have contributed to an effort. You know people will walk across here in a couple of weeks time and see that the trees have been lopped.

3.69.3 OK they won't know me but at least I can take away that people will see that work been done there and I know it's our team and my little role has helped create this for people to view.

4.6.3 Yeah getting me out of the house really

4.16.3 Also like it can get me into a routine and that as well, waking up early, getting out.

4.103.3 From doing nothing

4.105.3 Getting myself doing something helping myself more than anything else.

6.23.3 It has from now

4.101.3 I see it as a step forward compared to what it has been.

6.106.3 I think it is going to help me a big help to how I've been.

7.100.3 Its playing a good part I'm getting out the house. Just doing stuff every day, instead of sitting there.

8.22.3 It's about the different kind of stuff they do it's not like a ...it's not just a standard everyday course is it that you sign up to do say like art or mechanics and you already know what you will be doing there. This one it covers everything and it might just make me see things a little bit clearer hopefully it will do for what I want.

8.32.3 Yea I get up in the morning and get on site for six o clock and I know what I've got do whereas with a job like that you are getting up each morning and you don't know what you are going to face at work do you. I think that's sort of where I want to go, that's why I'm on this course for.

8.84.3 Something exciting that I can do. It would be exciting to wake up each morning and get up to work.

9.2.3 To be honest I was looking in the sentinel. I have recently come back from a broken leg I've got a double compound fracture I've been ill for two months and January I set out beginning a job search and I was looking through the sentinel and I saw the advert and it was saying things like do you want to get your life back on track do you want to meet people and one sentence was this might be the best choice you have ever made. So I rang them u arranged the interview and as soon as I got to the interview I realised I was on to a good thing and it kept getting better and better since then really. But it was basically I need to get back into work. It was the advert really.

4. NO SENSE OF PURPOSE

5. SENSE OF SELF-WORTH

6. A NEED TO CHANGE

7. DECISION TO ENGAGE IN LEARNING

8. TUTOR MESSAGES FOR CHANGE

9. THE CHALLENGE OF COMING ON TO THE COURSE

10. SHIFTS IN VIEWS ON LEARNING

11. THE CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF CHALLENGES IN LEARNING

12. FEAR OF BEING JUDGED - EXCLUSION

13. THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL ACCEPTANCE

14. ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OTHERS

15. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

16 MONEY

17 DOING SOMETHING WITH LIFE

45. THE VALUE OF BEING ALONE SOMETIMES

46. THE UNCHANGEABLE

47. ANTICIPATION OF CHANGE

Appendix 2.8   Entry interview refinement of categories

Refinement of categories through rules of inclusion: The allocating of a new code for the category into which the 47 provisional codes are collapsed. A total number of 15 propositions were emergent. (1-3 are illustrative examples of process)

1. Decisive action. (DA)

Subsumed provisional categories: 25, 11,

Rule for inclusion: participants are motivated to take action to engage in learning.

2.84.11 The first night of the residential. (DA)

 2.86.11 Because we were up till three o' clock, doing an activity outside. (DA)

2.88.11 It was OK it was fun.(DA)

8.96.11 That was challenging today to stand up in front of a class for an hour or so, just getting all their attention all the time when they are talking. All the challenges will kick in later on the course big time. (DA)

1.12.25 I didn't hear about it until yesterday and then I started and came along. (DA)

1.32.25 I've always been interested in the Prince's trust. I have always looked into them but I have never had the opportunity to do it. Then the opportunity came along yesterday and I thought well there's no better time to do it than now, because they do some great courses, they do some amazing courses, which I am into myself, I mean I like my gardening, I like my horticulture, I like everything really that they do. They have got a lot to offer. (DA)

7.10.25 I had a couple of weeks notice of it that's when I started thinking about it and rang Rob and got an interview and I got in. (DA)

7.19.25 No I decided it myself. (DA)

1.36.25 Just by word of mouth, I just picked up on it yesterday and just came along straight away for the interview and I got on it. (DA)

1.53.25 I just switched off to them and thought right this is me now, my turn to shine so whatever has happened then and whoever I have known I have got to put them to the back of my mind, because I need to do this for myself. That's how I basically did it. (DA)

2.6.25 I just saw the advert for this in the sentinel and it is something I have wanted to do for a long time. I was supposed to do it when I was sixteen but I found out I was pregnant. I thought I'd come back now my children are in school. (DA)

2.20.25 Just getting people to pick my children up from school on days when I am doing something like this, otherwise I would go home earlier to pick them up but it was things like that fitting it around my children. (DA)

2.24.25 Just on days when we are doing something like this who is going to pick them up from school and look after them until I got home. (DA)

8.24.25 No I've been laid off I get the jobs paper every Wednesday anyway and I just saw the sign in the paper. So I was looking at it and I thought before I ring up Ill see if I know anybody who knows anything about it like. So I started ringing round. (DA)

2. Possession of a sense of competency (PSC)

Subsumed provisional categories: 1, 26,

 Rule for inclusion: Possession of a sense of competency. Participants possess a perception of their competencies (self-efficacy) prior to engaging in learning or realise these soon after. (PSC)

6.100.1 Yea it could have because I could have done something with myself I have wasted opportunities. (PSC)

7.55.1 Its encouraged me to start my own football team up. (PSC)

8.2.1 Well I just saw this course and I was interested in it. I had been told all about it before. What different life changing experiences it does for people. So I thought I'd just come experience it for myself. (PSC)

8.30.1 Yea I just didn't want do what I was doing. I still don't know what I want do now but I know It's not working on a site plastering. I want do something like Rob does do you know what I mean I'd like something like something that gives you challenges each day. (PSC)

8.44.1 No because I just didn't want to learn because I didn't think I had to but obviously when you grow up you can see things a lot more clearly. If I could turn the clock back to that time now I would make myself learn and I would enjoy it and get myself in university or whatever. (PSC)

8.76.1 I feel like I've missed out. I've missed on what I could have been now. I could have been anywhere I wanted really I reckon if I had gone college, to university and tried harder at school I perhaps could have picked any job in the world to do. (PSC)

9.23.1 Oh Yes I am consciously trying to work things out. The only way of doing it is by doing it trying to work things out. You just get up and do it sort of thing. (PSC)

4.125.1 I am determined to do things. If I set myself a challenge then I will do that challenge it's like if I say to myself now I am challenging myself to complete this course I will do. That's a new thing that's come to me it has been recent the determination that I have got now and what I had before, (PSC).

1.57.26 It's a five day team building exercise, we are just going to be doing all sorts, obviously team building and I am a good team leader so it is going to help me brush up on my skills as well. (PSC)

1.59.26 To tell you the truth a team that lacks in enthusiasm, when they aren't so enthusiastic I make them enthusiastic. I say right we have got to do this come on. You can see peoples' changes. (PSC)

2.30.26 Just the experience of it because I have never worked, getting into that and seeing I don't know, just sort of not being scared to do things like that. (PSC)

2.36.26 Yes, it is just to prove to myself that I can do these things, get out and do something else rather than just being a mum and a housewife. (PSC)

2.82.26 Well yes or after I have finished I will be more confident and won't be as scared about going and doing new things to get a job. (PSC)

2.90.26 Because I think I am a strong person, I think I can do anything if I put my mind to it. (PSC)

2.92.26 Yes just get up and get on with it and have a go. (PSC)

3.55.26 So I want to be able to gel in a team, team building as well because with me working on my own for so long, the last time I was ever involved in a team was when we used to do team exercises in college. (PSC)

4.18.26 No, not at all. I woke up one day and thought yea I'll give them a ring and try to sort it out.

4.77.26 I am good at maths. So that comes in to it I just thought. It was at a time when I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was just confused about any choices I made. I saw that and thought I'll go for that its one day a week I'll do that. (PSC)

4.117.26 No not really. How you live your life is your choice personally I think the only thing that can have an impact on that is you. (PSC)

6.58.26 It is going to be stressing, quite stressful for me but I think I am going to be able to conquer it. (PSC)

6.98.26 I struggle with my reading and my writing and my spelling but it doesn't really bother me because I have got skills in other areas I know I have. (PSC)

7.57.26 When we were always at PE like at school we were always playing football and stuff like that but I thought I may as well do something for the community so I did like a kids football team and its every Sunday at half seven till half past eight. (PSC)

9.35.26 I don't know because I like cooking, I have really got into me cooking and thinking of going into that but that maybe because it's the only thing I can think of. So by the time it gets to there to work I have really got to choose what I want. (PSC)

9.45.26 I've always been athletic so going into manual labour was just like that ...lifting carrying, exercise, the physical side has always been second nature to me. Learning isn't too difficult but I find it is easier to just do the physical aspect of things. (PSC)

9.59.26 Definitely when I come back and I do basic maths or basic English, I write a sentence and I am misspelling words and not remembering how to spell words that I know are simple and simple maths equations, I just really can't know them and it frustrates me because at school I used to really enjoy maths I enjoyed numbers I suppose it wouldn't take long but I don't know. I miss being able just to write proper English and do basic maths which I know I can do I have just forgotten how to. (PSC)

8.92.26 Earlier on when I was sorting out all the shopping for a week, I didn't really want to, I did want to but I was too shy, but I just thought stick my hand up and do it and it felt good after. (PSC)

8.94.26 Standing up, helping that's how Ill build it. I felt just after an hour today before I got up and did that project till after Id felt a massive confidence boost. I didn't feel i could do it beforehand then when I did it I felt good. (PSC)

9.4.26 In education. I do manual labour it's not that I can't do that it's just that I prefer to work manual labour. (PSC)

3. Non-progressive previous learning experiences (NPRL)

Subsumed provisional categories: 29, 31,32,

Rule for inclusion: Participants identified previous learning experiences which were not progressive for them.

 (NPLR)

1.75.29 Yes but I got expelled from all my infants schools then ended up in a boarding school borstal, everything just went downhill from there. (NPLR)

1.77.29 Yes because in the school they used to give us, teachers use to give us a lot of grief. If I didn't work and wasn't working right then they shouted at me. I can't work under pressure well I never used to be able to work under pressure, so when the teachers were giving me work to do I couldn't do it because I knew they wanted me to do it. (NPLR)

1.83.29 If the teachers had just stayed off my back. If they had been a bit lenient because I had a learning difficulty at school and I did really struggle but they didn't seem to care they just wanted the work done there and then and then they could go on their break. They were pressuring me to work if I didn't have that much pressure on I would have been alright. (NPLR)

2.42.29 I was on something called the bridge project at cauldon college when I was fifteen, because I got chucked out of school, and that was the last thing I had done when I was fifteen. (NPLR)

2.54.29 I don't know, just how I was I didn't like being told what to do and having be somewhere for a certain time and things like that. (NPLR)

6.62.29 No I used to find it difficult in class in communication. I don't know, I was naughty at school I wasn't interested in work. I didn't enjoy it at all. (NPLR)

6.64.29 I went to college from school with school links. (NPLR)

6.70.29 As soon as I left school I was working so I just forgot about it like. (NPLR)

6.72.29 Probably a different school might have made things easier. I seem to learn better in smaller groups, than in a big classroom full. If someone is being disruptive I'd go along with it when I was younger and obviously I have learnt from my own mistakes and I have grown up a lot more since that being in a working environment I know what it's like. (NPLR)

7.2.29 I got kicked out of my other college like. I had nothing do, then I heard about the Prince's Trust and thought yea I'll give it a shot. (NPLR)

7.4.29 I just didn't like the tutors they were too strict. (NPLR)

7.43.29 It went alright but I just didn't like the tutors they were too strict, it was just like oh yea do this and do that. (NPLR)

7.63.29 If the tutors had been less strict like(NPLR).

8.42.29 I hated every minute, but if I could turn back time now I'd have got me head down and I'd have made sure I enjoyed it. (NPLR)

9.43.29 No I had a problem with authority back then. I can learn I didn't go school for the last two years and I still got a C grade in maths without even trying. So I can do it at the time when I had the initial opportunity I had a problem with authority I got in with bad people it was just easier to go No! When I was about sixteen or eighteen I reckon that if someone had said try this Princes Trust course it might have been the perfect thing for me then as well... but it's still helping me now and I am twenty five. (NPLR)

3.30.31 I went to the sixth form where I did media studies and English Lit, after that it was straight into a job. (NPLR)

8.46.31 It took me up to sixteen. (NPLR)

8.48.31 Nothing at all I just went straight in as a plasterers labourer and worked my way up from there soon as I left school, literally four or five week after leaving school. (NPLR)

9.7.31 Sixteen. (NPLR)

9.9.31 No well I have got tickets for fork lift driving and things but no actual college courses. (NPLR)

9.41.31 My fork lift truck course was with learn direct. I did a course three years ago in which I had to do literacy and numeracy tests before I could do the fork lift, free with the job centre and that was probably the last thing I did. (NPLR)

2.44.32 I did but I was too young to take things seriously. (NPLR)

2.50.32 I enjoyed it, it was good, it's just that at the time I was too young and I wasn't bothered about education then. (NPLR)

4.107.32 I do but, like I said if you don't know what you want to do when the open day comes and all that then you can miss out on opportunities and I think the college web sites aren't laid out organised enough for people to find what they want. (NPLR)

4.109.32 It's a bit of a negative like way really because you need to have something that makes you motivated to do something. The way that colleges teach just bores you it makes you lose focus on everything. (NPLR)

4.111.32 They don't show anything that's exciting about anything. They seem to see it as just work rather than helping you out and like moulding you into something that can do something. They just see it as their job to get a wage. (NPLR)

6.68.32 Yes I thought I wasn't going take it any further. I was working before but since I come out like I needed pointing in some other direction to try and help me get back in to work. I thought this course was going be able to help me. (NPLR)

9.47.32 I really don't know. ..I do really. At school you have that opportunity to go to college if you miss that cut off point you can end up missing out, if that wasn't the only opportunity t the time it is out there more that when you are eighteen nineteen you can restart even if you have finished so that if you have missed the opportunity there is a way back in. There are a lot of people at that age who are No No No just don't want to. I know what I'm doing. Some people do miss out there and I suppose I am one of them. Not getting into alcohol would have definitely helped. (NPLR)

4. Sense of purpose and change (SPC).

Subsumed provisional categories: 3, 7, 17, 19, 39, 46, 47,

Rule for inclusion: Participants experience a shift or movement from a sense of no purpose to a sense of purpose when they engage in learning which resonates with a belief that they can change. (SPC)

5. Self worth and the perception of others (SWPO).

Subsumed provisional categories: 5,

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a sense of self worth arising from how they believe others perceive them. (SWPO)

6. Prior self dissatisfaction (PSD).

Subsumed provisional categories: 4,6,7,

Rule for inclusion: Participants experienced dissatisfaction with themselves prior to engaging in learning. (PSD)

7. Acceptance and motivation (AM).

Subsumed provisional categories: 8, 13, 14, 23, 24,

Rule for inclusion: Participants experience of acceptance from differing sources is an active stimulant of encouragement for change both prior to and during engagement in learning. (AM)

8. Overcoming fears to engage in learning (OFEL).

Subsumed provisional categories: 9, 12, 20, 21, 40, 41,

Rule for inclusion: Participants identify and face challenges and overcome fears and anxieties to engage in learning in ways which may be indicative of a beginning of a process of change. (OFEL)

9. Future purpose (FP).

Subsumed provisional categories: 10, 15, 18, 22, 30, 37,

Rule for inclusion: Participants develop an idea of what they are aiming for early on in their engagement in learning and are open to possibility, this is accompanied by a heightening of a belief in the positive value of learning, this can be held alongside an awareness of a negative experience of learning. A sense of the course fulfilling a purpose having future meaningfulness beyond a participant's immediate engagement in it. (FP)

10. Previous experience of trust (PET).

Subsumed provisional categories: 27,28

Rule for inclusion: Participants derive a notion of trust from social networks established prior to engaging in learning.

11. Trust, respect and the valuing self and of others (TRVSO).

Subsumed provisional categories: 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44,

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a developed notion of trust and hold a belief in the value of others which enables them to begin to form constructive relationships and affirm or develop a valuing of self. This reciprocated valuing is fundamental to the fostering of a receptivity and openness to the constructive evaluation of self by self and others. (TRVSO)

12. Untapped potential and motivation. (UPM).

Subsumed provisional categories: 2,

Rule for inclusion: Participants give an indication of an untapped potential and motivation to learn. (UPM)

13. A question of money (QOM).

Subsumed provisional categories: 16,

Rule for inclusion: Money is a contributing factor in the consideration to engage in learning. (QOM)

14. A notion of self-confidence (NSC).

Subsumed provisional categories: 38,

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a notion of self-confidence. (NSC)

15. The value of being alone to think at times

Subsumed provisional categories: 45,

Rule for inclusion: Participants valued being alone as affording a space to think in. (VABT)

Entry Interviews

15 emergent propositions subsumed to create five final propositions.

Propositions 1,2,3 and 4 are final outcome propositions.

Proposition 5 stands alone as a final proposition.

1) Prior to engagement in learning, participants experienced a sense of dissatisfaction and may have previous experiences of learning which have not been satisfactory. They experience a sense of untapped potential in themselves and are aware of some aspects of their lives where they experience a sense of competence and confidence.

Subsumed refined entry categories: 6, 3, 12, 2, 14.

6. Prior self-dissatisfaction (PSD).

Subsumed provisional categories: 4, 6, 7,

Rule for inclusion: Participants experienced dissatisfaction with themselves prior to engaging in learning. (PSD)

3. Non-progressive previous learning experiences (NPRL)

Subsumed provisional categories: 29, 31, 32, 14.

Rule for inclusion: Participants identified previous learning experiences which were not progressive for them.

12. Untapped potential and motivation. (UPM).

Subsumed provisional categories: 2.

Rule for inclusion: Participants give an indication of an untapped potential and motivation to learn. (UPM)

2. Possession of a sense of competency (PSC)

Subsumed provisional categories: 1, 26.

Rule for inclusion: Possession of a sense of competency. Participants possess a perception of their competencies (self-efficacy) prior to engaging in learning or realise these soon after. (PSC)

14. A notion of self-confidence (NSC).

Subsumed provisional categories: 38.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a notion of self-confidence. (NSC)

2) Participants were motivated to act in order to engage in learning that is accessible to them. This is accompanied by an inner movement from a sense of no purpose to one of meaning and purpose. They engage and face fears and anxieties in order to engage in learning.

Subsumed refined categories: 1, 4, 8.

1. Decisive action. (DA)

Subsumed provisional categories: 25, 11.

Rule for inclusion: participants are motivated to take action to engage in learning.

4. Sense of purpose and change (SPC).

 Subsumed provisional categories: 3, 7, 17, 19, 39, 46, 47.

 Rule for inclusion: Participants experience a shift or movement from a sense of no purpose to a sense of purpose when they engage in learning which resonates with a belief that they can change. (SPC)

8. Overcoming fears to engage in learning (OFEL).

 Subsumed provisional categories: 9, 12, 20, 21, 40, 41.

Rule for inclusion: Participants identify and face challenges and overcome fears and anxieties to engage in learning in ways which may be indicative of a beginning of a process of change. (OFEL)

3). Participants have previous experiences of trust prior to engaging in learning which enable them to make constructive and meaningful relationships with other learners. Acceptance, trust, support and feedback of other learners are valued and sought for and are experienced as stimulating and motivating.

Subsumed refined categories: 11, 10, 5, 7.

11. Trust, respect and the valuing self and of others (TRVSO).

Subsumed provisional categories: 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a developed notion of trust and hold a belief in the value of others which enables them to begin to form constructive relationships and affirm or develop a valuing of self. This reciprocated valuing is fundamental to the fostering of a receptivity and openness to the constructive evaluation of self by self and others. (TRVSO)

10. Previous experience of trust (PET).

Subsumed provisional categories: 27, 28.

Rule for inclusion: Participants derive a notion of trust from social networks established prior to engaging in learning.

5. Self worth and the perception of others (SWPO).

Subsumed provisional categories: 5.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a sense of self worth arising from how they believe others perceive them. (SWPO)

7. Acceptance and motivation (AM).

Subsumed provisional categories: 8, 13, 14, 23, 24.

Rule for inclusion: Participants experience of acceptance from differing sources is an active stimulant of encouragement for change both prior to and during engagement in learning. (AM)

4) Participants from early on in their engagement in learning have thought about and developed ideas of what they want their learning to lead on to. The opportunity to think is valued.

Subsumed refined categories: 9, 15.

9. Future purpose (FP).

 Subsumed provisional categories: 10, 15, 18, 22, 30, 37.

Rule for inclusion: Participants develop an idea of what they are aiming for early on in their engagement in learning and are open to possibility, this is accompanied by a heightening of a belief in the positive value of learning, this can be held alongside an awareness of a negative experience of learning. A sense is experienced of learning fulfilling a purpose and having future meaningfulness beyond a participant's immediate engagement in it. (FP)

15. The value of being alone to think at times (VBAT)

Subsumed provisional categories: 45.

Rule for inclusion: Participants valued being alone as affording a space to think in. (VBAT)

5) Money is a factor which has to be considered by participants in their decision to engage in learning.

Subsumed refined categories: 13

13. A question of money (QOM).

 Subsumed provisional categories: 16.

Rule for inclusion: Money is a contributing factor in the consideration to engage in learning. (QOM)

Appendix 2.10 Exit interview provisional categories (1-3 are illustrative examples of process)

Exit interviews; provisional category coding to form 24 provisional categories
1. Overall experience
SE2.1. Brilliant!
SE2 .2. Because I've got me confidence up and I'll be able to go on [to do] other things after this.
SE3.3. It's been a kick start basically where I was before I came here it's reinvigorated my kind of interest in being in a learning institution. I used to love high school but then obviously I left that for six years to go and work in the private sector but after coming back being around young people and students in an institute of learning it has actually given me the second opportunity to go ahead with further education.
SE3.48. The way it's impacted on me is it's basically it's got my sparkle back. I was very much a bit of one of the lads at high school. I was very clever but I had a bit more about me, the past six years being in that job that I was in sucked the life out of me. Even my grandma could turn round and say 'look at the photo of you in year 11 and look at you now'. It was completely different coming back here, being on this course. I'm not 100% there but I'm back to 70% where I was, I'm more eager to succeed. I know that if I go for a job that I sent off for if they turn round and say 'sorry you just don't fill the criteria'.
SE7.1. The course, the Prince's Trust course, it's been an experience an experience I'll never forget
SE754. No not at all [not the same person at the end of the course]
SE7.58. I feel that I've done everything I can through the course as well as I can.
SE8.2. It's been the beginning of something for me because I had a broken leg before and basically what I did was pick the phone up and the first thing I did was ring the Princes' Trust; the job centre told me about it and I came up and that's all I've done and it's been that good that it's definitely the start of something and that's the kind of course it is, it's not going to finish at the end of the course it's a foot in the door. I've already learnt what new career I want do; retail cause I was doing warehouse work before but obviously that's going be a bit heavy so I was thinking offices and various things but then I did my work placement in a charity shop behind the till and doing all that kind of stuff and it's just opened up that door to begin I mean this will go on a CV and everything and it will go to wherever I apply and that and I've got courses I'm going to do so basically the beginning of something, hopefully.
SE11.1 It's been really good because before I was just at home on m own, it's been good to socialise with people and meet people with a spread of ages and there all from different backgrounds, it's been really nice meeting people who I've been able to socialise with.

2. Getting what you want from the course
SE.2.3. Because I wanted the qualifications and so that I could complete it and get the most out of it that I could.
SE7.36. Perhaps the work placements that we did [had a big impact] because I'm like 25, I'm the oldest you can be on this course. For a 16 or 17 year old it would be good because they've got no work experience, but I went on my work experience and I went two places. One was Trentside Manor, which is a residential home for old people. That one was a real eye opener. The reason I chose that was because I'd never done anything or been in a work place like that before, so wanted to do that, and another place I went was Jubilee Baths. I wanted to get into [being an] activity instructor and that; that was just a pointless exercise for me, all they had me doing was cleaning and I've done nine years of that.
 SE9.32. Well I've definitely learnt from my placement

SE9.33. Well I went in a care home and obviously you had to, well I didn't think you had to actually do all the gross jobs but I did which don't get me wrong I was fine with it a bit daunting at first but I was fine with it and it turns out I loved it. SE9.191 I don't know it's definitely this course
SE9.192 Yes the course has given me a lot to think about
SE11.68 Just mostly my confidence
SE11.70 Yes and learn like leadership skills and improve my communication skills when I've been on the course as well so that has been a big help
SE11.87 Probably the academic side of it because we did a few qualifications so I found those alright I didn't struggle with them so don't think they stressed me they are quite useful but not really useful for the career I want to go in but useful all the same.
SE11.88 Useful just to have I suppose.

3. Difficulties experienced on the course
SE.2.4. None really.
SE3.72. There is the hindrance that I've got a problem with Alcohol, that is one that I'm trying to get assistance with. It's a slow long process and I will be the first to admit that I have fallen off the programme a couple of times. That is one of the hardest things I need to battle. This course has really given me a lot more positivity. The only thing the course can't do for me is get rid of my insomnia.
SE7.8. Just trying to keep everyone on track on the tasks that needed to be done.
SE7.21. Definitely [improved ability to deal with problems], before the course, before I'd done this course I've had problems and I just go up like a bottle of pop and this course has shown me how to deal with it in different ways, different problems and how to deal with them.
SE8.13. Stress and not so much the physical sides of things because I can deal with that I've done manual labour but I've not done much learning sort of thing I didn't d much school and I didn't go college or anything but I can do it I mean at school I was brilliant at Maths you know what I mean I can do that sort of thing but I prefer to do manual labour than activating my brain so the kind of using my brain sort of thing I can't quite think of the words..
SE8.14. Well it's something I can do [the course] but not something I can do to the extent of doing it five days of the week 40 hours a week or whatever and the stress of that and the pressure because the course is a particularly high pressured course perhaps compared to some others obviously not like university courses but it is a kind of high pressured course and the pressure is on like and it built up and it built up and it caused a lot of stress like.
SE8.15. I drink [to deal with stress of challenges] I do drink and I think that's where it built up sort of thing burning the candle at both ends doing that then coming in
 SE8.16. Well it was my birthday and that's where it all went a bit wrong and I'd got in a little bit of state with alcohol do you know what I mean
SE8.17. I didn't come in drunk but I come in hung over and it must have been on my clothes
SE8.18. I recuperated I had a day or two's rest and I recuperated I like cooking so I made myself some food that's very therapeutic sort of thing. I rested, I got a lot of sleep like and then as soon as the symptoms of the stress had worn off and it was sort of like I was pressured but 'it's the Princes' Trust' in my head, trapped like and as soon as I pushed away from that sort of thing I sort of recuperated sort of thing and then the second I got that phone call I was straight back here it wasn't that I didn't want do the course but I but I think I was just mentally well my mental health was going a little bit sort of thing
SE8.21. I don't know I just went and hid sort of thing just went and ran sort of thing I don't know
SE8.22. It was just the stress because stress makes you think funny things doesn't it
SE8.23. It makes you feel weak sort of thing
SE8.24. A lot of pressure sort of thing
SE8.25. Once I was over that I was back to normal sort of thing and I could deal with the things they were asking of me.

SE8.29. I think I did just blow a circuit sort of thing do you know what I mean blow a fuse sort of thing

SE8.94. I've suffered with depression in the past and I'm very harsh on myself so in an environment where there's people and lots of eyes I get very, sometimes I get home and I get very wound up to point I'm very stressed and that's when I go drinking sort of thing to sort of ease the stress so it doesn't turn into depression or something.

SE9.3. Definitely the two week project we had some terrible rain in the end and the fund raising

SE9.5. and it's problem solving

4. Organisation external to course.
5. Looking back on what has been done
6. Future planning
7. Gathering information from others
8. Identifying areas for development
9. A sense of confidence
10. Expanded self-belief
11. Future defined goals
12. Changed view of education
13. Expanded relationship networks
14. Building new networks.
15. Pre-course sense of self.
16. Sense of self post-course
17. Sense of purpose
18. Meeeting Challenges
19. Working with others
20. Freedom of choice
21. Motivation
22. Another's belief in you
23. Weighing things up
24. When things don't go right.

Appendix 2.11   Exit interview refinement of categories

The entry interview emergent propositions subsumed all the exit interview provisional categories, no new propositions arose from the analysis of the exit interviews.

Five propositions

Propositions 1, 2, 3 and 4 are outcome propositions as a result of subsuming other propositions.

Proposition 5 stands alone as a final proposition.

1) **Despite previous experiences of learning which have been dissatisfactory, a sense of untapped potential motivates a re-engagement in learning.**

 Subsumed emergent propositions: 6, 3, 12, 2, 14.

6. Prior self-dissatisfaction.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 4, 6, 7.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 15, 16.

Rule for inclusion: Participants experienced dissatisfaction with themselves prior to engaging in learning. (PSD)

3. Non-progressive previous learning experiences

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 29, 31, 32, 14.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 1, 2, 12, 20.

Rule for inclusion: Participants identified previous learning experiences which were not progressive for them.

12. Untapped potential and motivation.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 2.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 0.

Rule for inclusion: Participants give an indication of an untapped potential and motivation to learn.

2. Possession of a sense of competency

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 1, 26.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 5, 8, 9, 10, 21, 23.

Rule for inclusion: Possession of a sense of competency. Participants possess a perception of their competencies prior to engaging in learning or realise these soon after.

14. A notion of self-confidence.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 38.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 0.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a notion of self-confidence.

2) A motivation to act in order to engage in learning is accompanied by an inner movement from a sense of no purpose to one of meaning and purpose.

Subsumed emergent propositions: 1, 4, 8.

1. Decisive action.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 25, 11.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 4, 21.

Rule for inclusion: participants are motivated to take action to engage in learning.

4. Sense of purpose and change.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 3, 7, 17, 19, 39, 46, 47.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 17.

Rule for inclusion: Participants experience a shift or movement from a sense of no purpose to a sense of purpose when they engage in learning which resonates with a belief that they can change. (SPC)

8. Overcoming fears to engage in learning .

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 9, 12, 20, 21, 40, 41.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 3,18,24.

Rule for inclusion: Participants identify and face challenges and overcome fears and anxieties to engage in learning in ways which may be indicative of a beginning of a process of change.

3). Participants have previous experiences of trust prior to engaging in learning which enable them to make constructive and meaningful relationships with other learners.

Subsumed emergent propositions: 11, 10, 5, 7.

11. Trust, respect and the valuing self and of others.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 13, 14.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a developed notion of trust and hold a belief in the value of others which enables them to begin to form constructive relationships and affirm or develop a valuing of self. This reciprocated valuing is fundamental to the fostering of a receptivity and openness to the constructive evaluation of self by self and others.

10. Previous experience of trust.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 27, 28.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 0.

Rule for inclusion: Participants derive a notion of trust from social networks established prior to engaging in learning.

5. Self worth and the perception of others.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 5.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 22.

Rule for inclusion: Participants have a sense of self worth arising from how they believe others perceive them.

7. Acceptance and motivation.

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 8, 13, 14, 23, 24.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 19.

 Rule for inclusion: Participants experience of acceptance from differing sources is an active stimulant of encouragement for change both prior to and during engagement in learning.

4) Continued engagement in learning is one of an increasing openness and consideration of possibilities.

Subsumed emergent propositions refined categories: 9, 15.

9. Future purpose.

 Subsumed entry provisional categories: 10, 15, 18, 22, 30, 37.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 6,7,11.

Rule for inclusion: Participants develop an idea of what they are aiming for early on in their engagement in learning and are open to possibility, this is accompanied by a heightening of a belief in the positive value of learning, this can be held alongside an awareness of a negative experience of learning. A sense is experienced of learning fulfilling a purpose and having future meaningfulness beyond a participant's immediate engagement in it.

15. The value of being alone to think at times

Subsumed entry provisional categories: 45.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 0.

Rule for inclusion: Participants valued being alone as affording a space to think in.

5) Money is a factor which has to be considered by participants in their decision to engage in learning.

Subsumed emergent proposition: 13

13. A question of money.

Subsumed provisional categories: 16.

Subsumed exit provisional categories: 0.

Rule for inclusion: Money is a contributing factor in the consideration to engage in learning.

Appendix 2.12 Overview of exit interview refinement of categories

List of exit interview provisional categories and entry emergent propositions, illustrating the subsuming of the exit provisional categories under the entry emergent propositions

Exit interviews provisional category coding list	Entry interviews emergent propositions (meaningfully ordered)	Subsumed exit provisional categories under entry emergent propositions 1-15
1. Overall experience	6. Prior self-dissatisfaction	**1. Decisive action**
2. Getting what you want from the course	3. Non-progressive previous learning experiences	4. Organisation external to the course
3. Difficulties experienced on the course	12. Untapped potential and motivation	**2. Possession of a sense of competency**
4. Organisation external to course	2. Possession of a sense of competency	9. A sense of confidence
5. Looking back on what's been done	13. A question of money	10. Expanded self-belief
6. Future planning	1. Decisive action	5. looking back on what's been done
7. Gathering information from others	4. Sense of purpose and change	8. Identifying areas for development
8. Identifying areas for development	11. Trust, respect and the valuing self and of others	21. Motivation
9. A sense of confidence	10. Previous experience of trust	23. Critical thinking
10. Expanded self-belief	5. Self-worth and the perception of others	**3. Non-progressive previous learning experiences**
11. Future defined goals	7. Acceptance and motivation	1. Overall experience
12. Changed view of education	8. Overcoming fears to engage in learning	2. Getting what you want from the course
13. Expanded relationship networks	9. Future purpose	12. Changed view of education
14. Building new networks.	14. A notion of self-confidence	20 Freedom of choice
15. Pre-course sense of self	15. The value of being alone to think at times	
16. Sense of self post-course		
17. Sense of purpose		
18. Meeting challenges		
19. Working with others		

20 Freedom of choice **21. Motivation** **22. Another's belief in you** **23. Critical thinking** **24. When things don't go right.**		**4. Sense of purpose and change** **17. Sense of purpose** **5. Self worth and the perception of others** **22. Another's belief in you** **6. Prior self-dissatisfaction** **15. Pre-course sense of self** **16. Sense of self post-course** **7. Acceptance and motivation** **19. Working with others** **8. Overcoming fears to engage in learning** **3. Difficulties experienced on the course** **18. Meeting challenges** **24. When things don't go right.** **9. Future purpose** **6. Future planning** **7. Gathering information from others**

		11. Future defined goals
		10. Previous experience of trust
		None
		11. Trust, respect and the valuing of self and of others
		13. Expanded relationship networks
		14. Building new networks.
		12. Untapped potential and motivation
		None
		13. A question of money
		None
		14. A notion of self-confidence
		None
		15. The value of being alone to think at times
		None

Appendix 2.13 Tutor interviews provisional categorisation

Tutor interviews Provisional Categorisation into 24 main themes (1-3 are illustrative examples of process)

3 Tutors

Key Tutor 1 - T1, Tutor 2 - T2, and Tutor 3 -T3

E.g. T1.1 – Tutor 1, interview transcript statement 1

    T2.26 – Tutor 2, interview transcript statement 26

Provisional categorisation 1-24

1. Tutor belief in ability

T1.1. My experience as a tutor came from actually completing this course myself many years ago and as a result of completing the programme I then got the confidence to go and try new challenges in life. However, circumstances changed after 9/11 and I ended up returning back to the UK and I approached what I felt at the time was the whole reason I'd gone abroad which was this programme and I went to the programme manager that was there when I was a student on the course and they informed me that there were some positions coming up soon so I waited two weeks and the jobs were advertised and I applied for the post and even though I'd got no teaching experience and I was up against quite a few in the interview room as they were all qualified teachers but I got it on the strength that I'd got programme experience and I was one of the success stories of the course and that I actually enrolled on two night time teaching course and that if I agreed to those then the post was mine so I took it gladly

T1.2. Yes I completed the Princes' Trust Volunteers Programme I then went abroad for 7 years because I'd got that much confidence from the programme that I went abroad and then I came back and when I came back and I went for the interview I'd got a lot of presentation experience then from working abroad selling and that sort of thing so that part of the course wasn't an issue but I did have to admit to the panel in front of me that I hadn't got any teaching experience and I know that all the people out there in the waiting room had because I'd seen them looking through all their stuff all day but I believed in the programme and I was back for a reason and I would be able to be much more beneficial for them in that sense

T2.8. I'm very very passionate about young people and what they can do so I think that comes across quite a lot in what I do I like the challenge sometimes it's tiring but I like the fact that I help people and that kind of motivates me which then motivates them so I think that quite often young people haven't had a positive role model or a positive influence or person that has listened to them in their life and I would like to think that if that was the case that was what I could offer them T2.17. I always say to other team leaders the young people buy into us before they buy into the programme that's kind of the way it is,

T2.26. …homeless and refugees and asylum seekers and I guess for the people like that they've probably never had anyone who is actively working on their behalf before a kind of, actively ambassador if you like for them and giving them that belief that is the difference…

T2.38. I think that the main thing is that somebody believes in them and somebody is giving them the opportunity to be responsible for something and believes that they can do it and that is what brings about the change I think from the beginning they own something they can make something work and that that's what starts the change making them, taking them out of the comfort zone and giving them experiences that they wouldn't get normally in the residential weeks that makes a massive change in confidence.

T3.2. well it all started when I was on the Princes' Trust team as a student myself and I job vacancy became available and I decided to apply for it a lot of people influenced me into the job role and it seemed very interesting at what I could achieve, I'd got quite a decent knowledge of what the Princes' Trust is all about and what people feel when they're on the course

T3.4. just from my team leader who was a support throughout who just encouraged me to go for the role

T3.6. I just think my knowledge of being on the Prince's Trust Team and what it's all about and knowing what they stand for the Prince's Trust … and giving them the chance to believe in themselves and empower themselves and get what they want from it

T3.19. yes I think it's important because we offer something unique and different and we try to put them in the most important position we can so I think it makes them feel important if you are dedicated to get them an appointment as soon as possible and sometimes if that includes early mornings or late nights or going to somewhere different to meet them I think it makes a great difference because you are showing them that you believe in them and you want to give them the opportunity which is what it's all about

T3.51. I think the main one is confidence, belief in themselves that they can actually achieve something with their life and not just people are told what they are good and what they can't do and you'll never make a teacher you'll never be this but then when they come on our course they realise that they can do things and we offer them so much encouragement and support that they world is their oyster they can go for what they want and with the careers work that we embed in it really helps them to focus on what they want so that changes in themselves ya know I can get a job I can go and study and be this person that I want to be

2. Transformative experiences that others may experience too.

T.1.4., personally because I've got programme knowledge I've been through the course with them so I've got experience of what they are experiencing when they are going through different weeks and how it feels for them in that respect so I can draw on that experience of how they might be feeling during the pressure weeks and the fund raising and where their confidence might be most tested you might say most challenged and because I've actually got a lot out of the programme and what it did for me and how it changed my life I like to try engage people and inspire them with look I wasn't the best person in the world up to this point and then look at all the things I've achieved and you seem to be impressed by that well what's to stop you from also going through that transformation

and changing your life and really try to sell it on well this was me and this was what I got from it and this is where you say you want to go and well don't you give it a try

T2.10. I describe it as a personal development programme that's like no other personal development programme ...I have never, in all the teams that I have worked with and ran and supported, I have never come across a young person who hasn't got any benefit from it at all.

T2.26. we are trying to be so different I think it's something that no other programme offers I think that's why it's necessary it would be pointless having a life changing programme if it was no different than anything else

T2.29. well some of them change immediately and you can really see that there kind of loud inappropriate behaviour that they started with becomes a desire and an enthusiasm to working harder at something others take a lot longer and you kind of have to work on that all through the 12 weeks and they go and you can see that they've changed and people come and tell you that they've changed I love it at the end of the programme when people's families come and say you know "our Billy was this when he started and I can't believe the difference in him you've done such a lot for him" and that's always really great but we can see that probably not quite as much because where everyday it's always difficult to pin point the subtle changes when they go home and all of a sudden they are offering to wash up for their mums when they haven't before you know these are important little steps.

T2.36. so when they feel an achievement they feel like they've done good I feel like they've done good I get a bit emotional and proud cause you know we buy into them as well I guess It's not just them buying in to use we buy into them so their achievements I feel as if they're are my own children if you like, when we've been out and raised loads of money like we have yesterday I make sure I tell them how proud I am and how well they've done and some of them really like that some of them can't take that praise but some of them love that it's the only praise they're going to get T2.41. It can be a complete life changing event it can mean the difference between going to prison and reforming and getting a job you know there are many different things, we've had people we had a girl recently who's won a national award who's been on the telly because she had really bad bi-polar disorder massive manic depression couldn't ever work before and now she's a support worker so her's has been completely life changing and she's won an award for that that reason so it's not always as life changing sometimes it's smaller changes but it can be completely life changing, I worked with a young woman once who was a prostitute and a heroin addict and she can onto the programme to try and change her life she came on to try and make new friends and that is exactly what she did by the project weeks that are in 5 and 6 she was project leader and she was absolutely brilliant...

T3.7. I always describe it as a once in a life time opportunity that will transform your life and I stick by that because I really believe it does change peoples' lives.

T3.9. There's so many different skills but I think the main one is social skills, how to behave, how to act and how to think because sometimes they come from very different view point of this is me and my bubble and I haven't really experienced anything else, what we do is we open their eyes to so many different things that they can experience and learn a different skill area so it's like taught behaviour

T3.64. I love the job and I love seeing people change it's a magical moment when you can remember when you first interviewed someone three months ago and then you can see them three months later and they are doing their final presentation. I meet a girl once that I interviewed and she couldn't look me in the eye she had no confidence at all and she just had her head down on the table and then three months later she's speaking in front of 100 people and doing a presentation and it's that feeling that you get that you know if we weren't here, if this course wasn't here what would have happened you know because I don't think there is another course like ours because we do so much and its jam packed and giving that person the change to express herself and come out of her shell and experience what life has to offer it's an amazing feeling and also when you see people that have not had job before and they go through the programme and do some voluntary work and then they ring up and say I've got a job as a travel agent and I'm traveling around the world next week I'll send you a post card and it's just an amazing feeling that you were a part of it by king of steering them in the right way and when you hear their story of what they've gone through and you really feel for them

3. Instilling a sense of direction

T1.7. I describe the course when I interview people as, well initially I will ask them where they are at and what I want them to do is suddenly make them stop and try and get behind the mask as quickly as possible and try and get them to identify actually how they would assess themselves right there and then on what they are doing with their life and then from that I will go well in three months time I will sort of I will ask them so far you've been doing x, y and z and then say yeah and I go have you wasted or bummed about or spent more than 60 days or more in bed doing nothing and not engaging and they go yeah, predominantly young people will say yeah I've easily wasted 60 days and I go well in that 60 days you could have done three months voluntary work in the community, you could have got six new qualifications, you could be more confident you could be more enthusiastic you can have direction and you can have something really good on your CV because in the business the name of the Princes' Trust has still got a lot of clout so do you think you can do that I they go yeah I could do that because they know they've bummed around for 60 days so they can easily do another 60 days and I sort of say well have you got anything on the next three months and they are like now so I say well why don't you give it ago and like are like ok. I try and engage them straight away and sell it on the you know I will ask them do you want a house and they'll go yeah and do you want a car and they'll go yeah do you want money in your pocket so when you see something nice in the shop window you can go and get it and they all so yes, there are a lot of leading questions if you like so I go so when you've been at home lying in bed doing nothing has that letter every come through the post going well done dream job million pound start of Monday has that ever arrived and they go no so I go so what are you doing to get that life then. This is a starting block and I tell them to use this course like a spring board at a swimming pool so they come on get to the end of it and they get all that energy off the spring and then they go off and do something much better and it's just a starting point for them

T2.11 ...this job is like no other job you do everything you are like their friend their confidant the tutor the person who gives them a push the person who gives them a telling off when they need it you are the person that sorts things out for them the person who sign posts them on to other things

T3.25. I think just explaining how the programme could change them and what's in it for them because it's not a programme that you just go to a course and you get a qualification and that it, it's

a programme that will open your eyes and change you, so I try to explain that as soon as possible on the phone, it's a programme that will help you identify where you want to go in life, give you new skills, give you new confidence and it kinds of homes in on 'well actually that's quite good for me because I need this, this and this' so that's what happens on the first call

4. Presenting the empowering choice

5. Running with the risk of change

6. Reaching out

7. Suitability ongoing

8. Non-suitability

9. The limits of suitability

10. Making a connection

11. Predicting engagement in learning

12. Building empathetic rapport, human all too human

13. A process of looking at one's self

14. A slice of life again

15. Unique individual pre- learner experiences

16. Change is more than a piece of paper

17. Some people change

18. Change through overcoming a poor self concept.

19. Early leavers

20. **Completing the course**

21. The unemployment factor

22. Being real

23. Change at the beginning and ongoing.

24. Changes in confidence

Tutor analysis

Emergent propositions are formed through inductive process using rules of inclusion - refinement of categories

24 provisional categories collapse and are subsumed to form 3 Outcome propositions (An example of the process is illustrated for outcome Proposition 1)

Refinement of categories through rules of inclusion: The allocating of a new code for the category into which the provisional coding has been collapsed.

Outcome proposition 1: Human beings can change

Subsumed provisional categories; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Rule for inclusion: Tutor express a belief that human beings have the ability to change.

1. Tutor belief in ability

T1.1. My experience as a tutor came from actually completing this course myself many years ago and as a result of completing the programme I then got the confidence to go and try new challenges in life. However, circumstances changed after 9/11 and I ended up returning back to the UK and I approached what I felt at the time was the whole reason I'd gone abroad which was this programme and I went to the programme manager that was there when I was a student on the course and they informed me that there were some positions coming up soon so I waited two weeks and the jobs were advertised and I applied for the post and even though I'd got no teaching experience and I was up against quite a few in the interview room as they were all qualified teachers but I got it on the strength that I'd got programme experience and I was one of the success stories of the course and that I actually enrolled on two night time teaching course and that if I agreed to those then the post was mine so I took it gladly

T1.2. yeah I completed the Princes' Trust Volunteers Programme I then went abroad for 7 years because I'd got that much confidence from the programme that I went abroad and then I came back and when I came back and I went for the interview I'd got a lot of presentation experience then from working abroad selling and that sort of thing so that part of the course wasn't an issue but I did have to admit to the panel in front of me that I hadn't got any teaching experience and I know that all the

people out there in the waiting room had because I'd seen them looking through all their stuff all day but I believed in the programme and I was back for a reason and I would be able to be much more beneficial for them in that sense

T2.8. I'm very very passionate about young people and what they can do so I think that comes across quite a lot in what I do I like the challenge sometimes it's tiring but I like the fact that I help people and that kind of motivates me which then motivates them so I think that quite often young people haven't had a positive role model or a positive influence or person that has listened to them in their life and I would like to think that if that was the case that was what I could offer them T2.17. I always say to other team leaders the young people buy into us before the buy into the programme that's kind of the way it is,

T2.26. …homeless and refugees and asylum seekers and I guess for the people like that they've probably never had anyone who is actively working on their behalf before a kind of, actively ambassador if you like for them and giving them that belief that is the difference…

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T3.19. yes I think it's important because we offer something unique and different and we try to put them in the most important position we can so I think it makes them feel important if you are dedicated to get them an appointment as soon as possible and sometimes if that includes early mornings or late nights or going to somewhere different to meet them I think it makes a great difference because you are showing them that you believe in them and you want to give them the opportunity which is what it's all about

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2. Transformative experiences that others may experience too.

T.1.4. personally because I've got programme knowledge I've been through the course with them so I've got experience of what they are experiencing when they are going through different weeks and how it feels for them in that respect so I can draw on that experience of how they might be feeling during the pressure weeks and the fund raising and where their confidence might be most tested you might say most challenged and because I've actually got a lot out of the programme and what it did for me and how it changed my life I like to try engage people and inspire them with look I wasn't the best person in the world up to this point and then look at all the things I've achieved and you seem to be impressed by that well what's to stop you from also going through that transformation and changing your life and really try to sell it on well this was me and this was what I got from it and this is where you say you want to go and well don't you give it a try

T2.10. I describe it as a personal development programme that's like no other personal development programme ...I have never, in all the teams that I have worked with and ran and supported, I have never come across a young person who hasn't got any benefit from it at all.

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T2.36. so when they feel an achievement they feel like they've done good I feel like they've done good I get a bit emotional and proud cause you know we buy into them as well I guess It's not just them buying in to use we buy into them so their achievements I feel as if they're are my own children if you like, when we've been out and raised loads of money like we have yesterday I make sure I tell them how proud I am and how well they've done and some of them really like that some of them can't take that praise but some of them love that it's the only praise they're going to get
T2.41. It can be a complete life changing event it can mean the difference between going to prison and reforming and getting a job you know there are many different things, we've had people we had a girl recently who's won a national award who's been on the telly because she had really bad bi-polar disorder massive manic depression couldn't ever work before and now she's a support worker so her's has been completely life changing and she's won an award for that that reason so it's not always as life changing sometimes it's smaller changes but it can be completely life changing, I worked with a young woman once who was a prostitute and a heroin addict and she can onto the programme to try and change her life she came on to try and make new friends and that is exactly what she did by the project weeks that are in 5 and 6 she was project leader and she was absolutely brilliant...

T3.7. I always describe it as a once in a life time opportunity that will transform your life and I stick by that because I really believe it does change people's lives.

T3.9. there's so many different skills but I think the main one is social skills, how to behave, how to act and how to think because sometimes they come from very different view point of this is me and my bubble and I haven't really experienced anything else, what we do is we open their eyes to so many different things that they can experience and learn a different skill area so it's like taught behaviour

T3.64. I love the job and I love seeing people change it's a magical moment when you can remember when you first interviewed someone three months ago and then you can see them three months later and they are doing their final presentation. I meet a girl once that I interviewed and she couldn't look me in the eye she had no confidence at all and she just had her head down on the table and then three months later she's speaking in front of 100 people and doing a presentation and it's that feeling that you get that you know if we weren't here, if this course wasn't here what would have happened you know because I don't think there is another course like ours because we do so much and its jam packed and giving that person the change to express herself and come out of her shell and experience what life has to offer it's an amazing feeling and also when you see people that have not had job before and they they go through the programme and do some voluntary work and then they ring up and say I've got a job as a travel agent and I'm traveling around the world next week I'll send you a post card and it's just an amazing feeling that you were a part of it by king of steering them in the right way and when you hear their story of what they've gone through and you really feel for them

3. Instilling a sense of direction

T1.7. I describe the course when I interview people as, well initially I will ask them where they are at and what I want them to do is suddenly make them stop and try and get behind the mask as quickly as possible and try and get them to identify actually how they would assess themselves right there and then on what they are doing with their life and then from that I will go well in three months time I will sort of I will ask them so far you've been doing x, y and z and then say yeah and I go have you wasted or bummed about or spent more than 60 days or more in bed doing nothing and not engaging and they go yeah, predominantly young people will say yeah I've easily wasted 60 days and I go well in that 60 days you could have done three months voluntary work in the community, you could have got six new qualifications, you could be more confident you could be more enthusiastic you can have direction and you can have something really good on your CV because in the business the name of the Princes' Trust has still got a lot of clout so do you think you can do that I they go yeah I could do that because they know they've bummed around for 60 days so they can easily do another 60 days and I sort of say well have you got anything on the next three months and they are like now so I say well why don't you give it ago and like are like ok. I try and engage them straight away and sell it on the you know I will ask them do you want a house and they'll go yeah and do you want a car and they'll go yeah do you want money in your pocket so when you see something nice in the shop window you can go and get it and they all so yes, there are a lot of leading questions if you like so I go so when you've been at home lying in bed doing nothing has that letter every come through the post going well done dream job million pound start of Monday has that ever arrived and they go no so I go so what are you doing to get that life then. This is a starting block and I tell them to use this course like a spring board at a swimming pool so they come on get to the end of it and

they get all that energy off the spring and then they go off and do something much better and it's just a starting point for them

T2.11 ...this job is like no other job you do everything you are like their friend their confidant the tutor the person who gives them a push the person who gives them a telling off when they need it you are the person that sorts things out for them the person who sign posts them on to other things

T3.25. I think just explaining how the programme could change them and what's in it for them because it's not a programme that you just go to a course and you get a qualification and that it, it's a programme that will open your eyes and change you, so I try to explain that as soon as possible on the phone, it's a programme that will help you identify where you want to go in life, give you new skills, give you new confidence and it kinds of homes in on 'well actually that's quite good for me because I need this, this and this' so that's what happens on the first call

4. Presenting the empowering choice

T1.8. the importance of knowing themselves knowing how, for me well we have obviously the course and the skeleton of the course and what it's about and the process they go through but I think what I'm really trying to get young people to identify with is, who they are, who they want to be and what are their barriers to actually getting where they want to be and try to help them either unravel or unpick them and see what's preventing them getting there and instead of blaming whatever, because some of them have got very different life experiences and I try to get them to acknowledge and accept the fact that it isn't about blaming it's about, well ok this has happened and this is how I've processed it but is this going to stop me from being where I want to be and give them a choice do you want that future or do you just want to keep going on about the past but your choice

T1.25. I think it's giving that young person the space and the security to go well what do you want not what you can do not what game you can play what do you want, this is what you can have and this is what you've got what do you want, your call and then I give it back to them and then you know I try empower them, yeah I could waste more time or I could get more out of life

5. Running with the risk of change

T1.9. I would say the power of the peer pressure in the group and if you engage them on a good level I think they all get that message whether some will actually pick it up and use it straight away or whether some will do it two or three months after the programme and then you'll see them in the street or they will give you a ring to come down for a chat and you see that they've actually moved forward. I think some get it instantly and they want to run with that because they're really in a place where they want to do that now and others still are kind of assessing whether they feel vulnerable and whether they want to take that risk and change, I think they are afraid of the people they have to go back to every day when they leave here and I think they don't want to risk bringing more harm or disrupt any kind of relationship with people it depends how bad they feel and how much they want to change it.

Outcome proposition 2: Identifying potential for change and transformation

Subsumed provisional categories: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Rule for inclusion: Tutors refer to process of change and transformation and the degree of suitability of the learner to engage in this process.

6. Reaching out

7. Suitability ongoing

8. Non-suitability

9. The limits of suitability

10. Making a connection

11. Predicting engagement in learning

12. Building empathetic rapport, human all too human

Outcome Proposition 3: The deeper consideration of a process of change

Subsumed provisional categories: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.
Rule for inclusion: Tutors were aware of the complexities of change that learners were faced with.

13. A process of looking at one's self

14. A slice of life again

15. Unique individual pre- learner experiences

16. Change is more than a piece of paper

17. Some people change

18. Change through overcoming a poor self concept.

19. Early leavers

20. Completing the course

21. The unemployment factor

22. Being real

23. Change at the beginning and ongoing.

24. Changes in confidence

List of original 24 provisional categories

1. Tutor belief in ability

2. Transformative experiences that others may experience too.

3. Instilling a sense of direction

4. Presenting the empowering choice

5. Running with the risk of change

6. Reaching out

7. Suitability ongoing

8. Non-suitability

9. The limits of suitability

10. Making a connection

11. Predicting engagement in learning

12. Building empathetic rapport, human all too human

13. A process of looking at one's self

14. A slice of life again

15. Unique individual pre- learner experiences

16. Change is more than a piece of paper
17. Some people change
18. Change through overcoming a poor self concept.

19. Early leavers

20. Completing the course

21. The unemployment factor

22. Being real

23. Change at the beginning

24. Changes in confidence