

Defining moments as potential catalysts for development: The
case of the UKZN Leadership Course

By

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Declaration

I declare that this is my own work. All verbatim extracts have been distinguished by quotation marks, and all sources of information have been specifically acknowledged. This work is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Masters in Education, in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores how moments perceived as ‘*defining*’ or being a climatic turning point may influence students’ preconceived ideas and viewpoints.

Institutions worldwide are becoming cognisant of the importance of preparing students for global leadership roles. In meeting this objective the Student Leadership Development Office introduced students on its leadership course to the topics of leadership and citizenship. The Leadership Course’s structure used an ethical lens to elaborate on elements of citizenship related to knowledge, skills, efficacy, and commitment. The course aimed to imbue students with a sense of stewardship, and commitment to civic involvement. The provision of real-world learning experiences included the use of a culturally responsive form of teaching, by the introduction of the African spiritual concepts of *ubuntu* and *umhlangano*. Lessons were further amplified by prior research, feedback, and the use of reflective journals by course participants. Using Mezirow’s (1991) theoretical framework of transformative learning, this study considers how the course facilitates the possibility of catalytic experiences for course participants. This study is particularly interested in determining whether real change is possible via defining moments which may potentially trigger transformative learning.

Data gathered from reflective journals and email questionnaires has been coded and analysed for possible themes. Triangulation between sources allowed for greater validity for the findings of the data collected. The study shows how, via transforming experiences, students became aware of preconceived biases and judgements in their internal landscapes. These defining moments contribute to catalysts for development. Case study results suggest that students could develop a broader understanding of the responsibilities of leadership and citizenship by obtaining an overall understanding and appreciation for diversity and being motivated to implement activities that could potentially have a positive bearing on community life.

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Acronyms

The following acronyms are commonly used by the various organisations listed, and most are well known. Others such as the SLD are utilised for the sake of brevity.

AVP – Alternatives to Violence Project

HIVAN - Centre for HIV/AIDS Networking

NEPAD - The New Partnership for Africa's Development

SAQA – South African Qualifications Authority

SLD - Student Leadership Development

SRC – Students Representative Council

UKZN – University of KwaZulu-Natal

Chapter 1 Introduction

There exists a long-standing belief that higher education has a responsibility to mould future citizens for the betterment of society. South Africa's Department of Education (2007) states as one of their objectives that education should, '*contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large,*' (Department of Education, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, Jonathan (2006) posits that schooling should prepare students for democratic, fully participating citizenship. Such moulding might occur in class but it may also be catered for in many out of class educational activities.

Out-of-class curricular, or 'co-curricular' activities, as they are sometimes referred to, facilitate learning experiences in higher education outside the traditional lecture-room situation, according to Mandew (2003). He explains how these courses, run by student services practitioners, have the potential to develop critical thinkers, lifelong learners and self-programmable workers.

The traditional academic focus in higher education is on delivering cognitive knowledge as efficiently as possible, whilst also claiming to incorporate values and ethics, within the confines of limited resources. Generally, this activity occurs in formal in-class sessions. Cranton (1996) however, feels that new models of interdisciplinary education promote student teamwork in a shift toward experiential, transformative, and collaborative learning. Moore (2005) explains how these collaborative models are difficult to create within academic systems which tend to emphasise individual grading and in which minimal emphasis is given to social change as an outcome.

However, Student Services divisions which frequently have a focus on social change, customarily play an equally, if not more important, developmental role as academic departments, through residence interventions, counselling, student campus governance, and the delivery of short courses. These activities embrace a wide spectrum of subjects useful for life skills and citizenship and are generally held during the mid-year break. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal these activities are sponsored by the university and the Leadership Course is made available to students at a nominal cost. Students residing in residence are most likely to attend these courses, as many of our non-residential learners leave for home immediately after lectures. Residence life presents numerous opportunities to develop friendships, and to acquire interpersonal skills such as conflict negotiation, and the engagement in collaborative work

because of the opportunities for governance and leadership (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002, p. 47).

Extra-mural courses run by these student affairs bodies or co-curricular practitioners may contribute to student development and knowledge. Regrettably, co-curricular practitioners from within student service divisions are not always recognised by mainstream academics, in spite of their quest to introduce students to a broader education by including topics of social interest. A combination of these two forms of higher education, i.e. the formal in-class sessions and co-curricular activities, should contribute to a more encompassing learning environment extending beyond the classroom. For instance, Rajab (1999) believes co-curricular activities should provide educational, cultural, and social aspects of development.

Mandew (2003), however, reports that a significant number of South African higher education institutions are under-resourced, leading, in particular, to fragmentation and marginalisation of their student support services. This anomaly exists in spite of Mandew's (2003) perception of a pressing need for student leadership training and student involvement in campus affairs.

The general administration of student services in South Africa is rooted in the systems originating from Britain, the former colonial power. This model has been altered over the years, according to Mandew (2003), by the development of home-grown innovations and by emulating structures such as those observed in the United States of America.

Student leadership, via organisations such as the Student Representative Council (SRC), can influence the governance of the institution thereby strengthening the overall campus climate. According to Mandew (2003) students are the most disempowered group in the scheme of co-operative governance as on occasion they need to debate issues with sophisticated intellectuals who are more advanced in terms of practical experience. Mandew (2003) explains how the SRC represents students' interests and their authority over clubs and societies.

In South African higher education institutions, a hybrid, or mixed approach to student services consists of both faculty and support staff. Their activities prevail in residences, counselling, sport, and financial aid. The hybrid model, according to Mandew (2003), combines *in loco parentis* and intellectualist approaches. This model assumes that intellectual development includes spiritual, emotional, and social growth. It is in this space that character development and moulding may occur most strongly.

Although the hybrid model predominates in institutions in this country, there is a move to encourage even wider participation by all sectors within the institutions, with a focus on the development of students outside the classroom. Mandew (2003) advises that due to globalisation and ‘*marketisation*’, student services divisions have leaned towards ‘*managerialism*’, rather than being ‘*education-orientated*’. This trend would detract from its core purpose of providing an education suitable for culturally and linguistically diverse groups of students where graduates are able to engage with the challenges of civil society and the workplace.

According to Mandew (2003), there is a perceived need for transformation of the higher education system within this model. For instance, the hybrid model does not take cognisance of the country’s socio-political history and its impact on the education system (Mandew, 2003, p. 5). One of the biggest challenges for student services professionals is to ensure co-operative governance, which, according to Mandew (2003), should be ‘*embraced at an emotional level and committed to at a practical level*’ (Mandew, 2003, p. 10). He cautions that this change is easier said than implemented, as students are increasingly resistant to being parented.

Student-centred and development-oriented approaches such as the hybrid one, suggest that student services divisions play a pivotal role in the development of life-long learners. Habermas (1992) believes learning should have emancipatory objectives driven by concerns for justice, equality and equity. One of the key activities of student services professionals is through the counselling and career units. Standards are governed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa in the counselling arena. Due to the nature of their activities an emancipatory approach is adhered to where fundamental rights and fairness is implemented regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, gender, sexual preference, age and socio-economic status.

1.1 Research Background

One student affairs initiative subscribing to a collaborative and shared learning process consists of a 10-day live-in course on leadership run by the Student Leadership Development Office (SLD) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Their mission statement states that their quest is to provide ‘*a holistic education for citizenship and leadership in Africa and the world*’. This extra-curricular programme is the focus of the case study in this research. Unlike other leadership courses emphasizing management theory leadership, this pragmatic course encompasses more humanitarian aspects through wide-ranging issues such as globalisation, ethics, and HIV/AIDS, as well as personal development. Through the content presented there are possibilities for shifts

in consciousness to where students become intrinsically aware of human rights and are motivated to use their new leadership skills in an empathetic manner. Wits University in Gauteng, and the University of Cape Town, have credit-bearing courses on leadership and management which focus on strategy development and policy-making. The latter mentioned institution does emphasise the importance of a values-based education and a culturally responsive curriculum. Likewise on the UKZN Leadership Course one of the learner outcomes states:-

Know why citizens and leaders have a responsibility to actively combat negative stereotyping and promote understanding and respect amongst people whatever their differences, and to create inclusive processes and an ethos of inclusiveness e.g. in student governance. (See Appendix A).

A research document considering leadership enhancement stated that there was a '*need to understand the African context as well as the indigenous thought system and, in particular, the perspective of the African worker,*' (April and April n.d., p. 7). Although the UKZN Leadership Course is not a credit-bearing module a culturally-responsive style of delivery is used where students are introduced to African spiritual philosophies.

The UKZN Leadership Course considers the subject of leadership through a social lens, rather than using the traditional corporate focus of management practice. This extra-curricular course therefore differs from structured, credit-bearing modules such as those mentioned above. The Leadership Course is voluntary and open to all students within the four campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Although the course is not a credit-bearing module, certificates are awarded based upon the completion of the written assignments at the conclusion of the course. These assignments provide the qualitative material for this study. Appendices A (i), (ii) and (iii) outline the course requirements, expected outcomes, and assignment details. This will give the reader an opportunity to conceptualise how change within the psyche of students could potentially arise.

The traditional management process of plan, organize, lead and control, taught in MBA type courses does not always give rise to authentic leadership according to Avolio and Luthans (2006). They state popular models in business schools have as their emphasis techniques for maximising profit on investments for one's shareholders, not leadership development *per se*.

A preferred approach for the development of authentic leadership would be via the process of learning from significant events in one's life (Avolio and Luthans, 2006). This is not unlike Mezirow's (1991) transformation theory. The concept of authenticity has its roots in Greek

philosophy and the phrase, '*to thine own self be true*'. Avolio and Luthans (2006) draw on their theory of authenticity from humanistic psychologists such as Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1969) who focussed attention on self-actualisation as contributing to ethical behaviour.

Adult learning theory is fundamental in leadership development, but receives scant attention by leadership scholars (Conger and Benjamin, 1999; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002). This study seeks to examine how learning occurs on the Leadership course with main reference to Mezirow's (1991) transformation learning theory. Learning is seen to be stimulated through what is termed defining moments, those which make individuals stop and reassess their usual understandings. Mezirow (1991) believes that defining moments may be accentuated by reflection and examination of assumptions on beliefs, opinions and emotional reactions. Terms used to describe '*defining moments*' include; a moment of truth, a climax, a critical juncture, crucial moment, turning point, and others. (See the online thesaurus <http://thesaurus.reference.com>). In Kreig (1999) numerous examples are given by a variety of people of where defining moments arose from literature, music and learning. Mezirow (1991) believes that the '*meaning making process*' can potentially transform how we look at the world and the people in our lives. Learning, he says, sometimes takes place independently of the teacher, by being intimately linked to real-life situations.

This research examines how, through a culturally responsive pedagogy (where social justice issues are integral to the content), the Leadership Course raises issues, perhaps allowing participants to question previous frames of reference, thereby providing potential for the transformation of points of view. Mezirow (1991) states that through critical reflection of assumptions self-narratives can be altered. Defining moments he says, contribute to changes in narratives. These moments, sometimes fleeting, even subliminal, referred to by Avolio and Luthans (2006) as '*moments that matter*', are considered in this study. Reflecting on these occasions may further enhance these changes as per Schön's (1983) notions of reflection-in-action which involves looking at experiences, attending to theories, and connecting with feelings.

1.2 Research Question

According to Astin and Astin (2000) two fundamental presuppositions of education are that people can change, and that education and the learning environment can effect that change.

The study looks at students' perceptions of these changes after their attendance at the Leadership course by posing the research question:-

What did students identify (if any) as ‘defining moments’ during their participation in the Leadership Course?

This question is further unpacked by using the following sub questions:

What were the perceived effects of these defining moments?

1.3 Rationale and Importance

The Department of Education recognises the development of skills beyond core curricula to improve work seekers chances of employment, including them in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) policy documents (Nkomo 2000). In addition, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) states that their critical cross-field skills of problem solving, teamwork, critical thinking, and empathetic leadership styles are vital to student development.

Most of our leaders emerge from higher education institutions ill prepared for the responsibility of visionary leadership. However, an enormous potential exists for universities to *‘be leaders in questioning the status quo, challenging paradigms and openly practicing new ways of living, thinking, teaching and learning’*. (Moore, 2005, p. 78).

If this potential is to be pursued, there should be some experiential engagement with the social concerns of our communities as lessons of leadership are unlikely to be learnt from literature. This study is important as it could provide insight into how student development can flourish through non-curricula courses and perhaps also be used to motivate for the development of a full credit-bearing course. Learning in a classroom environment does not necessarily encourage students to reflect upon their previous experiences. In transformative learning however, *‘one’s values, beliefs, and assumptions compose the lens through which personal experience is mediated and made sense of’*. (Mezirow, 2000, p.7). In keeping with Mezirow’s (1991) transformative learning theory the study aims to contribute to debates on how defining moments can be instrumental in the incremental change of people’s consciousness by influencing the mindsets of students to become change agents thereby creating an ecologically and socially just world. Due to high attrition rates in higher education, not all students will continue to post graduate level and complete a module or full course on leadership. Time constraints also result in a focus in formal courses on subject-oriented learning. Courses held by Student Affairs divisions are well placed to introduce emancipatory type learning. In keeping with this type of learning, the mission statements of many educational institutions recommend strong links with

communities and the development of a social conscience. This is not as a rule possible within the confines of classroom-based material.

One of the aims of the dissertation is to explore whether the critical pedagogy of transformative learning helps to trigger change in the students. Perhaps, if it does, Student Services divisions in other HE institutions could consider a similar model in their courses for student leadership.

A similar approach to imparting knowledge on leadership was found within a combined study between the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business and Ashridge Business School in the UK (n.d.). Similar themes to those found in this study are mentioned in their paper concerning their MBA programme. These themes include transformative learning, values, reflection, social networking, diversity, ethics, locus of control and change. During their two year programme '*quasi-painful moments*' are designed. These could be likened to Mezirow's (1991) disorientating dilemma. Students are encouraged to record their feelings in reflective journals arising from these dilemmas. Although this study cannot directly compare with a two year programme, it is interesting that this study looks through a similar lens when considering student development.

As this study considers a shorter period of time true transformation is difficult to detect. Wilson, B.G., Switzer, S.H., Parrish, P., and the IDEAL Research Lab (n.d.) explain how transformative learning experiences may not be immediately apprehended, but through re-evaluation over time may be seen as transformative. However, even a short course can be designed to provide crucial moments for reflection. Defining moments are referred to fairly widely in higher education, and in popular literature motivational speakers frequently refer to '*aha*' moments where previously held opinions are challenged and questioned. Critical thinking, encouraged in higher education is effective when utilised in conjunction with reflection of defining moments. The critical theory of Habermas (1992) is the foundation of much of Mezirow's (1991) theory. The synergy between critical thinking, reflection and defining moments could receive more emphasis by additional research after this study.

Through scaffolded experiences on this leadership course, students' inherent biases and personal narratives were identified and questioned as they consider issues pertaining to social justice and equity for all citizens. The topic of leadership is inherently values-based encompassing numerous issues pertaining to social justice. Greenleaf (1998) believes lessons in leadership cannot exclude

mention of values and social responsibilities. Bennis and Thomas (2002) discuss how defining moments have the potential to impact on our values system.

Jonathan (2006) believes there is more to education than delivering lessons on '*citizenship*' and '*social education*'. He states that academics subscribing to '*community engagement*' in their lessons should become familiar with the environments from which many of the students originate.

The topics of citizenship, social education, and community engagement should, in my opinion, be integral to leadership studies, due to the topics' emphasis on morality and on the guidelines contained in human rights documentation. Astin and Astin (2000) believe any form of education, including leadership development, is inherently value-laden. Social issues, such as those arising from unprotected sex, drugs and alcohol abuse, especially amongst the youth, cause many to declare a moral crisis in our schools and in our societies. Moral issues have been discussed since Socrates' times by philosophers such as Kant (1788), and by leaders of change revolution, such as Martin Luther King. Values, norms, and sanctions, differ within cultures, but respect towards others, and the environment, should be striven towards, not just enunciated from liberal platforms. Values education frequently utilises the theories of experiential learning and disorientating dilemmas. Social reconstructivists like Freire (1970) see teachers as change agents in promoting an awareness of dilemmas which confront humanity. These dilemmas are useful as a mechanism in leadership development. They provide opportunities to create paradigm shifts in concepts of values, leading in turn to '*authentic leadership*' (Aviolo and Luthans, 2006). No structured dilemmas are planned for the Leadership Course, although some of the content is often contentious and a subject for debate, especially in discussions on issues pertaining to social justice. These informal debates may lead to unplanned disorientating dilemmas during the Leadership Course. Thereafter through critical reflection and critical discourse, the two major elements of Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory, transformation may arise. In this context transformation refers to changed viewpoints and opinions of a profound nature.

Chapter 2 The UKZN Leadership Course

Anually at midyear, a group of approximately 80 students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal spend almost two weeks together on a course, which has as its focus the enhancement of students' personal development and strengthening of skills and values-base for practical leadership competence. This chapter describes the course as it was for the year of this study. Since then student intake figures have increased, the duration has lengthened, and the course fees are therefore higher. The content of the course still runs on similar lines. Refer to Appendix A for a full description of the course

The Student Leadership Development Office, within the Student Services division of the university, runs this course. The university subsidises the course thereby keeping the course fees as low as possible, Sometimes raising outside funding for several students in a particular field of study has been successful. The advertising for the course is directed at students based at all five campuses of UKZN. This course is generally oversubscribed, and only 100 applicants are accepted. In order to be accepted as a participant, a letter of motivation from the student should accompany the application. Although one of the questions on the application form enquires whether the student is presently in a leadership role, such as in student governance, this is not a requirement for entry.

The course is open to all UKZN students and there is no restriction on the academic level or age of the applicant. Students are therefore provided with opportunities to broaden their social network through learning about other campuses, degrees, and cultural groups.

The nominal cost of R500.00 which includes meals, accommodation, and notes, is beyond the reach of some students. These students are then encouraged to motivate for their own funding. If students are unable to raise the full course fee in advance, payment by instalments can be arranged with the SLD. In order to ensure commitment, all students who are accepted are required to meet the deposit of R100.00 themselves prior to the course.

The Leadership Course is non-credit bearing and voluntary. Assessment takes the form of written assignments. One assignment consists of extracts from their daily course journals. Reflective journals play a large role in the learning and assessment process. Students are required to record their daily impressions and learning experiences in these journals. Depending upon participation,

punctuality, and the submission of their assignments, students will obtain either a certificate of attendance only, or a certificate of completion. Students may then use this certificate as part of their curriculum vitae. Due to the broad content, there is a potential for students to improve on critical cross-field outcomes as deemed important by the South African Qualifications Authority. These include cohort work, presentation and communication skills.

Presenters from UKZN, NGOs, local government and industry are invited to address the students. Some of these presenters are social activists who are currently engaged in addressing issues pertaining to the environment, HIV/AIDS, and concerns of local communities. For the sake of brevity, the following list will give the reader a sense of the course content. Each year there will be a slight variation, but core subjects concerning leadership remain.

- Leadership
 - Theories
 - African concepts
 - Sources of power
- Governance
 - The role of the SRC
 - Citizenship
 - The South African constitution
- Personal development
 - Spiritual and emotional intelligence
 - Presentation skills
 - Self-knowledge
 - Social Interaction
 - Conflict resolution
- Learning
 - Research skills
 - Critical thinking
 - Creative thinking
 - Reflective journals
- Social issues
 - Human rights
 - Gender / cultural diversity
 - The implications of globalisation

The teaching styles differ according to the presenter, but generally the norm is a student-centred approach where active participation is encouraged. Cohort work is a large component of the course as, for example, students are required to work in groups of 8-10 to prepare and give a presentation based upon one of the readings. Course material readings are provided at the Introductory Day enabling time to prepare for this requirement.

There is an experiential component of the course where students go on a site visit to local communities. Students produce a report as part of their findings. After the visit in 2007 students were given an opportunity to present their findings to the Mayor of Pietermaritzburg and a number of councillors.

African concepts of leadership, such as *ubuntu* and *umhlangano* are introduced. These concepts are enacted in the course in order to demonstrate how it entails a process of developing shared values through group reflection. A circle is formed and students are advised that everyone is equal, and anyone is at liberty to voice their opinion on any topic, including the course itself.

The benefits students may potentially receive from attending this course are many and varied. However, an assumption is not made that each student does obtain each benefit. The following list highlights just some benefits, which may emerge.

1. Knowledge on leadership theories and the broad issues concerning this topic
2. Improvement of job prospects
3. Self-development
 - a. Confidence building and self-esteem
 - b. Self-knowledge
 - c. Social interaction and conflict resolution skills
 - d. Broadening of social network
4. Knowledge on HIV/AIDS, its prevention and treatment, and a personal reduction of risky behaviour
5. Exposure to new teaching and learning techniques
6. Better understanding of discrimination and rights pertaining to cultural diversity and gender, social stratus, and sexual preference discrimination

After being present at some of the presentations at the Leadership Course, and thereafter being invited to facilitate a session, I became aware of the potential advantages to students of attending such a course. My interest was piqued in how this experience affected students, especially since I found the course to be a positive experience for myself and seemingly for the students. I have attempted to be objective about the perceived advantages, and try to tone down my positive bias as far as possible. Although the course is presently non-credit bearing, it has obtained some recognition from within the university. Its certificate is regarded as a recommendation for admission to the School of Business Leadership Centre's postgraduate Leadership Certificate programme. Property Development, a programme within the School of Civil Engineering Surveying and Construction, recognises the benefits of students attending such a course. A positive outcome of the completion of this dissertation would be to have other programmes becoming similarly motivated to encourage student attendance.

As will be noted from this chapter, opportunities for change may exist for students who fully participate on this course. This dissertation's focus therefore considers how moments occurring on the course may lead to altered personal awareness of social matters and of preconceived notions regarding self.

Chapter 3 Setting the Framework

This study sits within the broad framework of transformative learning theory as outlined by Mezirow, (1985, 1991). The case study for this research is a Leadership Course whose participants consist of culturally and linguistically diverse students from a broad range of experiences, academic levels and social backgrounds.

The critical pedagogy of transformative learning theory is appropriate for this study as, just as the Leadership Course emphasises an awareness of social responsibility, so Mezirow's (1991) theory stresses the importance of emancipatory potential in education. The content on the Leadership Course contains areas of conflict requiring debate. These debates generally focus on issues of social conscience. A number of assumptions about transformative learning are made; one being that this type of learning resonates with an education for conflict transformation (Fetherston and Kelly, 2007, p. 267). This notion is similar to Mezirow's (1991) '*disorientating dilemma*' where through sometimes uncomfortable occasions, previously held opinions may be re-examined.

3.1 Early influences

In order to better understand Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning and how it has evolved, it is necessary to consider early influencers. The term 'paradigm shift' was first used by Kuhn (1962) to describe a change in basic assumptions within the ruling theory of science. A good example of a paradigm shift which Kuhn (1962) used is the optical illusion of the duck-rabbit which enables one to see the same information in an entirely different way. Mezirow (1993) refers to a paradigm shift occurring in changes of mindsets where no reversal of previously held opinions takes place thereafter. Mezirow (1993) refers to this shift in understanding as a 'perspective transformation'. These are similar to paradigm shifts as described by Kuhn.

Covey (2004) suggests that a 'paradigm shift' is what we might call the 'AHA' experience when someone sees something in a different way. In this study this experience is referred to as a 'defining moment'.

Kuhn (1962) theorised the importance of paradigms which he defined as '*universally recognised scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners*' (p. viii). Kuhn (1962) used several examples of paradigms, and believed that the

history of electrical research best exemplified the nature of a paradigm. Kitchenham (2008) explains how the theory of transformative learning has itself become a paradigm in that it has provided answers to questions about adult learning and engendered its own group of specialised practitioners.

The last stage of critical consciousness as outlined by Freire (1970) influenced Mezirow (1978) in terms of critical reflection, critical self-reflection on assumptions, and critical discourse after experiencing a disorientating dilemma. Taylor (2005) refers to Freire's (1970) approach as social emancipatory. Freire (1970) believes an antidote to the lack of free thought and reliance of students on teachers is conscientisation. This concept concerns the development of consciousness that has the power to transform reality. He feels that instead of unidirectional knowledge, the teacher should introduce critical ideas for discussion leading to more democracy in the classroom. Freire (1970) also feels that learning extends beyond the classroom to all areas of a student's life.

Habermas (1992) identifies emancipatory learning where knowledge is gained through critical self-reflection, resulting in the identification of meaning perspectives. He uses a philosophical approach to reflection as a tool for the development of particular forms of knowledge. Leadership studies frequently include discussions on understanding human behaviour, and different forms of communication. These topics are often emancipatory in nature. Habermas's (1971, 1984) three domains of learning are titled the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory.

Technical knowledge: This domain includes information falling within the environment and behaviouristic learning theories. Kitchenham (2008) regards this knowledge as being rote and governed by rules.

Practical knowledge: This domain is concerned with understanding social norms and values and making ourselves understood. The humanistic learning theories are partly involved in this domain. Kitchenham (2008) gives an example of how teachers understood how to interact with their pupils in an online chat room.

Emancipatory knowledge: This domain is particularly relevant in Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning where knowledge is gained through critical self-reflection. Kitchenham (2008) states how this knowledge is introspective as the learner is self-reflective.

The examination of these domains led to Mezirow's (1985) description of perspective transformation as

the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1985, p.6)

There are a number of terms and phrases that require unpacking in the theory of transformative learning.

3.2 Meaning perspectives

The term 'meaning perspective' is defined as 'the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions' (Mezirow & Associates 2000, p. 16). Meaning perspectives and meaning schemes can be transformed through reflection and critical discourse (Mezirow, 1991). He further explains that meaning perspectives are more than a method of seeing things differently. They constitute an orientating frame of reference that serves as a tacit belief system. These meanings of what is inherently believed stem from biographical, historical, and cultural beliefs and values. Transformative learning theory is defined by Mezirow as follows:

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow and Associates, 2000, pp. 7-8)

Meaning becomes significant through critical discourse with others, according to Mezirow (1985). This opinion is reminiscent of Kuhn's (1962) paradigm and Freire's (1970) conscientisation. Constructivists such as Kolb (1984) and Piaget (1971), as well as social constructivists such as Vygotsky (1978) also contributed to Mezirow's (1985) theory. Meaning making or 'constructing meaning' is found in a constructivist approach to education.

Meaning making often occurs through narrative and dialogue (Ziegler, Paulus and Woodside 2006). Narrative is one of the key considerations in transformative learning theory which Mezirow (1985, 1991), refers to as 'restorying' leading to changes in one's meaning system. Ziegler et al. (2006) explains that narrative and dialogue are discursive practices used in private

thoughts and public discourse. Autobiographical narrative is a fundamental structure of human meaning making, according to Bruner (1986). In this study reflective narrative is found in students' journals where events of the day are recorded and how they contributed to learning. A number of researchers have used participant journals as a data source (Brown, 2005; Kember, Jones, Loke, McKay, Sinclair and Tse 1999); Kitchenham, 2006).

3.3 Perspective transformation

Perspective transformation can be epochal and painful (Mezirow, 1985, p. 24). According to Mezirow (1985) this dimension involves a comprehensive, critical re-evaluation of oneself. Negative experiences can influence development, sometimes more so due to the pain frequently associated with the event. Avolio and Luthans (2006) refer to these experiences as '*jolts*' associated with crisis, translating to growth experiences.

The transformative learning model fits within a constructivist paradigm where individuals construct knowledge through their experiences in the world (Cranton 1994). Dewey (1938) for instance, refers to meaning constructed from knowledge. Reflection and dialogue thereafter deepen the learning experience. Critical reflection and critical discourse are the two major elements of transformative learning theory. According to Dewey (1938), effective undergraduate education should provide the necessary structures for reflection.

Perspective transformation is also identified by Clark (1991) (changes in understanding the self), convictional (reconsideration of belief systems as consisting of the three dimensions of psychological), and behavioural (lifestyle change). Mezirow (1991) sees the ego as central in the process of perspective transformation. This differs from Boyd and Myers' (1988) framework that moves beyond the ego emphasising reason and logic that is more psychosocial in nature. This view of transformative learning as an intuitive and emotional process is beginning to emerge in the literature. For instance, Ball's (1999) study found that strong emotions were frequently accompanied by transformation. However, Ball (1999) also noted that personal change was sometimes imperceptible and participants were unlikely to recall conscious reflection. The participants related how their experiences were on a more emotional and subconscious level. Ball (1999) found that in practice transformative learning is sometimes not as rational and deliberate as Mezirow (1991) maintained.

3.4 Disorientating dilemma

Mezirow (1991) believes transformative learning results from a disorientating dilemma often triggered by a crisis or major life transition. It is these disorientating dilemmas which are considered as a potential contributory factor to change amongst the participants on the Leadership Course. Boyd and Myers (1988) feel these dilemmas have the potential to expand consciousness resulting in greater personality integration.

Cranton (1994) feels that transformative learning occurs when an event, such as the trauma of losing a job is experienced, or when simply an unexpected question is posed. The individual then becomes aware of their distorted point of view. Upon examination of this view the learner opens themselves up to alternatives which may change the manner in which this area of life was considered. O'Sullivan believes this transformation is more dramatic as a "*deep structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings and actions – a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world.*" (O'Sullivan 2003, p. 326)

3.5 Critical reflection

Transformative learning takes place in an environment where assumptions are questioned, and then transformed, when they no longer fit beliefs (Mezirow, 1991). After identifying the problem, critical engagement and discussion should take place, he states.

Mezirow (1991) distinguishes between three types of critical reflection:-

- **Content reflection.** Individuals reflect on the description of the problem. This concept is similar to Dewey's (1938), idea on problem-solving. Schön (1990) points out that cognitive models are frequently better at representing a problem space than pinpointing where a solution may arise.
- **Process reflection.** The focus shifts to methodologies used to solve problems rather than the content of the problem itself.
- **Premise reflection.** Assumptions, beliefs, or values are questioned which underlie the problem questioned. (This latter form of reflection would result after a defining moment).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) refer to three phases of transformative learning as being critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action. It is therefore evident that reflection is a vital process

within the learning cycle, promoting self-awareness and learning. Self-awareness is a precondition for developing a capacity to consider other people's viewpoints (Mezirow, 1991). This study explores how critical reflection may lead to changes in meaning perspectives that could potentially affect core values and principles for effective leadership. Mandell and Herman (2007) state how experience without reflection and discrimination is routine and fragmented.

Self-reflection and critical reflection are terms widely used in transformative learning theory (Cranton, 1994). Cranton (1994) says that in the process of teaching sometimes teachers pose critical questions to themselves where they can similarly experience transformative learning. Mezirow (1991) refers to critical reflection as the process whereby changes of points of view of previously held notions are processed and examined. The use of reflective journals is encouraged on the Leadership Course as a means of remembering the events of the day and contributing to the learning experience. As will be noticed in the methodology section these journals were used to extract data for this study. See Appendix A for an explanation on how these were encouraged as a learning tool.

Reflective learning practice resonates with a constructivist view of education, as students construct their own meanings in collaboration with their colleagues. Schön (1987) believes that students and teachers should view problems from other people's perspectives when promoting reflective practice. Critical reflection assists learners in becoming aware of how their political, social, cultural and religious viewpoints affect their view of the world. Mezirow referred to the reintegration of information previously learnt as a time of '*change in the learner's frame of reference*' (Mezirow & Associates 2000, p. 16).

3.6 Comparison with a staged approach

Perspective transformation is continuous, as Mezirow's (1991) theory is not age specific, but rather looks at life's incidents that challenge beliefs. Mezirow (1978) does not use a stage theory approach although there are some prerequisites required prior to the journey of transformation. Mezirow (1978) said his theory was only viable for adults with validated frames of reference. Once these frames of reference are tested and validated, the student is ready to move through Kegan's (1994) latter stages. His theory of consciousness development includes the ability to recognise oneself as a citizen within a social order. Kegan's (1994) first two levels involve childhood and therefore do not align with Mezirow's (1978) theory. It is only in Kegan's (1994)

stage three that Mezirow's (1978) transformation and higher levels of consciousness are possible.

The following table is referred to in the data analysis section where comments are categorised into these phases in order to determine levels of transformation. Some comments fell into more than one of these phases.

Table 1: Mezirow's (1978) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

- Phase 1 A disorienting dilemma
- Phase 2 A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
- Phase 3 A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic
assumptions
- Phase 4 Recognition that one's discontent and the process of
transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar
change.
- Phase 5 Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
- Phase 6 Planning of a course of action
- Phase 7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- Phase 8 Provisional trying of new roles
- Phase 9 Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and
relationships
- Phase 10 A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated
by one's perspective

Extracted from Kitchenham (2008) and Snyder (2008).

In 1991, a further phase was included, which stated '*renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships*' (Mezirow, 1994, p. 224). This phase occurs when meaning becomes individualistic and internal, rather than what is prescribed in written notes and speeches.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a background to the origins of transformative learning theory, the key areas referred to in this study, and the difference from a staged approach to development.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The qualitative design for this research adopts a case study approach, where an event (the UKZN Leadership course), is studied over a period of time (ten days) taking into consideration physical environment, using observations and interviews (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). This course was held midyear in 2006 during vacation time. Case studies are distinguished from other modalities in that intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system are utilised (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). Likewise, MacDonald and Walker (1975), cited by Bassey (1999), state how a case study is an examination of an instance in action.

Flyvbjerg (2006) reports how his teachers and colleagues tried to dissuade him against employing this particular research methodology. They said that case study research is suited for pilot studies, not full-fledged research schemes. Another said they are too subjective giving scope for the researcher's own interpretations. This they argued would make the validity of the material wanting.

The research object in a case study can be a person, a community, or an incident. A case study was selected for this study as they are frequently intricately connected to social, historical and personal issues, according to Yin (1984). He says a key strength of the case study method is in its use of multiple sources and techniques. This study uses a number of sources for data which are explained in this chapter. Furthermore, case study research is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. This is explained by Flyvbjerg (2006) who believes that by using the case method and other experiential methods for teaching, students may be assisted to achieve real practical experience via summer jobs, internships, and the like (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 223). This methodology is appropriate for this study as the time students spend on the Leadership Course can be likened to that spent on a summer camp or internship.

According to Stake (1995), case studies use critical incidents in non-business education and professional development through a problem-based approach to learning. This is pertinent in this study as the research question for this study addresses how 'moments that matter' contributed to students' transformative learning by their attendance at the UKZN Leadership Course. The research question asks:

What did students identify (if any) as 'defining moments' during their participation in the Leadership Course?

This question is further unpacked by using the following sub questions:

What were the perceived effects of these defining moments?

Snyder (2008) stresses the importance of location to maximise the possibility for transformation. According to her the learning should take place in a contextually relevant setting for the learner. Taylor (2007) in turn believes that each educational setting provides a unique '*community of practice*'. Students participating on the Leadership Course were housed in residence facilities and therefore obtained opportunities to share experiences and explore cultural differences through discourse on the events of the course and their social backgrounds. These dialogues may enable the examination of meaning perspectives. Critical discourse is an important component of transformative learning theory and through long periods together these opportunities enabled the examination of previously held notions and beliefs. This will be commented upon in the data analysis section.

As discussed in the Conceptual Framework chapter, this study uses Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning to determine whether perceptions of change occurred. Snyder (2008) makes a number of assumptions concerning transformative learning.

- *Transformation can be articulated by an individual who has experienced it.*
- *Transformation is documentable in a qualitatively persuasive and deep manner.*
- *Transformation is a positive endeavour and one will benefit from transformation.* (Snyder, 2008, p. 160)

In this study comments perceived as being transformative learning experiences are articulated through the eyes of the students. The long-term benefits of this perceived transformation has not been investigated in this study as in a short timeframe only the potential for change was possible. Mandew (2003) states that leaders need to lead change as leadership is not only about embracing change. As the study's timeframe is short, only students' opinions or perceptions of change are discussed. However, what is of interest is students' exposure to and implementation of reflective learning. The investigation of long-term changed behaviour would be worthy of additional research requiring a survey of the UKZN alumni.

The research utilises eclectic methods from participant observation, to constructivist, interpretivist forms of enquiry, relying heavily on students' subjective, experiential knowledge. Qualitative research differs from quantitative in its quest for understanding and in-depth inquiry (Henning et al., 2004).

Qualitative research, according to Walliman (2004), enables the development of a social construct by getting as close as possible to the subject of the research. This approach suits the study of transformative learning. For example, in Snyder's (2008) assessment of ten primary transformative learning theory authors and their methodologies, all used qualitative design elements. The researchers are Berger (2004), Brown (2005), Cranton, (2004), Fetherston and Kelly (2007), Kember, Jones, et al. (1999), King (2004), Kitchenham (2006), Taylor (2007) and Whitelaw et al. (2004). These researchers used similar research instruments to this study, such as questionnaires, journals, interviewing and self-reporting.

Transformative learning theory concerns the examination of one's values, beliefs and assumptions which according to Merriam (1998) compose the lens through which personal development is made sense of. The qualitative approach is therefore best suited to this research theory.

Mezirow (2003) emphasised 'critical-dialectical discourse' for transformative learning. A lynchpin of Mezirow's theory is rational discourse where one's new meanings are discussed and evaluated. Ideally in rational discourse one sets "aside bias, prejudice, and personal concerns ... to arrive at a consensus" (Mezirow, 1995, p. 53). As much of the subject material on the Leadership Course involved ethics and the moral responsibilities of leaders, debate ensued during these sessions. This provided me with opportunities to monitor body language, overhear comments and participate in informal discussions. It would however be difficult to gauge whether students exhibited highly developed metacognitive skills of critical self-reflection and judgement a prerequisite for true transformative learning (Merriam, 2004). Henning (2004) explains that qualitative research denotes inquiry in which '*qualities, the characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation*' (Henning, 2004, p. 5).

4.1 Research Instruments

The following table lists the sources used to extract data for this study, show the number of respondents who participated, and gives the Appendix number where this instrument may be viewed.

Table 2: Sources used as data in this study

No of respondents	Appendix No	Research Instrument
51	N/A	Reflective journals and extracts from essays
9 groups of approx 5 each	B	Cohort Mind-map Course Evaluation
46	C	Post course questionnaire after 2006 course.
11	D (i)	Email questionnaires
6	& (ii)	
N/A	E	Feedback from course convenor
N/A	N/A	Observation notes

There were a total of 61 participants on the Leadership Course as will be seen from the following table. However only 51 journals were used in the analysis as some students did not complete the assignment as outlined in Appendix A (iii). Some students also elected to not continue with the course after the Introductory Day.

The following table reflects the student profile showing gender ratio, race, campus of study, country of origin and degree being read.

Table 3: Student group details

Males	28	12	Education	African	42
Females	33	16	PropDev	White	4
Total	61	8	BA	Asian	10
		4	Development Studies	Coloured	5
Country of Origin			Masters - Social Science, CRPS, Agriculture, Politics and Development and Housing	Total	61
SA	47	5			
Rwanda	3	1	Honours Theology	UKZN Campus	
Mozambique	1	2	LLB	Howard College	24
Nambia	1	1	Chemical Engineering	Pietermaritzburg	23
Nigeria	1	1	Sports Science	Edgewood	8
Lesotho	2	3	B.Comm	Westville	6
Swaziland	3	1	Residential Management	Total	61
India	1	1	BA Social Science		
Zimbabwe	2	1	Computer Engineering		
Total	61	1	PhD Hydrology		
		1	BSc Info. Tech		
		2	BSc		
		1	Human Res. Man		
	61		Total respondents		

Out of the 61 participants only a small sample are reading for their masters and PhD studies. They would be the oldest in this group. This may be a shortfall in this study as *the*

transformations likely to produce developmentally advanced meaning perspectives usually appear to occur after the age of thirty, (Mezirow, 1991, p. 103).

However, Merriam (2004) asks how ‘*mature*’ or ‘*cognitively developed*’ one must be to have a transformative learning experience. Intuitively we do realise that ‘*adults do not have to be at the pinnacle of some model of cognitive development to experience transformational learning*’ (Merriam, 2004, p. 66). Freire’s (1973) work with illiterate peasants confirms this. I concur with Merriman (2004) as she observed meaning perspectives being changed.

Reflective journals

The reflective journals contained the richest material. Only extracts pertaining to areas where defining moments may have occurred, are included in the data analysis section. Reflective journals have been used by a number of authors on the topic of transformative learning theory (Brown (2005); Fetherston and Kelly (2007); Kember et al. (1999) and Kitchenham (2006). Kitchenham (2006) was interested in detecting whether teachers were motivated in using technology in their teaching and devised an action research design in the journals from which his data was extracted. He attempted to gauge from the data whether these teachers were on the transformative spectrum.

During and after the Leadership Course students were encouraged to record their learning experiences and critically reflect on new insights and knowledge gained during the previous day’s events. These journals could also be used for contributions during discussions at the *umhlangano* sessions. Extracts from these journals were forwarded to the course convenor after the course in order to fulfil requirements for assignment two. See Assignment 2 in Appendix A (iii) which explains how students should use their journals. Students are advised in this document how using this method can reinforce teachings and experiences. Additionally, this document explains how by group work, students may obtain opportunities to develop empathy and respect for cultural diversity. The appendix outlines how students should become aware of issues shaping the context of leadership, and how their personal development and knowledge on global issues may be expanded.

As reflective journals frequently contain emotional, personal content, caution is used to protect the identity of students. No data which would identify the student was provided. The drawback of meeting this ethical consideration was that gender and academic level had to be gauged by the descriptions in the material itself. This was made easier in some cases as students discussed their

degree and gender in their journals. It should be noted that prior consent was obtained from students during the course itself. Journals kept by the students were used as a source of data and only those statements which denoted transformation of some sort were extracted. Through the completion of the concluding assignment essay which requires reflection during and after the course (see Appendix A ii), students could find opportunities for the examination of their motivations and value systems. This practice has the potential to develop students into reflective practitioners.

Transformative learning theory emphasises the importance of critical reflection on assumptions of individuals (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Taylor, 2000).

Self-reflection and critical reflection after a disorienting dilemma may challenge our meaning perspectives leading to an emancipating learning experience, according to Mezirow (1978). He explains that transformative learning may take place in ten phases. In phase three of the table extracted from Kitchenham (2008) and Snyder (2008), it states, '*A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions*' takes place. See the Literature Review for the full list of Mezirow's (1978) phases.

Reflective journals used in this study also contained reflections on moments construed as '*epochal*' and disorientating. Although these journals were not originally intended for input for this study, they proved invaluable as students related their personal feelings on a daily basis. The richness of the material provided more than sufficient data, although the extraction of pertinent statements proved difficult at times due to the amount of data. The NVivo software tool was useful for this task.

Cohort Mind-map Course Evaluation

This instrument provided secondary data which proved useful for contributing to the validity of the findings. It was primarily used as a brainstorming instrument to uncover areas where the course had some impact upon students' mindsets and goals. Therefore it was not designed with the express purpose of providing data for this study.

Cropley (2001) explains how the quantity of ideas is important rather than quality. He recommends mind-maps in education as effective for creative problem solving. Researchers from the Faculty of Engineering, Tshwane University of Technology made use of this tool in their

case study research to determine service levels within their information and communication technology infrastructure (Jacobs and Herselman, nd).

The nature of mind-mapping is to use key words or phrases only, and not complete sentences. Mind-mapping, a term coined by Buzan (2000), is an effective brainstorming tool, ideal for extracting viewpoints quickly and displaying them graphically. Other names for this method include concept mapping and spider diagrams. A Mind Map® is a powerful graphic technique used to unlock the potential of the brain by harnessing a full range of cortical skills. These skills include word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour and spatial awareness.

The example of the mind-map used on the Leadership Course may be found in Appendix B. The objective for using a mind-map was to remind students of the content of the course and for them to brainstorm ideas in their groups on their greatest learning experience on issues pertaining to self-management, leadership, and interactions with others. The material arising from this particular instrument was not extensive, and a number of comments are ignored as they only pertain to course evaluation and are therefore superfluous to this study.

Post course questionnaire

The approach in this instrument was to use open questions although some enquiries may be perceived as being leading. Ideas such as values, social skills, confidence levels and academic ability could have influenced students in those directions. My area of interest concerned moral and values education, prior to the decision on the theoretical framework, hence the emphasis on these topics. However, as is apparent in the readings these aspects are important in transformative learning theory. (See Peace Education Turay, & English, 2008.) Furthermore, Merriam (2004) states that '*in transformative learning, one's values, beliefs, and assumptions compose the lens through which personal experience is mediated and made sense of,*' (Merriam, 2004, p. 61).

Two questions in the post course questionnaire concern the course content itself, such as the highlights and suggestions for improvement. Comments from these two questions have been ignored as they concern the course itself. Themes emerged from the data but only those comments considered as possible '*defining moments*' were extracted. The data was analysed using a software tool entitled NVivo where patterns and trends were noted on key issues pertaining to self-development and life altering experiences. The questionnaire may be viewed in Appendix C.

In my quest to validate findings I approached a student who attended the Leadership Course in 2003. Admittedly this data cannot be construed as directly related to this study, but I feel it is worthy of inclusion at this point as it addresses one key area of lack, that of diversity. Students frequently commented on this point. They reported how social interaction with students not normally in their communities provided a forum for contemplation on cultural differences. The following comment comes from an Indian student who attended the course in 2003 and participated in other years as one of the assistants.

I believe this comment provides valuable insight into the reason for the lack of participation by other cultural groups which may be pertinent for further research:-

'This may be a very personal opinion, but I don't believe that Indian students are as committed to enriching themselves, learning more and enriching their lives beyond getting a degree and achieving financial success. The university has over 20 thousand students. I am surprised that more Indian, white and 'coloured' people did not see this as an opportunity to enrich their life and arm themselves with more life skills. At the course, I realised unambiguously that black students are far more invested in their community upliftment and empowerment, than any other racial ethnic group. One cannot fault the advertising or marketing of the course in any manner, as it is the students who are just not interested in this sort of thing. If you understand the general ethos of why Indian students in particular go to a university, it is to get that degree, start working and earn money. It is inculcated in them from an early age by parents who were never afforded the same opportunity. Thus, leadership, self-development, and maintaining a fulfilled lifestyle, are not high on their agenda of priorities. In years to come, the only way to market the course better would be to show those successful students who have benefited from the course to potentially interested students. This will raise some awareness, creating an excitement around the course and its outcomes.'

This is a subjective point of view which may not apply to all students in the Indian cultural group, as after all he himself is Indian. His comment that black students are more interested in community upliftment than other race groups is his personal perspective, stemming from his observations as participant on one course and assistant on several others. He suggests further research to determine long-term commitments that could be utilised for marketing future courses. His comment directly addresses the suggestion in this study that further research could reveal strategies on how to improve attendance from a broader demographic spread.

Email questionnaires

In order to determine whether some students kept up the impetus of commitment after the course email questionnaires were sent out for the purpose of contributing to the statements found in the reflective journals. The students were randomly selected from several years and thirty requests

were sent out. Unfortunately only eleven students responded to the first email and six to the next. The poor response was possibly due to being distributed at examination time so I was unable to determine commitments from other students. (See Appendix D (i) and (ii) for the questions). One student went ‘out of her way’ to provide deep qualitative material. It was not possible to select respondents from the year of this study as many students’ personal emails were returned as unknown.

Feedback from course convenor

An extract from Marie Odendaal’s article for the 2006 Kenton conference provides some insight into longer term commitments. Her ongoing research should reveal more of this type of commitment in the future.

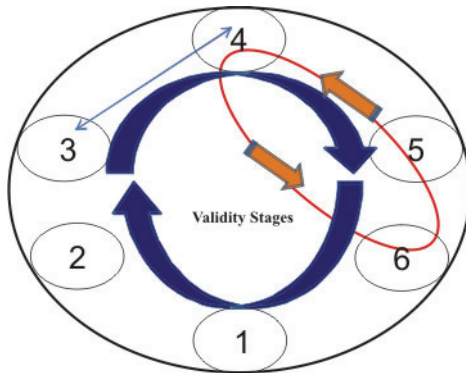
‘Longer-term effects of the course can be gauged by what students do in subsequent years. Gathering of data for this is still in progress. Data obtained thus far show that of the 350 students who attended in the years 2000 - 2005, 24 have trained as AVP facilitators, while a further 31 have done the advanced AVP workshop, with some stating their intentions to train as facilitators. 15 – 20 of these facilitators have been actively involved in facilitating one or more workshops this year; some of them are now lead facilitators and one has introduced AVP into the Integrated Development Plan of the Greater Edendale Development Initiative, drawing on student facilitators to run a number of community workshops. One AVP facilitator is currently doing peace-related work in Palestine on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.’

Marie Odendaal

Observation notes

As a participant during some sessions on the Leadership Course, opportunities arose for me to have informal discussions with students. I recorded the events of the day together with students’ comments arising from the informal discussions. This enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the comments arising from the other research instruments.

Validity and Reliability



Key

- 1 Designing
- 2 Interviewing
- 3 Transcribing
- 4 Analysing
- 5 Validating
- 6 Reporting

Source: Kvale (1996)

Kvale's (1996) stages of validity in research provided input for the above diagram, designed by me. It illustrates the process of this study's research methodology when addressing the aspects of validity and reliability. Initially the questionnaires were designed, and then the interviewing consisted of an explanation to students that the material would be used for research purposes and their anonymity was ensured. The transcribing of the material was done initially in word processing and then in spreadsheet formats. Thereafter, in order to construct the data into theme based material, the software program NVivo was utilised. Data was extracted and analysed in this programme. The validation process involved determining whether the data acquired was appropriate for this study and therefore valid to the research. Questions asked included:

1. Will this data contribute to answering the research questions?
2. Are the results consistent?
3. What extraneous variables are there in terms of maturation? One such variable concerned whether the respondents were bored or fatigued at the conclusion of the course when the research questionnaire was disseminated. How valid is this data? Are the comments composed around the respondents' perception of what would be a pleasing answer? One would expect that if questions were posed before the course, responses would be largely based on attitude. I expect that answers to a questionnaire posed directly after the event would be based largely on experience with input from attitude and emotion, the latter i.e. emotion, would in most cases have been engendered by the course. If one poses the same questionnaire some weeks later, the emotional content may well have attenuated, but would have informed a more reflective answer since the respondent had time to reflect at

an intellectual level. Therefore, attitude, emotion, and intellect all inform the respondents reply to a greater or lesser extent along the causative timeline.

4. Is there experimenter bias as I became aware of the potential for self-development and change?

The final process involved the recording of this information in the dissertation. As can be seen from the diagram, initially stages three and four were revisited several times. This systematic use of feedback loops occurred particularly after the conceptual framework was altered during the construction of the dissertation. Thereafter the last three stages of analysing, validating and reporting were repeated a number of times whilst continually seeking reliability of data.

4.2 Limitations of Research Instruments

There is a danger of subjectivity in the assessment of this data, because, as a participant and observer on the course, value in the content was evident to me. Although it is assumed that the data provided is honest, some students may present what they believe fulfils evaluators' requirements. Fortunately the reflective journals were able to provide opinions of a more personal nature on a variety of topics. The research feedback was anonymous, encouraging freedom of expression, although obviously emails were not as they could be traced via the student number. Perhaps this is also a reason for poor response. As can be seen in Appendix A (iii), only extracts from the personal journals were requested and therefore if students were uncomfortable with sharing these, they could be excluded. Perhaps the more emotional, painful episodes have been excluded which is regrettable in a study which considers defining moments.

Henning et al. (2004) caution that social forces such as obsequiousness, fear of embarrassment, and pressure to conform, can influence output. They recommend building causal networks by categorising the data into meaningful units, identifying patterns. As stated previously in this chapter, I used the software program, NVivo, to identify patterns. For instance, similar statements on diversity and issues of social concern were categorised together. Mezirow's (2000) ten phases have been referred to when discussing the data. These phases are listed in the Literature Review.

The data extracted from reflective journals, provided personal '*from the heart*' opinions that came across as honest and reliable. In Appendix A (iii) students are advised that their extracts should '*not be aimed at pleasing me, but at articulating your own experiences*'. Students may either obtain a certificate of participation, or one of accomplishment, the latter being awarded if the essay and journals are submitted by due date. There is still a danger that students may record only positive

comments, hoping to obtain a certificate of accomplishment as opposed to that of participation. Perhaps further research would determine whether students have pursued their goals of compassionate leadership in their communities.

4.3 Conclusion

Defining moments are more likely to be remembered than cognitive knowledge as they affect one on an emotional level (Moore, 2005). Defining moments immediately recalled may be indicators of aspects which have made an impact, and therefore would influence future behaviour in leadership roles (Althof and Berkowitz, 2006). These '*epiphanies*' need to be revised and continuously constructed in order to be meaningful (Avolio and Luthans, 2006). Mezirow (1994) says that critical self-reflection and the examination of one's meaning perspectives is a continual process and true transformative learning sometimes takes place long after the epochal moment. This process involves a process of discourse with others committed to change, decision about a plan of action, and then the integration of the learning. This study therefore has not formally investigated evidence of long-term effects on student development arising from defining moments, but hopes to encourage this initiative.

Chapter 5 Literature Review

Epiphanies have the potential to alter what Mezirow (1991) terms meaning perspectives. This study refers to these occasions as ‘defining moments’. Wilson et al. (nd) explain how learning experiences can occur during pivotal or defining moments in a learner’s life. They believe that when learners construct meaning of learning events, lasting impressions are left. These impressions then become part of the person’s self-narrative, and have a behavioural impact on future actions. According to Wilson et al. (nd), narrative or storytelling can be thought of as being instruction where the student, the instructor, and fellow learners become participants or actors.

Three key areas emerged in this study where students perceived defining moments occurred with the possibility of influencing meaning perspectives. Students commented on the following areas as being instrumental in their profound change.

- The effect of attending a play with the central theme of someone diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.
- Gender and other issues of diversity.
- A visit to local communities.

The literature pertaining to these themes is discussed under these headings.

5.1 Entertainment media as an influence on mindset change

Drawing on the media has the potential to promote transformative learning if it used as a gateway for critique (Tisdell, 2008, p. 63). A film on globalisation and a play performed by someone with a HIV/AIDS positive status were mentioned by a number of students as contributing to defining moments. Learning environments are not only limited to the classroom and Tisdell (2008) believes the entertainment media has the power to raise consciousness leading to transformative learning. He explains how the media has an enormous influence on people at both a conscious and an unconscious level, through exposure to a variety of opinions about ourselves and the social issues of our time. Some of this exposure is negative and Tisdell (2008) gives an example of hurtful stereotyping as ‘*the portrayal of people of color so often as drug addicts or criminals*’. (Tisdell 2008, p. 49)

Through self-reflection and dialogue with their colleagues collaborative learning could occur as students gain opportunities to become both teacher and learner (Cranton, 1994). Tisdell (2008)

discusses how part of the purpose of higher education is to assist students become critical thinkers and suggests the use of media for this development. The media is a powerful tool for discovering alternate narratives in ourselves and others according to Tisdell (2008).

Tisdell (2008) advises that there has been minimal discussion on the role of the media in transformative learning literature. However, she does relate to the work of Dass-Brailsford (2007) and Grand (2006) who used film to teach cultural competence in counselling classes.

On the Leadership Course the potential for transformative learning through a staged event is realised where the main actor made known his HIV/AIDS positive status. In addition a film on globalisation is shown on the course and this occasion is similar to examples Tisdell (2008) gives of how the media can potentiate transformative learning. Tisdell (2008) believes the entertainment media can educate and 'mis-educate' and can be used to facilitate transformative learning about diversity issues, through the engagement and discussion of social issues. As examples, Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and Michael Moore's *Sicko* help raise awareness on global warming problems and the pitfalls of the American health care system (Tisdell 2008, p. 49).

Incremental change in people's consciousness can be realised according to Tisdell (2008), through critical reflection on the actions of marginalised 'others' '*in understanding the complexity of what living as a marginalised 'other' is like*'. (Tisdell 2008, p. 58). Prejudice towards people afflicted by HIV/AIDS is a sad reality and student services divisions are aware of the importance of education on the topic. See Appendix A which explains the focus of this topic on the course.

Tisdell (2008) who found in their study that through the influence of the media, changes in mindsets occurred on topics such as diversity, and sexual orientation. As the media on the Leadership Course concerned content of social justice, these experiences could also be put in the category of Mezirow's (1991) third domain of learning, that of emancipatory learning. This type of learning is often difficult and sometimes painful. Emancipatory learning is also one of Habermas' (1971) three domains of learning which he said occurred through critical self-reflection.

Taylor (2005) believes that transformative learning theory does not pay much attention to the emotional and behavioural aspects of learning. However, there is no doubt that disorientating dilemmas can be emotional with the potential to impact on future behaviour. Mezirow (1997) did

say that if learning is too comfortable, transformative learning is unlikely to occur. Scott (1997) discusses how grieving may occur when people's meaning perspectives are challenged. Similarly, Moore (2005) feels that transformative learning is full of emotional upheavals.

5.2 Gender and other issues of diversity

As the students participating on the Leadership Course originate from a number of different African countries, opportunities exist for the examination of cultural beliefs and opinions differing from their own. Cross-cultural interactions and sessions on gender emerged as another area contributing to defining moments as perceived by students attending the Leadership Course.

Gay (2000) explains how culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the legitimacy of cultural heritages of different ethnic groups. On the Leadership Course students learn about the negative effects stereotypical discrimination has on marginalised groups. Gay (2000) reports how culturally responsive teaching is both emancipatory and transformative. An example is given of how African Americans have a gift for verbal creativity and storytelling. In his research Gay (2000) tells how these occasions of storytelling created powerful learning experiences for all participants.

Gay (2005) believes that culturally responsive teaching is transformative. Cultural heritages are legitimised and according to Gay (2000) this form of teaching is

- validating
- comprehensive
- multidimensional
- empowering
- transformative
- and emancipatory (Gay, 2000)

Social and cultural backgrounds are considered on the Leadership Course by the introduction of African spiritual wisdom. Gay feels it is important to teach students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages by incorporating multicultural information and resources in all subjects (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

Kidd, Sánchez and Thorp (2007) show through their own research how a culturally responsive pedagogy may lead to changes in mindsets through defining moments. Mezirow's (1991)

emancipatory framework of social justice considers power relations based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation in society. Discussions on ethics, conflict resolution, and the unfairness of stereotypical references to people would fall into the emancipatory framework discussed in this study. See Appendix A which gives an outline of content.

Kidd, Sánchez, and Thorp (2007) in response to their students differing socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds, introduced a culturally responsive curriculum to preservice teachers. Their study found that some preservice teachers lacked a conception of, or concern in, cultural and racial diversity. Similarly on the Leadership Course some students had never heard of concepts such as *umhlangano*. When teachers and students come from similar cultural backgrounds instruction is generally easier (Cochran-Smith, 1995). In Kidd et al.'s (2007) qualitative study they analysed the narratives of the preservice teachers detecting changes in perspectives concerning teaching a culturally responsive curriculum. One of the categories in their analysis was defining moments or experiences which stood out as an influence in previously held dispositions. Many of the teachers from Kidd et al.'s (2007) study mentioned particular readings on the topic of cultural conflicts in the classroom as being pivotal and therefore transformational.

Students should be encouraged to make connections between ethnic backgrounds and society according to Christensen and Karp (2003) who stress that all good pedagogy should be rooted in the students' needs and experiences. Andrews (2007) believes that it is not the cultural diversity of the student population which is the problem; it is rather the pedagogical approach of the educators.

Hanlin-Rowney, Kuntzelman, Lara, Quinn, Roffman, Nichols, and Welsh (2006) use narrative as a powerful catalyst for personal and cultural transformation through classes in non-traditional settings. Narrative can transcend cultures, ideologies and academic disciplines according to Ziegler, Paulus and Woodside (2006) as they say it is deeply alluring and richly gratifying to the human soul. They believe dialogue can create an influential forum for understanding one's own and others meaning systems.

According to Merriam and Ntseane (2008), Mezirow's theory has been criticised for its Western focus. Although Clark and Wilson (1991) contend that Mezirow's orientation uncritically reflects Western values of the dominant culture in our society, as being masculine, white, and middle class, Mezirow (2000) does recognise that learning may be unintentionally assimilated from

culture. Merriam and Ntseane (2008) examine the role of culture by studying transformational learning in the African culture of Botswana. They were interested in how their research would provide a lens for examining how culture shapes the process. Spiritual concepts such as *ubuntu* (South Africa) and *botho* (Botswana) concern the belief in connectedness. Mkabela, 2005 explains that “*Most African worldviews emphasize belongingness, connectedness, community participation and people centeredness*” (p. 180).

Some of the comments arising from this study are similar to that of Merriam and Ntseane (2008), who found that transformational learning with Batswana (people from Botswana) adults was shaped by three cultural factors; spirituality and the metaphysical world, community responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles.

Merriam and Ntseane (2008) advise that to date they have been unable to find any research that explicitly analysed how culture shapes a transformational learning experience. Taylor (2000) concurs by commenting that, “*much more research is still needed with a primary focus on the role of culture and transformative learning*” (pp. 311-312). In addition, Taylor (2007) concluded in his study that “*the role of culture . . . and transformative learning continues to be poorly understood*” (p. 178). Furthermore, Taylor’s (2007) studies have been conducted in the West, where individuality, autonomy, and rationality are accepted cultural values.

According to Merriam and Ntseane (2008), “*Transformational learning studies have focused on delineating the process, the role of rational discourse, and the nature of the changed perspective.*” (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008, p.194).

Although it could be argued that most of the students attending the Leadership Course have taken on the values of the West, according to the comments arising from this study there is still considerable influence from their communities and families on cultural values.

5.3 A visit to local communities

This study suggests that a sustainable education may be achieved and could result in transformative learning experiences for the participants. On the Leadership Course students are introduced to activists in various fields. As activism can be a risky pursuit, these presentations often have shock value. Moore (2005) asks whether academics engaged in activism contribute to a culture of fear. A question is posed on how to raise awareness without creating more anxiety,

fear and worry in the classrooms. Moore asks, '*Is higher education prepared for transformative learning theory in practice?*' (Moore, 2005, p. 79).

Through engagement with presentations on activism and a visit to the poorer communities surrounding the city of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, students reported how these occasions led to the examination of their roles and previously held notions of values. This section has therefore been selected as one of the defining moments and the literature selected will consider Peace Education, sustainability in education, and social justice issues.

Peace Education is implicitly linked to transformative learning according to Turay and English (2008), as it is concerned primarily with transforming worldviews and conscientisation. They say that regrettably research studies in Peace Education do not concentrate on transformation. It is to be expected that comments would emerge from participants learning about leadership on current affairs and how they as future leaders could make a difference.

O'Sullivan (1999) believes that as an ecological crisis exists globally, a radical shift in education is paramount to change. He sees this crisis as a cue for moving education in a transformative direction at all levels. The concepts of a sustainable education and sustainability as defined by Moore (2005) are focussed on creating '*an ecologically and socially just world within the means of nature without compromising future generations*' (Moore 2005, p. 78). Moore (2005) believes that sustainability education must be interdisciplinary, collaborative, experiential, and potentially transformative. According to Moore (2005) phenomena such as globalisation, consumerism, and the lack of connection to our natural world, is troubling academics. This concern has resulted in academic collaboration on interdisciplinary projects and an increase in community-university alliances.

Lessons from life on the Leadership Course are suitable for future leaders and the transformative model fits within a constructivist paradigm where individuals construct knowledge through their experiences in the world (Candy, 1991; Cranton, 1994). This collaborative model implies that knowledge is socially constructed by a group of individuals (Moore 2005). However she says that the transformative model goes one step further to include both the individual and the social construction of meaning perspectives. Moore (2005) comments on external pressures on higher education institutions to train the leaders of tomorrow. She believes collaborative learning is only possible if academics are aware of the influence of the systems and structures impacting

classroom dynamics. Moore (2005) gives the following list of the ideal conditions for discourse and debate.

Participants are

- *allowed full access to information,*
- *free from coercion,*
- *allowed equal opportunity to assume various roles of the discourse,*
- *encouraged to become critically reflective of assumptions,*
- *empathetic and open to other perspectives,*
- *willing to listen and to search for common ground of a synthesis of different points of view, and*
- *willing to make a tentative best judgement to guide action.* (Moore, 2005, p. 82)

The development of empathy and being willing to consider diverse viewpoints fits within the learning theories of Freire's (1970) social-emancipatory model, Tisdell's (2008) cultural-spiritual, and Sullivan's (1999) planetary. Turay and English (2008) feel all strands of these theories are brought together in Peace Education. Peace Education attempts to perceive and understand differences in power dynamics as far as race, social class, and gender are concerned (Turay & English, 2008). They find it surprising that silences exist around spirituality and peace, as well as transformative education links to peace. Turay and English (2008) explain that Peace Education is implicitly linked to transforming worldviews and conscientization. A model of Peace Education is proposed in his study which celebrates diversity and difference by bringing together participants in distinctive ways to resolve conflict. Peace Education concepts are important in this study as they address issues such as poverty and corruption in government, viewing these problems from a variety of perspectives (e.g. political, economic, religious, cultural), strategising on options for dealing with root causes, and then moving onto solutions (Turay & English, 2008, p. 294). Similarly on the Leadership Course students engage in these social challenges. See Appendix A which gives an outline of content.

Leadership courses generally prepare students for change in a society of constant change and challenge. Theorists of leadership, Astin and Astin (2000), state how graduates from higher education institutions require not only sound professional knowledge, but also competence in social and cultural matters, leadership, civil responsibility, and effective communication interaction. Our world today is fraught with challenges in our environment, health care, and education. If higher education institutions prepare students for citizenship (Mandell & Herman, 2007) social justice issues should be introduced into the curriculum. These researchers give examples of how by including topics such as internship, autobiographical writings, and field projects in one's community, students may make connections with the outside world and its

challenges. Moore (2005) calls this type of learning '*sustainability education*'. Topics of social concern on the Leadership Course include globalisation, HIV/AIDS, and the scourges in the environment would fit in Moore's (2005) sustainability education category.

Citizenship issues are key considerations on the leadership course. Part of the SLD's mission states:

The SLD educates students to participate effectively in the citizenship and leadership processes of student government, student societies, and community organisations; and facilitates transformative student projects and campus and community service activities.
(See Appendix A)

Effective leadership requires integrated personalities with high levels of emotional intelligence. Mezirow's (1991) theory of development of emancipatory capacity is unlikely to emerge without some maturity in emotional intelligence. Covey (2004) explains how the following components are commonly accepted for the advancement of this type of intelligence which he believes is crucial in leadership development:-

- **Self-awareness:** Covey (2004) says self-awareness, provides the ability to self-reflect and grow in self-knowledge. This knowledge would then be used for self-improvement. As stated earlier Mezirow (1991) saw this condition as a precursor to the examination of meaning perspectives.
- **Personal motivation:** Leaders should motivate themselves and others after discovering the goals, desires and hopes of others.
- **Self-regulation:** Self-regulation ensures the acquisition of these goals.
- **Empathy:** Empathy is the ability to see how others think and feel about issues.
- **Social skills:** Social and communication skills assist in problem solving and conflict resolution.

Mandell and Herman (2007) state how in order to learn effectively at university the environment should be sufficiently cloistered, away from the distractions of the outside world, but at the same time relevant to the world in order that transformation may take place in learners' lives. These connections need to be meaningful and relevant to experience (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow (2000) wrote:

“Adult educators create protected learning environments in which the conditions of social democracy necessary for transformative learning are fostered.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 31).

Learning is never without some challenges and change in perspectives frequently takes place in a chaotic environment. Snyder (2008) says that location should be a consideration when designing a transformative learning curriculum, as students should be placed in a '*contextually relevant setting for the learner*' (Snyder, 2008, p. 177). Furthermore, Taylor (2003) believes that the educational setting as a unique '*community of practice*' is equally important as context.

Chapter 6 Data Analysis

The research question focuses on students' responses to questions related to self-perceived personal development arising from defining moments after their attendance of a Leadership Course held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This study focuses only on those statements construed as being transformational. Mezirow (1991) would describe this transformation as being a complete turnaround of meaning perspectives occurring because of the influence of what is referred to in this study as a defining moment. This transformative learning experience may then become part of the student's self-narrative. The aforementioned comment is a cautionary one as this study does not investigate whether their self-narratives were altered in any long-term, meaningful way.

The main research question states:

What did students identify (if any) as 'defining moments' during their participation in the Leadership Course?

This question is further unpacked by using the following sub questions:

What were the perceived effects of these defining moments?

The data is categorised under three themes perceived by students as being 'defining'. The Leadership Course presents varied occasions where students may examine their values through the social conscience format of the content. Common denominators for defining moments include the experiential learning exercises of tours, plays, and site visits as well as the presentations on diversity. This study considers how these occasions may lead to one or more of the phases of transformative learning. Mezirow's (1978) ten phases are repeated below.

Table of Mezirow's (1978) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

- Phase 1 A disorienting dilemma
- Phase 2 A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
- Phase 3 A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions
- Phase 4 Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.
- Phase 5 Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

- Phase 6 Planning of a course of action
- Phase 7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- Phase 8 Provisional trying of new roles
- Phase 9 Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
- Phase 10 A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

Merriam and Ntseane (2008), and Gay's (2000) research studies are referred to in the category of diversity and how exposure to different cultures and alternate mindsets may influence transformation. Tisdell's (2008) research is important in the category concerning how media may enable a number of Mezirow's phases. Moore's (2005) interest in sustainable education is important as the course content uses this approach.

Phrases that stand out as contributing to a defining moment have been highlighted in grey to draw the reader's attention to the text.

6.1 Entertainment media as an influence on mindset change

The film on globalisation, *'State of Denial'*, led to a lively debate that extended beyond lecture times. Students voiced surprise to me that they were able to converse on a complex subject with such enjoyment, in their leisure time.

- *I've been 'conscientised' about issues concerning government and the evils of globalisation.*
- *I look at the world differently.* (This student went on to comment that the content enabled the consideration of topics that would normally not be of interest to him, such as politics and the effects of globalisation.)
- *The course has allowed me to tackle issues I was not interested in before but have now seen the importance of, such as politics, and the effects of globalisation. I am now more informed and look at the world differently.*
- *From this film, I came to realise that globalisation is not in favour of the masses, but rather a way of 'enriching' the rich and make the 'poor' poorer. As future leaders we should begin to think on how to transform the unjust systems that has eaten deep into our society.*

As previously discussed, premise change after reflection may occur when assumptions, beliefs, or values are questioned. The above statements give one the impression that an altered view on social topics was made possible. This shift appears to be towards a more conscientised position with an empathetic awareness of others. These comments gleaned from journals, concern perspective transformation and fall within Mezirow's (1978) phase 3 which states: A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. The last statement infers a new

realisation and motivation to right the wrongs of society. It would be interesting to find out if this student used this new information in any way.

An opportunity for the development of empathy arose in the form of presentations on the issue of HIV/AIDS. There is no doubt, that when a presenter with HIV/AIDS admits to having this disease, students view this experience of sharing such personal information, as transformational. The presenter staged and acted in a play on his life. One student explains how this play is particularly relevant in his life. He said:-

'I was really moved by the HIV/AIDS play, 'Road Worth Travelling'. It really hit home for me, since I have lost people to this monstrous disease, who were very close to me. I still have friends who suffer from this disease. I now realize that perhaps the reason why I had to see this production was for me to do something for those people who can still be helped. I've realized that it is not just financial support that they need, but being there for them and telling them every day that it is okay, is important. I plan to be there and help them in every way that I can.'

This statement from one of the journals, illustrates how students may become inspired to serve in their communities after experiencing a disorienting dilemma as per phase 1 from Mezirow (1978). As mentioned in the Literature Review, both positive and negative experiences influence the manner in which we look at the world and others according to Avolio and Luthans (2006). Perhaps this student could consider the role of an activist after such an epochal event. Tisdell (2008) also feels the entertainment media has the power to raise consciousness leading to transformative learning.

The perceived effect of this defining moment should be that students were moved to become motivated find solutions to assist others with this disease. One student wrote the following in his journal:-

'He is a very good example in society, since he emphasized the need for people to disclose their status, so that they will be able to live longer. So the 26 of June 2006 changed my life in such a way that I will not forget even a single moment of this day.'

This student appears to be open to change as his statement denotes an awareness of the concerns of others.

Another stated:

'The author of the play later related that the play was his true life story and it was really touching and raised people's emotions. We learnt that role play is a better way to bring

things to peoples' attention, because people tend to remember things that are exciting to them and amusing.'

Of the fifty-one journals, twenty-one contained expressions that this play contributed to life changing experiences. They were unanimous in their praise of the author's bravery in admitting his status. One student felt that most students present were ignorant of all the facts pertaining to the disease and this aspect of the course served as a 'wake-up call' to examine their own lifestyles (Mezirow's, 1991 meaning perspectives).

The words, 'I will not forget even a single moment of this day,' give the impression of lasting change, although as already stated, it is unknown whether this event did lead to permanent change. Perhaps by a process of critical reflection, and examination of assumptions, transformation of meaning perspectives may occur.

One student realises the value of learning from this experience. She stated in her journal,

'I realise from this play that non-disclosure of one's positive status increases the spread of the virus. It is important that we all know our status and help to disseminate the information about HIV/AIDS because it affects both the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated.'

One student commented on feeling 'immensely empowered' as a result of experiencing the play. He stated how he was reminded that HIV positive people live with us every day, and that they are ordinary people that 'come from any sphere of life'. A further student remarked:-

'I've seen and heard of people dying from AIDS but I've never heard anyone confess to self-motivated future leaders that they are HIV positive; I mean that must have taken a lot of moral fibre to do, considering the connotations that are associated with it'.

The above student is referring to the stigma attached to admitting to the status of being HIV positive. Presumably this is a defining moment for this student if he has never encountered someone brave enough to admit to being HIV positive. The example set by the actor may have led to premise change and the examination of his own values.

A similar incident occurred during a presentation on HIV/AIDS when one of the students' colleagues admitted to being HIV positive. The effect on all participants was profound. They learnt the theory of the social issue, but consciously meeting someone who has HIV, from their own social group, reinforced how this disease could manifest in anyone. One white male commented in the questionnaire, 'I realise how blind sighted I was towards the epidemic, it was a real eye opener.' He went on to state in the additional comments section,

'I can't start to express what an inspiration and life-changing event this has been. Thank you for asking/forcing me to participate.'

The above statements denote a change in mindset to that of one which is inclusive and discriminating through a critical re-evaluation of self.

Students, when initially examining the programme, were overheard to comment on how they believed they had received more than enough education on HIV/AIDS. They envisaged a boring lecture on the dangers of unsafe sex and felt the media, and other learning environments, had covered the subject *ad nauseam*. The fact that presenters were either activists, or victims, of the virus, had an enormous impact on their perceptions of this disease. Students will no doubt reflect upon this 'social learning' experience that had some shock value allowing them to re-examine previously held perceptions of this social problem. One would hope that the emancipatory format of this learning created a lasting impression and had a demonstrable impact on their practices.

The HIV/AIDS section is a core component of the course content, providing the impetus for defining moments. Some reflective experiences could be classified as negative 'moments that matter' in accelerating authentic leadership development, I am sure the researchers Avolio and Luthans, (2006) would concur as they believe authentic leaders should be aware of their own and others perspectives of morals. For instance, students recorded the following in their journals.

- *I see others as equals. It made me see the pandemic and made one strive to talk about it to fellow students.*
- *I felt touched and my whole behaviour changed according to how I view HIV/AIDS.*
- *I changed after seeing our leaders living with HIV.*
- *HIV/AIDS is here and is everyone's concern and everybody is responsible.*
- *I have learnt that to have HIV/AIDS is not the end of the world. If people like the one we saw are still positive about life, what will stop me?*
- *My behaviour changed in terms of being more understanding and tolerant. I am more sympathetic because people were brave enough to disclose their status.*
- *I have learnt that HIV/AIDS is real and affects all, not the poor only.*
- *I am not as ignorant as before and have a better understanding and appreciation for those suffering.*
- *I believe in giving more compassion to those infected and a greater social purpose. I got inspired to make a change or help people affected by HIV/AIDS.*
- *People with AIDS need our love. At the end of the day, we are all human beings and deserve the same amount of dignity and rights.*

Critical premise reflection, perhaps after the shock of this experience, could result in beliefs and values being further examined. All the above statements address the main research question concerning defining moments where Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning has occurred,

particularly as far as the emancipatory social responsibility aspect of his theory is concerned. Hopefully these students will move into the following phases after being exposed to this experience by being motivated to reflect, improve their knowledge, and perform a new role in their communities.

- Phase 5 Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
- Phase 6 Planning of a course of action

Although there is some shock value in introducing a colleague with HIV/AIDS, and could be construed as voyeurism, Mezirow (1991) would attribute this to a negative jolt resulting in transformative learning. Six students declared their allegiance to and support of societies involved in HIV/AIDS education after this event.

This particular defining moment would be in Phase 2: *A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame*, as students realised that discrimination of people afflicted by HIV/AIDS was inhumane and we should all learn to be more compassionate.

One student, who responded to an email questionnaire (see Appendix D), stated how she was now a peer educator in HIV/AIDS in the HIVAN division at Pietermaritzburg campus. She is also the project organiser in Agriculture for the HIV/AIDS Unit Pietermaritzburg. She would therefore be in phase 5 and possibly phase 6. Further research should determine whether other students have taken their lessons into their communities in order to benefit others.

Tisdell (2008) believes that the power of emotionally laden images in the media by well lead to transformative learning about personal and socio-cultural issues. In this category transformational learning seems to have occurred as previously held convictions and viewpoints were challenged and these experiences should qualify as strong, valid instances of changes in meaning perspectives.

Students are likely to reflect on events that stand out from the everyday and certainly this event would be classified as one of them, and could be put in the category of a '*negative jolt*'. Mezirow (1991) agrees with Habermas's (1992) social critique in that educators should encourage such critique, as when learners become threatened by having their beliefs and values challenged, alternative perspectives are can be reflected upon and considered.

6.2 Gender and other issues of diversity

Culturally sensitive teaching was evident in the *umhlangano* sessions. As explained, students form a ring and are given opportunities to express their opinions on any topic, including the course itself. Students enjoyed the opportunity to express their feelings on the progress of the course during these daily sessions. The following comments are typical:

'I really enjoyed umhlangano because it gave us a chance to reflect and evaluate the last few days as a collective group, with no leader. Everyone was on the same page, speaking freely on the issues that we as a group need to relay to each other.'

'I was doing some self psycho-analysis and I realised that I had not been given enough platforms to air my views without being criticised and ridiculed.'

These comments extracted from journals illustrate how the *umhlangano* sessions enabled re-examination of one's role in interacting with others. One student commented on their groups' positive and affirming statements, compared to others' more negative and critical utterances. She feels that *umhlangano* is an effective system for non-crucial matters, but *"I believe that generally it is preferable that a leader sets the vision and is accountable for decisions"*.

Although no doubt the course content has been constructed in a sustainable format with attempts to introduce non-Westernised structure in some of the presentations, not all students appreciated this initiative. For instance, one student stated,

'The umhlangano session somewhat did not flow as was envisaged; it ended up being a talk shop of many issues without really saying anything substantive in the end; perhaps this was the purpose?'

One student stated that although *umhlangano* and non-hierarchical leadership were important considerations in African leadership, not all leaders were aware of this 'African way'. He stated in his journal,

'In my country (Nigeria), the leaders find it difficult to listen to court order. They disobey the law and rules they have sworn to defend. I find it difficult to believe they are our leaders. Moreover, the attitude of servant-hood is not there.'

Negative experiences may have enabled a closer examination of this student's opinions on better governance in his country. Perhaps this student could be placed in phase 3 which states, A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions.

Another student said,

'The umlangano session made me become aware of things I had never considered before. It was good because we were encouraged to participate and everyone had an opportunity to say something.'

Gay (2000) believes one of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching is that it acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups. Taylor (1992) believes our societies are becoming increasingly multicultural, and recognition is a basic human need. He says its non-recognition influences identity. Likewise, communicative action, according to Mezirow (1991), allows us to relate to others by examining our meaning perspectives. He says the inherent purposes of communicative action are to reach an understanding.

The introduction of African spiritual knowledge such as *umhlangano* and *ubuntu* caused one student to recognise his shortfall in communication skills. He stated in his journal,

'I realised that part of the problem we do have in our community is lack of adequate communication. This exercise showed us the importance of co-operation. A tree cannot make a forest.'

The last comment shows an understanding of the concept of *ubuntu* which speaks of unity and interconnectedness. Perhaps he came to realise that the old ways of his forefathers are important considerations in his life.

An Indian student said in her questionnaire this was the first time she understood the meaning of the term *ubuntu*.

'I am wiser now that I understand the concept of ubuntu, which I understand as "I am because we are". I believe we each give and take something from each other by hearing about each other's experiences, values and beliefs.'

This student comes across as having considered her value system and could be placed in phase 3, *A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions.*

Students perceived the lack of diversity amongst participants as a shortfall on the Leadership Course. For some students, the potential for diversity as a development consideration was perceived by them as having being curtailed. Reasons for this anomaly i.e. the lack of cultural and gender diversity, are not fully addressed, as this would require further research falling outside the ambit of this study. Collective values and thinking styles vary amongst people from different backgrounds. Their exploration is potentially transformational. For instance, Shamir and Eilam (2005) posit that the concept of an authentic leader may not be valued similarly in all cultures, as some may not expect leaders to be self-expressive or transparent. They believe that

some cultures could in fact even react negatively to such a leader. Therefore, although students realised the benefits of exploring other cultures, the demographics were not as broad as they would have preferred.

For example, one respondent remarked that it would have been preferable to incorporate a more even racial mix. Another student from the same group commented upon the uneven gender mix. (The demographics of the group were acquired from those students who attended the Introductory one-day session. A number of females elected to not attend the balance of the course as their parents were uncomfortable with them being in the University residences).

'I am a female in a leadership position and I was alarmed by the male to female ratio at the S.L.D course and I realise the urgency of phasing that mentality out. Talking about socialisation and gender issues, helped me to address my own issues and helped me to realise that everyone is equal.'

This comment from her journal directly addresses the student's sense of identity as it refers to her group identity as a female in her particular cultural group. She appears, through words in her text, such as 'alarmed' and 'urgency,' to have become more aware of her role in leadership and the necessity of moving away from male-dominated models. Mezirow (1991) states that, prior to the women's movement, women seldom questioned the social expectations entrenched in stereotypical sex roles. It is possible that this student could be in Phase 3 which states, *A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions.*

The general feeling amongst students in each cohort was there was a lack of diversity along racial lines. For instance, a student stated similarly in the questionnaire:-

'As for student representation on the course, I think that it was not adequately proportional both demographically and gender wise.'

Better representation could potentially have had more impact on defining moments leading to transformative learning.

One student stated that although he was always open to converse with all cultures and races, this aspect of his personality had been dramatically improved. Another student said he 'learnt a lot about different people and how they think'. This is important, as we frequently assume we understand the thought processes of others, leading to conflict and miscommunication. Although the students were predominantly black, their cultures differed giving participants insights into disparities amongst themselves. These students may have experienced defining moments through

'disorientating dilemmas' (phase 1), and thereafter 'a critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions' (phase 3) – Mezirow (2000).

Appendix B illustrates a mind-map used for course evaluation. It has been included because of comments pertaining to cultural experiences. Three cohorts commented upon diversity issues as follows:-

- *We loved the fact that the Islamic students joined forces with the black community for a common purpose*
- *We learnt the importance of not having preconceived notions about people, and that everyone can learn from others. Everyone is human and we should be happy.*
- *The quieter students 'bloomed' in smaller groups. People worked efficiently even though their viewpoints differed. We learnt about the different backgrounds of group members. We had to overcome cultural barriers and allow others to express their own viewpoints. This was the greatest learning experience.*

These experiences of interacting with diverse cultural groups can be likened to Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning, as students re-evaluated their preconceived notions of cultures differing from their own. The statement 'quieter students bloomed in smaller groups', shows how changes were noticeable amongst some of them.

A first year female Indian student commented in her journal:-

Coming from a different background to my peers was a great opportunity to improve my social skills by learning so much about different cultures.

The following statements, extracted from journals particularly mention how the issue of diversity changed their mindsets about preconceived notions of cultural differences.

- *I am able to adapt to social changes and understand different cultures. I now value myself more than before and my confidence level has increased by 150%.*
- *My social skills and confident levels have drastically improved over the past week. It may not be evident now but I have learnt to look at things in a new light, especially as far as thoughts about my community.*
- *It really changed me in a manner in which I view events and other people.*
- *I have been exposed to many cultures. It has allowed me to think more open, appreciating and respecting these differences.*
- *I have learnt the importance of communicating with other people, and working cooperatively with other people.*
- *The course helped me to respect other people's point of view and when someone speaks, allow the person to finish what he is saying.*

- *Leadership skills have assisted me to acknowledge that people are the same regardless of their race and culture. My confidence levels have improved by having a chance to present in front of others.*
- *I have learnt to socialise with other student leaders in different spheres e.g. politics, business, religious and cultural different backgrounds. It has opened doors and possibilities I never thought existed.*

Through the authentic engagement with others whose stories differ from our own, Howard (2005) believes we can transcend the limits of social assumptions and biases. Through the use of phrases such as, ‘*I am able to adapt,*’ ‘*I have learnt to look at things in a new light,*’ ‘*allowed me to think more open,*’ ‘*respect other people’s point of view,*’ ‘*acknowledge that people are the same,*’ and ‘*opened doors and possibilities I never thought existed,*’ all denote changes in mindsets. Through personal reflection and the further exploration of cultural differences, students may build upon these new opinions.

Merriam and Ntseane (2008) identified three factors on how cultural concept shaped the process of transformational learning. They are spirituality and the metaphysical world, community responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles. Perhaps this study contributes in some way to their viewpoint.

Thirteen students out of the 46 commented in their journals on issues of socialisation, and particularly the gender activism session as it pertained to inequalities within society. All the female students discussed cultural restrictions, and the challenges of the patriarchal system with the high incidents of HIV/AIDS, poverty and sexual abuse. One student commented on an interesting discussion she had had on how ‘*the first oppressor of women is a woman herself.*’ They welcomed the opportunity to celebrate womanhood, although one student cautioned that, in spite of the independence of women, respecting their fathers, husband, and ancestors was still important.

Comments from men were of a more general nature, such as the importance of human rights. This may have been because the presentations were conducted by feminists and the reading material which stresses feminism in leadership. For instance, Kokopeli and Lakey (1985) discuss change within leadership from the outmoded patriarchal style toward a more feminist model. They refer to patriarchal style as being one where women and ‘*gayness*’ are suppressed.

The women on the course were enthusiastic about being introduced to the issues of gender in leadership. One woman stated in the questionnaire:-

'The gender exercises were so awakening, opening my eyes so incredibly. It made me see things in a different light! Most particularly things about me as a woman, it made me realize and embrace my self worth, firstly as a woman, and then as a human being.'

The words 'made me see things in a different light', illustrate how the student's sense of identity has been challenged and acknowledged. This comment could be construed as a defining moment, leading to transformative learning due to the student's perception of an altered self-narrative.

In a group session, where the sexes were separated, a discussion ensued regarding the idea that some women are not comfortable with their own sexuality, in their fight for recognition. They reflected upon the strong patriarchal system existing in their communities. The women in the cohort expressed their gratitude for an education as a means to advance their perceived empowerment.

Habermas' (1992) emancipatory interest has as its aim the empowerment of individuals that potentially results in self-transformation. Mezirow (1991) says one of the features of empowerment concerns the acquisition of a more efficacious sense of self. By learning about stereotypical references directed at people, this empowerment aspect of these women's personalities could have developed. Men in turn had the opportunity to examine their own prejudices towards women in leadership roles. The literature provided contributed to their knowledge on the topic.

One of the male students reflected on previous perceptions of gender in his journal by saying,

'Women in general have more rights than they used to, and I hate to say this but before I came to the course, whenever I heard the word leader, I immediately associated it with a male figure.'

Kokopeli and Lakey (1985) discuss how leaders are predominantly men who are expected to embody masculine characteristics such as toughness and aggressiveness, suppressing any feminine characteristics.

The following statement comes from a female student who presents a balanced perspective of empowerment that embraces all humanity. She stated in her journal:-

'Gender equality was a revelation for me as one does understand it but one is not really in tune with it. It made us realise that today as we try to eliminate discrimination on any grounds, we have to discover ways to empower women without disempowering men. We have to learn that our roles are complementary and not in opposition. The whole of humanity is enriched by the upliftment of each individual. We should celebrate each

other's success and make it possible for all people to achieve their full potential. Chauvinists take note!

The session on gender issues led to an examination of this student's sense of identity, as a woman, vis-à-vis her role with men. Her use of the word '*revelation*' sounds transformational in concept. This experience would have challenged preconceived cultural ideas, still in evidence today, that women take a secondary role in society.

Another student commented in her journal on the lack of diversity:-

'You will not believe the variety of participants in terms of cultural background, origin and fields of study. This allows for a broad collection of experiences and wide debate that is important for critical analysis and adaptation in the global world. There were people from different countries, different races, and obviously different experiences. I am however not satisfied with the lack of participation of non-African students. I think more effort is needed to attract these racial groups. If all means fail, research should be conducted to find out why Indians, 'coloureds' and whites have no interest in such a fruitful initiative.'

This student introduces a further diversity factor, the prior experiences and fields of study of the participants. Additionally, the '*critical analysis*' and '*debate*' he refers to could be considered a disorientating dilemma, something Mezirow (1991) refers to as the catalyst of change of preconceived notions.

One white male who attended commented:-

'As the only white person on the course, I had a lot of worries and concerns that I would be alienated or left out, but in fact, I found it to be the opposite. I was accepted as a friend. For example, when I sat down at a table of Zulu speakers speaking in a language I could not understand, they all greeted me and made a conscious decision to speak English. I really appreciated the way everyone treated me and I can say that I have made many new friends. My only regret is that I did not get to meet and speak to everyone in such depth as I spoke to others.'

Cohort work on this course forces integration. Each cohort uses one of the articles disseminated prior to the course to prepare a presentation. The course design provides for a collaborative and shared learning process. See Appendix A (i).

A male student from the Westville campus headed his report *A life time experience*. On the topic of diversity he stated,

'Some international students gave some perspective on the challenges they face and these interactions assisted us to iron out the media distortions that quite often homogenously define African countries in a 'one size fits all' kind of theory. It proved to me that in life

we tend to overlook things. It taught me the importance of understanding the reasons and logic behind situations. All this was better understood after an intense session of personal reflection.'

Personal reflection, as has been already stated, is an important part of transformative learning. Through the interaction with international students this student could be in Mezirow's (1978) phase 4 which states, 'Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.'

One student reflects on his learning experience from interactions with his colleagues in his journal:-

'The leadership course granted me an opportunity to interact with different people from different backgrounds. The games that we played helped us to know each other better. I never thought that I would be friends with people from Rwanda, Lesotho and Nigeria. I learnt a lot about the countries that they come from, the difficulties that they are going through, lack of freedom in their countries, oppression of women, and the racism that they face in the different countries when travelling. Who would have thought I would be friends with a priest.'

The above statement could be viewed as a shift away from personal opinions to that of others. Action, Mezirow (1991) says, is an integral and indispensable component of transformative learning. The above student's comment addresses the manner in which games led to changes in his meaning perspective by the examination of his perceptions towards others. His last comment concerning being surprised that he could be friends with a priest is a case in point.

Kegan (1982) believes that epistemological change has to occur if true transformational learning is experienced. This refers to self-awareness and knowledge on 'what is known'. Kegan (1982) feels by using his constructive developmental theory the journey towards transformative learning will be facilitated.

Student participants commented in their journals on how their perceptions of people of other nationalities and ethnic groups had altered. One student stated:-

'The relationships I have developed with my peers on the course have been life-altering. The various languages and cultures are so rich and expressive. Their diversity has created a newfound respect for immigrants within the country. The warmth I felt from all is what made leaving difficult. It was the union of people from different walks of life with the shared vision of wanting to be leaders!'

A 'life-altering' experience could be perceived as being an epochal event which directly addresses the research question. The phrase 'shared vision' mentioned by the student is likened

to Habermas's (1992) '*communicative learning*' which involves learning to understand what others mean. The comment '*created a newfound respect for immigrants*' illustrate how participatory learning provided opportunities to advance understanding and tolerance of others. This experience falls within phase 3 of Mezirow's (2000) ten phases which states, '*a critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions.*'

Allen (2007) states that architects of leadership programmes should be aware of student differences by tailoring material to the individual's development level in order to maximise learning.

Piaget (1971) recommends that instructors be aware of cultural backgrounds and the possible developmental stages that individuals go through in the learning process. The Leadership Course convenors attempt to address this recommendation by the use of a culturally responsive teaching practice. This practice is particularly evident in the *umhlangano* sessions and discussions on *ubuntu*.

As can be seen from earlier statements, diversity is perceived as a key component to transformational learning, in this study. However, data to verify whether statements claiming that some experiences are '*life-altering*' beyond the course duration is not available. This development would probably be more evident in April and April's (n.d.) research as their MBA course duration is at least two years and in that period students are requested to conduct a one hour interview with someone who differs in socio-economic background, ethnicity, values, way of thinking, and other considerations. Students on their course are requested to reflect on what surprised them about the conversation, their personal level of comfort during the discussion, lessons learnt, and what additional questions were raised for them.

Twenty-seven out of 48 students who completed the questionnaire shown in Appendix C made mention of social interactions as a contributory factor to self-development. Nineteen students from the same group believed their confidence levels had dramatically improved. Social interactions proved a key consideration in perceptions of development through defining moments occurring when mixing with people not traditionally accepted as companions. For example, some students commented in their journals:-

- *The course helped me with confidence building. I started to realise my strong points and the ones that need improvement. I have made new friends and been encouraged to have good relationships with other human beings.*

- *It really changed my personality. It gave me self-confidence. It made me be less anxious in front of people and my discussion skills have been improved. I learnt to not work in isolation and to always consider other people's views.*
- *I have learnt to share whatever I have with others. I used to believe that every person should be independent.*

The above statements denote new ways of considering social interactions. Mezirow (1991) believes that transformational learning takes place in a learning environment where students are free of coercion and self-deception and have the liberty to converse freely and evaluate arguments. This section showed how, through the utilisation of culturally responsive teaching, encouraging transparency and participation, students are better able to remember lessons for future reflections.

It is the first time I am close to other Africans from other countries and I am glad we are interacting so well. I became oblivious to the fact that there were different races, as everyone was treated the same. I think this was because we had to co-operate.

Social interactions frequently include discussions of viewpoints on beliefs. One cohort commented in their mind-map that they enjoyed the opportunity to 'understand people's spiritual and cultural beliefs'.

One student commented on his learning experience by saying:-

'By engaging in group discussions I have been able to get to know people from different backgrounds by sharing knowledge, skills and experience and learning about their values.'

As values may differ culturally, diversity experiences such as shown in the reflection above enabled the examination of students' values and beliefs. Although this statement is not profound in anyway, the assumption of transformation may be assumed that this student could be at phase 3 which states, 'A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions.' Bennis and Thomas (2002) believe that reflection on defining moments may provide the necessary anchors for altering personal narratives. Perhaps this experience 'opened a window for reflection' leading to transformation.

6.3 Social engagement

Accountability is strongly linked with the topic of values. A student felt strongly about the lack of accountability in local government. He stated in his journal:-

'Why is the masipala (sic) (municipality) not doing anything about this? I mean the only thing they need to do is provide the people with some black rubbish plastic bags and some rubbish bins. There were no rubbish bins and yet the mayor has a merc (sic) (Mercedes) and bodyguards who serve no purpose.'

These comments stem from the visit to local communities. As explained in Chapter 2 which gives an outline of the Leadership Course, there is an experiential component in the content of the course. No particular phrase in the abovementioned comment has been highlighted. It is placed here to provide an understanding of how students may have considered leadership in government with 'new eyes'. In keeping with the theme '*Leadership through Social Change*', students went out into the communities to interview people, with the view to later presenting their findings to the Pietermaritzburg mayor. Unfortunately, although student participants brainstormed possible solutions to the social problems they encountered, insufficient time was allocated for their presentations to councillors, and the students were angry that their views were not heard. This in itself shows students' growing desire to vocalise, and make a difference through the '*observe, think, decide, act, process*' continuum. Apparently, a written report was sent after the course. This has not been made available for this study.

Although most students felt this activity was a worthwhile experience, many were saddened by what they witnessed. The following comment from one of the journals explains:-

'We got to see and encounter the realities and monstrous living conditions that people still have to endure after twelve years of democracy!'

The words '*monstrous living conditions*' convey an impression that this statement can be construed as a negative '*jolt*', or disorienting dilemma, leading to transformative learning. Perspective transformation is, according to Mezirow (1991), associated with critical reflectivity, '*conscientisation*', and '*consciousness raising*', amongst other concepts. This experience has potential to engender development in the first three phrases for this particular defining moment. My comments are in brackets.

- Phase 1 A disorienting dilemma. (Students have commented on how disturbing they found the visit although recognised its importance.)
- Phase 2 A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame. (Some students have reported how they felt responsible in some way for the living conditions).
- Phase 3 A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. (Through being '*conscientised*' they would presumably examine these assumptions).

In this study it is unknown whether students went on to take on new roles and become activists for change.

A number of students commented in their journals on how challenging, turbulent and ‘*very depressing, disturbing and uncomfortable*’ the site visit was, although at the same time ‘*necessary*’.

The following comments directly address the issue of the development of a conscience, and could be placed in Phase 2 which states, *A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame*.

- *The course showed me that I have a social responsibility in my community. It gave me the chance to observe social difficulties and challenges facing all communities and our leadership in government.*
- *The visit to local communities broke my heart.*
- *I have more to offer to my community than before. It is now in my hands that I help and lead my community to better changes. I can no longer turn a blind eye to issues that are affecting us.*
- *I also visited less economically stable people than me. This experience breaks my heart.*
- *I saw that our communities are facing many social problems and I believe that I am someone who can bring about social change.*
- *It helped me because now I know that I can able to lead change in my community and I have a vision for them as well as myself.*
- *It helped me because I am completing my masters in housing so by experiencing things we theorise in class I now see the practical implications. It inspired me a lot as when I go out to work I will motivate for every citizen to get adequate housing, in order to improve the quality of life for all.*
- *Visiting those areas was really a trauma for me. I was concerned about raising people’s hopes, while I was not to do anything about their problems.*
- *By going on site visits, my thinking has been shaped in a way that I want to now stay in my homeland and develop it.*
- *The course has ‘conscientised’ me.*
- *The course changed me by making me aware that people are facing environmental challenges and other social constraints.*

True change leading to transformative learning can only be determined after reflection on the ‘*trauma*’ of this event and how students were ‘*conscientised*’. The strong tone of the comments suggests that most students identified defining moments during this section of the course. The perceived effects arising from these experiences may have motivated them to consider new roles.

One student puts himself into the shoes of others. He stated in his journal:

‘The methodology that we used to conduct our research was intimidating to some people who feared that their responses would be given to the ward councillor. They were

intimidated by us university students, who predominately spoke English, and carried pens and papers in our hands. What I could see is that people are not free to voice their concerns, views, problems, and ideas etc about development, or envision the kind of future they would like. The question that I kept asking myself was how accessible are the councillors and mayors, not only in the area that we visited, but nationwide?’

These experiences enabled the examination of students own sense of identity, ethics and values. One student observed how, *‘Councillors are not aware of people’s concerns and poverty. They are not doing their best for the communities.’*

One student found the experience relevant to her studies. She is reading for her Masters degree in Housing. She commented in her journal:-

‘The trip for us was really an interesting practical aspect of the course. Further to that it was an eye-opener to some of us who have been theorizing on development and poverty.’

I was surprised and saddened to overhear at an informal cohort discussion, one male black student comment that the township people were, *‘always looking for handouts and are not interested in bettering themselves.’* This comment is in keeping with Kohlberg's (1981) heteronomous stage, where the student has an egocentric point of view and is not able to relate to the psychological interests of others. Discussions in the press refer to a sense of entitlement that pervades in some communities, which will take years of education to alter.

Kohlberg (1981) reported that only 10 percent of his adult subjects were at his stage six where actions were guided by ethical principles that included recognising the dignity, equality, and right to justice for all people. Although I was impressed with the honesty of this student, I felt frustrated that this experience had not impacted on his sense of social duty and the development of empathy. Perhaps his future reflections on this occasion will enable an examination of his previously held opinions. He would then be at phase three which states, *A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions.*

As students originate from a wide variety of countries in Africa, some students experienced difficulties with the indigenous language when visiting the local communities and a comment made in the questionnaire after the site visits was that:-

‘I felt disadvantaged, as I found the language barrier difficult to deal with. I couldn’t express myself verbally for them to feel my compassion’.

One would hope that, through non-verbal body language, the communities realised the empathy this student felt towards them and that in discourses later with other students he learnt more

about their challenges. A white male student said he felt guilty about coming from his advantaged background. He felt that the people there were asking why whites had put them in that situation. He could be placed in phase 2 which states, *A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame*.

One black student said that he did not realise how fortunate he was to be living in Umlazi. He said that previously he did not really care about people living in squatter type conditions, until he left his 'comfort zone' to discuss their challenges. Both these students show how, by exploring the social conditions of others, and reflection on this event, the potential for the development of empathy could occur. Whether this is a short-term emotional response or not has not been determined in this study.

Another student said this practical exercise made him reflect upon lessons learnt on leadership theories. He commented on the lack of co-operation between the property owner, tenants, and the municipality, and felt it was not ethical practice to take money for rent 'without first sorting out some hygiene problems'. These problems include access to clean water, overcrowded housing, unsanitary ablution facilities, and other socio-economic and environmental challenges, factors that indeed transgress people's constitutional rights.

Students used phrases pertaining to the site visit such as:-

- *Broadened my horizon*
- *My thinking has been shaped*
- *Opened my mind*
- *I am have 'conscientised'*
- *I have been challenged to think outside the box*

These comments were extracted from the questionnaires.

Mezirow (1991) refers to 'conscientisation' occurring when learners reach the fourth level of consciousness. At this level, the process entails 'the rigorous critique of the dehumanising social, political and economic structures supported by ideologies' (Mezirow, 1991, p. 136). The potential for learners to engage in social change, he says, occurs at this level. All the above statements seem to indicate that a shift in consciousness has occurred in the respondents.

Although students expressed desires to become involved in helping their communities, this may have been perceived by them as, 'the right thing to do'. One student has an idea how this may be possible. He said in his journal,

I plan to use the skills I have learnt to try to alleviate poverty by introducing sport and physical interactive games to relieve tension in my community by giving youngsters other alternatives to crime.

This comment shows an awareness of a social problem and how this may be addressed. As previously mentioned self-awareness is a precondition for transformative learning. Mezirow (1991) refers to learning new frames of reference after elaborating on existing frames of reference and thereafter transforming of points of view.

Merriam and Ntseane (2008) found that transformational learning with Batswana adults was shaped by three cultural factors; spiritual and the metaphysical world, community responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles. Perhaps by this student serving his community transformative learning could emerge.

Higher education institutions need to encourage similar organisations as mentioned above as they provide lessons not normally covered in modules. Jane Thompkins, of Duke University, quoted in Astin and Astin (2000), concurs:-

'If institutions that purport to educate young people don't embody society's cherished ideals – community, cooperation, harmony, love – then what young people will learn will be the standards institutions do embody: competition, hierarchy, busyness, and isolation.'
(Astin and Astin, 2000, p.32)

Allen, Bordas, Robinson Hickman, Matusak, Sorenson and Whitmire (1998) believe the purpose of leadership in the twenty-first century is to construct environments where people may live in peace with one another, and to create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility. Additionally, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) cite numerous examples where altruism, humanitarianism, and a sense of civic responsibility emerge and increase in students' college years.

Representatives from activism organisations explained how students could become involved. One student was inspired to write in the post course questionnaire, *'I want to become an activist for social change.'* It is unknown whether this student did meet his goal. O'Sullivan (1999) suggests there should be radical change in education if we are to create change agents who would be motivated to address the current ecological crises. Activism is one approach to leadership whose focus is human rights and care for the environment. It is an important part of the Leadership Course. See Appendix A which states the following learner outcomes:

- Understand issues of governance and human rights.

- Know about various strategies and practical interventions aimed at addressing poverty, social injustice and development.

Schaefer and Lamm (1995) discuss how American society is uninformed by its non-recognition of the impact that social movements, such as the civil rights movement, suffragists, and those opposed to the Vietnam War, have had on the course of history.

'Sociologists use the term 'social movements' to refer to organised collective activities to promote or resist change in an existing group or society.' (Schaefer and Lamm, 1995, p. 579)

Encouraging students to consider joining an organisation whose focus is change in our society falls within what Moore (2005) calls a sustainable education. She explains how the *'concept speaks to the reconciliation of social justice, ecological integrity, and well-being of all living systems in the planet'*, (Moore, 2005, p. 78). Many students have never considered the sometimes dangerous role of activism. They did appreciate the fact that the presenters were currently engaged in activism. The following comments were recorded in this questionnaires:

- *The presenters 'walked their talk'.*
- *What was particularly touching was that the hero of the show was talking about his own life.*

Presentations by social activists no doubt contributed to defining moments for many of the students. After reflection on these thoughts of future roles the potential exists to place students in the phase 8 category of Mezirow's (2000) ten phases – *the provisional trying of new roles*. For example some students stated in their questionnaires:

- *I need to start HIV/AIDS awareness in my community.*
- *I am immensely empowered to make a difference in my community by sharing my knowledge.*
- *The information I gained made a big change in my life. We must lead by example.*

Some comments in answer to questions 1 and 2 of the questionnaire found in Appendix C, mention the topics of values, morals and principles. The following statements show how, through disorienting dilemmas, different types of epistemological change became a real possibility for some students. Some students considered new roles and could therefore be venturing into phase 8, the *Provisional trying of new roles*.

- *I learnt a lot of things like caring for others and respecting others which I wasn't aware of before.*

- *I feel very strongly about improving my mental state and in doing so improving the life/lives of the people around me.*
- *I no longer think that everything should be done by the government as I can also do it. My plan is to start a community organisation that will help our youth in terms of getting access to relevant information.*
- *I am motivated to empower the disempowered by providing help to the helpless and be the sense of hope to the hopeless, by engagement and active participation of the public in matters that concern them.*
- *Visiting those areas was really a trauma for me knowing that I am raising the hopes of people, while I am going to do nothing about their problem.*
- *I am inspired to work towards positive change, not only in words but also in using what I've learnt in varsity to allow my community members to develop.*

These students appear to consider how accountability should extend beyond the auspices and responsibilities of local government. Perhaps they feel compelled to make a difference since the unfortunate dilemmas detected in local communities have been brought to consciousness.

The following statements extracted from the questionnaires are more pertinent to mindset change in terms of personal morals and values.

- *It really changed me in a manner in which I view events and other people.*
- *The course has changed me to be a positive person who thinks and takes time before reacting. It has also challenged me to socialise with others*
- *The course changed my personal view of society and community in terms of the values of certain attitudes and it provided skills for an improved society.*
- *The course has changed me a lot; my values have changed me to help others – to influence others and to put others first before me.*
- *I am able to understand my values better.*
- *The course has really reinforced many values that are fundamental in promoting an environment conducive for all concerned. I have been challenged in opening my eyes and thinking outside the box in that we need to take a holistic approach in tackling societal problems and that developing our values, social skills, confidence levels and academic ability is fundamental in achieving ones goals and objectives'*

Perhaps by becoming more informed students would be empowered to observe and internalise the world differently. The above comments give the impression that changes in viewpoints have taken place and students are inspired to make a difference in their communities. The words 'challenged' and the recollection of 'trauma' show they are aware that change would not necessarily be easy. Statements like 'changed my personal view of society' imply an implicit change in attitude after consideration of the viewpoints of others.

In the Chickering, Dalton, and Auerbach (2006) foreword, Astin and Astin caution that unless we understand personal motivations and feelings, we severely limit our capacity to understand

others. Chickering et al., (2006) concur by suggesting we embark on an examination of our own history, prior knowledge, preconceptions, attitudes and values, and emotional reflexes as a critical function for significant learning. This is in line with Mezirow's (1991) transformation theory where personal narratives can be challenged and altered through reflection on key events of one's life.

Mezirow (1991) believes there is no such thing as values-free education as to avoid discussions on the topic perpetuates the '*unexamined values of the status quo*' (Mezirow, 1991, p. 203). Astin and Astin (2000) feel that one of the qualities of transformative leadership is the development of empathy and that our most neglected communication skill is that of listening. True transformative learning only arises according to Mezirow (1991) after a period of reflection. The Leadership Course does encourage further development by providing a facilitators course on the Alternatives for Violence Project for those students who are interested. Appendix E reports on the success of this initiative.

Interwoven through all sessions of the Leadership Course, are opportunities for the examination of values and beliefs, particularly those on the citizenship issues of globalisation, ethics, governance and rights, HIV/AIDS and other social issues. Students commented in their journals about the particular relevance of examining values in Africa.

One student stated in his journal that,

"Values may change from culture to culture, but those of loyalty, accountability, honesty, respect for self and others, should be those I should abide by in future leadership roles."

This statement concurs with the research of Haydon (2006) who stresses the importance of respect amongst different cultural groups who may value different traits they believe make for good citizenship. Values and morals may change from culture to culture, but the guiding principles referred to by Covey (2004) are consistent. He mentions one key value, that of integrity, vital in any leadership role, especially government.

Perhaps because of the theme of the Leadership Course, '*Leadership through Social Change*' all 46 respondents commented how they re-evaluated their values and beliefs because of their visit to local communities as this interaction led to an understanding of the needs within communities.

Morals and ethics are essential concepts for discussion, particularly when related to leadership. One student felt so strongly about issues pertaining to ethics, that he commented in his journal:-

'I'd like to enforce morals and ethics in some societies and eventually lead them to encompass the greater injustices in the country.'

One would hope that the second language student would lead by example and meant the word 'enforce' in a more democratic context, for instance by using the word 'inculcate' instead.

Transformational learning is frequently enhanced in challenging circumstances as has been mentioned in the literature review. Whether these reflections had any further impact has not been determined in this study. Reflection at a later stage on these defining moments may provide anchors for changes in self-narratives, as explained by Mezirow (1991). For instance, if students adhered to using journals this practise would lead to students becoming reflective practitioners. According to Mezirow's (1991) theory, ideal learning conditions, for the development of changes in meaning perspectives, include learners having an opportunity to participate, weigh evidence, and evaluate arguments.

6.4 Determination of Long-term Motivations

In order to determine whether students were maintaining the impetus after the course, emails were sent to students who attended former leadership courses. A random selection was made as many email addresses were no longer valid. The questions do not directly ask students about defining moments, but rather are concerned with detecting whether students could possibly be considering the following phases:

- Phase 8 Provisional trying of new roles
- Phase 9 Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

The following questions were posed:

Question: What leadership role/s did you become involved in after the course and how did the Leadership Course assist you in this role?

Question: What lessons learnt on the course, have been particularly valuable?

Eleven students from a randomly selected 30 students responded to the email shown in Appendix D (i). One student spoke of being involved in the Student Bursary initiative. In addition, she said she was inspired to register for the Entrepreneurship module, especially after watching the film on globalisation. As this study has shown this film was frequently referred to as a defining moment, as students grappled with topics pertaining to ethics in worldwide leadership. The

following comments illustrate a change in consciousness and it would be interesting if these goals were adhered to for any extended time.

- *It makes me realise what is really going on in the world not only to myself, and how I can be a better person*
- *I learnt many things from this course that I wasn't exposed to before, like caring for others and respecting others. From now onwards, I will have to think carefully before responding.*
- *I believe that since I have become aware of many things that I didn't know and that I have taken for granted I am more skilled to assist in my community.*
- *Interacting with the other participants has also made me aware of the educational gap I face, in terms of extra reading required to increase my understanding of social issues facing my society.*

What is evident from these statements is that if transformative learning is to be understood from its identity-forming, cognitive, attitudinal, and motivational impacts, then the course content has obviously enhanced the impact of some if not all of these aspirations. Phrases such as 'I look at the world differently,' and 'made me realise what is really going on in the world' show how previously held opinions were challenged. The last comment in the list above conveys an impression that the student was comparing her level of education with that of the other participants and came to the realisation that further exploration on social issues was important.

As reported earlier, a number of students commented on how they were more confident completing group assignments and handling conflict. One male student stated in his email:-

'I tend to value and encourage dialogues and motivate all members with the knowledge I acquired from the leadership course.'

This comment shows a change in meaning perspective as far as his relationships with others are concerned, and that he is now motivated to put this new knowledge to use.

A female Indian student explained her appointment as cohort leader, and the challenges involved in motivating her team players. She said that after the leadership course, she changed her style of leadership to that of:-

'..... a more 'hands on', less delegation role, where I could lead by example, and know exactly what was going on within our team.'

She commented on how challenging accountability could be, and realised that not all in her team could be her 'buddies'. Students learn that leadership can be a lonely role. This student pledged

to become more involved in Habitat for Humanity in 2007. This student stood for one year as Chairman of the Habitat for Humanity UKZN chapter.

Not all students will be inspired to become leaders; some simply wish to be good citizens. One student spoke of how, although he was not in a leadership role, he nevertheless now realises the importance of values in all his dealings with local communities.

A female student told how she became elected as a Community Development Officer within the SRC. In 2007, she was re-elected as the Finance and Project Officer. She said:-

'I learnt self-confidence, discipline, and the importance of being a good listener on the course. I work with the local SRC from different compasses, background and politics, and as a woman I wouldn't have made it without the skills I learnt on the course.'

This student is referring to the stereotypical references made to women where men predominate in campus government. The course made her realise that women can take on major leadership roles.

A white student spoke of the development of his social conscience:-

'I became involved with Habitat for Humanity UKZN, and was elected as Chair for the Building Committee 2005 and Vice Chair in 2006. I am also involved at my church with the events committee. We organise social events for the young adults.'

This student commented that he felt the emphasis on the course was too political, but on hindsight he now realises the importance of knowledge on issues such as the Constitution. He recorded how he was now more patient at meetings, and stressed the importance of the 'I feel' statements in order to avoid conflict.

Residence students have more leadership opportunities as they generally are more accessible than those students who stay at home. One student spoke of lessons learnt on leadership styles, communication and problem solving. She describes her style as that of:-

'.... a holistic leader, who works hand in hand with the people. I learnt to acknowledge the work done by the people I work with, and I inform them when they are not in line, or out of order. I resolve conflict within a group non-violently whereby people reconcile and work together again.'

She reflected on how her life was transformed by being within an environment where people can share their ideas about life and debate social issues.

A black male student spoke of his enthusiasm regarding the opportunities the course provided to mix with diverse cultures and how he was inspired to participate in the House Committee of his residence. He found the lessons on managing and resolving conflict particularly useful. Once again, as a residence student more opportunities for campus leadership are evident.

A white student, commenting on his involvement in Habitat for Humanity, said he regrets he is not as active as originally intended. He found conflict resolution, self-confidence building, and the public speaking exercises, particularly useful.

Another white male student, said:-

'I became involved in major projects at work, where I have to produce certain services to clients by organizing, delegating and instructing people (employees), whilst at the same time having good leadership qualities such as communicating well with people I work with, and having a good relationship with my colleagues. I have had five successful projects all driven by me, with a large amount of profit. It was not easy along the way, as I had to deal with unsatisfied people, incompetence and many more problems. Without the leadership course, I wouldn't have known how to handle such problems.'

He spoke of the importance of knowing the difference between a leader and a manager. As class cohort leader, he found the 'I feel' messages particularly useful in resolving conflict:-

'It helped me to see things from their perspective and also to get my message across without coming across too harshly or demanding.'

Judging from the feedback received from these emails, the provisional trying out of roles has been embraced and reflection on lessons is ongoing. The students appear to have new perspectives and confidence in facing conflict situations in the work place.

Feedback on Long Term Commitments

Mrs Marie Odendaal, as course coordinator of the Leadership Course since 2002, provided the material to address the question of long term commitments. An extract from her article for the 2006 Kenton conference may be viewed in Appendix E. It is apparent that long term commitments are evident amongst some students who have improved their skills by becoming facilitators for the AVP courses.

Further research would no doubt find similar stories of long-term commitment to leadership with adherence to the principles offered on the course.

6.5 Conclusions of the Data Analysis

This study's research has been linked to Mezirow's (1991) conceptual framework of transformative learning, where particular attention was paid to statements denoting reflection on meaning perspectives and whether these could be construed as '*defining*'. As noted, Habermas's (1992) emancipatory interest is similar in concept as it deals with self-empowerment. Critical changes and the development of new frames of reference were not determined due to the short timeframe of the study. By frequent reflection on the content delivered at the UKZN Leadership Course true transformation may potentially occur and this could be a topic for further research.

As students generally '*disappear*', once they graduate, it is difficult to gauge longer-term commitments. Attempts to tackle this difficulty were addressed by obtaining material from students several months after the courses via follow-up emails that gave some insight into commitment levels. Additionally, comments arising from the course convenor's research further validated the commitment of some students to service in leadership. It would therefore seem apparent that some students go on to phase 9 *Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships*.

As in Merriam and Ntseane's (2008) study, interactions with other cultures appear to have given students a new perspective on looking at various social issues. These researchers were interested in how students came to think and/or act differently as a result of going through the transformational learning process. If, as their study found, learning is shaped by community responsibilities and relationships in the African context, it would be interesting to find out if transformative learning evidence is more noticeable in phase 9. Perhaps further research will contribute to the work of Merriam and Ntseane (2008).

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The Leadership Course is a microcosm for the development of social change in the macrocosm of change occurring at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and ultimately South Africa. The study demonstrates how students, through transformative dialogic moments, examined and reassessed their meaning systems. The complex social environment existing in South Africa provides an ideal forum to sharpen our skills in relational eloquence.

By exploring identity group differences, in gender, race, or faith affiliation, and listening to diverse stories, students discovered new ways of relating to others. This collaborative inquiry motivated students to become curious about one another's perspectives. The scope of the study does not explore whether these motivations for a new, shared narrative for the future were maintained beyond the course itself. This could be the topic for further research via the alumni.

The course content provides opportunities for students to contemplate societal issues, motivating them to make a difference in their own communities. Mezirow (1991) believes a disorienting dilemma or life event forces individuals to perceive the world and relationships in new ways. This empirical experimentalism falls within Mezirow's (1991) conceptual framework of transformational learning, as many of these students reported that they re-evaluated their opinions on various topics. Additionally, Wilson et al. (n.d.) states how transformational learning can play a unique role in shaping learners' identities and aspirations.

Not all learning is transformative, as this requires the examination of epistemological, social, and psychological assumptions underlying beliefs, feelings and actions (Mezirow, 1991, p. 224). He states that changes in these assumptions are best determined by a close relationship between learner and teacher along the lines of mentor and friend. This was not possible due to the ratio between student and facilitator, as well as the timeframe of the Leadership Course.

Mezirow (1991) believes that the most significant learning experience in adulthood involves critical self-reflection leading to an assessment of our own assumptions,

worldviews and schemas. This critical reflection is essential, he says, for the transformational process, validating the *raison de etre* of the research, which throws a spotlight on the genesis of the transformational process. The development of critical, reflective practitioners emerged as one of the strengths of the Leadership Course.

It is commonly perceived that South Africa in particular, with its high crime rates and corruption in various sectors, needs leaders committed to the welfare of people within all communities. Tertiary institutions play key roles in institutional and societal transformation. Our students are our future leaders, and this research highlighted the pivotal role that the Leadership Course performs in the potentiality for transformation in our learners.

Astin and Astin (2000) rightly believe that leadership is an essential skill, and should not be the '*province of the few, the privileged or even the merely ambitious*' (Astin and Astin, 2000, p. 31). They feel that students have a right to become more deeply involved in shaping their educational experience for themselves and others, but these skills require conscious development and motivation by those trained and skilled in tertiary education. Perhaps this endeavour could potentially be addressed with further courses, workshops, and support groups on leadership for the graduates of this course. There is no doubt that not all students will take up the challenge of leadership. In fact, some may be discouraged after hearing about the misadventures of activists.

The study showed how, imaginative teaching, using constructivist theory techniques, provided opportunities for students to critically, and emotionally, engage in Mezirow's (1991) '*communities of critical discourse*'. This study reports how, by using constructivist, problem-based learning which delivered content with a social ethical lens, students transformed their thinking on issues such as gender inequalities, globalisation and its effects, both positive and negative, local government challenges, and the social ills of HIV/AIDS and poverty. This may inspire educators to emulate this style of teaching over a full academic year thereby deepening students' transformative learning experience.

The importance of interactions with all sectors of the community in our country today cannot be trivialised. Perhaps further research will uncover the reasons for non-participation and reticence to participate, among some cultural groups, in endeavours

such as the Leadership Course, providing suggestions on how this issue may be addressed. Perhaps one possibility would be to consider making the course credit bearing thereby giving it more credibility and wider appeal.

Whilst constructing this document the aspect of external validity arising from this research was not apparent, as this study specifically considered one experience at the University. However, after being invited to contribute to a debate at the 1st Community Engagement conference in October 2009, co-ordinated with the College of Humanities, the thought occurred to me that perhaps as UKZN was committed to areas of outreach that could be linked to curricula, more students could experience defining moments leading to self-development such as those experienced on the Leadership Course.

The importance of diversity, as an agent of influence on self-narrative emerged as a key finding from this study. This study has shown how personal development can be enhanced through intense experiences completing a permanent transformation of our awareness. This awareness is particularly relevant in our interactions with others, altering perceptions by creating an understanding of the cultural and psychological assumptions of others whose opinions differ from our own. Xenophobia and racism are sad realities globally and even the new South Africa, with its optimism and aspirations, is not immune. By understanding the cultural and psychological assumptions of others whose lives and social development differs from their own, students should be capable of transferring these new skills to others in their immediate surroundings. Some may even be inspired to expand upon this influence.

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Appendix A (i): Leadership Course Aims and Objectives

The **University of KwaZulu-Natal Leadership Course** is informed by the vision and mission of Student Leadership Development (SLD):

The SLD's Mission

Providing holistic education for citizenship and leadership in Africa and the world

The SLD provides and promotes excellent curricular and extra-curricular programmes and services which enable UKZN students to develop leadership values, qualities and competences appropriate to the developmental needs of South African society in a context of increasing global interdependence.

The SLD educates students to participate effectively in the citizenship and leadership processes of student government, student societies, and community organisations; and facilitates transformative student projects and campus and community service activities.

Aims of the Leadership Course

This course is for students who occupy or aspire to occupy leadership positions in diverse student and community organizations. The course design provides for a collaborative and shared learning process. Since each individual comes to the course with different kinds and depths of knowledge, skills, values, and experiences, each person must come prepared to learn, and teach, according to his/her capabilities and needs.

The course is designed to achieve the following aims:

For the individual -

- To enhance your personal development and strengthen your knowledge-, skills-, and values-base for practical leadership competence. This will enable you to engage more effectively in citizenship and leadership activities, for the betterment of the university and your community; enhance your employability; and enable you to engage more confidently with the challenges of the community, civil society, and the workplace.
- To encourage you to engage consciously in a lifelong process of learning and personal development for more effective citizenship and leadership action.

For the group and the institution -

- To provide a learning community and a common forum for students from all UKZN campuses where they can learn from each other and from people with relevant expertise, through sharing knowledge and ideas about governance-,

citizenship- and leadership-related issues pertinent to student life, the university, and the broader society

To develop a cohort of student leaders across our campuses who are committed to:

- improving the quality of and increasing student participation in student governance, student life and extra-curricular programmes and community service activities on- and off-campus, through their own participation and through sharing their knowledge and skills to empower others
- rendering exemplary service to their fellow students and promoting integrity and accountability in student governance
- engaging actively in processes aimed at shaping the nature and direction of the university: contributing to 'transformation' of the university in line with its Mission of being the premier university of African scholarship.

These aims can be achieved through realising a number of specific intended outcomes. The course is designed to make possible the following outcomes:

Individual learner outcomes

As a result of participating in the leadership course, your self-knowledge and personal development will be enhanced. You will be better able to:

- Understand and relate positively to yourself and other people, i.e.
- Appreciate the meaning and importance of grounding your approach to life and leadership in a spiritual or values base; clarify your own principles and values; and respect diverse perspectives in this regard.
- Know what it means to be ethical, why it is important, and be committed to practicing and promoting ethical behaviour and challenging unethical behaviour in leadership.
- Reflect critically on how your own socialization, especially through education, has shaped you, and identify ways in which you want to change yourself
- Practice the basic interpersonal skills of relating to others in a non-violent manner and handling conflict and solving problems in creative non-violent ways.
- Practice good communication skills and be confident about speaking in groups, meetings and public situations.
- Practice effective teamwork in your organizations.
- Understand cultural diversity in South Africa and respect cultural differences.
- Reflect critically on your own socialization with respect to differences, specifically in issues relating to gender and disability, and work on changing your own negative attitudes in these areas.
- Know why citizens and leaders have a responsibility actively to combat negative stereotyping and promote understanding and respect amongst people whatever their differences, and to create inclusive processes and an ethos of inclusiveness e.g. in student governance.
- Identify one or more specific areas of campus life (e.g. residence, a student society) in which you will find an opportunity to serve others, and exercise leadership or active citizenship to bring about positive social change for the

benefit of the institution, your fellow students, and to improve your own leadership capabilities

- Determine specific actions you can do in those areas, and start doing them.
- Inform fellow students of opportunities where they can serve as volunteers, and motivate and mobilize them to do so.
- Lead yourself and others proactively in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, i.e.
- Know what kind of a disease HIV/AIDS is, what its impact on society is, and the challenges it poses to leaders and society as a whole.
- Assess the extent to which your personal lifestyle and intimate relationships places you at risk of HIV infection, and make life-enhancing choices in these areas
- Understand what 'positive living' with HIV entails, and reject any stigmatisation of HIV-positive people
- Know about initiatives to ameliorate the effects of the disease, and about the services the university provides, especially voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), medical treatment, and peer counselling
- Take steps to share your knowledge with others on your campus and in your community, as individuals and in collaboration with others, to help prevent the spread of the disease and/or to deal with its effects on campus or in your communities
- Take practical steps to respond (either individually or as part of a collective) to some aspect of the challenges posed by this pandemic, and sustain your commitment to responding proactively.

Understand and practice an appropriate approach to leadership in today's world, and specifically to leadership in the African context, i.e.

- Understand the basic principles and values that inform the emerging paradigm of leadership; be familiar with ideas of collaborative, transformative, compassionate and servant leadership.
- Understand the specific behaviours and actions of exemplary leadership; identify your personal styles and strengths as a leader; and be able to apply the principles and values of the emerging leadership paradigm in your own practices.
- Be aware of significant interconnected trends, issues, and developments in our rapidly changing world that shape the context of leadership, including:
 - globalisation
 - sustainable development
 - environmental issues
 - the AIDS pandemic
- Be aware of the implications of these trends and issues for democracy, citizenship and leadership, particularly for the African continent and our region.
- Develop a critical perspective on the role of African universities and intellectuals in the development of the continent.

- Know about various strategies and practical interventions aimed at addressing poverty, social injustice and development.
- Understand issues of governance and human rights, i.e.
- Know the purpose of, and the basic principles informing, a constitution and be committed to promoting constitutional practices in all levels of governance, including student governance and societies.
- Know that equal human rights for people, irrespective of race, gender, etc., are a central tenet of democracy; why this is so; and be committed to upholding human rights for all.
- Know the reasons why leaders should be accountable, and represent the interests of all those who fall under their governance. Be committed to fair representation, personal accountability, and to holding those in governance accountable for their actions.
- Understand some of the challenges of student governance for student leaders and student 'citizens'; have a critical awareness of the role students should play in relation to student governance, and be committed to participating actively in it, whether as 'citizen' or elected leader.
- Throughout the course you will engage in individual and collective reflection on your own learning and development, and on the interactional dynamics and learning processes of the group. There will also be an evaluation at the end of the course so that we can improve the course as a whole.

Appendix A (ii) Course Requirements

2006 Leadership Course Requirements

A. Attendance and Participation

How much you get out of this course, will depend primarily on how much you put into it. I urge you to participate wholeheartedly - this course is a wonderful opportunity to develop yourself and contribute to others' development. At the same time, be sensitive about not dominating; allow space for others also to participate fully.

You are expected to attend every session in the programme, arriving promptly, to give and gain maximum benefit. A register will be circulated at various times, for you to sign. We will be going on a field trip. It is crucial that you be on time for the bus at all departure points.

Should any emergency arise which affects your attendance, e.g. illness, please communicate directly with one of the course staff members, Marie Odendaal, Mandla Ndaba, or Ginny Porter, or you may give a written note to a friend to hand in to one of us.

B. Coursework and Assignments

All your course materials, worksheets, notes, journal entries, copies of assignments and any other relevant articles etc. which you accumulate, should be kept in the file we have given you. The file thus becomes your 'portfolio' from this course, and a very useful resource for the future.

All your assignments must be typed and either sent to me by email or posted to me in one envelope through the internal mail to reach me by no later than **14 August**. You may post them from the SRC Offices, any departmental office, or directly from the registry on your campus. This costs nothing but supply your own envelope, and write your name and address on the back. Send your assignments to:

Marie Odendaal
 Student Leadership Development
 University of KwaZulu-Natal
 Pietermaritzburg campus
 PB X01
 Scottsville 3209
 Or Odendaal@ukzn.ac.za

I will acknowledge receipt of your assignments, by email. It is your responsibility to follow up with me if you do not receive this acknowledgement.

Your assignments are designed with two purposes in mind:

1. to help you integrate your learnings from your experiences in the course, intellectually, emotionally, and in your everyday practice.

2. to help us evaluate the effectiveness of the course so that we can improve it in the future.

I will not allocate percentages/marks to your assignments, but I will read and respond to them with written comments. I will assess your overall course participation for certification purposes (see the section on Certification)

There are 4 main assignments for you to do; details of which are on p.2:

1. Completing 'before and after' self-assessment questionnaires
2. Doing some informal research on HIV/AIDS and summarizing your findings – before the course
3. Keeping a Leadership Journal throughout the course
4. Writing an 'essay' after the course

Appendix A (iii) Assignments

Assignment 1:

One of the challenges people are facing worldwide is that of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is a real leadership challenge for all of us! Assignment 2 requires you to do some informal research so that you can come to the leadership course with information and views on the effects of this pandemic, what the University of KwaZulu-Natal is doing about it, and people's attitudes to it. There are 2 questionnaires; one for your home community and one for your campus to help you in this task. The information you gather will provide a basis for discussing what students from the leadership course can do about HIV/AIDS. Bring these questionnaires, completed, to the course on 17 June.

Assignment 2: Keep a Leadership Journal

Our day begins at 8.00 every morning with a quiet time for focused reflection and writing. During this time you have a chance to write 2-3 pages of your personal leadership journal. This is a valuable habit to develop; many leaders and artists keep a journal for the spiritual and practical benefits they gain from it.

Use these 'morning pages' to explore your feelings and reflect on what you are learning from the course and how you experience the course activities and processes. Are you feeling excited, stimulated, depressed, or uncomfortable? Why? Were the aims of the different sessions achieved, for you? What were your most valuable lessons, what new knowledge, insights, or skills are you gaining? What did you like and not like, and why? How could things have been done better? and so on. You can also use the journal to develop your own ideas on issues that interest you particularly. If you wanted to say something in a session and did not have the chance to say it, note it in your journal.

Treat your journal as if it were a very trusted friend with whom you are having an ongoing conversation about your experiences on this course; in effect, you will be having a dialogue with yourself, through your journal, and consequently benefiting more from the course. Don't censor yourself! Don't worry too much about grammar and spelling. Just write freely, whatever you think about. Later you will be able to go back and reinforce what you learnt, as well as recall the wonderful experiences you had, from rereading your journal.

Date each day's writing and keep your journal pages in order in your file. After the 20-30m quiet time for writing each morning, you will have a chance to share anything you might want to share with other people in the group. Your journal will provide a basis for you to give us evaluation feedback; for contributing to discussions during umhlangano sessions; and for writing your essay/report after the course, which is where it is invaluable.

Although the journals are personal to you, I would like you **after the course is over**, to select extracts from your journal writings on at least 3 different days of the course, **type** them up **unedited**, and post them to me in the same envelope as you send your essay (see below) – **by 14 August**. Choose extracts pertaining to diverse sessions/ experiences/ issues which were important to you, and which you feel comfortable sharing with me.

The minimum combined length for the extracts should be three pages, typed in 12 point font with 1.5 line spacing; the submission may be longer if you wish.

Assignment 3: Essay/Report/Letter

Write an assignment in which you reflect **critically** on this course, what it has contributed to your personal development, and the most important things you have learned about leadership during the course.

You may do the assignment in one of three ways:

1. Write a personal reflection in the form of an essay, choosing your own title for it.
2. Imagine that a funder /your sponsor asked you to evaluate the course so as to decide whether they should sponsor again. Write your report for the funder, choosing your own title for it.
3. Write a letter to a friend recommending whether you think it worth her/his while to apply for the course next year, based on your experience this year.

Whichever way you do your assignment, it should be a personal, **honest** and comprehensive (but not exhaustive) piece of writing synthesizing your learning. It should not simply be a repeat of chunks of your journal, nor should it be aimed at pleasing me, but at articulating your own experiences. (Please be aware that I value and appreciate honesty and constructive criticism because I can learn from them).

Here are some guidelines:

In your report/essay/letter try to write, in an integrated way, about

- the broad themes and topics which were covered in the course; and what they meant to you
- how the content and processes of the course influenced you: what you gained in understanding and knowledge, in skills, and in terms of your values;
- what you have learned from the selected readings
- what the course has meant for you as a person and leader/aspiring leader, and why
- problems/challenges you faced in the course
- your recommendations on how to improve the course for 2005;
- in what other ways the University can promote leadership development for students.

Organise your ideas in whatever way is meaningful for you, paying particular attention to those topics or aspects of the course that were most important to you personally.

Avoid generalizing; rather tackle issues concretely and specifically, and demonstrate that you have thought critically about your experiences.

Reference your assignment properly at the end, irrespective of which form you choose for it (see the reading list for examples). Your report/essay/letter should be at least 7 typed pages in length. Use 12 point font and 1,5 spacing.

It is best to do a first draft (by hand if you don't have a computer at home), revise it, then type it (use a spell check please!).

Send the final version in the internal mail to reach me by no later than 14 **August**. I will acknowledge, by email, all assignments received in the post, so if you don't get an

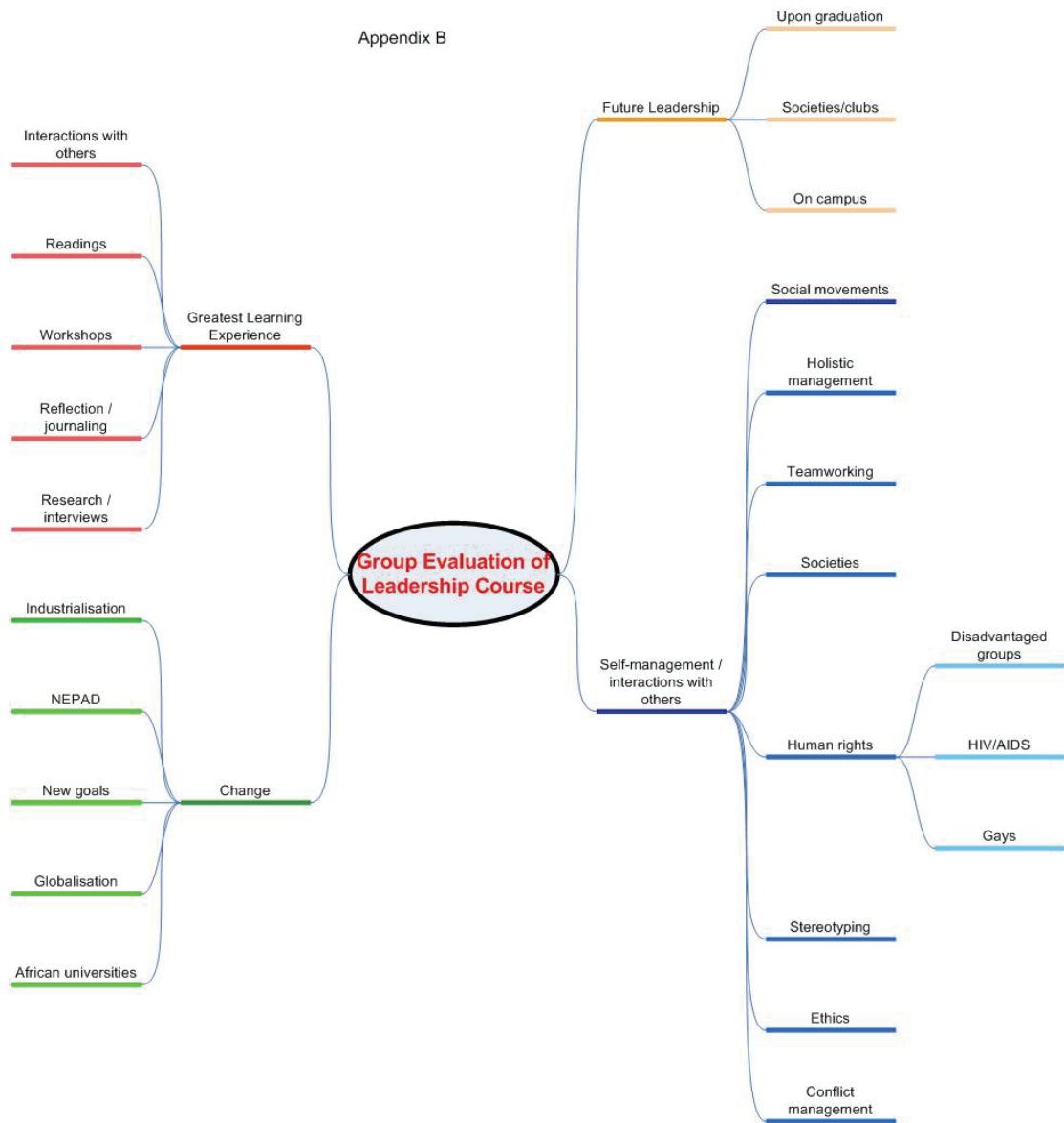
acknowledgement, you are responsible for following up to find out what went wrong.
Late submissions will not be accepted.

We would like to quote extracts from some of your essays in our report, and use them in a funding proposal - please indicate whether this is acceptable to you

C. Readings

You will receive a set of readings at the introductory day. Some of these readings will have a set of questions to help you navigate your way through them. We will not have time to discuss all of them during the leadership course, but you will be assigned to a reading group and allocated one or more specific reading/s to discuss. Try to read as many of the readings as possible before 17 June so that you can relate what you learn on the course to the concepts in the articles, and obtain maximum benefit from both.

Appendix B: Cohort Mind-map



Appendix C: Post Course Individual Questionnaire

Please note that this form is anonymous and you therefore cannot be identified. The content will be used for research purposes in contribution to the dissertation for the MEd degree. The topic concerns students' perceptions of the course.

- One of the key expectations from students concerns **self-development**. Explain in your own words how the course changed you as a person. Consider issues such as values, social skills, confidence levels, academic ability etc.
- The Leadership Course provided opportunities to meet people who are using their lives in service to others, and you also visited areas of **social concern**. Explain how your goals have changed. In what way will you use the skills you have learnt for leadership purposes?
- What in your opinion were the **highlights** of the course and why?
- If you were planning a future course, in what way would you **improve** it? Explain here if you had any difficulties in attending this course.

Appendix D (i) Email Questionnaires

Question 1: What leadership role/s did you become involved in after the course and how did the Leadership Course assist you in this role?

Question 2: What lessons learnt on the course, have been particularly valuable?

Appendix D (ii) Email Questionnaire

How have you developed since the leadership course, if you had to consider the following?

- Personal development (self confidence, critical thinking and learning, social skills)
- Citizenship knowledge (knowledge on the constitution, ethics, social and environmental issues)
- Morals and values

Appendix E: Feedback from course convenor

'Longer-term effects of the course can be gauged by what students do in subsequent years. Gathering of data for this is still in progress. Data obtained thus far show that of the 350 students who attended in the years 2000 - 2005, 24 have trained as AVP facilitators, while a further 31 have done the advanced AVP workshop, with some stating their intentions to train as facilitators. 15 – 20 of these facilitators have been actively involved in facilitating one or more workshops this year; some of them are now lead facilitators and one has introduced AVP into the Integrated Development Plan of the Greater Edendale Development Initiative, drawing on student facilitators to run a number of community workshops. One AVP facilitator is currently doing peace-related work in Palestine on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.'

Marie Odendaal