AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF PAGES OF *LEARN WITH ECHO*
NEWSPAPER SUPPLEMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL/PEDAGOGICAL TOOL IN
CLASSROOMS OF ADULTS IN THE GREATER PIETERMARITZBURG AREA.

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DECLARATION

The author hereby declares that the contents of this dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, are her own work and that the dissertation has not been submitted simultaneously or, at any other time, for another degree.

Zanele Gladness Buthelezi
January 2006

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this product to my father, Simo Simeon Dlamini. He is the first man in our family who took his daughters to school when schooling for girls was regarded as taboo.

Thank you, Sibalukhulu, for defying family practice for our benefit. Had you conformed to the family culture of 'no school for girls' I would not be where I am today.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adults in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area. The *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement is supplied to many adult education centres in Pietermaritzburg and other areas once a week, but there is little empirical evidence of how it is used.

Learn with Echo is a four page weekly adult literacy and basic education newspaper supplement. It is produced by the Centre of Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg. This newspaper supplement was founded partly as a response to one of the deeply rooted social problems that we have in South Africa, illiteracy. This problem is prevalent particularly among older persons who were marginalised from educational opportunities during the apartheid era. Current national statistics reveal that about half the country's adults have less than nine years of schooling, and three million no education at all (Baatjes et al, 2002).

This study worked within a qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative research approach and used interviews and classroom observations as tools to elicit data. The variety of techniques used enhanced the validity, reliability and authenticity of this research.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from this study show that the *Learn with Echo* pages are indeed being used effectively for a variety of language practices and communication activities in classrooms of adults and that most of adult learners and facilitators are satisfied with the overall content of *Learn with Echo*. The majority of facilitators and adult learners maintained that the issues addressed in the supplement are useful and relevant to their everyday lives.

However, findings also suggest that the existing human rights and democracy pages should be given greater attention in future since they carry the empowerment commitment of the project and that the language level of most pages is pitched at levels two and three which is above the level of MTL adult learners targeted by this study.

From a pedagogical perspective, findings show that interaction amongst learners encouraged reflection, discussion, and critical thinking, and learning activities that were tied to these functions contributed to perspective transformation. Significantly, however, retention of information and the ability to transfer it in new settings in real life situations was minimal.

As a result of this, it is proposed that:

- Producers of materials, including those of *Learn with Echo* pages, need to devise strategies to regularly interact with the target audience in order to be better informed of its interests, needs and motivation, to ensure sustained relevance and quality.
- IsiZulu should be the primary language of the *Learn with Echo* supplement, but with English included in one way or another.
- Writers should produce less content and use a lot of pictures for pages targeted at MTL level one as it is difficult for adult learners to access information if too much of it has to be inferred.
- Facilitators who use *Learn with Echo* as a classroom resource need to be trained in the pedagogical rationale of the materials.
- The researcher should conduct staff development seminars with the *Learn with Echo* team so as to share the depth of knowledge she has acquired through this dissertation

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABE – Adult Basic Education

ESL – English Second Language

LWE – Learn with Echo

MTL – Mother Tongue Literacy

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

UIF – Unemployment Insurance Fund

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background to the study

The objective of this study was to establish how pages of the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement are used in classrooms of adult learners. The *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement is supplied to many adult education classrooms in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area once a week but there is little empirical evidence of how it is used.

Learn with Echo is a four page weekly adult literacy and basic education newspaper supplement. It is produced by the Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, on the Pietermaritzburg campus. This newspaper supplement was first published in 1990, with the primary objective of providing learner-centred learning and reading material to impoverished, under-educated people in the Pietermaritzburg area. It is published by *The Witness*, a local daily newspaper. Its distribution is through insertion in *The Witness* and also from the Centre of Adult Education through a mailing list to organisations and adult education centres. Readers get it free of charge every Thursday. The readership survey (2000) indicates that its readership is approximately 250 000 in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and further afield.

The most important educational aims of the *Learn with Echo* project include:
- provision of useful information in an accessible format
- fostering a culture of reading, especially reading for pleasure
- supporting family literacy, and
- promoting the mother tongue as a language of learning.

Learn with Echo offers readers, facilitators and learners interactive learning material which models the application of literacy related skills to everyday tasks. It focuses on the crucial need of ordinary people to gain specific knowledge and skills in order to fulfil their roles as members of a democratic society. *Learn with Echo* reaches a wide range of people in terms of age, educational level and geographic spread. Although *Learn with Echo* is used primarily by adult learners as an adult basic education resource, it is also used by many other people.

Some people say they read *Learn with Echo* with members of their family, with other adults, friends and neighbours. This encourages interactive literacy because everyone participates. Evidence from the readership survey indicates that learning is informal and readers are not afraid to make mistakes. Observations made during the 2000 survey also revealed that the interactive learning is characterised by a lot of thinking aloud.

The *Learn with Echo* project was a response to one of the deeply rooted social problems that we have in South Africa, illiteracy. This problem is prevalent particularly among older persons who were marginalised from educational opportunities during the apartheid era. Current national statistics reveal that about half the country's adults have less than nine years of schooling, and three million no education at all (Baatjes et al, 2002).

Learn with Echo is a medium of adult education, easy reading and family literacy, and continues to be a means of communication of public information and education messages to educationally deprived people in the province, especially the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. With increasing regularity, *Learn with Echo* receives requests from government departments and non-governmental organisations to communicate information to adults in the region.

Originally, the purpose of this research was to investigate the use of 'civic education' pages in classrooms of adults. But responses from data collected referred to all kinds of *Learn with Echo* pages. As a result, the purpose shifted to establishing how different kinds of pages or articles produced by *Learn with Echo* are used as an educational/pedagogical tool in adult education classes by facilitators and learners, to gain specific knowledge and skills in order to fulfil their roles as members of a democratic society. This study focused on adult classes that do mother tongue literacy (MTL) and therefore paid specific attention to a variety of pages written in IsiZulu or in both IsiZulu and English. Amongst other pages, the study paid attention to topics that deal with democracy, citizenship, HIV/AIDS, voter education, elections, heritage and culture as these are written by *Learn with Echo* on a regular basis.

1.2 The rationale of the study

The major *Learn with Echo* Readership Surveys that were conducted in adult education centres in Pietermaritzburg in 1993, 1996 and 2000 revealed that there are gaps that need to be filled by further research. Some of the findings of the surveys were that:

1. *Learn with Echo* is perhaps not being used in Adult Basic Education classes (outside of the NGO sector) ...

2. ... it is not seen as appropriate for use in Level 1 Zulu classes

3. ... it became apparent that in fact relatively few adult basic education classes are using *Learn with Echo* as a regular resource

4. Finally, the 2000 Readership Survey says that there is something of a gap between the perceptions of those involved in the *Learn with Echo* project about how the supplement is being used in classrooms, and the reported usage by the two Adult Basic Education (ABE) organizations involved. This, however, will need to be further explored ... (*Learn with Echo* Readership Survey, 2000: 21).

While acknowledging the value of these findings, certain pieces of information from the surveys do not truly reflect the current situation. For example, the *Learn with Echo* team has had several meetings with the Users' Group Forum which is comprised of facilitators and co-ordinators of local ABE learner groups. Feedback resulting from interaction with these facilitators confirms that *Learn with Echo* is used outside **and** within the NGO sector by quite a variety of adult education centres as a regular classroom resource. Moreover, minor Readership Surveys that are regularly conducted through questionnaires printed in the *Learn with Echo* also reveal that *Learn with Echo* is used in adult education classes. However, what needed to be researched was how *Learn with Echo* is used as a classroom resource, for what purposes and how it could be improved to serve adult learners and facilitators better.

This study thus aimed to address these issues with a view to plugging some of the gaps mentioned in the different findings of surveys conducted. Finding out about how this newspaper supplement is used in classrooms of adult learners, and whether there is transfer of learning to contexts out of the classrooms is important. I believe that the

findings of this research contribute to a better understanding of the use of the newspaper supplements in literacy projects and their potential to effect transformational learning and social change.

1.3 Research questions

1. How is the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement

used as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adult learners?

2. How do learners and facilitators respond to the language level, content, use of pictures and layout of the newspaper supplement?

3. Is there any evidence to suggest that learners are gaining information that is useful in their daily lives?

4. Is there any evidence that learners have engaged in transformative learning and experienced perspective transformation?

1.4 Limitations of the study

1.4.1 Research subjectivity

I am a contributor and writer in the *Learn with Echo* project and I am aware that my role in this research could be perceived as highly subjective. I do believe, however, that it is of great significance that a researcher acts as objectively as possible, that is, in such a way as to preclude interference or even potential interference by my 'personal opinions, preferences, modes of observation, views, interests or sentiments' (De Groot, 1969: 163). Babbie (2000: 279) supports this argument when he talks about the 'insider-outsider' dialogue. This relates to tension created between description (insider perspective) and interpretation (outsider). Gadamar, as cited by Scott (2000: 19) echoes this by arguing that the researcher must be aware that a 'fusion of horizons' occurs when own interests interfere with the collection of data.

I know that as an insider I might have brought my own conscious and unconscious 'baggage' to the research process especially when conducting interviews and analysing interview data. However, ways of dealing with my subjectivity included being open, foregrounding potential fluidity of the interview process, highlighting the 'baggage' and naming my social positionality to all the research participants.

1.4.2 Target audience diversity

Another potential limitation relates to the diverse nature of the *Learn with Echo* target audience. *Learn with Echo* has a wide distribution. Although it started as a Pietermaritzburg based newspaper supplement, it now serves a diverse group of people all over KwaZulu-Natal. *Learn with Echo* is not only used by adult learners as an adult basic education resource, it is also used by many other people. As indicated earlier, some people say they read *Learn with Echo* with members of their family, with other adults, friends and neighbours. It is also now used by school teachers who see it as readily available, easy to use learning material which is relevant to the lives of local people (Land and Buthelezi, 2002). There are also a lot of casual *Learn with Echo* readers in places where people tend to congregate to wait for something, for example, a pension payout queue. Given the diverse readership, for logistical and practical reasons, this study focused on classes conducted in and near Pietermaritzburg only. Although this sample was not fully representative of *Learn with Echo's* total readership, this limitation should not undermine the overall efficacy of the research.

1.5 Definition of key terms in the study

The focus of this study was on how *Learn with Echo* materials are used as an educational/pedagogical tool in classes of adults. Terms related to literacy learning are used in this study. It is therefore important to define them in relation to their use in the study:

(a) Adult Education

Defining adult education is difficult as there are different kinds of adult education activities that exist in order to meet different needs of adult learners. For example, adult education activities could be adult basic education (and training), distance education, further education, open learning, vocational education, workplace learning and others. These examples give us a hint on the location of adult education activities, what adults may be learning there, but also show us that the field of adult education is wide and is sometimes specialised according to the needs of adult learners.

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Of the many definitions of adult education that people give, for purposes of this study, I chose the one that was adopted and recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at a conference in Nairobi, Kenya, which says that adult education is:

> the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (1976: 7).

This definition was deemed relevant for this study because it does not only see adult education in the context of the educational processes but also developmental processes in society.

(b) Literacy

A common sense understanding of the term literacy is learning to read and write. But definitions of literacy have changed over the decades and have done so 'in accordance with changing social and cultural conditions for the acquisition and use of literacy' (Mbatha, 2004: 16). Most definitions now indicate that literacy involves more than just learning the three R's (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic), but includes consciousness raising.

Gillete and Ryan (1983: 20) define a person as 'literate' when he can both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his every day life.

Beder (1991) as cited by Baatjes (2002: 4) defines literacy as:

> the ability to read and write, not only by adults, but by children and youth as well. Literacy is a continuum of reading and writing skills. Often the term is used to include also basic arithmetic skills

Lyster notes how definitions of literacy based around the three R's have become inadequate:

> There is no simple line to be crossed from illiteracy to literacy, as literacy can no longer be seen as just about mastery of the alphabet. Literacy should be seen as an extended process involving a complex set of communicative practices, all of which have an impact on people's ability to asset their rights or actively engage with the external world (1992: 11).

The definition which emphasises that literacy needs to be defined in relation to its uses and purposes was announced by the International Committee of Experts on Literacy in 1956. It says that:

> a person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development.
> (UNESCO, 1978, quoted in Harley et al (1996: 18)

There is another definition of literacy which views literacy as a means of adaptation and power. It is known as The Declaration of Persepolis. It considers literacy to be

> not just the process of learning the skills of reading and writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for acquisition of a critical consciousness of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiatives and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to mastery of techniques and human actions. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right ... Literacy is a political act ... Literacy ... would constitute the first stage of basic education. (Bataille, in Harley at al, 1996: 19).

Some definitions of literacy also include the ability to read in any context. However, it is now generally accepted that real literacy must be functional and be in acccordance

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with one's needs. This brings in what we call functional literacy. Functional literacy can be defined as literacy that is beneficial to the individual and his environment. It is the ability to use literacy skills for specific purposes in the home, community and workplace. Other people define functional literacy as the ability to derive meaning from the codified knowledge specific to a particular context. Lyster (2003: 61) defines functional literacy as 'a generic term to refer to the direct and practical application of literacy skills in the world outside of the structured learning situation'. It is also worth mentioning that this change in definition, from minimal literacy skills to the provision of a broader, more functional adult education, led to literacy programmes being also referred to as adult basic education (ABE) programmes.

The view of literacy that befits this study needs to portray literacy not just as the process of learning to read and write but one that should include a process of conscientisation and empowerment offered in conjunction with the delivery of information, knowledge and skills, and literacy that contributes to the liberation of people and their full development. For me, a basic education programme in South Africa should aim to give people the skills they need in order to participate in building the new democracy. Literacy needs to be made relevant to people's lives. To give people what is more than reading and writing, literacy needs to be broad and must draw on a range of sources.

Furthermore, relevant and quality literacy education, for me, would mean an education that focuses on developing a responsible adult who thinks critically through learner-centred learning that is geared to key learning competencies in the domains of literacy, numeracy, life skills, as well as moral and cultural values. Furthermore, I believe that basic education should emphasise the importance of interplay between social integration, economic growth, environmental protection, human rights and the practice of democracy, and women empowerment in development.

(d) Empowerment and emancipation
The idea that literacy is essential for empowerment of individuals and communities has long been a powerful perspective in the promotion and provision of adult education. Since the 1960s, as many African countries gained independence, literacy acquired new status as a tool for empowerment. And many adult education

practitioners today speak of empowering adult learners by helping them develop self-awareness, and social and political understanding (Foley, 1998). The printed word is thus regarded as a tool for providing information with which to challenge repressive governments.

According to Gwala (2003: 13), to empower means to "enable, to allow or to permit" and can be conceived as both self-initiated and initiated by others. Gwala (ibid) maintains that empowerment is a process (and not an event) that is characterized by reciprocity and mutual respect and understanding towards reaching the defined goals and objectives. Friedmann (1992: 33) concurs with this argument:

> empowerment is an act of building, developing, and increasing power through co-operation, sharing and working together. It is an interactive process based on a synergistic, not a zero-sum, assumption about power in the situation, as opposed to merely redistributing it.

Another issue related to empowerment is emancipation and/or emancipatory learning. The goal of emancipatory learning is to free learners from the forces that limit their options and to give them control over their lives, to move them to take action to bring about social and political change (Cranton, 1994; Inglis, 1997).

Although adult education classrooms may focus on empowering learners, they may also teach adults how to operate successfully within existing power structures (Foley, 1998; Inglis, 1997), thus enforcing domestication, and therefore losing the emancipatory element. In the context of this research, learning that is emancipatory includes not only understanding existing power structures but also how to resist and challenge these structures and their underlying ideologies (Inglis, 1997).

(e) The development perspective

Development as a concept does not operate in a vacuum but it overlaps with notions of empowerment and emancipation. This study refers to development that is linked to capacity building and self-reliance through participation and the role that literacy plays in bringing about this kind of development.

Development can be defined as:

.. an improvement of the level of living of the people, the enabling of
communities to become increasingly self-reliant and a change in attitude or
mind that results in a change of behaviour and the pursuit of a new course of
action. People usually do things because it is meaningful to them, either
through dictates of tradition or through a free choice between alternatives on
the basis of prevalent values (Ferrinho in Swanepoel et al, 1980: 39).

The role which literacy plays in development is a highly contested one. The
fundamental debate revolves around the extent to which the attainment of literacy
affects the development of individuals and communities. 'Theoretical positions
regarding the impact of literacy on development vary' (Lyster, 2003: 61). One view is
that literacy is associated with development (correlated but not causally related), but
that factors other than literacy are primarily responsible for and crucial to
development. The more dominant view is that literacy is directly, essentially and
causally related to development. This view remains dominant despite cautions that the
link is not simple or automatic.

According to Graff (1979) the context in which literacy is taught or acquired is
essential if literacy programmes are to succeed in developing learners. He argues that
to understand literacy one needs to consider historically specific material and cultural
contexts. He believes that the meaning and contribution of literacy cannot be
presumed but rather must be a distinct focus of research. I concur with this argument
because I also believe that literacy cannot occur in a vacuum.

The common element that seems to be shared by discussions of literacy,
empowerment, emancipation and development is participation by learners or people
to improve their conditions so that they are self-reliant and take their own decisions.
Graff (1979: 8) echoes this in his conclusion when he maintains that 'rudimentary
literacy alone is not enough'. He believes that the world would change if people
became literate and if they also became critical, constructive people who are able to
translate ideas into actions whether individually or collectively.

1.6 Print media

The term 'print media' is usually associated with professionally produced publications such as books, manuals, magazines and newspapers. Printed material is the most widely known, widely used and generally accepted medium, (Gwala, 2003:16) as opposed to some electronic media which may be inaccessible to poor illiterate people like the ones targeted by *Learn with Echo*. The role played by print media varies from creating awareness and giving information to providing practice for reading.

The main focus of this study was on the use of *Learn with Echo*, a newspaper supplement designed specifically for literacy, empowerment and development. More and more facilitators and educators use newspaper supplements in their classrooms because:

- they are cheap and easily accessible
- they provide some of the best motivational and timely resources
- they deal with topical issues
- and are the most up-to-date 'textbooks' on the market

Notwithstanding the pronounced potential associated with printed media to effect literacy, it is important that its shortcomings be mentioned as well. Some of them are that:

- print material may be fragile and susceptible to wear and tear (Gwala, 2003: 17)
- distribution may be difficult.

Special care also needs to be taken to ensure that the material is meaningful and interesting to the learners. Land (2002: 19) argues that if learners have a strong positive reaction to the content of the text, they can learn with less difficulty and have little difficulty in retaining what they have learnt.

Moreover, writers of newspaper supplements might have a specific purpose to achieve with their material but the text may be mediated by 'variables within the institutional context' (Mbatha, 2004: 26). The facilitator as mediator has a very important role to

play as he or she has an opportunity to shape and constrain what learners do with the text in the classroom.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, print seems to be the most practical and basic medium that could be introduced in adult literacy classrooms for effective learning and teaching in and outside the classroom.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background to the study, and presented the research problem and research questions. The rationale and aims of the study were outlined. Key concepts used in the study were explained in order to give the reader a contextual understanding of their use in the thesis. The limitations and outline of the chapters is given below.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical underpinnings of the study by examining different learning theories, models, and frameworks which illuminate some aspects of adult learning.

Chapter 3 is a description of the research design and methodology. It gives a theoretical justification for the methodology chosen for this study. It also describes some small scale aspects of qualitative methods used in the study. Methods of data collection and analysis are also described in detail.

Chapter 4 is a presentation and analysis of data. The key themes discussed in Chapter 4 are the following:

- *Learn with Echo* as an educational/pedagogical tool

- Content and relevance of materials

- Response to language level, layout and the use of pictures

- The language of learning

- Information, knowledge and empowerment

- Perspective transformation

Chapter 5 considers the conclusions of the study and their implications.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the study was based in adult education, this review gives a summary of the principles of adult learning as formulated by some of the leading theorists in this field. It is important to note, however, that in as much as there is no single theory that explains human learning in general, no single theory of adult learning has emerged to unify the field. Rather, there are a number of theories, models, and frameworks, each of which illuminates some aspects of adult learning (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: 271).

In the following pages, I discuss andragogy, experiential learning, the radical approach, transformational theory, reception theory and the role played by mother tongue as a language of learning in classrooms of adults. All of these contribute to the theoretical matrix underpinning this study.

2.2 Andragogy

2.2.1 What is andragogy?

One of the most well known theories that argues that adults do not learn the same way as children is termed andragogy. The architect of andragogy is Malcolm Knowles. Knowles defines 'andragogy' as 'the art and science of helping adults to learn' (Knowles, 1980: 43). Andragogy, which contrasts in many ways with the traditional principles of pedagogy (the art and science of helping children to learn), has established itself as an educational field in its own right.

Knowles believed that the adult learner is qualitatively different from the child learner and that the differences justify a separate discipline and necessitates a very different approach to the learner. Thus, if learning of adults is to be made meaningful, the adult educator or the facilitator needs to be aware of these differences and be cautious in his or her practice.

This theory was deemed relevant for this study because of its basis on five assumptions about the adult learner. Firstly, Knowles argues that as a person, the

learner's self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being. Secondly, he states that an adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning. Thirdly, Knowles argues that the readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the development tasks of his or her social role. Fourthly, there is a change in time perspective as people mature; from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus an adult is more problem centred than subject centred in learning. Lastly, Knowles argues, adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones (Knowles, 1980: 43). These factors have helped to distinguish adult learners from child learners in mainstream education.

Although adult and child learners should always be treated with respect, some adult education facilitators may not be aware of this distinction and might dictate to adult learners and treat them in a patronising way, and sometimes be sarcastic. Research also shows that adult learners should be involved in selecting what will be useful to them or they will simply leave classrooms or literacy projects. One of the principles of andragogy is respect amongst adult learners themselves and between adult learners and their facilitator. There should be a spirit of mutuality between the facilitators and adult learners as joint enquirers because adult learners come with loads of experience that could also be used as a resource. The theory of andragogy gives adult practitioners (facilitators and educators) and adult learners 'a badge of identity' (Knowles, 1980: 43) that distinguishes them from other education areas.

Land and Fotheringham (1999:14) also argue that adult learners do not learn the same way as children but that there are similarities between the learning processes for children and adult learners. They are all, for example, stimulated by engaging in a range of activities, need material that is interesting to them, need to learn in a cognitively engaging way and they need to be given respect as learners. But teaching adults is different in many ways. For example:

- Children see the educator as a parent figure. They expect to be controlled by her or him. Adult learners expect to be respected by the facilitator and vice versa. Adult education is characterised by elements of mutuality and collaboration between adult learners and facilitators.

- Interactions between adult learners and their facilitator does not involve discipline. A facilitator is not expected to reprimand an adult learner.
- The adult learner plays a primary role in the determination of learning objectives. There is usually a collaborative negotiation between what the adult learner wants and what the facilitator believes is also beneficial to the learner.

2.2.2 Critique of andragogy

Although the theory of andragogy is a rallying point for those who are interested in adult education as separate from other areas of education, it has not gone uncontested and has stimulated much controversy, philosophical debate and critical analysis.

Davenport and Davenport (1985: 158), like many other theorists, argue that the definition of andragogy as 'the art and science of helping adults learn' is not particularly useful as a basis for empirical research. Even the more detailed definition of andragogy as 'both a philosophy and a method of adult education in which the learner is perceived to be a mature, motivated, voluntary, and equal participant in a learning relationship with the facilitator whose role is to aid the learner in the achievement of his or her primarily self-determined learning objectives' (Rachal, 2002: 210) falls short for empirical testing.

The above definition is flawed, for example, because it doesn't take into account implicit power relations between the facilitator and the adult learner. This raises the question of whether adult learners and facilitators are ever equal in terms of participation. There is also the issue of the adult learner dictating what he or she wants to learn versus what the facilitator believes is essential to learn.

Furthermore, there is a problem with Knowles' basic assumption that becoming adult means becoming self-directed. Rachal (2002) argues that the concept of self-directed learning is very limiting and cannot be regarded as an ultimate adult educational goal. Rachal (ibid) maintains that in other kinds of adult learning the 'we' is more important than the 'self'. For example, adult learning that happens in churches, families and communities are more collaborative in nature. So, there are other factors

involved, for example, what type of adult learning is happening and also who is involved in the specified adult learning.

Hartree (1984, in Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: 209), for example, argues that andragogy is not a theory of learning but it is perhaps a set of principles of good practice. She noted that the assumptions of andragogy can be read as descriptions of the adult learner. She argues that Knowles' assumptions have a lot to offer and are recognized as good practice but that he failed to establish a unified theory of learning in a systematic way.

Brookfield (1986, in Merriam and Caffarella 1991: 273) raises the question of whether andragogy is a proven theory. Brookfield wanted to find out to what extent a set of well grounded principles of good practice can be found in andragogy. He argues that self-direction is more a desired outcome than a given condition, and he believes that being problem-centred can lead to a reductionist view of learning. The only assumption that Brookfield finds grounded, is experience. But he also questions it saying that the quantity of experience that adults have does not necessarily translate into quality experience that can become a resource for learning. He argues that some life experiences can become barriers to learning. For example, an adult learner may have failed somehow in life adventures and would come to class with that experience of fear of failure. This may be a barrier to learning. He further argues that children in certain situations may have a range of experiences qualitatively richer than some adults.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991: 275) criticise Knowles for focusing on the learner and thus ignoring the sociohistorical context in which learning takes place. They argue that in his description of assumptions of andragogy, there is little or no awareness that the person is socially situated, and a product of sociohistorical and cultural context. Education of children and adults do not occur in a vacuum. What one needs or wants to learn, what opportunities are available, the manner in which one learns, are all to a large extent determined by the society in which one lives.

As a result of some of the criticisms, Knowles (1980) later scrutinised his original assumptions and their implications for practice by educators in and out of adult

education. This resulted in Knowles changing his original stance that andragogy characterized only adult learning. In 1980 he argued that pedagogy-andragogy represents a continuum and that both approaches are appropriate with children and adults, depending on the situation. This indicates a shift in how Knowles ended up defining andragogy. This shift has been acknowledged in the recent definitions of andragogy obtained online, for example, Krajinc (1989: 19) defines andragogy as... 'the art and science of helping adults learn and the study of adult education theory, processes, and technology to that end'. Other theorists include 'education and learning of adults in all its forms of expression' (Savicevic, 1999: 97). Reischmann (2003) offers the term 'lifewide education' to describe the opening of this new field, thus encompassing formal and informal, intentional and institutionalized and autodidactic learning (http://web.uni-bamberg.de/ppp/andragogik/andragogy/index.htm).

2.2.3 Conclusion

Andragogy has been the primary model of adult learning for nearly thirty years, although little empirical work has been done to test its validity. Merriam and Caffarella (1991: 277) state that, although the theory has flaws, practitioners who work with adult learners continue to find Knowles' andragogy to be a helpful rubric for better understanding adult learners. Thus, Knowles' andragogy has relevance to this study because it sheds light in understanding certain aspects of adult learning. The theory of andragogy is not perfect, but it constitutes one piece of the rich mosaic of adult learning.

Nevertheless, I think that the field of adult education has gone through a process of growth and development. As a result, 'andragogy' today has a wider definition used to label the discipline that reflects and researches adult education and learning of adults.

A wider definition of andragogy also emphasises lifelong learning of adults. In this sense it not only includes institutionalised forms of adult learning, but also self-directed, informal and non–intentional forms of learning. These latest definitions are seen as relevant to this study because they don't limit andragogy to a teaching situation but also other forms of adult learning (refer to chapter 4 for perspective transformation).

2.3 Experiential learning

Another theory relevant to this study is that of experiential learning. According to Aitchison (2004: 21) an experience is an 'actual observation of or practical acquaintance with facts or events' or an 'event that affects one'. In this study, this definition suggested that an experience is an event or a happening that you either see or participate in, and that has an impact of some sort on you. So, experiential learning is learning that one gains from an experience or experiences.

The significance of experience in adult learning is expressed in Linderman's 'frequently quoted aphorism' that:

> experience is the adult learner's living textbook (1926: 7) and that adult education is therefore, 'a continuing process of evaluating experiences'. This emphasis on experience is central to the concept of andragogy that has evolved to describe adult education practice in many different societies (http://www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield_Adult Learning.cfm).

Sometimes called informal and incidental learning, experiential learning in adult education is associated with practices related to reflection on concrete experience. Learning through reflection on experience is linked to constructivism, a school of thought that believes that people reflect on lived experience and interpret and generalize these experiences to construct their knowledge when they interact with the environment and others.

Experiential learning was deemed relevant for this study because the study investigated adult learners. Adult learners come to a learning environment with ideas, knowledge, attitudes, values and beliefs, skills and abilities that they have gained throughout their period of existence. Because of experience that they have gained throughout their lives, adult learners are not, therefore, clean slates or empty vessels in which to pump knowledge. Experiential learning ensures that new learning builds on what adult learners already know. It helps adult learners to reflect upon and learn

from the wide range of real life experiences that they already have. Many theorists echo the significance of experiential learning. Fenwick and Parsons (1998), for example, argue that experiential learning refers to a process of human cognition. They maintain that experience embraces reflective as well as kinesthetic activity, conscious and unconscious dynamics, and all manner of interaction among subjects, texts, and context.

Kolb (1984) as cited by Jarvis (1987: 18) supports the notion of experiential learning and recognises that adults are exposed to a multitude of life experiences. But he further argues that not all experience educates. Not all of us learn from experiences we go through. Learning from experience becomes meaningful only when there is reflective thought and internal processing of that experience by the learner, in a way that actively makes sense of the experience, links the experience to previous learning, and transforms the learner's previous understandings in some way.

Boud and Walker (1991) enrich Kolb's contribution by acknowledging that specific contexts shape an individual's experience in different ways. These theorists also looked at how differences among individuals influence the sort of learning developed through reflection on experience. They are particularly interested in differences brought about by past histories, learning strategies, and emotions. Boud and Walker find that during a particular experience we each notice and intervene with different elements of the milieu depending on our individual predispositions.

Dewey (1938, in Javis 1987: 16) also argued that not all experience educates. We sometimes go through episodes in life but remain unchanged. Sometimes we learn things that are not beneficial to our growth and development. Furthermore, the experiential learning theory is criticized for portraying experience and reflection on experience in isolation, that is, not acknowledging the significance of the context in which learning occurs. Experience does not exist in 'splendid isolation' (Jarvis, 1987: 16). Experiential learning cannot be discussed apart from its political, social, and cultural contexts.

Foley (1999) proposed what he calls emancipatory experiential learning. He believes that the actual knowledge people acquire through social action experience includes

self-confidence, and critical understanding of how power works in society. Foley argues that the most important knowledge is people learning that they can act and that action can make a difference. Foley's argument affirms the notion of the radical approach proposed by Paulo Freire (1970: 27). The radical approach (discussed further below) is thus deemed relevant to this study because of its understanding of the notions of development, conscientisation and empowerment, all goals of the articles that *Learn with Echo* produces.

2.4 The radical approach

The radical approach is a theory of learning which was conceptualised by the Brazilian educator and philosopher, Paulo Freire in the early seventies. This theory was based on the basic concepts of conscientisation, dialogue and generative themes. Freire's theory is set within a larger framework of radical social change. This is a theory which he believed would bring about a relevant pedagogy of the oppressed people. Freire remarked that 'it seemed profoundly unjust that men and women were not able to read and write' (Freire, 1970: 27). However, equally Freire recognised that 'illiteracy is just one of the concrete expressions of an unjust social reality'. As a result he developed a new approach to literacy which linked 'learning to read the word with learning to read the world' (Freire, 1995: 40). These remarks are of great significance to this study and they made me realise that this theory is also relevant to the study because participants involved are in adult classrooms in order to rid themselves of dehumanizing illiteracy. Moreover, this study attempted to find out if *Learn with Echo* pages are relevant to adult learners' lives and if they contribute towards helping them to be able to 'read the word and the world'.

Paulo Freire criticised existing education systems saying that they were 'domesticating'. He called them 'banking systems' where learners are not active participants but are empty vessels into which knowledge is deposited by an 'all-knowing educator' (http://217.206.205.24/resources/publications/EA8Eng/obiturary.htm). Instead, he came up with a liberatory kind of education which was based on dialogue, generating a process that encouraged reflection and action:

if learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorising and repeating given syllables, words and phrases, but rather, of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself and the profound significance of language (Freire 1970: 105).

In Freire's (1975) conception of powerlessness, people become powerless in assuming the role of 'object' acted upon by the environment, rather than 'subject' acting in and on the world. Powerlessness arises from passive acceptance of oppressive cultural 'givens', or surrender to a 'culture of silence'.

Keiffer (1984), a community activist described her sense of powerlessness as follows:

it would never have occurred to me to have expressed an opinion on anything ... It was inconceivable that my opinion had any value ... You don't even know the word power exists ...

(http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/bien/Files/Papers/2002Handler.pdf)

Empowerment thus helps people to start seeing themselves as being able to make a difference and being worthy of voicing opinions.

Freire (1970) popularized the notion of 'conscientisation' to represent the awakening of critical awareness or consciousness. Critical consciousness is characterized by the development of a critical awareness of an issue, which exceeds everyday understanding of problems.

Paulo Freire's central theme is dialogue. He believed that:

democratic education is based on dialogue and mutual interaction between 'teacher' and 'student' with the goal of eliminating the distinction between the two. In reality, the teacher has some 'knowledge,' but so too does the student. There are things each does not know. In participatory education, both become active partners in learning (Freire, 1970: 96).

Furthermore, he believed that dialogue is part of human nature. He maintained that

people should be allowed to discover and discovery is a social process and discussion

works as a solidifier. He believed that 'the moment of dialogue between people is a

moment of transformation. Freire saw the dialogue of the elite as vertical. He called it

"banking" pedagogy. The learner only needs to listen while the educator "deposits"

loads of knowledge into his or her head. It follows then that 'Banking Education and

problematization' are opposite ideological stances on how knowledge is made

(http://www.ac.wwu.edu/~sibrown/freire.htm).

Freire maintained that dialogue which occurs between learner and educator is of
significance if learning has to occur. He believed that:

> all people, no matter their education or class, are capable of critically thinking
> about and responding to their world by using dialogue. Education in this sense
> is therefore transformative, and the engagement of learners in this process can
> profoundly change their sense of self, the world, and their perception of the
> limitations' they encounter. Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is
> also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is not
> communication, and without communication there can be no true education
> (www.mc.maricopa.edu/other/engagement/Journal/Issue2/Chapman.jsp).

In order to encourage dialogue, writers of *Learn with Echo* pages believe that issues
discussed in class must be close to the daily lives and reality of the participants. This
includes all things that people feel strongly about, for example, their hopes, fears,
frustrations, anger and anxieties. These things, Freire called "generative themes".
These themes are discovered by listening to, and learning from, the learners about the
issues that mean the most to them. As a result of this notion, *Learn with Echo* writers
take into consideration views, ideas and opinions of adult learners through meetings
with their facilitators and letters that learners write through a freepost system.
Feedback received in this way is used as basis for developing some of the pages that
Learn with Echo writes.

Freire believed that thematic investigation leads to awareness of self and reality, and to liberation. The obstacles to people's full humanization are the themes of that epoch, and the interacting themes of an epoch are its "thematic universe." Freire believes that the fundamental theme of our epoch is domination/liberation. Another basic theme is the anthropological concept of culture. Freire states that:

> one of the basic themes (and one which I consider central and indispensable) is the anthropological concept of culture. Whether men are peasants or urban workers, learning to read or in a post-literacy program, the starting point of their search to know more (in the instrumental meaning of the term) is the debate of the concept. As they discuss the world of culture, they express their level of awareness of reality, in which various themes are implicit. Their discussion touches upon other aspects of reality, which comes to be perceived in an increasingly critical manner...
> http://217.206.205.24/resources/publications/EA8Eng/obiturary.htm

I also believe that the theme of culture is indispensable as it gives people an opportunity to explore their own meaning schemes so as to be able to interact differently with people of other cultures, as well as people with whom they interact in their daily lives.

Freire's work is indispensable for this study and will continue to be indispensable for other projects that aim to conceive of a democratic and liberatory education. His contribution is relevant for this study because the insights that it makes available will remain of tremendous value to all who are committed to the struggle against oppression and rectifying injustices of the past for the creation a just society; for example, *Learn with Echo*'s contribution in the fight against illiteracy and the overall struggle for national developments in the Third World countries.

Although radical approach as a theory of learning is indispensable, it is not enough for one to understand adult learning. In addition, a type of learning that works towards effecting peoples' frame of reference should also be considered. This brings us to the theory of transformative learning which will be discussed in detail below.

2.5 Transformative learning

Basically, transformative learning is the kind of learning we do as we make meaning of our lives. Transformative learning as a theory has become very popular in adult education because it emphasises more than just classroom learning; it involves learning about our lives.

One of the best known theorists in this area is Jack Mezirow. He started studying this area in the 1970s. Transformative learning centers around three key concepts, that is, the centrality of experience, the nature of critical reflection, and the connection between transformational learning and development in adulthood.

Transformative theory foregrounds how adults interpret their life experiences, how they make meaning. Mezirow (1995:162) defines learning as a meaning making activity. This argument is supported by other theorists like Cambourne (2002) who argues that for learners to make meaning, learning should be authentic and contextualised. He argues that this is the most effective form of learning. Such learning makes sense to adult learners, and is not only less complicated, but it also is more likely to result in robust, transferable, useful, and mindful learning. In contrast, learning that learners cannot make much sense of leads to automatic, rigid, mindless experience which doesn't contribute much to the development of adult learners.

Mezirow (1995) maintains that the degree to which learners can make sense of what is learned in any learning situation is, therefore, a function of the degree to which they can place it within a context that helps them make connections. This emphasizes the fact that what is learned cannot be separated from the context in which it is learned. Savery and Duffy (1995) echo this by arguing that we cannot talk about what is learned separately from how it is learned, as if a variety of experiences all lead to the same understanding. Rather what we understand is a function of the content, the

context, the activity of the learner, and perhaps more importantly the goals of the learner.

Mezirow further argues that learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action (Mezirow, 1995: 163). Transformative learning is firmly anchored in life experiences. A process of reflection is crucial to this kind of learning. As a result, adult education practitioners need to be aware that adults bring with them a depth and breadth of experience that can be used as a resource for theirs' and others' learning (Knowles, 1970). This study tried to establish the extent to which materials that *Learn with Echo* develops build on learners' prior experience.

The notion of prior experience implies that learning is cumulative in nature, that is, that nothing has meaning or is learned in isolation from prior experience (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: 320). Dewey (1938: 148) argues that for learning to occur from life experiences it must reflect two principles, continuity and interaction. He argues that continuity means that every experience both takes up something from that which has gone before and modifies in some way the quality of that which comes after. He argues that an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at that time, constitutes his environment.

Transformative learning is deemed relevant for this study because materials that *Learn with Echo* produces deal with what happens in people's lives (see appendix 5). Some of the articles, like those about xenophobia, give adult learners a chance to start questioning their assumptions about their beliefs and attitudes and this has the possibility of eventually leading to change in their meaning schemes, thus resulting in transformation.

2.6 Reception theory

Reception theory is alternatively called transactional theory or reader response theory. Lyster (2003:14) argues that reception theory focuses on what takes place in the mind of the reader while reading. The reader creates hypotheses about what the text means and changes expectations she had before starting and as she proceeds to read the text.

The reader reads forwards and backwards, predicting and recollecting, in a complex and dynamic process (Lyster, 2003:15).

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According to Rosenblatt (1994: 152), the concept of transaction, the transactional nature of language can be applied to the analysis of the reading process:

> every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. Instead of two fixed entities acting on one another, the reader and the text are two aspects of a total dynamic situation. The meaning is not found ready-made in the text or in the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between the reader and the text.

Adult learners in the classrooms have to transact with the text and 'meaning' is what happens during the transaction. The reader searches for meaning among a spectrum of possible meanings. This brings us to the schema theory which says that readers are in a better position to comprehend what they are reading if they use prior knowledge (schemata) to construct meaning.

Schemata reflect the experiences, conceptual understanding, attitudes, values, and skills a reader brings to a text situation. Rumelhart (1988) as cited by Vacca (2002: 191) argues that schemata have been called the building blocks of cognition and a cognitive map to the world because they represent elaborative knowledge networks that learners use to make sense of new stimuli and situations. For comprehension to occur, the reader must activate or build a schema that fits with information encountered in a text (Vacca, 2002: 191). When a good match occurs, a schema allows the reader to organize text information more effectively, make inferences and fill in knowledge gaps in a text, and elaborate on the material.

Merriam and Cafferella (1998) argue that people often form schemata about events as well as objects; such event schemata are often called 'scripts'. These schemata, which may be embedded within other schemata or may stand alone, are filled with descriptive materials and are seen as the building blocks of the cognitive process.

They argue that schemata are not passive storehouses of experience, but are also active processes whose primary function is to facilitate the use of knowledge.

Therefore adult learners come to classrooms with different configurations of knowledge. This links to Mezirow's notion of 'meaning perspectives' or 'habits of expectation'. Each adult learner comes with different schemata sets and many leave the classroom situation having learned new or different things. Rumelhart (1977) as cited by Caffarella (1998) argues that there are three different modes of learning that fit the schema framework: accretion, meaning the daily accumulation of information that is usually equated with learning facts; tuning, which includes slow and gradual changes in current schema; and restructuring, involving both the creation of new schema and re-organization of those already stored.

Thus, different readers may come up with different meanings. Birch (1991) concurs with this notion when he argues that there is nothing like an objective literary meaning but merely differing accounts of what the text has done to different individuals.

Baker (1996) argues that the readers bring their own meanings to text and maintains that the meaning individuals give to text depends on their culture, personal experiences and histories, personal understandings of the themes and tone of text, and the particular social context where reading occurs.

In this discussion the use of the term 'transactional', besides the reading event, also focuses on the ability of the tutor to facilitate discussions in which learners collaborate to form joint interpretations of text and on the interactive exchange between learners in the classroom.

Duke and Pearson (2002) summarise the basic components of transactional activity in the classroom as follows:

Cognitive Strategies	Interpretive Strategies
Thinking aloud	Imagining how a character might feel; identifying with a character.
Constructing images	Creating themes
Summarising	Reading for multiple meanings
Predicting (prior knowledge activation)	Creating literal/figurative distinctions
Questioning	Looking for a consistent point of view
Clarifying	Relating text to personal experience
Text structure analysis	Responding to certain text features such as point of view, tone or mood.

On the basis of the above, this study maintains that most adult learners come to class with prior knowledge as a basis for learning and it is therefore critical to investigate the role that this knowledge plays in learning using *Learn with Echo* pages. In thinking through the possible connections of prior knowledge to learning in adulthood, the reception theory and the concept of schemata provided a useful framework within which to understand this process.

2.7 Mother-tongue as a language of learning

Language is one of the issues that cuts across developmental learning activities. The choice of which language to use and the level of complexity should therefore be considered essential to effective development of adult learning materials. South Africa is characterized by linguistic diversity, and in producing adult basic education material for a broad readership the choice of language is a complex one. In the course of producing Learn with Echo as a newspaper supplement for adults with limited literacy skills, writers often find it necessary to print some articles in IsiZulu and some in English or the same article in both languages. Bilingualism for speakers of

indigenous languages in South African education is not an option but a means of survival because of the superiority in status of English in many spheres of life. Lyster (1992:12) argues that in South Africa definitions of literacy are complicated by the fact that knowledge of a second language, usually English, is as vital for survival and development as the ability to read and write in an African language. English is generally considered a language of access, and competence in its use is crucial in all areas relating to political or economic power in South Africa.

Luckett (1991) argues that the use of both languages may help to encourage the development of bilingualism in South African homes. But, I think, South Africans have to ensure that this applies equally to both the dominant and the dominated cultures. It is essential to take cognisance of the 'paradox of literacy' (Gee, 1990) by bearing in mind that literacy is a socially constructed phenomenon and guard against cultural imperialism. This endeavour should not promote change of identity and cognitive style which may conflict with the culture of the readers' primary socialisation.

Nevertheless, I think bilingualism promotes linguistic diversity. I think it could have an effect of easing social tensions and making diverse groups within the society more willing to work with one another.

Even though many people encourage bilingualism, research shows that learners and readers need to become literate in their mother tongue first in order to form a solid grammatical and cognitive base for learning a second language.

Internationally, there is growing support for using mother tongue to teach basic literacy. If one learns to read and write it is best to know the language one is taught in. Many theorists argue that to teach basic literacy in a language other than mother tongue is a recipe 'for pedagogic disaster' (Lauglo, 2001). It also potentially undermines, and often leads to the extinction of learners' culture. Furthermore, the findings of the Threshold Project (Macdonald, 1990: 48) indicate that the literacy performance of English second language learners in English will be enhanced by strengthening the cognitive and academic language skills in indigenous languages, like IsiZulu.

Snow (1998) concurs with research findings which demonstrate that learners who acquire literacy in their home language and transition gradually to the national language perform better and faster academically at school than those learners who study only in a national language.

According to Mbatha (2001) the use of mother tongue in education is both sound and pragmatic. She argues that mother tongue serves as a stepping stone and allows learners to adjust to schooling and helps them understand concepts they would have otherwise found difficult in another language.

However, whilst the mother tongue as a basis of education is upheld in South Africa, English is seen as the language of opportunity because it is used in the business world. Many black South Africans, including myself, still feel that English proficiency is essential to educational success, occupational achievement, and socioeconomic mobility. As a result, many adult learners learn mother tongue as a basis for learning English at a later stage. My experience as an adult educator is that learners will demand to learn English as soon as they are able to read and write in isiZulu. This is the case because most adult learners do not associate proficiency in mother tongue with any educational and cognitive benefits. This is so because in most black communities people who are fluent in English are regarded as clever and are respected as compared to people who cannot speak English. Unless there is evidence that there are equal benefits of learning in any of the South African languages, people will always see English as superior. Therefore, a change of status of languages in the Constitution does not necessarily mean that the status of languages has changed in practice.

This situation poses a threat to indigenous languages as languages of communication and learning. The influence of English over indigenous languages has a negative effect as these languages are looked down upon, especially by young people. And as the older generation leaves the world one by one, there won't be any people left to speak the indigenous languages in our country unless all stakeholders work towards changing the situation. A language, like a species, can head for extinction if it is threatened by a powerful invader (_Echo_, 2003), if it no longer has a large enough or

young enough or economically viable enough population to speak it and if its habitat is destroyed.

2.8 Conclusion

The theories discussed in this review are a significant point of departure to my study because of their relevance to adult learning. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, there is no single theory that unifies the field of adult education but there are integrated theories which illuminate different aspects on adult learning. Some of these theories have been discussed discretely for purposes of clarity.

The discussion of different theories has highlighted the following important aspects about adult learning:

- Adults do not learn in the same way as children and adult education practitioners should therefore be aware of the differences to make learning for adults more meaningful.
- Adults come to class with a reservoir of experience which should be used as a starting point for learning and they learn through reflection on lived experience and interpret these experiences to construct knowledge when they interact with the environment and others.
- Adult learning needs to be a combination of the 'word and the world' so that it is relevant to adult learners' daily lives.
- The adult learning environment should be characterised by dialogue and mutual interaction between adult learners and the facilitators.
- Adult learning does not occur in a vacuum but needs to be authentic and contextualised.
- When adult learners transact with the text, they use prior knowledge (schemata) to construct meaning and they come up with different meanings as they bring to class different configurations of knowledge.

This chapter also covered the debate about the importance of the use of mother-tongue for initial learning. It has been argued that basic education in one's mother-tongue is not only feasible but it also has educational, cultural and social benefits.

Chapter three focuses on the research design and methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the research design and methodology selected for this study. This will involve describing and exploring the theoretical underpinnings and arguments for the research design, sampling, instruments used to gather data, and the entire process of data collection.

3.2 Establishing a research orientation

In this study I have worked within a qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative research approach. Qualitative research depends on multi-method strategies to elicit data. This study used interviews and observations as tools to elicit data for the study. In other words, it focussed on listening to responses of participants, took consideration of their subjective experiences and included observations of participants in their classroom environment. A variety of techniques of data collection were used to enhance the validity, reliability and authenticity of this research.

Qualitative research also includes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the study involved. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Hammersley (1993:16) states that:

> Qualitative methods are privileged with the naturalistic approach and thus do not have the problem of inappropriately fixing meanings where they are variable and renegotiable in relation to their context of use.

Keeves (1998: 4) supports the above assertion when he argues that:
> as qualitative research is concerned with understanding the behaviour of real-life events or situations, it enables the investigator to ask people who act as social agents, what they perceive as their reality and what is important and meaningful in their context.

Research questions that I formulated for this particular study were trying to elicit greater understandings of perceptions, attitudes, and processes involved in the

phenomenon, which is the use of *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement, being studied in a classroom context.

Furthermore, the interpretative nature of the research required me to be immersed in the situation and the phenomenon that I was studying. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) state that this allows the researcher to assume interactive social roles in which he or she records observations and interactions with participants. I, therefore, believe that the techniques I used in this study befit the qualitative approach to research.

3.3 The sample

3.3.1 The sites investigated

A sample of three adult education sites in and around Pietermaritzburg was used for data collection. These sites were selected by using purposive sampling which is one of the non-probability sampling methods. In purposive sampling, a researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his or her 'judgement of their typicality' (Cohen et al, 2001: 103) In this way, the researcher builds up a sample that is satisfactory to her specific needs. As explained below, a sample was chosen for a specific purpose.

The following is a profile of the sites investigated and are all adult learning centres:

Site A

The first site is an adult education centre situated in central Pietermaritzburg. This centre serves a wider community of educationally disadvantaged people in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area. It is easily accessible to many people. The centre provides access to basic, and further education and training for adults and out of school youths. This centre is very well resourced. It boasts a Resources Centre which is equipped with a variety of titles suitable for a diverse audience like ABET learners, high school students and the general public.

Site B

The second site is situated about 40km north east of the city of Pietermaritzburg. The area is semi-urban and is regarded as a refugee settlement because it is inhabited by people who fled political violence in the 1980s. The majority of the people in the area are poor, unemployed and educationally deprived. Some of them (including participants) attend adult classes that take place in a local primary school in the afternoons. The host primary school is poorly resourced and does not have a library. In class, adult learners use 'Asifunde', an IsiZulu book for beginners donated by the Centre for Adult Education, and *Learn with Echo*.

Site C

The third site runs classes at a community library in a small country town situated about 40km south east of Pietermaritzburg. This area is characterized by commercial farming like sugarcane cultivation, livestock, dairy and chicken farming. The majority of black people inhabiting the town outskirts have never received formal education. In many households people are unemployed. A few of those who are employed work in the farms and most females work as domestic workers in households in town. Although adult classes take place in the community library, there is no learning material in mother tongue suitable for learning of beginners. Adult learners and facilitators do use *Learn with Echo* as an educational resource.

Data was collected from these three different sites in order to increase the degree of representativeness of the study. *Learn with Echo* has a diverse audience and therefore it is necessary to draw samples across learning contexts and across different kinds of content material. This was done in order to ensure that the findings are, as far as possible, transferable, that is, that they help to understand other contexts or groups similar to those studied.

3.3.2 Criteria for selection of participants

- All learners should be adult learners
- All learners should be doing MTL level 1
- Mother tongue learnt should be IsiZulu
- Facilitators should be teaching MTL level 1 and
- They must be using *Learn with Echo* as an educational tool in their classrooms

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3.3.3 The units of analysis that were used in the study were adult learners and facilitators:

Interviews and classroom observations constituted the primary sources of data. Interviews were conducted with:

(a) six adult learners, two from each Mother Tongue Literacy (MTL) class per centre. The following is a profile of adult learners who participated in the study:

	Site A	Site B	Site C
LEARNER A	• Female • 49 years • Single • Unemployed	▪ Male ▪ 39 years ▪ Married ▪ Farm worker	▪ Female ▪ 35 ▪ Married ▪ Domestic worker
LEARNER B	▪ Female ▪ 37 years • Married ▪ Vendor	▪ Female ▪ 40 years ▪ Single • Unemployed	▪ Female ▪ 36 years ▪ Married ▪ Unemployed

(b) One facilitator from each centre was interviewed. This makes a total of **three** facilitators. The following is a profile of the facilitators who participated:

	Site A	Site B	Site C
Age	37 years	39 years	22 years
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Race	Black	Black	Black
Qualifications	Matric + one year ABET Certificate	Matric + Four months training in ABET	Matric and no formal training in adult education
Experience as facilitator	4 years	5 years	7 months

(c) With regards to observations, one class from each centre was visited three times. This means that a total of **nine** lessons were observed for this study. The classes observed were all doing level 1 IsiZulu mother tongue literacy.

(d) Interview prompts

Learn with Echo newspaper articles were used during interviews. Articles were displayed on the table and learners referred to them as examples in trying to answer questions. Articles were also used as resource materials for each lesson during class observations.

Breakdown of observations and interviews conducted

UNITS OF ANALYSIS	CENTRE 1	CENTRE 2	CENTRE 3	TOTAL
Adult Learners interviewed	2	2	2	6
Facilitators interviewed	1	1	1	3
Classes observed	3	3	3	9
Total of units	6	6	6	18

3.4 Ethical considerations

The essential purpose of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants, although there are many additional ethical considerations that should be addressed in the planning and implementation of research work. There are a number of well-known cases of unethical research practice that have led to harm being inflicted upon persons, and that have brought disrepute to the researcher and their field of study (Kimmel, 1996). I therefore felt that it was essential to negotiate consent with all the participants and gatekeepers.

Firstly, written permission was sought from management of adult education centres to use their adult centres as research sites. It was very important for me to find an ethical way of becoming part of the setting so that I could understand it from 'from inside out'. Verbal negotiations were entered into between a researcher of this study, adult learners and facilitators to arrange to interview them and to observe their lessons. Before visiting the adult education centres, I prepared 'informed consent' forms to be read and signed by adult learners and facilitators if they agree to be participants in the

study. The forms were written in IsiZulu because this is the language that prospective participants could read and understand. Firstly, I explained my being a researcher to all participants in IsiZulu. Negotiations were entered into between myself as researcher, adult learners and facilitators to arrange to interview them and to observe their lessons. I also explained and assured participants that data collected would under no circumstances be used for any purposes other than for this research.

Secondly, permission to record all interviews was sought from adult learners and facilitators prior to the interviews. A tape recorder is useful because it allows the researcher to concentrate on listening and prompting rather than trying to capture detailed data through making notes (Cohen et al, 2001: 281).

Another important issue was the identity of the participants. Researchers often give pseudonyms or codes to participants they have observed or to institutions in which they have carried out observations. I also did the same for purposes of confidentiality and anonymity.

After I had had permission to conduct interviews and lesson observations in the sites, I trialled both interview and observation schedules. I visited two of the sites that were selected for this study once. I observed one lesson and interviewed one facilitator and two learners from each centre. These participants were included in the final sample of this study.

The purpose of these trials was to find out if I had asked all the questions necessary for the study, if there were any ambiguous questions and also to eliminate repetition of questions. On the basis of these trials a few questions were added, some were rephrased and none of the questions were excluded.

3.5 Instruments of data collection

Data was collected using the following different types of techniques:
- Semi-structured interviews with adult learners
- Semi-structured interviews with facilitators
- Classroom observations

The use of a variety of techniques in data collection is important as it provides checks and balances. It ensures authenticity of the research as it enhances the validity and reliability of the research by comparing findings of one instrument with findings of another instrument.

Cohen et al (2000: 112) supports the above argument by saying that a powerful way of demonstrating validity and reliability in qualitative studies is by means of triangulation, that is, the use of two or more methods of data collection. Bell (1999: 102) echoes this argument when he describes triangulation as gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources with the aim of cross-checking information to produce a well balanced study. Triangulation was achieved by comparing data from observations and interviews.

(i) Semi-structured interviews

As has been mentioned earlier, this study used semi-structured interviews as one of the tools for data collection. I chose semi-structured interviews because they are conducted with a fairly open framework which allows for focussed, conversational, two way communication. In this form of interviewing, not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues. The interviewer asks certain major questions the same way each time, but is free to alter their sequence and to probe for more information (Fielding, 1993). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews may be very useful because learners could also ask questions. This way, a semi-structured interview works as an extension tool, by which an interviewer could get more information than anticipated because respondents provide not just answers but the reasons for the answers.

As this kind of interview is a kind of 'informal conversation' (Haralambos and Heald, 1985: 507), it gives the interviewer the freedom to phrase the questions anew, should they be ambiguous to the respondents. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews provides opportunity for more communication which strengthens the validity of data collected.

However, semi-structured interviews are not perfect as a research instrument. It is possible to find learners more open in the absence of a tutor than when he or she is present. This, to me, is an *indication that the information a researcher may get*, can depend on other factors and may not always be a true reflection of reality.

Another potential problem with conducting semi-structured interviews relates to the interviewer. The most common problem with interviewers is that they ask leading questions. Other problems are that they fail to listen closely, repeat questions that have already been asked, fail to probe when necessary, fail to judge the answers, and ask vague or insensitive questions.

(ii)Interviews with adult learners

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the adult learners at the sites. Facilitators were not present when adult learners were interviewed. Interview questions for adult learners were posed in IsiZulu and covered the following areas:

- Response of learners to *Learn with Echo* pages
- Purposes that the pages are used for.
- Issues of layout and how learners feel about it.
- The level and suitability of language used

(See Appendix 1, page 100)

I used prompting, as a follow up to the questions, when the participants look puzzled and uncertain, especially learners. Prompting helped participants to respond to the questions. I do not think that I would have elicited the required quality of data from most of the adult learners if prompting was not done.

(iii) Interviews with facilitators

All the three facilitators were interviewed once. Each interview took between an hour and an hour and a half. Facilitators were more relaxed than learners. This kind of behaviour is typical of adult learners in adult education classrooms because of stigmatisation of illiteracy. Adult learners see themselves as 'helpless amputees who cannot function in the world' (Lyster, 1992: 13) and as a result become withdrawn

and refrain from expressing their opinions. I think this kind of feeling is minimal with facilitators.

During interviews, predetermined questions were asked and participants were allowed to discuss issues beyond the questions' confines. Questions of the interview schedule of the facilitators covered the following areas:

- Response of facilitators to *Learn with Echo* pages
- Facilitators' impression of knowledge and skills gained by learners from *Learn with Echo* pages.
- Their response on attitudes of learners who have used *Learn with Echo* pages.
- Usage of *Learn with Echo* pages as a classroom resource.
- Language level, content, use of pictures and layout.

(See Appendix 2, page 102)

3.5.2 Lesson observations

As indicated earlier, this study also used observations as one of the tools for data collection. Observation is fundamental to most research. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) describe observation as direct, eyewitness accounts of everyday social action and settings recorded in the form of field notes. Observations helped the researcher to verify data gathered through interviews from facilitators and adult learners and to see learning and teaching using *Learn with Echo* materials in action.

This study used non-participant observation. That is, I watched what happened without taking part in the event. Swann (1985) argues that a distinction between participant and non-participant observation is not so straightforward. She maintains that by virtue of being in a classroom and watching what is happening, to some extent, the researcher is a participant. I concur with this argument because during the initial lessons I could feel that adult learners were a bit tense. Although I got relevant information, my presence as a researcher in the classroom did have a negative effect as learner participation was minimal. Although this situation improved later on as learners started to get used to my presence in class, it indicated that the presence of a researcher may lead to what is termed the 'observer's paradox'. This means that the mere presence of an outsider is inclined to change the behaviour of the participants.

I observed the proceedings in classrooms and took fieldnotes while the lessons were in session. My fieldnotes comprised recording how *Learn with Echo* pages were used in the classroom. The lessons were observed from the lesson topic, introduction, presentation, activities and conclusion. I used observation schedules to ensure that I captured the relevant information. As explained earlier, the observation schedules had also been trialled. On the basis of the trials a few questions were rephrased.

There were two different observation schedules: one for observing facilitators and another one for observing adult learners. For facilitators, the lessons were observed in relation to the following issues:

- Planning for the lesson
- Competence
- The learning environment
- Applicability of text to learners' daily lives
- Use of other materials other than *Learn with Echo* pages.

For adult learners, lessons were observed in relation to the following issues:

- Dialogue triggered by the use of *Learn with Echo* pages
- Level of participation
- Link of previous knowledge with issues being dealt with
- Topics which generate the most or the least interest
- The issue of whether there are topics that cause conflict
- How pages are linked with literacy, language learning and life skills activities.

(See Appendix 3, page 104)

The original intention was to visit each class once from each of the three centres. But from the pilot observations I discovered that one *Learn with Echo* page was used more than once. I, therefore, ended up visiting each centre three times to satisfy my curiosity about how *Learn with Echo* articles were used in the other lessons and also to find out whether subsequent lessons were linked to the original article. Additional visits yielded very important data.

Another reason why I decided to observe centres three times each is the nature of the observation technique. In the first observation, I had difficulty associated with

capturing all the details of actions and interactions that take place in class within a limited period of time.

3.6 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and, coded according to Strauss' (1987: 55) method of coding. Strauss as cited by Neuman (2000: 421) defines three kinds of qualitative data coding. In these three kinds of data coding, the researcher reviews data on three occasions for three different purposes:

(a) **Open coding:** According to Strauss (ibid), this is the first stage in which the researcher focuses on actual data and assigns codes for themes. In this study, I started by reading my transcribed notes with the aim of locating key terms and events which I could develop into themes. Using research questions as a guide, I grouped together related patterns and concepts. These were assigned codes in the form of letters A – F. This standardised coding in the form of alphabetical letters helped me to identify themes and condense data into identifiable categories. This was very preliminary and allowed for change in subsequent analysis.

(b) **Axial coding:** This is the stage in which a researcher revisits initial codes or preliminary concepts to see if these could be rearranged or improved in relation to the research questions. The focus here is not on data as in the first stage, but on initial coding. I went through initial codes and found that additional codes and new ideas emerged. I think this stage was very important in that it gave me a chance to reorganise ideas and codes, and to also think about linkages between existing concepts and themes. This stage raised a lot of new questions to such an extent that I had to split research question 3 into two, which led to the development of the fourth research question.

(c) **Selective coding:** This type of coding involves the scanning of data and previous codes. It is called selective coding because a researcher needs to look selectively for cases that illustrate themes and make comparisons and contrasts (Neuman, 2000: 423) after all the data coding has been done. Selective coding helped to finalise organisation of themes and confirm accuracy of coding. I ended up having data revealing the following themes:

- *Learn with Echo* as an educational/pedagogical tool
- Content and relevance of materials
- Response to language level, layout and the use of pictures
- The language of learning
- Information, knowledge and empowerment
- Transformative learning and perspective transformation experiences

These themes will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

I must say that this was the toughest part of this research for me. There was a time when I thought coding was impossible until I read Strauss' (1987:55) warning which says that 'coding is the most difficult operation for inexperienced researchers to understand and to master'. This assertion inspired me because I began to think that coding is difficult but is not impossible as other people might have gone through the same kind of difficulty before.

3.6 Tensions and dilemmas

In this section I will discuss challenges and difficulties that I came across during the data collection, transcription and analysis phases of this study:

- Firstly, interview schedules were written in English as it is a medium of instruction in the institution where I was studying. This is not the language suitable for adult learners that were targeted for this study. English was only suitable for facilitators. But again, the kind of facilitators that the field of adult education has at the moment have not had a lot of training. As a result I had to do code switching and code mixing English and IsiZulu even when I interviewed facilitators. So, responses were either in IsiZulu or in both English and IsiZulu. This posed a huge challenge to me as I had to hurriedly look at a question written in English but translate it in my mind to say it in IsiZulu. My thesis is in English and when transcribing data I had to listen to IsiZulu responses but record them in English. The switching from one language to another was a huge challenge which I tried very hard to overcome. I had to listen to responses more than once to check the correctness and to ensure accuracy of the translation.

- Secondly, adult education classes did not start before three o'clock in the afternoon, and ended at five. This frustrated me because two hours was not

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enough for both learning and interviews. I did feel that I was interfering with the participants' learning schedule. There were instances when interviews exceeded time requested. This worried me especially because these interviews were conducted at the beginning of winter and it got dark earlier. Given the high crime rate in our country it was not safe for participants to go home when it was dark. But the participants were so kind that even if the interview dragged for longer than expected, they stayed until the interview was finished without hurrying me to finish.

- Let it also be said that I had to review and rephrase some of my research questions and the topic after I had coded data. The original topic aimed to pay specific attention to 'civic education' pages of *Learn with Echo* only. But, from interviews to coding of data I realised that the majority of responses were about *Learn with Echo* in general. I removed all phrases referring to civic education pages so that the study focused on all kinds of pages that *Learn with Echo* produces.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the presentation, analysis and interpretations of data elicited from the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This study yielded rich data collected from participants using the different tools discussed in Chapter 2. The raw data was analysed in terms of the four research questions repeated for convenience below:

1. How is the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement used as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adult learners?

2. How do learners and facilitators respond to the language level, content, use of pictures and layout of the newspaper supplement?

3. Is there any evidence to suggest that learners are gaining information that is useful in their daily lives?

4. Is there any evidence that learners have engaged in transformative learning and experienced perspective transformation?

Using Strauss's coding method outlined in chapter three, the following themes emerged:

- *Learn with Echo* as an educational/pedagogical tool

- Content and relevance of materials

- Response to language level, layout and the use of pictures

- The language of learning

- Information, knowledge and empowerment

- Perspective transformation

4.2 *Learn with Echo* as an educational/pedagogical tool

Learn with Echo pages were used in a variety of class activities primarily serving as a discussion trigger, and as a source for reading passages and writing activities.

4.2.1 *Learn with Echo* as a discussion trigger

Class observations revealed that *Learn with Echo* pages trigger dialogue between facilitators and learners, for example, in lessons on the calendar, elections,

HIV/AIDS, xenophobia and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). This confirmed what Vella (1994) says about facilitator-learner dialogue, that it is very powerful as learning and teaching method. In six out of the nine lessons that I observed, I witnessed what Montgomery (1995) describes as 'an intricate process' and a 'negotiation of meaning'. This was at work between facilitators and adult learners in the majority of the lessons that I observed. Dialogue provided the arena for critical learning to develop in the classroom. For example: In one of the centres a series of lessons I observed were about using a calendar. The facilitator created dialogue in class by asking the following questions (See Appendix 5 for the *Learn with Echo* calendar page):

- What is a calendar?
- Why do we need calendars in our lives/ why are calendars important in our lives?
- What could go wrong if we could stop looking at our calendars?
- A long time ago, what did people use instead of calendars? Let's give examples of how what we use now differs from what they used then. Which way do you think is more effective? Why?
- How many months does a calendar have? Which month do you like the most? Why?
- Let's take turns and say the date and month in which we were born.
- What other dates are important to you? Why? Do you have dates that make you sad when you think about them? Why?
- Do you know that we use months to form seasons? How many seasons do we have? Let's name them. Which months make our summer? Which season do you like the most? Why?
- What do you think about holidays? Do you know why each holiday was formed? Let us give examples. Which holidays do you like the most? Why?

Through probing, the facilitator got amazing answers and good discussions. For example: When the facilitator and learners discussed religious holidays, the facilitator asked them how they felt about the fact that Christmas and Easter are the only religious holidays in the calendar and those of other religious groups like Muslim and Hindi do not appear? One of the answers was: "Christianity is the only one that is

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important and there are a lot of Christians in our country". The discussion went on to such an extent that learners realised that what is happening is not fair to other religious groups. I think, the fact that learners expressed their views about other peoples' beliefs that are different from their own, means that the facilitator was able to create a situation in which learners reflected critically on their assumptions.

In addition, the facilitator gave a lot of examples and allowed learners to relate their own stories to contextualise the issues under discussion. Discussions in class went beyond the single meaning of the text that was dealt with. For example, learners were keen to start to keep diaries after one of the lessons on calendars. By using practical examples from peoples' daily lives, most of what was learnt was put in context. For example, the facilitator made copies of calendars so that adult learners diarise community meetings, clinic visits, birthdays and other dates that were important in their lives. This concurs with Cambourne's (2002) way of thinking when he argues that learners make meaning better if their learning is authentic and contextualised. Cambourne's view is also in line with Halliday's (1985) social semiotic model whose basic logic is contextualization. Social semiotics is the study of human social meaning-making practices. The basic premise is that meanings are jointly made by participants of the social activity structure. Meanings are made by constructing semiotic relations among patterned meaning-relations, social practices and physical-material processes.

In the centre where the calendar was used, during classroom discussions learners learnt brainstorming skills, expressing and supporting their viewpoints and drawing conclusions by relating to own experience and previous knowledge. Building on prior experience is in line with Mezirow's (1995) argument that meaningful learning is anchored in life experiences. These discussions sometimes led to short debates and role-plays.

In the same adult centre, dialogue was highly collaborative during the lessons. The role of the facilitator was to ask questions in order to facilitate construction of meaning by adult learners. This reflects what Duke and Pearson (2002) call a 'transactional activity' which focuses on the ability of the facilitator to formulate discussions so that learners form interpretations of the text. Duke and Pearson (ibid)

also put emphasis on relating text to personal experience, and questioning that aims to look for a constant point of view, as basic components of the transactional activity in the classroom.

I think it is also worth mentioning that in two different centres each facilitator guided learners more at first but later learners were able to move on with discussions and construct meaning in groups with less help, reflecting a process of scaffolding in accordance with the Russian psychologist, Vygotsky. One important tenet of Vygotsky's theory is the existence of what he called 'the zone of proximal development'. The zone of proximal development is the difference between the learner's capability to solve problems on his own and the capacity to solve them with assistance. In other words, the actual development level refers to all the functions and activities that a learner can perform on his own, independently without the help of anyone else (Vygotsky & language acquisition: Ricardo Schutz http://www.sk.com.br/s-vygot.html). In terms of this research, the facilitators provided the scaffolding process. The facilitator intervened and arranged the effective learning by challenging and extending the state of development of the adult learner, becoming thereby, the 'expert other'.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development has many implications for stakeholders in the field of adult education. One of these implications is the idea that 'human learning presupposes a specific social nature and is part of a process by which learners grow into the intellectual life of those around them' (Vygotsky, 1978: 56). Therefore, when it comes to the learning of a language, the nature of the environment in which learning takes place and the relationship between the learner and the facilitator are important factors in making the learner feel part of that environment.

4.2.2 *Learn with Echo* as a source of reading activities

The purpose of this section is to explain how *Learn with Echo* pages were used for reading activities (See Appendix 5 for examples of *Learn with Echo* pages that were used as a source of reading activities). Examples of reading activities included:

- Reading for pleasure: All three facilitators used the fourth page (Mkhize page) for reading for pleasure. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this page was cited by learners and facilitators as a favourite because of the humour that

the stories and the characters bring for readers. Learners read either individually, in pairs or in groups.

- Reading for information: In some instances learners would be instructed to read for the purpose of finding information that was on the page. This information would either be discussed in groups or copied by learners into their books. For example: In one of the lessons, all learners were asked to take turns to go to the calendar and encircle the date in the month in which they were born and then write it down in their books.

- Reading to get vocabulary: In other lessons learners were instructed to find words that mean the same thing or words with the same sounds as those given.

Two of the three facilitators helped learners while they engaged with the text. What I experienced was facilitator-learner-text interaction. I would argue that reading activities that I observed displayed reading as a socio-cognitive process. As used in this context, reading as a socio-cognitive process means reading for problem solving, inferencing and conceptualization. From this position, reading is a process of socialization, enculturation, and cognition. This is in line with what was discussed in Chapter 2 about the fact that the transactional nature of reading also focuses on the ability of the tutor to facilitate and mediate discussions so that learners form interpretations of text. Duke and Pearson (2002) were also cited in their argument about speech as a vital ingredient of transactional pedagogy. They further argued that interaction between facilitators and learners, and among learners themselves can foster growth and cross-fertilization in the reading process. These processes were all evident in the classrooms that I observed.

Without suggesting that teaching methods that are not interactive in nature are less effective, interviews with learners after the lessons suggested that articles were more meaningful when the facilitator helped at the beginning of the activities than when learners were left to work on their own, especially as individuals as opposed to working in groups.

It is also worth mentioning that two of the three facilitators were qualified to teach adults and were experienced. From the interview with the third facilitator it came out that she only had a matric and had never been trained to teach at all. This particular

facilitator did not allow meaningful learner participation, critical thinking and relating text to learners' personal experiences in her lessons. Lack of training may be one of the reasons why her lessons were never interactive. As a result, less participation by learners had adverse effects on establishing the appropriate environment and how the *Learn with Echo* learning materials were used in her classroom.

4.2.3 *Learn with Echo* as a source for writing activities

Writing activities emanated from what had been discussed or read. Facilitators played a mediating role before learners could start writing (See Appendix 5, page 106 for examples of *Learn with Echo* pages used a source for writing activities). For example they would:

- Explain what it is that learners had to do. For example, in one of the lessons the facilitator explained to the learners that each one of them had to read all the statements and copy in his or her book only those that describe qualities of a good councillor. The statements were:

   1. Kufanele kube umuntu onebhizinisi endaweni (It should be someone who owns a business in the community)
   2. Akube umuntu oneqiniso (He/she should be an honest person.)
   3. Kudingeka kube umuntu oswenkayo (He/she needs to be someone who wears expensive clothes.)
   4. Kumele kube umuntu othembekile (She/he should be trustworthy.)
   5. Kumele abe umuntu okwaziyo ukulalela futhi azisukumele ngesikhathi izinto (He/she should be a good listener and be able to do things timeously)
   6. Akabe umuntu onemoto ukuze akwazi ukuhamba uma esilungisela izinto (He/she should be someone who owns a car so as to move from one place to another without a problem).
   7. Kumele abe oweqembu lepolitiki engikulo mina (He/she should belong to my political organisation.)

- Some written activities were a combination of teaching visual literacy, vocabulary building, word formation and sometimes re-writing the story briefly in their own words. For example: The facilitator would give learners *Learn with Echo* pages with pictures and tell them to write down names of

things they saw in the pictures. The learner would then show the facilitator names of things and their corresponding pictures.

- In two of the lessons, facilitators combined visual literacy and numeracy in the written work assigned to learners. For example:

Write down how many of the following you can see in the picture. Write the number and the word for the number: Tree 1 one; Boys 3 three.

One of the three facilitators used worksheets that she had compiled from old editions of *Learn with Echo* for enrichment. These worksheets included matching activities, filling in activities, true or false activities, multiple choice and crossword puzzles. Below is an example of one of the **True** or **False** activities:

Instruction: Funda le misho elandelayo. Bhala esikhaleni ukuthi ngabe umusho uyiqiniso noma uyiphutha (Read the following sentences. Write in the space provided whether the sentences are true or false):

Umusho	Yiqiniso	Yiphutha
1. UGogo umama kaMaMsomi.		
2. Amehlo ayamhlupha uGogo.		
3. UMkhize noGogo baxabana njalo.		
4. Zintathu izingane zikaMkhize.		
5. UParafini uyena omdala.		
6. UMkhize uyena ubaba wekhaya.		

This particular facilitator felt that there were not enough activities that come with *Learn with Echo* pages and asked that there be more activities especially towards exams:

Mina awungisizi kakhulu umsebenzi osuke ufike nalo iphephandaba ngoba uba mncane futhi uba owohlobo olulodwa.Kuhle uma umsebenzi umningi

futhi ukhuthaza nokucabanga kubafundi. Ngabe kungcono ukuba kunekhasi lomsebenzi nje wodwa okungenani-ke ube wodwa eceleni ube yibhukwana. (Activities in *Learn with Echo* are not enough. It would be better if there was a full page dedicated to activities only, or a weekly primer for use in classes.)

Observation of one of the lessons suggested that learners were far more comfortable writing answers to questions based on the text in front of them because they could seek the answers in the text, than those which require them to write their own opinions or experiences. Learners were more comfortable expressing themselves orally than they were when doing it in writing. Without suggesting that such activities should be omitted, I think most learners lacked confidence in writing about their feelings and experiences, especially when they worked individually.

4.3 Content and relevance of materials

Facilitators and learners were agreeable that most articles talk about issues that are relevant to their lives. The extracts below illustrate that some of the skills and information that learners gained through using *Learn with Echo* pages have been used to solve problems in real life situations. In the first extracts are responses from three different learners and in the second extracts are responses from the facilitators:

Learners' views

The first respondent is a domestic worker and she managed to find pages applicable to her context from *Learn with Echo* pages:

A learner who is a domestic worker responded by saying that:

- Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) – Ngajabula ukufunda nge-UIF. Kumnandi nokwazi ukuthi ungalutholaphi usizo oluphathelene nomsebenzi wakho uma kwenzeka ulahlekelwa umsebenzi. (I was happy to read what UIF is about. It is nice to know how UIF works so that I can get help if I need it.)

A learner who is a housewife responded by saying that:

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- Human Rights – Ngajabula kakhulu ukufunda ngezindaba zamalungelo. Sesiyazi manje ukuthi imaphi amalungelo ethu nokuthi singawasebenzisa kanjani. Kanti kuhle nokwazi ukuthi amalungelo abanye abantu adinga ukuhlonishwa. (I liked articles that talked about human rights. Now I know what my rights are. I also know that it is important to respect rights of other people.)

A learner who works as a vendor, selling fruits and vegetables said:

- Maningi amakhasi esiwafundayo abalulekile. Kodwa mina awusizo kakhulu kwaba yilawo akhuluma ngezifo, ezempilo, ezamabhizinisi, ezentuthuko nezikahulumeni. Lezi zinto ziyinxenye yempilo yethu. (A lot of pages we read in class are important in our lives. But for me the most relevant ones are about diseases, nutrition, business, development and government issues.)

Facilitators' views

The following are responses from the facilitators:

- Izindaba ezigqugquzela abesilisa ukuba babambe iqhaza ekukhuliseni izingane nokuthi akusafani nakudala, akubona omama bodwa okumele baphathe izingane, nobaba nabo kuwumsebenzi wabo ukugeza nokuphakela izingane. (Fatherhood pages: These pages contributed to break the stereotype that it's only women who must take care of children. Fathers have a role to play in terms of doing chores like bathing and feeding children.)
- Abaningi babengazi ukuthi uhulumeni uyithathaphi imali. Abafundi bathola lukhulu kulendaba ethi: Uhulumeni uyithathaphi imali? Basizakala kakhulu futhi ngendaba yama-rates nokuthi siwakhokhelani ama-rates. (Many learners didn't know where government gets the money. They gained a lot from the page titled: Where does the government get the money? Also pages about what rates are and why we should pay rates.)
- Ezinye izindaba ezibalulekile ilezo ezikhuluma ngengculaza nesandulela – ngculaza. Abantu bafunde okuningi kulezi zindaba njengokuthi kubalulekile ukuyohlola, ukuthanda osengenwe yigciwane, ukuphatha

isihlobo noma ilunga lomndeni eselingenwe yilesi sifo. (Also pages on HIV/AIDS. People learnt a lot of things, for example, why it is important to test voluntarily, taking care of friends and family members who have been infected by the disease.)

- Mina ngayijabulela kakhulu indaba yokuthi kubaluleke ngani ukwenza incwadi yefa usaphila. (The importance of making a will).

- Siyazithanda kakhulu izindaba eziphathelene namalungelo, ukubekezelelana nokuxazulula ingxabano. (Pages on human rights, tolerance and conflict resolution.)

- Ukhetho: Abaningi babengazi ukuthi kufanele sibhalise ukuze sikwazi ukuvota, kubaluleke ngani ukuvota, ukhethwa kanjani umholi oqotho njalo njalo. (Elections: Some learners didn't know that one has to register in the voters' roll to be able to vote, why it is important to vote, how to choose a good leader etc.)

- Imixhaso kahulumeni: Bathola ulwazi ngokuthi kudingekani ukuze umuntu athole umxhaso kanye nokuthi uma ugada ingane engenamzali kufanele usithole isibonelelo sikahulumeni. (Government grants: People got information about what documents they need to apply for a grant, who is eligible to grants like foster parents and others.)

The above responses reaffirm that adults are relevance-oriented. For them, learning has to be applicable to their work, their responsibilities and their lives in order to be of value to them. If adults see relevance in material that is presented to them, their motivation to learn is likely to increase. Svinicki (1996) notes that motivation to learn originates from the adult learner's expectations of the usefulness of the content. This is in line with transformational learning, as propounded by Cambourne (2002) and Mezirow (1995), which upholds contextualisation of learning.

The search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition. Wilson & Sperber (2002) argue that any input is relevant to an individual when it connects with the background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him. For example, giving valuable information, answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression. In terms of the relevance theory, a phenomenon

is regarded as relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect. Wilson and Sperber (2002) argue that a positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual's representation of the world, for example, a true conclusion. The above extracts from interviews underscore Wilson & Sperber's views on relevance.

- Some of the learners and facilitators suggested that there are some areas which do not get enough coverage in the *Learn with Echo* supplement. Suggestions for future content included:
- Entrepreneurial skills including how to write a business plan and budgeting
- Pages on traditional leadership; qualities of a good Inkosi; chairing meetings; how to manage Izinduna and solving problems.
- Cultural, traditional, heritage material. For example, nutritious, traditional food that people look down upon nowadays; how to handle in-laws; stereotypes/superstitions, history of ethnic groups and history of cultural practices.
- One facilitator suggested that other people's cultures should also be attended to. She felt that in the pages where culture was given attention, there was an over-emphasis on Zulu culture at the expense of other cultures.
- Provincial, national and major international content such as conflict and natural disasters.
- More stories about adult learners and adult centres. Also stories by adult learners as these are particularly effective since learners can identify with them.
- Two facilitators argued that there is too much emphasis on women's issues. They suggested that material targeting men also be included.
- Issues of employer/employee relationships.

The majority of the facilitators commended *Learn with Echo* for providing content that is immediate or responsive in most of the pages. Sometimes, *Learn with Echo* writers abandon consciously planned materials if topical issues such as an outbreak of cholera arise. *Learn with Echo* will put aside whatever had been planned for that

space and rather write about a disease as it is life-threatening and communities need to know about it.

Another positive response in terms of content was about pages on human rights and democracy. This section has been produced regularly as a series since 1994 and all those pages were revised, consolidated into books written in IsiZulu and English in 2004. The majority of the facilitators felt that human rights and democracy should remain a crucial aspect of the *Learn with Echo* supplement.

4.4. Response to language level, layout and the use of pictures

4.4.1 Language level

There was a significant outcry with regards to the level of language used in the *Learn with Echo* supplement. The majority of learners and facilitators felt that only pages written in IsiZulu and the Mkhize page were suitable for MTL Level 1. They argued that the rest of the pages were pitched at levels 2 and 3:

- Akulula ukusebenzisa amakhasi abhalwe ngesiNgisi ngoba awawulungele uLevel 1. Ukufakazisa ukuthi ngisho ebhalwe ngesiNgisi kwasona silukhuni uthola kufakwe izincazelo zesiZulu kubakaki. Uma ulimi lulula, kungani kufakwa izincazelo kubakaki? (The language level has risen over the years. If the language used is not difficult why then do we find bracketed IsiZulu/English explanations words in some of the pages?.)
- Izindaba azifani. Ezinye zilukhuni kakhulu. Mina ngiyakhetha ngoba akuzona zonke ezilungele leli kilasi lami. (Stories are not the same. Some are very difficult. I choose and use only those that are suitable for learners of my class.)
- Mina ngiyayithanda *iLearn with Echo* kodwa ngiphatheka kabi uma kubhalwe ngolimi olubukhuni. Ngisho kuyisiZulu kuyenzeka sibe lukhuni futhi kube kuningi kakhulu okubhaliwe ekhasini elilodwa (I like *Learn with Echo* but I am hurt if I don't understand because of the language that is difficult to read.)
- Mina sengazitshela nje ukuthi ngisebenzisa uMkhize kakhulu.Ngiyawasebenzisa namanye uma ngibona ukuthi azosebenziseka. (I

do use other pages if I feel the language is fine but I use Mkhize most of the time.)

Some phrases in the responses above suggest that difficult language is measured in terms of sentence length, quantity of text and inaccessible vocabulary due to complexity. The majority of facilitators and adult learners explicitly stated that most *Learn with Echo* pages are overloaded with text. They prefer simple, short sentences because they associate these with ease in understanding and interpretation. Some of the language theorists disagree with this notion. They argue that short sentences result in unnatural, incoherent texts that convey less substance than regular texts. Davidson and Kantor (1982) argue that texts that have been modified according to the readability formulas are often more difficult to interpret. These texts, they say, require the reader to infer meaning relations between sentences because, in order to make sentences short, words and grammatical structures that show rhetorical or narrative connections between ideas are often eliminated. But I think short sentences accompanied by repetition of words could be effective, especially if there is an expert to mediate, for example, the facilitator.

In order to mediate text, some of the facilitators said they did the following:
- read to the learners and explained
- related their own stories
- brainstormed more ideas
- let learners dramatise i.e role-plays
- used extra pictures, graphic organisers and drawings to clarify
- used gestures
- rewrote the story in simpler language and wrote it on a chart or made copies for the learners
- allowed learners to debate an issue.

Two of the facilitators suggested strategies for simplifying language level used in writing *Learn with Echo* pages. Some of the suggestions were:
- Use less text and more pictures
- Explain difficult words and write explanations in brackets
- Develop a dictionary of words at the required level

- Ensure that writers double-edit the pages and eliminate difficult words to simplify the level of language used.
- If material is in the form of a series, it should be piloted before it is published.

I also think it is worth mentioning that readability and decodability of texts is influenced by time given to the learners to process texts, and methods, that different facilitators use. For example, one of the facilitators of classes that I observed didn't allow adult learners to work at their own pace. Learners read individually for a short while and were then expected to answer questions. This, to me, was pressurizing adult learners to work to a tight schedule like in formal classrooms. Lovell (1980) argues that adult learners prefer to be allowed to work at their own pace attempting to improve upon their own previous performances rather than working to formal time limits with targets that have been set by facilitators.

4.4.2 Response to layout

In this study, "layout" refers to the literal make-up of the newspaper supplement, for example, font and size or the colour of pictures. The four things that the majority of learners and facilitators expressed their concerns about were:

- In some of the pages the size of the font is too small for adult learners as most of them have eyesight problems.
- Pages that have too much text are terrifying to learners. The majority of facilitators prefer minimal texts with lots of pictures.
- Three facilitators argued for the use of a greater variety of graphics but insisted that there should be more photographs than illustrations. They argued that photographs of real people, doing things that ordinary people do, are more inspirational to learners than illustrations.
- Most facilitators were saddened by the fact that *Learn with Echo* only uses black and white pictures. They said that some pages are more useful if pictures have colour. For example, one page had a South African flag in black and white. The facilitator remarked that:

Ukuba leli fulegi laliwumbala ngabe saba mnandi kakhulu isifundo, ngabe ngafundisa abafundi bami okuningi, ngisho namagama emibala imbala (If the

flag had colour, the lesson could have been more interesting. I could even have taught names of colours in context.)

Besides the things mentioned above, most learners and facilitators did not suggest any substantive changes to the current layout.

4.4.3 Response to the use of pictures

Since the inception of *Learn with Echo*, the fourth page has been devoted to the development of literacy skills in English and IsiZulu. This page combines literacy activities, encouragement of bilingualism, reading for pleasure and visual literacy through the use of illustrations.

Almost all *Learn with Echo* pages have either illustrations or photographs. *Learn with Echo* uses good quality graphics of a great variety. There is a mix of photographs and illustrations used in different pages. By incorporating visual material, *Learn with Echo* attempts to ensure that those visuals enhance the concepts that are being presented. The use of visual material is thus used to help to clarify and reinforce learning.

Despite the absence of colour (raised by one respondent quoted above), this study confirms that the pictures provide a base for visual literacy in classrooms of adults. The page that uses illustrations the most is the cartoon strip page, the 'Mkhize page'. This is the *Learn with Echo* page that is cited by learners and facilitators as their firm favourite (See examples of the Mkhize page in Appendix 5, page 107). This is illustrated in the responses below:

Responses from four different learners:

- Mina ngizithandela uMkhize. UMkhize unezithombe. Ngithi ngingakayifundi indaba ngibuke izithombe kuqala. Lokho kuyangisiza ngoba kunginika umqondo wokuthi indaba yangalolo suku ikhuluma ngani. Ngithi ngiqambe ngiya endabeni asemancane amagama angihlulayo. (I like Mkhize. I look at the pictures first before I read the story. By the time I read the story, I have an idea what the whole thing is about.)

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- Ezinye izindaba esizifundayo ziyasijabulisa, sihleke. Njengezindaba zikaMkhize, zimnandi. Kulula ukufunda izindaba zikaMkhize ngoba zinezithombe. Ngisho uwedwa uyakwazi ukuzifundela. (Some stories make us laugh, for example, when we read the Mkhize stories. The Mkhize stories are easy to follow because they have pictures. You can read on your own with ease.)

- Awekho engingawathandi. Kodwa uMkhize ngimthanda kakhulu. Ngithanda amahlaya akhe nezithombe zemikhuba yakhe. (There are no pages I don't like. But I like Mkhize the most. I like humour and cartoons that go with the story.)

- Siyathanda. Ikakhulukazi uMkhize ngoba usebenzisa IsiZulu nesiNgisi nezithombe. Kuba lula ukuzifundela nesiNgisi uma uthanda ngoba nezithombe ziyakusiza. Ngokubuka izithombe usuke usunalo ulwazi lokuthi kukhulunywa ngani. (Yes, because combination of English and Zulu, and the use of pictures in the Mkhize page is very useful. Especially if you want to learn English on your own.)

Facilitators' responses to the use of pictures were:

- Ulimi olusetshenzisiwe lulungile, ikakhulukazi ezindabeni zikaMkhize. Abafundi abanayo inkinga kuMkhize ngoba izithombe ziyabasiza futhi ziningi. (The level of language is fine, especially the Mkhize page because it also uses a lot of pictures.)

- Isakhiwo sephephandaba sikahle kodwa abafundi bathanda kakhulu indlela okubhalwe ngayo uMkhize ngoba unezithombe eziningi nemisho emifishane. (The structure of the pages is fine but learners love the Mkhize style of the page that has many illustrations and shorter sentences.)

- Mina ngingajabula uma zonke izindaba zingabhalwa njengoMkhize, zibe nezithombe ezininigi. (I would make other pages like Mkhize, with many pictures.)

- Abafundi bami bayamthanda uMkhize ngoba unezithombe eziningi. Izithombe zisiza abafundi ukuthi bayilandele kalula indaba. Nami ngiyamthanda uMkhize futhi ngimsebenzisa njalo ezifundweni zami. (My learners love the Mkhize page because it has a lot of pictures to help learners

follow the story with ease. I also love Mkhize and I use his stories a lot in my lessons.)

It was clear from interviews with participants therefore that the Mkhize page is a favourite because of the use of illustrations, short sentences, humour and themes that are relevant to peoples' lives. So well known and loved is the Mkhize page that when I explained that I work for the newspaper supplement that writes the Mkhize stories, I was greeted with the response: Oh, you mean Mkhize's paper? That is how I gathered that this is what *Learn with Echo* is nicknamed by adult learners and other people: 'Iphepha likaMkhize'. In the following paragraphs, I give a brief description of what this favourite Mkhize page is about.

Learners articulated that the Mkhize stories are entertaining, interesting and fun. Through the use of pictures and suspense, readers are motivated to read on. Learners say they love these stories and there is therefore hope to develop what Ruddell and Unrau (1994) call ludic reading, which is reading for pleasure after attending classes. The beginner adult readers say that they were aided by pictures that go with speech and thought bubbles to learn the IsiZulu and some English vocabulary.

The message in each story is fairly simple, and readers can identify with it since it reflects their real experiences. Fordham et al (1995) argues that there are many advantages in using a community newspaper as a literacy resource. Among others, he argues that the publication is topical and current, and produced at regular intervals. It is concerned with things which readers may already know about; and people and places which they can identify with. It sets up a dialogue between people in neighbouring areas and it encourages the habit of reading newspapers as a source of information.

From interviews and class observations, it was obvious that the comic format used in writing the Mkhize stories is useful for inspiring both enthusiasm for, and confidence in, reading. Learners were explicit about their interest in the way a variety of pictures have been used in these kinds of pages and how this helps to facilitate comprehension. There is an old saying that says ' a picture is worth a thousand words'. Duke and Pearson (2002) argue that when it comes to comprehension, this saying might be

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paraphrased, "a visual display helps readers understand, organise, and remember some of those thousand words". In the case of the Mkhize stories, this certainly seems to be the case.

4.5 The language of learning

This study shows that respondents have different views with regards to which language is best suited for *Learn with Echo*. I think differences in choice of language are influenced by their needs and/or how much MTL literacy skills they have acquired. This study reveals that beginner learners prefer pages devoted to the development of basic literacy skills in IsiZulu only. I think IsiZulu only pages are of great significance since research shows that initial literacy instruction is advantageous if taught in mother-tongue. Beginner MTL learners find reading *Learn with Echo* materials in mother-tongue easier than in English. This is illustrated in the following extracts from four of the six learners interviewed:

- Kwesinye isikhathi kuba lukhuni uma sisiningi isiNgisi. Mina ngikwazi ukufunda IsiZulu kuphela. (Sometimes it is hard because of too much English. I can only read IsiZulu.)

- Mina into engingayishintsha ukuthi sibe sincane isiNgisi kodwa kube kuningi okubhalwe ngesiZulu (If I were to change anything I would ask that more stories be written in isiZulu.)

- Kuba lukhuni uma kuyisiNgisi sodwa, kanti kuba ngcono uma kuyisiZulu kuphela noma okungenani isiNgisi sichazwe ngesiZulu. (It is difficult if it is in English only, but better if it is in IsiZulu only or at least a combination of IsiZulu and English.)

- Ngiyayithanda mina *iLearn with Echo* kodwa kwesinye isikhathi ngiye ngingezwa ukuthi kuthiwani uma kubhalwe ngesiNgisi. (I like to read *Learn with Echo* but sometimes I don't understand if there is a lot of English.)

However, two of the learners explicitly mentioned that they would need English as soon as they had mastered literacy skills in IsiZulu as English is a language of business. This study shows that some of the learners who are towards the end of their MTL Level 1, prefer texts which are carried in both English and IsiZulu as friends and

family could start to teach them English at home later on. This is supported by the following responses:

- Nakuba kulula ukufunda ngolimi lwakho, kodwa siyakudinga nokufunda isiNgisi ngoba kuba lula ukwenza izinto edolobheni uma usazi kancane. Ngakho-ke mina ngithi kungaba lula uma kufakwa kokubili ukuze abantu bazikhethele abakufunayo. (Learning in your own language is easier but I think we need to also learn a bit of English. Life becomes easier when you can speak English, especially when you have to do things in town. I think both languages should be used and people can choose what they want.)

- Ngifisa sengathi singaba sincane isiNgisi kodwa kube kuningi okubhalwe ngesiZulu ngoba kuyazameka ukulandela indaba ngolimi owaluncela. Angisho ukuthi asiphume siphele nya isiNgisi ngoba ngaphandle kwaso kulelizwe umuntu akalutho kodwa mhlawumbe akusetshenziswe kokubili. (If wish there is less English and more stories written in IsiZulu. I am not saying we must do away with English completely because without it in this country you are nothing but it is easy to understand things if they are written in your own language.)

This view is supported by some of the facilitators who concur that pages should be written in IsiZulu or a compromise should be reached by writing articles in both languages:

- Mina ngifuna ukusebenzisa izindaba zesiZulu ngoba abaningi ekilasini lami basanda kuqala, abakasidingi isiNgisi okwamanje. Okungenani-ke akube izindaba ezixube izilimi zombili IsiZulu nesiNgisi ukuze umuntu akwazi ukuzikhethela. Uma kubhalwe ngesiNgisi kuphela kuba yinkinga kithina esifundisa uLevel 1 osafufusa. Kuze kudingeke ukuthi siyisuse olimini lwesiNgisi siyiyise esiZulwini indaba ngaphambi kokuba siyisebenzise. (I would use more IsiZulu as my class is full of beginners or an article in both English and IsiZulu so that one can choose what he/she is comfortable with. Pages written in English only are not good for Level 1 IsiZulu classes or else

the facilitator needs to translate, type and make copies before using the article.)

- Mina ngibona sengathi kungcono kakhulu uma izilimi zisetshenziswa zombili ikakhulukazi ngoba abami abafundi abekho ezingeni elifanayo. Labo asebesibhala kahle IsiZulu baye babuze ukuthi lokhu nalokhuya kuthiwani ngesiNgisi. Mina ngibona lokhu kuwuphawu lokuthi sebeyafisa ukucosha baqokelele amagama esiNgisi. Kuleso simo kungasiza-ke ukuthi kube khona okubhalwe ngesiNgisi. (The use of both languages is fine for me. I think it works very well because my learners are not a homogenous group i.e they are at different literacy levels. Those who have reached the stage in which they write IsiZulu very well, do ask what things mean in English. For me this shows that they are interested in starting to accumulate English vocabulary.)

- Mina ngicabanga ukuthi IsiZulu nesiNgisi kumele kusetshenziswe ndawonye, indaba ibhalwe ngezilimi zombili ngoba ngibona sengathi kuyasizana. Uma ngingenza isibonelo nje, abanye babafundi bami bafika la ekilasini bethi bazofunda isiNgisi ukuze bakwazi ukukhuluma nabaqashi babo. Mina ngakhuza ngababaza uma bethi kodwa abakwazi ukubhala nokufunda isiZulu. Ngabacebisa ukuthi baqale bafunde ukubhala nokufunda IsiZulu bese bedlulela esiNgisini. Mina ngibona sengathi kuyasiza uma ziba khona zombili lezi zilimi ukuze oselungile akwazi ukudlulela phambili. (I think some pages should be in IsiZulu and some in English. For me these two complement each other if the story is in both. For example, some of the learners come to class to learn English to communicate with their employers. But we advise them to learn isiZulu first and move on to English. So, it helps a lot if the page is in both languages.)

The complementary nature of the use of both IsiZulu and English mentioned in one of the extracts above is further reiterated by one of the staff members in development of the *Learn with Echo* supplement. She has this to say about the language issue:

I think research was conducted at first to guide the beginning production of *Learn with Echo*, I don't think things were just assumed. I know at the very

least the materials developers facilitated literacy groups while they worked at *Learn with Echo*, in order to test the materials they developed. At the moment we assume that many of our readers can't or don't read much of the English in *Learn with Echo*, so we include lots of Zulu text too. We assume this means the material is accessible for more of our target readers. But we also assume (and this was supported by the readership surveys) that people do aspire to read and write English and should do so if they want to study further/be able to function well in society, so we go on with English pages, trying to make it as simple as possible (Arbuckle, 2004).

From the foregoing extracts, it is clear that the language choice is a critical issue to consider in terms of the effective learning and development of learners. South Africa is characterized by linguistic diversity, and in producing adult basic education material for a broad readership the choice of language is a complex one. Whilst learners see the importance of using mother tongue as a language of learning, one also notes a tone of urgency to learn English. Evidence presented seems to be in favour of co-existence of both languages in producing *Learn with Echo* materials.

4.6 Information, knowledge and empowerment

This section of the chapter attempts to answer the third research question re-stated below:

> Is there any evidence to suggest that learners are gaining information that is useful in their daily lives?

The majority of adult learners who were interviewed for this study were explicit about how most of the *Learn with Echo* pages have supplied them with useful **information/knowledge** that has **empowered** them ('**ulwazi olubalulekile** futhi **olubasizile**'). It was not clear whether the term 'ulwazi' referred to 'information or knowledge' as the two terms are closely related in meaning in English and in IsiZulu, and are easily confused by many people. Through probing I had to be sure about what adult learners were talking about. For purposes of clarity, I would like to briefly give descriptions of what the three terms (bolded above) mean in the context of this study:

Firstly, in IsiZulu, the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' originate from the verb 'azi' which means 'to know'. Generally, Zulu-speaking people refer to information or knowledge as 'ulwazi'. For many Zulu-speaking people, including participants in this study, both terms are used interchangeably. But my understanding of the difference in isiZulu is that 'knowledge' has a deeper meaning as it has a connotation of internalising of the **information** by the person who has received it.

Secondly, the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' in English have many different meanings in everyday usage in many specialised contexts. Many people have used these terms without careful consideration of the many meanings they have. For purposes of this study, I will focus on definitions closely related to instruction, learning, communication, meaning making and mental stimulus.

According to one internet source (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information), the term 'information' refers to data that have been processed to add or create meaning and hopefully knowledge for the person who receives them. The same source defines 'knowledge' as 'the awareness and understanding of facts, truths or information gained in the form of experience or learning (a posteriori), or through introspection (a priori)'. From these two definitions I deduce that information comes first but for it to be knowledge it needs to be internalised, resident within the mind of the receiver, be contextualised and be of value to the recipient.

Thirdly, to 'empower' in IsiZulu literally means to 'give energy' (ukunika amandla). This definition has a connotation of someone who has been helpless and vulnerable, but has been rescued and resuscitated by being given energy to save himself or herself. If one applies this meaning to this study, it may mean that adult learners (before getting help from adult classes) felt helpless, insignificant, marginalized, excluded, less informed in a knowledge-rich society that demands certain levels of basic education, looked down upon and stigmatised because of being illiterate. I believe that these situations have a negative impact on ones identity as there are many instances where learners have also said they felt like they 'do not belong'. For example, three of the learners interviewed said:

- Uma ngiphakathi kwabantu abangaziyo ukuthi angifundile bengizizwa sengathi ngilahlekile, ngizibukele phansi. (I used to be shy, feel lost and despise myself when sitting amongst literate people.)

- Ngangizibukela phansi ngicabange ukuthi abantu bayangihleka ngisho bengashongo lutho. Ngangizizwa ngingabalulekile. (I used to think that people who know I was illiterate laugh at me behind my back. I felt insignificant.)

- Uma usucela omunye umuntu ukuthi akufundele noma akubhalele, yilapho ubona khona ukuthi kukhona okushodayo kuwe njengomuntu. (Each time I asked someone else to read or write a letter for me, I felt helpless and less of a normal human being.)

From their responses, one deduces that attending classes saved them from a desperate state of powerlessness, indignity, marginalisation and lifelessness.

Therefore, in this study, empowerment refers to an act of building, developing and enabling participants through collaborative effort. It is a phenomenon that doesn't occur overnight but a process. Gwala (2003) concurs with this view (as explained in Chapter 1) by maintaining that to empower means to enable, to allow or to permit and can be conceived as both self-initiated and initiated by others. Gwala maintains that empowerment is characterized by reciprocity and mutual respect and understanding towards reaching the defined goals and objectives. Furthermore, the following three definitions of empowerment, obtained from the UNESCO website (www.unesco.org/education/educprog/lwf/doc/portfolio/definitions.htm), are in line with purposes of this study and the concept of literacy:

- Empowerment refers to increasing the political, social or economic strength of individuals or groups. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

- Empowerment is a consequence of liberatory learning. Power is not given, but created within the emerging praxis in which co-learners are engaged.

- Empowerment is an important element of development, being the process by which people take control and action in order to overcome obstacles. Empowerment especially means the collective action by the oppressed and deprived to overcome the obstacles of structural inequality which have previously put them in a disadvantaged position.

Powerlessness means that people find themselves in a situation where they experience an actual or potential loss of power (Albertyn, 2004). People who feel powerless or disempowered feel alienated from resources, have a sense of distrust and hopelessness. I would like to add that empowerment as a concept is meaningless if it doesn't integrate awareness and taking of action to fight powerlessness by participants meant to be empowered.

- For me, value added information (knowledge) is empowering if it impacts on peoples' lives and people apply it in practical situations for their benefit. Information that *Learn with Echo* disseminates would be empowering knowledge if it allows adult learners to:
- Defend their rights and fight inequality between sexes, especially male-dominance
- Create a culture of peace, that is, to play a role in conflict and post-conflict solutions; identify the sources of conflict, take steps to mediate and negotiate to solve conflict.
- Reinforce identities
- Respond to aspirations of democracy. Sustainable democracy begins with well-informed citizens. Therefore, an educated, responsible, active citizenry is very important.
- Acquire greater confidence in themselves and an improved self-esteem.

Although not all adult learners who participated in this study were able to achieve all of the above through using *Learn with Echo* materials, the majority of them feel that different kinds of information they read from *Learn with Echo* pages empowered them in many ways. The following are some of their responses in this regard:

- Lezi ndaba ziyasisiza. Zisinikeza ulwazi olunhlobonhlobo. Mina ngibona sengathi ulwazi esilutholayo lubalulekile ezimpilweni zethu. Mina ngangingazi ukuthi kubaluleke ngani ukuthi sivote nokuthi kanti amalungelo abesilisa nabesifazane ayalingana. (These stories help us a lot. We get information that is important in our lives. For example, I didn't know why it is important to vote and also that we all have equal human rights regardless of gender.)

- Kade singcwaba uGogo Lata ngesonto eledlule. Kumangale wonke umuntu ukuthi uGogo ubenewili. Lolu lwazi waluthola ngokufunda ngalokhu ekilasini kade kubhalwe kuLearn with Echo. (Last week, Gogo Lata, a 70 year adult learner, passed away. A few days after the funeral, the eldest son, who thought he has inherited everything, got a shock of his life to discover that Gogo had a will. She had gone to a local magistrate to help her make the will. This information she had read about in *Learn with Echo* in class.)

- *I-Learn with Echo* isifundisa nezinto ezintsha, ebesingazazi esikhathini esiphambili njenge-UIF (They tell us about new things that we did not know before, like UIF.)

- Ngafunda ngokuthi sifakwa kanjani isicelo somsebenzi, ngenza kanjalo ngase ngiyawuthola. Ngikholwa wukuthi kwangisiza ukuthola lolo lwazi kwa-*Learn with Echo* ngase ngenza izinto ngendlela ezongiphumelelisa. (After reading about how to apply for the job from *Learn with Echo* I got the job. I believe that information I got helped me to do things the right way.)

- Ngafunda ngebhizinisi likaMkhize lamaselula ngabona ukuthi njengoba ngiwumama ongaqashiwe kumele ngizame ukuziqalela elami ibhizinisi. Sahlangana nabanye saqala ibhizinisi lokufuya sithengise izinkukhu. (After reading about Mkhize selling cellphones I realized that as an unemployed mother I could start a business to feed my family. As a result we started a chicken project.)

- Kwakuyinkinga kabi ukuthi uma ngithola incwadi ngicele omunye umuntu angifundele. Namhlanje ngizifundela izincwadi zami mathupha. Kwakuba buhlungu ukufundelwa incwadi ngoba ugcina ungenazo izimfihlo ngoba ngeke umthembe umuntu okade ekufundela incwadi. Ngizizwa sengathi ngiwumuntu omusha. (By learning to read and write I can now read private letters addressed to me instead of asking the next person to read and interpret for me. At last I have privacy and dignity, and I feel like I am a new person.)

- Uma usukwazi ukuzifundela nokuzibhalela incwadi, uyazethemba. Uma ungakakwazi uvele ucabange ukuthi uyisilima. Manje sengizibona ngishintshile, angisafani nakuqala. (When you can read and write you feel confident. This makes your self-esteem better. Before I came to class, I thought I was stupid and limited but now I feel different.)

In the first five extracts above, respondents explicitly say that they gained information which was used to solve problems in their lives. This suggests that generic information was converted to value added information (knowledge) which adult learners used in practical situations for their benefit. For me, this suggests explicit empowerment at its best. The last two extracts are more of a reflection of inner satisfaction which I would describe as implicit empowerment.

Albertyn (2004) categorises outcomes of empowerment differently. She argues that outcomes of empowerment can be identified and organised on three levels. These are micro, interface and macro-levels. Albertyn argues that only if there is evidence of indicators from all the three dimensions of empowerment with an individual can one say that empowerment has occurred.

Albertyn's (2004) 'micro-level empowerment' includes, inter alia, self-confidence, sense of personal responsibility, feelings of self-efficacy and belief in one's capability to perform certain skills. On the other hand, the interface level of empowerment includes respect for others, caring for the next person, problem solving, individual assertiveness and the like. Lastly, macro-level is more advanced, in the sense that it involves critical reflection, awareness of one's rights, and the ability to take action for purposes of effecting change.

I would like to argue that if being empowered means to satisfy all the three dimensions as mentioned above, the term empowerment may not fit neatly with what *Learn with Echo* achieves through its materials. This is so because very few of the participants achieved empowerment at all the three levels. Most of the time participants felt more empowered at a personal level, which is the micro level of empowerment and to a lesser extent, the interface level. For example, some of the female participants were explicit about the valuable information they get from *Learn with Echo* pages especially on HIV/AIDS. For me this is satisfaction experienced at a personal level. But when the participants were asked if they use condoms, one of them was quick to say 'no' she doesn't because her partner doesn't like condoms. The fact that the women could freely talk about the most avoided HIV/AIDS topic is an achievement. This example suggests that the participant may be aware of her rights but has not transcended cultural barriers which perpetuate dependency on men. I believe that she has achieved empowerment, but rather at a micro than at a macro level.

As we all are products of socialization, it may be very difficult to overturn deeply embedded cultural practices through *Learn with Echo* materials alone. Ideally, this woman would have used information at her disposal to rid herself of the oppressive patriarchal situation and protect herself against HIV/AIDS. She was not, however, able to do this. I think therefore that empowerment at a micro level is an achievement even though it neither satisfies all Albertyn's empowerment levels nor covers the latter part of Wedepohl's (1988:15) definition of literacy that says:

> Literacy is not simply a matter of transferring knowledge of the alphabet from one brain to another. It is a process that helps learners to overcome various barriers towards fuller understanding of their own situation and what they can do to change it.

Another example could be that of one of the participants who claimed that she didn't know that one needs to register to vote, but she learned about this from *Learn with Echo* pages. When asked if she did register for the elections that were to take place thereafter, however, she said that she didn't and could not come out with valid reasons for not doing it.

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From the above responses, there is no doubt that adult learners get added information from *Learn with Echo* but one begins to believe that there is no guarantee that this information will be put to good use or will be used to effect change in peoples' lives unless they themselves apply it in practical situations. As we have seen in the last two examples, information obtained from *Learn with Echo* may provide enlightenment but some of the learners may not use the information they have gained to fight the evils of powerlessness and hopelessness because of other factors like cultural barriers and influences of socialisation.

4.7 Transformative learning and perspective transformation experiences

This sub-section attempts to answer the last research question which says:

> Is there any evidence that learners have engaged in transformative learning and experienced perspective transformation?

As explained in Chapter 2, transformative learning occurs when adult learners critically examine their beliefs, assumptions, values, feelings and conditioned responses (Mezirow, 1995) in the light of getting new knowledge, and as a result begin the process of effecting change in their frames of reference. Frames of reference define our life world and our 'line of action' (Mezirow, 1995). Moreover, research has shown that exposure to the process of language learning can result in changes to an individual's identity and perspective.

Interviews with adult learners who participated in this study suggested that reading *Learn with Echo* brought positive change to their identity and altered their perspectives in three major ways. These are:

(a) A change of attitude towards the mother tongue

One of the major themes of transformative learning that emerged from the data was that as the learners engaged in adult MTL classes, they changed their perceptions about the importance of learning in their mother tongue. Firstly, some of the learners were scared and saw themselves as stupid and limited, and therefore not capable of learning to read and to write. Secondly, learners came to class to learn literacy skills in their mother tongue but at the back of their minds

MTL was devalued as compared to ESL. But the smile on the face of an adult who has learnt to read and write the language which is the bearer of her identity and culture is that of appreciation, pride and empowerment. Learners were explicit about how important ones language is. Learners were overjoyed that they could read and write their own language, an indication that they had achieved something of value and that their language was important.

- Ngicabanga ukuthi ulimi lwethu lubalulekile. Uma ungakwazi ukubhala ulimi lwakho kufana nokuthi awuzazi ukuthi uwubani (I think our language is important. If you can't read and write your own language, you don't know who you are.)

- Ayasisiza ukuthi sifunde ukufunda nokubhala. Mina ngangicabanga ukuthi ngiyisilima angihlakaniphile ngoba ngingakwazi ukubhala ngisho IsiZulu engasincela ebeleni. Nganele ngakwazi ukubhala IsiZulu kwayima ngibona ukuthi hhayi bo nami ngiwumuntu ofana nabanye abantu. Ngaqala lapho-ke nami ukuzethemba ngizizwe ngiwumuntu. (The pages help us to learn to read and write. Before I could learn how to read and write IsiZulu, I thought I was stupid. But now that I can read and write my own language, I am confident in myself.)

- Mina sengafunda ukuthi ayikho into engingayenza uma ngingakwazi ukubhala isiZulu, siyisisekelo, ezinye izinto ziba lula uma usulwazi ulimi lwakho. Ngisanda kuqala ukufunda isiNgisi ngoba sengiyakwazi ukubhala kahle IsiZulu. (Now I know that my language forms the foundation; other things become easier if you can read and write your own language. I have started recently to learn English because I now write isiZulu very well.)

- Okuningi ngikuthole kuwo la maphepha. Ngangingakwazi nokubhala, ngafunda kuzo lezi zindaba. Ngafika ngizofunda iziNgisi kodwa uthisha wangitshela ukuthi isiZulu sibalulekile angifunde sona kuqala. Wayeqinisile. Manje ngiyakwazi ukufunda nokubhala isiZulu. Ngangingazi ukuthi kuyinto emnandi kanje ukwazi ulimi lwakho ngoba luwuwena qobo lwakho. Lokhu kuyangijabulisa kakhulu (Yes. I have learnt a lot from these pages. I can now

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read and write IsiZulu. I had come to learn to speak English but my teacher told me that it is important to start by my mother tongue because it is who you are. I feel great. She was right.)

- Ezinye izindaba ziyasikhuthaza. Njengendaba yaleya ntombazane eyakhishwa esikoleni sasemini ubaba wayo wathi akasenayo imali yokufundisa amantombazane. Yabe isiya esikoleni sabadala. Manje isifundile leyo ntombazane. Lokhu kusitshela ukuthi nathi singayenza lento. (Some pages motivate us. They tell us about people who could not read and write. For example, the story about the girl who started to go to adult classes after her father had told her that he doesn't have school fees for girls, but for boys only. She can read and write in isiZulu now. This tells us that we too can do it.)

The quotations above highlight the fact that adult MTL learners come to learning institutions with preconceived ideas about learning to read and write mother tongue and its importance as a language of learning. It is clear that learners were engaged in evaluating their own assumptions and beliefs.

The above narratives also underscore the fact that it is not good to try to learn to read and write in a language in which one is not orally competent. In fact, many writers believe that to teach basic literacy in a language other than mother tongue is a recipe 'for pedagogic disaster' (Lauglo, 2001). Existing research reveals that reasoning, logic, description, discerning implication, differences between fact and opinion, and comprehension of subtle differences of meaning are all easier and meaningful in basic literacy learning contexts when done in the mother tongue.

(b) A second major theme identified related to the development of intercultural awareness. The adult learners repeatedly mentioned another major development within their social and cultural understanding. For example, in *Learn with Echo*, there are articles that expose xenophobia and ethnocentrism as damaging behaviour. For this kind of behaviour, people have cited different reasons. When I interviewed learners, two out of three learners said that after critically engaging with text that deals with misconceptions about foreigners they transformed their point of view in

that they became more tolerant and more accepting of members of other groups. This is what they had to say:

- Enye indaba engiyikhumbulayo ile yabantu abaqhamuka kwamanye amazwe. Mina bengibazonda, nginenkolelo yokuthi bazosihlupha ngoba basintshontshela imisebenzi kanti futhi abesilisa bathatha izintombi zabanye. Manje sekungcono kakhulu, angisabazondi kakhulu ngoba sengezwa ukuthi abaningi babo baxoshwe yizimpi le emakubo. Kodwa bayangicasula abanye babo ngoba badayisela izingane zethu izidakamizwa. (I used to hate foreigners but not that much anymore. Now I understand that many of them are here because of wars in their countries.)

- Uma usufundile wazi izinto obungazazi kade ungakafundi. Njengokuthi nje ngangingazi ukuthi abantu baxoshwa yini emazweni akubo. Babengicika ngizwe ngingabathandi. Sekuncono manje njengoba sengazi. Angisabazondi njengakuqala. (We know things we didn't know before we started classes. For example, I had no idea why people leave their countries and come to South Africa. I used to hate them but I think my attitude towards them has improved.)

The other learner still maintained that foreigners are bad because some of them sell drugs and take other peoples' jobs as they accept low wages. This suggests that not all adult learners transformed their attitudes after reading pages like those dealing with xenophobia and ethnocentrism.

Another example is learners' exposure to *Learn with Echo 's* educational materials on political tolerance and intercultural awareness. Learners became more aware of and appreciative of people with different beliefs and cultures, for example, that we should respect other people's right to choose a political party they like even if it's a party that we don't like. In the scope of perspective transformation, political tolerance and intercultural awareness are a significant breakthrough (King, 1999). In MTL classes observed in selected adult centres in Pietermaritzburg, some *Learn with Echo* articles were effective in helping to guide learners through this experience and led to their change of opinion about others with different beliefs.

Many of the learners in this study have come to understand that other people's choices, religions, beliefs and culture are different but are as valued as their's:

- Mina ngangicabanga ukuthi bonke abantu bayathanda ukugubha ukhisimusi. Ngangingazi ukuthi kukhona abangakholelwa kuwona. Kwaqale kwangicasula ukuthi ukuthi abawuthandi ngani ngoba angikaze ngibabone beya emsebenzini ukukhombisa ukuthi abalifuni leli holide. Manje sengiyazi ukuthi kumele kuhlonishwe ukuthi kukhona nezinye izinkolo ezingebona ubuKrestu. (I didn't understand why some of the learners in our class were complaining about why Christmas is a holiday when other religious days of other South Africans are not observed as such. Now I understand that there are many religions and that we have to respect other people's choices.)

- Eziningi izindaba ngiyazithanda kodwa angilithandanga leli elikhuluma ngokuhlatshwa kwezimbuzi ngoba ngiyikholwa. Ngacasuka ngingaqondi ukuthi abantu kungani besabambelele ezintweni ezingenamsebenzi. Kodwa sengiyazi ukuthi ukuzikhethela kukumuntu. (I hated the article about slaughtering a goat for ancestors, since I am a Christian. But now I understand that a lot of people still practise this and it is their choice. It is wrong to want to choose for other people).

- Baningi ekade bezonda abanye ngenxa yobunhlangano. Kodwa manje sekuncono ngoba sebeyazi ukuthi ilowo nalowo muntu kumele azikhethele inhlangano. Akekho okumele azondelwe ukungahambisani nabantu abathize. Ilungelo lomuntu lokuzikhethela kumele lihlonishwe. (Yes. For example, people now understand that you cannot force people to join your own political organisation. People must make their own choices.)

From the above responses, it was clear that learners had preconceived ideas about other peoples' cultures and beliefs before they started to attend classes. But from interaction with other learners and the use of relevant texts, learners had to face a disparity between this new knowledge and their established beliefs. Learners thereafter felt the need to evaluate their belief systems, and decide to accept or reject a new perspective. This is in line with Mezirow's (1995) assertion that reflection

enables us to correct distortions in our belief systems. The above responses are clear examples of the kind of perspective transformations adult mother tongue learners experience through interacting with other learners, facilitators and appropriate learning materials in the classroom.

(c) The third theme of perspective transformation was in the scope of personal change. Adult learners reported how they gained greater self-esteem and 'micro' empowerment as they learned to cope with learning the new skills of reading and writing. This greater self-confidence affected what they did, how they related to others, and how they thought about themselves:

- Ngifika la esikoleni ngangingakwazi ukufunda nokubhala. Manje sengiyakwazi ukuzifunda nokubhala isiZulu. Sengiyazethemba. (When I started here, I couldn't read or write. But now I can read and write IsiZulu. I have confidence in myself.)

- Umuntu ofundile akafani nongafundile. Mina ngazizwela mathupha lokhu. Izinto eziningi sengiyazenzela. Angisangeni lapho kubhalwe khona ukuthi 'akungenwa', kanti kuqala ngangikhishwa sengiphakathi. (I feel different. I can read signs and I no longer get into places that show 'no entry' like I used to.)

- Sengiyakwazi nokufunda izincwadi eziphuma esikoleni sezingane zami uma zibhalwe ngesiZulu, kanti namariphothi sengiyazifundela kanti kuqala ngangibuza kuzona ukuthi ziphasile yini (Now I can read letters from my children's school. I can also read school reports myself, if they are in IsiZulu.)

From the above quotations, I believe that this research demonstrates a clear manifestation of perspective transformation promoted through transformative learning. I would also like to add that transformative learning may not always be the only goal of adult education, but its importance should not be overlooked and all adult educators should strive to understand it, even if they do not choose to foster it (Imel, 1998).

Chapter 5 discusses the significance of findings and gives recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5: SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

In this research, I aimed to establish how pages in the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement are used in classrooms of adult learners. *The Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement is distributed to a variety of adult education centres in and around Pietermaritzburg but there is very little empirical evidence of how facilitators and adult learners use it as an educational/pedagogical resource. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How is the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement used as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adult learners?

2. How do learners and facilitators respond to the language level, content, use of pictures and layout of the newspaper supplement?

3. Is there any evidence to suggest that learners are gaining information that is useful in their daily lives?

4. Is there any evidence that learners have engaged in transformative learning and experienced perspective transformation?

When I read the findings of research and the readership survey that the *Learn with Echo* project undertook in 2000, I felt that there were gaps that needed to be filled by further research. Moreover, I was convinced that through this research useful feedback could be gathered on contents, illustrations, format, practicality and coverage. I believed that a response to the feedback obtained could lead to improvement of the materials that *Learn with Echo* develops and could also illuminate some aspects on how newspaper supplements could be effectively designed for purposes of conscientisation, development and empowerment.

I also sought to examine the wider educational implications by finding out if there was evidence to suggest that learners are gaining information or learning things from the supplement that positively affect their view of themselves as potential change agents or active members of their communities.

What follows is a discussion of the main findings flowing from this research and proposals as to what can be done to ensure that *Learn with Echo* is a more effective classroom resource in the future. Finally, recommendations for further research and interventions are suggested.

5.2 Main conclusions of the study

5.2.1 *Learn with Echo* as an educational/pedagogical tool

Data elicited from interviews and classroom observations were analysed through qualitative methods using Strauss' (1987) method of data analysis. When data was analysed, it was established that *Learn with Echo* articles are used for a variety of language practices and communication activities in classrooms of adults. *Learn with Echo* materials were used in formal and in informal educational contexts. In the pedagogic encounters that I observed, *Learn with Echo* articles were used:

(i) as discussion triggers about the issue at hand and beyond. Examples of pages used in the classrooms included elections, the use of calendars, xenophobia, human rights, HIV/AIDS, UIF and government grants. Discussions that took place in classrooms gave learners a chance to brainstorm ideas, express their viewpoints and draw conclusions relating to their own experiences and previous knowledge. The discussions also provided adult learners with opportunities to work in groups and focus on understanding what they were learning about, rather than reproducing facts. From the class observations it was clear that group discussions helped to reduce the focus on error correction thus building learners' self-confidence and promoting meaningful learning.

(ii) as a source for reading activities which promoted reading for pleasure, reading for information and reading for development of vocabulary.

(iii) as a source for writing activities. Facilitators used *Learn with Echo* pages to design writing activities and they played a mediating role by explaining what adult learners needed to do and by giving them examples. Pictures provided a good source of writing activities that focused on visual literacy. Moreover, two of the facilitators used old *Learn with Echo* editions to compile a variety of written activities for enrichment. Keeping and using old *Learn with Echo* copies ensures a long shelf-life.

The long shelf-life is one of the indications that *Learn with Echo* is being used as a classroom resource.

5.2.2 Content and relevance of materials

(i) Most of adult learners and facilitators who were interviewed expressed satisfaction with the overall content of *Learn with Echo*. Furthermore, they maintained that *Learn with Echo* dealt with issues that are useful in their everyday lives. For example, some of the adult learners were able to access government grants using information they got from *Learn with Echo* pages. Using that knowledge, adult learners were able to assess whether they were eligible or not and they knew what documents to bring when they went to apply for the grants.

(ii) Many of those interviewed felt that there was a good range of issues being covered by *Learn with Echo*. However, interviewees did suggest that there are some of the important issues that are not given enough attention and urged that this should be treated as a matter of urgency. These issues were:

- Entrepreneurial skills including how to write a business plan and budgeting

- Pages on traditional leadership; qualities of a good Inkosi; chairing meetings; how to manage Izinduna and solving problems.

- Cultural, traditional, heritage material. For example, nutritious, traditional food that people look down upon nowadays; how to handle in-laws; stereotypes/superstitions, history of ethnic groups and history of cultural practices.

- One facilitator suggested that other people's cultures should also be attended to. She felt that in the pages where culture was given attention, there was an over-emphasis on Zulu culture at the expense of other cultures.

- Provincial, national and major international content such as conflict and natural disasters.

- More stories about adult learners and adult centres. Also stories by adult learners as these are particularly effective since learners can identify with them.

- Two facilitators argued that there is too much emphasis on women's issues. They suggested that material targeting men also be included.

- Issues of employer/employee relationships.

(iii) The majority of the interviewees felt that there needed to be a stronger emphasis on human rights and democracy issues. They maintained that human rights and democracy pages needed to be a pivotal area for *Learn with Echo* since they carried out the empowerment commitment of the project.

(iv) Two of the facilitators commended *Learn with Echo* for producing content that is responsive when the need arises. For example, facilitators referred to a page that was produced in 2000 when there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and another one in 2003 when cholera hit many areas in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. *Learn with Echo* abandoned consciously planned pages and wrote information on those life-threatening diseases for the benefit of the affected communities and people at large.

(v) Responses from the majority of adult learners reaffirmed that adult learners evaluate the relative importance of information they get. Therefore, material developers like the *Learn with Echo* team need to ensure that the material adults get for learning is relevant, and that it will have an immediate effect. Adult learners want to see how the objectives of the learning relate to authentic situations and real solutions to problems. Knowing who your target audience is, helps to ensure that the material you're presenting meshes with expectations of the learners.

5.2.3 Language level, layout and the use of pictures

(i) The language used in *Learn with Echo* pages is of particular significance. The majority of adult learners and facilitators argued that the language level of most pages is pitched at adult basic education levels two and three except for the Mkhize page. The material fails in its purpose if it is too high for its primary target audience. According to writers of *Learn with Echo* pages, the primary target audience is adults with low levels of literacy. Although this is not the sole audience, the evidence suggests that *Learn with Echo* needs to double edit and make complex issues understandable for the benefit of the adult learner. *Learn with Echo* already does this to some extent but there should be more devotion and commitment to this practice.

I would also propose that material developers like *Learn with Echo* should be cautious about tight constraints on length and simplicity of text and try to consider other criteria for preparing texts, for example, informativeness, relevance and coherence. Material developers also need to be knowledgeable enough on how to assess the appropriateness of the language so that it is best suited for the target audience. Language issues such as how bilingual pages are used need further exploration.

(ii) In terms of layout, many adult learners and facilitators interviewed voiced their concerns with regards to the following:

- In some of the pages the size of the font is too small for adult learners as most of them have eyesight problems.
- Pages that have too much text are terrifying to learners. The majority of facilitators prefer minimal texts with lots of pictures.
- Three facilitators argued for the use of a greater variety of graphics but insisted that there should be more photographs than illustrations. They argued that photographs of real people, doing things that ordinary people do, are more inspirational to learners than illustrations. But adult learners preferred illustrations to photographs because of originality and creativity displayed by the artist in illustrated visuals.
- Most facilitators were saddened by the fact that *Learn with Echo* only uses black and white pictures. They said that some pages are more useful if pictures have colour.
- Participants felt that layout needed to be changed to make pages more accessible with shorter and more succinct text.

(iii) This study also established that the Mkhize page is the most liked of all the pages as a classroom resource. The comic story, Mkhize, is a combination of verbal and visual media. The Mkhize page uses a lot of pictures, is based on relevant themes, uses simpler language and is easier to use and more interesting to read for both facilitators and adult learners than the other *Learn with Echo* pages. This research established that the Mkhize page, when compared with other *Learn with Echo* pages, triggered more discussions. When adult learners were involved in discussing and

retelling the comic stories, they learnt to produce language that is not in the presented text. These kinds of activities challenged adult learners' imaginations and also tapped the adult learners' own language resources.

Some of the strengths and the values of Mkhize stories are in the time taken to produce not only language that people will identify with, but scenes and topics they will recognise. Familiarity of context combined with repetitive vocabulary help our readers to construct the meaning more easily and successfully (Land 2002). Samuels (1994), as cited by Land (2002), argues that the speed of lexical access is faster for more familiar vocabulary than vocabulary from unfamiliar contexts. Therefore, learner readers are more likely to succeed in reading texts with familiar words. In the creation of the Mkhize stories, there is also a policy of trying to include ideas and opinions from all sections of the population, and therefore not stressing any political or social line.

The Mkhize page is one of the very few South African cartoons with African leading characters. When one looks at the high rate of illiteracy in our country and the absence of a reading culture in African communities, comics could be an appropriate tool in cultivating a culture of reading. Le Roux (1995: 14) has this to say about the importance of comic stories and illustrations that accompany them:

> It is important to establish a reading culture in South Africa for the lack of one
> is a major factor in the poor performance of literacy programmes. Popular
> literature has a crucial role to play in fostering mass literacy. Recent research
> shows that from Malaysia to West Africa to Latin America, comics seem to be
> popular literature of the Third World. The Storyteller Group believes that
> people will only be encouraged to read if they have enjoyable reading material
> which is relevant to their lives. They believe that comics can be read by more
> people than books, and that comics can lead people to read books.

5.2.4 The language of learning in *Learn with Echo*

All of the interviewees strongly agreed that the mix of languages gives *Learn with Echo* its unique identity. However, most interviewees argued for more Zulu content,

especially for pages aimed at mother tongue literacy learners. Many facilitators and adult learners argued that whilst mother-tongue as a basis of education should be upheld, English was seen as the language of business and opportunity. Thus, IsiZulu should be the primary language of *Learn with Echo* supplement, but with English included in one way or another.

5.2.5 Information, Knowledge and Empowerment

This study has served to reveal that materials that *Learn with Echo* writes help learners to acquire useful knowledge, information and literacy skills. Adult learners were explicit about how pages from *Learn with Echo* have provided them with opportunities to be involved with people, issues and activities that are an ongoing part of their own lives in their communities.

On the contrary to the above, the study has also revealed that retention of information and the ability to transfer information in a new setting can happen but is not guaranteed. The capacity for critical reflectivity and for transformation of entrenched perspectives and perceptions depends on individuals. Some learners interpret, retain and apply the information to solve problems in real situations, enhance their lives and to rid themselves of powerlessness. But for some of the learners this does not happen. The majority of the adult learners who were interviewed reported that information they get from *Learn with Echo* education pages is useful and relevant but when questioned about how they apply it to authentic situations it became evident that some of them don't. I would therefore argue that transformative learning with its emphasis upon critical reflection is not necessarily emancipatory in nature if that learning does not lead to some kind of action. It is therefore essential to mention that although emancipatory learning is commonly associated with adulthood, not all adult education fosters it. There are a lot of barriers to adult learning and individuals who practice adult education have diverse philosophical beliefs about the goals and purposes of education, and not all adult educators or facilitators align themselves with emancipatory learning practices. This study has underscored the significance of these barriers.

5.2.6 The role of facilitators

Although *Learn with Echo* materials in classrooms are cited as useful by facilitators, teaching could have been done better if all facilitators had sufficient training as adult basic education practitioners and on how to use newspaper supplements like *Learn with Echo* effectively, as a classroom resource. One of the three facilitators did not use *Learn with Echo* materials to teach anything else other than reading and writing. In her lessons, participation by learners in the lessons was minimal. Without suggesting that conventional methods of teaching are insignificant, this research displayed that there is more to literacy than being able to decode print. A facilitator needs to design in-class situations that encourage learners to give their voice, share experiences, seek links between past experience and current situations, analyse and reconstruct past experience, and help learners form links between their past experience and their beliefs about themselves, how things work, what is important, and what things mean. This is a challenge to people involved in producing materials that it is not enough to develop good, relevant and meaningful materials without adequately capable facilitators. Projects like *Learn with Echo* may overcome this barrier by working with NGOs, government departments and other stakeholders to ensure that there is compatibility between materials developed and availability of competent facilitators. This I mention because two of the facilitators in this study have had adequate training on how to teach adults, but the third one had never had training at all, not even in the form of sporadic workshops that usually last a few days or three months at most. Facilitation is a complex phenomenon and its complexity is compounded if a facilitator has never had any training and this may have adverse effects on the use of materials like *Learn with Echo* in classes of adults.

5.2.7 Conclusions related to perspective transformation

This research reveals that a lot of change can be experienced by adult learners who go to classes for mother tongue literacy, and that perspective transformation theory provides a basis from which to view these changes. Certain changes identified were foundational not only to learning by adults in a classroom, but also to the learner's understanding of other people's cultures and self. Critical to educational practice, these perspective transformation experiences highlight the fact that adult learners have diverse needs and concerns. From the learners' accounts, coming to class and

interacting with others encouraged reflection, discussion, and critical thinking, and learning activities that were tied to these functions contributed to perspective transformation. *Learn with Echo* articles provided material that was used as a springboard and a tool for achieving these.

This research underscores the core adult learning principles, such as recognizing the experience that adults bring to the classroom, creating a climate of respect, and active participation. Each of these ingredients is important in facilitating transformational learning and all of them were portrayed in the accounts of the research participants. Adult educators have to be aware of these sorts of changes and find a way to facilitate and support such significant learning.

When transformative learning is considered as a goal for adult learning, the role of the facilitator in establishing an environment in which it will occur is significant. The facilitator needs to build an environment that builds trust for transformative learning to occur. To facilitate transformative learning, educators need to help learners become aware and critical of their own and others' assumptions. Learners need to be helped to participate effectively in discussions and educational newspaper supplements like *Learn with Echo* provide a good discussion trigger. According to Mezirow (1995) discussions and debates are essential to validate what and how one understands, or to arrive at a best judgement regarding a belief.

Revealing how literacy learning experiences contribute to perspective transformation may lead to structuring adult classes and educational materials in a variety of ways that befit diverse needs of adult learners and to give them necessary support.

There has been little empirical research about perspective transformation among adult mother tongue learners. This study makes a contribution towards understanding of the breadth and depth of perspective transformation that adult learners experience in classrooms. Realizing that not only are adult learners learning to read and write, but also changing their perspectives of culture, intercultural awareness, self-confidence and gaining empowerment, reveals that adult learning can be much more than learning how to decode print.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations arising out of this study, pertain specifically to writers of supplements such as *Learn with Echo,* and writers of other learning materials designed for newly literates:

- Educational materials work well if producers have a good understanding of who their target audience is. Therefore, producers of materials, including those of *Learn with Echo* pages, need to devise strategies to regularly interact with the target audience. This should include ongoing evaluation of materials so that outcomes are analysed for the benefit of learners and readers.

- This study has proved that it is difficult for learners to access information if too much of it has to be inferred. I would recommend that *Learn with Echo* writers produce less content and use a lot of pictures for pages targeted at mother tongue literacy level one. Writers should avoid packing too much into one page. This is supported by Rowntree who maintains that:

  > It may be better for learners to fully understand half the content you would ideally like to include than to half understand all of it (1990: 57).

- Facilitators who use *Learn with Echo* as a classroom resource need to be trained in the pedagogical rationale of the materials. This could be done by conducting workshops from time to time on how *Learn with Echo* could be best used as a classroom resource.

- This research highlighted the enormous success of *Learn with Echo* as a classroom resource, but also raised a number of different issues and debates which will need to be carefully thought through by writers of pages in this project. I, therefore, recommend that the researcher conducts staff development seminars with the *Learn with Echo* team so as to share the depth of knowledge she has acquired through this dissertation.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Numerous possibilities for further research emerge from this study. They include:

- Studies that provide more detailed knowledge about the value of pages written in both IsiZulu and English simultaneously. This could help writers to decide whether this practice should be extended to other pages or not.

- Studies that tackle the issue of which kind of bracketed translation works best. Is it translation of a single word, a phrase, a sentence or the whole paragraph that is more meaningful to the adult learners and readers?

- Studies that explore in greater detail how learners and readers read *Learn with Echo*. Previous surveys and this research have indicated that some of the pages are mediated. Many learners and readers maintain that they read *Learn with Echo* with friends, family and neighbours. Further research could reveal who reads to whom outside the classroom and how this interaction takes place.

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APPENDICES

LIST

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW WITH LEARNERS IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES

DATE:

CODE OF RESPONDENT:

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Sex   _____

2. Age   _____

3. Marital status   _____

4. Employment   _____

5. Level   _____

B. RESPONSE OF LEARNERS TO LWE PAGES

1. Do you like to read pages like these? Why?

2. Can you tell me what they are talking about?

3. Do you find information in these pages useful?

_____

____

4. How does this information help you in life generally? If it does, give examples.

_____

____

5. Do you think this information makes you a better person? Explain.

6. Which pages are the most useful to you? Give reasons.

7. Which pages do you not like? Why?

8. What other things would you like us to write about? Why?

....
....

USAGE, LANGUAGE AND LAYOUT

1. For what purposes do you use civic education pages?

2. Are these pages easy or hard to read? Why?

_____

____

3. How do you feel about the way *Learn with Echo* writes these pages?

4. How do you read these pages? Do you read alone, with another person or with a group? Why?

_____

____

5. If you were to change anything, what would it be? Why?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FACILITATORS IN SELECTED ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES

CENTRE CODE:
DATE:

CODE OF FACILITATOR:

A. RESPONSE TO LWE PAGES

1. Do you find information in this kind of pages useful to the learners? Give reasons.

2. Which pages do you think are the most important? Why?

3. What is your impression of knowledge and skills gained by learners from these pages?

4. Do you notice any changes in the attitudes of learners who have used these pages for some time?

5. What issues do you think have not been given enough attention or have not been covered at all?

6. Would you recommend these pages to another tutor who has never used them before? Give reasons.

B. USAGE OF LWE PAGES AS CLASSROOM RESOURCE

1. For what purposes do you use these pages in your class?

2. Do you develop any activities from these pages for use in your class? If yes, are these activities based on social, political and economic development or on development of language and communication skills only? Explain.

3. Do you only depend on these pages as a classroom resource or you also use other learning materials?

4. If you were to change anything, what would it be? Why?

C. LANGUAGE LEVEL, CONTENT AND LAYOUT

1. How do you find LWE pages? Do you find them easy or difficult to use? Explain.

2. If pages are difficult, how do you make them simpler for your learners.

3. What do you think about the language level? Is it easy, satisfactory or difficult?

4. Any comments about the languages that are used? Would you like pages to be in English, English with translated sections, Zulu or both English and Zulu?

5. How do you feel about translated sections in pages written in English? Which kind of translation helps to clarify things the most? Is it translation of a word; a phrase; a sentence or the whole paragraph?

6. Do you think content is relevant to your learners? Explain.

7. What do you think about the structure of the pages? How is the font? Are letters too small or are they big enough for the learners to read and be able to access information.

8. How do you feel about the use of illustrations and photographs?

APPENDIX 3: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: LEARNERS

A. Biographical information

1. Code of Centre: Date:

2. Level:

3. Code of facilitator:

4. Number in class:

B. Evaluation of the session in terms of the following:

1. How are the pages used in class? Is there dialogue about a topic raised?

2. Is there active participation by adult learners?
   - During discussions, do adult learners link previous knowledge with the issue being dealt with?
   - Are learners able to voice their opinions, argue in favour of or against, take position and give reasons?
   - Do they share ideas with one another?

3. Which kinds of topics generate the most/least discussion or interest?

4. What happens if an issue creates conflict in class?
   - Who dominates, in terms of gender and age?
   - What is the role of the facilitator in this regard?
   - How is the conflict resolved?
   - What is the class environment like after the conflict?

5. Which topics potentially cause conflict?

6. Is there any indication that learners have seen and/or read the pages before the class is observed/ before this session?
   - If so, what tells the researcher this? Do learners say so?
   - What does the facilitator do in this case?
   - How does this influence the learning potential?

7. How are the LWE pages linked with literacy/language learning/life skills activities?

APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: FACILITATORS

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Code of Centre:

2. Date:

3. Code of tutor/facilitator:

4. Class:

OBSERVATION IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Planning for the session

Is there any indication that the tutor has planned for the session being observed?

2. Competence

- Is the tutor familiar with the concepts that relate to the issues being dealt with in the LWE pages?
- Does the tutor go beyond the text and give examples that are relevant to the context of the learners?
- Does the tutor ask questions and engage learners actively in the lesson? Are learners allowed to work in pairs/groups?
- What language is the tutor using? Does she use Zulu or English or does she do a lot of code switching and code mixing?
- How does the tutor handle translated words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs?

3. The learning environment

- How are learners responding to the tutor with regards to pages being dealt with? Do they seem to like/dislike the issues being dealt with?
- How are these pages used: Does the tutor read to the learners, ask questions, give examples and allow learners to give their opinions/views about the issue or
- Does the tutor allow learners to read on their own and discuss the text in pairs/groups?

- Does this kind of text interfere with the learning atmosphere in the class?
- How does the tutor respond to disruptions like remarks, conflicts that arise and learners that dominate the discussions.
- What is the tutor's approach to LWE pages. Does he/she see these pages as a tool for giving learners information that could positively affect their view of themselves as potential change agents or active members of their communities?
- Does the tutor use the text for language/literacy/life skills activities? In other words, does she go beyond the meaning of text to how it could be applied to learners' daily lives?

Use of other materials
Does the tutor depend on LWE pages only as a source of information or the tutor also uses other books, magazines, pictures and newspapers?

Learn

No. 565
February 7
2002

News

Zimbabwe's President

Many people are very worried about what is happening in Zimbabwe. Soon there will be an election to choose the President.

Robert Mugabe, who has been the President of Zimbabwe for many many years, wants to be elected again. Many Zimbabweans think it is time for Mugabe to go.

Life in Zimbabwe seems to get more and more difficult. Their money is worth very little, so food is very expensive, and there are shortages of basic goods like maize meal. There is more and more violence as the government tries to scare people into voting for Mugabe again. The opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), says the election will not be free and fair.

Zimbabwe could cause many problems for its neighbours if the situation does not get better. The South African government and other SADC leaders could do more to try and change the situation.

Why are more of our leaders not speaking out against Mugabe? What do you think they should do?

❶ Keep clean and stay healthy

❷ Make your life better

❸ Your work is wonderful

❹ UMkhize: Liyamphinda lshwa!

Keep clean and stay healthy!

Have you noticed that a lot of people are sick with vomiting and diarrhoea at the moment?

These "tummy bugs" are common (uhudo oluj wayelakile) in summer. The germs that make us sick can grow and spread easily in hot weather. There are a lot of flies which carry germs. The summer rains also wash the germs into the rivers where many people get their daily water. Cholera could become a problem again this year.

Good hygiene (ukuhlanzeka) can prevent (kungazivimbela) stomach problems. We should all follow these rules:

- Wash your hands with soap after you have been to the toilet.
- Wash your hands before you touch food, and before you eat.
- Wash fruit and vegetables with clean water before you eat it or cook it.
- Keep food covered so that it is safe from flies, which carry germs.
- Clean water is tap water; boiled water; or water that has been treated with bleach (one teaspoon of bleach to 25 litres water).
- Make sure that meat is very well cooked before you eat it. Raw meat may contain germs or worms eggs that you can't see.
- When you re-heat leftover food, make sure that it boils properly. This will kill any germs that could make you sick.

Be extra careful to follow these rules when there are crowds of people, for example at parties or funerals. Many "tummy bugs" are spread at big gatherings where people all wash hands in the same bowl, and eat together.

If you don't have a tap, the "tippy tap" can help you to wash your hands with clean water. Pull the string and clean water pours out. Phone or write to Learn with Echo if you want to make one. Tell us your address and we will post instructions to you.

Cholera

Treatment for diarrhoea (Ukwelashwa kohudo)

A person with diarrhoea must drink a lot to stop the body from drying out (dehydrating). The sick person should drink this mixture:

- 8 level teaspoons of sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 litre of clean water

Drink small sips as often as possible.

Rates crisis

Many people can't afford to pay their rates. Some owe thousands to the local council. Others owe only a little. All of them may lose their homes.

The Smit family has had a hard time for many years. Mr Smit used to work for a shoe factory, but he was injured (walimala) in an accident. He couldn't work anymore, so he got a disability grant (imali yokulimala). This helped the family to pay their accounts. In 1999 his grant stopped. Mrs Smit also gets a grant, but it is not enough to pay for everything the family needs. In the middle of the month there is often no money for food. Mrs Smit borrows money from neighbours, and sometimes she sells popcorn or ice blocks to get a little money.

The Smits are foster parents. They get a grant for the foster child. But Mrs Smit says that money is for his school fees, clothes and food. She knows she can't use that money to pay other accounts.

Since 2001, Mrs Smit has been trying to pay off what she owes for rates (ubesikhokhela isikweletu sama-rates). The Smits owed quite a lot of money to council, so the council asked lawyers (abameli) to get the money from her. Mrs Smit started by paying R50 a month to the lawyers, but they said that was not enough. She then paid R100 every month, and then R200. The council's lawyers (abameli bakamasipala) now want her to pay R800 a month. Her grant is only R740 a month. She has receipts to show she has already paid more than R2 000 to the lawyers. She can't understand why her debt (isikweletu) does not go down. One of the problems is that the lawyers collect the money for the council, but they charge fees for this. So Mrs Smit is paying for her debt and the legal fees (ukhokha isikweletu kanye nemali yabameli).

Things have got worse for Mrs Smit since the council has put the rates account together with the electricity account. Mrs

Mr and Mrs Smit show the letter from a lawyer asking them to pay R800 a month for their rates and legal fees

Smit is up to date with her electricity account, but now that her rates are added on to this she can't pay the whole account every month. This means she will now fall behind with her electricity account! If that happens, her electricity could be cut off.

Many poor people in Pietermaritzburg have the same problems as the Smits. Some people owe a lot more money to council than the Smits do. Others owe only a little to the council. The council may sell peoples' homes to get the money, even if people owe only a small amount.

The council needs money to be able to do its work. But people are very angry about the way in which the council is trying to get its money. Many believe that housing and water are rights, not commodities (things that you can only get if you have money). Should people lose their homes because they are too poor to pay rates?

Do you have problems with your rates and water accounts? Write to us and tell us about your problem. How do you deal with problems like this.

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Did you know?

4 Children need to eat a lot of food, especially protein ('grow food'), because their bodies and brains are growing.
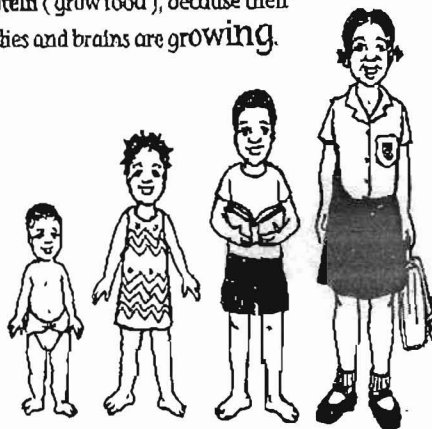
8 Children who do not get enough protein to eat when they are small may find it difficult to do well at school.

8 Chips and sweets are not real food. Chips have lot of salt (which is unhealthy), and they do not build the body or give real energy. Do not buy chips and sweets for children every day. If you do buy something, buy fruit or yoghurt instead. · - - — ··

You can double the amount of protein and energy in maize meal if add these things when you make porridge:

| 1 cup maize meal |
| 2 teaspoons full cream milk powder |
| 1 teaspoon sunflower oil, or margarine, or peanut butter |
| 1 teaspoon sugar |

Do this when the porridge is for somebody who needs to put on weight, or be 'built up'. This recipe is also good for young children.

---

4 People who have HIV need more food than people without HIV. They need more vitamins and minerals because their body is dealing with an infection all the time (*umzimba wabo ulwa nokugula*), even when they seem to be well. People with HIV must also try keep their weight up (*bazikhuluphalise*).

4 Elderly people often eat less than others, but they do need a good balanced diet. The elderly can get sick easily so they need vitamins, minerals and proteins to stay strong.

4 You do not need to eat meat often to get enough protein. There are many cheaper ways to get protein, such as eggs, beans, split peas, lentils and soya mince (Imana, Knorrox). Eggs are a very good way to get protein (body building food).

4 Fresh food is usually better than tinned food or frozen food. Fruit and vegetables have more goodness when they are fresh.

8 Cooking can take away some of the goodness from fruit and vegetables. Heat destroys Vitamin C. Eat vegetables raw, or cook them for a very short time.

4 Brown bread is more healthy than white bread. So is brown flour and brown rice. These foods are rough, which helps a person's stomach to work properly.

8 A person can be overweight (*akhuluphale*) and malnourished (*angondleki kahle*) at the same time. For example, a person who eats a lot of phuthu but not enough protein, vegetables and fruit can look well fed (*ondlekile*) but is actually unhealthy (*engenampilo*).

News

UIF for domestic workers

1. UIF for domestic workers
2. Zitshalele ukherothi
3. Amanzi atholakala mahhala 4
4. **UMkhize**: UMkhize uyachaza.

From April 1, all domestic workers (*abasebenzi basazindlini*) must belong to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Employers (*abaqashi*) must make sure that their workers are registered before the end of March.

What is the UIF?

The UIF is organised by the Department of Labour. A person who is registered with the UIF can get paid part of their salary for some months after they lose their job. Women who get unpaid maternity leave (*ukuphelelwa okungakhokhelwa*) can also claim from the UIF for the months when they get no other pay. Employees and their employers both put a small amount of money into the fund every month – the money which is used to pay people comes from these contributions (*imali efakwayo*). If you are not registered with the fund, or you have not paid into the fund, you cannot claim from the fund.

It is now compulsory (*kuphoqelekile*) for all domestic workers who work more than 24 hours a month for an employer to be registered (*babhaliswe*) with the UIF. Workers and employers must pay contributions (*bakhokhe imali*) to the fund. 'Maids', gardeners, drivers, nannies and any others who are paid to work in a house are domestic workers. Domestic workers who work for different employers must be registered by each employer separately. If they work for each employer for 24 hours or more per month. Employers who do not register domestic workers with the UIF will be fined R5000.

How much does it cost each month?

Domestic workers must pay one percent (1%) of their salary to the UIF, and employers must also pay 1% of the domestic worker's salary. For example:

The worker earns R800 per month... must pay R8 a month to the UIF. His employer must also pay R8 each month to the fund for her...

The employer...

A domestic worker who earns R1000 must pay R10 a month... amadoda must always... in R10, [?] at her R20 altogether...

Money must be paid from 1 April 2003, and it must be paid before the seventh of each month. Employers can pay for a whole year at once if they want to. They must pay at the nearest Labour Centre, or into the UIF bank account.

How to register with the UIF

The employer must fill in two forms, the UI 8 form, to register as an employer, and the UI 19 form, to register the domestic worker. This information is needed:

UI8: The employer's name, address and postal address, and the employees' names...

UI 19: The domestic worker's name, ID number, how much the worker is payed, and how often (daily, weekly, or monthly).

The forms must be handed in at the nearest Labour Centre. Or post them to the Unemployment Insurance Fund Head Office at 94 Church Street, Pretoria, 0001.

After March 17, employers with computers and the Internet can register at www.uif.gov.za and pay electronically (using the computer).

Next week: How much a worker can claim, and how to claim from the UIF.

It is not too late!

You can still register to vote at IEC offices

Do you remember why Dumisani and Bhekithemba Dube were against voting? And why Mkhulu said he wouldn't vote either?

> Voting doesn't make any difference. Things stay the same. So I won't vote.
> **Bhekithemba Dube**

> **Dumisani Dube**
> I don't care about politics. I won't vote.

> **Mkhulu**
> Many other people will vote for the party I like, so I don't need to vote.

> You are lazy, Dumisani! And you, Bhekithemba, are making sure that things won't change! What if you change your mind just before the election, and decide that you do want to vote then? It will be too late. Registering is quick and easy, and you still don't have to vote on election day if you don't want to.

You can still register now at IEC offices. Registration will stop on the day that the President announces (*esememezele*) the election date. This will probably be sometime early in February. So if you want to register, don't delay (*ungazibambezeli*). Go soon or you will be too late!

Remember! Democracy only works well if most people vote, to choose leaders.

☒ If you don't like a leader or party, vote for a different one!

☒ If you don't like any of the parties or leaders, spoil your paper or don't vote. Your 'no vote' will only be noticed if you are registered as a voter on the voters' roll!

Where can I register now?

Register your name on the voters' roll at the municipal IEC office. In Pietermaritzburg the IEC office is at:

The Symons Centre (corner of Boshoff and Church streets) on the 10th floor

Voter registration is open from 8am and 4pm on weekdays (Monday to Friday).

When you go to register, you need to give some important information about yourself. Someone can help you to write your details down at an IEC office. But it is useful to practise for the next time you need to fill in a form. Practise writing your personal details here:

First names (*amagama akho*) _____

Surname (*isibongo*) _____

Residential address (*lawuhlala khona*) _____

Postal address (*ikheli lokuposa*) _____

Date of birth (*usuku lokuzalwa*) _____

Gender (*ubulili*) _____

Marital status (*ezomshado*) _____

ID Number (*umazisi*) _____

Signature (*ukusayina*) _____

Today's date (*usuku*) _____

Next week: More about why some people don't want to vote

Bhekithemba is sick

Remember Nokuthula's brother Bhekithemba Dube? He is 32 years old. He works as a security guard. He is a single parent with two children. His wife died two years ago. Bhekithemba gets sick often.

Bhekithemba's family is worried about him. They think his wife died of AIDS. Now they can see that Bhekithemba is getting sicker. They are afraid he also has AIDS.

This is what the different family members think about Bhekithemba's illness:

It's not *ingculazi*. Criminals have put a curse on him because he is a security guard. He must go to *inyanga*, then he will get better.

I think its AIDS but I hope that it is something else, like diabetes or TB. We must be careful not to touch him, in case it is AIDS.

Gogo

Mkhulu

Dumisani

I can see that Bhekithemba has AIDS. He must have an HIV test. How can I talk to him about it?

Nokuthula

We should build a room outside for him, so he doesn't touch our things. He mustn't sit in our chairs or use our plates and cups.

How does Bhekithemba feel about being sick?

I think I have AIDS. But I don't want a test, because I am scared. I am scared to know for sure that I really do have AIDS. I am also scared of what other people will say. My family might chase me away from home. I am so worried all the time but I can't talk about it.

Activity *Umsebenzi*

What should Bhekithemba do? Tick one or more:

☐ Go to a traditional healer for treatment
☐ Go to the clinic for medicine but say no to an HIV test
☐ Go to the clinic for medicine and ask to be tested for HIV
☐ Do nothing, try to carry on as usual
☐ Talk to his family and ask for their advice

Talk about why he should do it. Or write the reasons why here:

_____

_____

Which member of the Dube family do you agree with?

☐ Mkhulu
☐ Dumisani
☐ Nokuthula
☐ Gogo

If Bhekithemba decides to talk to a family member, which one should he talk to? Why?

_____

Izinhlobo zamakhambi engculaza

Zintathu izinhlobo zamakhambi ahlukene asetshenziswayo. Njengoba kulula ukuthi i-HIV izifihle futhi yenze amakhambi angasebenzi, abagulayo kumele bazidle kanye kanye izinhlobo ukuze lingadabuli. Lokhu kudla amakhambi anhlobontathu kubizwa ngokuthi 'HAART' (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy) noma 'triple therapy'.

La makhambi amaqembu mabili. Abezempilo babiza la maqembu ngokuthi ama-'regimens'. Ami kunje la maqembu:

Amakhambi kumele uwadle ngesikhathi esisodwa njalo. Uma uke wadideka, igciwane lithola amandla lifunde nokuzivikela.

Iqembu 1 noma Regimen 1
• 3TC or Lamivudine
• d4T or Stavudine
• Efavirenz (noma i-Nevirapine, ekahle kwabesifazane abasafisa ukukhulelwa)

Iqembu 2 noma Regimen 2 (For those whose HIV resists Regimen 1)
• AZT or Zidovudine
• ddI or Didanosine
• Lopinavir with Ritonavir

Amakhambi anikezwa amagama ahlukene, kunye ngokuthi akhiwe iyiphi inkampani. Ngaleyo ndlela ikhambi elenza umsebenzi ofanayo lingabizwa ngamagama ahlukene yizinkampani ezihlukene. (Isibonelo: Umuntu noma amaphilisi i-paracetamol, iyakhiwa ezinye izinkampani sithole isibizwa ngamagama afana nalawa: Panado, Painamol, Tylenol, or Dolorol.)

Izifo ezivela ngenxa yokusebenzisa amakhambi

Kwesinye isikhathi siye siphuze imithi yakwelapha kodwa isidalele izinkinga. Ungaliphuza iphilisi lekhanda, buphele ubuhlungu bekhanda kodwa leli philisi likuphathise isisu. Namakhambi engculaza ayakwenza lokhu. Lokhu kuthiwa ama-side effects ngesiNgisi.

Ezinye zalezi zifo zingaba yingozi. Asebeqalile ukudla amakhambi okulwa negciwane lengculaza kumele bazi kabanzi ngalezi zifo ukuze baphuthume kudokotela noma emtholampilo uma zibaphatha.

Abasebenzi bezempilo

Abantu abasebenzisa amakhambi kumele babonane nomsebenzi wezempilo oyedwa zikhathi zonke. Oyedwa uyena ozobe azi kabanzi ngawe nezinkinga zakho. Kuba lula ukuthi ukusize kulezi zifo eziqubuka ngenxa yamakhambi owadlayo. Futhi kuba khona ukuthembana phakathi kwakhe nawe siguli. Uma ogulayo ebonwa umuntu omusha njalo kungaba khona izinkinga ngokuthi imaphi amakhambi asetshenziswa isiguli nokuthi ikuphi ukuhlolwa kwegazi osekwenziwe, nokunye.

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Ukufunda Nokubhala

698. Izibuko zikaGogo – Gogo's glasses

1 Izibuko zikaGogo zanikeza uMkhize umcabango.

> Nami ngingabukeka ngihlakaniphile njengomhloli wezikole.

Granny's glasses gave Mkhize an idea. He thought if he wore them, they would make him look clever like a schools inspector.

2 Wazihlaba egazini uKhabazela izibuko zikagogo, walibangisa ethaveni.

Mkhize put on the glasses and set off for the tavern.

3 Akakwazanga nokubona abangani bakhe ethaveni ngenxa yezibuko ezingafanele.

> Kunjani we-Cutter?

> Ubani lo? NginguZungu mina!

He couldn't recognise his friends at the tavern because the glasses were wrong for his eyes.

4 Anda amaphutha kaKhabazela ngenxa yokungaboni kahle.

Toilets

Mkhize's mistakes got worse because he couldn't see properly.

Igesonto elizayo: UGogo ufuna Izibuko

Next week: Gogo looks for her glasses

Activity – umsebenzi

✎ Write the paragraph correctly, using full stops and capital letters. There should be six sentences.

mkhize thought granny's glasses would make him look clever he wore the glasses to the tavern mkhize could not see properly he could not see his friends he went into the ladies toilet by accident granny's glasses were not right for mkhize's eyes

✎ Bhala lesigaba ngendlela efanele, ufakele izimpawu kanye nofeleba. Akube imisho eyisithupha.

umkhize wacabanga ukuthi izibuko zikagogo zizomenza abukeke ehlakaniphile wazifaka waya ethaveni izibuko zamenza wangabona kahle wayengaboni ngisho abangani bakhe wangena etoyilethi labesimame ngephutha izibuko zikagogo zazingawalungele amehlo kamkhize

Ukufunda Nokubhala

660. Usuku lokuqala esikoleni – The first day at school

1 Ngosuku lokuqala esikoleni wonke umndeni wamphelezela.

Uyaphelezelwa njenga belungu.

On the first day at school the whole family went with him.

2 UParafini waba namahloni.

Benginitshelile ukuthi salani ekhaya.

Parafini was embarrassed. He told the family they should have stayed at home.

3 UGogo waba nomcabango.

Kanti izingane ziyaqatshulwa e-High school.

Gogo had an idea. She noticed that some kids get kissed goodbye at high school.

4 UGogo wafuna ukumqabula uParafini.

Woza nami ngikwange mzukulu!

Lutho Gogo!

Gogo wanted to kiss Parafini. She said "Come here and let me hug you!" but he said "No way, Gogo!"

Ngesonto elizayo: Usuku olubi

Next week: A bad day

Activity – Umsebenzi

Last week Mkhize bought Parafini's school uniform. This is how much each item cost. Write out the amount for each item in words, for example: R20 _twenty rand_

Shirt R50 _____

Trousers R75 _____

Tie R50 _____

Shoes R100 _____

Socks R10 _____

If Mkhize bought two shirts, one pair of trousers, one tie, one pair of shoes and two pairs of socks, how much money did he spend altogether?

Mkhize spent _____.

Ngesonto elediule uMkhize wathengela uParafini iyunifomu. Into ngayinye yabiza le mali. Bhala imali ngamagama, kanje: R20 _amashumi amabili amarandi_

Ishethi R50 _____

ibhulukwe R75 _____

Uthayi R50 _____

Izicathulo R100 _____

amasokisi R10 _____

Ukube uMkhize wathenga amasbethi amabili, ibhulukwe, uthayi, izicathulo kanye namasokisi amapheya amabili, kwakungaba imalini sekukonke?

UMkhize wasebenzisa _____

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Ukufunda Nokubhala

573. UMaMsomi nomakhelwane – MaMsomi and the neighbour

1 UMkhize wabona inkosikazi ikhulumela phansi nomakhelwane

Mkhize saw his wife talking quietly to their neighbour.

2 UGogo wambamba ezama ukulalela efasiteleni.

Wenzani wemkhwenyana?

Granny caught him trying to listen at the window. She asked him what he was doing.

3 UMkhize wazama ukuchazela uGogo ukuthi ubesula ifasitela.

Bengi... bengi... bengisula ifasitela!

Mkhize tried to tell Granny that he was cleaning the window.

4 UGogo waqala ukusola uMkhize

Wena ugeze amafasitela? Lutho!

Granny was suspicious of Mkhize. She said he never washed windows.

Ngesonto elizayo: UMaMsomi umangaza uMkhize

Next week: MaMsomi surprises Mkhize

✏ Who does what in this story? Fill the gaps in in each sentence with the correct name.

| MaMsomi | Mkhize | Granny | the neighbour |

1. _____ looked out of the window.

2. _____ and _____ were talking quietly over the fence.

4. _____ tried to hear what they said.

5. _____ asked _____ what he was doing.

6. _____ lied to _____ .

7. _____ did not believe _____ was washing the windows.

✏ Yini eyenziwe abantu kulendaba? Gcwalisa izikhala ngegama elifanele emushweni ngamunye.

| uMaMsomi | uMkhize | uGogo | umakhelwane |

1. _____ walunguza efasiteleni.

2. _____ no _____ babemi othangweni bekhulumela phansi.

4. _____ wazama ukulalela ukuthi bathini.

5. _____ wabuza _____ ukuthi wenzani.

6. _____ waqamba amanga ku _____ .

7. _____ akakholwanga ukuthi _____ wayesula amafasitele.

Ukufunda Nokubhala

Use the 2006 Calendar to do the activities below.
You can write on the calendar.

2006

January
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

MaMsomi is marking her family's birthdays on the calendar. Draw a circle around the date of each birthday on the calendar above. Here is her list:

Mkhize: 12 December
Gogo: 20 July
Parafini: 24 February
Shukela: 19 September
Selula: 14 May
Me, MaMsomi: 12 October

Fill the gaps in these sentences:

_____'s birthday is on a Sunday.
_____'s birthday is on a Tuesday.
MaMsomi and Gogo will both have their birthdays
on a _____. _____ is born
in the shortest month, _____.

In KwaZulu-Natal, schools close for holidays on 23 June, and open again on 17 July. How many days of holiday is that? _____ days

Mark the date 1 March, on the calendar. What important event will happen on this day?

_____

Write the names of the days of the week correctly, in the right order, in the spaces below:

dayneswed
sudayn
ursthday
dayfri
maydon
ursatday
desaytu

M_____
T_____
W_____
Th_____
F_____
S_____
S_____

APPENDIX 6

<u>UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL</u>

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM
(SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES)
<u>Inquiries:</u>
Ms Phumelele Ximba
Tel: 260 3587
Email: <u>ximbap@ukzn.ac.za</u>

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN TYPED SCRIPT;
HANDWRITTEN APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED**

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1	**Full Name & Surname of Applicant** : Zanele Gladness Buthelezi
1.2	Title (Ms/ Mr/ Mrs/ Dr/ Professor etc): Mrs
1.3	Student Number	: 203516274
	Staff Number	: 25227
1.4	Discipline	: Social Sciences and Humanities
1.5	School	: School of Adult and Higher Education
1.6	Faculty	: Faculty of Education
1.7	Campus	: Pietermaritzburg
1.8	Existing Qualifications	: SED (Vista), BA Hons (UniZul), ABETCert
(Unisa)		
1.9	Proposed Qualification for Project	: MA (Adult Education)

2.   Contact Details

Tel. No.	: 260 6274/3869174
Cell. No.	: 082 400 5714
e-mail	: butheleziz@ukzn.ac.za

3.   SUPERVISOR/ PROJECT LEADER DETAILS

NAME	TEL. & FAX	EMAIL	DEPARTMENT / INSTITUTION	QUALIFI TIONS
3.1 Carol Thomson	2605567	thomsonc@ukzn.ac.za	Univ. of KZN - Education	BA (Hons); MA (Applie(Linguistics) UKZN.
3.2				
3.3				

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SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please do *not* provide your full research proposal here: what is required is a short project description of not more than two pages that gives, under the following headings, a brief overview spelling out the background to the study, the key questions to be addressed, the participants (or subjects) and research site, including a full description of the sample, and the research approach/ methods

2.1 Project title: An investigation into the use of pages of *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adults in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area.

2.2 Location of the study (where will the study be conducted)
The study will be conducted in three adult centers in and around Pietermaritzburg.

2.3 Objectives of and need for the study
(Set out the major objectives and the theoretical approach of the research, indicating briefly, why you believe the study is needed.)

(a) Research into the *Learn with Echo* project in terms of the relevance of contents, illustrations, format, practicality and the coverage is critical to future development of materials. The response to feedback and findings could also be a contribution to a wider perception of how newspaper supplements could be effectively designed for purposes of teaching literacy skills, empowerment, and development. This study could therefore illuminate aspects of the role of print media in adult literacy classes where empowerment, development and conscientisation are part of the agenda.

As this study is based on adult education, a review of principles of adult learning as formulated by some of the leading theorists in this field, has been done. It is important to note, however, that in as much as there is no single theory that explains human learning in general, no single theory of adult learning has emerged to unify the field. Rather, there are a number of theories, models, and frameworks, each of which illuminates some aspects of adult learning. As a result, different theories, such as

andragogy, experiential learning, the radical approach, transformative, reception and constructivism have been dealt with in this study. All of these contribute to the theoretical matrix underpinning this study.

2.4 Questions to be answered in the research
(Set out the critical questions which you intend to answer by undertaking this research.)

1. How is the *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement

used as an educational/pedagogical tool in classrooms of adult

learners?

2. How do learners and facilitators respond to the language level,

content, use of pictures and layout of the newspaper supplement?

3. Is there any evidence to suggest that learners are gaining

information that is useful in their daily lives?

4. Is there any evidence that learners have engaged in transformative

learning and experienced perspective transformation?

2.5 Research approach/ methods
(This section should explain how you will go about answering the critical questions which you have identified in Section 4. Set out the approach within which you will work, and indicate in step-by-step point form the methods you will use in this research in order to answer the critical questions.
For a study that involves surveys, please append a provisional copy of the questionnaire to be used. The questionnaire should show how informed consent is to be achieved as well as indicate to respondents that they may withdraw their participation at any time, should they so wish.)

This study worked within a qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative research paradigm. Qualitative research depends on multi-method strategies to elicit data. This study, therefore, used interviews and observations as tools to elicit data. In other words, it focussed on listening to responses of participants, took consideration of their subjective experiences and included observations of participants in their classroom environment. The variety of techniques used enhanced the validity, reliability and authenticity of this research.

A sample of three adult education sites in and around Pietermaritzburg was used for data collection. This study used purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling in which a researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his or her judgement of their typicality.

Interviews and classroom observations constituted the primary sources of data.

- Six adult learners, two from each Mother Tongue Literacy (MTL) class per centre were interviewed.

- Interviews were also conducted with one facilitator from each centre.

- One class from each adult centre was observed three times. This means that a total of nine lessons were observed for this study. The classes observed were level 1 IsiZulu mother tongue literacy.

All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. Data was analysed using three kinds of data coding as cited by Strauss (1987:55) whereby a researcher reviews data using open, axial and selective coding.

2.6 Proposed work plan

Set out your intended plan of work for the research, indicating important target dates necessary to meet your proposed deadline.

STEPS	DATES
Literature review	January 2004 – March 2004
Data Collection	April 2004 – August 2004
Data analysis	September 2004 – March 2005
Writing dissertation	April 2005 – November 2005
Submission of thesis	January 2006

SECTION 3: ETHICAL ISSUES

The UKZN Research Ethics Policy applies to all members of staff, graduate and undergraduate students who are involved in research on or off the campuses of University of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, any person not affiliated with UKZN who wishes to conduct research with UKZN students and / or staff is bound by the same ethics framework. Each member of the University community is responsible for implementing this Policy in relation to scholarly work with which

she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be in violation of this Policy.

All students and members of staff must familiarize themselves with AND sign an undertaking to comply with the University's "Code of Conduct for Research".

QUESTION 1.

Does your study cover research involving:	YES	NO
Children		no
Persons who are intellectually or mentally impaired		no
Persons who have experienced traumatic or stressful life circumstances		no
Persons who are HIV positive		no
Persons highly dependent on medical care		no
Persons in dependent or unequal relationships		no
Persons in captivity		no
Persons living in particularly vulnerable life circumstances		no

If "Yes", indicate what measures you will take to protect the autonomy of respondents and (where indicated) to prevent social stigmatisation and/or secondary victimisation of respondents. If you are unsure about any of these concepts, please consult your supervisor/ project leader.

QUESTION 2.

Will data collection involve any of the following:	YES	NO
Access to confidential information without prior consent of participants		no
Participants being required to commit an act which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret		no
Participants being exposed to questions which may be experienced as stressful or upsetting, or to procedures which may have unpleasant or harmful side effects		no
The use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant		no
Any form of deception		no

If "Yes", explain and justify. Explain, too, what steps you will take to minimise the potential stress/harm.

QUESTION 3.

Will any of the following instruments be used for purposes of data collection:	YES	NO

Questionnaire		no
Survey schedule		no
Interview schedule	yes	
Psychometric test		no
Other/ equivalent assessment instrument	yes	

If "Yes", attach copy of research instrument. If data collection involves the use of a psychometric test or equivalent assessment instrument, you are required to provide evidence here that the measure is likely to provide a valid, reliable, and unbiased estimate of the construct being measured. If data collection involves interviews and/or focus groups, please provide a list of the topics to be covered/ kinds of questions to be asked.

QUESTION 4.

	YES	NO
Will the autonomy of participants be protected through the use of an informed consent form, which specifies (in language that respondents will understand): Yes		
The nature and purpose/s of the research	Yes	
The identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor/project leader and their contact details	Yes	
The fact that participation is voluntary That responses will be treated in a confidential manner	Yes	
Any limits on confidentiality which may apply	Yes	
That anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/ disguised names of participants/ respondents/ institutions)	Yes	
The fact that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves	Yes	
The nature and limits of any benefits participants may receive as a result of their participation in the research	Yes	
Is a copy of the informed consent form attached?	Yes	

If not, this needs to be explained and justified, also the measures to be adopted to ensure that the respondents fully understand the nature of the research and the consent that they are giving.

Before visiting the adult education centres, I prepared 'informed consent' forms (attached) to be read and signed by adult learners and facilitators if they agree to be participants in the study. The forms were written in IsiZulu because this is the language that prospective participants can read and understand. Firstly, I explained my being a researcher to all participants in IsiZulu. Negotiations were entered into between myself as researcher, adult learners and facilitators to arrange to interview them and to observe their lessons. I also explained and assured participants that data collected would under no circumstances be used for any purposes other than for this research.

Secondly, permission to record all interviews was sought from adult learners and facilitators prior to the interviews. A tape recorder was useful because it allowed me to concentrate on listening and prompting rather than trying to capture detailed data through making notes.

Another important issue that I talked about was the identity of the participants. I used codes for participants that I had interviewed, and their institutions, for purposes of confidentiality and anonymity.

After I had finished explaining about all of the above I handed out the informed consent forms for all participants to read and sign. All participants read, asked questions for clarity and then signed the forms.

QUESTION 5.

Have efforts been made to obtain informed permission for the research from appropriate authorities and gate-keepers (including caretakers or legal guardians in the case of minor children)? Yes: Written permission was sought from management of adult education centres to use their adult centres as research sites.	YES	NO

If not, this needs to be explained and justified.

QUESTION 6.

How will the research data be secured, stored and/or disposed of? Data will be stored as finished thesis.

QUESTION 7.

In the subsequent dissemination of your research findings – in the form of the finished thesis, oral presentations, publication etc. – how will anonymity/ confidentiality be

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protected?
Real names of participants and their institutions were never mentioned in this study.

QUESTION 8.

Is this research supported by funding that is likely to inform or impact in any way on the design, outcome and dissemination of the research? No.	YES	NO

If Yes, this needs to be explained and justified.

SECTION 4: FORMALISATION OF THE APPLICATION

I have familiarised myself with the University's Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to comply with it. The information supplied above is correct to the best of my knowledge.

....
....
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT
DATE

DATE: ....

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR/ PROJECT LEADER
:

RECOMMENDATION OF FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

FULL NAME : _____ (CHAIRPERSON)____

DATE : ....

SIGNATURE :_____

RECOMMENDATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE
(HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

FULL NAME :_____ (CHAIRPERSON)____

DATE : ....

SIGNATURE :_____

APPENDIX 7

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

IFOMU LOKUVUMA UKUBA YINXENYE YOCWANINGO (INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT)

Lesi yisicelo sokuba ube yinxenye yoncwaningo. Ngezansi uzochazelwa kabanzi ngalolu cwaningo ukuze kucace ukuthi olwani, lwenziwelwani, sithini isihloko, luzosiza kuphi nokuthi kuzokwenziwani ngolwazi oluzotholakala kulo. Uma usufundile wachazeleka kahle, kuzomele uthathe izinqumo sokuthi uyavuma ukuba yinxenye yalolu cwaningo noma cha. Uma uvuma kuzomele usayine ekugcineni kwaleli fomu.

ISIHLOKO SOCWANINGO (PROPOSED AREA OF STUDY/TITLE)

Ucwaningo lolu lubhekisisa ukuthi iphephandaba elibizwa ngokuthi yi 'Learn with Echo' lisetshenziswa kanjani emakilasini abantu abadala. Isihloko sizovela ngolimi lwesiNgisi kanti sithi:

An investigation into the use of pages of *Learn with Echo* newspaper supplement as a pedagogical/ educational tool in classrooms of adults in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area.

UBANI OCWANINGAYO (WHO IS DOING THIS RESEARCH)?

Ucwaningo lwenziwa uZanele Buthelezi eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natali. Ngesikhathi enza lolu cwaningo uzobe ephansi weliso elibukhali likaCarol Thomson osebenza khona kuleNyuvesi.

KUNGANI KWENZIWA LOLU CWANINGO (AIMS OF THE RESEARCH)?

Abakwa-Learn with Echo bayadinga ukwazi ukuthi abasebenzisa umsebenzi wabo emakilasini benzani ngawo, bawubona kanjani mayelana nengqikithi yawo, izithombe nokudwetshiwe, ukuhleleka kanye nokusebenziseka. Ulwazi oluzotholakala lapha luzobasiza ukuba bathuthukise umkhiqizo wabo esikhathini esizayo. Lo msebenzi ungaphinda futhi ucacise kabanzi ngesimo samaphaphandaba alungele ukusetshenziswa emakilasini abadala ukuze abathuthikise, abavule amehlo futhi abahlomise.

KUZOKWENZEKANI (WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN)?

UZanele Buthelezi uzofika ngezikhathi ezihleliwe azoxoxisana nabafundi nothisha, ababuze imibuzo emayelana nokusetshenziswa kwe-Learn with Echo. Uzobuye afike izikhathi zize zibe ntathu azohlala ekilasini ukuze abone okwenzekayo. Ukuxoxisana ngakunye nokuvakashela amakilasi kuyoba isikhathi esicishe sibe yimizuzu engama 45.

UKUSETSHENZISWA KWESIQOPHAMAZWI (USE OF TAPE RECORDER)

Konke ukuxoxisana okuzoba khona phakathi kowenza ucwaningo, abafundi nothisha kuzoqoshwa ngesiqophamazwi. Kuyothi kamuva bese konke kulalelwa ukuze konke okushiwo kubhalwe kahle phansi ukuze kucubungulwe.

UKUGODLWA KWAMAGAMA (CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY)
Lonke ulwazi oluvele kade kuxoxiswana kulolu cwaningo alusoze lwasetshenziswa
kwenye indawo ngaphandle uma kunesidingo senkomfa yezemfundo noma umbhalo
ongashicilelwa ephephabhukwini. Kodwa amagama abantu okuxoxiswane nabo kanye
nezikole zabo akusoze kwagagulwa. Esikhundleni samagama abantu noma izikole
kuyosetshenziswa izimpawu ezaziwa uZanele Buthelezi kuphela njengomcwaningi.
ILUNGELO LOKWENQABA NOMA UKUYEKA (THE RIGHT TO REFUSE OR
WITHDRAW)
Kusemandleni akho ukuvuma noma ukwenqaba ukuzibandakanya kulolu cwaningo.
Noma ngabe usuqalile, unelungelo lokushiya phansi uma uzwa ukuthi awusathandi.
Akekho oyokubeka icala noma akujezise ngokuyeka kwakho.

IGAMA LAKHO:.....................................

UKUSAYINA: .... USUKU: ....

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