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The Assessment of Transformational Potential of Students in Placement Modules in United Kingdom Universities - Academic Staff Perspectives

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The Assessment of Transformational Potential of Students in Placement Modules in United Kingdom Universities - Academic Staff Perspectives

Abstract

It is generally acknowledged that two central goals of university higher education are to enable student learning and to help students develop. Within that mandate, academic staff perform many functions including teaching and assessing. It is also generally acknowledged that educators adapt as new and accessible knowledge emerges on how students learn and develop and on changing demands on Higher Education (HE). One of these adaptations has been the widening use of experiential learning, specifically the use of community placements. As the educational contexts of students expand beyond the university, both the different pedagogy of experiential learning and unfamiliar situations in community agencies can create a situation where it is possible for students to experience Transformational Learning (TL), as proposed by Mezirow (2008).

This is an interpretive, qualitative, exploratory and descriptive study that uses a pluralistic methodological approach. This approach includes multiple case studies and the theoretical frameworks of TL and Service-Learning (SL). The study explores how placements in the United Kingdom are similar to SL provisions in the United States, how Academic Staff Participants (ASPs) perceive and conduct assessment of students in placements and how they consider TL experiences. Through semi-structured interviews with twenty-nine ASPs in four UK universities, the methods used in the assessment of student work are illuminated and analysed. The pedagogies of the ASPs in both professional and non-professional placement modules are compared. The ASPs relay their experiences, expectations, assignments, assessment protocols and university engagements with placement hosts and communities.

The emerging themes from the ASP interviews show that change and risk, lifelong learning and employability are major concerns for stakeholders and that placement learning serves many purposes.

The resulting conclusions identify some of the challenges that placement learning poses for ASPs teaching in the new millennium. With the practices shared by the ASPs this thesis further proposes a framework of Participatory Action Research (PAR) that academic staff (AS) could use to support each other, further assisting student learning and development to realise the full potential of TL.

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Author's Declaration

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.”

Signature: _____

Printed Name: Gail Marie Goulet

Introduction

This thesis describes an exploratory study conducted on how academic staff (AS) working in placement learning modules in UK universities assess transformative learning in their students. The thesis is organised mostly thematically. The chapters begin with the Literature Review, followed by the Methodology, and then move into the themes of Placement and Service-Learning (SL), Transformative Learning (TL) and Assessment. The thesis finishes with a chapter titled Conclusions, Recommendations, and Epilogue. Following is a short description of what is covered in each chapter.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The Literature Review covers the five topical educational areas: SL, TL, assessment, academic staff, and universities. The TL section surveys literature that points to the fostering of TL in different types of courses as well as a history of the development of transformative learning theory (TLT). Some of the criticisms of the theory are relayed along with a rationalisation for using the theory in this study. No study to date has integrated all five of these areas in a single study on the situation in the UK, and therefore an exploratory study is suggested.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The methodology chapter provides the rationale for using an interpretive, pluralistic, exploratory, and descriptive methodology for this study as this allows for emergent discoveries. As a qualitative, multiple-case study this research seeks to understand a specified academic activity. It describes the development of the research questions used, the multiple methods that were implemented, and the criteria used to select the universities and academic staff participants. It offers the idea of the researcher as 'bricoleur' and the main instrument of the enquiry. It further argues for the centrality of the perceptions of academic staff as professional practitioners as well as for research that informs practice.

Chapter 3: Placement and Service-learning

This chapter introduces the ASPs. It then explores the differences and similarities between the placement schemes encountered at four UK universities compared to the United States (SL) pedagogy. It shows that there are many different placement types in the UK, and that many of these have goals that are similar to those of SL.

Chapter 4: Transformative Learning and Transformative Learning Theory

This chapter provides an overview of Jack Mezirow's work and the development of TLT. It explores the potential for TL in placement learning, as described by the ASPs showing that they recognise the TL potential for their students in the placement pedagogies. Using a simplified core framework for TL (disorienting experiences, reflection, rational dialogue, and action), it shows that ASPs in some disciplines, especially those preparing students for practice, have more understanding of TL. For many ASPs there appears to be a desire for supporting TL, but there is seemingly a lack of opportunities in their pedagogies, especially for discourse or dialogue.

Chapter 5: Assessment

This chapter presents some of the standards the ASPs use to guide their assessment protocols. It describes the multiple assessors involved in some of the programmes. It explores the summative, formative, and authentic aspects of assessments and presents the many modes of assessment the ASPs relay. It presents how the ASPs assess for TL, proposing that they assess in order to support student development, but not for summative or formative purposes.

Chapter 6: Emergent Issues

This chapter examines the staff and programmes, which report the most engagement with TL. It also reports the aspects or phases of TL that appear to be lacking. It then looks at emergent issues that are discovered from the ASP interviews. These topics are change and risk, and employability, as well as preparing independent and lifelong learners. The participatory elements of the study are also described.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Epilogue

As an adult education thesis, now with an ‘insider perspective’ (Dirkx 2006), this thesis explores the practice of ASPs from their perspectives. The tentative conclusions put forth in this chapter relate to the discoveries of implicit and explicit assessment of TL and of placement learning. The recommendations focus on a practice model that the ASPs could use to increase their discourse or dialogue skills authentically so that they may be able to increase their support of the TL experiences that students may be undergoing in their development through their university education. Recommendations include that universities strengthen their engagement with their communities by supporting a multi-disciplinary continuing professional development model of Participant Action Research (PAR) for academic staff educators delivering placement learning modules. The epilogue discusses the journey taken by this researcher for this research.

1 Literature Review

This chapter situates the thesis within the scholarly literature and demonstrates that the research adds to discussions in the five educational fields: service and placement learning, TL, assessment, academic staff, and UK universities. The review covers the conceptual framework of these five topical educational areas and addresses where these educational areas intersect and affect each other. No single study to date has explored the integration of all five areas represented.

In order to engage with the volume of international scholarly work available on the five educational areas this literature review covers material written up to 2010, the point at which this study is conceived and then operationalised. Relevant post-2010 scholarly works are covered in the topical chapters for discussion, generally in relation to issues that emerge out of the fieldwork.

1.1 Service-learning

SL is generally a student activity and seen as a union between experiential learning through an educational endeavour and community service. The hyphen in SL (service-learning) is a grammatical communication device to denote that SL is part of a larger pedagogical structure as Speck and Hoppe (2004) explain:

As service and learning became more intimately connected, the literature began using the term service-learning, the hyphen being a symbolic nexus that linked inextricably praxis and theory so that they are no longer two separate activities but symbiotic. (p.viii)

SL is part of an academic response to aid to remedy the ‘fracturing of community in America’ (*ibid* p.2).

As a particular form of educational pedagogy SL combines several goals for the student, community and institution. SL projects can involve several different combinations of individual and group work, services, methods of learning, and types of assessment. This portion of the literature review explores the many facets and challenges of SL including those of research and scholarly endeavours.

SL in education for credit has a fairly recent history as it has only been inaugurated since 1990 as an educational requirement in the US. However, its roots in Higher Education (HE) can be traced back to early America through areas as varied as land grant universities, John Dewey's (1938) educational philosophy, and other discourses on the relationships between learning, institutions, and communities. As both a volunteer service and a way of learning about social justice, civic engagement and community development, SL carves a niche in and links together multiple factions of education and society.

Students, and to some degree AS, can be important contributors to their communities through placement learning activities and working with agencies with social justice missions. The learning and experiences of the students can inform them of the issues and motivate them to join those who are working towards solutions.

According to Katula and Threnhauser (1999), as a method of experiential learning, SL's predecessor, - apprenticeship, goes far back in time, and is perhaps one of the earliest forms of organised transfer of skills and knowledge. SL also involves community service, in that learners are placed in or work with community organisations to learn in the real world, and this is sometimes combined with critical reflection. Other forms of experiential learning, such as work experience placements, field experiences, studies abroad, internships and practicums are similar, although they may lack the specific civic engagement aspect. Other types of experiential learning, for example stimulation and active learning are used in university as well. However, SL is seen as learning that occurs outside the classroom, supplementing classroom-taught theory with actual real life experiences to enhance learning. SL is seen to provide opportunities for students' growth of personal, intellectual and civic awareness (Butin, 2010).

Philosopher John Dewey (1938) is often credited with conceiving the idea of experiential education. Dewey states his concern that students sitting in classrooms are droned at and drilled by teachers who know very little about how young people actually learn. Dewey observes that students, because of their age and background (often the impoverished and immigrants), have insufficient experience to apply their grammar, spelling and reading lessons. He observes that most students could not hold onto the abstractions used in the classroom, because they could not connect them to anything 'real' in their own lives. He sought to change the way knowledge is transmitted to students so that they might become actively engaged in its acquisition, rather than being passive vessels into which it is poured. Dewey argues that education in the classroom should focus on helping students make sense out of their own experiences (Katula and Threnhauser, 1999, p. 240).

Dewey's call for experiential education is an early foundation of SL. Of relevance to studying the expansion of the traditional university experience, Pascarella (2006) calls for research where the focus includes the realisation that 'interactions with a diverse spectrum of people, ideas, values and perspectives that are different from one's own and challenge one's assumed views of the world have the potential for important developmental impacts during college' (p. 511).

SL, as a teaching and learning strategy combining academic theory with community voluntary experience, can allow students to participate in meaningful activities that meet identified community needs. Service-learning is not limited to the US. Projects all over the world have been reported in the academic literature, including a project established in Serbia (Dull, 2009) that aims to develop intercultural understanding in order to encourage students to see each other as individuals rather than solely as members of marginalised groups. In South Africa, SL has been used in conducting research into Human Geography (Shay, 2008) and in Guatemala (Taylor, 2009b) students learn to help community members determine their own research needs by conducting requested research and formulating plans of action to meet those needs.

In many international SL endeavours, students from more affluent countries provide services to communities in countries that are less endowed with materials and resources. There are several organisations devoted to helping institutions, faculty and/or students

develop projects and earn academic credits at a post-compulsory institution at home. One such organisation assists students with studying and performing community service in a foreign country. An example of an International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership (IPSL) programme is located at the University of Glasgow's Urban Studies Department, which combines courses with service opportunities in Glasgow with organisations that serve groups of people in disadvantaged situations: the elderly; people in hospice care; women's support services; childhood education programmes; and programmes for asylum seekers. Students from US universities gain credit towards their degrees spending a term living and studying in Scotland. Other examples of international SL include student nurses from the US in Nicaragua (Kiely, 2004) and Mexico (Wessel, 2007), as well as students from Australia working in Sri Lanka (Gibson, 2009). These educational opportunities seek to merge divergent goals. As Crabtree (2008) explains, civic education, cross-cultural immersion, relationship building, community development work, shared inquiry for problem-solving and change, and powerful learning experiences are further grounded in critical reflection (p. 28).

While SL can occur at all grade levels in the US and is supported by 'Learn and Serve: America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse', this thesis focuses on SL in HE in the UK. However, the following descriptions and discussion of the predominantly American versions of SL, and several of its different aspects, are of relevance to institutes of HE in other countries, and to this thesis. This literature review includes a variety of the research undertakings that demonstrate a few of the possible elements in SL and the impact of SL on different participants and partners. Also included is some literature on some of the tensions and debates around these various overlapping and divergent facets of SL.

The aims of SL for students are aligned with the aims of education in general: intellectual and personal development, the preparation for work in a profession, training for leadership and preparation towards becoming contributing members of civil, democratic society. The following discussion shows how SL enhances HE's educational efforts to realise these goals.

Schön (1987) suggests that if academia only focuses on theory it falls short of its mandate to prepare students for work in the professions. He uses the analogy of a low lying swamp

to depict real life, likening traditional academic educational provision to people staying on top of the hill discussing, but not participating or practicing in the low lying swamp (p. 3) where the real issues need to be dealt with. SL has the potential to assist students in linking theory with practice, providing them with access to the ‘messiness’ of real life, with its complexities and ill-structured problems. Ill-structured problems are those that do not have easy answers and require reflective judgment and complex thinking skills to solve. Reflective judgment, understanding and problem-solving are seen as developmental skills that can be improved by education. Furthermore, those working in professions such as law, medicine and education need to develop reflective judgment and complex thinking skills not only to be competent in their work, but also to manage their professions. There is a danger that if professionals are not managing themselves, or at least providing input into the overall management of their professions, they could be managed by others who do not share their goals, ethics or knowledge-base. Exercise of professional judgement and reflection is also important in terms of promoting an ethical culture. Boud (1995) notes and advocates further that professional guidelines, rules and knowledge requirements need constant revisiting and be regularly revised and updated, as issues change with the advent of new research, understandings, technologies, legislation, rules by other groups and so on. It might also be further argued that ethical standards ought to be constantly on the agenda and that professional groups ought to be transparent in their dealings with issues.

Barber (1992) is one of the champions of community service being mandatory academic work for students to develop skills for a civil society. Through education-based community service, students learn that democracy and liberty are the cornerstones for strengthening the country and avoiding the fall of the United States (which he likens to other civilisations that have fallen). Barber argues:

...the fundamental task of education in a democracy is the apprenticeship of liberty – learning to be free. We must be taught to be thinking, competent, legal persons and citizens. The literacy required for living in civil society, the competence to participate in democratic community, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permits us to hear and thus accommodate others, all involve skills that must be acquired. (p. 4)

SL, because of its potential to develop learners’ skills through real problem-solving and contribution to society through community service projects, is seen as a conduit to manifest these goals. SL as an educational model is reported here in the UK in one programme

(Deeley, 2010) and one scholarly work on a community service programme (Gordon, 2006).

While SL appears to have many benefits, there are several issues, including the provision of non-paid labour, especially in cases where students are required to pay university fees. However the intent is for the students' learning to be a primary focus of the placement activities. The fees are needed as there is still much work on the part of the university staff to support students in placement. The hosts need to provide supervision and training, for which they will not necessarily receive a benefit (i.e. recruiting or training an employee). Issues of increasing host staff workload or the threat of replacing workers are rarely addressed in the literature, but would need to be addressed in actual practice.

The development of SL in the US is reported to be in part due to a lack of civic engagement in the general population and university students' growing lack of awareness of social issues. The reports from the literature (Butin, 2003, Dicklitch, 2005, Butin, 2005b, Birge, 2005, Butin, 2010) suggest that on the whole SL does indeed increase student awareness of social issues.

1.1.1 Impacts of Service-learning

Understanding the impact of SL on various participants and partners is an important aspect of the practice and research in education. Scholars, learners, universities, communities, agencies and clients of agencies all have goals and potential benefits to gain, especially when they work in partnership. Several advocates of SL also say that its practice positively influences the wider contexts of civil society, democracy, global relations and sustainability (Barber, 1992).

The gains for student learning and development are perhaps the most central to SL, as the following studies show. Buchanan et al. (2002) illustrate how pre-service teachers, as learners, benefit from community service beyond their teacher training. Students in their study either work with kindergarten students with motor skill development issues or conduct one-to-one tutoring with middle--school students who are not engaging in literacy learning. These SL students receive the multiple benefits concomitant with an ethic of

service and social responsibility, thereby demonstrating excellence in teacher education and exemplifying scholarly endeavour. In addition to the opportunities to practice their teaching skills, the SL students benefit by being shown how the academic staff themselves deal with real life issues that arise, showing possible examples of how ‘the grey areas that do not have easy answers require constant reflection, problem-solving and information gathering processes’ (p. 34). Watching these issues arise and be dealt with may be new and sometimes uncomfortable experiences for these SL students, requiring them to work out difficult issues. Milofsky & Flack (2005) emphasise that SL can create uncomfortable situations:

...service-learning placements...often challenge students in ways that elicit difficult emotional responses and require their integration with an increasingly sophisticated, intellectual grasp of the issues on the ground. Previously comfortable assumptions are thrown into doubt and new thinking about the self and about the nature of social life is often the result. (p. 169)

It is sometimes a disruption to comfortable assumptions that can lead to learning. Kiely (2005), working with TLT (Mezirow, 1981), reports finding that learners in SL could experience different types and intensities of dissonance. The longitudinal study indicates that high-intensity dissonances are more likely to lead to TL experiences.

Vadeboncoeur et al. (1996) note that pre-service teacher trainees in a SL course report gaining a broader perspective on social issues. They also find that the duration of the one-term SL course is too short to witness students’ full TL experiences.

1.2 Transformative Learning Theory

In this thesis TL, or transformational learning, largely refers to experiences as described by the theory as ‘understood’ by Jack Mezirow. He relates that his view of the theory is only his perception (Mezirow et al., 2009 p. 20), and that it is his understanding of TL that he writes about. TLT has been the subject of an expansive discussion over the last thirty years by numerous scholars and educators, some of whom are referenced in the second section of this section of the literature review. The number of recent studies in the field of TL has been vast. This section further includes a more detailed overview of the development of the

theory. It concludes with a summary of the critiques and an argument for using TLT in this thesis.

Merriam (2004) writes that ‘the decade of the 1990s might be called ‘the transformational learning decade in terms of its move to centre stage as the focus of scholarly activity in adult learning’ (p. 92). As well, during a recent on-line conference, she says that TL is the most researched area of adult learning and adult education (Merriam, 2009a). In particular, feminist perspectives on, and research into, adult education have become increasingly important. Poirier (1996) discusses how a feminist participatory perspective is aligned with TLT and reports on a project from this perspective:

The concept of agency is perhaps the hinge which unites feminist popular education, gender and development and participatory development. This is the notion that history is made by the conscious acts of human beings. Popular and feminist popular education enables people to discover their agency, without which participatory development would not be possible. The discovery and expression of agency is important for all marginalized sectors, but especially for disadvantaged women who have been silenced by both poverty and patriarchy. (p. d7)

This points to an understanding that individuals, women in this case, are themselves the central subjects of the transformation. Each woman has the right to act on her knowledge as she chooses, as each woman’s circumstances are different, and only the individual woman can judge and evaluate the risks and benefits of acting. Context is important and the individual’s right to act as she sees fit is central. The progression from personal development to social equality is seen as the best route to follow, but of course they are much interwoven, as Poirier explains:

Personal development is indispensable because individuals who are able to live democratically with each other lay the foundation for participatory development and participatory democracy. This statement does not imply, however, that the personal dimension should be the singular priority for development efforts. Rather, it provides a rationale for a truly bottom-up approach, which proceeds from the experiences, perceptions and motivations of the individuals involved but expands upwards and outwards to local and global levels...The term “bottom-up” connotes not only the sector with which alternative and participatory development are concerned but also the process through which development can take place. (*ibid.* p. b79)

Poirier describes her work with adult educators in Nigeria, saying that they have to be respectful of the community, including inequities in power (sometimes gross inequities of

power), where the educator is working: '[in participatory research] the responsibility for identifying and implementing solutions arising from the investigation rests with the community itself. They are not imposed from above' (*ibid.* p. c4). Poirier describes the model being used:

The experiential adult education model is a bottom-up approach which is based on the self-expressed needs of the participants. The term, "experiential" refers to the fact that it begins with participants' experiences and that learning is derived from reflection on experiences. (*ibid.* p. c10)

Working in these environments can be extremely difficult as the educators are working with women whose rights and freedoms are severely limited. The development workers need to accept the situations as they exist while endeavouring to help the women see their situations and learn to expand their own agency and equality. To repeat Mezirow's initial motivation, the work involves assisting participants: '... towards a maturity manifested in meaningful and sustained participation in continuously expanding areas of decision-making' (Mezirow and Luke, 1954, p. 177). The difficulties are exacerbated where violence, and the threat of violence, are used to keep women from emancipatory action: participants' determination to act or not act needs to be respected. In some ways educators may need to 'accept the unacceptable' as for example when working with survivors of domestic abuse. We need to accept that the abuse has occurred, and accept the woman and her experience fully, while knowing, and communicating, that the abuse is unacceptable. Sometimes we even have to accept that the woman may return to an abusive situation, without the benefit of family counselling. This is a paradox, and those of us working with women in these situations strive to continue to make what progress we can.

The difficult issues often involved in transformative learning raise challenges for measuring the effectiveness of TL programmes and projects. In the development of TLT, attempts have been made to create measuring schemes for processes involved in TL. From the beginning where Mezirow's (1978) grounded theory research assessed that women participants in community college re-entry programmes were going through similar learning experiences; the seemingly chaotic interior process of these women's changes in perceptions, thus teased out, disentangled and organised into the ten and then eleven non-sequential phases, is subsequently named TL. The following section provides an overview of some of the ensuing research that further discusses ways to assess TL.

Taylor's (2007) critical review of the empirical peer-reviewed research from 1999 to 2005 is comprehensive, surveying forty articles. He finds that most studies tend to focus on methods for fostering TL, discussions on the complexity of critical reflection and analyses of the role of context and relationships rather than on identifying TL itself. Snyder (2008) survey of the literature of ten empirical qualitative studies summarises some of the research published from 1999 to 2008. All cite Mezirow TLT. Four studies use Kegan's (1982) theory of developmental consciousness, eight use interviews and five use surveys, grounded theory and/or self-reporting. Four of the articles in the survey have longitudinal elements and four have quantitative elements. She reports that overall, the studies generally lack robust results and triangulation, with durations of short term programmes being too short to ensure the occurrence of TL. Kitchenham's (2008) review of Mezirow's theory from 1978 to 2006 provides interesting visual diagrammatic models of some of the processes involved in learning and provides a comprehensive and comprehensible overview of the theory. It is further delineated and discussed in Chapter 4: Transformative Learning.

At first glance, learning about technology may not seem like a way to foster TL, but Kitchenham's (2006) mixed method approach finds that elements of transformation can occur through learning, designated assignments and reflection. In the tenth anniversary edition of her handbook, King (2009) cumulates hundreds of TL experiences from responses to the Learning Activity Survey (LAS). Designed in consultation with TL scholars Brookfield, Mezirow, E. Taylor, K. Taylor and Shaw, the LAS is a survey that may be followed by a semi-structured interview. The Journey of Transformation (JOT) model is a modification of the LAS. It is used with educators learning technology and puts greater emphasis on reflective essays and interviews. Information gleaned from the LAS suggests to King that it is possible for more than one transformation to occur. Finding Kitchener & King's LAS too costly in both time and resources, Kemper et al. (1999) propose a coding scheme to assess the evidence and quality of reflective thinking in their journals. After having tested their scheme for validity and reliability they now offer it for the assessment of learner growth in reflective thinking, which they say is an increasing component in higher, further and even technical education.

After looking at three programmes over a period of two years Taylor (2003) finds that attending post-graduate school in adult education at a Master's level does not necessarily

result in a premise transformation from teacher-focused to learner-focused education. Perhaps he would be gratified to know that Glisczinski (2007) finds that, with a modified LAS, one third of teacher students are able to critically examine complex ideas, relationships, problems and opportunities by the end of their degrees. The elements of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, rational dialogue and taking better-informed action are reported as the benchmarks of the learners' perspective transformations.

The following section provides an overview of Jack Mezirow's work and others on the development of Transformative Learning Theory (TLT).

1.2.1 Theory Development

The following section first describes the theory's history, foundations and evolution and second further explicates the theory. The specific terms used in the literature of TL studies are transformation theory, transformative learning and Transformative Learning Theory. In this chapter, the term Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) is used to refer to this theory, one that seeks to understand and explain both TL and the TL experience.

Mezirow's work on TLT appears to begin in 1954 when he writes a newspaper commentary where he calls for a type of adult education that:

...can be led by the able teachers from the concrete to the abstract, from the immediate to the remote, in solving problems of increasing magnitude...towards a maturity manifested in meaningful and sustained participation in continuously expanding areas of decision-making. (p. 177) (Mezirow, 1952)

During the early years of his work (1971) and (1975), Mezirow begins a quest for 'theory', which he defines as 'the completed result of philosophical induction from experience' (1971, p. 144). For Mezirow theory is needed to ground research, to assist adult educators in programme development and evaluation and to facilitate professional training. The theory he seeks would also need to reflect the uniqueness of adult learning, focus on the learner, unify what is already understood as well as inform practice. In his early definitions of theory, Mezirow suggests that this theory would need to evolve in such a way that it derives its information from real life, from studying adults while they are learning, as

opposed to information gleaned from laboratories, so that themes can emerge directly from the experiences of adult learners (Mezirow 1971).

In the early 1970s, Mezirow observes that no one is studying the grass-roots movement of women's consciousness-raising groups. Mezirow notes that such groups are unique, in that they are leaderless and characterised by power-sharing. Mezirow is particularly interested, from an adult education perspective, in the phenomenon of women returning to education or the labour market after an absence. Heeding his own call for an educational theory grounded in the experiences of adult learners (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), Mezirow leads a study of over 340 re-entry programmes in the US. These programmes had been established to help women transition back in to education and the work-force and are generally found in higher or further education programmes (Mezirow and Marsick, 1978). From this study, the following non-sequential pattern of experience is observed and emerges out of Mezirow's (1981) grounded theory research with these women's groups: 1) a disorienting dilemma; 2) self-examination; 3) a critical assessments of personally internalised role assumptions and experiences of alienation from traditional social expectation; 4) the ability to relate one's own sense of discontent to similar experiences shared by others or to public issues, i.e. the ability to recognise that one's problem is shared and not exclusively private; 5) exploring options for new ways of acting; 6) building competence and self-confidence in new roles; 7) planning a course of action; 8) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan; 9) provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback; and 10) a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective (p. 7). Later, Mezirow (1994), in response to his and others' additional research and theoretical work, adds an additional phase: 11) the renegotiation of present relationships and negotiation of new relationships (p. 224). This list of phases is repeated when they are explored in more detail later in the thesis.

In order to propose a theory based on a synthesis of theories, studies and observations of adult development, learning and education, Mezirow (1978) amalgamates the information gained from his research study of women's groups with the works of numerous scholars. He works with and refers to the works of many scholars over the development of TLT, including: Bateson, Becker, Bernstein, Bruner, Camus, Cell, Chomsky, Dewey, Fingarette, Finger, Foucault, Freire, Freud, Gould, Habermas, Jung, Hegel, Kuhn, Laing, Marx, Mead, Piaget, Roger, Searle, Schön and Vygotsky (Mezirow, 1991b).

TL is seen as an important factor in adult development and of interest to educators. People may seek help when they are unable to solve a problem or life situation within or outside an educational context. They may become confused because their problem cannot be solved within their established framework of beliefs and assumptions, or they may have discovered and accepted new information that does not fit into their existing frames of reference. Mezirow (1996b) likens such experiences to Kuhn's paradigm shift analysis of scientific inquiry, or the transformation of paradigms brought about by critical reflection on dilemmas engendered by 'attempts to make newly discovered data "fit" established assumptions' (p. 166). Mezirow (1978) reports that his theoretical quests are actually partially in response to Kuhn's call for a theory of adult development based on the transformation of science through changing paradigms (p. 109).

According to Mezirow (1981), once a person becomes adept at critical reflection he or she must continually apply those critical skills to more complex issues, decision-making and problem-solving. As he states, 'insights gained through critical self-awareness are emancipatory in the sense that at least one can recognise the correct reasons for his or her problems' (p. 5). Mezirow (1985) states that the communication skills of discourse are necessary to work through the recognition of assumptions and the rectification of distortions (p.149).

Many scholars (discussion follows) contribute to the evolution of TLT by working with learners (including themselves and peers) in order to support all or some TLT phases. Mezirow (1990b) outlines the fundamental premise that 'emancipatory education is an organised effort to help the learner challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding and act on the new perspectives' (p. 18). Fostering TL involves providing learning activities that promote critical thinking. For a learner, this asks them to elicit and examine their own assumptions and may lead to transformation. Mezirow (1990a) comments on the role of educators:

Our tasks as educators are to encourage the multiple readings of "texts," to make a wider range of symbol systems or meaning perspectives available to learners, to create reflective dialogic communities in which learners are free to challenge assumptions and premises, thereby breaking through the one-dimensionality of uncritically assimilated learning. (p. 360)

The initial development of TLT is attributed to Jack Mezirow (1978, 1981, 1992), as an educational theorist he undertakes the initial line of research into the types of deep learning that transform learner perspectives. According to Mezirow, ‘Transformation Theory is an evolving theory of adult learning’ (2004 p. 70) and, in this light, he has continued to build this theory not only by developing his own work, but also by inviting scholars to continue researching the many different facets of TL as it evolves in different directions. Other works on the theory include: Kember (1999), Kitchener and King (1990), King and Kitchener (2004), Erickson (2007), Glisczinski (2007) and Affolter et al. (2009). There is now a *Journal of Transformative Education*, numerous articles, books, theses and a biennial conference devoted to the topic.

Mezirow’s interest in adult education for deep or higher learning can be traced to the days of his early work as a community developer, when he wrote a commentary to a newspaper arguing for a field of adult education that:

...can be led by the able teachers from the concrete to the abstract, from the immediate to the remote, in solving problems of increasing magnitude ... towards a maturity manifested in meaningful and sustained participation in continuously expanding areas of decision-making. (Mezirow and Luke, 1954p. 177)

Implicit in Mezirow’s description of an ‘expanding area of decision making’ is the underlying purpose of learning to contribute to a more involved and active citizenry. In a video for the Eighth Transformative Education Conference website produced in 2009, Mezirow states: ‘There is need for people to understand to learn how think for themselves’ (Mezirow, 2009), and that the only way he knows how to help people achieve that is to help them critically reflect on their assumptions.

Mezirow’s premise is based on a humanist philosophy, one that argues humans will innately strive towards good. He is working towards a theory that informs adult educators how to best help people develop themselves and participate in creating democratic, participatory and inclusive societies.

In between Mezirow’s initial newspaper commentary in 1954 and the 2009 web video are 55 years of working on a theory of deep, significant and structural learning. In the early

years of his writings Mezirow (1971) calls for a theory of adult learning and is influenced by work by Bruner (1973) on skilled action. Mezirow (1962) reports his early experience in community development in Pakistan working to build communities, noting that adults were not partaking in community decision-making to their fullest potential may have fed his frustrations (p. 224) and subsequent search for this theory. He then continues to define and develop this theory in the middle part of his career. His initial contention is that a theory that could guide adult educators is lacking and he argues that educational theories are needed not only to ground research in the field, but also to assist educators in programme development, evaluation and professional training. For Mezirow (1971) this theory of adult education would need to meet the following criteria in order to be effective: be learner focused; unify what is already understood; inform practice; and provide foundations for future research. Mezirow (*ibid.*) also suggests two proposals for the development of this theory: one, that it is ‘research based qualitative theory, indigenous to adults and capable of indicating dependable and practical guidelines for policy and programme decision making’; and two, that the theory should further ‘provide practical guidance to practitioners’ (*ibid.* p. 136).

Mezirow also calls for a practical theory of adult learning that is qualitative in nature and focuses on understanding how people learn in real settings, as opposed to laboratory-based studies that could never truly capture the fullness of learning, even in instances of simulation. Mezirow also notes that research, including research in psychology and sociology, ‘bypassed the very process of growth itself – the interaction with self and others by which an individual learns to cope with his world, engages in problem solving and changes his behaviour’ (*ibid.* p. 137). It is this process of growth – found in both adult and higher education settings, which is of interest to this research and is not limited to only adult education settings but can be observed in higher education.

Mezirow argues that in order to develop an educational theory, researchers need to see the educational process from the learners’ perspectives. In this sense, research in the field of education must include an examination of practical experience. Such research in turn could then contribute to theories that are useful for improving learning. Speaking to the lack of such research, Mezirow states, ‘researchers have not usually involved themselves intimately into the situations they are studying to attempt to understand the perspectives of those involved and the dynamics of their interaction’ (*ibid.* 139). Prior to this, much

educational research focuses on outcomes, skills development, milestones passed, or on programme utility. In contrast, Mezirow's purported theory seeks to understand and explain what is occurring from the perspective of the learners (Mezirow (1971). Drawing on Bruner (1973), Dewey (1925), (1935), Camus (1955), Laing (1961) and Freire (1970), he frames a constructivist theory. He argues that learning occurs within individuals and involves the ways in which contexts are processed within the individual and therefore encompasses much more than what can be recorded as changes in behaviour.

Mezirow proposes that the research methodology for this new theory of learning use grounded theory methodology being forwarded by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Their proposed methodology would replace empirical studies conducted in laboratories in favour of studying people learning in their own environments. Glaser and Strauss's work influences Mezirow's own idea that within adult education theory, important themes should emerge from the experiences of learners (Mezirow, 1971).

Mezirow (1979) expresses surprise that no scholars are focusing on the women's movement as an adult education topic. He describes this grassroots movement as a phenomenon whereby women, through self-developed, often leaderless (power-sharing) consciousness-raising groups, reject confining and stereotypical gender roles and demand equal access and equity. Over 300 programmes across the US respond to the demands put forward by such women's groups by developing re-entry programmes to assist women transitioning (or re-transitioning) into the workforce. These programmes often offer courses in topics such as communications, assertiveness, basic academic skills and interpersonal relations. Mezirow consequently undertakes to do research on the then current phenomenon of what we now call women's consciousness-raising.

Following his study of women's grassroots movements Mezirow (1981) then goes on to examine the experiences of women returning to college. Utilising the newly developed grounded theory, Mezirow finds that the women involved in his study experienced learning in similar ways. He then uses this collected data to find that ten common phases of experience emerge, which he calls the non-sequential phases of the dynamics of perspective transformation. These ten phases of perspective transformation involve:

1. 'a disorienting dilemma
2. self-examination
3. a critical assessment of personally internalised role assumptions and a sense of alienation from traditional social expectation
4. relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues; i.e., recognizing that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter
5. exploring options for new ways of acting
6. building competence and self-confidence in new roles
7. planning a course of action
8. acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan
9. provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback
10. a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective'. (1981, p. 7)

Mezirow (1994) later adds another phase:

11. renegotiation of relationships and negotiating new relationships (1994b, p. 224)

Mezirow (2004) names his theory on perspective transformation 'Transformation Learning Theory' which he characterises as an evolving theory that is always in progress through his work as well as the work of others: 'We are all collaborating to build a theory in the process of development' (p. 70). Mezirow publishes this theory, of these non-sequential phases to be further developed, tested and changed with subsequent research.

There may be an argument that this theory is very limited due to its sample comprising women only. However, in this mass movement many individuals are undergoing similar emancipatory experiences and, accordingly, constitute excellent subjects for case-study research. Again, the methodological design of grounded theory is new and unique for its time. The subsequent development of the existing literature in this area could also be an indication, at least in the US, that adult educators and adult education scholars consider it

to have some merit. Ensuing research builds on this, especially feminist research focusing on the women's movement.

As previously noted, the theory has evolved with the input of many other scholars. Here Kitchenham (2008) provides us with the following historical account of the evolution of the theory and timeline of the evolution:

- '1978 Mezirow proposes the initial 10-phase theory;
- 1981 adapts the three domains Habermas (1972) of learning: technical, practical and emancipatory (Mezirow, 1971);
- 1985 expands the theory to include instrumental, dialogic and self-reflective learning. Definition of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Introduction of three learning processes: learning within meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes and learning through meaning transformation;
- 1991 adds an additional phase: stressing the importance of altering present relationships and forging new relationships. Expansion of earlier notion of the distorted meaning perspective. Argument for three types of meaning perspectives: epistemic, sociolinguistic and psychological. Presentation of three types of reflection: content, process and premise;
- 1995 stresses the importance of critical self-reflection in perspective transformation;
- 1998 articulates idea of critical reflection of assumptions, including objective and subjective reframing;
- 2000 presents a revision of transformative learning by elaborating on and revising his original terminologies. Acknowledgment of the importance of the affective, emotional and social aspects of transformative learning. Introduction of habits of mind and points of view;
- 2003 provides a clear definition of his theory;
- 2005 with Dirkx at the Sixth International Transformative Learning Conference concedes that the two points of view could coexist (Mezirow et al., 2006);
- 2006 Presents an overview of transformative learning. Further expands on his theories vis-à-vis constructivist theory, psychic distortion, schema therapy and individuation' (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 110).

In keeping with Kitchenham's evolution, the timeline is brought here to 2009:

2009 Mezirow presents a video statement on the website for the Eighth Transformative Learning Conference in which he sums up his argument that individuals need to learn to think for themselves and that adult educators need to help them do so through critical reflection (Mezirow et al., 2009). Although Mezirow is the seminal TLT researcher, he still argues his earlier point that TLT is an evolving theory. In his update of TLT research Taylor (2007) states that much of the research in the field of TL is conducted in higher education.

1.2.2 Transformative Learning Theory

The following section focuses on TLT and explains some of its pertinent vocabulary, terms, processes, elements and environments.

Mezirow originally conceives of TLT as fundamentally an adult domain, because it is in adulthood that one has had enough time to develop assumptions and beliefs, or meaning schemes. It is through reflecting on and making changes to these assumptions and beliefs that TL occurs. Such transformation can occur with students in higher education.

Human development is seen as a four-stage process whereby an individual goes from being accepting and dependent to being critically aware of themselves, their relationships and their cultural and psychological assumptions, all of which Mezirow groups together as meaning perspectives. These meaning perspectives lie beneath visible behaviour, form one's underlying assumptions, thoughts and beliefs and are a result of past experiences and culture as well as one's own observations of how others interact between themselves and their environments. When one makes such assumptions explicit, he or she can better evaluate whether or not these assumptions are useful in solving problems – especially new problems – and if they are useful and working in general (Mezirow, 1978). Mezirow describes change as a necessary development as one learns to approach problems in new ways. When one does not learn, one may well repeat the same behaviour over and over again and yet expect new results. The point he is making is that there is a choice: one is able change one's assumptions, thoughts and behaviours and to respond to situations differently, and that education can assist in this. The role of the educator is pivotal.

TLT holds that 'an individual *constructs* meaning through an active process of interpreting what is going on in his [sic] situation' (Mezirow, 1971, p. 137). Further, people will strive

to understand how they define and change their definitions through their interactions with others. Mezirow proposes that we construct meaning and thus create meaning schemes, or meaning perspectives, which make up our frames of reference and habits of mind.

Mezirow says that meaning perspectives are socio-linguistically and culturally formed, and therefore comprise the core theories, assumptions and encoded structures that inform our meaning schemes, or clusters of beliefs. It is this relationship between individuals and their social environments that is created, and subsequently consciously reflected on, that TLT endeavours to illuminate and use for individual and, when warranted and possible, social change.

TLT is also a reconstructive theory in that it:

...seeks to establish a general, abstract and idealized model that explains the generic structural dimensions and dynamics of the learning process. Furthermore, it strives to identify the common elements and operations of adult learning, as well as the universal ideals implicit in human communications with which educators may investigate and assess local practice. (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 166)

Mezirow reports on his own transformative experiences as he reads the works of Freire (1970), who uses a similar approach to adult education in rural Brazil and Chile in order to engage a group in 'problem-posing'. Freire sees the adult education experience as a catalyst not only for individual change, but also for action. Freire calls this shift a 'change of reference' while Mezirow calls it a 'change in meaning perspective'. Mezirow and Marsick (1979) write that Freire takes the concept further, saying that the learner's stated needs are a departure point and that adult education should encourage learners in order to prompt personal and social change.

According to Mezirow (1990a) the role of educators to help learners deal with their perception changes and potential action is at the heart of the educational imperative:

Accordingly, learning is a desired process in living, not a separate experience. Learning is not a desirable outcome or a goal; it is the activity of making an interpretation that subsequently guides decisions and action. Learning is grounded in the very nature of human communications. Becoming reflective of the content, process and especially the premises of one's prior learning is central to cognition for survival in modern societies. It is in this way we control our experiences rather than

be controlled by them and it is an indispensable prerequisite to individual, group and collective transformations, both perspective and social. Especially in modern societies where authority is relative and adults increasingly tend to transform themselves through critical self-reflection, educators seek ways to understand and enhance this vital natural learning function'. (p. 375)

As TLT evolves Mezirow (1996c) puts forward 12 key propositions of the theory:

1. A learning theory, abstract and idealised, must be useful to adult educators and grounded in the human communications and the learning process.
2. Learning can be defined as the use of prior interpretations to create new or revised ones that guide future action.
3. We make meaning by projecting images, etc. to interpret new experiences and the construal of meaning may or may not be intentional; furthermore, the construal of meaning will go beyond words.
4. Sense perceptions are filtered through a frame of reference, which selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition and feelings by predisposing our intentions, expectations and purpose.
5. A frame of reference is composed of two dimensions: a *meaning perspective* (habits of mind), consisting of broad, generalised, orienting predispositions; and a *meaning scheme* which is constituted by the cluster of specific beliefs, feeling, attitudes and value judgements that accompany and shape an interpretation.
6. Our frames of reference may be transformed by critically reflecting on our assumptions (usually after the failure of actions based on previously held assumptions and beliefs).
7. Learning occurs by:
 - a. Elaborating existing meaning schemes
 - b. Learning new meaning schemes
 - c. Transforming meaning schemes
 - d. Transforming meaning perspectives
8. Transformations can be incremental or epochal and can be of the individual (subjective), or external piece of the world (objective).
9. A learning theory must consider two of Habermas' domains of learning: instrumental and communicative.

10. Validity in instrumental learning is based on empirical testing. In communicative learning, it is based on rational discourse (or the informed, objective, rational and intuitive assessment of reasons, evidence and arguments towards a tentative, consensual, best judgement). Consensus building is ongoing.
11. A transformative learning experience requires the learner to make an informed and reflective decision to act when appropriate.
12. Development in adulthood is a learning process and can be in both the instrumental and communicative domains. (p. 164)

This chapter will now outline the elements of TL as described by TLT. It focuses on the following elements: learning domains, meaning schemes, meaning perceptions, distortions, critical reflection, discourse, disorienting dilemmas, objective and subjective reframing and social action and adult education.

1.2.3 Learning Domains

TLT uses the three domains of knowledge proposed by Habermas (1987): technical, communicative/practical and emancipatory, each of which requires a different methodology of ‘systematic objective inquiry’.

The technical domain requires ‘instrumental’ action where ‘the empirical-analytic sciences have been developed expressly to assist us in understanding our technical interests, those relating to work. The very nature of our efforts to control and manipulate the environment has dictated a uniquely appropriate approach using hypothetical-deductive theories and permitting the deduction of empirical generalizations. (Mezirow, 1981, p. 4).

Instrumental action denotes task-oriented problem-solving, as well as the manipulation of objects and people. It can also be more easily measured and empirically studied. Learning that falls within this instrumental technical domain is taught along current educational guidelines that can be supported by empirical positivist inquiry, insofar as it is possible to manipulate people, their behaviours, attitudes and values as variables. The current education system, which emphasises instruction on how to manipulate and control the environment and which reflects the ideology of behaviourism, is basically built around the instrumental learning domain (Mezirow, 1981).

The second domain is the area of ‘practical’ cognitive interest, or the learning domain that has to do with interaction or ‘communicative action’. It is the realm that deals with social norms and the communication between two or more individuals. It is also the realm that involves ‘interpreting the meaning of communicative experience’. This learning domain of communications and social interaction is where education can help learners ‘enhance their understanding of and sensitivity to the way others anticipate, perceive, think and feel’ (p. 18). The goal of education within this domain is to increase communications skills, self-esteem, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to ask questions. This communicative domain requires interpretation and explanation, as well as a ‘systematic inquiry’ that seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of communicative experience. It also ‘includes comparisons, patterns of commonality and meanings’. In short, communicative learning ‘seeks to understand the meaning of others and focuses on coherence’ (Mezirow, 1990b, p. 9).

It is the third, or emancipatory, area of cognitive interest through which education works to free learners from the ‘libidinal, institutional or environmental forces’ that limit ‘options and rational control over’ their lives and are generally ‘taken for granted as beyond human control’ (Mezirow, 1981, p. 5). Most learning involves elements of both instrumental and communicative domains, but the emancipatory learning discovered in the women’s programmes is that on which Mezirow bases his original theory, which he calls Transformative Learning. ‘Transformative learning can occur in either of the domains but no need is more fundamentally human than our need to understand the meaning of our experience’ (Mezirow, 1990b, p. 11). Emancipatory education is organised as an effort to ‘help the learner challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding and act on the new perspectives’ (p. 18).

However, Collard and Law (1989) find the theory too ‘liberal-conservative’ with not enough emphasis on changing social structures, which Tennant (1993) and Hart (Hart, 1990b) echo. Their argument is that only change that results in social action should be called transformative. Mezirow (1997) says he understands TLT to include changing epistemic, sociocultural and psychic distortions, which must happen prior to social actions that would then change social structures.

1.2.4 Frames of Reference: Meaning Schemes, Meaning Perceptions

TLT holds that each person has a unique frame of reference, or installed dimensions, of making meaning.

Meaning schemes are sets of related and habitual expectations governing it-then, cause-effect, and category relationships as well as even sequences. We expect food to satisfy our hunger; walking to reduce the distance from one point to another; turning the knob and pushing on a door to open it. Meaning schemes are habitual, implicit rules for interpreting. Meaning perspectives are made of higher-order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal orientations and evaluations, and what linguists call 'networks of arguments'. Lover-beloved, teacher-student, employer-employee, priest-parishioner, and other familiar role relationships are predicated on established meaning perspectives involving habitual expectations familiar to everyone. (Mezirow, 1990b, p. 2)

According to Mezirow, as one develops a new meaning perspective one will in turn develop new dimensions of thought, feeling and will. Of importance is that one needs to decide what to change or not change, and when to act or not act. When an individual's meaning perspective has been transformed, he or she does not return to the previous viewpoint. Humans develop their own meaning perspectives based on their own individual circumstances, languages and cultures. Throughout life these meaning perspectives may need to change as challenges come up that are not satisfactorily resolved just through the addition of more skills or knowledge. 'Meaning perspectives include sociolinguistics, morals, ethics, learning styles, religions, psychological aspects, health aesthetics, structures, rules, criteria, codes and dispositions on which we base our thoughts, feelings and actions' (Mezirow, 1981, p. 20).

Mezirow argues that the purpose of adult education is to improve learners' self-directedness, which is both the means and end of education. Through self-directedness, people, including educators and other experts, learn to use resources in order to improve the quality of their lives. This is also the place where questions are stretched into the self-assessing question crucial to problem solving: 'are we asking the right questions?'

1.2.4 Transformation

Mezirow borrows from psychoanalytic theory to help explain his idea of perspective transformation. In therapy one learns to analyse critically one's own actions and reactions. Initially, this typically follows an attempt to use old perceptions, which are found lacking.

Learning by adding skills or knowledge is not enough; one needs to add a new perspective, often someone else's and consciously realizing one has done so. One is then able to see the old way and the new way and see them as thus - old and new perceptions - and then one is able to solve the problem. This critical appraisal can be 'tension producing and can be acutely threatening to our sense of self' (Mezirow and Marsick, 1979 p. 59).

Mezirow (1981) is saying that perspective transformation is the process of attaining emancipatory learning:

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

The term 'transformation of the meaning perspectives' is shortened to the 'transformation of perceptions', to meaning transformations, then finally shortened to just 'transformation'. This transformation is seen to be emancipatory '...from libidinal, institutional or environmental forces which limit our options and rational control over our lives but have been taken for granted as beyond human control' (, p. 5). One therefore learns to choose to be able to control or influence what possibly can be controlled or influenced. It also allows one to see and accept more of the interconnectedness between people, with the new perspective being that one is now able to see as from someone else's viewpoint.

Education for TL refers to the process of 'fostering this learning effort so as to progressively enhance the adult's ability to become increasingly autonomous and responsible – more self-directed – as a learner' (Mezirow, 1981 p. 142). Mezirow identifies at least two ways to perception transformation: sudden and slow. When educators meet individuals in a learning context, the learner may be on the verge of, in the progress of, or having completed a TLE. Educators who are aware of this and of individual differences may be able to have more impact on the learner's development:

It appears that there is great variation in meaning perspectives among adults (and among children as well) who are at different stages of development. Recognition of these individual differences is crucial for educators. Each stage in the development

(moral, ethical, ego and others) involves a developmentally advanced and progressively more functional meaning perspective. (Mezirow, 1990b, p. 2)

1.2.5 Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is central to TLT. It is through critical reflection that one is able to identify one's frames of references, to question them and decide if they are legitimate or if they need to change. If one finds one's perceptions to be faulty, one can transform them into perceptions that are more valid. Critical reflection is the process of thinking about the assumptions one has and whether they are valid or not. This is where the educator may need to guide the learner to learn how to question their premises:

Our tasks as educators are to encourage the multiple readings of "texts", to make a wider range of symbol systems or meaning perspectives available to learners, to create reflective dialogic communities in which learners are free to challenge assumptions and premises, thereby breaking through the one-dimensionality of uncritically assimilated learning...Precipitating and fostering critical self-reflective learning means a deliberate effort to foster resistance to just such technicist assumptions, to thoughtlessness, to conformity, to impermeable meaning perspectives, to fear of change, to ethnocentric and class bias and to egocentric values. (Mezirow, 1990a, p. 360)

Once one becomes adept at critical reflection, one will always desire to use the skill as more complex issues present themselves. The opportunity will emerge to contribute to decision-making and problem solving: 'Insights gained through critical self-awareness are emancipatory in the sense that at least one can recognise the correct reasons for his or her problems' (Mezirow, 1981, p. 5). The communications skills of discourse are necessary to work through the recognition and rectifying of distortions.

1.2.6 Discourse

Mezirow borrows again from Habermas (1972), who names the specific dialogue intended to validate an individual's experience 'ideal discourse' (Mezirow, 1981, p. 102).

'Discourse allows us to test the validity of our beliefs and interpretations' (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 165). Rationality is at the centre of ideal discourse; it is what we are trying to achieve: 'To say that one acts rationally or that a statement is rational is to say that the action or statement can be criticised or defended; we have the criteria with which to justify the act or statement' (1996b, p. 164). Mezirow identifies discourse as a phase needed for transformation: that one needs to validate the new interpretation. He states that TLT: '...holds that our acquired frames of reference and the beliefs and values that they endorse

may be transformed through critical reflection on one's assumptions and the resulting interpretations validated through discourse' (p. 237).

Mezirow (1981) states that conditions need to be present are comprehensible; truthful, appropriate and the speaker must be believable. The participants need to be free from coercion, able to argue, equal, confident and informed. The decisions or definitions arising from such 'ideal discourses' would be such that anyone would agree, including sound-of-mind judges. It is desirable to hold up this ideal because even if we cannot quite attain it, trying gets us closer than we would get without trying.

The ideal discussion or discourse of free parties as outlined above would include defining and refining the frames of reference. This is what Mezirow calls meaning perceptions as well as that which is obvious. Psychological assumptions can be questioned to eliminate those childhood survival mechanisms that are no longer useful in adulthood. Here, one sometimes finds oneself held up in one's own development by distortions: adult educators can assist learners to transform their perceptions with the help of language: 'Language...is the vehicle for expressing the state of the individuals' cognition' (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 159). By critically reflecting on and developing communicative competence, learners can take charge of their decision-making and their lives. As Mezirow (*ibid*) continues:

Communicative competence refers to the ability of the learner to negotiate his or her own purposes, values and meanings rather than to simply accept those of others. A learner may acquire communicative competence by becoming more aware and critically reflective of assumptions, more able to freely and fully participate in discourse and to overcome constraints to taking reflective action. (p. 164)

The next part of the TL process is in the relationships with people who share the new perspective. The new perspective is more inclusive, more abstract and perhaps more accepting of ambiguity. Further it is also through discourse that one can work with other likeminded people to change larger common sociocultural perceptions. 'Sociocultural ideologies are often institutionalised and require social action in some form to change them' (Mezirow, 1990a, p. 335). Marx's work is mentioned but not specifically cited as similar to 'critical theorists' for helping people think beyond accepting problems as individualistic (Mezirow, 1981, p. 5). 'Transformative learning is not a private affair involving information processing; it is interactive and inter-subjective from start to

finish' (Mezirow, 1990a, p. 364). Educational experiences where people assemble to learn can be a place for this interactivity.

1.2.7 Application of TL and TLT: Examples from Practice

The review now turns to examples of educators who have emancipatory intent and create environments, activities and processes that foster TL. While many of these examples are outside the boundaries of HE, they inform the discussion and add possibilities for implementation in formal educational settings.

In his classes Brookfield (1990b) starts with the learner's own experience in order to find critical incidents that can be used as a basis to explore assumptions. As in other phenomenological approaches, the purpose is to enter another person's frame of reference so that the other's structures of understanding and interpretive filters can be experienced and understood by the educator, or a peer, as accurately as possible. As a first step in encouraging critical reflection, educators must endeavour to see the world as their learners see it:

We must become phenomenological detectives, immersing ourselves in learners' worldviews and assumptive clusters, as a first step in exploring how to encourage them to move outside of their comfortable paradigms. Given the anxiety-provoking nature of asking people to analyse critically the assumptions by which they habitually live, it is crucial that educators find ways of doing this that are as accessible and nonthreatening as possible. (p. 180)

Brookfield further recommends indirect rather than direct approaches to assist rather than intimidate the learner. It is also crucial for educators to act as models for learners by sharing critical reflections of their own assumptions and meaning perspectives, because there is 'a real danger that educators in this area of practice will present themselves as critically sophisticated gurus who have come to release learners from the chains of their distorted meaning perspectives; this approach is arrogant and alienating' (p. 181). In order to model critical reflection in the classroom, Brookfield (1990b) shares his own examples, makes use of long introductions, explains and discusses critical theory and thought, organises peer learning, facilitates role playing, debriefs learners and uses anonymous critical incident questionnaires.

Peters (1990) provides a detailed account of a method called the Action-Reason-Thematic Technique (ARTT) which includes implicit instruction in the process of critical thinking. The ARTT method may be used to help learners who are undergoing either training or working on research projects. It involves one or more interviews, sometimes with therapeutic functions, in order to help individuals learn more about their own behaviours, plan for achieving goals and develop problem-solving techniques. The ARTT process seeks to understand and clarify the beliefs, wants, norms and breadths of factual knowledge that underlie the interviewee's network of assumptions, or themes, which Peters defines as the 'recurring ideals, actions and ways of thinking that characterise the individual's relationship with his or her world' (p. 316). When the interviewee articulates experience in the interview process, he or she begins to engage with reflective thinking and thereby learns.

Dominice (1990) also implements a methodology for facilitating critical reflection that is often used with adults who are learning within educational institutions, large companies, or public administration. Specifically, Dominice organises learners into groups and then uses educational biographies to facilitate reflection. Once in groups the students develop their own questions to think back on their educational experiences and analyse how, where and why learning actually takes place. Dominice often finds that the learner-generated questions focus on 'how to identify the process of education through which we give form to our lives' and that surprisingly, most learners consider 'the majority of their learning to have taken place outside of the "system"' (p. 200). As Dominice explains, 'the biographic approach challenges the normative, organised world of education and leads to a dialectic between the "real" world and the "disorder" of subjective human experience' (p. 196). As well, critical reflection based on the consideration of one's own educational biography 'can be used in education as a tool for critical reflection and the dynamics of this reflection can become for the researcher, the real objective of his research' (p. 196). Dominice finds that most learners are happy to present their biographies in class and talk about their current learning processes. When facilitated by peer group questions and critical reflection, discussions about learning often enrich and reorganise what students already know. In Dominice's experience, educational biographies show that it is what we do with our education that gives learning its meaning.

Another process for reflective learning is put forward by Lukinsky (1990), who describes how ‘keeping a journal may help adults break habitual modes of thinking and change life directions through repeated reflective withdrawal and re-entry to the writing’ (p. 213). Based on Proffoff’s (1975) *At a Journal Workshop*. Lukinsky’s method has the learners write on a specific topic, meditate upon it and then analyse their own writings from several different perspectives. Lukinsky’s method is learner-centred and participants only share their writing if they wish to do so. Another author, Kennedy (1990), writes of his own ‘poor but cultured middle class’ upbringing as his topic of a personal journey of transformation, discussing how he worked through the realisation of his acceptance and rejection of the hierarchical and elitist structures set up by the World Council of Churches. He also advocates for education as an instrument for development.

Brookfield (1990a) facilitates the decoding, analysis and examination of mass media as a way to engage learners in critical thinking and considerations of how the media influences or even creates our perceptions. Maxine Green (1990) uses literature with her participants to prompt them into discussing how the portrayal of characters reflects or creates reality. Even if the process does not transform learners’ perspectives, it is still touted to be beneficial because ‘at least it gets one thinking’. Candy (1990) uses ‘repertory grids’ to help learners take problems and unpack them, thereby exposing some of their underlying assumptions, which can then be assessed for rejection or acceptance.

Hart (1990b) uses the historical context of the feminist movement along with theoretical knowledge to prompt consciousness-raising and help participants analyse, reckon with and make transparent the ‘the internal and external effect of power’ (p. 48). She further suggests that personal experience should be the point of departure for learners as they learn to think critically and she advocates for a theoretical distance in order to put personal experience into a larger context.

Hart (1990a) also provides a feminist critique of TLT. She says that she favours Mezirow’s intentions in TLT:

I profoundly appreciate Mezirow’s introduction to some of Habermas’ major concepts ... because this attempt is based on a concern for forms of education which

are liberating rather than merely adjusting, and which point to new possibilities for thought and action rather than fixate the learning to the status quo. (p. 126)

According to Hart, Mezirow is not using Habermas' work as Habermas intended because he has largely omitted the inter-relativity between technical, communicative and emancipatory action. Further Hart relates that Mezirow ignores the issues of power whereas Hart and Habermas see 'dominance-free' communications as pivotal in individual and social liberation. Hart, an authority concerning Habermas' work is well qualified to critique specific issues of TLT with regards to Habermas' intentions. However, Mezirow does emphasis that an ideal dialogue is critical, falling just short of naming it 'dominance-free' 'powerless', or non-hierarchical' (see Dialogue section in this thesis: Chapter 4: Transformative Learning and Transformative Learning Theory).

Hart calls on educators with emancipatory intent to develop and promote dominance free communications as much as possible and where:

a deep structure of non-hierarchical, caring and solidarity relations and where the negative task of diagnosing and correcting distortions is complemented by the positive task of nurturing and practicing new virtues and of acquiring new ethical sensibilities for a social intercourse which is not based on the need to control or be controlled. (p. 135)

For educators in HE to follow Hart's recommendation they would need to balance their ability to create a dominance-free environment within the hierarchical structures of the universities in which they work. This could prove challenging, and would require that issues of power and equality be made explicit and critically reflected upon by senior university managers, educators and the students. Not only is an educator working within hierarchical structures, but the classroom itself has issues of power, including those between the educator and the student(s).

The initial TLT does not specifically include Hart's appeal for these contextual factors necessary for TL. These are conditions that would foster and support TL. Indeed the literature suggests they are crucial to the process and a wide variety of examples are available, some of which are relayed in this review, especially in volumes such as *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood. A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* (Mezirow, 1990b). TLT may be trying to explain something slightly different and

more basic: how individuals come to realise where imbalances of power lie and how they have come to believe these imbalances are immutable. The discussion points to the interplay of the individual psyche and the social contexts, and to how, and how much, individual agency is seen to be the focus in TL. Mezirow lays out a framework for ‘ideal discourse’ (Mezirow et al., 2009) which could be seen as a basis for what Hart is calling for in her analysis. Mezirow further invites scholars, adult educators and writers to share the educational conditions they setup to increase support for TL.

Among the most widely-known programmes for social change is the Highlander School in Tennessee US (Highlander Research and Education Center, 2010), which helps train civil activists. With roots in the civil rights movement of the 1960s the school includes such notable students as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. The centre promotes a balance between theory and action, works with labour movements and groups such as Hispanic farm workers and gives particular support to activists. Heaney & Horton (1990a) argue that the centre is especially important for activists who ‘have resisted the security and prestige of formal institutions’ (p. 85). They warn that without theory and underlying principles, a social movement will eventually become part of an oppressive system. While personal transformation is important, participants who attend Highlander are most often already committed to transformation and collective action. The authors’ goal is to make changes towards a more just society and they state: ‘we cannot inspire unless first we conspire’ (p. 97). Part of their vision includes learning environments where ‘both educators and learners become critically reflective in shared struggles for non-technocratic, non-patronising, non-bureaucratic, non-governmental solutions to real problems’, because it ‘is here – in these struggles – that conscientization begins’ (p. 97). Their further contention is that if an individual has had a change in perception and realises an issue is an injustice they do not necessarily know what to do about it: ‘people can change their theories without having improved their capacity to change their situation’ (p. 85). The centre is therefore seen as a place where people can come together to act towards changing unjust situations.

Gould’s (1990) Therapeutic Learning Programme (TLP) is an online programme that provides participants with processes that involve TL, with the goal of emancipatory education. Gould’s programme helps participants understand what personal functions are not working and what must be done to get them working again, which is the ‘cardinal concepts of adult emancipatory education’ (p. 153). Gould states that he thinks he has

‘teased out’ the process for overcoming psychological hurdles that hold people back from acknowledging possible changes and/or accomplishing their goals. He justifies his theory by explaining that as people age they need to deal with different events – such as learning new skills or confronting things they have never dealt with before – in a mature, adult manner. Learners may need help if their habits impede their learning, or prevent them from coping effectively with new situations. They may need to overcome their non-functional habits by defining their problems, proposing and implementing solutions and also resolving any conflict that may interfere with implementation. Gould says he translates psychotherapy through the learning models of ‘critical self-reflexivity’ and TL and that specific intervention programmes can use these models for adult development.

Gould’s (1990) proposal of on-line counselling programmes may be questionable to some, but Gould states that the programmes could be beneficial in conjunction with in-person assistance, especially for those who are reticent to counselling. In defence of the programme, Gould says that learners forget all about the computer medium because they become engrossed in the information and intrapersonal communication about themselves while learning about their own processes. He suggests learners use the printout of the online counselling sessions as a way to help start discussions with a professional.

The above reports are presented as examples of the contexts that are created by educators to foster learner TL. The next section looks at the developing and evolving TLT by Mezirow and other scholars.

Merriam (2004) questions TLT, surmising that TLT might apply only to individuals whose higher-level cognitive skills are developed. Mezirow (2004) replies to Merriam’s assertion by stating, ‘We are all collaborating to build a theory in the process of development’ (p. 70), but does not answer her question specifically. King and Heuer (2009) find that GED and ABE instructors report having TL experiences while they learn how to assist literacy students become more motivated and responsible in their own learning. They deem TL can potentially occur for the students as well as the instructors.

1.2.8 Critique and Defence of Transformative Learning Theory

While TLT is a widely researched and discussed theory for both adult learners and students in HE, it is not without its detractors. Two central areas of critique are that TLT focuses too much on the individual (Mezirow, 1994a, Mezirow, 1998, Inglis, 1998, Clark and Wilson, 1991) and that social action needs to be present for a full TL experiences to be deemed such (Tennant, 1993, Newman, 1993). There is also contention with TLT's perceived lack of acknowledgement of contexts (Hart, 1990a, Collard and Law, 1989) and suggestions of elaborating on developmental aspects of learning (Tennant, 1993, Inglis, 1997). The following section provides a summary of these discussions, points to some of the gaps in the literature and provides a rationale for using TLT as a framework for this study.

Clark and Wilson (1991) criticise TLT for its focus on the individual, pointing out that meaning is context dependent. 'What the individualistic focus does not include, however is the multiple contexts in which the experiences of these women were situated, nor what impact those contexts had on their transformational learning process.' (p. 77). They point out that the women in Mezirow's study are middle-class participants in structured learning environments and to the historical context that they say shape the women's experiences. They also critique Mezirow's lack of gender analysis. They state that 'By narrowing the focus of the internal process alone, the interpretative frame of the learning experiences is lost and our understanding of the meaning of those experiences is diminished' (*ibid.* p. 78).

They further relate:

The relationship between the individual and the social context is therefore problematic because how individuals think about and understand themselves is shaped by language and culture, both of which are socially constructed and serve the interests of those in power. Much of this structuring of the self occurs apart from conscious awareness; it is only when it is brought to consciousness and critiqued that it can be changed. In this model therefore, human agency is seriously contested by sociocultural forces. (*ibid.* p. 79)

These are interesting criticisms, but perhaps not entirely different from what TLT is proposing as a process by which an individual comes to understand their own socially constructed beliefs. This can include considerations of power dynamics and inequality in one's environment, as well as one's ability to change inequalities. TLT proponents argue

that ensuing research could illuminate further that the process for individuals could be similar across different contexts, and indeed have endeavoured to do so. TLT does focus on the individual and their constructed meanings as the location of learning, with the contexts being vitally important, but not as central to the process. Perhaps it could be argued that TLT acknowledges that an individual's socially constructed inner contexts can be elucidated and consequently can be transformed through education, social movements or life events, and so on. This process can lead to an individual acting differently in the world, and may include joining social movements to make changes to their contexts.

Inglis (1997) takes the critique of the theory further to define a difference between empowerment and emancipation. He says that while empowerment once described people's ability to act in their own interests the term has now been co-opted. Empowerment now renders people to police themselves on behalf of more powerful people, suppressing their own needs for others' gain. Emancipation is described as when people join social movements to eradicate domination by others, and is seen as an expression of a fuller potential of TL. This distinction would be an addition to Mezirow's TLT phases, perhaps expounding further the role of the action phase. This is an interesting discussion of whether, when TL is seen to have been completed, it is awareness and personal liberation or social action or both outcomes are attained. This is a long standing and complex issue that is mirrored in larger educational debates. Mezirow posits that learners could indeed undergo a TL experience cumulating with collective action, but warns against educators encouraging learners towards any action the learners are not fully committed to undertaking. Emancipation, as described by Inglis, is a possible outcome of TL, one many of us would argue is the most desired should the learner be fully knowledgeable and committed.

For his critique, Tenant (1993) espouses a stronger delineation between normal adult development and perspective transformation. He proposes that TL involves 'some level of social critique (that is, the questioning of a given world view)' (p. 34). He further says that:

Much of what is regarded as normal development occurs within a framework of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world. Perspective transformation, however, is a process,

which challenges these assumptions. As such, it represents a developmental *shift* (a new world view) rather than simply developmental *progress* (*ibid.* p. 41).

Inglis (1998) argues that TLT ‘leads to an over-reliance on the individual rather than on social movements as the agency of change and, consequently, to an inadequate and false sense of emancipation’ (p. 6). Mezirow (1998) responds by saying he understands that ‘...our received frames of reference are composed of assimilated cultural codes, social norms, ideologies and language games. These frames of reference are the way culture shapes the way we learn. We are embedded in these sets of assumptions and expectations’ (p. 72). A further question might be how do individuals come to join social movements, with Mezirow stating that they do so as a result of TL and sometimes with the assistance of educators skilled in the areas of social and collective action.

There ensues in the literature a discussion on the primacy of social action or cultural action, with Mezirow saying that educators working with TL are enabling cultural action, which can lead to social change. Joining social action is seen as an individual choice where:

...learners would certainly be encouraged to read texts, if there are any appropriate to their situation, about how they have been victimised by taken-for-granted paradigms of power and privilege...learners who are moved to take action and do not know how to do so should be assisted by the educator to learn how to do this effectively’ (*ibid.* p 72).

Mezirow also relates that some educators are better skilled and trained to assist learners in social action.

This appears to be an argument of what comes first: the chicken or the egg. Mezirow is arguing that cultural action can include social movements and Inglis is arguing that personal development is contextualised in social and political transformations (p. 14). Mezirow proposes ideal communication, but does not delineate how to achieve it; indeed he relies on educators skilled in these areas. He does however call for:

... empathetic solidarity, committed to the social and political practice of participatory democracy, informed through critical reflection and collectively taking reflective action when necessary, to assure that social systems and local institutions, organizations and their practices are responsive to the human needs of those they serve. (*ibid.* p. 72)

Inglis replies that they may indeed be mostly on the same page: 'I am not too sure that the dividing line between us is that great' (1998 p. 6.).

In an article, Mezirow (1997) responds to two of Newman's (1993, 1994) books: *Defining the Enemy: Adult Education in Social Action* and *The Third Contract, Theory and Practice in Trade Union Training*. Newman apparently critiques TLT as excluding social factors and focusing on the individual, to which Mezirow responds by stating:

Dichotomizing the individual and society seems to me counter-productive in trying to understand the learning process. Learning is a social process, but it takes place within the individual learner. (p. 29)

Newman (2010) further proposes that the term TL (and presumably the theory) be abandoned altogether and replaced with the term 'good learning'. He proposes that this good learning has nine aspects. Unfortunately this does little to help us (educators, researchers or learners) understand a process of learning that the TLT attempts to illuminate. Newman's proposed nine aspects of good learning have yet to undergo scholarly debate. There may be a way to reconcile Newman's aspects with the process that TLT describes if and when scholars undertake the research and theory development as they have with TLT.

An issue overlooked in the literature is that not all transformative learning experiences are necessarily beneficial to the learner or others that they interact with. For example, someone through a learning experience could make a transformation that made them more oppressive to others. A related issue is the education of oppressors who believe in their right to oppress and/or ignore the effects of oppressive actions on others. The literature seems to lack reporting on TL experiences where one learns one is part of the suppression of others. The importance of awareness of this possibility and the work needed to address the issue is not concerned with our own emancipation from being oppressed, but emancipation from oppressing others. There is need for the oppressors to cease

exploitation of others, and provide justice for others who are affected directly by that exploitation, or by others' acceptance or ignorance of exploitation. The pedagogy involved in education about the negative consequences of inequality for everyone, including oppressors, needs further exploration in the TL field.

Another issue not addressed fully in the literature is how learners themselves may resist TL, preferring to hold on to their beliefs, however erroneous. Learners may be adverse to critical reflection and even development, preferring instead to accept the status quo: learn some skills, get a job, and have a 'regular' life. In HE, academic staff, especially if they are new and perhaps insecure in their employment may have to be careful even if they have emancipatory intent. The multiple pressures of student and university-as-employer expectations may make them concede to following easier less disruptive and more traditional topics and pedagogy.

While not a topic to be resolved in this thesis, there is an on-going debate amongst scholars as to whether we as humans have good or malicious intentions (or somewhere in-between), whether we are self-centred or altruistic and whether nature or nurturing (or lack thereof) is the main reason for the way we are. These are large debates, and if given enough time and exploration, may be the basic beliefs that underpin one's rejection or acceptance of TLT (in its original and evolving forms). In education there is so much variety in beliefs, which one could argue affect what one thinks not only of how best to educate, but the purpose of education as well. An atheist science educator may have some fundamental disagreements with a religious educator. However, just as we may have to engage with students who do not share our beliefs and perspectives, or whose choices we do not agree with, we may have to try to see some of the merits of others' perspectives, find some common ground, or indeed just 'agree to disagree'.

The central literature in TLT begins and develops from Jack Mezirow, as he initially calls for and then develops a theory of adult learning that illuminates the deep learning process involved when a person develops awareness of their limiting perceptions and undertakes to change them. For over five decades Mezirow writes original texts and replies to critiques of the theory. Many of these critiques centre on the lack of attention to the contexts where TL is observed, or on the lack of acknowledgement that social contexts are the

foundational influence (Inglis, 1998, Collard and Law, 1989, Newman, 2010, Hart, 1990a). Ensuing literature attempts to expand on these limitations of the theory (Moore, 2005b, Tennant, 1993, Mezirow, 1998).

The resulting abundance of scholarship derived from Mezirow's work on TLT covers topics from fields that include technology, meditation, personal and professional development and activist training. Many important questions pertaining to TLT still remain. For example, how does an educator, as posed by Hart (1990b) promote 'a deep structure of non-hierarchical relations' (p. 135) when working in an established hierarchical structure like a university? Challenges to educators may come from students, administrators, and other educators who are comfortable with the established system, the status quo, especially when it serves their perceived interests and beliefs. These challenges may be mitigated in certain disciplines, or even modules, where the discussions of inequalities pertain to the core topics.

Significant critiques levelled against TLT are that it is based on western male rational thought and does not take into account other perspectives enough, including feminism (Hart, 1990a) or non-Western cultural perspectives (Merriam and Ntseane, 2008) and that it does not include social action for those, like Mezirow, who do not include it in their definition of TL (Inglis, 1998). Another aspect of critique (although not discussed here in depth) is a further lack of understanding of the affective, the unconscious and the spiritual domains, as brought up by Dirkx (Mezirow et al., 2006) and (Cranton, 2006). Notably, the literature does not include research or discussions on negative experiences of TL, or TL that make people's perceptions change in ways that some people would argue are not progressive. Yet another gap is literature and discussion regarding the ethics of potentially manipulating participants or students through designing TL experiences.

The scholarly critiques of the theory have stimulated more literature. For example, Collard and Law (1989) find fault with TLT's general lack of acknowledgement of the contextual influences, which spurs not only a reply from Mezirow but the development of works that inform on multiple, diverse and creative environments where TL potential is present. The growing number of academic and other works report on those environments that are created, especially in educational offer, specifically to enhance TL potential. There is a call

for more work on how people deal with the perceived negative aspects of either the TL process itself, especially the disorienting dilemmas when the experience causes people to contract instead of expand their awareness and decision making, or when the TL process is co-opted for nefarious reasons. When this researcher brought up the topic to Mezirow in 2009 he replied she should perhaps pursue it as her own research agenda. Another issue is that it can also be frustrating for learners to have a TL experience, and not have the skills to change their situations. This is the type of situation the Highlander Education Center (Heaney and Horton, 1990b) and other social organisations have worked to remedy.

There are multiple examples of different and divergent models of educational offer provided in the literature (Taylor, 2000, Brookfield, 2009, Mezirow et al., 2009, Taylor, 2009a) that show the breadth of applications that might support TL. One observation about these applications is that there is a common thread of respect for learners and their learning process: for example many reports discuss how learners can choose to share the inner and sometimes difficult process of TL, or not (Peters, 1990, Kennedy, 1990, Dominice, 1990). Another is the recommendation that educators undergo the same learning processes that are being asked of learners (Brookfield, 1990, King 2005). TLT seeks the commonalities between the contexts, for educators with emancipatory intent (Hart 1990) to use for guidance. TLT may be a fairly simplified theory of deep learning, and we may agree only that it has some practical uses to begin a conversation with educators and practitioners. Overall the TLT can be considered a guide to help understand a learning process. It attempts to explain a process of deep learning whereby individuals come to realise that their beliefs are distorted. It is also useful to inquire into just how those beliefs come to be acquired, and further gain a sense of the undeniable impact the social world has on forming our beliefs. When someone becomes conscious of their own thoughts, they may begin to discern what is true and what is fabricated by examining their assimilated information from a variety of contexts: social, political and economic environments.

At its core, TLT tries to uncover what is true and can enhance human experience. It also seeks, in some regards, universal as well as idealised learning. TLT has both been shown to be a theory we can understand in its simplified 11 phases, and at the same time it delves deep to discuss complex and impactful learning. It tries to rescue, as Mezirow (1996) says:

...the belaboured concepts of freedom, justice, democratic participation, and equality... It holds that these values, along with trust, tolerance, education, openness, and caring, are essential to the ideal of undistorted communication' (1996b, p. 170).

TLT also tries to outline the 'ideal conditions' within which there is ... 'a conscious effort by the educator to establish and enforce norms in the learning situation which neutralize or significantly reduce the influence of power, the win-lose dialogue, and the hegemony of instrumental rationality found elsewhere in society' (*ibid*). While these conditions may not always be attainable, it is good practice to attempt create them, when possible, in our educational pursuits. It is hoped that TLT can be a basis from which educators can help their students through a process of situating themselves in their personal and social situations and further understand issues of agency and of power when it is, as Hart (1990) says at 'the center of one's educational program' (p. 136).

To conclude, taking into account many of the detractors of the theory, TLT, even with its inclination towards individual agency, is still a useful framework and pedagogical tool for educators to further understand, support and foster a process of deep learning. The process of individual students becoming aware of their wider environments, and their inner landscapes, learning to question and ameliorate their own, and others lives, without bringing harm to others, is a worthwhile goal of HE. Studying this and using a TLT framework is acceptable.

1.3 Assessment

Stobart (2008) describes assessment as 'a powerful activity which shapes how societies, groups and individuals see themselves' (p. 1). For this research, the considerations are how ASPs assess student learning and student work in the complexity of placement learning, especially since in many cases, the students' performance may not be observed by the APS's themselves

The term assessment is hereby used to denote the activity in HE in two ways. First, it is used to describe the academic staff activity of judging or evaluating student learning and student work, referring to both summative and formative types. Secondly, it is used in terms of the students assessing their own belief systems, which can be a key process of the TL experience.

A focus of this research is on assessment practices that academic staff use to judge student learning and work for credit-bearing courses. It is important to examine and understand the traditional methods for assessing students. This section outlines some of the traditional categories used to define and differentiate types of assessment and discusses some of the critiques of these categories.

Summative assessment refers to the process in which assessors, often educators, make judgments on learners' work when determining grades for final products. As Barrow (2006) asserts, summative assessments largely monitor whether or not the transmission of discipline knowledge from the teacher to the student has been successful. Formative assessment refers to evaluative activities used to elicit the necessary information that could help educators and learners determine strengths and weaknesses in student learning and accordingly make any needed adjustments. Martin & Collins (2010) credit Scriven (1967) for the terms and preliminary explanations of summative and formative assessment.

The characteristics of educational assessments including objectivity, reliability, validity, adequacy and authenticity are well rehearsed. Objectivity describes how different assessors evaluate student work in a similar fashion and thus requires the criteria to be understood by all involved parties. Reliability refers to the assessment producing consistent scores by similar learners, or the same learners a short time later. Validity denotes how closely the assessment reflects the desired learning objectives. Different components of validity are face, content, construct, predictability, consequence and fairness (Tummons, 2005). These components are considered when ascertaining how well an assessment tool expresses and achieves its objectives as well as how such an assessment tool avoids irrelevant, faulty, unjust, or unwarranted practices.

Knight and Yorke (2003) add adequacy, referring to how well the assessment activity covers all the intended learning objectives and authenticity that denotes how well the assessment activity mirrors the situations and contexts in which the learned knowledge or skill would actually be used. Boud (1995) states that these characteristics of educational assessment serve as important guidelines and are crucial for encouraging accuracy, fairness and professionalism in assessment activities, whether these assessments are standardised by external providers, or created and used within a classroom environment for specific

learners. Knight and Yorke (2003) also add that assessments should be useful and affordable.

The particular manner by which an assessment is developed and its measures interpreted generally falls under one of these categories: criterion, norm, or self-reference. Criterion referencing refers to how a person's work or performance is assessed against a pre-determined set of standards. Norm-referenced assessment describes how well a person's work compares to other learners, or the norm in the class. Self-referenced assessment largely refers to learning contexts where the learning goals are personal and comparison or objective standards are inappropriate (Moran, 1997).

Although the traditional definitions of assessment outlined above are still influential and largely in use, they have come under fire from educational theorists. Boud (1995), for instance, questions these traditional formal assessments:

What are teaching, learning, and assessment really about? Are they the relatively well-ordered and formalised process, which I had experienced as a student or do they constitute the searching, challenging, agonizing struggle for meaning and growth? (p. 5)

He further distinguishes subject-matter autonomy from the notion of autonomous individuals exhibiting qualities of moral, emotional and intellectual independence – a generally acknowledged goal of HE (p. 29). In researching HE in the UK, Brennan et al. (2010) suggest that the changing demographics of students and the largely unpredictable future:

...may require greater emphasis being placed upon “ways of knowing” rather than “what is known”. The assessment and certification implications are important issues if both commonalities and diversities in learning outcomes of higher education are to be fully recognised. (p. 201)

Barrow (2006) argues that formative assessment in formal education is useful as a welcome expansion to summative types of assessment. Formative assessment is chosen for various reasons: it assists in giving feedback to the students about their own learning (Moran, 1997); it contributes to ‘assessment-as-inquiry’ for ‘learning-as-the-construction-

of-knowledge' (Hargreaves, 2005); and it facilitates diagnostic assessment (Campbell, 2007). The advantages of formative assessment have been widely proclaimed and are at the heart of the 'assessment for learning movement' (Taras, 2008). There is even a discussion amongst educators of potentially turning assessment into learning itself, instead of just 'assessment-as-measurement' for 'learning-as-attaining-objectives' (Hargreaves, 2005).

A summation is provided in the following quote regarding the theoretical underpinning and the need for formative assessment:

The spirit of formative assessment aims to transform knowledge and understanding, based on critical autonomy and intrinsic motivation, through feedback, question and diagnostic activities and critical conversation about a topic between teachers and students, and between students. (Torrance, 2007 p. 46)

As Ecclestone (2005) cautions, however, the combined lack of understanding and lack of resources, along with ad hoc policies of outcome-based and competency-based foci that merely emphasise achievement create learning environments in which meeting the summative requirements dominates learning, even when there are ample formative assessment activities. This focus on summative requirements can produce situations where learning activities are predominantly geared toward learner assessments, thereby prompting a 'narrow instrumentalism', which, as Ecclestone asserts, is already central in many learning environments. Like Ecclestone, Torrance (2007) shares a similar concern about learning environments dominated by summative assessment, namely, that assessment 'procedures and practices may completely come to dominate the learning experience and that "criteria compliance" may come to replace "learning"' (p. 281). In these learning situations drawn by Ecclestone and Torrance, assessment becomes the learning. Which, one could argue, is authentic for more test learning, but not for the application of the learning for work or civil life. As well, such learning experiences may raise a motivation for achievement in learners rather than develop their deep engagement with subject knowledge and skills (Ecclestone, 2007).

Situations in which students gear their learning towards assessment scores as opposed to deep engagement with new knowledge can be countered by practices put forward by Barrow (2006) and Tal (2005). In his study of environmental science education Tal finds that assessment can be used to reach the two desired outcomes of subject mastery and

cognitive development. When students are able to judge their own assessment outcomes Tal notices that their reports of the difficulty level of the assessment correlate with their scores. Furthermore, the students' reflections on their performance in the questionnaire provide rich descriptions of their learning processes. He further says:

Overall, we found that the assessment programme we employed served two purposes: exposing the students to the principles of environmental education...and providing them with actual experience in authentic assessment that addresses the wide scope of learning. (p. 596)

In a study of two courses in separate degree programmes, one in design and the other in business administration, Barrow (2006) examines the programmes in their practice and assessment of student learning diaries. He says that reflecting and writing in the diaries enables the students to gain better knowledge of themselves and to think of themselves in relation to the rules of their discipline. This self-knowledge also helps facilitate 'the speculative goals of higher education of linking intellect and character' (p. 37). As well, the diary-writing process provides the potential for students to transform themselves, thereby empowering them to consider the discipline they are studying, including its limits.

Black et al. (2006) are in agreement that learners need to be engaged at this higher level of learning by being given opportunities to think strategically and reflect on their engagement with new knowledge or skills learning (p. 124). The importance for reflective practices is based in part upon the current climate of academia and the labour market.

Another important type of assessment in education is what is termed pre-assessment, whereby the educator seeks to discover the needs of the learners as well as other vested parties by taking into consideration the learner's prior knowledge, experience, interests, concerns and goals. According to Vella (2002) pre-assessment is of considerable importance, because it facilitates an opportunity to discover the 'generative themes' of the learners, or what Vella calls the 'who needs what as defined by whom?' Pre-assessment activities that include the learners' input generally increase the learners' sense of involvement in the learning and assessment process. While pre-assessment is a process often found in non-formal adult education learning environments, it may be used in placement learning, in its form as experiential learning. Furthermore, the complex learning

process acknowledged in conducting pre-assessment may add the benefit of more student involvement.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a growing assessment practice and has at least two purposes: to assess credentials from other jurisdictions for employment or educational transfer; and to recognise life experience in lieu of educational credentials for entry into educational programmes. Stenlund (2009) reviews the works on PLAR and finds that while the 'transformational model seems to be attractive to everyone, a major concern persists as to whether academic institutions have the competence to assess this invisible learning' (p. 788).

Assessment influences both the educators and the learners. When the educator is also the assessor, the two roles can come into conflict. As Boud (1995) points out, 'There is continuing potential for conflict between being a facilitator of learning on the one hand and being an assessor who has a key role in certification on the other' (p. 37). This sentiment is further affirmed by Macfarlane (2004) who points out that assessment is the part of the job that many academics dislike the most. Yet assessment in formal education is mandated and expected and it can help learners focus on the topics of their study. As well, it can be crucial in motivating students, because more strategically inclined learners may often avoid working on what is not assessed. As Moon (2004) says, an assessment process at least 'ensures that work is done' (p.150).

Another type of assessment practice is self-assessment. It also enables reflective learning by requiring the student to think deeply about their learning and assess their own work. While self-assessment is a fairly recent concept in the realm of higher education, it aligns well with and can be used for, assessment for the record (summative), as well as assessment for enhancing knowledge (formative), although is most often used in the former (Boud, 1995). Self-assessment has the potential to not only help busy educators in the assessment process, but potentially paves the way for reflective learning, which is also called critical thinking (Mezirow, 1990b). It thereby has the potential to create opportunities for perception transformation. Thus, more than any other assessment practice, self-assessment may be the answer to the question 'what kinds of assessment increase the likelihood, or the process, of TL?'

Not all learners may be ready to engage in self-assessment, no matter how well designed. Grow (1991) categorises learners into four stages of motivational independence in the learning process: dependent, interested, involved and self-directed. Any given classroom may have learners at a variety of stages. As well, learners could be at different stages depending on their familiarities with a given subject. However, Grow says that if a learner has attained self-direction in one area, he or she is more likely to move through the stages more quickly in another area or topic. Educators need to be aware of and account for these variables in a learning environment. Each stage requires different strategies to engage learners in an appropriate way for their level of learning: from coaching at stage one, to motivating at stage two, to facilitating at stage three and finally, to delegating at stage four (p. 135). Grow's model ties in with both TL and assessment. Educators can assess the motivational stage of their learners in their specific contexts and direct learning activities accordingly.

In their analysis of teaching performance, Delandshere & Peterosky (1998) make some interesting and pertinent observations about assessment:

Much more emphasis has been placed on the support of learning and teaching than on the sorting and ranking of individuals. Hence, the field of assessment is now challenged by many conflicting purposes that create interesting problems. (p. 14)

Higher Education is now being asked to deal with these assessment problems in the contexts of placement learning. While the history and assumptions behind assessment protocols are largely beyond the scope of this thesis, it can be surmised that these assessment protocols would most likely need to go beyond easy graded testing. As Delandshere & Peterosky further point out:

Numerical ratings are useful in representing occurrences of simple and discrete behaviours that manifest themselves consistently across individuals, contexts, and time and where the correspondence between the assignment of ratings and the observed behaviours is more obvious. What we are questioning is the use of numerical ratings to represent complex performances (events) and drawing attention to their limitations as placeholders for a series of qualitative judgments that vary across assessment tasks and individuals and to the assumptions that accompany the assignment of numerical ratings. (p. 23)

Learning in placement is complex and as Delandshere and Petrosky (1998) continue to explain, experiential or performance tasks make it necessary to:

...define assessment beyond individual measurement because they capture the individual in action, producing knowledge within contexts that vary over time, across situations, and across individuals. In current educational measurement theory, variation across context is considered a nuisance. (p.19)

The assessment of such complex learning in relation to the development of civic identity skills has been examined in Richardson's (2009) study of citizenship education in English secondary schools. She suggests that:

...in order to change current perspectives of assessment in citizenship education, a shift in pedagogy is required; teachers should be encouraged and supported in reframing their perceptions of assessment from the "test is best" model to the "the most valid in a given situation is best". (p. 476)

Assessment regimes that involve self-assessment and encompass learner input into their criteria, goals, or learning evaluations may take advantage of other important developmental opportunities, such as Cranton's (2006) suggestions that educators engage in their own journeys of reflection and transformation in order to move forward in their own development as well as that of assisting their learners.

1.4 Educators Assessment of Transformative Learning

Overall, little research focuses specifically on how the educator can assess TL in formal education in the course of their educational provisions. The research that addresses the question of how to assess TL and its concomitant phases can help inform formal higher education practice. Although many questions still loom as to how to assess the impact of TL on learners' lives, their other learning and development, there is still a felt sense that striving to locate accurate practice for assessing transformation 'is a good thing'.

Questions arise about the types of assessment that can be employed to usefully evaluate TL, or even help in the process of, or fostering, TL itself. Moon (2004) relays that we use the diverse purposes of assessment according to the nature of the subject matter and intended learning. For this reason, the tools we use to assess TL will be different from

those used in other situations. In certain areas, it may be important to have a protocol or framework to assess transformations, especially when it is intended, as in the case of drunken driving deterrent education, or education for instilling dietary changes in persons with diabetes.

Cumulatively the above studies on the various assessment protocols inform us that it is not unusual to find that many learners report having TL experiences. There seems to be concurrence among scholars that this is desirable. Disciplines such as medicine, social work, technology education, faculty development and leader development have some scholarly research and discussions (Birren, 1996, Baumgartner, 2002, Boyer et al., 2006, Palloff and Pratt, 2009, Kitchenham, 2008, Hart, 1990a). Taylor (2007) however calls for more research on the impact of TL on other learning outcomes. King (2009) vouches for further collaboration in setting the standards and boundaries when assessing the presence of TL, for which she offers the 'Learning Activities Survey' as a base to be adapted to suit the particular needs of a given research project.

Mezirow's initial work on the theory of TL suggests that, given the social and developmental importance of this complex process, the design and delivery of programmes and curricula can be assessed from the transformation perspective (Mezirow and Rose, 1978). Despite over thirty years of research on the subject, the assessment of curricula through a transformative lens has been limited. There are, however, some promising gains over the last few years. Other theories and works of research describe the same or similar assessments and it is in this wider arena that further information can be found. In such quarters we find suggested ways, even in assessment, by which educators can (and do) assist learners through TL or other similar process. For example, works using the terms reflective learning, learning to learn, self and peer assessment may assist here. Many uses of assessment in experiential learning, for example, focus on the enhancement and shaping of learning and double as a means of attaining a mark (Moon, 2004). Surprisingly all the usual components of assessment can be, in different contexts, involved in programmes that encourage TL. However, due to TL's personal development dimensions, self-assessment may be the most applicable type of assessment.

1.5 Academic Staff and Service-learning

The many facets of the academic educator's job include the traditional requirements necessary for the successful development of curricula, courses and programmes, student and programme assessment, researching, writing, presenting and administration. This gives academic staff a daunting job description. While newer student-centred pedagogies are being promoted, they may not always be taken up. As hooks (1994) notes, 'many professors remain unwilling to be involved with any pedagogical practices that emphasise mutual participation between teacher and student because more time and effort are required to do this work' (p. 198). Schön (1987) observes that 'especially in major research universities faculty members think of themselves as freestanding agents of intellectual entrepreneurship' (p. 310) and this does not necessarily support an educational approach that requires focus on the learner. Adding placement learning may overburden staff to such a degree that the additional work is just not possible. For courses with SL components educators can even further be responsible for marketing, coordinating, supervising of placements and assessing experiential, potentially complex learning.

Scholars have also taken the opportunity to perform SL themselves. Gordon (2006) combines SL with action research in her provision of a community course in the UK for people of Afro-Caribbean descent. During the course this group comes together to 'transcend its stigmatised history and move toward achieving its individual and group potential' (p. 226). Gordon, Buchanan et al. (2002), Taylor (2009a) and Erasmus (2007) argue that SL endeavours need to be considered for tenure and promotion because they are important scholarly activities. This would further enable AS to focus on the multiple tasks and enhance the benefits to all involved. Hall (2005) offers an account of Participatory Action Research (PAR) where academic staff and/or students work with the community to assist people to engage with all aspects of research, from developing the focus and questions to using the results. While the research in the community process does not necessarily need the assistance of AS and students, it might be especially helpful as participants may be able to help access the resources of the university.

SL evolves from volunteer community service and seeks to help join non-profit, charity, non-governmental and other organisations to solve problems and ameliorate people's lives. The work performed by students for the organisations and their clients/service-users can

contribute valuable labour towards the missions of organisations. Whether the learners participate by doing art therapy with children in a homeless shelter (Feen-Calligan, 2008) or provide legal assistance to asylum seekers, build houses, or tutor students who are not engaging in school (Rhee and Honeycutt Sigler, 2010), the SL students' exposure to different aspects of real life and contributions to short-term immediate issues and long-term structural solutions, can help educate them for future leadership positions.

For the professions, Hyland (1996) comments that work-based learning may enable professionals to re-affirm the importance of experiential learning and reinforce the centrality of the ethical bases of professional practice.

Through learning activities such as directed writing, small group discussion and class presentations, students reflect on the external experiential service activity. They gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). As Katula and Threnhauser (1999) relate, the important learning task is then on making meaning through reflection on their experiences:

...determining which are valuable, distilling from those the intellectual or moral meaning and integrating those meanings into abstract ideas and theories that can serve as a compass for future problem-solving and decision-making. This cycle of experience and reflection grounds all forms of experience. (p. 240)

This further creates the opportunity for students to develop and practice reflective and critical thinking skills.

From the results of two case studies, Shay (2008) states that SL is an arena requiring assessment of learning for a:

...different set of skills and attitudes. Some of the necessary shifts in both curriculum and pedagogy include: moving from a knowledge-driven curriculum to learning to apply knowledge to real problems; from contained disciplinary areas to multi-disciplinary perspectives; from individual to group products; and from classroom-based learning to learning in unfamiliar, unstructured environments. (p. 235)

According to Shay, traditional forms of assessment do not measure up to the task.

Examples of service work in civil rights situations include learners working with asylum seekers and refugees in a political science course (Dicklitch, 2005), assisting incarcerated and released individuals (Pompa, 2005) and contributing to social justice work based on addressing inequities due to race and class bigotry (Endres and Gould, 2009); (Gordon, 2006); (Boyer et al., 2006). Henry (2005) reports on an optimum SL project that provides students with the opportunity to assess their assumptions about themselves and others.

SL projects involve unique combinations of partners, goals and outcomes. Many varieties of such projects exist in the numerous disciplines, making them difficult to categorise and evaluate. Research into SL attempts to measure and describe the vast variety of potential outcomes and results gained by projects and programmes.

There is much debate about how best to research SL and these debates mirror the general arguments on how best to research education as a whole. SL has multiple participants – including learners, academic staff, community service clients, staff and funders – with a myriad of possible models and outcomes. The scholarly research has been deemed to be based on what Furco and Billig (2002) call a ‘far flung research base that has presented a broad range of research questions, relied on a multitude of theories, utilised a plethora of methodologies, and produced an expansive array of results’ (p. 16). One of the problems is that, although in the US SL is supported by a mandate in some jurisdictions and the Federal ‘Learn and Serve’ programme, it is by and large a grassroots movement (Kraft, 1996). Educators practicing SL have low or non-existent budgets but strong passions for learner development, service and environmental and/or social justice issues (Butin, 2005a). SL can be applied in almost any educational discipline or context, and has many definitions, programme styles, people, variables, goals and outcomes, all of which can make research challenging.

Butin (2010) further argues for SL to become a discipline, as part of the community engagement movement in higher education. The rigours of scholarly research could be applied and tenured staff would be more likely to take the risks associated with SL. The

risks he says, come from SL being engaged in scholarship with ‘expert faculty cobbling together successful practices from the happenstance of specific students in a particular class in a certain locale with available resources (p.148). Like gender studies, Butin argues that disciplining SL would ensure continuity and respect.

According to Furco and Billig (2002) the philosophical underpinning of the researcher influences the kind of questions and research activities that are seen as important. Proponents of applying ‘scientific methodology’ purport that legitimacy for the process can only be claimed when there is ‘establishment of a clear, logical chain of reasoning’ (p. 23). Eyler (2002) argues that since the impact of SL on the learner is not known the call is for strong systematic research with limited variables and control groups to identify and measure outcomes that are difficult to measure on standardised tests. The same can be said of the effects of long-term desired outcomes like citizen behaviour and personal and cognitive development. Other researchers state that the ‘layers of understanding defy prediction’ (Pompa, 2005, p. 175). Kraft (1996) and Butin (2005a) argue that research should be practice-led, as well as designed and conducted to answer educators’ questions rather than succumbing to narrow goals of quantitative data gathering in order to ease the accountability mandates of management. Birge (2005) questions quantifying the unquantifiable, arguing that data collection for measuring outcomes takes away time and resources that could be applied to expanding understanding and helping other faculties implement SL and community partnerships. Furco and Billig (2002) argue that:

because service-learning casts a wide net in terms of definitions, programmatic features, purposes served, and disciplines involved, the establishment of a clear, logical chain of reasoning is especially critical to building the knowledge base for service-learning. (p.23)

These scholars contend that the legitimacy of SL as an educational practice hinges on the validity of its research findings.

Several articles in the literature provide techniques, tools and tips for educators to use in SL programmes. Process and product portfolios by Bass et al.(2004), and journal reflection by Connell and Dymont (2006) are used to help learners integrate their learning. Sandmann et al. (2009) create and discuss a model for programme planning; Comas et al. (2005) and Fairfield (2010) describe large group or class-wide projects, while Henry (2005) and

Pompa (2005) show the impact such projects have on individual students. Buchanan et al. (2002) relate that group discussions appear to be central for learners to process their learning. This aligns with the social-constructivist philosophy, which states that an individual must engage socially through talking and activities to make meaning (Merriam *et al.* (2007).

1.6 Universities

Erasmus (2007) proposes that while universities have a mandate to engage with their communities there is a gap between the rhetoric of a focus on community engagement and the reality of staff members' perceptions in respect of the lack of substantial support for their efforts. Buchanan et al. (2002) argue that SL can be the bridge between the university's mandate to contribute to their community as an important scholarly activity, and that it should be included for consideration for tenure and promotion. Gordon (2006) echoes these views, particularly since her research and programme development shows the important contributions scholars can make to communities.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2000) propose that universities move towards thinking of themselves as collaborating *with* communities rather than working *for* communities. Lewis (2004) further proposes a move from work based on a charity model to a collaboration model that furthers joint efforts for social justice. These scholars are part of the call for universities to widen their own civic responsibility awareness and scope. There are tensions between the numerous roles of universities: to provide a means to narrow disparities of opportunities against the continuation of the status quo and the ruling elites. Many purport SL to be on the side of promoting more equality, but there are degrees of opinions, and these scholars are seen as proponents a more communitarian model of SL.

SL is also part of the larger university-community engagement activities. As Butin (2010) writes:

...service-learning--the linkage of academic work with community-based engagement within a framework of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection--has become an extremely popular form of active pedagogy and civic(s) education in higher education. It is understood as part of the large community engagement

movement in higher education--a set of loosely interrelated practices and philosophies such as civic engagement, community-based research, public scholarship, and participatory action research--that is traditionally viewed as the successful linkage of classroom with communities and theory with practice that improves students' academic achievement, enhances their cultural competence, and fosters a more inclusive and just world. (xiv)

University-community engagement is seen as a movement towards social justice, as Hall (2009) proposes, the potential contributions of universities is vast:

In communities where institutions of higher education exist, the collective resources of these universities and colleges (students, academic staff, facilities, research funding, knowledge, skills, and capacities to facilitate learning) represent our largest accessible, available, and underutilised resource for community change and sustainability. (p. 13)

According to Wade and Demb (2009) some faculties are more community-oriented than others: social work, the health professions and education tend to carry out more community service work than other faculties such as the humanities, biological and physical sciences. While these latter faculties may not use SL as pedagogy he says they are not averse to it, as they see the multiple benefits.

While again, not the focus of this thesis, an area that is available for further exploration is the role universities may play in perpetuating inequalities and how these inequalities, in the university and in larger society, are manifested in modules and disciplines. The tension between the university's role in creating elites and in so doing perpetuating inequalities or working towards eliminating equality through greater social inclusion is a considerable topic. So while individuals, like this researcher, may have an impetus towards inclusivity, equality and participatory democratic citizenship, these values may not be widely held in common in a given university, faculty or department. Of continuing interest is what is learned and how to improve what is learned at universities. This includes civil and personal skills development beyond the disciplinary knowledge acquisition usually attributed to university learning. Brennan et al. (2010) propose that students:

...will be facing societies in which employment and career trajectories will be taking new and complex directions, in which sources of knowledge and learning will become ever more diffuse, and in which issues of social cohesion and citizenship

may become as, if not more, important than the economy and its skill requirements.
(p. 14)

1.7 In Summary

Through learning activities and assessments of classroom reflection, brainstorming and problem-solving exercises based on community service experience, students are more likely to develop their critical thinking skills – skills that are needed in civil society to solve the complex current and future social and environmental problems. If society (and the larger global community) is to ensure its citizens' freedom, human rights, justice, equality, peace, and a sustainable planet, citizens must themselves be part of the solutions to the problems. Educated citizens must know their rights, be able to assert them for both themselves and for those who cannot (including children, the planet, and future generations), and as well be engaged in the political processes to contribute to decisions on social issues. A civil society seeks to ensure social justice and equality and SL projects can help students discover the areas where inequality exists. Where students' perceptions may change from their experience there is the potential for TL to occur. As Mezirow relates (1998), TL is 'about emancipating ourselves from these taken-for-granted assumptions about social being. It involves bringing the sources, nature and consequences of this received wisdom into critical awareness so that appropriate action – including social action – can be taken' (p. 72).

The literature from the five areas of the proposed study, Service-Learning, Transformative Learning, Assessment, Academic Staff and Universities are each components of a part of this study. The review indicates that there is much studied in these areas individually, and to some extent even between one or two of the areas. There has been no inquiry to date of UK academic staff perceptions of assessment in SL-type educational modules and even more specifically in the assessment of TL. Since this opens up a new area, an exploratory study is hereby suggested.

Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities - that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form the basis of perception. Research is exploratory, inductive, and emphasises processes rather than ends. (Merriam, 1998 p. 17)

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This methodology chapter provides an account of the research process and methods used in this study. It includes a statement of the problem, the conceptual framework and the research questions. These questions enable exploration of the ways in which academic staff in four universities in the UK describe the assessment of student learning within placements and the assessment of students' TL experiences. For the most part, the settings for assessment are within programmes, courses or course modules that offer placements in communities, outside the universities, as part of their pedagogy. The discussion explains the research paradigms and research methods that are used to develop and answer the research questions and argues for the appropriateness of the pluralistic approach taken.

2.2 The Problems Explored

The following section describes how the research inquiry developed 'organically' from factors that include the researcher's interests, commitments and restraints. As Janesick (2000) suggests 'Qualitative research design begins with a question or at least an intellectual curiosity, if not a passion for a particular topic' (p. 385). This research begins with a passionate intellectual curiosity.

Academic staff in universities attempt to incorporate the emerging knowledge of their disciplines and of the learning processes with an ever-growing plethora of data published and accessed through digital means. They have particular responsibilities as they are charged with educating students who will be among tomorrow's problem solvers and leaders. An overarching problem area revolves around the question of how educators help their students develop skills and attributes that contribute to a more sustainable and just world, as a UNESCO report notes:

We are all familiar with the priorities that the world must address today: technological change, globalisation, identity, inequality, poverty, conflicts, and signs of ecological distress, to name just a few. In the face of these challenges, there is a wide belief in the contribution of education in favour of social well-being and political stability, as well as productivity and competitiveness. Education is also a basic human right that frees the spirit from the chains of ignorance... In the light of these demands and global challenges, what competencies are important? Which ones contribute to sustainable development, social welfare, cohesion, and justice, as well as to personal well-being? (Rychen and Tiana, 2004, p. 3)

Given this broad, complex and important remit, it is important to understand if and how academic educators translate these goals into practice. Academic staff are the primary facilitators of student learning at university and are key proponents in the process of assisting students to develop competencies and to take on these demands and global challenges. While the above quote envisions universities playing a role in 'productivity and competitiveness' these goals can be in contradiction to goals for inclusivity, cooperation, social welfare and justice until the economic and social link is explicitly acknowledged.

Professional knowledge and practice is a large and complex area to explore: 'One of the fundamental issues facing researchers is the challenge of understanding the nature of the professional knowledge guiding practice' (Paul and Marfo (2001, p. 537). These issues hold opportunities to contribute to understanding and perhaps to contribute to enhancing practice as well. Stake (2005) echoes that issues can be a basis for research: 'Issues are relevant topics or areas of concern...include topics not only of main research questions, but of potential or latent research questions as well' (p. 24).

Questions then arise: how do academics use their work with students to include these aims as well as their discipline subject matters? What kinds of higher educational academic activities foster the kinds of learning experience that will help students attain these competencies? As these issues emerge, it becomes clear that a step back may be needed to explore just what is going on in the delivery of higher education, especially in the areas where one thinks one might find the potential for students to be developing awareness of the larger issues and challenges. It seems that if the awareness is being developed, students may need to be learning a global and sustainable perspective. That is to say, students who have not had exposure to social justice issues may be exposed to them through their learning at university. Through this exposure they may change their perceptions of how the world works, and how it could work better for more people and they may learn of their

own potential roles in promoting social justice. Indeed, they may have transformational learning experiences as described by TLT (Mezirow, 1994).

2.3 The Research Questions: Narrowing Down to the Main Questions

Like all research, central to this project are a series of questions: questions that ignite the process, ones that focus it, questions that are asked of the participants, questions that emerge while conducting the fieldwork, questions that are asked about the accumulating data and still more that emerged post-analysis. This section aims to clarify the development of the research questions.

With regards to academic staff preparing students, and introducing them to issues of social justice, the questions centre on what academic staff (AS) see happening with students? Do AS know about TL? Do they know about TLT? Are they aware of students having transformational learning experiences? Are they fostering or supporting TL? If AS know about TL, are they assessing it in students? If they are assessing, then by what process? This, in turn, elicits the question: What do academic staff know of TLT? How do academics see TL in their modules and how did they react to being exposed to the theory in the interview? How do they report assessing for TL? Do university contexts have any bearing on the provision of SL or upon the ASP's assessment of TL?

Assessment is a key activity for the university, and of immense importance for students and therefore serves as a focal point for the inquiry. It is also a key process in the TL experience as people assess their perceptions.

2.4 Service and Placement Learning

A final decision-making stage is to narrow down to a type of educational activity within the universities that would provide the opportunity to explore the issues and questions. An academic learning environment that is more complex than the traditional classroom would perhaps yield the best opportunities for a study of this nature. The literature presents a variety of models for experiential learning (Fenwick, 2003), including practice learning which can occur in environments both inside and outside the university. As students

venture outside the traditional classroom into practice and placement learning, these environments could provide a context where TL is a strong possibility. One form of placement learning is SL, which has many models and offers particular advantages in that many of the placement locations would be working on some degree of assistance to people who may be facing disadvantages. The contexts of SL offer rich and complex environments for learning. The initial question this research seeks to answer: how do academic staff assess students' TL in SL modules in HE in the UK?

2.5 Four Universities

While a study involving academics in one UK university might provide some insights, it would not tell us if their experience is a particularity of that university, therefore the inquiry is conducted at four universities to include a broader view, as the phenomenon under study is quite narrow. Four universities are chosen, as this researcher has the resources to include four location visits, and these are considered to offer a variety that could form a basis for comparison and provide a balance of enough similarities and differences to allow potentially valuable insight into the research questions. Universities are institutions and, as Cummings (1999) points out 'Institutions are comprised of complex norms and procedures oriented toward realising a particular goal or ideal, and they motivate behaviour toward these goals or ideals' (p. 413). For the sake of comparison, two dimensions are chosen: 1) difference in universities according to their focus: whether they are research-intensive or teaching-intensive and 2) their locations in either England or Scotland.

The demarcation of the teaching and research focus of the university selection questions ASP perceptions of their educational provision with regards to TL and TLT. According to Kember and Gow (1992):

While 'teaching-intensive' universities in the UK have made significant progress in implementing institutional learning and teaching strategies, progress has been much less rapid, extensive or securely embedded in research-intensive institutions where the collegial organisational culture mitigates against bureaucratic and corporate approaches to management. (p. 416)

The original stated intention is to examine at least three programmes in each university, for a total of twelve programmes which would in turn provide information in the following areas: type of programme, type of assessments, supervision of the programme, goals of the educators and the programme, which university goals the programmes endeavour to meet, how grading is awarded for the SL and or reported on the SL activities, assignment and assessment strategies.

Raffe et al. (1999b) point out that comparison studies with the four UK countries, which they call international comparisons, are of value:

Our final argument for home international comparisons is that they may be easier or cheaper to conduct. A common language, cultural affinities, a common administrative environment, and geographical proximity facilitate them. The costs of travel and communication are lower. (p. 22)

To conduct in-person interviews with AS in their own environments there are the pragmatic issues of accessibility and the restrictions involved in limited resources. There are, as a result, four universities for this study; enough to be able to make comparisons, but not too many so as to afford in-person visits to all.

To try to limit some of the variables the decision is made to choose sites of similar size and history. Table 2-1 shows the similarities of the universities and some of their differences. The information in the table is from the 2010/2011 academic year. To protect the anonymity of the participants, names and number of staff and students have been omitted and the totals have been rounded. Four universities of similar size and experience are chosen. The criteria for selecting these universities are their accessibility, similar size and length of time in operation. The following table shows the four universities and their pertinent attributes.

Table 2-1: Overview of the Four UK Universities				
University Type Pseudonym	England Research EnRes	Scottish Research ScRes	England Teaching EnTau	Scottish Teaching ScTau
Years in Operation (Approx.)	Between 110 to 500			
Number of Students (Approx.)	Between 17,000 and 31,000			
Ratio of Students to Faculty & Staff	5	5	5	5
Annual Income	Between £ 160 M and £ 421 M			
Number of ASP in this study	5	7	9	8
Source: Websites of the four Universities and their towns. (Accessed November, 2011) and (HESA, 2013)				

For the teaching universities, the dates are taken from their original or first educational mandates. Some schools began independently and amalgamated over the years to eventually merge with or form a university.

The original study is designed to compare the presence or non-presence of assessment of TL at research-intensive and teaching-intensive universities. The research-intensive universities are represented by two from the Russell Group: ‘the term “Russell Group” is a group of twenty universities with the best research reputation in the country and who receive a large proportion of the government's research funding’ (Armstrong, 2008). The teaching-intensive designation is represented by two ‘post-92’ universities, their status as universities having been awarded in 1992. The reference is due to the fact that ‘in 1992 a whole group of institutions were given the name “university”. These post-1992 universities are former polytechnics or colleges of higher education’ (*ibid*). This dimension is chosen due to the universities’ inherent differences of missions:

At two extremes of a spectrum an elite, as represented by the Russell Group of universities, are increasingly focusing a mission led by research and internationalisation while others, largely from the former polytechnic sector, see their market as being local and regional with teaching at the fore. (Brennan et al., 2010, p. 34)

For comparison, there are hypothetical reasons one would have more academic staff knowledgeable of TLT in research-intensive universities: they may tend to be more familiar with theory. However, academic staff from the teaching-intensive universities might become familiar because of their professional focus on student learning.

The UK is comprised of four educational systems: Scottish, English, Welsh and Northern Irish. Scottish Universities do not necessarily represent the UK, although the reverse is commonly true: ‘Most descriptions of UK education and training for international audiences focus on England’ (Raffe et al., 1999 p.10). Therefore, to expand the range of the study, England is chosen as well as Scotland to align with current UK descriptions. This study considers four universities: two in Scotland and two in England, with a research-intensive and a teaching-intensive institution selected in each jurisdiction. Four universities are considered sufficient to provide enough similarities and differentiation to answer the research questions with some assurance.

The selection allows for two tentative hypotheses based on university missions and location:

1. That there might be a distinct Scottish predisposition to SL, as compared that of England, and
2. That teaching-intensive universities may have staff with a more developmental view of student learning which might include TL in the assessment protocols.

2.6 Selecting Academic Staff for Participation

This study has five elements that intersect to form the research questions. These areas are Transformative Learning, Service-learning, Assessment, Academic Staff and Universities.

These areas form the frameworks of this thesis. The selection for participants is quite narrowly focused on academic staff who are involved in teaching and assessing students and whose modules include some placement experience, preferably a community placement. The research focuses on the academic staff working in programmes that offer external placement learning opportunities for university credit. This therefore excludes voluntary activities that the universities provide as they are not always credentialed or engage an academic educator. Within these selected boundaries, the ASPs teach in a variety of modules where different types of placements and credits are offered.

The participants therefore comprise a purposeful sample, chosen because they work in, or have knowledge of, modules with placements. These academic staff participants are also partly self-selecting in that an invitation is sent via email and they can respond or not.

Identifying and inviting academic staff to participate is an important procedure. To find answers to the questions, academic staff are sought who are involved in first SL and then placement learning. Several methods to identify and request participation are employed: introductions by an academic supervisor and subsequent contact people and by searching the university websites. Once academic the staff are identified, letters of invitation that include the requisite University of Glasgow ethical approval are made.

At each university, there are different access points and different procedures to obtain permissions and to identify and invite potential participants. For the two English universities a personal introduction to a contact person paves the way. This person either provides appointments with staff, or in the other case, electronically sends out the research letter of invitation and their endorsement to a select group of academic staff.

The first point of contact at the English research-intensive university (EnRes) is a staff member involved in volunteerism and educational studies who provides an introduction via email to another staff member. While these first two contacts are not administrators, they relate that no other permissions are needed as they have authority to allow for the conduct of this research. This second staff person requests that all interviews be set up through her; she will make all the introductions and arrangements. She sets up interviews with staff in

career services and educational development for herself and two other academic staff participants. While these initial three interviews provided copious information on the scope of placement learning in this context, two of these ASPs do not have current direct responsibilities for assessing student learning. This person relates that she has been trying to contact several more people to no avail. She eventually grants permission to contact other staff. Two more staff, specifically involved in the coordinating and assessing placement learning, are thereby contacted and interviewed (although a repeat visit to the university is necessary). The other potential participants the contact person and this researcher try to access either decline or do not respond to the requests.

The opportunity to attend two somewhat relevant sessions at EnRes is also taken. The first is a training session for undergraduates preparing for sociology placements in a community adult literacy programme. The career coordinator who provides the session does not have other teaching or assessment responsibilities and no one who supervises or assesses these participants is accessible. The other session is a regional meeting of an organisation that assists universities to accredit experiential learning. While efforts are made throughout the rest of the interview period (November 2010 to June 2011) to access more participants they are unsuccessful, and this university remains the one that provides the fewest participants. Although the main contact for this university is keen to include staff members teaching the course from the orientation session in sociology it turns out the staff members are no longer at university. Other academic staff are said to be too busy as the university is under a very involved restructuring process.

For the EnTau an introduction to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs is made through a supervisor and a subsequent referral to the Dean of Students. This Dean sends out an email of introduction, with letters of invitation to 16 academic staff, of which nine respond and nine interviews are set up. Having this introduction and personal request produces the strongest response from staff for this study.

For both Scottish universities the Deputy Principal and the Head of Research for ScTau and Head of Research Ethics for ScRes are the contacts provided by one of the academic supervisors. Following a review of the letters of invitation and the University of Glasgow ethical approval, permissions are granted to pursue the research. Unfortunately, these do

not come with any further introductions or recommendations of academic staff to interview. For these two institutions, key terms (service-learning, experiential learning, work based and practice learning, internship, co-operative education, practicum and volunteer) are entered in the search boxes at the opening page of the universities' web sites. The terms are different names for placement learning in the UK, US and Canada. Potential participants are found through reading their teaching and research interests. Additionally, experience from the first two universities in England provides a basis for participant selection and therefore AS in the medical, legal, social work, education, business and law faculties are contacted. One university's law faculty website reveals that 80 per cent have interests in social justice issues, indicating that there may be opportunity for staff to assess TL.

Three of the universities accept the University of Glasgow's ethical review; one university has their own board review and approve it. Two of the universities identify the academic staff and send a letter of introduction by email, for the other letters are sent directly to academics identified from searching the universities' websites.

2.7 Methodological Considerations

This research seems to defy easy methodological description. This is due in part to the inquiry design that is informed by the five different academic areas in education (ASPs, university mandates, TL, assessment, SL and placement) and in part due to the complex but targeted nature of the questions themselves. Another contributing factor to the complexity is the changes in the lines of inquiry due to the emerging information as the research progresses.

This section discusses the process and the methodological multi or pluralistic use of research protocols. While the research fits within certain methodological categories, it also sits outside of them. In this way, it aligns with the bicolour idea. As Coyle (2010) relates, 'The bicolour is viewed as actively combining available resources, theoretical and philosophical understandings as well as methods of inquiry in new ways to illuminate the complexity of the research focus' (p. 81). This research, with its particularities and patchwork approach, creates a satisfactory unified and useful assembly to both advance research and inform practice. This also aligns with methodological pluralism.

Keating and della Porta (2010) describe how methodological pluralism allows researchers to use the best methods and traverse through paradigms and methodologies and choose methods, not for their allegiance to a particular dogmatic tradition, but for the fulfilment of the inquiry:

There are five levels in social inquiry: ontology; epistemology; approaches; methodology; and methods, which we see as means of gathering information. There is no determinate relationship such that one school will consistently choose the same options all the way down. We can cross between what are often seen as competing world views at several of these levels. Natural sciences have not arrived at a unified field theory and there is no reason why social sciences have to do so. (p. 111)

The following section discusses the process of this research, beginning with what is often referred to as the paradigms, moving towards a primarily interpretive and qualitative approach, with a variety of methodologies used from the different strategies. The subsequent section further describes the methods used for this inquiry.

Merriam (2009b) proposes to organise the paradigms, epistemological orientations or perspectives into four categories: 1) Positivist / Post-positivist, 2) Interpretive / Constructivist, 3) Critical and 4) Postmodernist / Poststructuralist, each with its own purpose, types of research and view of reality. However, she too suggests that these are not discrete categories, and that research could intersect in various ways. She states that the purpose of interpretive / constructivist research is ‘to describe, understand and interpret’ (p. 12), which therefore categorises this project as largely interpretive. This study does however cross over into the positivist paradigm as it contains a small experiment within the interviews: one question is not asked of the ASPs directly, so in a way there is an experiment to see if they will bring up the topic themselves, and how they react after the TLT is presented to them. This occurs within all 29 of the ASPs, whereas other lines of inquiry are somewhat different for each ASP.

This study also reflects elements from the critical perspective. As Merriam (2009b) states:

... critical research has become a broad term that covers a number of orientations to research, all of which seek to not just understand what is going on, but also to critique the way things are in the hopes of bringing about a more just society. (p.23)

Different aspects of the critical perspective are in this study. Firstly, TLT has at its basis an aim to assist people ‘to critique and challenge, to transform and empower’ (p.10) and secondly so do aspects of SL. These are discussed in the chapters dealing with these topics. The third element is the interplay of higher education and TL that will assist in the ‘social critique in order to raise consciousness and empower people to bring about change’ (p.23). The fourth element of this type of research, one that indicates its relationship with the critical paradigm, is that it encompasses crucial elements of PAR (Hall 2005). As part of the exploration, while it might be considered ‘participatory light’, this research uses the term ‘participants’ for the interviewees / subjects / respondents, and asks the ASPs for their input and views of the interview and of the research. Furthermore, the study is influenced by a personal foundation in feminist critical philosophy and methodologies. And lastly, the potential of this research to use the information to assist the participants and other academic staff in their work provides another element of PAR.

This research also contains some elements from the postmodernist paradigm in alignment with Merriam’s definition:

Postmodernists celebrate diversity among people, ideas, and institutions. By accepting the diversity and plurality of the world, no one element is privileged or more powerful than another is. Congruent with this perspective, postmodern research is highly experimental, playful, and creative, and no two postmodern studies look alike. (p. 10)

This bricolage of research processes does indeed seem experimental and creative, and arguably looks like no other.

Overall, however, for the most part this research fits into the definitions of a qualitative naturalistic interpretive study. As in other studies, it resonates with Merriam’s (1998) statement that:

In the field of education, generic qualitative studies are among the most common forms of qualitative research. They characteristically draw from concepts, models, and theories in educational, developmental, or cognitive psychology, or from sociology, which provide the frameworks for the studies. Analysis of data uses concepts from the theoretical framework and generally, results in identification of

recurring patterns, categories, or factors that cut through the data and help to further delineate the theoretical frame. (p. 17)

This research uses the ASPs' reported thoughts and perceptions to understand better the process of assessing TL in SL. It is exploratory and its focus is on the subjective reports of the ASPs.

2.8 Interpretive and Qualitative Dimensions

Merriam (1998) uses the terms 'interpretive / constructivist' and 'qualitative' interchangeably and for the purpose of this thesis this interpretation is adopted and this research is categorised as largely qualitative: the research is interested in the insider's perspectives; the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis; there is, as usual, field work involved; and the process uses an inductive strategy (p. 17).

Within this interpretive epistemological paradigm, Merriam (2009b) lists naturalistic / qualitative as one of the research types along with phenomenological, ethnographic, hermeneutic and grounded theory, and that 'qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed...' (p. 13). While this research includes some discussion on the participants' constructed meanings, the inquiry is more interested in *how* different ASPs in different universities and disciplines yet in similar programme types (placement learning) report their activities, which are mostly in assessing, and of that portion, mostly in assessing TL. The emphasis is not on how ASPs construct their meanings, but in how they report *using* the constructed meaning. It is research focused on reported practice.

Merriam (2009b) further breaks down the interpretive category into research strategies:

Given the variety of qualitative research strategies, I have chosen to present six of the commonly used approaches to doing qualitative research ... basic qualitative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, and critical qualitative research. (p. 22)

While many scholarly discussions focus on qualitative versus quantitative methods, Mezirow (1996b) discuss the plurality of qualitative research: '...qualitative research is a

plural domain expressing points of contrast not only between so called qualitative and quantitative method but also between qualitative methods themselves' (p. 422).

The categories defined by Merriam shown above are different from those presented by other scholars. For example, Creswell (2008) presents five approaches to qualitative study: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) identify six research strategies: case study, ethnography, grounded theory, life and narrative approaches, participatory research and clinical research. These scholars are brought into the discussion to emphasise that organising and categorising research is not an agreed-upon linear process, nor is it categorised easily; rather different scholars have adapted it. Boundaries are often crossed and this research is no exception.

This discussion shows how this study uses elements of qualitative / naturalistic research strategies to answer the study's research questions, thus continuing the pluralistic approach, and while it uses elements of the five approaches, it fits mostly as a basic qualitative study. As Merriam (2009b) explains, basic qualitative research provides rich description on the contexts, participants and activities of interest, using quotes and excerpts. The research process also needs to be dynamic, and as she elucidates, it needs to be:

... emergent and flexible and respond to changing conditions of the study in progress. In basic qualitative research, the analysis of the data involves recurring patterns of themes supported by the data from which they are derived. (p.13)

The original notion of this research as interested in the university as a culture, the spheres the ASP inhabit and their influence and SL evolve during the course of the interviews. Table 2-2 shows Merriam's definitions of qualitative research and how this research associates with it.

Table 2-2: Aspects of Qualitative Research Applied to This Study		
Points	Qualitative research	This research
Goal of investigation	Understanding, description, discovery, meaning, hypothesis-generating	Better understanding of ASPs assessment of TL
Design characteristics	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Changed 1) placement learning rather than service-learning, 2) issues related to ASPs' working conditions
Sample	Small, non-random, purposeful, theoretical	ASPs invited to participate based on their involvement of assessment of placement learning. 29 agree to be interviewed.
Data collection	Researcher as primary instrument, interviews, observations, documents	Researcher as primary instrument; interviews are main source of data.
Mode of analysis	Inductive (by researcher)	Patterns and themes emerge
Findings	Comprehensive, holistic, expansive, richly descriptive	Use of ASP voices for description
Table adapted from Merriam (1998, p. 9)		

Merriam (2009b) states that in a basic qualitative study one seeks to understand the experience of those studied, and to some degree this study seeks to achieve this objective. However, it also veers away from being a basic qualitative study into the category of a phenomenological study, as it seeks 'understanding about the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon' (p. 23). Likewise, 'to get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of an experience, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection' (p.25). Like a phenomenological study, this research primarily uses interviews to collect the data. The discussion later from Stake (2005) in this chapter further expands on the idea of the phenomenological slant on part of this research.

One of the frameworks, TLT, originally developed through a grounded theory methodology (Mezirow, 1978), and this research contributes to that theory.

This research does not fall into the critical qualitative research domain per se. The focus is on practices to assist in finding a way forward, and not so much on the ways in which oppression occurs. Further, the focus of the research is to try to contribute to a part of the solution, rather than focusing so much on pointing out what is wrong. That being said, much of the framework and activities have critical dimensions to them. The basic premise is that it is important for students to become aware of social and environmental injustices. They may encounter injustices through their engagement with SL-type placements where their work is being assessed by AS, and if it does not fit with their beliefs they may have TL experiences. The ASP may foster, observe and/or assess this process in their students.

Narrative interpretation and analysis are used in several ways in this study. The mores of narrative analysis are applied to this research in that, as stated by Polkinghorne (2007):

... narrative research, as well as conventional research, most often involves two performances: (a) the collection of evidence and (b) the analysis or interpretation of the evidence. Narrative researchers frequently move between these two performances choosing further sources of evidence based on needs derived from interpretations of the already gathered evidence. (p. 479)

In this vein, the literature is revisited repeatedly: being first explored to focus the study and then explored again while the interviews are being conducted, analysed, interpreted and written about.

This project also draws out themes and story plots and seeks to link those to the university and community environments, as Polkinghorne (*ibid.*) suggests:

In some cases, narrative interpretation focuses on the relationships internal to a storied text by drawing out its themes and identifying the type of plot the story exemplifies; in other cases, it focuses on social and cultural environment that shaped the story's life events and the meaning attached to them... Where interpretation in conventional research offers an explanation of the implications of the results of its statistical analyses, narrative interpretation often develops implications by comparing

and contrasting assembled stories with one another or with other forms of social science literature. (p. 483)

Additionally, this research's link to narrative inquiry follows a definition that indicates the primacy of the interviews as the data as narrative: 'Research data can be categorised into three basic forms: short answer, numerical, and narrative' (1995, p. 6). This study is categorically in the latter whereby the interviews contain narratives relayed by the ASPs about their perspectives, their practices and their students. As well, the discussion in this chapter on validity includes Polkinghorne's arguments for narrative analysis. The final linkage is in the manner that this thesis provides a narrative of the research, which, while being obvious, needs to be not overlooked.

The initial design of this study centres on examining the four universities as the cases for a multiple case study and to further compare and contrast the participants' answers to analyse whether the research-intensive institutes differ from the teaching-intensive institutes. Similarly, analysis comparing the reported pedagogies at universities in Scotland and England would see if that dimension would elicit differences. The focus however evolves to include more discoveries as themes emerge from the ASP.

Mouton and H.C. Marais (1990) state that the goal of the exploratory study is 'the exploration of a relatively unknown research area...to gain insight and comprehension rather than the collection of accurate and replicable data' (p. 43). This study is exploratory, as its focus is on a topic on which little is known. There is potential for further studies to replicate the discoveries here, or to make accurate accounts of the ASPs' statements and perceptions.

2.9 Case Study Parameters, Exploration of a Field and Developing Question

The following section shows how this research fits definitions of a case study and further as a multiple case study. Definitions by additional scholars such as Yin (2002), Stake (1995), Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Creswell (2009) are used to describing how this research is a multiple case study.

Originally, this research is conceptualised to be a straightforward multi-case study of four UK universities to understand TL in SL modules. The data gathered would be from the ASP interviews with documentation from course hand-outs, reports, promotional materials and websites, with an emphasis on their universities with each university being a case: Scotland or England and the orientation of their focus on teaching or research. The four universities are regarded as the units of analysis. The study design however, is expanded in order to account for emerging information in regards to programme models, discipline affiliations, regulatory considerations and concerns brought up by the ASPs during the interviews. Due to the course of the research, and sanctioned by the fact that interpretive research needs to be flexible and consider the emerging themes, the discussion and boundaries of the case study model expand and change, as explained further in this chapter.

Merriam (1998) states that the qualitative case study could be characterised as particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. ‘Particularistic’ for her means a focus on a particular situation, event, programme, or phenomenon. This study is particularistic in that a very particular process, the assessment of TL, is explored in the particular context of UK university SL modules through the experiences of the ASPs. Case studies ‘descriptively provide a detailed account and can be exploratory’ (p. 28). These descriptions come before hypothesising or theorising. Since there are few prior explorations into this topic, descriptions are necessary to investigate the field. This study is also heuristic in that the research uses the experiences reported by the ASPs to answer the research questions and additionally this research seeks to understand and to contribute the best practice HE.

Again accordingly, ‘A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme and institution, a person, a process or a social unit’ (Merriam, 2009b, p. 12). This inquiry seeks to understand the perspectives, experiences and practices of the ASPs on a specific topic in a bounded programme model and thus fits into this category. This study also fits into Merriam’s definition as it explores a particular process: the process of assessing TL in SL. This concurs with Thomas’ (2011) definition of the case study, as he states:

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena

that provides an analytical frame—an object—within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. (p. 23)

This further echoes what Stake (2005) says: ‘at the outset of such a multi-case study, the phenomenon is identified. The cases are opportunities to study it’ (Stake 2005, p. 24).

As with all case studies, this one also required boundaries. Merriam (1998) provides a means to determine these boundaries:

One technique for assessing the boundedness of the topic is to ask how finite the data collection would be, that is, whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a finite amount of time for observations. If there is no end, actually or theoretically, to the number of people who could be interviewed or to observations that could be conducted, then the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case. (p. 27)

The boundaries of these case studies are: a) the four UK universities where the academic staff participants work; b) the research focus on TL and TLT; c) the practices of Assessment and; d) SL as a credentialed programme activity.

The boundaries of this study are limited to ASPs who are involved with teaching and assessing in placement SL. While the pool of candidates may be quite large, it is theoretically limited. A further limitation in this study would be geographical: the subjects are within the UK, with further refinement to Scotland and England and further to the four universities, which form the basis of the context. An additional confirmation is Stake’s (2005) definition: ‘Qualitative case study is developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations’ (p. 3), as the ASPs are interviewed about their current practical experiences on the bounded topic.

This study is in accord with the three conditions Yin (2008) puts forth for using a case study method: 1) the research questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’, 2) the ‘focus on contemporary events’ and 3) the ‘lack of control over behavioural events’ (p. 8). The following Table 2-3 shows Yin’s definitions in conjunction with this study.

Table 2-3: Case Study Attributes Met by Yin's definition			
Yin's Definition	The research questions of 'how' and 'why'	The focus on contemporary events	Lack of control over behavioural events
This study	How do ASPs assess for TL in SL?	Majority of ASPs currently assessing placement modules	Not an experiment or manipulation of events under study

The research focuses on how the ASPs understand and use TLT and assessment in the arena of a SL placement. This study focuses on contemporary events of the ASPs' current roles as educators, although some ASPs discuss courses that are being developed as well as some that had been delivered in the past. However, it is largely a study of a contemporary practice or process and the ASPs are employed by universities at the time of the interviews. As for control over events, this investigation did not set up an experiment or control behavioural events except by using pre-designated question schedules that somewhat followed semi-structured interviews; then there was the issue of not including the TL focus in the letters of invitation to participants or at the onset of the interviews.

Case study research is adopted for this study in education because there are multiple variables: programme models, disciplines, orientations, stakeholders, as well as multiple issues and potential research protocols. The statement 'case study research in education seeks to understand specific issues and problems of practice' (Merriam 1988, p. 23) fits with the complexity of this study. This study uses case study as a research model and more specifically a multi-case study design is established. The study has two levels of cases: the four universities and then ASPs as units of analysis.

As stated earlier, the research begins with a focus on the universities but moves to include the disciplines, programmes and the ASPs. Whether the focus is on the features of the universities, or on the ASPs, or on a certain process, it is useful to formulate the study as a multiple case study. Stake's discussion is of value to explain the nature of this study:

Whether leaning toward standardization or diversity, almost every educational or social service programme will be far from uniform across its different situations. To understand complex programmes, it is often useful to look carefully at persons and operations at several locations. (Stake 2005, p. v)

The focus on the process of assessment and recognising TL in the context of placements is better understood by assembling multiple ASP views, as (Stake 2005) describes: ‘the official interest is in the collection of these cases or in the phenomenon exhibited in those cases’ (p. vi).

Stake (2005) proposes that a multiple case study has many facets with a central entity and further named this entity a ‘quintain’: ‘I am going to call the whole - the entity having cases or examples - a “quintain”...the quintain is something that we want to understand more thoroughly and we choose to study it through its cases, by means of a multiple case study’. He further states:

Our readers need to be given the opportunity to know how the study of issues that cut across cases contributes to understanding the quintain... A quintain (pronounced kwin’ton) is an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied - a target, but not a bull’s eye’. (2005, p. 9)

Over the course of the research, the focus of this quintain did not change from assessment of TL, but the emphasis in the discussion expands for SL to placement learning (discussion follows) and on to discuss the emergent themes. An additional layer is the research question regarding the ASPs’ assessment of TL and their understanding of TLT, which illuminates the quintain of assessing TL in SL.

The research questions start with the assumption that TL occurs and is potentially occurring in SL placements that AS would assess the process. The questions are centred on how they assess learning and more specifically how they assess TL in the contexts of SL modules in universities. However, so many models of programmes and many forms and opinions of assessment of interest emerge which add to the central questions. This study kept with Stake’s (2005) definition that:

Multicase research starts with the quintain. To understand it better, we study some of its single cases-its sites or manifestations. However, it is the quintain we seek to

understand. We study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better. (p. 6)

In this investigation, many facets are revealed in connections with the central question, some anticipated, some not. So while there are central research questions, multiple manifestations of the phenomenon (multiple cases) are explored to understand it. ‘A multi-case study is organized around at least one research question. It asks what is most important for understanding the quintain’ (Stake 2005, p. 9).

As Stake (2005) states, ‘the study of situations reveals experiential knowledge, which is important to understanding the quintain’ (p. 12) and the ‘more the study is a qualitative study, the more emphasis will be placed on the experience of people in the programme or with the phenomenon’ (p. 27). This study examines the experiences relayed by the ASPs during the interviews and it seeks to gain understanding of their processes and the themes that emerge. The stated experiences of the ASPs and the analysis of these experiences contribute to the knowledge of the quintain under study. The 29 different ASPs show how the phenomenon appears in different contexts. Most of the ASPs represent different models in different disciplines and universities, and there are a few ASPs from the same discipline, programme, and modules.

2.10 Ethical Considerations, Influences and Procedures

There are three areas for ethical consideration involved in this study. First is the regulatory ethics procedure required by the University of Glasgow; second is a personal sense of responsibility and professionalism; and third is the consideration of ethics in the practice of teaching and assessing for TL.

The issue of anonymity greatly influences this study. The University’s ethical review process requires protection for the Academic Staff Participants’ anonymity. This is written in the letters of invitation to participate in the study and the ASPs are therefore referred to by pseudonyms. An impact of these regulatory ethics contributes to the limitations of the study. There is no way to protect the anonymity of the participants without keeping the universities themselves anonymous. As described earlier, the universities have pseudonyms and are therefore referred to as EnTau (English teaching-intensive), ScTau

(Scottish teaching-intensive), EnRes (English research-intensive) and ScRes (Scottish research-intensive). If the universities themselves are revealed, it would be far too easy to trace the participants back through their disciplines and courses. Moreover, even here, because a reader may have been interviewed and be able to determine their own university and could identify the other ASPs, precautions are made to not tie the respondents directly back to the universities, thereby limiting some of the potential analysis. While this has some ramifications on the presentation of the analysis, the study evolves from the original quest for comparisons and still contributes new understandings.

Another issue for consideration is the 'hidden research question'. Initially the participants are not informed of the focus on TL assessment: the study is presented to them as investigating 'Academic Assessment in Service and Placement Learning'. This is to enable uniformity in the presentation to the participants of the theory, rather than allowing the potential for the ASP to look up the theory prior to their interview. This is an attempt at some control over the answers, thereby being able to answer the research question a little more evenly. Using this procedure is suggested by Drever (1995): 'as a rule you would not reveal the main question. You want the interview to unfold naturally and you do not want them to read up, talk to others and prepare answers in advance' (p. 41).

Another aspect of ethics is the considerations of the responsibilities involved in working with people (students) who are undergoing TL Experiences. The process of TL is a very personal process and could cause some individuals to feel vulnerable at certain stages.

2.11 The Pilot Study in Three Phases

There are three endeavours that comprise the pilot phase of this study. The first is an interview with an academic staff member at a university in the United States with extensive experience with SL in an adult education graduate programme. The second activity is a recorded interview that follows the preliminary schedule with two fellow PhD students. The third is a 'Conversation Café' session at the 2010 Conference on Transformative Learning (Bermuda).

During the interview with the US academic, she relates how she develops SL components for her courses. She reports she encounters many difficulties whereby she has to adapt her expectations of what the students do. For example, when the service activities are dependent on community members who do not respond or carry out their agreed upon activities, there are repercussions for the students. A multi-pronged assessment protocol is therefore employed whereby the processes, as well as the products, are graded. This interview further informs me that it is very difficult to explain ‘assessing transformative learning’. For the next step in the piloting phase, I would need to explain TLT and what would be considered a TL Experience.

For the second pilot study activity, an interview schedule of questions is developed and followed with two fellow Post Graduate Researchers from the Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow. They are given an oral overview of TLT with examples. One of these pilot participants, with an adult teaching background, recounts a story of a student that fits with the topic: it sounds like the student may have undergone a TL experience. We follow up the more formal practice interview with a discussion whereby they had found the interview difficult, as they did not really know TLT. When the suggestion of a hand-out with a summary of the theory is made, they reply that indeed, it would be very helpful to have an explanation sheet. The Transformative Learning Theory Information Sheet (Appendix B) for the interviews is therefore developed. The Interview Questions (Appendix A) are also further developed, and are further discussed in the next section.

Listening to the recorded pilot interview reveals that there is much background noise when interviewing in a café. From there the decision is made to interview participants in quieter places such as offices. This decision is then fortified; as the AS do some of their work in offices and therefore conducting the interviews there would be closer to their working habitat.

Another pilot exercise is conducted at a ‘Conversation Café’ at the Transformative Learning Conference (Goulet, 2009). Six participant attendees, all of whom have some knowledge of the theory, are asked ‘Is it possible to understand TL without ever having had a TL experience?’ Some of the participants responded that they think one would have to have personal experience with the process to recognise when another person is

experiencing one. Other participants respond that one could indeed understand that other people have ‘deep, life-changing learning’ experiences without having had one. Another participant wonders how anyone alive could never have a TL experience. Since no answer is obtained this line of inquiry is not pursued.

2.12 The Semi-structured Interviews and the Participants

According to Yin (2002), ‘A good case study investigator should be able to ask good questions... and interpret the answers’ (p.67). The questions for this research are developed through a process which includes supervisory review, three pilot exercises and on-going refinement, as Janesick (1998) states: ‘Qualitative researchers formulate questions to guide their studies, but those questions are under constant revision and are continually updated’ (p.40). Interviews are chosen as the method, as surveys would not easily allow for the free flow of ideas that the conversational style of an interview provides. Focus groups might detract from the personal focus of the study and the ability to determine the individual participant’s perspective. Semi-structured interviews are used with the ASPs. Drever (1995 p.13) says that the ‘main characteristics of a semi-structured interview are:

- it is a formal encounter on an agreed subject and “on the record”,
- the main questions set by the interviewer create the overall structure,
- prompts and probes fill the structure: prompts by encouraging broad coverage, probes by exploring answers in depth,
- there can be a mixture of closed and open questions,
- the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom: what to talk about, how much to say, how to express it,
- the interviewer can assert control when necessary.’ (p. 13)

Similar questions are asked at each interview roughly following a schedule (Appendix A) and a review process after the interviews influences successive ones. ASPs mostly come from different disciplines, backgrounds and responsibilities and therefore the perspective and information gathered from each ASP is different. The variety of the programmes and modules is quite remarkable. Modules are varied in terms of numbers of credits as well as in terms of assignments, learning activities and assessment protocols. Rust et al. (1999)

would categorise this study as a field research study by interview with ‘face-to-face data collection in which the researcher asks questions of another’ (p. 95) and according to their advice the inquiry should be conducted as much as possible in the naturalistic setting of the participants. This follows then that the ASPs are interviewed on their campuses, in their offices or a mutually agreeable office or location nearby.

There are various meanings attached to each word we use, especially when the words are employed in complex models. While the quantitative study may seek to identify each discrete part, the qualitative studies seek to understand the whole (Merriam, 2009b) and in this case, to understand how each ASP relates to TLT: if they have heard of the theory, worked with it, assess for it in their student’s experience of academic learning that takes place in a placement, beyond the institution’s walls and control. The invitation to participate in the study does not identify TLT so that the ASP would *not* begin to think about it. There is consideration of a second interview should it become necessary, but this proves otherwise. Other questions focus on assessment and the ASPs approach, or their course’s/programme’s approach to the assessment.

While most ASPs in this study are working with students who are in placements and who currently or previously have assessment duties, there are some who do not. These interviews still prove to be very interesting and much is learned from their accounts. So while the investigation begins by looking for ASPs who currently assess student learning, the study evolves as ‘case study work is often said to be progressively focused that is, the organizing concepts may change a little or a lot as the study moves along’ (Stake 2005, p. vi).

As Yin (2008, p. 69) states, the investigator needs to be open and flexible to new potentially significant data. An example of this is that the original inquiry included a question about the use of assessment of the activities by educators, staff and students and their degree of formality, aiming to discover if the degree of assessment formality has bearing on TL experiences. While this would have been an excellent line of inquiry, it proves to be premature before really understanding the breadth and depth of the quintain.

Selecting and inviting the participants is dependent on the ASPs volunteering, reflecting an purposeful approach: ‘Sample selection in qualitative research is usually (but not always) non-random, purposeful and small...’ (Merriam, 2009b, p. 16) and, as Stake (2005) tells us:

...we will often usually draw a purposive sample of cases, a sample tailored to our study; this will build in variety and create opportunity for intensive study...we can learn some important things from almost any case...for multiple case studies, selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important; relevance to the quintain and opportunity to learn are usually of greater importance. (p. 25)

As stated earlier, a few of the ASPs currently work, at the time of the interviews, outside of assessment of placements but they provide useful insights for this inquiry, as they either have prior experience, or have oversight responsibilities.

Stake (2005) states that ‘...it is often better to pick the cases that most enhance our understanding than to pick the most typical cases. In fact, highly atypical cases can sometimes give the best insights into the quintain’ (p. vii). In this study, there is a mix of cases. The programmes have the common aspect of being in one of the four universities; some are unique and offer a different perspective to this study and perhaps to education and educational placement. An example of this is one of the participants whose graduate level programme in education responds to the needs of service organisations by engaging them in defining research topics based on issues these host organisations want to address. While this model is suggested in the literature for SL (Butin 2000), this manifestation is unique in this study, although another ASP expresses desire to do the same in a future module.

The original research design for the ethical review application documents suggested twelve participants, three at each of the four universities. These participants would be from a variety of programme designs and could inform us on the kinds of programming that placement learning could demonstrate. It becomes apparent however, that there is so much variety in the programming that more than 12 interviews would better capture the richness of examples available. Even with 29 ASPs, while more diverse than 12, a saturation point is not reached. This is a limitation to the research, which a broader survey might capture

more fully. Indeed it seems that the surface is only just being scratched here; a lifetime research agenda would do the topic more justice. This exploratory study has opened up a potentially long and rich research agenda, and more questions arise than have been answered.

All interviews are attended in person, either in the offices of the academic staff, or in a location suitable to an interview on or near their campuses. Being respectful of their many responsibilities the interviews are kept to about an hour and loosely followed the interview format, following the semi structure qualitative research strategies. The question sheet (Appendix A) provides a rough framework for the interviews and notes are made on them as the interviews proceeded. The approach is well said here:

Researchers are not invisible neutral entities; rather they are part of the interaction they seek to study, and they influence that interaction. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in their interactions with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place. (Fontana and Frey, 2008 p. 144).

There has been quite a debate raging in academic circles regarding research, its purposes, methodologies and approaches and how credible any one work is. Entering the field as a novice academic researcher can be overwhelming and quite baffling, but also fascinating, as the discussions are reflective of the discussions going on in our global world.

In several respects this research can be considered an evaluation of a specific practice in HE, based on reporting of the ASP involved in placement learning. From the field and based on the best practices relayed in the interviews, recommendations can be made to the practice. As such, this researcher could be considered an evaluator. ‘Evaluators are interpreters. Their texts tell stories. These stories are inherently moral and political’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008 p. 408). It is important to do justice to the ASPs, the experiences and thoughts they share, to interpret in the best way possible and to offer back some suggestions for practice. This is somewhat in keeping with PAR philosophy in so far, as Hall (2005) says, as the ‘researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process’ and the process ‘creates a greater awareness in the people of their own resources and mobilise them for self-reliant development’ (p. 12).

Regarding the current research arena, Denzin & Lincoln (2008) offer comment: ‘This is a legitimization crisis. It involves a series of rethinking of such terms as validity, generalizability and reliability...and how multiple criteria of evaluation compete for attention in this field’ (p. 27). Here, ‘Terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity’ (p. 26). They further outline that:

Basic positions on the issue of evaluative criteria: foundational, quasi-foundational and non-foundational. Foundational positions describe the positivist and post positivist criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. Quasi foundational is somewhere in the middle with non-foundational rejecting research that is not rooted in the concepts of care, shared governance, neighbourliness, love and kindness. (*ibid.*)

The participants in this study themselves add credibility to this study. They provide not only practice authority but also a unique qualification by virtue of the fact that those holders of doctoral degrees are also potentially at the highest development phase of reflective judgment, as shown by Kitchener and King (1990). Like other qualitative studies, this one skirts the ‘objectivity’ discussion, along with others:

There is no claim to objectivity here and indeed I endeavour to make visible as much as possible, to award the readers the opportunity to make their own decisions regarding the interpretation of the data. ...relativists...calmly assert that no method is a neutral tool of inquiry, hence the notion of procedural objectivity could not be sustained. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008 p. 404)

The feminist angle of this study is a result of personal values, long-held and long-developed. There is, however, only part adherence to what Denzin (2008) calls a feminist communitarian researcher:

The feminist, communitarian researcher does not invade the privacy of others, use informed consent forms, select subjects randomly, or measure research designs in terms of their validity. This framework presumes a researcher who builds collaborative, reciprocal, trusting and friendly relations with those studied...It is also understood that those studied have claims of ownership over any materials that are produced in the research process, including field notes. (p. 275)

Johnson (1997) defines descriptive validity as the ‘factual accuracy of the account as reported by the researchers’ (p. 286) and further purports that ‘verbatim is the lowest

inference descriptor of all because all the participants' exact words are provided in direct quotations' (p. 286). By doing this, interpretive validity is enhanced in that 'by reading verbatim...readers of a report can experience for themselves the participants' perspectives (p. 286). However, in this study, for the sake of increased understanding and of the differences between spoken and written language, words not in the quote are introduced in brackets [] and phrases like 'you know' and 'ums' and (laughs) are deleted, without compromising the intent of the speaker. This is shown in the following two renditions of the same quote from an ASP:

You need to understand what people want as well as need and get that balance. So I expect them to understand you know that there are different people out there and they do have different issues, you know?

This quote becomes:

[The students] need to understand what people want as well as need and get that balance. So I expect them to understand that there are different people out there and they do have different issues.

That being said, there is still some adherence to more traditional protocols. Triangulation is a process by which the research can claim validity. It uses several sources to confirm the knowledge. In this inquiry the interview data, university and course documents and the literature are used as three ways to confirm some of the findings. Observations and surveys are not undertaken as this exploratory inquiry seeks to understand the issue from the participants' perspective. Focus groups, another potential method, are not used, again to allow the focus to be on the individual perspective, rather than adding group dynamics to the inquiry.

Second interviews are not conducted for this study, again as the research seeks to freeze a moment in time and not get involved in the dynamical learning and motivational processes of the ASPs. A case in point is that due to operator error, the second half of one interview is not recorded. The ASP Anna is kind enough to be re-interviewed. During the second interview, she shares, 'I changed the assessment slightly after our talk. I have asked them to research and write about their community group and to reflect on whether their perceptions of it changed' (Anna). Adding second interviews would introduce new lines of

inquiry. This could be another study, which would be welcomed, but not timely, at this point.

Another approach is to consider multiple facets beyond triangulation. Richardson (2000) uses the symbol of the crystal, summoning up an image that combines, ‘... multiple dimensionalities and angles of approach’ (p. 934). This fits with the pluralistic methodological approach. As she states, ‘what we see when we look at a crystal, depends on how we view it, how we hold it up to the light or not’ (p. 392). In this way, the ASPs, from different disciplines, offering courses and assessment of different types, contribute different perspectives to the questions. These are the privileged voices in this research and the readers are the ultimate judges of their credibility. As Caelli et al. (2003) say, ‘to honour the value placed on enabling the voices of all participants that is part of a feminist methodology, researchers seek methods that are congruent with those values’ (p. 6). This is extended in that the readers are academics, the interviews are with academics (ASPs) and the research is academic. In keeping with qualitative research, Hartnett and Engels (2008) relates that scholars cannot be objective outsiders analysing static objects of inquiry; instead, in engaged scholarship, researchers become ‘subjects mutually enmeshed in the processes they are studying’ (p. 597). This is further extended as per the experience of this researcher, which follows with the researcher as an instrument of the inquiry.

2.13 Primary Instrument of the Research

This section concerns qualitative research design and the investigator is the primary instrument of inquiry. As Wolcott (1994) explains, ‘the personal reflections of the research as interpreter have come not only to be allowed but to be expected’ (p. 256). While not aiming to reflect too deeply, reflection provides these aspects of this researcher’s experience that probably have some influence on the research. These are delineated in the following table (Table 2-4):

Table 2-4: Researcher as Instrument		
Experience	Topic	Influence
Formal education: undergraduate degree	Communication studies and women studies	A critical and feminist orientation. Like to adhere to good communications ideals, socially minded
Formal education: M.Ed.	Adult and higher education	Interest in learning (as a topic and as a pursuit), research and social justice issues
Professional experience: career counsellor	Working with adults, youth, students	Service and 'other' oriented Interview and problem-solving skills, know much about people, careers, self (from assessments), directed interviews towards career issues
Professional experience: educator	Working with adults and students grade 8 to masters level	Tendency to start developing curriculum with everything learned about 'learning', think about own learning, offer educational knowledge, experience and advice during the interviews
Professional experience: business owner	Employment and development services for unemployed, people on low-income. Also continuing and professional education.	Tendency to start problem solving around issues of administration, service, human resources. Social entrepreneur
Other: post-menopausal	All incoming knowledge weighted against...	...considerable experience (takes time to digest)
Other: third culture kid (Fail et al., 2004)	Early TL experience, love of being on the boundaries	Perhaps a propensity to TL and perhaps tend to stay in disorienting dilemmas for too long

Some of the above factors may influence this study, and also provide for a unique perspective.

2.14 Audio Recording and Transcribing of the Interviews

All of the interviews are taped using a digital voice recorder. This enables focus on listening to the ASP and on taking short notes rather than focusing on taking detailed records. To be a good listener, one has to pay attention and give 'listening clues' like nodding, making affirmations like 'uh-huh', so taking notes could have been distracting for both the participant and the interviewer. Three interviews are disrupted due to technical difficulties, but these occurrences are only slightly problematic for the interviews. Quick unobtrusive notes on the interview sheet (Appendix A) are taken and the questions are roughly followed.

The audio quality is very good. A fellow PhD student is hired under a confidentiality agreement to transcribe the audiotapes. She transcribed both the questions and the ASP's answers. There are some words and terms that are 'indecipherable' when she is transcribing. A first task is to listen to all the audiotapes and correct the transcripts where possible. Some of the quotes are abbreviated and edited for nonessential words in the texts.

Audiotaping and transcribing the interviews allows for multiple 'revisits' to the data to explore the quintain. 'It is not easy to find a perfect middle ground between under-anticipating [sic] and over-anticipating, but a new researcher should expect that good hard thinking about the relative importance of research questions will increase the relevance of observations' (Stake 2005, p. 13). Reviewing, coding and analysing create more opportunities for experiencing the interview data, which is discussed further in the topical chapters.

2.15 Analysis

The interview transcripts are first reviewed and a constant comparison method is applied. Themes are colour coded and then the major ones are cut and pasted together. The new theme transcripts are then re-analysed and the best and most unique examples are focused on.

2.16 In Summary

The research journey begins with the idea that the differences in ASP assessing TL in SL might be attributable to different universities' foci. To that end, two universities in each of Scotland and England, one each of research-intensive and teaching-intensive are chosen. As the inquiry progresses adjustments are made, especially as the models of SL found in the United States do not have a counterpart in the United Kingdom.

During the process, this research grows into areas that are not anticipated but which are in keeping with the potential in the 'emergent and flexible' design of interpretive research. This study is largely an interpretive qualitative study, using the case study and embedded units of analysis (the universities and the participants) for its explorations. A basic orientation for the research is towards practice from the practitioner's perspective. The exploratory inquiry makes some discoveries of interest to both the research and practice communities. There is consideration of being inter-disciplinary, as the academic staff are from different disciplines. This study concurs with Merriam (1998) when she states:

I believed that research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education (p.1).

You'll hear me call it practice learning, placement learning. I may refer to it on occasion as work-based learning ... they're all subtle variations on a general theme. The student moves away from the classroom and is actually learning within context. (Emily)

3 Placement and Service-learning

This chapter serves two functions: it introduces the Academic Staff Participants (ASP), and explores the differences and similarities between the placement schemes encountered at the four UK universities to the US placements or projects in community agencies called Service-Learning (SL) educational models and theoretical frameworks. To honour the assurance of anonymity the ASPs have been renamed, are only loosely linked to their disciplines and their genders are sometimes obfuscated. The original study design sought to comprehend the assessment process of TL in UK SL models, but few are found and fewer still at the chosen universities.

This chapter is descriptive, it focuses on statements and explanations given by ASPs with their quotes utilised to illuminate the discussion. The three sections of this chapter outline the UK experience of placement learning against American SL objectives. The first section introduces the UK experience of active citizenship; the second section describes the SL programme found at the four UK universities. The third section discusses pedagogical similarities of practice between the UK placements and highlights their links to disciplines, employability and the universities' contributions to community.

3.1 A UK Programme Similar to Service-learning

There are many definitions and goals for SL as outlined by Butin (2010) and Speck and Hoppe (2004). Many of the placements in the four UK universities share similar goals. In the US, SL models are well developed with corresponding bodies of scholarship. In a broad sense, the definition of SL encompasses the elements of placement learning discovered in the UK universities, as Butin (2010) says: '...an active pedagogy committed to connecting theory and practice, schools and community, the cognitive and the ethical' (p. 3).

Jerome (2012) compares US style SL to the English active citizenship education programme. The English programme is school based and directed at students between 11 and 16 years old, with a focus on ‘National Citizen Service for 16 year olds’ (p.67). The US programme is wider in scope and is delivered across the educational spectrum from early years through to HE. He notes that the term ‘service’ has a more negative connotation in the UK due to staff being deemed ‘in service’ to the upper and aristocratic classes.

Jerome (2012) reiterates the tensions and differentiates the views of what SL programmes should be accomplishing. He also outlines the debate about what constitutes citizenship. His reiterations parallel the arguments for three suggested models of SL: philanthropic, civic engagement and communitarian as described in Speck and Hoppe (2004). Abel (2004) proposes the philanthropic model stating that all education, including the pedagogies of SL, needs to remain neutral so as to allow students to develop their own values. Sementelli (2004) criticises the philanthropic model, saying that it perpetuates privilege and that students should ‘recognise they have benefits not available to those they serve’ (p. 139). The civic engagement model promotes citizen and democratic action by teaching students how to be participants in political decision-making for social amelioration. According to Codispoti (2004) the communitarian model goes furthest to offer a vision of people who are involved and responsible in all areas of their lives and who therefore have little need for extensive government activity. Codispoti relates the communitarian model and argues that HE’s mission is to contribute to nurturing, developing and educating students to be highly contributory citizens who are:

... self-consciously active, ethical, and civic member of an open and inclusive community in which democracy is understood as self-government actualised through collective inquiry and as action carried out in civil society as much as through representative government. (p. 106)

The comments of ASPs regarding their modules loosely reflect the above models. The following quote from Ronda indicates that her model could be considered an example of the philanthropic model:

...we are fortunate and we are all privileged and so we are trying to give back, which makes us sound very pious. But I think the students are very aware of that as well. And they do have clients who maybe are addressing something like domestic abuse, clients who are homeless. We also have many different types but they do come

across this and I think that's very, very good for them. They really think "we're doing this to help". And most of them get very involved. (Ronda).

The tensions between these visions and models exist in both the US and UK jurisdictions and sometimes are worsened when policies are written to promote one model over another. This, according to Jerome (2012), could be exacerbated where there is a lack of buy-in at the teacher / delivery level, thereby creating a repercussion of variable student experience. Jerome outlines a problem: Crick (1998) purportedly authored (in committee) the "Crick Report" to lean towards active citizenship / civic engagement model outcomes. Jerome cites an example of students organising a party at a senior citizens' home as their SL project, which could be considered an example of a 'philanthropic' model. The project is criticised for not promoting active citizenship. This would be especially true when the pedagogy lacks discussion of increased awareness of social issues.

SL itself has its detractors. Butin (2010) outlines the arguments against SL by those who claim that academia must keep its focus on the creation and dissemination of knowledge. This being said, Butin continues to argue that SL pedagogy is vitally important. His view is that it needs to move from charity to justice. This would thus concur with the communitarian model.

Butin (2010) also observes that there is a continuum of SL that focuses on student development on one end and contributions to communities and host agencies on the other. For the most part, the ASP reporting through the interviews of this study reflect a focus on student learning and development, with the benefits to the community being an additional feature. While only one programme out of the four UK universities specifically uses SL pedagogy, most of the UK ASPs reiterate goals and debates akin to those in the US. The aforementioned continuum is not used here as a framework, largely because the UK placements are not SL courses or projects, and for the most part the aspect of contributions to community are not brought up by the ASPs. One ASP does however mention the civic mission of his university.

SL is implemented in different formats that range from stand-alone community-based projects to long-term host based practicums. SL projects can have student performing activities on their own, in pairs or teams working together on projects. There are numerous

names for the placements, including work experience, work-based learning, field experience, practice, school learning and practicum. Likewise, the placements explored in this study have a multitude of formats, thereby indicating that the UK's HE educational placement pedagogy has a kinship to SL.

The ASPs are selected for interviews because of their involvement with credentialed placement learning. The following table shows a categorisation of the different programmes and their placement aims. These are very loose categories, as many placements have multiple goals, and these different aspects are relayed through the interviews.

<u>Placement Focus</u>	<u>Discipline / Programme</u>	<u>ASP Pseudonym</u>
Training for a profession Performance for practice	Social work, drug and alcohol studies, community development, nursing, teaching	Alan, Andy, Edward, Lidia, Mary. Nancy, Sara, Valerie,
Career decision making	Criminal justice, sociology, business, career services, interdisciplinary, business studies	Elisa, Yvonne, Lena, Lane, Avery, Tomas,
Skills development	Business studies, education, computing science, law	Adam, Uma, Rita, Ariel,
No placement involvement at this time	Teaching and learning (administration or consulting) business, policy studies	Allie, Emily, Ivan, Ike,
Community awareness (for practice)	Dentistry, medicine	Ila, Isabel,
Clinic	Law	Rena, Ronda.
Community project	Education, policy studies, arts	Laura, Ursula, Anna.

Each ASP is categorised only once even though for several their many goals would allow them to fit into a number of placement types. For example, a business studies ASP discusses student placements in a local charity and reflects on some of the learning the students express from that experience. In actuality though, the majority of the placements in that particular programme and module are hosted at for-profit businesses with non-profit placements being ‘few and far between’ (Tomas). These placements serve many functions: they help students decide on a career direction, and develop community awareness and discipline specific skills. Another example is Rita, a mid-to-late career scholar who works both in the careers centre and as an educational developer. For this study she discusses a programme module for computing science students designed expressly to augment their interpersonal skills.

The placement examples reported from the four UK universities are all very different with different goals and assessment schemes. This is not dissimilar to the US provision of SL, which is purportedly ‘an embodied and experiential activity that cannot be contained’ (Butin, 2010, p. 46). The placements for the nursing, social work and teaching have students in mandatory statutory placements where the purpose is to assess the students’ practice. Here the professions have overarching governance. As the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2012a) states in *The Quality Code*, they have degrees of oversight or regulation by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs). Institutions therefore ensure that they are clear about the requirements of each applicable PSRB (Ch B7 External Examining). Such placements are part of professional preparation programmes where people in the occupation provide services and thereby have similar SL goals in the discipline themselves. This is an overlap with the practices of service and learning.

Community development and drug and alcohol studies also have an ‘observation in practice’ component, but they are not governed by a PSRB and their assessment protocols vary immensely. The drama performance reported on here could also be categorised as ‘performance for practice’ but since the community focus of the module is so pronounced it is deemed a ‘community project’.

Although the focus of the interviews in this thesis is on projects that serve others in communities and are therefore more like SL, it would not be out of place to point out that

dentistry and law programmes have internships, articling and similar mandatory placements but these are not part of this research. In this research the medicine and dentistry modules are community based, compulsory and the placements activities focus on health projects for the community. The law clinics are usually elective and are purportedly very popular with students. For criminology, sociology, policy studies, business studies, education and law the elective modules with placements are part of the aim to give students practical knowledge of the discipline while simultaneously linking academic theory with employability goals.

In medicine the programme generally puts students on projects within communities for educational purposes because as Isabel says ‘people get sick in communities [and they] get better in communities’. This is seen to prepare the students for their actual work when they become medical professionals.

Business studies use placement learning for their educational and employability goals. The types of placements discussed include a one-year paid internship, sometimes referred to as a ‘sandwich’ year, which usually takes place between third and fourth years. Another business programme is in a pilot stage, with the goals discussed similar to SL. Another involving consultancy exercises as part of specific modules and is said to be offered widely to non-profit organisations.

A community development programme attracts many ‘non-traditional’ mature students who work in community service-related careers and are studying part-time to attain academic credentials. Such situations do not easily fall under the category of SL because the students are not volunteering: they are mostly using their workplace for their placement. While Butin (2005a) states, ‘to suggest, for example, that students engaged in SL be paid...is to go against the grain of the implicit normative framework of what is understood by service-learning’ (p. 7). Although the community development programme might not be considered SL, it still parallels the SL philosophy and pedagogy, which are recognised to be of value to adult learners. As Annette (2009) states:

...the learning theory and practice of service-learning, with its emphasis on “reflective practice” and the development of active citizenship through experiential

learning, can be adapted to provide a way of learning that best meets the needs of adult learners who are actively involved in their communities. (p. 155)

Training for the service professions, particularly social work, is close to SL and in the US this proximity is even more so. Zieren and Stoddard (2004) explain that since:

...its first years as a profession social work was concerned about education that was more than just education of the individual, but rather education of the individual through service to society. (p. 34)

A portion of the foundation for SL in social work came from an early course of civic activism that also had its roots in adult education. In their review of Zieren and Stoddard's chapter Speck and Hoppe (2004) explain how Zieren and Stoddard direct their attention to the role social work has taken in promoting the ideals of service-learning and present social work 'as a the prime example of a professional that has promoted democratic participation by aiding the disadvantaged through the integrating of theory and praxis, in other words, through service-learning' (p. ix).

3.2 A Module Using Service-learning Pedagogy

While the umbrella term SL is not commonly used in the UK the community placement schemes share similar attributes with their US counterparts. Only one programme from the four UK universities has expressly a named SL course. This particular module, active citizenship, follows from the UK programme by the same name delivered at the compulsory education level. More SL programmes such as this may have been identified in this research had its focus been on SL programmes in the UK rather than on assessment and TL. The active citizenship programme does however show that SL pedagogy and theory are applicable in the UK and the experience for those involved can be explored with SL scholarship frameworks.

The duration of the active citizenship module's placement component is 48 hours over an eight-week period. During this time students learn to 'combine academic work with their service placement so they gain understanding of the academic work in public policy' (Ursula). Course documents for the active citizenship placement programme further

describe the course in terms that denote service-learning philosophies and experiential learning [Course Handbook 2010-2011].

Because a stated goal of this active citizenship course is to ‘educate and make a difference’ (Ursula), it does not entirely follow the philanthropic model. This is because, by definition, the philanthropic model ‘cannot foster exposure, reflection and ultimately debate about issues affecting communities... Therefore, it remains a poor choice for programmes where the goals are ‘to “make a difference,” educate, or foster change in a society’ (Sementelli, 2004, p. 69).

The active citizenship module more resembles the civic engagement model, with its function to ‘socialise the next generation of citizens so that these citizens actively promote democratic ideals such as equality and become agents of social change’ (Watson, 2004, p. x). ASP Ursula reiterates these goals:

Citizenship, I think, is a good topic to focus on – lots of things come off that...And hopefully by the end they do feel like they are more active citizens, which is what it’s about...I would hope that they understand the public policy in a deeper, broader way and I think some of them actually articulate that. They actually say that it brings it to life. (Ursula)

There are also elements of the communitarian model in this active citizenship course in that it offers alternate political views:

I give a lecture on critical reflection and I give the example Malcolm X, for example and Paulo Freire, even, talking about raising consciousness and going through different levels and changing and how we can make this interchange not just for ourselves but for society, which is, I think again, what public policy is about...It’s creating a vision of a better world and the ways in which to do that. (Ursula)

In this sense, the active citizenship module contributes to the civic mission of higher education as described by Codispoti (2004):

A democratic citizen is a self-consciously active, ethical and civic member of an open and inclusive community in which democracy is understood as self-government

actualised through collective inquiry and as action carried out in civil society as much as through representative government' (p.107).

He goes on to explain that democratic 'citizenship must be learned and cultivated' and that the 'civic mission of higher education is to contribute to this process' (p. 107). Further to educational objective of establishing citizenship ideals, students in the active citizenship programme are asked to 'learn to learn' from the experiential SL placement and to:

...be able to identify what their role is in the placement, in the service agents, their role as a volunteer...I'm not teaching skills. It's the students themselves, and it's all about their learning, and it's coming from them, and I make that very clear to students that what they're learning on placement, they have to generate that. It's without my control, or, [rather], that's part of service-learning ... knowing what it is they're doing, what experiential learning is that they are learning for themselves, and that it is a deeper learning. And they're having their awareness, they're raising their awareness and becoming more conscious, I think, just more aware of what they're doing, becoming more critical. Because I do try to teach them how to think critically or how to reflect. We have exercises on doing that. So, yeah, it's about personal development as well. (Ursula)

Ursula links into the SL networks in the US for pedagogy and support. She is an example of the SL educator who, like those in the US, involves SL pedagogy in her teaching, and does so with a 'strong passion for learner development, service, and environmental and/or social justice issues' (Butin, 2005a). As Ursula observes: 'I do see a difference in the students. There's no doubt about it and it's a joy to see it at the end of just ten weeks they've been out on placement'. Like the academic staff who incorporate SL in the US, she finds that much of that works well to enhance learning. SL brings, as Bringle and Hatcher (1996) state: '...new life to the classroom, enhances performance on traditional measures of learning, increases student interest in the subject, teaches new problem-solving skills, and makes teaching more enjoyable' (p. 2).

3.3 Programmes Under Study Share some of the Same Aims as Service-Learning

As described by the ASPs, the placements are all quite different, and range from short observations to yearlong paid employment posts. There are programmes that involve people who are already working and augmenting their employment experience with academic credentials. The diversity of placements mirrors the diversity of SL experiences. Butin (2010) explains the 'multiple, divergent, and often contradictory modes' of SL in higher education:

... what we can truly say is that there is no singular, unitary, or obvious model by which service-learning is or should be done...there is no one thing called service-learning...the theory of service-learning is actually a set of theories contingent on the embodied and experiential character of the service-learning experience. (p. xiii)

Several examples of the pedagogical practice of the UK placement programmes in this thesis evince alignment between SL, the programme philosophies the ASPs. The ASPs report seeing many benefits to their placement modules and are under direction from their universities for their provision. Butin's (2010) explanation aligns with some of these modules as SL is:

...traditionally viewed as the successful linkage of classrooms with communities and theory with practice that improves students' academic achievement, enhances their cultural competence, and fosters a more inclusive and just world. It is seen as both a pedagogy and philosophy that links classrooms with communities and textbooks to the "real world". (Butin, p. xiv)

One popular definition of SL is that it is a:

...course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996, p. 222)

This definition fits well with the pedagogical practices found in this study.

On the basis of Bringle and Hatcher's definition, UK placement schemes can be considered SL because they include work with organised service activities, agencies, clinics and projects that meet perceived community needs. As well, the UK placement programmes involve reflective practice. Both the Assessment and Transformative Learning chapters more fully discuss the findings here and the role of reflection as a major part of the experience of the placements.

An important difference between UK and American practice of SL instruction involves the language itself: SL is not considered an 'umbrella' concept in the UK as it is in the US and SL terminology is not generally used amongst UK placement programmes, excepting the

actual SL course found at one of the UK universities. There are other aspects of the UK placements that show their dissimilarities with SL: some are paid internships, while others focus on observed practice as mandatory professional preparation. In addition, the focus is most often with student reflection on the placement activity as being far more central and important than the service performed for the organisation or the community. Teacher training programmes place their students in schools to observe them in their teaching roles. The students work in classrooms alongside experienced teachers; but this is professional practice, and is not considered SL. Social work, community development and medicine share this attribute. Again, nursing, dentistry and law all have placements, internships and articling provisions that would not be considered purely SL. In this study however, the medical and dentistry modules perform community services very much like SL. Another example is the one-year 'sandwich' work experience for business studies students. These are paid internships or industry placements. The ASPs in business studies share their views on the values of placement and student paid internships at non-profits. They also share a future programme with a pilot study completed or shorter non-profit placements, which are very much like SL.

The following section discusses the similarities between placement experience and SL, particularly in the categories of theory, consideration of community needs, increased student awareness of social issues and relevant pedagogical practices.

An example showing the use of reflection and student experience of agency clients, comes from a statutory practice learning module: 'It might be their first opportunity to have a contact with service users...we provide reflective learning tools like a reflective diary which gives them questions to prompt their thinking' (Nancy).

Another programme enrolls students who are already working (and occasionally volunteering) in a community service occupation and links the service work to the course content. As one of the ASPs explains, the intention of such programmes is 'to give students a theoretical framework within which to think about their practice'. In this regard, 'the thrust of the course is about finding a link to theory and practice; back and forth...I think the real difficult task is how you link theory to practice...' (Adam). Another ASP describes the programme as having 'a strong academic focus' on what the students are studying:

It's almost as if they're applying some of the more theoretical ideas that they're encountering in the rest of the programme, and seeing how they play out within a practice setting. (Andy)

As in SL, the modules use students' placement experience to inform and learn theory and theory to understand practice. In this sense the same SL philosophy and pedagogy often underlies UK placement experiences. This underpinning SL pedagogy can be further exemplified in the description of a UK business programme that tries 'to connect students with the world through the medium of using a social enterprise project'. Furthermore, as an ASP mentions, the attempt to connect learners to the 'notion of sustainability and the notion of locality is quite significant to the business programme as a whole' (Lena).

Some UK programmes work to expand the students' awareness of their communities. Ila describes how experiential learning is based on a community focus:

... we book them in with the students that they've seen on the clinic so they get their dental care as well. However, it's all based on community engagement and community development. It's got nothing to do with dentistry. Much as I would love to drag it into that'. (Ila)

One statutory training programme has an embedded assignment in which learners construct a social marketing campaign. The reason behind this project is the idea that social marketing 'is all about trying to sell ideas to people to improve their health on a non-profit fashion. The first project the students ever did was to try and sell injecting heroin users the idea of not using a needle' (Alan). This project assignment can make a larger contribution, particularly since many of the proposed projects have been implemented by agencies. Another example of this type of model is a drama production module that has community non-profit agencies as clients. Within this programme the students:

...start researching what they would like to do: areas of the community, schools, hospitals, mental health, outpatients. We don't choose. They decide on their area of the community they're interested in...then they start to think about the materials that they've been researching. Some of them then are encouraged to go back to their client groups and say "this is what...we're thinking about. Is this the kind-of thing you would like us to do? What else could we do?" So they start to build it that way. And then it's just – get their heads down, get the scripts together. Create. They can use any form of theatre, film, whatever they want. (Anna)

The performances the students organise are based on their own research of what the clients want communicated through performance. Each production is also followed up by a workshop.

The dental school also embraces aspects of community service within its placement programme in a way that is similar to the drama production in that the students choose their own team projects and provide services to diverse populations:

They have to write their own project and it has to be health or dental promotional based. We're asking [them] to look beyond the stakeholders who are trying to provide support and help. Not asking the stakeholders but asking the real people and then looking at "well, what are their oral health needs? And actually, what can we do to help?" Look at developing...a programme that's effective, that's efficient, that will work. (Ila)

Examples of projects the dental school students organise include: a fluoride varnish programme that involves working with three-to-five-year-olds at children's centres, learning all about how children's centres work and figuring out how to improve health for that group; researching the needs of the homeless to better understand the health issues of people living on the street; conducting a needs assessment of prison populations in order to understand the world of prison dentistry as well as the plight of probationers who leave prison and can no longer access dental care. Another group makes mouth guards enlisting the [Town] Rugby Club as ambassadors. The students organise the professional rugby players to accompany them to 'tell rugby teams and mini rugby "Hey I'm a first class rugby player. I wear [a mouth guard] you must wear [a mouth guard] too"' (Ila).

At a business school the modules have students conduct consultancy work to non-profits, thus providing a business lens that the organisations might not be able to afford: '...a number of programmes here [work] with social enterprises and community groups, charity groups, in that format. The students are unpaid. They are on a shorter-term placement. They're working on specific projects. At the end of that they deliver something to the organisation' (Lena). These placements are different than the yearlong paid placements.

Many of the placements related are designed to fulfil a need in the community not provided by any other means. As one law clinic ASP says:

Generally...you can't get legal aid for employment law advice. But not all people have the money to pay for a private solicitor ... so it's areas of unmet legal aid is what we refer to is what the law clinic looks after. (Rena)

One Master's level programme is designed specifically to have students work on community issues and problems: 'We want their work to have immediate impact and access to a field where it can help the most vulnerable people. Our students are actually at the service of a more vulnerable community' (Laura). This programme could be considered under the Communitarian model, as it seeks to be at service to alleviate disadvantage for some of the most affected people, in this case refugees and asylum seekers.

The goal of increasing students' awareness of wider social issues is apparent in many of the placements. As a law clinic ASP relates:

...there was a school closing down and it was in an area, a quite deprived area of [Town]. It was considered to be a very good school. The one chance a lot of those pupils would have, [and] to now they would have travel a much greater distance and a lot of those wouldn't have cars. They weren't laying buses on so how would the students...get there? And we had two brilliant girls doing it who had never thought about such issues; children not being able to get to school, because your mother drove you to school So we do have that and it tends to come from the clients introducing them to a new world actually. (Ronda)

Another example from Rita on an undergrad placement programme specifically designed to provide social experience to students:

...some of the organisations we place students with have got quite vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults and it actually has quite a profound effect on perhaps people and some groups that they'd heard about but never really had an opportunity to integrate with and understand.

A further example is a medical module where student engage with community agencies:

[We] send the students out into the community but to a non-medical placement so it might be say a reading group for people recovering from mental health problems. It might be a carpentry group. Lots of different sort-of voluntary organisations, charities: Help the Aged, Death Centres, this sort-of thing, to try and give an idea that it isn't just the NHS that's out there, that everything isn't just statutory, that there are voluntary agencies that are out there. If you're looking after practice in an area where you know that there's say a Tai Chi group up the road. That's a way really of helping your patient by saying, I know you're feeling a bit down and a bit lonely, why don't you go and join the Tai Chi? So it's trying to get them to think about the patients and their problems in a more of a psychological and social manner. (Isabel)

It is worth noting here that a difference between the US and the UK is that the UK has socialised medicine and at the time of this writing the US system is based on a for-profit model. This would affect the training, as the UK medical training would be more inclined to view health holistically and try to keep people healthy using low cost community alternatives.

Another example of the focus on the students' interests and their exposure to different social realities to increase their awareness is from sociology. Yvonne describes a placement in a children's centre helping parents through a court process:

So [we have] a range of placements that hopefully marry with the students' interests in terms of their course and the particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. So the school, for instance, is in one of the sort-of most deprived areas of [Town] and the children's centre deals with many disadvantaged families. Working with the courts service, being able to sit in on that, gives them a real insight into the challenges many families face. (Yvonne)

The pedagogy and aims of programmes that implement community-oriented projects can often be similar to those of SL. This closeness to typical SL goals in UK placement programmes is exemplified by the objectives of one of the UK business studies programmes:

[We want to] connect [students] to the issues of global warming, global poverty and, international relations and how it impacts on business. And so we're trying to connect them that way. But then we're also trying to connect them at a very local level with thinking about their own learning in a much wider sense and seeing the value of their learning, both personal, community and through that medium of that project. The focus of that module is... manifold really...it's partly what we're calling big picture. So our students connect with big issues like global warming,

sustainability and global poverty and do they understand their perspective on those issues in relation to their learning? (Lena)

Rena describes how the placement experience is designed with wider goals in mind:

I think that the longer the students are with the law clinic the more open to these kinds-of things they do become – to social justice issues. Because that was part of the idea of the law clinic, is that it wouldn't just be purely them doing drop-in practical work.

The interviews also uncovered some examples of student's expanding awareness from the placements, even when those placements are not in community non-profits, but in businesses. This could indicate that the pedagogy of placement learning and the assessed assignments are important, regardless of the place of the work experience:

I've one student at the moment – and this probably doesn't count as community service at all – but she's working in a [large national retail store] in [Town] and she's starting to notice the differences between her working there, as someone who just comes in and does a bit of extra work to help fund her study, but she doesn't really have to do it, she just sort-of does it for some extra money and then some people who work there for whom it is a permanent full-time occupation and they have to be there. And I think she's starting to notice how the workplace is fine for her to dip in and out of, but how difficult it is if that's the place where you're limited to and if that was your whole working life and working career, how limited and how constrained that would be. And I guess it's leading her to thinking more carefully about qualities of equality and equity of workplaces. (Uma)

The aim of enabling and motivating learners to consider the wider implications of their work is further exemplified by a UK business studies project in which the ASP asks the students to:

... think about what that investment bank is doing and how it's contributing to the society that it supports. Not just how you make a lot of money for yourself. I like having that dialogue with the students and just play around with and why are you doing those things? What do you hope to achieve?' (Adam)

There is an issue not always mentioned in SL literature, nor is it a question in these interviews and that is the impact of the placement on the community and the role of the university in the community. Some ASPs however acknowledge these issues, as one ASP states:

Because, obviously, the other underpinning agenda for this is the university's civic responsibility which is obviously a big key thing for the university – the role of the university in [Town]. And those students are ambassadors for the [Name] University ... obviously that's more about the university than the students' issue but they also need to understand they are ambassadors and the impact of their actions could affect the university's reputation. So we want it to be a good experience for the host organisations and for the students, so that's what we're looking for, a win-win. (Rita)

Moreover, another example of the placements' potential larger impacts is described by Ariel from law studies:

...it's an opportunity for a student to gain some experience within the legal field by working in citizen's advice bureau and for the citizen's advice bureau to work with us to take advantage of the fact that we have all of these bright, young things. And I think it's really important personally, because I think it's important that we as a university and us as the school of law in particular, are reaching out to the most vulnerable. Because if you think about the people that use these centres and clinics, they are very much the people who really are at the fringes. They can't afford probably to pay for their own lawyers – so they go and get the pro bono legal advice. So for me and for most of the students actually who get involved they also have that very kind-of – they often say in their application forms that they really want to help people. (Ariel)

Ariel speaks mostly to the philanthropic model here, providing legal services for people who cannot afford them. In other parts of the interview she discusses her work in human rights but seemingly has not yet made the links for educational provision for placements. She relates she is new to the placement officer position and that with a teaching load she is very busy.

3.4 Placements for Discipline Study, Employability and Community

This section highlights three more aspects of the placement schemes explored in this thesis: 1) the specific links between the placements and academic disciplines, 2) the advancement of professionalism and employability and 3) the contributions to the community. This section focuses generally on statements given by the ASPs and utilises these statements to explain the three particular aspects of the placements mentioned above. The characteristic links between disciplines and placement schemes, the opportunities for advancement and the community contributions are further discussed in other chapters because they are emergent themes that warrant exploration beyond their SL and placement features.

For a work placement module in sociology the study focuses on the workplace itself, as Yvonne describes the work that students do in regards to their placement learning:

And the third thing in terms of the report is about making linkages. It's about appreciating again. It's understanding their learning in the workplace and not seeing it as abstract. This is something that I just do in this specific module by relating it to the wider learning they have, their wider sociological understanding. Obviously, from their sociology modules already they will have an understanding about the key structures in society and this module also gives them a little greater understanding specifically about the sociology of the workplace as well. So a specific new learning, linkages to their existing sociological learning, and the ability to use a particular example from their own workplace to actually illustrate and expand upon that. (Yvonne)

The goals for this ASP are weighted towards the students and their learning and the contribution to the agency is not mentioned.

While the business studies yearlong paid internships are largely in for profit businesses, one ASP reflects on a non-profit agency working with youth:

The one that sticks out most is [Name] organisation. They help young chaps by and large locally who have had difficulties, ended up in the social work system for one reason or another. Some of them will be on a day basis, some will be residential, some will be violent and residential, so they have a mix. They've also introduced what's called [Name] Project which once they've got them to a certain level, they can put them into these small firms that they've created themselves and hopefully they pick up some good work experience from that but it's any income is regenerated into an expansion of [Name] Project. (Adam)

Since the business school has several 'sub-disciplines' the placements can be variable as this ASP says 'the expectation is that they will find a placement that supports an aspect of their business learning (Adam).

A sociology module is described by an ASP who is not involved in the teaching but in the placement coordination. She relates how the pedagogy is slanted towards the placement experience informing the course work:

They have placement so they can do a piece of coursework...it's to do with the set of charities and how they work and how they're organised. So obviously the placement gives them an inside perspective. It helps them learn about it and it gives them the material to actually base their coursework on and they've got to do 48 hours again over the same time period. And theirs isn't so much developing skills although they certainly do that, but obviously the purpose of their placement is slightly different because it's to do with their coursework. (Lane)

The placement focus can also change year by year, depending on the goals of the programme. In one three-year programme students are generally employed in professional service occupations, the third year placement must be different from their workplace:

...it is a work-based learning degree so students usually work in the field of community development, youth work, adult education, community learning and development and such likes and they normally do their practice in their work place. They need to do third year in a different context from what they've done in first, second and third in their work-based practice. (Mary)

The following example from an ASP in social work where the focus is on the student learning in what might be named student centred learning. The experiences of the students are reported to lead the AS pedagogy:

And so we all have to design the teaching around the practice so that what students were getting is what might be useful to them at that point in their practice. Because you couldn't expect them to draw knowledge of how it was fitting together if we didn't give them a bit of help around that. (Valerie)

The value of the placement to students is reiterated here from Emily, a mid to late career scholar administrator:

What our students tell us is that it is the practice learning element, the placement, the work-based learning that they really gain the most from because it's the theme that brings it alive. And it enables them to link up what they learn in the classroom with real-life so it actually facilitates this kind-of reflective engagement that I would see be characteristic of degree level. Moreover, it reflects my own experience [doing an internship as part of her undergraduate degree]. (Emily)

This is echoed in the SL literature: 'For any course that theoretically discusses society or social events, service-learning projects lend the possibility of providing concreteness' (Zieren and Stoddard 2004, p. 19).

In an educational studies module, the literature on work-based learning itself is studied and ties to the student development and employability.

Some of that is about personal development aspects in terms of developing graduateness and employability. Some of it is about developing an understanding of the field of work-based learning because that's where most of the literature where we draw upon comes from – work-based learning theory and professional learning.
(Uma)

Graduateness and employability are brought up as a benefit of the placement or project. For example, Anna from the arts relates that 'A lot of them from the theatre for the community project have made their own theatre companies and are travelling and working in the community'. She further refers to a former student who is now reconnected with the programme in a teaching and evaluating capacity. These areas are further discussed in further chapters, as emergent themes.

Sara, an ASP in a teacher-training programme, explains the value of the placement for what is called professionalism in the world of teacher training:

... the placements are key for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, in terms of their professionalism, and developing their professionalism, they are an absolute key. While they get a lot of input here, that's where they're out in the field, and they're learning and they're seeing and they're imitating and they're able to develop their own professionalism. (Sara)

In a sociology module, the coursework around the placement prepares the students for job searches by practicing those skills:

They're actually interviewed for the work placement. Those are the first stages. They're given a sheet of placement providers, a description of opportunities that are available locally. They're also given the option to actually arrange their own placement should they wish to do so. They then have, for assessment purposes, to put in an application form for their first-choice placement together with a curriculum vitae and the third part of it, a letter of application. They're then called for interview and the interview isn't part of the assessment process, but it's important, obviously, in actually placing them in the job. (Yvonne)

Lena speaks to the multiple aims of the placement: '[it's a] very valuable thing that they're doing, but also seen as part of a professional development process where they are doing

personal social responsibility. But they're also learning all these skills along the way, which is a benefit'.

Elisa discusses that some students are finding employment related to their placements:

...the students who go out on what we call work-based learning, they are third-year students and they are in their final year, year three, of the BSc Honours...studies programme...We have had at least three students who have got jobs quite quickly after graduating and they have been in criminal justice agencies that they've either been on placement, or the type of agency they've been on placement with, or those close links to that agency. And that's quite nice to see that happening. (Elisa)

The community engagement aspect is seen in several different ways in the placement learning. As one ASP says, 'Because we run a number of placements in citizen's advice bureau and legal clinics around [Town], that's a nice way of – I think – of doing things and engaging also with the third sector out there' (Avery).

The work is sometimes seen as contributing to the communities by using the availability of students to work on important projects that otherwise might not be conducted, as in this example from a medical training module:

We also do an audit in fourth year as well. Which again is quite an innovation, because they've got an entire year to do it. They can literally set up what they're going to do, come up with the results, and go around the audit cycle again – because you do need time to do it. So there's a brilliant opportunity. Hopefully they will actually make a difference... [The audit] could be something like, Does everyone who's a diabetic had their ACR checked in the previous 15 months? Because that would have a huge implication on patient care. How many of the population have had their blood pressure checked in the last five years? Things like this really. What can we do then to increase your results?' (Isabel)

This following quote from an education studies ASP indicates the potential impact the placement can have on the placement host:

So we're trying to enrich [student] understanding and also I think, for the third years, some of them have quite an enriching effect on their workplaces as well, because they go and they do these interventions. Sometimes they engage more people than just themselves and make some kind of evaluation. In some of these projects that

they do, they've actually been quite useful to the places. They are bringing the knowledge and the understanding that they're developing here. (Uma)

A criminology programme recently expanded its policy to allow students to use their volunteer sites as their placement hosts. Prior to this placements could only offer students an opportunity to observe workplace activities so this expansion could enrich student placement experiences: 'maybe in terms of students who are volunteers that could be very useful, because they are much more hands-on, because they've been recruited by the agency' (Elisa).

Valerie from a social work programme states her view of the placements:

I'm interested in doing the best we can for service-users now and in the future and that means providing good learning environments; well-supported, well-managed, because every single learning environment will have idiosyncrasies of its own and will need supporting, managing, sometimes getting in there and problem-solving and so forth. (Valerie)

She further discusses and how the work placement can be advantageous for the service-users, that they can receive a service that no one else could have provided, but virtue of the student being a student:

And we have sometimes – not always – when we read a portfolio you'll see that a service user having had a student gets a service that they could not have had from anyone else, because a student is bringing together everything that they know. And one of the things I think is really fantastic is that students don't know. They don't know what isn't possible. All the people around them including me know what isn't possible and they don't, and so they do the impossible. And it's such a joy when you see a student enabling somebody to assert their human rights in a way that nobody else would have because they don't know (Valerie).

The concept that placement work can be of benefit to the hosts is reiterated in a description of a policy studies programme that is still in its pilot phase:

...the students will go out into the placement and conduct an actual research project rather than just the traditional dissertation, so actually working with an agency, perhaps doing a piece of research that the agency would like to have done – so that both parties develop something from it. (Ike)

One programme has a unique approach for students to meet community needs as well as the academic ones. In this programme, the student submits two separate works: an academic dissertation and a host report, for which the student is paid a stipend. This module has come about by profoundly considering the needs of the host agencies:

It sounds like what we need to be doing with our master's programmes in these areas is saying to NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), would you be interested in having some free research? What would you like us to be researching on at the moment? Then the academics will work with you and the student will work with you to come up with a research proposal for a dissertation at master's level that can be done in six months. Because a lot of the NGOs and service users really want something that is relatively short-term. They don't want to wait three to five years for the longitudinal study. They would really like something they can build with now. But they also need evidence-based research to be able to put in bids for funding. This isn't for academic research. It's for service delivery and for care and community work. (Laura)

For the students on the Master's programme, there are several benefits as well:

And what this will give you is a chance to work on placement in volunteer and community and public sector organisations on a topic that's of direct relevance to them, with a supervisor from their field, from their organisation. And then there'll be a £1000 stipend for the final month after you submitted your academic dissertation, which will be to turn your findings into something that is immediately usable by the community organisation or the public sector organisation. (Laura)

Again, because of the payment factor, the programme cannot be said to fit with a SL definition, but so many of the service, community and learning elements are evident.

These ASP interview quotes show just how diverse the goals of community placements can be in HE modules. The work of the students during their placements can contribute much to the host organisations and the people they serve. Further, given that the ASPs are often overseeing the students' work, through them, the universities are thus also further contributing to communities.

This introduction of the ASPs and their modules and programmes, shows that while the programme model of SL is not widely applied in the UK, the aims and richness of the placement experiences for students and staff have much in common. The underlying

pedagogy that is relayed by the ASPs is also similar, though lacking in the specific philosophy and scholarship of SL. From here on out the variety of placement provision in the modules will be called by their type or by the generic word 'placement'.

It's quite a journey for some of the students. It's an incredible journey. (Anna)

4 Transformative Learning

This chapter discusses TL and the various ways TL is experienced by Academic Staff Participants (ASPs). It explores the potential for TL in placement learning, as described by the ASPs in semi-formal interviews conducted in the spring of 2011.

There are three sections to this chapter. The first overviews TLT, the second reports on the ASPs expressions of their familiarity with the theory and the third explores in their perceptions in more detail, using a core TLT framework.

4.1 Adult and Higher Education

At its core, TLT seeks to provide ‘a philosophical orientation of adult educators’ (Mezirow, 1985, p. 142) to help adult educators assist learners to gain as much control of their lives as possible. It is proposed here that HE also seeks to assist learners contribute to the best of their ability to their world and develop as much control in their lives as possible. In this regard, in TLT one can read adult education as education and adult educator as educator:

Transformative learning for emancipatory education is the business of all adult educators. We know that we must respond to initial learner interests and self-defined needs, but we do with the intent to move the learner to an awareness of the reasons for these needs and how the learners’ meaning perspectives may have limited the way they customarily perceive, think, feel, and act in defining and attempting to satisfy their needs. (Mezirow, 1990a, p. 358)

Students in HE have perspectives, which can be distorted and the process of TL may be what helps them change those distortions.

The educator who has an emancipatory orientation will not just respond to stated needs, but will also want to help the learner move beyond and to see even more what is possible. Educators can also create an environment where learners can learn what is possible, what

is beyond their current perceptions of what is possible. For example Mezirow (1981) says of a learner:

...she would know what she wanted if she knew what she could want. Real interests are those we would form if we had more perfect knowledge and freedom: if we were able to participate more fully in an ideal discourse...the adult educator is then needed to help people not only express what they want, but show them what they could want and how to achieve that...If we fail in this cardinal responsibility, we function at best as academic content specialists or as process technicians rather than as professionals. (p. 6)

In regards to future actions, Mezirow (1981) states that he is following the thoughts of Habermas, explaining that:

Jürgen Habermas is widely considered as the most influential thinker in Germany over the past decade. As a philosopher and sociologist he has mastered and creatively articulated an extraordinary range of specialised literature in the social sciences, social theory and the history of ideas in the development of a comprehensive and provocative critical theory of knowledge and human interests. His roots are in the tradition of German thought from Kant to Marx, and he has been associated with the Frankfurt School of critical theorists, which pioneered in the study of the relationship of the ideas of Marx and Freud. (p. 3)

Following then from Habermas, Mezirow elaborates on Domains of Learning.

4.2 The Domains of Adult Learning

Mezirow (1981) refers to Habermas (1972) differentiation of three generic domains (instrumental, communicative and emancipatory) and rejects the notion that a transformed consciousness in a specific situation can be expected to automatically lead to a predictable form of action. The intent of education for emancipatory action or Mezirow's (1990a) perspective transformation would be seen as 'providing the learner with an accurate, in-depth understanding of his or her historical situation' (p. 6). It is up to the learner, aware of all the reasons and choices, to act on their emancipations. Educators therefore are charged with the responsibility to assist learners to explore and learn how to take the action that the new perspective makes necessary (Mezirow, 1991a). Ethical considerations are paramount and the educator has to ensure that the learner is in no means coerced or manipulated into any action. The freedom to act, or not to act, remains with the learner. However, 'What

emerges as common ground is that we must begin with individual perspective transformations before social transformations can succeed' (Mezirow, 1990a, p. 365).

In HE there may be many occasions where students have disorienting experiences, including those provided by the experience of attending an educational institution. There may be disorienting dilemmas that arise from the course content or from the pedagogy. They may seek to enhance their adaptation skills. Mezirow makes a distinction between transitions and transformation. Transitions occur as one learns new roles from training or advancement, but only if they are expected, as part of the progression from the past to the present. In perspective transformation one goes on to discover one's place in the 'scheme of things, what is changeable and what is not' (Mezirow, 1981, p. 10).

TLT is a complex multifaceted learning theory because what it is trying to describe is complex and multifaceted. Mezirow and other scholars have attempted to tease out the interior processes of TL and conditions under which it occurs. The literature review of this thesis shows many curriculum models that foster TL. While there is much diversity in individuals, educators knowing TLT, and the common experiences the theory portrays, could assist AS support their students. As Vygotsky (1978) points out, a person's inner voice is unintelligible to everyone else, making it difficult to really know what another is experiencing or thinking. However, by working with learners educators can use TLT to identify and understand the common core of elements, phases or processes in TL to help their learners identify and change distorted perspectives and gain more control over their learning and their lives.

4.3 Academic Staff Participants Report on Transformative Learning

HE has the potential to educate for emancipatory purposes, as (Glisczinski, 2007) states:

Institutions of higher education are uniquely positioned to facilitate transformative experiences in learners, who may, through critical examination of the norms within their environment, develop heightened consciousness of their conditions. (p. 320)

TL in HE is a current topic of discussion, and has been for some time, as Harvey and Knight (1996) attest: '...higher education is about transforming the person, not (simply!)

about transforming their skills or domain understanding' (p. 133). This section explores the perceptions of the TL process of ASPs at the four universities in the United Kingdom.

This study focuses on the perceptions of the ASPs and how they express their experience with TL during the semi-formal one-hour interviews. The ASP voices are the central source of information, in keeping with a feminist research approach (Cranton, 2006). This section privileges these voices as quotes from the participants to elucidate their perspectives. This is in keeping with an interpretive, descriptive and exploratory methodology.

There is no testing or observation of students or ASPs to confirm or deny reports of TLE. In the cases where the course documents are cited and indicate the potential for TL, the discussion focuses on the alignment of the views expressed by the ASP and the documents. It is largely through the words of the ASPs that the potential for TL is explored.

During the interviews, preliminary questions are asked about programmes, modules, placements, assessments, students and the ASPs' interests. The interview questions ask if they know about Mezirow's TLT. The ASPs describe their experience of TL, or phases or elements of TL, or in some cases their lack of knowledge is what is evident. The ASPs reaction to being presented to the theory is also explored.

Table 4-1 (ASPs Reporting of Knowledge of TL and TLT) describes the ASP reports and the discussion follows the table. A larger font Table is available in Appendix C for easier viewing.

The five columns for this table delineate the familiarity the ASPs express regarding TL. Column One is the type University where the ASP works, Two is the ASPs educational attainment of a terminal degree or not, Three is if they report knowing TLT, Four denotes if they discuss observing students going through phases of TL and Five is provided for comments to elucidate their responses. In the comment column the ASPs words are in quotations if there are verbatim or are presented as a summary.

The four groupings of rows denote the level of familiarity with TL and TLT. They move from the first section of ASPs who appear to have little understanding of TL who are the least familiar and are unaware of TLT, to the last ten ASPs who are deemed to be very familiar with TL as they indicate that they know TLT and they report that their practice has elements of TL.

ASPs who report they do not know the theory and do not relay very much that could be considered TL would have *No*, in columns three and also a *No* in column four. The next group consists of those who do not know TLT but relay a few examples of TL, are labelled *maybe* as it is very not certain if they are actually see this type of learning. Those who discuss some examples that indicate understanding of the potential for TL are *No, Yes*, as their pedagogy includes elements of TL. Those ASPs who both know and use the theory have *Yes, Yes*.

(Table follows on next page)

Table 4-1: ASPs Reporting of Knowledge of TL and TLT				
1 University type	2 PHD	3 Reports knowing Mezirow's TLT	4 Reports phases of TL	5 Comments
Least Familiar – unaware of TLT and do not report using Transformative Learning				
EnRes	No	No	No	States that students realise there are many volunteer opportunities
ScTau	No	No	No	States that students are exposed to people with problems that surprise them
Somewhat Familiar - engages with idea that students may have TL				
EnTau	Partial	No	Maybe	Likes the theory, thinks of using it with placement students
EnTau	PhD	No	Maybe	New placement programme will look at global, local and environmental issues
ScTau	PhD	No	Maybe	Engages and relates TL to PhD process and his work in volunteerism
EnRes	No	No	Maybe	'I am willing to learn'
Familiar – reports not knowing TLT but indicates phases in practice				
EnRes	PhD	No	Yes	'I guess that's what we've got going on, I just wouldn't have put the name transformative learning but that's really going on'
EnRes	In Progress	No	Yes	'You certainly, certainly, see students who think about certain things ... in terms of the clients they meet'.
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'I think I might be playing at this'
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	Pedagogy includes social justice, gives example TL of individual student
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'This looks familiar ... I mean transformation is an area that I am interested in ... I'm not familiar with the author'
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	Brings up 'change perceptions' prior and uses TL language after
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'Yea that's exactly what is being set up here. It's completely what we do'
ScRes	PhD	No	Yes	Not Mezirow TLT, but transformation and all the elements in TLT
ScRes	PhD	No	Yes	'Tell me about it. I've heard of it but I've just never taken it up'.
ScRes	No	No	Yes	'It's not unlike the reflective process'.
ScTau	No	No	Yes	Relates experience in a simulation experiential course.
ScTau	No	No	Yes	Relates a story of students in a community programme
ScTau	No	No	Yes	All the elements are related as being part of the course
Very Familiar - both knows TLT and indicates practices have TL phases				
EnRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	'Yea Mezirow. Yea I have read some Mezirow'
EnTau	PhD	Yes	Yes	Reports using my theories and TLT when student brings it in
EnTau	no	Yes	Yes	'Yes, yes with intension'
ScRes	no	Yes	Yes	'Yes I think so. I think I've used some of that in some of the stuff I've written'.
ScRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	Studied TLT and uses it in teaching
ScRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	'Yea Mezirow ... we are looking for this kind of progression'
ScRes	No	Yes	Yes	Reports use of many theories, Mezirow included
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	'We had Mezirow's Transformative Learning very much in mind ... in evaluating the two observational learning experiences'
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	Relates TLT to reflective process
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	'I'm sure there is transformative learning for some people'

While Table 4.1 shows an interpretation of the ASPs knowledge of TL and TLT it does not show us how the ASPs might engage them in their pedagogies. For the following discussion the ASPs responses are presented in different groupings than the above table, starting with ASPs who reported the least familiarity, and ending with those with the most engagement with TL. These groupings do not exactly follow Table 4.1 as there are ASPs who state knowing the theory but do not actively use it in their pedagogies. There are also ASPs who state they do not know the theory but who report experiences that are similar to the phases in TLT, indicating that the ASP is aware of the processes involved in TL even when they report not knowing TLT prior to their interview.

Each ASP has some interesting insights of TL experience of the module, programme, or university even if they are not actively involved in placements or assessing placement learning. These groupings here are not finely defined; there are many factors could influence the ASPs experiences with TL such as the length and timing of the modules within the programmes or the prior experiences of the ASP and the students.

For the next discussion, the following delineation is used to categorise the ASP responses as:

1. ASPs Reporting Little Knowledge of Transformative Learning
2. ASPs Reporting Knowledge of Transformative Learning
3. ASPs Report Recognising and Fostering Transformative Learning

The discussion uses a framework that condenses the 11 phases of Mezirow's TLT to four core phases.

4.3.1 Framework for Defining Perceptions of Transformative Learning Potential

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of ASPs, 23 of the 29, report understanding some degree of TL with ten of these indicating knowledge of the theory. The discussion now will use a distillation of TLT as a framework to describe the understandings shared by these ASPs. Theoretical considerations are followed by the ASPs' responses.

There are 11 phases or elements identified by Mezirow (1994) that tend to lead to perspective transformation. Overall:

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

For this part of the discussion, four of the ten phases or elements are used that have been determined to be foundational or crucial in TL, as proposed by Merriam (2007), Glisczinski (2007) and Herbers (1998).

Mezirow (1991b) characterises the TL experience as having 10 phases, but Merriam (2007) states that there are ‘four components in transformative learning process: experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action’ (p. 134). The analysis here uses the four components that Herbers (1998) condenses from Mezirow’s 10 phases of perspective transformation; these include: (a) disorienting dilemmas, (b) critical reflection, (c) rational dialogue and (d) action.

As Glisczinski (2007) recounts:

Herbers’ distillation of Mezirow’s 10 phases clarified the foundational components of transformative learning ... Here, Mezirow, Herbers, and Kolb seemed to be addressing similar processes of experience, critical reflection, dialogue, and renewed action—which is informed, reformed, tempered, and redirected by experience and expanding awareness. (p. 320)

The following rendition of Mezirow’s (1981 and 1994b) 11 phases (Table 4-2) places them in this simplified framework proposed by Merriam et al. (2007) and Herber in Glisczinski (2007). Herber and Glisczinski provide four Quadrants: Disorienting Experiences, Critical Reflection, Rational Dialogue and Action. Many of Mezirow’s phases could be experienced with several of the quadrants, but for the purposes here, just one is chosen, based on an estimation of a ‘best fit’.

Table 4-2: Merriam et al. Quadrants and Mezirow Phases	
Quadrant	Corresponding Mezirow Phase Note: phase (#) is from Mezirow (1981) (1994)
Disorienting experiences	(1) disorienting dilemma (9) provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback (11) renegotiation of relationships and negotiating new relationships
Critical reflection	(2) self-examination (3) a critical assessment of personally internalised role assumptions and a sense of alienation from traditional social expectation
Rational dialogue	(4) relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues - recognizing that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter (6) building competence and self-confidence in new roles
Action	(5) exploring options for new ways of acting (7) planning a course of action (8) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan (10) a reintegration into society based on conditions dictated by the new perspective.

Using this simplified framework is conducive to this study as the presence or non-presence of TL is relayed via the perceptions of the ASPs and is therefore not confirmed by extensive assessment.

The first of these four phases, the disorienting dilemma, can be a trigger, or part of the 'non-sequential pattern' as Mezirow (1991b) describes:

Perspective transformation occurs in response to an externally imposed disorienting dilemma—divorce, death of a loved one, change in job status... The disorienting dilemma may be evoked by an eye-opening discussion, book, poem, or painting or by one's efforts to understand a different culture that challenges one's presuppositions. Anomalies and dilemmas of which old ways of knowing cannot make sense become catalysts or "trigger" events that predicated critical reflection and transformations. (p. 169)

The experiential and potentially different pedagogy that students encounter in placement learning may present these disorienting dilemmas. Students may also encounter different people, different problems and different social structures on their placements, which could be, as Mezirow calls them, triggers. Triggers can cause TL experiences.

In discussing critical reflection, the second phase, the term critical is not used in the sense of judgment, but rather in the sense of being open, questioning, conducting mindful consideration of how and why we think certain things in certain ways (Cranton and Carusetta, 2004). It means 'to give coherence to the unfamiliar' (Inglis, 1998, p. xvii) or simply 'making conscious the unconscious' (Habermas, 1972, p. 242). Critical reflection, elaborating on Habermas' reflection, is the term used in this theoretical framework and is central to TLT. It is through critical reflection that one identifies one's premises, questions them and decides if these premises are legitimate, useful and true, or if they are distorted and need to be changed.

Discourse, the third phase, refers to meaningful communications with others in 'as close to ideal' conditions as possible and perception transformation is when one changes one's frames of reference. Discourse is the communication process through which the learner, with trusted others, can critically reflect on their assumptions and resulting interpretations, test out new interpretations, validate them and reengage with the world, in old and new relationships with the new perceptions. Discourse is seen as a process whereby TL can occur (Mezirow, 1996a p. 237). The important roles for educators are explicated, as Mezirow (1990a) points out:

Our tasks as educators are to encourage the multiple readings of 'texts', to make a wider range of symbol systems or meaning perspectives available to learners, to create reflective dialogic communities in which learners are free to challenge assumptions and premises, thereby breaking through the one-dimensionality of uncritically assimilated learning Precipitating and fostering critical self-reflective

learning means a deliberate effort to foster resistance to just such technicist assumptions, to thoughtlessness, to conformity, to impermeable meaning perspectives, to fear of change, to ethnocentric and class bias and to egocentric values. (p. 360)

Mezirow uses Habermas' (1972) ideal discourse to denote specific dialogue intended to validate individual's experiences and ideas within the TL process... 'ideal conditions of authenticity, truth, equal, free will, safety for all parties are sought, for this, even though they may not be attainable, trying gets us closer' (Mezirow, 1981, p. 102). Further, 'Discourse allows us to test the validity of our beliefs and interpretations' (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 165). In striving towards this discourse, a person develops communicative competence: the ability to negotiate their own purposes, values and meanings rather than to simply accept those of others. A learner may acquire communicative competence by becoming more aware and critically reflective of assumptions and thus might be more able to freely and fully participate in discourse and to overcome constraints to taking reflective action (Mezirow, 1996b).

Subsequent to finding one's perspective(s) faulty, the process is furthered through the support of people who share the new perspective. It is also through discourse that one can work with other like-minded people to change socio-cultural perceptions. These socio-cultural ideologies can require social action to change them as they can be institutionalised (Mezirow, 1990b). This action phase is the fourth one and could include many different actions, such as changing a career path decision or being more inclusive. Since so much of this process is 'below the surface', it is difficult to gauge the processes. For instance, a person who becomes less frustrated with an elderly person's slowness, because of their SL placement at a seniors' centre, may have indeed had a TL experience and their action is to *not* roll their eyes or think impatient thoughts. Mezirow is quite adamant that the 'reintegration be on the transformative learner's own terms' (p. 60). While the debate rages on, it is most productive in this thesis to use Mezirow's definitions of both TL and TLT, which focus on the individual but acknowledges the importance of contexts and social factors, including social action.

According to Mezirow (1981) the purpose of adult education is to improve learners' self-directedness, which is both the means and the end of education. People increasingly learn

to use resources, including educators and other experts, to improve the quality of their lives. This includes reflection to uncover assumptions and potential distortions in thinking.

Education has a big role to play in assisting students with TL and studies are showing that it does indeed occur for students. As noted in Glisczinski's study (2007):

More than one third of the college students who participated in this study appeared to have experienced transformative learning in the classroom, in campus life, in residential living, or in field experiences. These students identified disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, rational dialogue and taking better-informed action as the benchmarks of their perspective transformation. (p. 322)

This study further underscores that ASPs perceive that TL is a potential learning at university, as exemplified by their reporting during their interviews.

4.3.2 ASPs Reporting Little Knowledge of Transformative Learning

Two participants relate very little in their interviews that could be considered TL. These participants are relatively new to their programmes, one has a BA and the other has an LLB and they do not have advanced degrees. They both appeared to be well under 30 years old. One's programme is in its first year, and the other works in a programme with a long history involving many senior staff where she mostly organises the administration of the placements. In her role, however, she does have contact with the students. Both of these ASPs comment on the increase in confidence levels of the students from their placement participation: 'They've become a bit more confident and maybe had their eyes opened a bit of what the real world is like and what might be expected of them in the future' (Lane). Rena, from a law clinic has a different notion of TL when presented with the theory, saying:

...it's something that I've heard about it from speaking about with [Name] who runs the [Area] law clinic that he has said that students initially go into law with very altruistic values and wanting to help people and wanting to change the world and then, at something like three months after commencing their studies, they've changed. And it becomes about the money or what firm could I work at and how much could I make. (Rena)

The above quote is the only unenthusiastic notion on TL encountered from participants in the study. Taylor and Cranton (2013) write that this is an unmet gap in the literature: ‘Surprisingly, little is written in the transformative learning literature about either the inherent goodness of the outcomes of transformative learning or the often-painful process of moving toward those outcomes’ (p. 36). While both these ASPs say TL and TLT are new to them, both expressed interest: ‘To be honest it’s not something that I’ve really thought about in that way. But I definitely will from now on’ (Rena).

The next category of responses groups four ASPs whose responses are not clear enough to determine if the ASPs recognise TL in their courses. Since the responses are not as clear as their comparisons, they are deemed ‘maybes’ in Table 4.2 for relating just some elements of TL in their work.

Lena (PhD) describes a new placement programme that is aimed at linking students with local, global and environmental sustainability issues in business:

So where they study, I mean the [Town] is one of the highest areas of social deprivation anywhere within the UK. Students are often completely unaware of that because they come from largely higher-end social economic backgrounds. And so they can be quite disconnected from their ... study locality. We’re going to have key speakers to come in and to connect them to the issues of global warming, global poverty and international relations and how it impacts on business and so we’re trying to connect them that way, but then we’re also trying to connect them at a very local level with thinking about their own learning in a much wider sense and see the value of their learning both personal, community and through that medium of that project. (Lena)

While the pilot programme has gone well, Lena discusses issues regarding the more ‘traditional’ academic staff questioning the time students spend on placement learning when there is so much subject matter to be covered. This indicates differences in opinion in some faculties, an aspect that will be further explored in the chapter on ASPs and Universities.

Adam, who conducted the research but did not complete his doctoral studies, has placement responsibilities for a business studies department. He reports that his background is mostly working in businesses, including a social enterprise. He does not

express strong knowledge of theory or pedagogy through the interview. He mentions he wants to see more work in the modules on the students becoming reflective practitioners and says he might use TLT (Appendix B) to engage students in a pre-placement session. Ivan, who has a PhD, is not involved in placement learning at the moment, but offers insights into employability and volunteerism from his considerable academic and community work.

These preceding six ASPs do not communicate enough about the elements of TL in their work to be categorised as knowledgeable of TL, nor do they report familiarity with TLT. The next 23 participants report elements of TL in their pedagogy with ten report having familiarity with Mezirow's TLT.

4.3.3 ASPs Reporting Knowledge of Transformative Learning

The following discussion focuses on ASPs reporting their experience with students and teaching in experiential (mostly placement) modules. In keeping with the naturalistic dimension of the methodology, some other kinds of placements are brought up by the ASPs and are reported on when appropriate.

Emily (PhD) is an administrator, whose role includes a remit of teaching and learning over a large faculty with several disciplines, including health and social work. She notes that student feedback consistently reports that placement learning is valuable and is seen to enable reflection:

What our students tell us is that it is the practice learning element, the placement, the work-based learning, that they really gain the most from because it's the thing that brings it alive. And it enables them to link up what they learn in the classroom with real-life so it actually facilitates this kind-of reflective engagement. (Emily)

Emily also relates several examples of students who, through the wider participation initiatives, have had their lives transformed through their university experiences. She therefore sees TL potential, especially for mature learners and learners with disabilities: 'I've worked with students where university has changed their lives'. She is concerned that the movement is now focused too much on an 'employability agenda', which could reduce the opportunities for non-traditional students:

One of the challenges we've got ... as we increasingly focus on discourses of employability, for example in seeing a university education as ultimately about having a career and contributing towards the economy, what you then lose is the education as a transformative experience because in essence we are training people to keep to their role within the university... while some individuals – what we might call the widening participation – may as a result improve their own social standing, move from a working class background to having a middle class career. The idea that universities should be tied so closely to the employment sector and ultimately that employers should be telling us what to include in our degrees, I think is anathema. I mean it's just appalling... what that model does because ultimately universities lose their ability to make a positive impact on society through transformation. (Emily)

Emily relates concerns that the TL potential will be diminished through an employability agenda.

Ike reports he came to academia as a non-traditional student and earned a PhD. He now wants to make the potential transformational experience easier on the students than it was for him. One way he is attempting to do this is by bringing students into the research activities with more senior staff:

...because I remember as a student that you came to lectures, you had small group work and then you went away. And learning was very much a sort-of atomised, very individualistic, often competitive experience and what I want to try and do is to ... break down ... barriers really between the staff and the students and get people to ... recognise that we're all engaged in the same endeavour. (Ike)

As he is not currently teaching in placement modules there is little to say of the potential for TL in the modules. He does however say that he asks students to attend community meetings where they are exposed to 'policy in action' and to meet people employed in government agencies. He is also involved in some new course designs that involve projects for the volunteer sector, which he says should involve research projects conceived by and useful to the community agencies involved. He reports that he understands the TLT as presented to him in the interview, proceeding to discuss reading Freire, whose work influences him and contributes to Mezirow's TLT.

Edward, with an MSW degree, is not particularly looking at TL, but at 'skills, attitudes and knowledge' with the caveat that 'You can change somebody's skills and turn them out as a worker much easier than you can change their attitude'. He says that TL experiences may occur, but they are not considered as part of the course:

I think some people I suspect do make these kinds of changes but some don't. And I don't think we are actively trying to make it happen. And I'm sure there are some people who make these changes without really either bothering to tell us which might be a bit of a struggle for them or even it being apparent in anything they write or submit to us so I think I acknowledge that this transformational change might take place and I think the placement is a key area for that to happen because the student has to get up from a desk and stop looking at a computer and go and do things with other people. (Edward)

There is however little support for the phases of TL, especially critical reflection or discourse, although some provisions are made that could support dialogue:

The Blackboard, the learning platform, is open for them. They actually tend not to use it very much and I think some of them, well there's kind-of friendship networks that develop and I think some students support each other quite effectively that way but that's it, saying there's some students who might even feel a bit lonely or out on a limb about it. (Edward)

Edward recognises that the students are not supported through potential TL experiences and may feel uncomfortable. He also states that restrictions may be due to lack of time: 'I think our programme is probably too short either to expect a lot of that to happen'. The placement to which he refers is 30 days, but there are others who acknowledge a TL potential in shorter placements. While Edward says he knows of Mezirow's TLT, TL is not a fostered process. He relates this to his personal 'ethos' and states that:

There really are many hotly disputed views about addiction. You know if we changed the teaching staff here for next year, we can have an entirely different view on a) the nature of addiction and b) how it should be taught and how you evidence, whether you think these students are competent, capable or should be let loose on the problem drinking public and maybe even be employed. (Edward)

Edward does not believe his remit includes changing belief structures, but with providing information for students to use in their practices. So if someone wants to continue to believe addiction is a disease he sees that is acceptable. Further, most of the students come to the course from professions where, he says, they already have their own ethos.

Allie (PhD) and works in Educational Development Staff Services. In discussing several elements of TL, she says that for reflection:

I'd give a structure. I'm a great believer in giving people lots of structure when you ask them to reflect, at least in the early stages ... in the belief that people who reflect easily will transcend the structure anyway. They'll just do it. People who don't reflect easily, or at least who don't write about reflection easily, will really benefit from having that structure'. (Allie)

This attests to the potential of teaching support for at least this phase of TL. On the topic of discourse, Allie currently works with academics to improve practice and shares a theoretical perspective on TL:

What the role of the tutor is in bringing about this kind-of transformative education. You get a discussion going. People share their learning, share their experiences. Maybe you set a problem. But if you're really on top of your material, you are listening for the point where the group is no longer challenging each other and then ideally you can put in some questions, which would move them on to the next level. And it's Socratic actually... Socrates was the master of it. He only did it one-to-one. So it's that being enough tuned into somebody's thinking and where they've come from in that thinking to be able to pose the questions that really challenge their thinking. Now groups can do this for each other without a tutor if they work well. And certainly groups of adults, you'd expect them to do it for each other. Clearly it's got to be based on trust because you really do have to expose the grounds of your assumptions in order to get that challenge. But if you've got a tutor in the group they can both help develop the trust, model the trust and hopefully model a way of presenting a challenge in such a way that people can hear it and work with it. (Allie)

Isabel (MD) teaches in a school of medicine that uses problem based learning (PBL). She attests to the disorienting dilemma, and may even be encouraging them, as she says 'we do sort-of go out of our way to inject a degree of uncertainty into the students because this is what practicing medicine is about. It's about juggling uncertainty really. So it's never black and white subject This is really what PBL seeks to do, to inject that degree of uncertainty'.

The uncertainty Isabel describes could be similar to other conditions that cause students to experience disorienting dilemmas, which, while being one of the elements of TL, is sometimes referred to as a 'trigger' (Cranton, 2006, p. 72, Mezirow, 1991b). When students are only familiar with traditional education, a different pedagogy like PBL, placements, reflecting and observing different people's lives may be disorienting. The course offers discussions and critical reflections that could be TL supporting:

In year one now they do have a reflective portfolio so obviously they'll come back to our sessions and they might say, oh gosh that was awful. The house is filthy and they have an opportunity to be emotional. But they can actually write into reflective documents as well. Going to see a family was the most poignant experience'. (Isabel)

Isabel relates further indications that there may be perception changes:

I think their attitudes do change because I think most 18-year-olds want to be brain surgeons... that's great but I think it does actually dawn on them that a lot of medicine is the unattractive day-to-day stuff so I think... that they do start to appreciate that most of the patients that you're going to treat are going to be old patients with many problems that are very complicated and most probably increasingly complicated because of social, environmental and psychological factors as well... They do change. Hopefully it's not too traumatic for them. (Isabel)

There are not enough indications that the process of TL is supported or fostered in the programme, but the action phase may be indicated from experiences for students available through other university programmes. Isabel describes some voluntary projects medical students do in the community:

Medical students, they are fantastic. They do lots of other things like, say, go and teach sex education in schools, basic life support, things like this that that are done really through the student societies and not part of the course as such. (Isabel)

In a criminal justice studies course the content itself is of a social justice nature: 'that's what we do in criminal justice; we look at the... way in which the law impacts negatively on certain people. It's okay if you're white, middle class and well off, but if you're not ...' (Elisa). Students in the placement learning module are expected to write a report 'that combines their own reflections on a criminological issue that they have become aware of in the placement which they link [with] their readings around the subject'. A new issue could conceivably be a starting point for a TLE, especially if students are able to critically reflect and consider their beliefs and premises. This is potentially useful for reflective learning, as Elisa (PhD) indicates. She includes reflection as a learning topic, stating:

I do a session with them on reflective writing and within that session I give them a piece of reflective writing that's done at four levels of reflection so there's sort-of surface level down to very deep reflection and that's just to really give them an example. Well that's the gold standard for you to achieve. (Elisa)

For this assignment the student would need ‘...to reflect on what they found out, how they found out about it, possibly how it made them feel and draw in the criminological literature. So they create ... a cohesive assignment’. Within this unit, the students’ placements are only ten days and usually entail observations. The pedagogy provides opportunity for students to reflect critically on these observations and could support deeper learning. A dialogue phase is perhaps present within these assignments and through Elisa’s office appointments; however the other phases are not as evident.

Similarly, a law clinic work experience can expose students to social justice issues they may not have considered prior to their experiential learning opportunities. Here they deal with real world people and their active legal problems. As Ronda (PhD in progress) discusses when recounting a client her students have taken on:

There was a school closing down and it was in a quite deprived area of [Town]. It was considered to be a very good school, the one chance a lot of those pupils would have, and... they’d have to now travel a much greater distance and a lot of those [pupils] wouldn’t have cars. They weren’t laying buses on so how would the students... get there? And we had two brilliant girls doing it who had never thought about such issues, children not being able to get to school, because your mother drove you to school. (Ronda)

Ronda continues to speak about the students’ reactions to the wider considerations:

They’re very enthusiastic. But I think... their world is quite narrow on the whole...they don’t seem to be particularly politicised. I think this clinic opens their eyes to quite a lot of things in that way which I’d hope is important ... some of them haven’t even really heard of the suffragettes. And I was talking to them last week about access to justice and I was saying: why would some people have been wary of the police in this country in the 1980s? No idea of the Birmingham six, the Guildford four, nothing like that. And so I then had to go into something else which had to do with women’s rights and if you look at Emily Pankhurst and they looked at me blankly and one of them said, oh that was a long time ago and I said yes. We weren’t alive then. And I said, no, nor was I. But I’m aware of it... But I think it is a major problem. So I’m hoping that we do give them a wider experience. I’m hoping a transformative one. (Ronda)

Ronda ties this lack of knowledge to her view of the education system in which she feels students are not encouraged to question or even think:

Do you know that I truly am concerned about education in this country at the moment and in particular that it is modular led ... if you learn the right things and then regurgitate them in the right pre-programmed way, you will do very well. That to my mind is not education. I'm not sure how much they're encouraged to question ... [It's] very difficult to say to students well your whole lives at school have been coached for exams, not educated towards them. And I'm hoping that this takes them out of their comfort zone in that way. And you can see often very, very high achieving students up until this point looking around blankly as I give them a scenario. And they say, well I don't know what to do. (Ronda)

While Ronda states her intention to widen her students' perceptions, there is seemingly little support for potential disorienting dilemmas, critical reflections, rational discourses, or planning courses of action. However, she introduces ideas and may be 'planting seeds' or perhaps even adding to an on-going TL process through the university experience.

In another example of reflective learning, Tomas, a business studies ASP, discusses how he utilises a reflective assignment that encourages the possibility of discourse between students:

We give them online resources so that we define what reflection [is, including] the various types of reflection. We give them samples of pieces of work which are at different stages of reflection and they, through online discussion boards, will chat to their fellow placement learning students who are going through the same material. You know I can see that and I can input to it and pose questions if need be but by and large that's normally quite well run by the student population themselves. So yeah critical reflection is the focal point. (Tomas)

Tomas also discusses his perceptions of some of the differences between the experiences of students who do their paid placement year at a for-profit business as contrasted with those whose placement is at a charity (but still a paid placement). He reports on a charity that assists young offenders who subsequently seek to start their own businesses, where business students are placed to help the charity and the youth participants. These two groups of students face differences within their placement experiences because the business models are different. The activities surrounding income generation are different, and usually primary in business, while the activities assisting the participants are primary in the charity. Tomas also sees different outcomes for these students based on their placement experiences. This difference between students placed in for-profit versus students placed in non-profit sectors speaks also to the importance of the action phase of TL:

[For] those students in the [Non-Profit Name] ... their use of language was different, their approach to writing the report was different and the outcomes – which is really what we're looking for ... to get their conclusions and what's happening to them in terms of career choices – those were shaped much more clearly. The ones that had that type of experience seem to be much more sure about what it was that they wanted to do. It was as if a door had opened for them ... They suddenly thought, well no this third sector would be a good place to work. If that meant going away and getting a further qualification then that's what they were interested in doing. So certainly in probably three out of six instances from that organisation, that was the perception of what I have of what the students now expect to do. (Tomas)

The business students do not tend to seek out these placements because they're non-profits, as Tomas explains: 'They would have been applying for a variety of posts in any of the sectors really and I think it was really once they were in the post that they suddenly realised that this was not a traditional placement experience' (Tomas). Tomas explains that these students further want to share their experiences with their peers, which could be considered a continuation of the action phase in a more social dimension:

Those particular students were very amenable to spreading the gospel I suppose is one way to look at it ... don't overlook the third sector simply because ... [the] voluntary sector, charities, won't be the same type of experience, you won't get the same knowledge of business, but far from it. They certainly wanted to sing the praises of the experience. (Tomas)

In these discussions, Tomas is describing only six students in community placements. When describing students who go on paid placements, he states that when they return to university, their confidence is higher and they present as more mature than their fellow students do. Therefore, while TL potential is present in placement learning, Tomas discusses a perception of a stronger potential for student learning and development within community placements.

Alan (MSc) teaches in the placement modules in a nursing programme. He relates instances of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection and action planning. He discusses the potential effect of these types of learning on his students and his own experiences with disorienting dilemmas:

It's taking them out of their comfort zone and it's then rebuilding it sensitively and saying to them look, there is a way for you to cope with this and that's why you're in education in the first place ... I actually think it's very good for students to

experience that because in some ways it's pulling the rug out from underneath their feet... (Alan)

Critical reflection is seen as key to developing the skills needed to be a nurse:

We give them some models of reflection in a module called Reflection in Practice ... the final part of the reflection, the future action, what will you do in future when you're in a similar situation so that you make sense using that loop, that cycle, and just keep using it with other patients. They're also asked to put in personal reflections at the end of each year in their portfolio on what are called critical incidents. Identify a few critical incidents during your placement experience and use a reflective process to make sense of them. So that again tells us if they understand reflection or not. (Alan)

Alan likens TL to empowerment and says that opportunities for TL can be there but their presence is not essential:

I don't think we can ever teach anybody to be empowered. We can facilitate the process of empowerment but they become empowered – not because of what we're teaching them – but because of their experiences and how they react to what they're taught. ...[W]e want patients to feel empowered to make decisions but we also want nurses to feel empowered to question other people's decisions on behalf of their patients and say actually is this the best thing for Mr Smith and his family? (Alan)

Alan's relays that the programme endeavours to expose students to experiences and opportunity for development with the hope that this can lead to them feeling empowered to act when warranted: a student may undergo TL to feel justified and able to question authority. Alan does not report group discussions or opportunities for the nurses to discuss their perceptions and experiences: there does not appear to be much opportunity for discourse. Another participant, Ariel, is newly working as a placement coordinator, which includes working with law clinics. During the interview she discusses that she does not feel she knows enough to work with TL in her employability role. She does however discuss TL considerations in a simulation module she has been involved with for several years. She relates some examples of how this module has prompted disorienting dilemma for some students:

We ... say to the students that they are responsible for their own ... learning but also their own kind-of mental health both individually and as a team ... I say at the very first meeting that if you like I am here as an ear but also as a facilitator if individually or as a group they wanted to come in and talk about something ... And I remain

available to them. It usually takes three to four days and I remain available to them, a bit like a social worker basically... I'm there on hand to really just perhaps suggest things and sometimes comfort... Because sometimes it is quite upsetting for some of them. There have been lots of tears on these trips. (Ariel)

This 'upset' alludes to a potential disorienting dilemma as the students are dealing with the non-traditional assessment procedure of self-assessment, which is further discussed in Chapter 5: Assessment.

Another ASP who is new to her placement role, Yvonne (PhD), has a long research career. She relates examples of her experience that indicate she is aware of the TL potential in placement experience:

And for many of [the students] too, they come from I suppose quite sheltered backgrounds and there's a difference between what you actually learn in a lecture hall about the challenges people might face on a day-day basis. Going... to the children's centre... seeing what a struggle it is for some people to actually make ends meet on a day-to-day basis and how difficult parenting is when you are under stress. So I think those things also have the potential to be quite important in changing the way you actually view the world and the way you actually question yourself. (Yvonne)

In this example, the critical reflective process is part of the module:

Reflection is that ability to actually critique their learning, to think constructively about what they're taking from any given situation They're encouraged to write a reflective diary every day they are on placement to help them with that reflective process and they're encouraged not to think just in descriptive terms, telling us what they actually did but to actually gain that greater insight from looking back on it: How would I have done things differently? What would I have learned from it? How did others perceive me in that instance? How could I change that in future? (Yvonne)

Yvonne provides opportunity for discourse:

Although they're out on work-based learning they're expected to touch base with me and tell me what they're doing – to come back in and talk about what they're doing [and] tell me if there are any problems. Universally those who have come and spoken to me have been illuminated by what they actually have seen that has challenged their preconceptions and you know for some of them it has so far even made them think about ... pursuing potentially different career options. (Yvonne)

Yvonne discusses a student who is seemingly in the action phase, whereby he is organising a new café for students that would be non-alcohol focused and offer ethically traded merchandise. This student is also reported to be an advocate for placement learning and had been asked to speak to current and potential students:

He's not only come and talked to my students but he does the talks for prospective students in the...open days and he's able to say that ... of all the modules he did in his sociology course this was the single module that he considered to be most important because it did actually change his perspective. (Yvonne)

Rita (PhD) describes a volunteer placement module for first year computing science students which she co-designed with a computing science professor to get students 'out from behind their desks'. She discusses how disorienting dilemmas provide learning potential to her students:

We're sort-of throwing them in the deep end, just helping them to recognise the whole richness and variety of learning opportunities that there are there. [Some] of them find it really difficult because their comfort zone and their safe zone [are] behind a computer. And we're actually taking the computers away. They've got to go and talk to people and do things and interact. (Rita)

On the topic of reflection, Rita shares the following:

One of the other elements that is also key to this programme is reflective learning and reflective practice – what have I learned? What skills have I got? Where did it go wrong? How can I do it better? So there's a very definite thread of building reflective practice in so the students don't just learn skills and knowledge but they develop reflective practice... [All] of those elements went into this module. (Rita)

Within this module the student presentations offer an opportunity for students to share their learning with each other. Rita discusses how these presentations also allow her to gain insights on her students' learning:

Sometimes students stand up and say, you know I judge people and [the placement] really changed [my] mind... And some will take it on the surface and just think about themselves, but others will really say well what am I learning about society? And some of them ... really do get into that. And, as I say, their presentations at the end you're just blown away by some of them. And some students surprise you and you

just don't think that they've picked it up ... which is actually great because then they'll take that with them. (Rita)

The opportunity for discourse is not overtly available in the module, but, at the time of the interview, Rita explains that she has had discussions with a colleague at another university who has set up a buddy system, which she is considering integrating into her module. As she states: 'so I don't do that but I think it's an absolutely brilliant idea that I'd like to bring in the future running of the module. (Rita)

Perhaps because Rita's module is for first year students TL potential does not seem to be as fully realised as other modules considered in this thesis. However Rita is an established scholar and relates that she has had the opportunity to witness the TL of students of this module who return in later years to work on other projects, and these students tell Rita that they still consider their placement experience foundational to their development.

Avery (PhD) states that a goal of the third year interdisciplinary placement is to 'develop [students] as independent learners with a view either to exit at year three or go on to fourth year honours'. The action phase can be considered to be a built-in 'experience that allows them to make the decision as to what they want to do beyond the placement'. She recognises the opportunity for disorienting dilemmas in the course's placement pedagogy as 'it is hard for them because it's a different approach to what they've done before'. Taking over from a convener who developed and taught the placement module for over a decade Avery is in her first year working as its convener. She has only read the journal assignments from one class, which appear to be lacking any deep or critical reflection:

I think the main narrative that I'm reading in looking at their journals [is] "I felt I didn't fit in and then I was integrated within the workforce and I started enjoying it" and it doesn't really go much beyond that, I have to say'

While this is a first time for Avery to be offering the module, she has experience in being the 'discipline supervisor' for students in prior placement modules.

In Avery's module, the readings' list includes Mezirow's *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* but there appears to be

a lack of critical reflection at the time of the interview. There is also a lack of discourse opportunity between students while they are on placement as Avery relates:

The previous convener felt that it was quite important that the students were left on their own and that that was part of the experience. So there wasn't any attempt to set up social networking opportunities. It was felt that if they did that [then] that was their own responsibility. I think she felt that the placement experience should involve the students basically negotiating problems on their own and [that it should be representative of] doing that in the workplace so that they had the experience of really being in the workplace and they weren't looking for a lot of support from the university. I'm not sure I wholly agree with that and I think possibly in future I might at least set up a Moodle page or something that they can use because I'm not wholly convinced actually that leaving them is the right way to go. (Avery)

Within this course, there is formal opportunity for discussion, but the course is not designed to elicit discourse: '[They] are communicating in a formal way through the session they have in the sixth week where they report on their experience, air any issues that are arising and discuss' (Avery).

Avery does explain that she sees a link between the course and TL: 'I think certainly overall we are looking for this kind-of progression.' However, she goes on to explain that 'I don't know how often [TL] actually happens in practice' and it becomes clear that certain phases of the course could be enhanced to foster TL. Avery very much recognises the potential of TL within the course, stating: 'it can be quite a momentous learning experience for the students I'm realising this year' (Avery).

Another ASP, Sara (PhD), discusses how the teaching programme she works in has recently changed:

In the past we used to ... teach curricular areas. Now we're very much [focused on] the placement ... [The] degrees [are] very much about them in the first number of years [where we want students to be] thinking of themselves as teachers and as learners and understanding their own educational values ... rather than looking purely at a subject within the curriculum. So there's less curricular content and much more focus on themselves as professionals and learning how they should be understanding education themselves (Sara).

In this new pedagogical approach, critical reflection is crucial:

Critical reflection is absolutely key. That's what we're expecting from them. For them to be critically reflecting on their own practice at all times. Everything that we're asking them to do is to critically think about their own professional practice. Construct and sustain reasoned and coherent practice. Value themselves as professionals. Reflect on and act and prove the effectiveness of their own practice and contribute to the processes of curriculum development. So it's about them looking at themselves individually and critically reflecting on that, on themselves and also what they're saying ... [We want them to develop the] ability to self-evaluate, to work with others, to be aware of the wider community and looking at the theory and the practice and how that informs practice. (Sara)

An action-planning phase is built into this curriculum whereby:

[Students] have to write a personal [and] professional development plan so they take [over] the responsibility [for this] after the conversation with their member of staff in school, after the conversation with their tutor. They have to identify the areas that they need to work on... [That is] the work that they do here, when they reflect back on their placement. (Sara)

Here discourse seemingly occurs amongst students when they work together in 'peer work, a lot of group work, a lot of presentations ... [done] collectively, a lot of online discussion forums.' Sara explains 'that over the last number of years with the introduction of this new degree and this change in direction, [the students are] much more articulate and able to say we need this; we want this'. Within this course, student discourse with the tutors is said to occur, especially when students are out on placement. Sara explains that 'students are always able when they're out in school to contact their tutor to talk it through with them.'

Within this specific course, there is indication that disorienting dilemmas occur in two areas. One area is in the newer curriculum, where students are not being taught the 'how to-s' and the second area is when a student does not have a good placement experience. As Sara details:

In the past there was the... criticism that we were spoon-feeding them. This is how you teach this. This is how you teach that. We don't give them any of that anymore. They have to take the responsibility to go and find that out for themselves but what we do give them is the confidence to believe in who they are. (Sara)

There is support provided for dilemmas that occur to students while they are on placement within this course. As Sara explains, 'if things are really tough on the students and [they

are] distressed and they've tried everything and the odd time this does happen. A student and I, we keep in contact via email' (Sara).

These 14 ASPs relayed various examples of TL in their interviews and of how TL is integrated to varying degrees within these courses. Overall, it is clear that these ASPs understand the process of TL even though all but two had not learned of Mezirow's TLT.

4.3.4 ASPs Report Recognising and Fostering Transformative Learning

From these interviews there appears to be opportunities for students to experience TL within these course settings and there appears to be opportunities for academic staff to be aware of, support and even foster TL with their students.

The following discussion involves the ten ASPs who more clearly indicate that the phases of TL are present in their courses. Of these ten participants one ASP knows TLT but does not use it; five know and use the theory and three ASPs indicate that TL is occurring within their classes, but they do so without having had prior knowledge of the theory.

An educationalist with a PhD, Uma, knows TLT but does not use it for a framework in her student-centred courses unless a student brings it up. She does however report on the TL processes of the placement courses:

[It's] about critical reflection on reading and reflection on the topic, being able to critically analyse and then synthesise and bring together different ideas ... [It] is part of bringing different lenses to bear on their experiences so that they're not just learning from experience. It is a mediated process [which occurs] through their readings, through their engagement with the tutor. (Uma)

As an example of TL Uma describes a situation where a student is in a placement at a national retail store:

I've got one student at the moment... she's working in a retail store in [Town] and she's starting to notice the differences there between her working there as someone who just comes in and does a bit of extra work to help fund her study ... And then some people who work there for ... a permanent full-time occupation and they have

to be there. And I think she's starting to notice how the workplace is fine for her to dip in and out of but how difficult it is if that's the place where you're limited to and if that was your whole working life and working career, how limited and how constrained that would be. And I guess it's leading her to thinking more carefully about qualities of equality and equity of workplaces. (Uma)

The learning is seemingly supported by discourse on education and TL itself that Uma is seems to be having with her students:

One of the conversations we have been having has been around the differences between professional education and work-based training and how some people are permitted to be engaged in education and have their minds extended and other people are expected to take on quite menial tasks... and then, what's that about really? ... What kinds of potential might these people have that they're just being overlooked or not considered? (Uma)

Uma describes a story of a mature student who had found and used TLT for their summative work-based training report: 'She saw the experience as having been transformational because it was something that she had not experienced before so she found it disorientating at first because it was new and strange and so she quite consciously used this as a framework' (Uma).

Uma's pedagogy appears to be of central importance to the TL potential of her students. In a second year module, the students undertake 'an auto-ethnographic study of their own learning in the workplace.' She indicates that TL can occur but she thinks it can be learned through other scholars and theories.

Several of the ASPs teach and are involved in placement or community project work with students over longer professional programmes such as those within the disciplines of medicine, nursing, dentistry, social work and community development. Of these, the ASPs in social work and community development report familiarity with Mezirow's TLT and utilise the theory within their educational practices.

The community development programme is of three years duration and this may allow for more TL and more evidence of TL. Andy and Mary, who work in the community development programme included in this study, mention the changes they see in students

from first to third year: '[People] make huge journeys, actually, to be fair to them. The transformation in people's thinking and learning from first year to third year is remarkable really' (Andy). Within this course, all phases of TL appear to be present; even the title of the first year course includes the term 'transformative practice'. The discourse phase seems to be very strong and the instructors see it as pivotal:

I think the dialogue with literature takes you so far in as much as you can interrogate your own thinking about ideas but it's the assumptions that you bring to that that you can't see and your thinking about your thinking that you can't see. And you do have to have that ... through that process of dialogue ... Because learning for me absolutely is a social process. I mean book learning, fancy book learning is okay but it only takes you so far I think ... And I suppose one of the things we do is we try and force the peer support, peer learning groups and it's not just about learning but it's about all these other kind-of amplifications that people have so they can navigate through some of these dilemmas because often again people would rather talk to their peers than talk to us because they still feel those power relationships... the dialogical approach... that builds confidence to be able to think and to be able to share [is] hugely important. It gives them a sense of control of their learning. (Andy)

Andy ties the TL experience of the individual learner to the wider context:

It's also about – it's about introducing people to wild ideas, to big ideas. You know often people think very narrowly, you know and they're kind-of locked into their own experience. So you take that bit of experience and you say: that links to this. This is global. This is universal stuff which inspires people and gives people a sense of their location in the grand scheme of things. You give them a sense of history. That what you're doing isn't just something that you've dreamed up or something that your project dreams up but actually you stand in a tradition of thinking and learning and practice and within a body of literature. And I know that when I first discovered... the Freirian stuff. It's like I can't believe that I'm not making this up. I can't believe that there are other people that think this and much, much more. (Andy)

Mezirow (1996) provides some important characteristics of TLT, one of which is that TL can be 'of the individual (subjective), or of an external piece of the world (objective)' (p. 162) and these ASPs provide indications that these programmes allow for both subjective and objective TL. Andy explains that they look to provide possibilities of both these kinds of TL in the programme he coordinates with Mary:

A surprising number of students come here and discover they've got... dyslexia. You know at the age of 30, 40, and 50, and the age of our students range from mid-twenties to mid-fifties broadly so if you come to you know the middle of your life and you find I wasn't stupid after all, you know. And that's just amazing. A lot of

our students come from working class backgrounds without any kind-of history or tradition of culture of higher education: Higher education isn't for the likes of us, you know'. (Andy)

Andy provides an example of a pedagogy that provides opportunity for experiential learning through travel, while also highlighting the potential within this pedagogy for disorienting dilemmas:

So it's ... a bit risky but people learn at that point of crisis. When we took people to India into slums and people go from being ... poor [County] to being rich white people and it did their heads in ... just total crisis. Total crisis emerged from that over a few days with experiences that ... were embodied within them that they would never lose. (Andy)

Andy contrasts the notion of fostering TL, or the process of making deliberate attempts to create situations in which TL is likely, to the notion of supporting TL, which is far less likely:

[This is the sort-of] learning that you get in your body. You learn through crisis. You learn through struggle. You learn through panic. And you want to be able to – as an educator – immerse people in a safe crisis. (Andy)

The pedagogy includes delving into these dilemmas to work with students and is seen as part of the educator's role:

...it's very personal and it's about how you see things and what you believe about yourself and your world and your relationship to it and the difference you make and all this sort-of stuff so it can get quite choppy waters for people... It's also about challenging people's thinking, challenging people's narrowness, challenging people's prejudices, assumptions, all of the stuff that people can't do for themselves. (Andy)

Mary, who also works in this community development course, sums up what she sees as the learning processes for students in this programme:

[They] do a presentation about their journey and their learning and in first year you notice it's quite descriptive and it's about this is what I did. They're still struggling to look at [how] the values [fit] into practice and maybe to align themselves with some theories but as they go into second year, you notice a change. And they say [it] themselves: Oh this course has changed me completely and I feel that I'm not the

same. I feel that I would challenge discrimination. I wouldn't put up with this... by the time they're in third year; they're far more critical practitioners. They're almost going through that again where they're challenging some of what they thought in second year. (Mary)

The three ASPs from two social work programmes also work with students over three or four year programmes. They all say they are using the TLT process as one of their frameworks. These programmes have existed for a long time and the ASPs credit the programmes for developing a strong TL supportive curriculum. 'We have inherited years of a programme developing quite organically into something that is transformative' (Nancy).

As discussed in relation to this programme, the act of attending or returning to HE can be disorienting for some students:

We deal with some very non-traditional, disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged students. So we often come across students who are very good in practice and can't write for toffee. You know so there's a lot of work to be done in hopefully bringing the students up to that level. But we sometimes face a very difficult situation. (Nancy)

Potential disorienting dilemmas can be processed through reflection exercises, as Nancy points out:

[For] first year students who go into that first observational placement... [It] completely throws them and so they have to do that searching for answers. ... [We] provide reflective learning tools like a reflective diary which gives them questions to prompt their thinking so they begin to do that self-examination bit and make some assessments on maybe some of the pre-conceived notions that they had before they went on placement. We would ask them to think about all those things and give them those written prompts in the form of questions. (Nancy)

As Valerie concurs, 'It's absolutely our intention...to put students in situations... where their existing resources don't work and they have to take that leap and establish what they can do.' Valerie provides an example of a student who is seemingly in a process of TL and who appears to be a bit disoriented. In this situation, Valerie provides the student with an opportunity for discourse:

She's come twice and she's sat in that chair and she's almost ready to burst. She's a 40 year old woman who's discovered global social injustice and she wants to be out there doing it and so she comes and ...we talk about what that means in social work ... and then she's kind-of decanted enough steam that she can go and study a bit more. (Valerie)

The social work programmes are created with aims for students to learn critical reflection in the curriculum that, as Nancy explains, 'is about the application of theory, ethical standards and values and practice, the ability to be critically analytical and reflective' (Nancy).

Nancy oversees the programme where the students have three or four years in their professional development programme. She explains that the courses have been 'built ... up incrementally over the years.' She goes on to explain that within the programme the aim is to integrate 'These skills and reflection and making sense of what happens out there in the real world and linking that back to what they're learning in here. So I think although it's maybe not formally written down in this kind-of way...it is very much what Mezirow talks about.' There are also indications of the incremental process to which assignments and learning activities refer. Valerie states:

[They] hand in a reflection on their first piece of work...they have an opportunity to use their own kind-of critical reflection and the feedback they've had to do a piece of work that improves what they did in the first place, depending on what it is that they hadn't done well... [or what] they wish had been in their original...piece (Valerie).

Lydia also explains that in 'final year ...we are expecting students to be much more autonomous, much more reflexive, much more critical in their approach and beginning to be much more creative.'

The programmes provide many opportunities for discourse with tutors, service users, between students themselves and with placement personnel. As Lydia points out: '[What] the mentor and these people who use the services offer is that crucial opportunity for discourse about what they're seeing and experiencing and feeling on placement so that they can make sense of all that.' She says that everyone involved is working together: 'The mentors who support these students on placements are employed by the agency but I usually provide training for mentors...we talk about Mezirow's theory.' (Lydia)

For group work, students need to learn skills to work with groups. As well, for their own learning, discourse is used as a learning process. In these situations, '[It's] about group performance, group work and about understanding content of their knowledge and they're supposed to research and bring material from their personal lives and their practice experience and their academic learning and make sense of that question together and it's brilliant' (Valerie).

For these social work programmes, the planning and action phases are a distinct part of students' professional development. Nancy explains that, 'at the end of their placement, they have come through that learning process and they know what they need to learn for the next time. So they do that planning and course of action and acquiring knowledge and skills' (Nancy). This is done for their own learning in the course, but also can be seen as a skill applicable in their professional lives:

The first one ... includes bits of reflective log and an essay about what they think social work is now and what their learning goals are and so forth. So it positions [where they function] as self-directed learners and then we can kind-of give them feedback about how well they're doing that and whether they understand that they're not jumping through hoops for us, that they're actually developing themselves as professionals. (Valerie)

Ursula reports that she studies Mezirow and integrates some of TLT as part of the readings in an Active Citizenship module that is designated as a Service-Learning module (Course Handbook). In the following quote she indicates that the elements of critical reflection, or what Mezirow (1981) calls 'a critical assessment of personally internalised role assumptions' (p. 6), as part of TLT's 'non sequential pattern of experience' are potentially present:

...we look at [how] media influences our attitudes and we may internalise certain views and attitudes. [It's] not just – that's just an example that we use – the media. But we look at oppression and discrimination in society and how we maybe internalise certain attitudes and that informs our behaviour. So they do look at that and they do question themselves and also about racism and other stereotypes... and it makes them question certain things. (Ursula)

Ursula alludes to the concept that 'transformations can be incremental or epochal' (Mezirow 1996, p. 162):

It's kind-of setting them up really for this and maybe it does change people. I just wonder: does it always do it when you want them to do it? Like when there's an assessment or is it something that they may not realise until they've left the university. They've graduated and they're doing something and they look back and think that did change me. But it is part of a process isn't it? (Ursula)

Group support between students is possible as part of the course discussions and may even go as far as to provide opportunities for discourse. The discourse is also between the students and the literature and between the students and Ursula, especially through a reflective essay assignment. The element of 'planning a course of action' in the critical incidents exercise (*an exercise within the course*) is another indication that this ASP seems to provide support for and even the fostering of TL:

I ask them to think of a situation and then reflect on it with questions like you know what did you do? What was happening at the time? So what did you do? What could you have done? What do you think was the best thing to do there? And then what do you think is the real reason for you having stopped in your tracks and how is this going to affect your future behaviour? (Ursula)

The module contains the elements to make TL possible and the ASP's perception is that it can be present, so the potential can be considered high. 'I do believe though that it can be part of transformative learning, service-learning pedagogy. I really do. I've seen it. It's certainly got all the ingredients' (Ursula).

According to Ila (PhD), the dentistry programme in which she works is seemingly designed to expose students to the phases of TL and to support the process. The community work is of significance to their learning of the profession. Ila relates the inherent possible disorienting dilemmas when students experience both the PBL pedagogy and the realities of people living in conditions unlike their own:

Because they'd all come from conventional universities. They sat in lectures. They wrote an essay. They crammed. They passed an exam ... we don't teach them anything. They do it all by debate and discussion and finding it out for themselves and then by facilitators. So that group then is given an academic tutor or somebody with a particular interest and we send them to different places and again they have to write their own project and it has to be health-promotional-based or dental. They have to work it up for themselves. They can do whatever they want but their academic tutor does make sure that they don't go...off-piste or do something dreadful ... and we had to have a lot of faith, a lot of faith when they were wobbling. (Ila)

The community projects are underscored by reflection exercises to help them learn from the experiences:

We then send them out to the community, two or three of them in year one and they spend a couple of weeks interviewing people that we approve and we send them to. They then write a reflective report... a 500-word reflection on: 'what did I learn when I was out there and how did that make me feel?' They've never been to a council estate before. Oh my goodness, there's graffiti on the walls... Dentistry isn't about sitting in your practice. It's about real people so we've already got them on real people ... A lot of these students are very middle class. They've gone to red brick universities in their ... previous degrees. And they haven't engaged at all with anybody real and it's to try and start them understanding that there is a wide-range of people out there all with different needs, demands and all with different problems and issues. And also a little bit to understand, I mean I haven't got that strictly in the aims and objectives, but to understand that actually we can't be pompous as health professionals and go around doing to people. You need to understand what people want as well as need and get that balance. So I expect them to understand that there are different people out there and they do have different issues. And actually some of them have worse dental health, oral health and basic health than others but why? And I want them to understand well why? (Ila)

The community projects thus provide learning opportunities for the students, supported by Ila:

But it's not my job to tell them it's not going to work. They have to find that out for themselves. All I do is guide them through it And they were devastated. They couldn't believe it. But we had 90% consent in school for us to examine the child without the parents there. But when we got them appointments and sent them home with appointments, the parents never brought them in. And I said, hey, what have you learned? And that was ... and they thought, well our project will fail. We'll do really badly. I said no. What have you learned? You've learned a really valuable lesson here. You know it's okay to try things and find they don't work. But maybe you should have looked a bit deeper as to what motivates people. (Ila)

The students learn to reflect. The reflection is a critical component to underscore strongly a TL experience and this may be the opportunity:

It's important for them to understand where the specialist dental services are and then they have to write a reflective report on how they found it and what, you know, the strengths were and the weaknesses were, threats, opportunities of that. When they do things it's mostly ... reflection is what they're marked on... it is their understanding of the issues and the problems. (Ila)

The reflection also involves the action planning for the students' own learning:

...have they got a plan for the next six weeks? Have they achieved what they should have achieved based on what they agreed and signed up to in the last? You know it doesn't matter. They can fail an exam or a test. That doesn't matter. That won't fail them. But are they progressing and reflecting. (Ila)

The group learning process provides opportunity for discourse, with limited facilitation unless the students get into difficulties:

The facilitator never leads them or tells them what to do. They stop them fighting probably... And they work through these cases as a group ... so patient one might be a child patient with this problem. And they have to debate it, discuss it, decide what they should have done with it and why. They go away and then they come back with their information and share it. And so they have 12 or 14 patients that [colleague name] ... and I wrote up... [with] pictures ... and ... all sorts of things. But the students have to work from ... what is the problem with this patient? Is this – what is their problem? And they stay as a group all the way through so there's a bit of friction sometimes. We have to sort-of sort them out. (Ila)

The community projects provide opportunities for action, as the students work through the development, implementation and succession of their group projects.

Honestly we can hold our hands up and say, our students have made a real difference ... the deal is we roll those programmes on. So part of what the students have to do is know that they must hand it over to the next group to take through or develop or enhance (Ila).

Throughout the process, Ila identifies the outcome of a potential TL experience:

You know you're tearing your hair out because they're saying oh but I don't know what I'm doing and I'm never going to do this and ... it's a jigsaw. You've got all your pieces of the jigsaw and actually you might go around the outside. You might be in the middle and you might concentrate too much there but eventually all those pieces fit together. And once they grasp that ... and now they're so cocky and confident... (Ila).

The process Ila outlines above involves critical reflections, group work, risk, developing confidence and working with unfamiliar populations and new situations, and appears to comprise the elements of TL. The other two ASPs who did not know of TLT prior to the interview work in quite different programmes: Anna with the Performing Arts programme and Laura (PhD) is involved in a new Master's level programme.

For Anna, who has worked in arts education for over 25 years, disorienting dilemmas are common among her students: ‘I just think they have to slog through the mud until they work it out.’ There is critical reflection in the assignments: ‘critical evaluation of themselves, they’re working in a group and working with others’ and that the students ‘...do an essay that critically reflects on what they’ve done and they use their working journals as an appendix’ (Anna).

The students have several occasions where they receive feedback on their productions, performances and workshops that they then use to make their action plans. ‘They reflect on the process... taking into account all the feedback they got, how they felt it went and any changes that they’re going to make’ (Anna).

Students in Anna’s programme often perform community theatre and workshops in prisons; these students, Anna says, change their perceptions:

Students absolutely change their opinions of what a prison is. They absolutely change their opinions about the society a prison has. They absolutely change their ideas of what they think should happen to prisoners. The students generally come out and say, they are people just like us. (Anna)

She tells a story of three students who did not want to do their project in schools, but ended up going along with the group. ‘Almost all of them said they want to go into teaching. They had all changed their perception about teaching, they changed their idea of what school is’. Anna continues:

...it’s quite a journey for some of the students. It’s an incredible journey. A lot of the students then go on to their creative project in fourth year which is lovely and there’s been six students and two groups who have then decided they would go and work in the same kind-of community areas and use their client group to put on a piece of community theatre and work that way. And we’ve had a number of students... They’ve been employed by the NHS in [Area] and they do at least two a year where they go into... a hospital: they go to out-patients; they go to groups that deal with depression etcetera, etcetera. (Anna)

While the programme does not necessarily set out to encourage TL, the elements are there and Anna says she recognises the potential.

While Laura says she does not have prior knowledge of Mezirow's conception of TLT, she understands TL: 'The other work I do with grad students, I think that's absolutely based on transformative learning paradigm, intentionally so'. She understands that the process, the disorienting dilemmas, can be difficult. As she says:

I think they all come with a fairly clear idea of what it is they're going to be researching and end up [laughing] and I just often say to them, yep you're losing your innocence because they've just hit a big thing that changes it all, that absolutely unravels all the world assumptions that they've had, in different ways. Some of them experience that ecstatically and some of them will experience that depressively. It usually has quite severe bodily trauma one way or another that I watch them go through and negotiate and out of them come absolutely astonishing, creative work. Would that it were not that painful... But I don't know how you get around it.
(Laura)

The above quote reflects a very poignant description of TL disorienting dilemmas, and this is given in the interview before TLT is mentioned. Laura also describes a programme where students do their projects in the community; 'I've been part of the project that has been setting up and designing a way of Master's students doing Master's research in volunteer and public sector organisations'. Regarding these students, Laura indicates that they could be in the action phase of their TL experiences:

Some of them have already gone through I think looking at their experiences of transformative learning previously and have come to us relatively well formed in theirs and their desire to work with the organisations they've chosen to do their dissertations really signals to me already lots of this work is already gone on. These aren't people you then necessarily want to spend a lot of time making ever more nuanced and critical about the world. You actually want to give them the energy and the wherewithal to go and make the difference because they've resolved things.
(Laura)

The transformation is seen to be at a level beyond that of the individual students:

We want this to be something that's solving real world problems. And in a sense I think our emancipatory and transformation dimensions, yes they're ontological but they're secondary in that sense. That actually the transformation that we want to see happening is in the domain of impact. We want their work to have immediate impact and access to a field where it can help the most vulnerable people. Secondary to that is that that will then also, through the process of being able to do that and learning how they do that, will change about how they think about themselves and their work.
(Laura)

Laura sees the aim of the educational programme is to enhance student capacities:

Your capacities as human beings in these situations are what matters and how you develop those. Then you are equipped to deal with the different things the world will throw at you rather than equipped to deal well technically with a particular set of intellectual questions. (Laura)

From these ASPs' interviews, it appears that not only those who deliver programmes with specific intentions to foster or support TL have the potential for TL. It is also likely that the curriculum and standards, pedagogy and ASP awareness can be influential in fostering or supporting a fuller cycle of learning.

The role of the educator could be crucial in providing a safe place to have and deal with the disorienting dilemmas inherent in this phase of TL. Assignments may offer the opportunity for students to reflect critically and to allow time and resources for discourse with each other, tutors, facilitators, literature and colleagues they meet on placement. These discourses can further be captured in the reflections. The action phase is also possible in a myriad of ways. Some ASPs discuss student presentations; some activities are available outside the course while some are included as part of the course structure. Whether the placement learning is part of or contains opportunities to experience the phases, many ASPs seem to recognise the TL potential for their students in the pedagogies of the modules, courses and programmes. The process of TL is a very personal process and could, with some individuals, make them feel vulnerable. This important issue within education needs to be more fully addressed. The receptiveness of the ASPs to the theory indicates that there may be a readiness to learn more and adopt (design, implement, explain) pedagogy more conducive to supporting and even promoting TL potential. In many the non-professional programmes there is seemingly a lack of time to observe students at the action phases in modular delivery formats. There is also a seeming lack of opportunities for discourse or even dialogue in many of the modules.

How do we assess all of that? Well that's tricky isn't it? (Andy)

5 Assessment

This chapter provides a review of the ASPs reports on assessment of student learning regarding standards, the people involved in the assessments, the types of assessments in these experiential learning modules and the ASPs assessment of TL. It reports on five aspects of assessment: the first describes some of the standards, views and challenges of assessments in the context of university placement learning; the second regards the formative, summative and authentic aspects of assessment in the modules; the third looks at the people involved in assessment in these contexts; the fourth reports on the kinds of assignments that are assessed; and finally, the fifth answers the research question of how ASPs report assessing for TL. Again, the perspective is predominantly from the ASPs, as given in their interviews.

The assessment discussed here focuses on the assessment of student work and student learning for HE modules. As the ASPs report, this also can involve student assessment of their own work, including assessing their own learning needs. There is a myriad of academic work on assessment and more specifically on assessment for HE, with books and journals inclusive of, or devoted to, the study (such as, for example: *The Journal of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness* and *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*). Other education journals also publish research on assessment, such as *Review of Research in Education* and *Educational Researcher*.

5.1 Standards and ASP Views and Challenges

The overarching body governing HE provision in the UK is The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). One ASP, a scholar working in administration as associate dean for learning and teaching, describes the assessment of placements and the standards:

If you look at the Quality Assurance Agency...our regulatory body, they have very strong statements about how the university must oversee the assessment. So the university has overall responsibility for the academic standards, which are measured through assessment. (Emily)

Accordingly, the university must take responsibility for the assessments of students, even when, for example, placement hosts or others provide feedback or even grades. For more detailed guidance, the QAA offers the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The Quality Code is intended to assure standards and quality provision in Higher Education. The QAA has a chapter regarding assessment to which Inglis (1997) describes the intent: These standards of quality practice are eminently attainable but their primary intention is to express a direction rather than a goal. The standards can therefore be used to help various groups to identify good practice where it already exists.

They can support critical review and discourse on the nature of effective assessment in different communities of users. Conversely, they can show what needs to be changed where good practice does not exist. Moreover, they can help those who are attempting to change assessment practice to ensure that improvement in student learning can be identified other than by measurement alone.

Standards of quality practice in assessment by teachers can be used to identify good practice where it exists or what needs to be changed where it does not. (p. 17)

The intention is to offer direction rather than precise instructions, which provides professional academic staff the remit to determine appropriate assessment for their contexts. There is much to consider in the placement contexts, with the university, the discipline, the occupational demands, the host employer and of course the students all having interests in the learning, education and assessments.

Further, the National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe what an individual needs to do, know and understand in order to carry out a particular job role or function. The Standards are developed with the sectors, through Sector Skills Councils and Standards Setting Organisations (2013). The Standards are seen as dynamic and open to revision. One ASP discusses how their programme input into to the development of the standards for their sector:

The [standards] are devised in consultation with lots of groups within the UK and they were just recently revised so they're quite up to date and they engaged with some of our students and we hosted some of those consultation meetings. (Mary)

The occupational standards are important in the preparation of students for the professions and in other degree programmes for positions in employment. The focus is often however

on the QAA standards and ASPs report that the meeting of the standards is a large part of their activities on student assessment and learning. These standards are seen as particularly important in programmes that prepare students for professions like nursing, dentistry, social work and medicine. The Quality Code also recognises that there can be other levels of oversight in the training and awards granted by universities. In such instances, the Quality Code denotes that there are:

... degrees of oversight or regulation by Professional, Statutory, or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Institutions therefore ensure that they are clear about the requirements of each applicable PSRB. (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012a, Ch B7 p. 8)

The ASPs have various perspectives on the role of the standards and the assessments for placement and practice. The importance of the standards is especially evident in the placements for teaching, nursing and social work. For example, a nursing programme identifies standards to be assessed, as Alan describes: ‘These assessments are for the professional practice...we have an assessment book clearly set out with every single standard and they have to meet those standards in practice’. Teacher education is likewise focused on the standards and emphasises the importance of placement as Sara reports:

The main aims of the placement are to ensure that the students are performing at an appropriate level. They have to meet the standard of initial teacher education, which is a government standard they must achieve. The placement enables them to achieve that...They need to be observed teaching and performing at that level. If they don’t they fail, so the aim of the placement is to assist them in getting to that point where they’re actually able to say you’ve got your degree and you can now proceed into the induction year...in terms of accreditation that’s what the placement is for.

The assessment of placements (named field experiences for teaching preparation) is stated to be one of the most important assessments. It is through these assessed observations students teach and perform in the classroom and are thereby deemed fit to proceed to induction year or not. Induction year is a one-year paid teaching position for new graduates.

For some ‘non-statutory’ disciplines the standards can be thought of as guidelines, as Edward, from alcohol and drug studies, points out:

We've just got much more, a much more kind of fluid approach...there isn't a professional development body so we're not restricted...in the same way that tutors would be on a social work programme for instance where there are certain things that really must be done and they must be done in a certain way. (Edward)

With the lack of oversight by a PRSB Edward relates that there is more leeway in the teaching and assessment for students of their programme. In this programme, Edward reports that for learning goals and assessments they use a three-way negotiated approach involving the tutor, student and placement host. In this particular case, the programme is aimed primarily at professionals working in other fields seeking specific knowledge, skills and qualifications in drug and alcohol studies.

Unless there is a PRSB involved, the responsibility for the assessments lies with the university, which is operationalised by many of the ASPs having responsibility for the assessments. There are unique challenges in assessing placement learning and the assessment practices discovered in this study show much variety in assessment protocols. The Quality Code outlines what it calls two fundamental principles of assessment: firstly, validity and reliability; and secondly, rigour, probity and fairness (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012a, Ch B6 p.8). The assessment is assisted in achieving validity when it involves an observation of student's performance, as the performance is in context. As the QAA points out:

Assessment is understood to be valid when it is testing precisely what the examiners want to test, bearing in mind the learning outcomes for the module. An extreme example of this is that a written examination cannot enable a student to demonstrate that they have mastered a practical skill. A written examination might also be invalid where it encourages students to regurgitate material rather than to critically analyse or apply material learned to solve problems. Reliability in this context essentially means that, as far as possible, markers acting independently of each other but using the same assessment criteria would reach the same judgement on a piece of work. (2012b, p. 5)

For assessing learning in placement, reliability may be difficult to obtain. Gipps (1999) points this out: 'some reliability is sacrificed for enhanced validity and the assessment of higher order/cognitive/thinking skills.' (p. 24). This is a concern brought up by several of the ASPs as they discuss the difficulty of assessing students on placements, as the student experiences can be remarkably different, as shown in this quote:

So the students know...the outline of what they'll be assessed on but again because of the variety...in the workload the students take on, it's difficult to assess them all to the same standards. (Rena)

This is an interesting observation particularly because the placement experience of the law clinic is more similar than other types of placements where students are working in very different organisations doing very different tasks. One ASP in teacher education reports placement variation as their programme's most difficult challenge. The programme staff endeavour to maintain or establish some consistencies across the placement schools but this does not always work out in practice. Sara relates that she makes adjustments for students in the different contexts:

When I go out to visit the student at the school eventually and I know this background, that's influencing what I'm thinking, how has this individual coped if she's had absolutely no support from the teacher? My expectation of that student is totally different from my expectation of the student an hour before that I went to see who's had all the support ... and I say that to students as well. I reassure them. How have they adapted to that situation? And I'm looking at them from the situation that they're in. (Sara)

Sara needs to apply professional judgement to assess the student within the contexts of the school and classroom. This is a difficult endeavour, calling on a knowledge base of what a 'perfect situation' is and how the student is performing in the 'imperfect' setting. This shows again the complexity involved and the abilities the AS need. Sara relates that there is much discussion with colleagues on how to deal with poor placement experiences. Sara further states that she wishes that all the hosts would provide excellent opportunities for their students to do well.

There are also examples of where the host is seen as a good experience provider, but that the student does not do well. Avery, from a college of arts, discusses how she sees able students and weaker students achieve differently on their placement learning, but that both gain from the experience:

...the very able students really respond to this well and they work independently and have an impact on how the placement unfolds. It's actually quite suitable for the less able student as well. And some of the students who have not performed so well throughout their academic programme are actually being graded quite well during the placement because it's a different type of learning. (Avery)

Avery does not name this different type of learning as experiential and seemingly she does not see it as academic as their other learning. Avery sees the placement learning as inferior, as the less able students are able to do well. ‘...particularly the case with weaker students, [it can] give them a kind-of false impression of their academic ability and that’s partly to do with them being with very nice placement providers’.

Avery raises another issue regarding a problem with assessing work done for the placement host:

One student...progressed to honours because he had a very supportive placement provider who actually approached me afterwards and said that they had real reservations about the placement because they’d had to provide the student with a lot of additional support. He completed a piece of work for them which was quite good but, having talked to the provider I now know, which I didn’t when I was assessing it, that the reason it was quite good...was actually because the provider did the majority of the work which took them away from other tasks...So there are some problems like that which are hidden in the assessment process I think. (Avery)

Avery relates that initially she has no input from the host about the student’s performance and that is seen as a problem because the work is being assessed for credit. Avery is also relating that there is opportunity for the weaker students to advance when their academic skills are not strong. This could indicate that the structures are not in place to ensure the work is authentically that of the student. Avery relates that she is thinking of changing the assessment procedure. Avery is in her first term of directly supervising placement learning although she had been a discipline tutor for prior years where she graded the academic work, but not the placement work. She relates ‘it can be quite a momentous learning experience for the students I’m realising this year’, which shows AS are also learning when they are new to placement learning.

Many ASPs convey that they understand that the university has the responsibility for assessment. Often though there may be ‘outside’ people involved in the assessments, especially in professional programmes that have a mandate for placement observation or multiple assessors. The following section focuses on some of these other people and their roles as professionals in the assessments that are discovered through these ASPs.

5.2 Other than Academic Staff Involved in Assessment

Placement learning assessment is complex, not only because contexts are different for students, but also because assessments can involve others outside the university as well as the students themselves. The following section describes the others involved in assessment, followed by some of the issues related about student self-assessment.

The assessment of students and their work may be done by several individuals: the teaching academic staff, assessors hired for that purpose, placement host staff, and even by the students themselves. The ASPs in this study report a variety of assessment methods and people doing the assessing.

Assessment in placement or practice can be quite different from more university-based classes especially when it involves a number of individuals in that assessment, as Emily relates:

What happens in practice is that assessment is a much more negotiated process. It can involve the students so in some areas we would hope that the student is actively engaged in negotiating what assessment will be through things like learning contracts. But also involving placement supervisors and mentors who in some areas actually give us the primary judgement on clinical practice for example, but also service users and careers. And some of our programmes... service users and careers actually have a very strong role to play in the assessment of students as well so it's a much more collaborative venture although the university formally still holds overall responsibilities, so the final decision on assessment is ours. But that said, I think what we're finding increasingly is that holding that separate from other people involved in placement learning is very artificial. (Emily)

Overall assessment in practice/placement modules appears to meet the intention of the QAA more readily than non-practice modules. The assessment process is seen as more negotiated with many individuals involved. This also allows for student input and decision-making, thus potentially providing students opportunity to develop and practice identified skills.

Uma discusses the role of feedback from placement employers in the development of students' final reports:

That's part of bringing different lenses to bear on their experience so that they're not just learning from experience, that it's a mediated process through their readings, through their engagement with the tutor. And also the other thing that we ask employers to do while we don't formally assess it, is at the end of the placement to sit down with the student and to do an informal review and that's recommended then that the student uses that as something that they can then draw upon for their report. But I think what's more important for us rather than that they get good feedback from their employer is that they can critically engage with and analyse what they've got back from their employer. (Uma)

Uma points to the pedagogy that centres on the students' interpretations and analysis of what occurs in the placements, including employer feedback. This is different from having the employer assess and report on performance, which is reported in other cases. The student learns to assess the value of feedback and to work it into their learning. This process keeps the responsibility for assessment within the AS and student realm, with formative informational feedback from the placement hosts. It does give the employer an opportunity to input, and this process may have mitigated the issue Avery discusses earlier, regarding a student receiving credit for work the placement host performed.

Social work ASPs relay a robust process of assessment, developed over many decades. Valerie gives an account of assessment and how the feedback from different practitioners is captured in the students' portfolios:

...historically, a means of assessing practice in this country has been through portfolio. And what we've worked to do is to produce portfolios that contain different voices so that what becomes assessed is not just what the student writes about themselves, or what a practice educator writes about them. But that it's a holistic view of the student as a practitioner because the voices belong to the placement supervisor, the student themselves, a practice educator, practice teacher or somebody who's got the overall responsibility for their learning, a tutor, a tutor looking at their educational progress, service user and carer, feedback and including observations of practice which are written up by an external which might be the practice teacher or it might be an independent person. (Valerie)

By having numerous people involved in the assessment of these students, the objectivity of the assessment is increased. It also, as in Uma's example, allows the student to assess their assessment through their reflections and in this case, the final report. This would have multiple developmental opportunities and add to, as Valerie points out, a comfort in one's work and practice being assessed. The other angle is students thinking about the different

‘lenses’ different people bring to an observed practice which allows them to further learn the complexity of action and different perspectives.

The portfolio assessment has changed over the years and Valerie discusses the evolution of the assessment practices in their social work programme:

So we try to gather together different voices in the same portfolio which originally, and I’m talking early 1990s, was about gathering evidence to show that students had met a competence framework so there was a lot of cross-referencing, you know it was a mind-boggling exercise that reduced it to technical, tick-box exactly, NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) in social work. But it was better than what happened before because what happened before in the 1980s was a very highly subjective, very unstructured report by a supervisor that said so-and-so’s very nice. They fitted into the team or actually they’re rubbish because I don’t like them. And there was no structure to the report. It came into the university and was then regarded as, do we agree with this or don’t we? And it was dismissed if it wasn’t agreed with. So it was very, very low status in terms of the academic judgement of the student [which] was the priority. (Valerie)

This shows that, reportedly for this discipline, the status of the placement assessment has increased as well as the number of people involved in providing feedback to the student. The support for practice is seen to better-prepare social workers, as their practice has been developed with the help of professional and other observations. The movement is from placements having low status with the assessment lacking objectivity, to a competency ‘tick-box’ exercise, to the current regime of multiple inputs. It has also changed to a system where students are graded for their work in placements.

The portfolios are used to capture the different ‘voices’ that provide feedback on which the student develops her practice. Valerie espouses the benefits of their current protocol:

...and most of my work has been about addressing that balance so that practice... whether students can actually do practice in their professional in critical and analytic and creative ways, is as important as understanding how they’re doing it. So you can’t just pass a student because they can talk the talk or indeed just because they can walk the walk, because actually next week they might not be able to if they don’t know how they’ve done it. So it is that bringing together of the practice and the underpinning frameworks for that practice that are really precious in the assessment. (Valerie)

This is an important interplay of practice and academic theory. The theory informs the practice, and the practice enables students to perform their understanding of the theory. However, it is important that the students be able to do both. Students need to articulate the theory of their practices so they are able to repeat them when needed, and be aware of how and why they are doing their practice.

The social work programmes provide the most comprehensive placement assessment encountered in this study, and includes the most input from others. They also have three- or four-year professional full-time study programmes (depending on the jurisdiction) as well as master's level programmes. Lidia and Nancy, also from social work, each explain more about the process, indicating that it involves many people and aims to be authentic, formative and summative and as such, it is quite complex. It is also seemingly student centred and developmental, as Nancy explains:

Everything's read. And this isn't just fourth year. The third year assessed placement goes through the same process. Everything's read by three people, marked, huge amounts of written feedback to the student and the practice teacher. And the tutor who is not the student's own tutor and the practice assessment panel member will do the feedback and agree on the decision. It's a pass or a fail. And whether the student needs to provide further evidence and what kind-of evidence and if that evidence isn't of a standard then the student and the learning team will be asked to come and meet with the practice assessment panel.

The process defined above would allow for several possible attempts at reaching the 'pass' grade for the third- and fourth-year placements. First and second year are formatively, not summatively assessed. Many people are involved and need to concur on the students' practice with students being allowed several opportunities to present evidence of their work being of standard.

Lidia discusses further practice and assessment opportunities students can access when and if they need to do so:

It's a hefty process. And it's very carefully managed and considered so the students get a fair crack at it before they come to a panel. They would have the opportunity to rewrite, to provide additional bits of evidence. If they don't do that, they would come to the panel and the panel is very experienced, it really is a good tool for helping the

students to tease out that evidence. You know if you can't write, you might be able to talk about it and convince the panel. So there are different opportunities for students to do that. And then if they don't do it then there's always the opportunity for a repeat placement because they have an opportunity for one repeat in each of these placements. (Lidia)

Valerie brings up one of the reasons for the robust assessment system. If a student complains about their grade, the programme staff have strong justification for their assessment decisions. She reiterates that staff need:

...to be able to justify why when the student complains, appeals, so forth, which is why the quality of the learning environment in the first place needs to be at the best because it always happens doesn't it – that a dodgy student gets a dodgy placement and a dodgy assessor? So you don't know which ingredient was more important. So the student passes because they weren't properly supported and tested.

Valerie's quote speaks to the complexity of all the people involved, especially if it all goes wrong. Alan from nursing discusses a concern that can arise when the assessment is done by the professionals in the field. He notes that, especially in the caring professions, there is a tendency for not failing students:

Nurses don't like to fail people. There's an interesting piece of work written by someone...called 'Failure to Fail'. And because it was recognised that nurses were actually passing people in clinical – people who shouldn't have been passed – and we in the school knew that but we were powerless.

This issue seems to possibly be mitigated by at least two measures. One would be when the placement host's assessment is taken into consideration with other knowledgeable stakeholders as a joint decision and the other is to train the external assessors. This last suggestion has to be agreed upon, as Sara relates that many of the teachers in the schools do not have time or the interest to engage with university staff for this purpose.

Several of the ASPs discuss how the involvement of multiple people can have other challenges too. The people supervising and assessing the student on the placement may have different criteria or opinions than university educational staff. Sara points out that occasionally 'you hear from a student that a teacher said, oh you're only in third year, I'm not going to give you an A'. This is thought to be mitigated recently by moving to the placement being a 'pass or fail' rather than awarded a grade. Sara also explains that

students have recourse through the university if they do not agree with the AS's grade, but that recourse is usually not available for the school placement assessment.

A change in a social work placement assessment is the exact opposite whereby the movement is from attributing a pass or fail to the current system whereby students are awarded a grade. According to Valerie this increases the status of the placement learning.

Finally, the other important actors in the process are the students themselves. Student self-assessment could fall under the 'independent learner' remit from the Quality Code, as the students learn to assess their own learning needs, what to do to meet them, and consider the quality of their work and learning. The Quality Code provides guidance that students be supported to become independent learners, as outlined below:

As active members of a learning community, students depend on interaction with staff and with their peers to support their learning. Achieving independence in learning means that there are always some opportunities for students to shape their learning experience. For some students this may not extend beyond selecting optional modules, undertaking additional reading or practice of relevant skills. For others it may extend to the negotiation of assessment titles or engagement in self-selected research for a dissertation or equivalent practice-based module. (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012a, Ch B3 p. 21)

This agenda is set forth in the Quality Code as an expectation of HE:

Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012a, Ch B3 p. 6)

Furthermore, the process by which students learn to assess their own learning needs can advance the independent learner agenda. A few examples indicate ASP support for students developing in a learning community through multiple means. Andy, from a community development programme, provides insight into his programme, which appears to have the highest developed 'learning community' focus. As he explains:

... informally we have a lot of discussion with feedback and that can be peer feedback and end-user feedback so people's thinking and people's approach and people's responses to theory and responses to practice will be critiqued by the learning group. So we try and develop a dialogical space for people to work within. And that takes a while to build up because people are a bit reluctant, a bit polite and don't want to engage in that ... so we do quite a lot of that so the students are getting informal feedback all the time really from myself and from their learning colleagues. And when they do presentations, individual and group presentations, we'll feedback again. You obviously have a big voice in that but we let the students chip in as well. So those are the kind-of feedback that the students get. And that's pretty much imbedded into the teaching and learning. (Andy)

The students in Andy's programme work in a 'learning group', signalling that the purpose of the group is to learn together. Students learn to assess their own work and that of their peers and receive formative peer assessment.

The Quality Code (Indicator 8) speaks to the development of independent learners in placement learning:

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to assist every student to understand their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and to shape their learning experience. Students undertaking fieldwork, work-based or placement learning may have additional responsibilities to the learning provider and to others such as customers, clients, service users, other employees and the general public they may encounter. This includes the responsibility to meet the norms and expectations for professional conduct in the particular field of work or study that they are undertaking. For students using their existing workplace for their work-based learning, such norms, expectations and responsibilities are often covered in an employment contract and may be more obvious than for students joining a workplace to undertake a placement. (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012a, Ch B3 p. 21)

These workplace norms are discussed as a topic for reflection, essays, and other work by several of the ASPs. There is more discussion on this later in this thesis.

Many ASPs attest to placement learning as an opportunity for students to develop confidence, which operationalises the above QAA Indicator. Adam from business studies offers the following observation:

... it's about the confidence that they build when they come back. They are just, many of them, completely different people in terms of their level of confidence, the

level of confidence they have to present an argument to you, to present work in a much better way, a much more considered way and we really do see that change in our students.

The 'we' Adam is referring to is surmised here to be his colleagues. This could indicate that there is discussion amongst the staff about the benefits of placement learning for the students and perhaps the progress of students from their placement learning opportunities.

Often the career interests of the students are a factor in the development and assessment of the placement or project. Here, Adam discusses student projects developed for employers while students are on placement:

There's a criteria reference right the way through. So they'll know how we're going to look at that project before they even start the project. And then it's a case of trying to fit what they're interested in into that framework or having a discussion about negotiating a slightly different framework. It is a little bit open-ended but the majority will try and fit it into what we've asked them to do. (Adam)

Students are deciding and negotiating parts of their learning, with the overall aim being the development of independent learners. This agenda is the overall stated goal for several ASPs, as explained here:

So assessment isn't a kind-of yea, done it, no you haven't. That's not the point of it. We're developing professionals that ought to be continuing to learn for the whole of their careers, lives hopefully, so we ought to be encouraging them to see this as a part of that process. Learning how to get feedback, learning what to do with feedback, knowing themselves, being...hungry for critical commentary – other people's and their own – so that they continue to learn. Because if they don't do that they stop being good professionals at whatever point of their career they are. (Valerie)

The learning to learn through others' feedback is seen as especially important in social work education. It goes beyond the content, disciplinary, and occupational knowledge to learning to process feedback from multiple sources. Ila, from dentistry, shares a similar perspective:

You know dentistry changes by the minute. It's changed so much and you've got to be able to do...there's a new technique and you're going to have to do it. You've got the basic skills and the basic understanding and you've got to assess: do I think that material is going to be okay? Do I think this will work in my hands? Have I got the

dexterity and the equipment to do it? Is it going to be cost effective, clinically effective? And you have to make those judgements. And that's what our students need to understand is that we can't teach them everything and once they've gone through that they realise that. And they're constantly going to be learning. (Ila)

Ila discusses how the students build their confidence year to year, but at the beginning they are anxious about what they know, or more precisely, about what they feel they do not know. Again while the content is important, it is also important that the students learn how assess their learning.

Some of the ASPs state that this intent is specified for the module; 'we want them to basically develop as independent learners' (Avery). Other indications are shown as well, as Ronda says:

They've got nobody holding their hand really. The supervising solicitor is there to check they don't go very wrong. But I think they have to work more independently in this than they do in any other module. Not least because when you're doing an exam or a test in the more traditional modules, a contract or something, the structure's already there. You've been lectured on those subjects. You've seen sample questions. You can't with this. There is no sample. And they have to think on their feet.

Ronda outlines the difference between the students' learning in other law studies modules and the clinic. The experiential learning in the clinic gives the students an opportunity to work outside of the school structure and to respond to the situations at hand. Another dimension is the usefulness of their work: what the students learn and produce is pertinent and used by the clients. The students' work can have impact the lives of the clients by providing useful legal advice.

This last law clinic example provides students with more structure than many of the other placement or projects learning environments. All of the students are learning to research and write 'Letters of Advice' for clients. In these cases, the client issues, the research and the advice letters are all different but the overall process of interviewing clients, researching, and writing the letters is the similar. In other placement examples students are at different hosts, doing different tasks which vary immensely.

The purpose of many of the placements is to assist students to learn, to make career choices, to prepare for work, or to practice job search skills. Job search preparatory work (resume and cover letter writing and interview skills etc.) is part of some of the modules and can even be credentialed. Ronda relates that the experience in the clinic helps students make the transition to work: ‘otherwise it’s too big of a gap’. She further states that she hopes that through interviewing clients students will also be more prepared for employment interviews.

The preparation of students to learn to work independently in placements is seen to help students become independent learners as they gain the ability to assess their own learning needs, their learning and their products and work. The required assignments can help support these multiple goals. Ursula describes a self-assessment process in her module where students make two presentations, assess their own work, and also further discuss the assessments and the grades with the tutor. Each presentation is assessed by both the student and Ursula. She relates the difficulties for the students: ‘the part that is self-assessed was a sticking point. They did a formative assessment first to get practice in not just giving presentations but assessing themselves’. She goes on to explain the procedure she follows:

I gave [the assessment criteria] to them. It’s in the handbook and we went over it as well. I gave them special notes and examples. I gave them a form, a pro forma, to fill in which is quite tick box at first and then there’s a little space for feedback. They can explain why they gave themselves that mark. And I did the same with them. I assess them. So there was a formative one and then there was a summative one which was on employability skills, how they had developed those skills. And then, we had a break after the presentations. During that break, I took each student one by one in another room and...went through the criteria, what feedback, what they thought the mark should be. And I gave them what I had written down and we agreed a mark. And [we] did the same with the summative assessment. (Ursula)

This example shows an assessment process that includes both formative and summative assessment, as well as student and AS assessment. By working in this way the students have an opportunity to further learn the assessment process. Ursula relates the process takes much more time than she had anticipated. This topic is explored in more depth in the next section.

The many examples of assessment performed by people other than the AS add to the complexity of placement learning provision for the staff. The provision of education for

professions with statutory mandates like social work and nursing where the observation of students by professionals is crucial for student preparation in their fields .

5.3 Summative, Formative and Authentic Assessment

Two general types of assessment are recognised in HE: summative and formative. Both are reflected in the ASP interviews. This next section portrays some of the ways the ASPs report their views on these assessments in the modules. Regarding summative and formative assessment, the QAA again addresses different goals of assessment, delineating these types of assessments in the Quality Code:

This chapter addresses the role of assessment in promoting learning, especially as the basis for reflection and dialogue between staff and students. This activity is often referred to as assessment for learning and equated with formative assessment, being developmental. It is contrasted with assessment of learning - often equated with summative assessment - the principal purpose of which is to determine student attainment against predetermined criteria. An effective approach to summative assessment, however, reflects the capacity of any form of assessment to enable on-going learning.

Assessment serves a number of purposes. The main purpose of summative assessment is to measure student learning in a way that recognises it through the award of credits or equivalent (the combination of which can then lead to a named qualification).

However, of equal importance is the recognition that assessment should also be an integral part of learning, or that summative as well as formative assessment can, and does, facilitate student learning. (Ch B3 p. 5)

Both summative and formative assessments are reportedly used by the ASPs, although no example is as clear as Ursula's self-assessment exercise. Ariel places law students with Citizen Advice Bureaus where students are formatively assessed with a summative completion credit: 'It's not assessed as such but it is monitored, and the idea is that the learning agreement which is completed is part of what's needed in order to get the academic credit'. The tripartite learning agreement is developed with the host, the student and the ASP. It assists the student to assess their own training needs, and they work through reflective reports.

For social work training, formative feedback is seen as important in developing the students:

...the students get all kind-of formative feedback...the practice has an interim report and we hold a lot of store on that, mid-point feedback in terms of being formative to help the student get to where they need to be at the end of it, so yes there's a lot of blood, sweat and tears and time spent on feedback for students. (Nancy)

A few ASPs report that their placement modules only have formative assessments. For example in the medical studies community module students undertake projects that are formatively assessed. This can create issues, as Isabel from medical studies notes:

Everything is formative. None of what we do is summatively assessed which is a double-edged sword really in that students think, oh well I can turn up and there's not going to be an exam on this, which is a bit stupid really because we have a vast medical component. And as I've said really, a lot of medicine is what happens in the community so people with heart failure are treated in the community. They hardly ever get into hospital and this is all our teaching really. It's around real medical problems. But there isn't a 'community studies' paper if you like, but we write questions for the exams. But the students could literally not be engaged with our bit but still pass the exam but that would be silly of them because obviously we are a very good learning and teaching bit to the course. (Isabel)

Isabel brings up an interesting issue and she believes the community module is very important and provides important learning for medical students. In the program the importance of community learning is not reflected as part of a summative assessment and in the students' grades, so students conduct the work and learning involved largely for their own formation. This situation speaks to the tension between learning and grades, and which one could become priority for the students' learning: some students may learn to become community knowledgeable doctors while others may focus more to get higher grades in the other modules with summative grades. This can have ramifications where access to other courses, placements and even jobs is based on grade point average. Another aspect is the difficulty of assessing student development. One of the goals of community learning is for the students to learn about different services and programmes, but the learning is unpredictable given the variations in contexts.

One education studies programme involves the students studying how people learn in the workplace and the auto-ethnographic study of their learning makes up the assessed

assignment. The classes involve readings, journal writing with a workbook, class lectures and discussions. ‘It’s entirely formative really, that whole process. And even the workbook is about formulating ideas for the final report’ (Uma). The formative assessment in this case provides support and even content for the graded final report. The pedagogy of the module seeks to help students develop critical analytical skills and aligns with what Boud and Falchikov (2007) find: that setting fewer assessment tasks is consistent with deeper learning. Uma offers other indications that her modules provide for deep learning through class discussions and reflections.

Anna’s dramatic arts module has students create a production for a community agency and asks the client to assist with formative feedback. The client normally works for the agency whose service users are the intended audience for students’ productions:

We go out and we see one performance and one workshop. We give them feedback in the performance but at the same time they’re not assessed. It’s just pointers because they’re in a different space. We also ask the lead client to give them positive feedback and otherwise, to be truthful and to be honest with them. And then they do a minimum of three performances and workshops. (Anna)

The feedback from the client is important to the development of the production, which helps the students learn by receiving and using feedback. Some of the ‘pointers’ may be very specifically about the service users, and therefore is best learned in context. Students are learning both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of making a production for a specific group: focusing on the issues and needs of the group and how best to work with the client and create the production.

Some learning is brought up by the ASPs as being considered, but not always explicitly assessed. There is an undercurrent of implicit learning, which is important to students’ practice and development but is not captured formally. ASPs often report being aware of this distinction in their practice. For example, Nancy from social work considers stress an aspect of the professional development of the students:

...how to deal with stress. Now that is another thing. Particularly in that final placement, how do you deal with a job like social work and look after yourself? And I think that’s something we’re always conscious of when we work with the students.

The teaching of how to deal with stress as a social worker appears to be an implicit topic with which the AS are aware. The topic is arguably an important one. Isabel also discusses a similar observation in medical education about learning that goes beyond the textbooks. She relates how she finds it difficult to assess:

Yea this is really the fascinating bit about medical education. I'm sure we can sit a student in a room with a textbook and say, right, in six months' time I'm going to give you an examination. Or is it really more than that? What are the social aspects of learning and I don't mean social as in community necessarily. How do you behave in an operating theatre that's different from how you behave? And yet what have you learned? So I find these the fascinating areas of medicine. You're sitting in a doctor's surgery. What have you learned? You must have learned an awful lot about how the doctor sits and how he reacts with the patient. And he's such a great guy and I want to be that doctor. It's things like this, the social aspects of learning, that I think is what we do mostly in medical education yet how on earth you capture that, I don't really know. (Isabel)

Isabel has an understanding of these social aspects, but says she does not know how to capture these in education. This could be indicating an area of improvement for the educational practice, again to make an implicit learning expectation explicit. Role-playing may be a way to cover the topic, as they do in the law clinic module.

While providing needed law services to people who might not be able to pay for them, the university law clinic is also preparing the students for the world of work in the profession of law. Ronda relates how she provides formative assessment of students' role-playing for their clinic practice:

They don't really get an assessment in that way although I try to encourage all of them. And I'm very open about saying that was brilliant, when I see it. I think you have to be. If someone is quite obviously appalling, I never say that was appalling because then it will just spiral and it will be appalling. So I try to be incredibly positive but at the same time have to say but you can't do that. What they've just done is actually role-play with various scenarios I've presented them with in front of their peers. And I do have to say that is far more difficult: If you can do it now you can do it in a little room on your own. (Ronda)

Feedback on role-plays performed and tutor feedback can be daunting for students but important preparation for practice. Since a formative assessment does not carry a grade, students may be more receptive to sharing, reflecting, trying and maybe even risking. Another ASP discusses students taking on and learning about risk as an important skill.

Allie, an educational consultant, relates that she thinks being able to take risks is important and perhaps university is a good place to develop that skill: ‘But it’s this kind-of risk-averse culture. Surely most employers need people who can take calculated risks and are willing to take calculated risks’. She exemplifies the risk adverse culture by relaying a story of a student not taking a course with an experiential placement. The student relates to Allie that because the placement learning is unpredictable she is sure she will attain a high grade, which she needs to secure a place in a master’s programme.

In many of the other programmes discussed in this thesis students are encouraged to be honest about their practice and placement in their reflection journals or diaries. For many the content of what students write does not form part of their grade. Discussions, observations, behaviours and plans are often not assessed. At a law clinic, there is a final discussion with the class:

At the end they have one session I’m sorry I’ve got to say which is a reflection. They have to write one for us, a reflection on the file and that is judged as well. So we do read through those and have a look and we have a session at the end where we all have to talk about it and see how they got on, what they thought about it, what they thought they could’ve done better. We don’t mark them on, if they think oh I should’ve done that. We don’t say oh I’m going to mark you down for admitting that at all. Basically it’s just to make sure that they do start looking at their practice.
(Ronda)

Ronda appears not to value the process of reflection and apologises for it. She does indicate that looking at their practice is part of the learning. She does not indicate how else to ensure the students process their learning from their clinical experience. Ronda discusses how she wants the students to gain a wider perspective and to understand people’s different situations but this does not appear to be captured anywhere in the assessments and the module may be missing the opportunity. She discusses how the student’s processing of how they could have done better is not judged against them, which may allow students to plan a better course of action the next time. Ronda is working on her PhD, is new to teaching, but has many years’ experience practicing law.

Authentic assessment is also important. Elisa discusses the authentic assessment she uses:

What I tried to do was to make the assignment authentic and there is a literature on that ... it felt important to me that it should be authentic, that the students should be able to actually think, well I've gone into workplace and now I've got this assignment to do and actually I could only really do that assignment properly by doing the work placement. And what I get them to do is they have to do a poster presentation and that's obviously a visual presentation that will be marked. They also have to collect a number of employment related documents, so for example they have to get their time in placement signed off by somebody in the organisation.
(Elisa)

In Elisa's case the students mostly only have the opportunity to observe the workplace, as the placement is short and there are issues with students working with sensitive issues. The authentic assessment attempts to allow for learning to focus on the placement host and the criminal justice issues it deals with. A class poster presentation further allows the other students to learn about the different hosts. While some students tell Elisa that they did not get to do much, she reports that other students make the most of the opportunity to observe the inner workings of the criminal justice agency host. In another case, while she does not call it authentic assessment, Isabel alludes to it. She describes the different assignments for different years in medical school, as she relates telling the first year students: 'You know, think about it. Put it into a nice package'. She relates how the presentation and the teamwork are important to the students' eventual practice: 'Getting the teamwork bit in the presentation because much of what we do as medics is about presenting. You know you present a case; you present a paper'. Learning teamwork skills is also of potential value. Another assessment for this programme involves a poster, which is presented again, and seen as useful for disseminating information so that it can educate patients as well:

The other part, which is the sending them out into the community bit, we assess them by a poster. Therefore, they have to make a poster about the centre that they've been to that could possibly engage the public in maybe accessing that service. So...the poster could be displayed in a doctor's surgery or a library. (Isabel)

These posters are formatively assessed. Then, in fourth year, another project is assessed:

We also do an audit in fourth year as well which again is quite an innovation because they've got an entire year to do it. They can literally set up what they're going to do, come up with the results, go around the audit cycle again because you do need time to do it so there's a brilliant opportunity. Hopefully they will actually make a difference. So that's what we do in fourth year. That's the assessment in fourth year.
(Isabel)

Placement learning offers unique opportunities for authentic assessment as the activities in the workplace may be what they would be expected to do if they are actually working in the agency or work place (Knight and Yorke (2003). As well, there may be ‘real world’ assignments where the students’ work adds value to a community, host organisation and clients.

Both summative and formative assessments are reportedly used by the ASPs. Authenticity is another important factor in assessing experiential and placement learning to help students learn and practice in contexts, preparing them for work practice. While few ASPs articulate the assessment protocols as authentic, many discuss assessments in a way that suggest they can be characterised as authentic, especially when the work performed is conducted in a ‘real’ workplace or provides a real service. The discussion here now turns to the different types of assignments that are assessed.

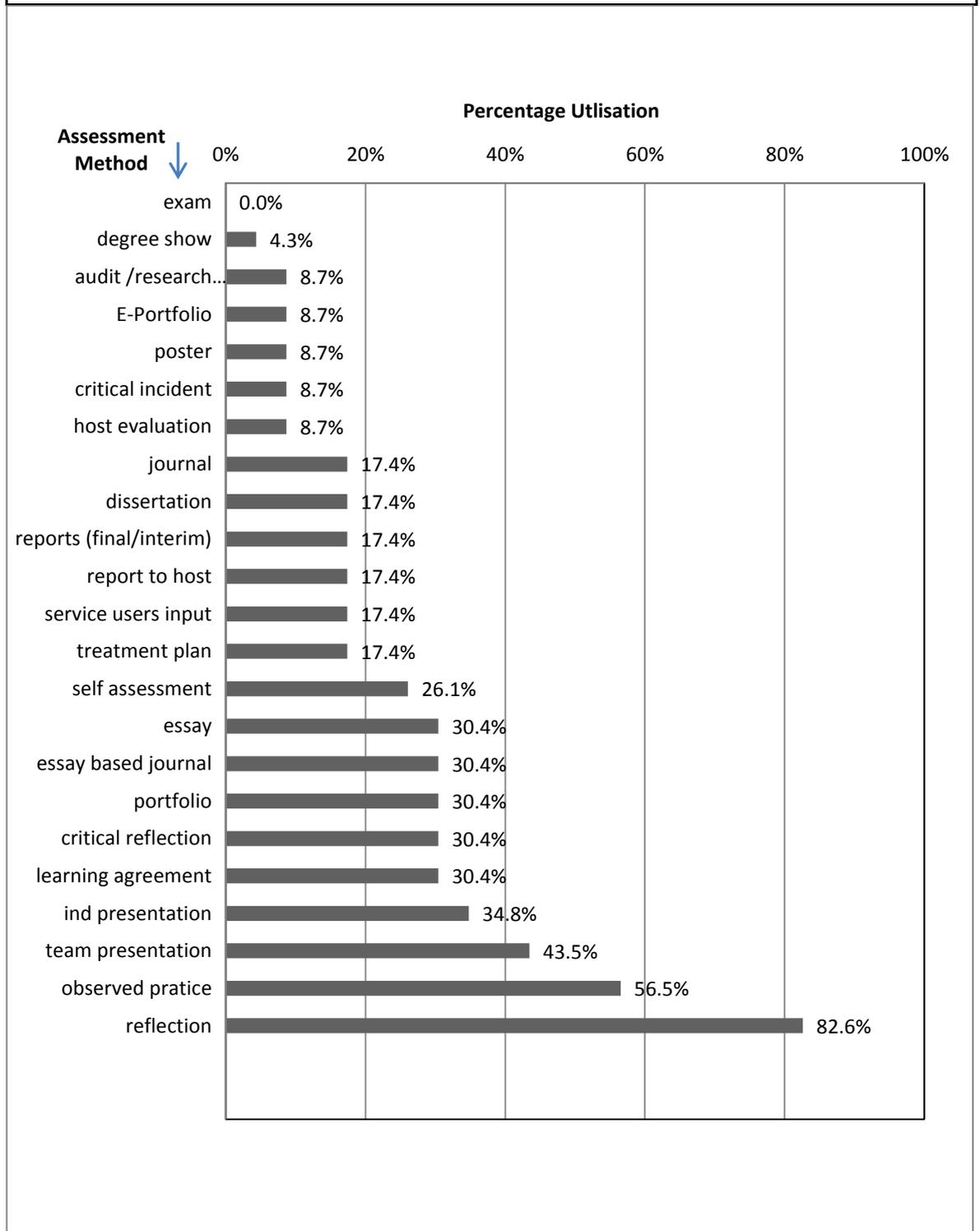
5.4 Reports of Methods of Assessments

During their interviews, the ASPs discuss many different projects and assignments that are assessed as well as the methods of assessing. The following Table 5-1 shows the assessment types reported. This does not represent an exact count as the interview questions are open-ended and may not have elicited all of the assessment methods. As well, they are not all verified by supporting documents or observations, as those activities are not part of this exploratory study. Computation of the totals does however give an approximate indication of the frequency of different assessments, especially on the low and high ends of the chart. In this exploratory study a variety of different programmes and modules are reported by the different ASPs, eliciting what is occurring and possible in delivering placement learning modules. These reports span the duration of university study from first year to fourth year, to post-graduate certificates and diplomas to Master’s level programmes. ASPs also report that they have different roles in the teaching or assessing process, from focussing on the placement learning, to developing assignments on their own or with colleagues, to working with community members to help in assessment. Different aspects of educational provision are also reported. For medical studies, for instance, an ASP reports on the community studies module rather than on placement modules or internships in hospitals, clinics or surgeries. For Isabel’s programme observed and assessed medical practices are not captured here.

Another issue with the reporting of assessment types is that a few of the ASPs are not currently involved in assessing placement learning. They are counted in the total while they do not report any assessment type, so the percentage for any given assessment type would be higher if the calculation were to be only based on those ASPs who assess. Therefore the following Table 5-1 represents an estimate count of the assessment types. The discussion of the different types of assessments continues after the table.

(Table 5-1 follows on the next page)

Table 5-1: Percentage of ASPs Reporting Utilising Each Assessment Method



The following discussion analyses some of these assessment types from least to most frequent: first exploring the lack of exams and then highlighting a few of other reported assessment types, including portfolios and degree shows. This section finishes with an

examination of reflections as the most reported work assessed. Overall, the assessment types go beyond the traditional test and essays. While it does not show here, often the ASPs indicate that the essay is based partially on their reflective accounts.

None of the ASPs with placement or SL type placements or projects report using exams for modules. While the medical school community modules staff write questions for the exam, these are not counted in the ‘assessment by exam’ category, as other types of assignments and assessments are mentioned for these placement modules. Some ASPs comment that there are no examination type assessments, as Lane points out: ‘what we want to emphasise is that it’s not an easy option because there isn’t an exam at the end. So some students might pick it because there’s no exam’. Mary also refers to the absence of exams:

In terms of assessment, yea we don’t do actual... exams. We just assess their assignments, portfolios and observations. We used to do a class-based exercise which was like an exam and we stopped that. (Mary)

This is the only mention of the existence of an exam for placement learning. The other assessment type that is reportedly not used by any of the ASPs is summative peer assessment. A few ASPs mention that students provide formative feedback, or assessment, to each other.

The interviews focus predominantly on assessment protocols for the placement section, rather than the wider courses, programmes or other modules. However Ila offers an overview of the entire programme and the integration of assessment into the overall programme:

Every student gets an interview every six weeks with their academic tutor... Every six weeks they have to pass. And if they get two un-satisfactory they go back a year... it’s quite complicated. It’s – have they reflected? Have they got a plan for the next six weeks? Have they achieved what they should have achieved based on what they agreed and signed up to in the last? You know it doesn’t matter; they can fail an exam or a test. That doesn’t matter. That won’t fail them. But are they progressing and reflecting. (Ila)

Ila also covers the pedagogy that accompanies the assessments: ‘Here we don’t give them one plenary on public health. Nothing. They learn it all by going out and doing.’ Ila calls

their methods ‘problem-based learning’ however on the department’s promotional website, they call their methods ‘inquiry-based learning’. Ila relates many examples of the learning in the current programme being community-based, and there is even a community developer on staff. Ila finds their teaching and assessment methods far superior to the ‘traditional old style’ of her former university, but says it has taken her a while to get used to it and that she has had to have a lot of faith in the process.

A community development programme offers the most diversity in assessments, and is one of the only programmes – along with the social work programme – to include dialogue as part of the programme. Here is an example of the diversity of activities that support the learning:

We get people to write stuff that demonstrates to some extent their ability to think critically and to apply theory to practice. A lot of our assessments link theory to practice quite directly. We get people to speak. So we have a lot of individual and group presentations, group discussions, dialogues and so there’s a formal and an informal assessment process that goes on there so we get a sense of people’s ability to think and to discuss. We get people to write directly about their practice, what they’ve done, what theory informs their practice, how they think it went, what they would do next time, academic views of their practice. And we have placement visits and observational practice, which gives you some sense; although it’s limited but it’s all we can do in the circumstances. But we meet with the student and their placement supervisor ... on the Med ... we meet three times during that period and we observe their practice and that gives us another person’s viewpoint. It also gives us – well we can see that people can actually work with a group of people... Can you talk to real people? Or can you just write about it afterwards? How do you express it? (Andy)

There are discussions, group presentations and observations of practice. Practice in community development would necessarily involve students in discussion with other people and that this is what is observed and assessed. Here Andy seems to place great value in the dialogue skills over the academic writing skills. He seems to value less the learning involved in the process of writing. There appears to be a delineation of skills, in that it is possible for a student to write well after a practice session, but not have success during the session with service users. This tension between the ability to perform well in action and in writing is lowered by several observations and by meeting with the placement supervisor. Andy states that ‘it is limited but all we can do in the circumstances’, indicating the complexity of the activities and assessment. The assessment is the responsibility of the university and not passed over to the placement supervisors.

Different programmes deal with the multiple inputs in different ways. In a new Master's level programme, Laura relates the different assessments for the different components of the programme. For the academic portion:

It is a straight Master's dissertation assessment. We haven't changed any of the assessment of the dissertations themselves at all. We've actually said it's really important that these are coherent, strongly formulated Master's theses that will sit in the university library and have their own academic integrity based on the literature and the methods that are appropriate to the field of study and with the right research design. (Laura)

The difference is in the research and report for the community agency and the academic work. Laura highlights the different assessments:

[The agency report] is in a language that is about the world of work... and it's assessed by the world of work on their terms, with their forms, in their discourse as opposed to the academic dissertation ... and we're basically saying let the academics do the academic work, let the partners do the partner work. (Laura)

Laura also says that both the assessment and the use of the work are for different purposes and done by different people. The business studies modules are another example where reports or consultations are produced for the placement hosts, thereby delineating between academic work for the university and the report for the business or agency.

The above examples are of AS and community or professional members and hosts providing assessment, but students are also reported to assess their work. One of the examples of summative self-assessment from a law school is not from a placement module, but rather a simulation module where the students prepare and present a human rights tribunal. They do however present it to a judge, and Ariel says that this process gets 'very real' for the students:

But at the beginning the students always say [when] you ask them what's their biggest concern about the course and they say the self-assessment. And we do our best to put them at ease and also to assure them that they'll be given the appropriate materials, the appropriate advice. (Ariel)

Ariel continues to say that the students eventually understand the importance of the self-assessment:

They came around to realising that that was the fairest and the most appropriate way of doing it and a lot of them say that they found that that was the biggest part of the course in terms of the learning about themselves and learning about others. And in a sense there's so many things that they gain from that course. (Ariel)

The self-assessment can be formative or like in the above example summative. Another element is students assessing their own learning needs. The process by which the students learn to assess their own training needs can be seen to support the independent learner agenda. Again, this agenda is set forth by the QAA (2012b) as an expectation of higher education: that students are 'enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking' (p. 6).

The learning agreement or negotiated content is an assessment that several ASPs convey; this usually involves students choosing activities or learning from a provided framework. In some cases, these are negotiated with the hosts as well. One difference is in a social work programme where the ASP emphasises that the negotiated learning outcomes are based on what the academic staff consider the student needs to learn as per the feedback they received, rather than on what the students identify they want to learn or which community, client, or user group they would like to work with to gain knowledge and experience. This is slightly different from the negotiated agreement for Uma's modules, for example, where one aspect of the module focuses on the students' career interests and the placement is where students explore, confirm, or change their career ideas.

Another assessment provides group feedback and allows fellow students to learn about each other's work. Anna and Laura relate that their programmes include an assessment by degree show. Anna works in performing arts and is therefore involved in that assessment method. Laura, from education, highly values degree shows and would like to see more of them in other disciplines. Anna's performing arts programme has multiple people assess the various performances and workshops (one practice performance and three for the community organisation). The feedback to the students is intended to help improve the performances as well as the students' learning:

We just have a day where we share our work and it's really very creative. It's a lovely day. They're all terrified but it's great. And once they get up there and they do it and we join in as the audience if we've got to shout back or whatever. And then we sit with them after that and give them instant feedback from their peers. It's not peer assessment but we give them instant feedback so they chat about what was good, what they could hear, what they couldn't hear. They give suggestions. We give suggestions and then they get written feedback from us because we then collate a mark and then the students reflect on the process, which is now the essay. They reflect on the process how, taking into account all the feedback they got, how they felt it went and any changes that they're going to make. (Anna)

The work and assessment are multifaceted here – students receive instant formative feedback from the audience of peers, community members and multiple staff members. The written work is their responses to all the feedback, their own assessment of the production and their part in it and how they feel. The feedback, and their processing of it, helps them develop an action plan for an improved performance. Another important criterion is that all the students take a leadership role at some point during one of the workshops:

They can't have one workshop leader and the rest stand back. They've all got to be involved and lead something whether it's a small group or the whole group or whatever. And then...we become their client group and then they all have the opportunity to run their workshop. And then the students feedback as to how they felt as participants, even if you're meant to be five. (Anna)

In this complex process, involving many people, there is opportunity for much learning, remembering too the interactivity, especially of the workshops. The performance and workshop are additionally assessed when they are performed for the client group:

They've kept a working journal of the workshops. And they've also kept an evaluation of the performances but it doesn't actually have to come in the skills and etcetera, etcetera. We mark them on what we see in the workshop and we mark it on their engagement with the client group, the appropriateness of their workshop and kind-of teachery things as well: whether they're listening to the group, whether they're responding, whether they're able to keep control of the group, whether they've used the space appropriately, that kind-of element. And we feedback instantly to them. We try and see the very first performance and the first workshop so that they then can relax and try out different things and it's within their kind-of boundaries and then they write us an essay It's again a 1500-word essay accompanied by their first working journal or log-book entries and they reflect on the process and what they learn. (Anna)

The students capture their processes in their reflective accounts in their written work and in their essays. The other process here is that after the practice and the feedback from their first performance for the client students are encouraged to try new things without having to be concerned that it will affect their grades: to be able to take some risks. The topic of risk is further discussed in the next section on Assessment of Transformative Learning and in the chapter in Chapter 6: Emergent Issues.

Laura discusses the value of degree shows as for assessment:

We actually need forms of assessment in social sciences, arts and humanities and particularly in education that are more like a degree show as in art school, which are about different people engaging with it. And are about a different reflections of what the conceptual schema is, that has been worked out and the reflection on the process towards transformation and the energy going forward. (Laura)

It appears that for many of these placement learning assessments feedback from different people are captured as 'different voices'. These voices can appear in portfolios and reflections, when the hosts are asked for comment, as part of the formative and summative assessment. In the teaching and social work examples, they are also meant be captured by the students in their reflections.

By far, the assessment most reported by the ASPs is reflection with 82 per cent saying it is being used in their modules. All ASPs who mention critical reflection (30 per cent) also mention reflection. These are noted as assigned exercises, by way of a journal, diary, or essay based on the journal. Many ASPs relate that they provide students with guidelines for their reflections, as Uma points out 'Well in order to reflect you need to know how to reflect so you need to have some sort-of structure to help you come to understand, reflect your processes. You need to have someone to provide guidance that's then translated into an assignment and assessment.' (Uma)

In some modules, the journal is part of the work being graded. As Avery says:

Well we're certainly looking at that in their reflective work diary. In assessing that we want to see evidence of development as reflective learners and also evidence of being evaluative in terms of the placement provider.

In other modules, the journal is not graded, but is a requirement which adds to the evidence that the work is being done: 'The reflective journal doesn't get judged at all but the end project is judged and it's meant to start to be built from their reflections as they go through. So in a sense it is judged but it's not a formal piece of work' (Adam).

For some, the reflective journal becomes evidence, not only for the students' grade, which is self-assessed, but also for the module itself, as Ariel says:

And throughout the course of the year from September through March, they are also requested to submit a reflective log to the course coordinator... it does become an evidence base for [the students] and for the course coordinator – who's not me – who does have a role in moderating and ensuring that the assessment is robust and does meet the aims and learning outcomes of the course. So you know it's really a kind-of safety net I think. (Ariel)

Ariel relates that high grades awarded through self-assessment are due to students' dedication to a given project and the extra time they put in. She also notes that because of the competition students face in order to be admitted to the module (only 10 students from 30 to 40 applicants are accepted) all the students who attend are already, as she says, very hard-working and competent. She relates that this is probably a factor in the high grades being awarded for the course. The summative self-assessment and the high grades awards, according to Ariel, are currently being questioned by other academics in the faculty and subsequently needs defending.

In Avery's module, the initial report asks students to anticipate their placement. The students are also required to assess their work experience in relation to their academic learning:

They have this initial report, which is basically an overview of how they think the placement is going to work and that's their first assignment. Then they produce a reflective work diary which is a reflective journal and also a dissertation which is 45% of their grade and that is based on their academic experience within the placement so they should be conscious at all times of how their degree programme is

informing their experience and assessing the relevance of their academic study to this placement. And that's the bit that they do in association with programme specific supervisors. So they have two supervisors throughout the process. (Avery)

There appears to be various assessment allotments to the reflections, as well as different expectations of their contents. Uma brings up the progressive aspect of the reflection, from basic to critical:

...we have a generic BA education studies assessment criteria which is quite general. What that tends to focus on is at the very lower levels of the assessment criteria. It's about engagement with the topic, enthusiasm for the topic, shows that they've done some reading. But as you move through... you start getting the word critical coming in and it's about critical reflection on reading and reflection on the topic, being able to critically analyse and then synthesise and bring together different ideas. (Uma)

While the definition of critical reflection – and a distinction between reflection and critical reflection – are not always specified, critical reflection is often expected further on in the learning, as Tomas says:

It's on all the formal and informal feedback that you gain whilst in placement. Reflect on that. What have you learned from it? Specifically on the feedback, not just on their general awareness of the placement. And that gives them prompts in particular areas so their relationships, communication, oral and written, ICT skills and so on. But in the second trimester that is then extended to things like judgement, decision-making and initiative. So if you like, higher level skills when they should be, hopefully, achieving a bit more responsibility. So that prompt should be – okay you've got these general skills but have you developed higher skills at any time? If you haven't then there's good opportunity to ask your supervisor: can I have some more experience in that area? So that I can have a bit more reflection and achieve those specific outcomes. (Tomas)

Emily concurs that reflection is expected to be progressive, as students move through their time at university:

In anything reflective, particularly at degree level so when we're at this level six stage three, the final year, we would expect a level of critical engagement with research, for example... moving beyond describing a piece of research and being able to critically assess it. And recognising what evidence-based practice means and what its limitations are as well. (Emily)

Ursula is also a proponent for critical reflection in students' reflective accounts:

More than anything [what I am looking for] is the evidence that they have reflected critically on their experiences and can relate it to wider issues in public policy and evidence through reference to the literature. And even go off on a tangent; even digress a little bit from the practicality of their experience to something about ideals and concepts in policy... I did give them criteria that I was looking for, the marking criteria. It's in the handbook as well. And we discussed it in class. I don't know what else I can do but just keep reinforcing that to them.

The fact that Ursula keeps reinforcing the critical reflection indicates the difficulty students may be having with the process. Through the reflective journals, a formative self-assessment exercise is also seen as difficult, as suggested by Adam, and students need more encouragement to complete them:

They're encouraged to keep a reflective journal as they go through that period. Most of the ones I visit don't do that. So we've got to do some work on how do we get this notion of reflection, of becoming a reflective practitioner, more ingrained in the student before they get out there. So we've started to drop that into their first year and second year work so that by the end of their second year they should start to appreciate it. But it's one of those things; it's quite a tough way of self-assessing. (Adam)

Adam is working on introducing critical reflection earlier in the programme to get students use to doing it. The reflection exercises are often a means for students to do self-assessment – of their performances, learning and future learning needs. The fact that the reflective accounts are assessed, either for summative or formative purposes, means that the students will engage in the activity. As Rita says, 'it's not true for all of the students but for many students, particularly in [this] module, if you don't assess it, it won't get done'. This self-assessment may include students assessing their own beliefs and assumptions, and in that, there may be TL potential. The next section discusses if and how ASPs assess TL.

5.5 The Assessment of Transformative Learning by ASPs

This section answers the original conception of the research question of 'how academic staff report assessing TL in service-learning in the UK'. The context for this study changes from service-learning to placement learning, which includes professional development programmes such as teaching, dentistry and medicine and non-professional programmes such as computing science, business, education and sociology.

The short answer to the question is, of course, that ASPs in this study do not assess TL in their students for summative purposes. The long answer to the question is far more complex, as this section will describe.

Ursula addresses the ‘big’ question – do we want even to assess TL? She further illuminates some of the problems with assessing TL, as a personal, invisible process:

I just wonder whether if you want to assess that kind-of thing and it doesn't happen, where does that leave the students? And because there's a danger that they might say that they had been transformed to tick a box, to get credit. I have actually had journals where people have actually written that they have been transformed and given reasons for different levels of consciousness that Freire talks about and I wonder, there's always a part of me that thinks, is this strategic? Does this student think that this is what I'm looking for and has therefore written it in? And I don't want to discredit anyone for having done that because it might be genuine but there's always that doubt. The very smart ones might think well this is how you write a journal. How do you assess transformation because it's a personal thing, is it not?
(Ursula)

Here a main issue is that TL is both invisible and personal. Any behavioural changes may come much later in the student's life, or may be part of a longer-term TL experience. As King (2005) states ‘This journey of transformative learning is not usually strictly linear; it may have many twists, turns, stops, delays and even re-routing along the way’ (p 2). TL experiences may therefore not be contained within one course or acknowledged in one. TL may be happening as part of the whole university experience. The University of Glasgow may be exemplifying this in their expectations of graduate attributes (Appendix D). Price et al. (2010) reiterate this issue:

The common thread running through the assessment premises is tension. Many aspects of assessment present a conflict between choices that are not amenable to compromise. Decisions about assessment strategy and implementation need to be made with full realisation of the power of assessment to drive learning, especially slowly learnt graduate attributes, and to be founded on a clear view of the role of assessment, which is congruent with the values and culture of the institution. (p. 490)

Students may report a TL experience that has not occurred and some students may be unaware of their TL process. Ursula states that the ‘very smart ones’ may read into her course that she is looking for student TL: it may indeed be happening, but there is no easy way to verify that it has. Student can and should be able to fulfil the requirements of the

course without it. Ursula reiterates that the course has the components for it to happen, and it certainly is a topic that is discussed.

At least one discipline, social work, appears to try to incorporate TL theory into the assessment process:

Well certainly... in the work we've been doing in evaluating the two observational learning experiences we had Mezirow's transformative learning very much in mind when we looked at those when we were evaluating them. Particularly for first year students who go into that first observational placement. It might be their first opportunity to have a contact with service users and it is very much this disorientating dilemma and it completely throws them. And so they have to do that searching for answers and what we ask them to do, we provide reflective learning tools like a reflective diary which gives them questions to prompt their thinking so they begin to do that self-examination bit and make some assessments on maybe some of the pre-conceived notions that they had before they went on placement. (Lidia)

This indicates that the intent is to support the students through TL experiences, but TL is not assessed for their grade. This would seem an appropriate use of assessing TL, to help support the student through the process, especially the potential difficulties of disorienting dilemmas. It also bears re-stating that the first- and second-year placement performances are formatively assessed, not summatively.

Ronda and Ursula exemplify the issue of TL not being an intended learning outcome in the following statements:

A lot of the things, which I hope they learn I don't think, are assessed but I hope we give them those skills. I think what they take with them isn't just a mark and I hope we do that in other areas because I don't think it is just about marks. I'll probably be deeply unpopular for saying that but I don't think learning is about marks You've got to be careful. You've got to make an effort with clients if you want to do well. I think that does them good. I just think actually most importantly it gives them a wider perspective. (Ronda)

The concern here is that the wider perspectives Ronda hopes they learn are arguably important to the students in their professional and civic lives. The module attempts to create an educational experience where they can gain a wider perspective, but leaves much of it to chance. Without attention to this learning, TL, and the educational experience, can

fall short of its potential. Ursula's module is designed to cover TL as a potential experience, which she categorises as personal development:

It's about personal development as well. Although you can't really say that that's intended learning outcome because you can't assess it. You can't say, you've got to change to become better... but I would hope that they would look back on it at some point and think: yea that course made a difference. (Ursula).

Ursula also points to the potential longer-term nature of TL. While TL cannot be assessed for grades, it can be discussed openly, as she says she does in her modules. TL is a potential outcome. Rita reiterates that this learning is not necessarily part of the intended outcomes for her programme's course:

...you've got a hidden learning outcome of understanding society as well as coming back and saying wow I can do this. You know I was afraid of talking to these people etc.... and so it's given them an understanding of society in a way... it's one of the unintended learning outcomes but we do encourage them to write about it. (Rita)

This may be where discussion and dialogue can be of use, that there is a type of learning, TL, where one learns a perspective that is not necessarily within the disciplinary concerns of the course. In that, it may be advantageous to discuss this potential with the students, to make them aware of the possibilities so it is explicit, not implicit, that it is openly discussed, not a 'hidden outcome'.

Another ASP, Sara, from education, does not know TLT but recognises that it may be used and supported in other modules in the programme. This could indicate that there is support in the programme for TL experiences in other modules, should it occur for a student. Sara indicates that other AS seem aware of TL.

Working through TL may be a skill that is helpful, even necessary, for people providing services to vulnerable populations, which is perhaps why the ASPs in social work and community development report that they recognise and use TLT in their placement modules. It is perhaps more generally understood that students graduating from these programmes need to be prepared to face a world of uncertainty in which they, or people around them, will likely have TL experiences. They may have to recognise and even help

others (clients, patients, service users, etc.) through the experience of having their perceptions revealed to be unsuitable for a situation at hand, and undergo some or all of the TL phases, as Mezirow identifies in TLT. Another aspect here is that these professions involve verbal discussions with clients and even helping clients change their behaviours. Professionals in these fields primarily need to use listening and verbal skills in their work. They are not, like dentists, working on teeth. However, the dentistry programme ASP relates that the community aspects of the course are aimed to help individuals look after their teeth and that is done by discussion and presentations.

The risk of not knowing about TL (whether or not one knows the theory) is that one could be, like Rena, ‘...trying to teach the students not to be judgemental of people who are coming in with their legal problems’, without the pedagogical support the theory could provide. During this process, AS may not be able to support students through the TL as well as they could. They may better reach their goals of student development with more knowledge of TL and of the theory and by making it explicit in the course. This can be considered to help students become professionals who know, Rena says ‘how to come across to clients in a professional manner and things like that’.

Edward has views of a placements’ objectives as behavioural goals:

I think if people have, through a placement at least, if they have the opportunity to demonstrate certain skills, which are evidence based and relevant, then I think that’s fine. In terms of attitudes or values, you would expect them to operate in non-discriminatory fashion ... you would expect people to operate in a social or a health care setting, that they’re there to support, help and be positive towards the folk who come to these kind-of services.

Edward relates that he does not believe that the goal of the programme is to change people’s beliefs. ASPs who can support their students through the experience of TL may be in more of a position to help them become ‘non-judgemental’ or ‘to operate in a non-discriminatory manner’. However, the issue is that the behaviour changes may not be enough to ensure that the behaviour continues, and that development progresses, as Mezirow relates:

Education cannot be defined by a simplistic preoccupation with fostering direct behaviour change, which in many cases exemplifies the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. The most significant behaviour changes may be functions of perspective transformation, and such transformation is often an essential precondition for meaningful behaviour changes. (1978, p. 107)

The reports by the ASPs here tend to acknowledge that TL can have many guises and occurs differently for different people in different contexts.

Another difficulty in assessing TL could be that a module, or even a programme, might be part of a student's longer-term transformation. As Mezirow (1994b) states there can be different ways perspective transformations can occur:

[There are] two different paths toward perspective transformation, one cumulative, a set of progressive transformations in related meaning schemes, the other epochal, a sudden reversal in figure and ground, a profound insight into the premises or presuppositions which have distorted or limited our understanding, often triggered by a disorienting dilemma, and involving a broader view of the origin, nature and consequences of our assumptions. (p. 229)

ASPs in the longer-term professional development programmes have a better chance of observing progressive changes in students, however they are not always observed, as in the case here with Alan from nursing. It appears that the goals of the placement may be important. Sara also discusses the goals of the placement and what is being assessed:

We're looking for [their own professional understanding] to come through in their teaching and in their planning when you're looking at the actual implementation of the lesson. So the classroom management, just the sort-of skills, and then their ability to self-evaluate, to work with others, to be aware of the wider community, and looking at the theory and the practice and how that informs practice. (Sara)

Students may undergo TL while they are learning to be aware of the wider community. The student may be in a module, which is part of a programme, where there is cumulative TL experience potential. In these modules, ASPs might only be aware, if at all, of a portion of the experience.

Regarding an education studies module, Uma states that changing assumptions are a course topic: 'that's something we highlight very strongly and also point out over and over again:

the strength of cultures, of workplace cultures in changing your assumptions and reprogramming you'. This suggests a process whereby students need to understand their own assumptions in order to understand how workplace cultures changes them and 're-programmes you'.

The ASPs for the most part do not report understanding the full phases of TLT, but seem to understand the general process of TL. One piece that is seemingly missing is critical reflection: not only the reflection on one's own premises, but also the reflection on how those premises are developed and how they might be faulty. Rita, for example, relates a story of a student who had been on their placement programme in first year computing science. She describes how an opportunity to work with this student in his third year shows her how important that experience had been. She also discusses different ways student develop:

He came back a different person. He actually said: I had my corners knocked off, which they needed to be. So for some people they need to constrict a bit. For some people it's a growing out: they blossom into self-confidence. For this particular individual it was almost too much self-confidence and he had to listen and learn from other people and realise it wasn't all about him and he didn't know it all. Other people knew lots of good things too. But the great thing is he recognised that. And this particular individual went on to do a full placement year and is now doing a final year project and he's absolutely delightful. He's turned into such a ... I don't know how to describe him but he's not the person that we saw three years ago. What was really good was when he gave his presentation at the end of his first year module, he was starting to realise that it was good to have self-confidence, that other people can contribute as well and although he had skills so did other people. And that journey has continued for him and just to see him now, you just think this guy's going to be very successful. He's got great skills but great inter-personal skills and gets on really, really well with his company. So that's just fantastic. (Rita)

Rita's enthusiasm for the student's development is apparent. A next enthusiasm may be for more students to be supported through the process. The community development programme has another level to their pedagogy, as explained by Andy, where the goals go beyond students developing critical practice: these students are being educated to be able to help others develop these skills as well. Andy explains the goals of the programme:

[It is] very much a practice focus. It's a praxis... we want people to be able to develop an analytical framework whereby they can analyse what's happening in any given community development context and in the back of that analysis make practice

decisions and then implement those decisions, evaluate the full plan and then come back so it's that kind-of reflective process... we're looking to develop people... who are critical thinkers in their own right but also are able to bring other people into the kind-of critical space to think about their life and to make—to take action within that for change. (Andy)

Not only are students perhaps in the 'action phase' of TL, but their future actions are to include nurturing others in their own change and in their own actions as well. This speaks to the process needing to be made very explicit, so that students can more fully understand their experiences.

Laura describes how both the academic and work components of the Masters' programme have potential for transformation: 'because of the nature of the subjects that people are looking at they're also using some of the emancipatory theoretical frameworks, but it's a theoretical framework and it's for an academic dissertation'. She explains, as quoted in the Chapter 4 Transformative Learning, that students in the programme often have already had TL experiences, and are engaged with what could be considered the 'action phase' of the process. She describes how this has now even gone beyond the students' individual TL experiences to the wider community:

It's potentially more radical than an individualistically transformative paradigm. It's actually about collective transformation rather than individual transformation. And that we know therefore needs us to work with very safe, functional language around the individual because otherwise it's not fair. Otherwise we're breaking their transaction. (Laura)

Laura speaks to the necessity for an ethical practice based on trust, which needs to feature attention to on-going support. This assistance and continuing support Mezirow (1978) describes in his earlier work: 'Within a new meaning perspective, people will still require educational assistance in acquiring the skills and knowledge they come to see as relevant' (p. 107).

While it appears that the assessment of TL is not, and should not be summative, the ASP reportedly informally assesses it when a student relates an experience that has changed them in significant ways. In some cases, TL may be fostered, as seen in preparing students for the professions, especially when their work situations might cause TL. Another reason to assess for students being aware of TL is a point the community development and social

work ASPs discuss, when the students become professionals, they will likely encounter TL, their own experiences and those of their clients. Here, comfort, or at least familiarity, may be seen again as preparation for work. It is thought that it is beneficial for the students to go through the experience at university, as they start being aware of wider issues. In some cases, the experience is seen as a positive ‘unintended outcome’. Again, to support TL, the AS’ might assess that the student is potentially having a TL experience and therefore be able to support and guide them appropriately.

King (2005) attests to the educational experiences needing to be open-ended, allowing for individual differences and be supportive of TL. She also proposes assessment practices that involve journaling, portfolios, presentations and group projects with focus on authentic assessment. This study discovers many instances of authentic assessment as placements offer opportunities to do tasks that are similar to what students would do when they are working and practicing their professions. This concurs with the discussion by Gulikers et al. (2006): ‘authenticity is a relative concept and that the authenticity of an assessment needs to be judged by its resemblance to the working situation it aims to reflect’ (p. 340).

This chapter reports on five aspects of assessment and shows the multiplicity of the assessment modes and assignments discovered in this study. Those ASPs who report that they do indeed assess that TL is occurring, do so although not for summative grades. Assessing TL may not be done for formative assessment either, but may be done to support the students through the experience and for this reason ‘supportive assessment’ is perhaps a better name for AS assessing TL.

Ten ASPs report being aware of TL potential, but do not necessarily know the theory. They could support TL without the theoretical knowledge but more AS may be successful in the support of student TL if they use at least some of the theory in their pedagogies. The intention of AS for students to ‘gain wider perspectives’ or ‘not be pompous’ indicates a willingness, understanding and desire to support students’ development towards inclusiveness. However many ASP’s lack the pedagogical theories and tools to increase the developmental potential of TL.

The assessment regimes found in these placement modules show that they are authentic, and the assignments can provide opportunities for TL. The assessment of TL however, would not be summative or even formative, when the formative assessment is a gauge to ensure that the learning criteria for the summative assessment are being met. The assessment of TL would be awareness AS have about a student's process. The effectiveness of ASPs assessing TL would be the extent of their awareness and the support provided to a student in the event AS assess a student's potential TL experience. As part of a supportive assessment regime AS could offer acknowledgment and reference to the literature when they assess that a student is potentially undergoing, or has undergone, a TL experience. Academic staff could therefore, in this way, provide supportive assessment for students.

Transformative learning is deep-seated change that may come at great cost to the learner. At the very least, learners experience the cost of letting go of the familiar and taking a risk on a new way of understanding. (King, 2005, p. 105)

6 Emergent Issues

ASPs do not assess students for TL, for summative or even formative purposes, but they are engaging with TL -- some more than others. This chapter examines which ASPs and programmes report engaging the most with TL, and which phases of the process appear to be lacking. It looks at emergent issues discovered from the interviews and then at the participatory elements of the study and reviews of the role of universities.

6.1 Staff and Programmes Engage with TL.

For theoretical reference this discussion uses the four core components in TL process: disorienting experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse and action, as described in TL: Chapter 4.

There are numerous reports of ASPs assessing that students may be going through a disorienting dilemma experiences. The language around this is quite varied as these ASPs describe:

- ‘I’m hoping that this takes them out of their comfort zone’. (Ronda)
- ‘We are throwing them in the deep end.’ (Rita)
- ‘So that could be quite a traumatic thing.’ (Elisa)
- ‘I just think they have to slog through the mud until they work it out.’ (Anna)
- ‘My politics were entirely turned upside down and inside out.’ (Alan)
- ‘I hope it is not too traumatic for them.’ (Isabel)
- ‘This module sort-of flummoxes them at the beginning.’ (Uma)
- ‘They’ve just hit a big thing that changes it all, that absolutely unravels all the world assumptions that they’ve had.’ (Laura)
- ‘In some ways it’s pulling the rug out from underneath their feet.’ (Alan)

The ASPs descriptions appear to indicate situations where students could have disorienting experiences, potentially as part of a TL experience. Other accounts are profiled earlier, as when the ASP discusses the students' 'middle class backgrounds' and lack of experience with people outside of their lives. The pedagogy of placement and especially community service placements may put students into completely new situations, meeting new, and different people. Another possible trigger for TL is the focus on students learning about their own learning, as in the following section on reflection exercises shows. ASPs relate this to be a different university learning experience for the students, different from what they experience in their other courses.

The majority of the ASPs report using reflection exercises as assignments for assessing student learning. Several ASPs provide an outline for the formats that students are expected to use. Rita describes the desired content for first-year module reflective accounts:

What have I learned? What skills have I got? Where did it go wrong? How can I do it better? So there's a very definite thread of building reflective practice in so the students don't just learn skills and knowledge but they develop reflective practice. The main element is the reflective portfolio and they do have to do an end of module presentation where they have to individually stand up, give a professional power point presentation that we mark on content and presentation skills so again it's skills development but the content is all about what have I learned? How have I changed as a person? What have I got out of this module? (Rita)

The questions fall short of asking students to critically assess the premises for their beliefs and for changes in their beliefs that may arise from their placement learning experiences. Other accounts by the ASPs relate that students are asked to examine their learning, their practices and workplaces critically. These indicate that the reflection exercises may contain opportunities for students to examine the premises for their beliefs. This may then evoke or trigger a TL experience. However, the questions the students are asked to follow often appear to be shy of asking for students to question their belief structures. Rita asks 'how have I changed as a person', which could prompt that kind of reflection, but not quite as strong as 'what beliefs changed?' and 'how had these beliefs been formed?'

Taking action is an aspect of TL, and another key element in reflective accounts is how students use their reflections and the feedback of others consider and plan their courses of

action. Some of the plans and actions are captured in the observed student practices during the programmes, when students use their experiences to plot a new course of action. In some modules the feedback on how the changes are enacted and an evaluation of them is part of the assessment process.

For standalone modules in non-professional development programmes, a few ASPs discuss students reporting TL experiences years after the module is complete. In the case of a Master's level programme, the fact that the students have made their proposals to do the work is thought to be the action phase, as Laura says: 'the work is in service to vulnerable populations'. With the majority of ASPs reporting the use of reflective accounts as part of the students' work, they appear to be following O'Neil and Marsick (2009) 'reflection is the glue that holds service and learning together to provide educative experiences' (p. 16). The educative experience may include TL especially since many of the phases are present in the pedagogies of the modules.

The social work and community development programmes indicate the use of dialogue specifically for student development. Both these programmes use observed practice for assessment purposes. They are also preparing students for work in fields that require caring for people and the ability to work very closely with others who may themselves be developing and may be in crisis. Learning about their own TL experiences could be seen as preparing them for the work they will be doing. The disorienting dilemmas are seen to be occurring, as are the reflections and the actions. Very few ASPs relate using dialogue as part of the modules and this may be the major lack in the pedagogies. The next section discusses the use and lack of use of dialogue in placement learning.

6.2 Gaps in Transformative Learning

TL is a 'theory in development' (Mezirow, 2004) and as such we must keep adding to it as we discover more about how people change their frames of references. While some of the ASPs indicate a fair amount of support for their students, and some even fostering TL, others seem to be aware that some students undergo TL. However, they may not be taking full advantage to assist students in their development. This section is about how the phase of discourse seems to be the least 'tended to' phase in the placement modules as described by many of the ASPs. There is potential discourse of course, within the reflections and

within the modules where students are asked to work with theory, as well as with discussions with the tutors. To attend to the transformative potential of placement learning the four basic components of TL need be present: it appears that the reflection exercises in the placement learning modules are not used to their full potential and dialogue is most often missing.

The use of verbal dialogue is perhaps important, however further research is necessary to illuminate the role discourse plays and the best ways to elicit it. As Patrick (2011) writes:

No written assessment can give a truly rounded picture of learner transformation: I learn much about the transformations my students undergo by listening to them during the discussions we have in the professional studies seminars when shifts in thinking about professionalism become apparent. (p. 4)

The spoken language may be very important in dialogue. As Andy states:

I think the dialogue with literature takes you so far in as much as you can interrogate your own thinking about ideas but it's the assumptions that you bring to that that you can't see and your thinking about your thinking that you can't see. And you do have to have that process of dialogue.

Skills in dialogue may even further the TL experience for students in their placement modules, if like the learners in Kiely's (2005) study, the dialogue is with the people in their context (in this case an international programme of US students in Nicaragua):

In particular, this study found that dialogue with, and observations of, community members who maintained radically different political, economic, cultural, spiritual, and social perspectives enhanced study participants' ability to question taken-for-granted assumptions, engage in ideology critique, identify hegemonic aspects of U.S. and Nicaraguan culture, and, more frequently than in previous studies, reframe perspectives. (p. 17)

There are ways placement modules attempt to allow dialogue between the students. This may be especially important in the yearlong sandwich placements in business studies programmes. Tomas relates technology is used as a support for dialogue amongst the students: 'That's why we tend to use the discussion boards so that the other students can

say, “yep that’s what happened to me” ’ (Tomas). The structure is set up utilising technology and could be used further in support of TL.

Ila discusses the expectations for students to understand the health care needs of people she thinks are unlike the students in the programme:

We are expecting them to learn that there are different populations out there and there are different groups of people, I mean yea it’s very much to do with the real world. A lot of these students are very middle class. They’ve gone to red brick universities in their previous degrees. And they haven’t engaged at all with anybody real and it’s to try and start them understanding that there is a wide-range of people out there all with different needs, demands and all with different problems and issues. And also a little bit to understand, I mean I haven’t got that strictly in the aims and objectives, but to understand that actually we can’t be pompous as health professionals and go around doing to people. You need to understand what people want as well as need and get that balance. So I expect them to understand that there are different people out there and they do have different issues. And actually some of them have worse dental health, oral health and basic health than others but why? And I want them to understand well why? Well they’ve got Sky TV. Why don’t they spend money on their [dental health] ... oh get real. They’ve never thought of it before. You know where are your priorities. You know that people have different priorities. And it makes them sort-of start to look at different areas of the population.

Ila indicates that she sees a marked distinction between what the students had experienced, as middle class people attending redbrick universities, and the larger population for whom they will be providing dental care. She relates that she thinks that learning about different populations’ needs and motivations of people who are different from the students is an important issue to study, for students to develop an understanding of others’ different motivations. When she says it is not in course ‘aims and objectives’, but that the students need to ‘not be pompous’ and ‘do’ to people, she indicates she wants to instil in her students an understanding of difference. Ila is saying that to be a good dentist one needs to work at understanding people’s motivations and work with those motivations to obtain better health results. She thinks the students need to learn this understanding and acceptance. She wants a change from the idea of the health care provider applying skills to that of dentists being a co-creator of health with their patient/client. She wants the students to understand ‘why some have worse health than others’. However, she does not articulate pedagogy to do so. This does not mean that the programme does not provide these learning opportunities to students: there is reportedly an adult educator / community developer on staff, as well as other like-minded dental educators. It could be that the programme does

indeed cover all these by providing support for students enlarging their understandings of other people. Ila relates that she had to have ‘a lot of faith’ with the new programme model and from her interview, she indicates she is very enthusiastic about it now.

Ila does not mention discussions and reflection sessions, which could really advance her hopes towards this kind of education and development for students.

From many of the ASPs interviews, there appears to be much potential to support TL. A key element, the dialogue phase, is what is missing from most, but not all, of the placement modules. It appears then, that this could be the area of most opportunity for supporting or enhancing TL in students.

As Kiely (2005) points out ‘Mezirow’s empirically-based conceptual framework also has explanatory value unique to service-learning contexts because it describes how different modes of reflection combined with meaningful dialogue lead people to engage in more justifiable and socially-responsible action’ (p. 6). This of course applies to placement learning as well.

6.3 Emergent Discoveries

The four main themes emerge from the interviews: change, risk, employability and independent learning are discussed here.

6.3.1 *Change*

Through the coding and constant comparisons exercise of all of the interview transcripts, the theme of change emerges as a factor in every ASPs work life. From restructuring of departments (as given as a reason for lack of access to staff to interview) to ASPs working in new placement programmes, to changes with the module regarding teaching and assessing there is mention of changes. There is even mention of changes that are going to occur, or that might occur. Some of the changes come from the ASPs themselves as they describe changes they have made, are making, or want to make to their modules. Ursula is adapting a self-assessment scheme, Laura’s programme and programme model, are new

and Anna is continuing to look for placement opportunities where students can access an existing production for their placement. Tomas discusses the creation of a peer-to-peer placement-finding programme:

Though one of the things that we've never been able to do and we're really keen to do is to take a step back from finding placements or helping the students find placements. We want to create a framework where the students help students find placements. So those that have been through the process are given a group of students. Give them help on how to do a CV, what they can expect at interviews or assessment centres, what they can expect once they're in a placement. Again how we give them credit. I think that will come in through this new set of modules that we've been asked to design. And that's really my interest is now. I've done the process. I know how placements work. I know how to administer placements but that's not really where the interesting thing is. It's how do the students then take ownership for something and drive it forward themselves? I think they're probably our best recruiters'. (Tomas)

Tomas is looking for ways to enhance the placement experience for students. Sara's programme has already been changed from an orientation where they teach students to deliver curriculum to one where they support students learning to be professional educators:

In the past, we [taught] how to teach curricular areas. Now the placement and also the degree, is very much about them in the first number of years thinking of themselves as teachers and as learners and understanding their own educational values and rather than looking purely at a subject within the curriculum. So there's less curricular content and much more focus on themselves as professionals and learning how they should be understanding education themselves. (Sara)

Lena describes how a new Dean is changing the direction of the programmes: 'The dean of the faculty who's come in and he's very keen to promote the sort-of social enterprise and community engagement agenda through the curriculum'. This is the explanation given for the new socially-oriented programme. This programme is reportedly not supported by all the staff, some of whom are saying students need more disciplinary knowledge in accounting, human resources and finance. The tensions of focus are thereby shown between the more traditional staff and those championing the new placement learning provision.

Some changes are dictated from outside the modules. Isabel discusses a move back, seemingly a change back, to a previous system:

The exams used to be competency based and the idea was really that we get away from all this prizes and excellence and things like that and we would talk about the competent doctor. But we seem to be moving back. There used to be an honour system but then that's changing and now what's happening is the students are all put in quartiles. It very much depends on their performance through the years. And that can make a huge difference when it comes to applying for foundation jobs. They are rank-ordered and put into these awful quartiles. (Isabel)

Isabel shares that she dislikes an assessment system that ranks students and prefers the approach that focuses on competencies. As a senior partner in one of [Town]'s largest medical firms and practicing GP (General Practitioner), she says she divides her time between her practice and teaching, and has seen a variety of changes to medical education. Her assessment of their community teaching unit is that it provides 'extensive wonderful teaching'. The changes in the educational provision, according to Isabel, have positive and negative effects. On the positive side is an example where students are assigned to an elderly person being released from hospital with their prescriptions. Students then have to learn about the patient, their medical issues as well as the issues of poly-pharmacy from a patient's perspective. The students' experiences are shared with their cohort, through presentations, posters etc., so that they all may learn from the experiences of the others. On the negative side the changes in NHS are creating a dearth of placement places for the students and that will continue to be a challenge.

ASPs describe the changes in assessment protocols that come from outside the universities, from the communities: Lidia regarding the demise of a community of practice that centres on discussing placements and Sara regarding the placement-clearing house that takes away her programme staff's ability to match students to their placements. Valerie describes changes to their placement abilities and the impact that has:

Statutory agencies, which is where most placements used to be, have been massively changed and cut... the dearth of placements has meant that a model of – give us a placement, anything will do, please, please, please take one of our students. And if they don't make any heinous mistakes or problems or ways then they'll pass because they've done their days. And that it's very much a sort-of add-on, an apprenticeship sort-of model to practice learning. So the best students are seen as the ones who fit in to the agency best rather than the ones who are learning to be critical professional

practitioners. Because the entire infrastructure, the requirement for education in practice and assessment in practice have been taken out or have been allowed to fall away. (Valerie)

Another change the ASPs bring up is the use of technology. A business studies programmes offers varying opinions: their own acceptance of students using technology in their classes contrasted to their colleagues who are seemingly ‘anti-technology’ and do not want students diverting themselves by looking up information on their computers in their classes.

The ASPs report seeing many changes in their work, both in universities and in placement learning. Placement learning itself is new to many programmes and many ASPs are new to working with placement learning. The various changes the ASPs are making indicate an evolving pedagogy aimed at helping students in their learning and skills development. The multiple changes, coming from many directions, indicate that the ASPs are working in a world of change and are being asked to adapt. Just as disciplinary knowledge is evolving from research, ASPs are no longer able to expect that work in teaching will remain constant. The theme of change emerges from the ASPs and needs further exploration.

6.3.2 *Risk*

One of the issues of placement learning is that the AS has less control of the learning than in non-placement modules. The issue can be regarded as risk because AS are responsible for the learning and the assessments, but do not have complete control. In the following two quotes Ursula discusses this issue with some depth:

...they’re reflecting on what they felt as though they had developed. See I think those things are already there, I’m not teaching skills. It’s the students themselves and it’s all about their learning and it’s coming from them and I make that very clear to students that what they’re learning on placement, they have to generate that. It’s without my control or, that’s part of service-learning, I think, is letting go and taking the risks. And it is a risky business I think. I don’t have control over the curriculum. I don’t have control over what they’re learning. I don’t know whether it’s going to go alright. I don’t know what’s going to happen to them when they’re out in the community. And I do worry about it sometimes. (Ursula)

Ursula articulates this from the standpoint of one who studies SL and who understands the potential for students to experience TL. Issues can arise and she discusses how not only she, but also the student cohort, deals with some of them:

Sometimes there are negative experiences and we have to work on that to try to make it into a positive one, help students see that it's not as negative as they think and try to get them to look at different angles of it which is where a good group I think help each other. They point out good things about maybe someone's negative experience. And invariably they do. They turn it around and they see it as a learning experience I can't guarantee that they are going to get it because they start the course thinking what is this about? How do we relate what we're doing on placement with what's in the books? And how do they write a journal? And all these questions. I think maybe it will work. And I've had to be, bite the bullet in a way and kind-of take the risk and think, well I can't tell them anything at the beginning because they wouldn't necessarily take it all in, they won't really understand it until they've done it. I have to be patient and think; yes they will get it in the end. And quite often they do say that. They say things like the penny's dropped. I see it now. But that's toward the end. I have to trust. So I have to take that risk that it will work but it always does. (Ursula)

Ursula has several years' experience and some assistance in this process. She has the literature from SL and a community of practice through which she continues to develop her pedagogy. The 'patience and trust' she describes is a different skill set than one expects in a teaching environment, and one that may be much needed in the SL contexts and in the placement learning contexts as well. It is perhaps this experience that it always works out that will help her take the risks the next time.

Ursula describes her process of working with students on their self-assessment assignments, the only example of its use for summative assessment. By introducing this process she is arguably taking risks. The community of practice she subscribes to understands this risk. As Speck & Hoppe (2004, viii) say 'Service-learning is a revolutionary pedagogy, perhaps even a dangerous pedagogy'. The danger includes that students may realise their own agency and become aware of social injustices.

The other disciplinary programmes, social work and community development, seemingly have strong support systems for the academic staff as well; as Andy says 'we talk about this stuff all the time'.

Another area of risk is identified around the roles of ASPs in regard to their teaching and research remits. Ike, an early career academic, says that he has difficulty with the requirements of multiple job demands:

I love my job more than anything but there are pressures that almost work against this kind-of approach because you constantly have to go to meetings. You're constantly having to meet deadlines and you can get lost and lose the time and the space and the opportunity to really reflect on what you're doing as an educator.

Added to the multiple changes, the ASPs' work has many demands with their teaching, or their reflection on it, not always given high priority. Ike speaks about his frustration:

There's this disjunction too between teaching and research that research and teaching are not linked in any way and that all the status is with researchers not with teachers. There's almost kind-of a snobby kind-of approach to teaching as if it's just like an amateur thing. But it's hard not only to break down those kinds of attitudes and work against them but also to have the time to really reflect... I think I'm only beginning, beginning I would say, to understand that I am an educator. That sounds really quite lame I think in a way but it's taken me a long time to get to that. I've seen myself very much as a lecturer, giving students access to information but I don't think that I've really fully understood the impact that I can make to help students really begin to work with these ideas and to reflect on them. And I think that's only something that I would say even within the last year that I've really begun to think of myself in that way. (Ike)

Through this awareness Ike has been changing his teaching: 'what I'm kind-of playing with in my lecturing at the moment, trying to create that dialogue to draw understanding out of the students rather than simply the didactic thing of opening up and pouring information in'.

Ike articulates his frustration with the status of teaching being secondary to that of research. One of the risks he is facing is that if he focuses on teaching and reflecting on his teaching practice he will not have the time to do research and administration, which are awarded higher professional priority. He could miss professional advancement by spending too much time on his educational practice. Ike appears to be a very engaged academic staff member who is dealing with some issues of where to focus his time and energy.

Risk taking is also a subject for students, where some may be concerned about their grades and not take risks that may have uncertain outcomes. The confrontation of social realities can take one aback, and be disorienting. The issue of ‘middle class’ students having been sheltered from reality surfaces several times in the interviews. It appears that it is not uncommon for ASPs to see their students as not being familiar with the ‘real world’ and ‘real people’. As Yvonne exemplifies:

And for many of them too, they come from I suppose quite sheltered backgrounds and there’s a difference between what you actually learn in a lecture hall about the challenges people might face on a day-day basis. Going back to the children’s centre example, again to actually turning up there and seeing what a struggle it is for some people to actually make ends meet on a day-to-day basis and how difficult parenting is when you are under stress. So I think those things also have the potential to be quite important in changing the way you actually view the world and the way you actually question yourself. (Yvonne)

The risks can also be deliberated in the more general terms of emancipatory education as exemplified by Heaney and Horton (1990) who discuss the political aspects of providing education:

The responsibility in emancipatory education, as in all education, is awesome because it is ultimately a political act. And all political acts, however well intentioned, involve risks. Nonetheless, for an educator to do nothing or to merely continue the hegemonic practices of state-sponsored education is also to choose and risk choosing wrongly. (p. 88)

The premise that supportive climates assist TL is relayed by Mezirow (1978): ‘Self-confidence needed for perspective transformation is often gained through an increased sense of competency and through a supportive social climate in which provisional tries are encouraged with minimum risk’ (p. 107) and this appears in several of the ASPs renditions of their programmes. The risk can be mitigated by a ‘supportive social climate’, which can be created in academia.

Another area which is not brought up by the AS, is that we know TL and changing perceptions can take time, and during a disorienting dilemma, and when one is trying new perspectives, one might not be at one’s academic best. So a potential risk is that students do not present their best work for assessment, as they may be confused at what they are seeing while working out new perspectives. This is a topic of interest in future research.

6.3.3 *Employability*

The topics of career decision making, job search skills, transferable skills and thus employability is brought up in many of the interviews. Essentially all of the ASPs from the non-professional programmes discuss one, some, or all of these topics as part of the placement learning. The professional programmes (nursing, teaching, drug and alcohol studies, social work, and community development) are largely professional employment preparation programmes where a purpose of the placement is for students to practice and develop specific skills and to demonstrate that they are fit for practice: employment preparation is implicit. The placements and projects with learning tasks linked to employment preparation are also evident in most of the other programmes. This demonstrates again that ASPs working in placement modules have knowledge requirements outside their disciplinary knowledge. ASPs are also often in contact with the host employers. While the focus in this study is in the community non-profit sector, there are discussions of placements in for--profit business as well. Even when ASPs are not in contact with the hosts, they are learning about them while they assess students' work and engagement.

Lena from business studies relates that with the advent of student fees, their programmes will need to respond to students and their parents' requirements to show value: that the students' employment opportunities have been increased through their studies. Placement learning is seen as part of this mandate.

The Master's level programme weaves employability skills into its already full community and dissertation agenda. As Laura recounts:

[It is] a bit of a hybrid of both but it has a new take: innovative ways in which we can work with partner organisations and give students something that will say, yea I've been in the real world. Look it's on my CV. I can work in other sectors. I can also do research at the same time. I can hold down two different selves and projects. (Laura)

Ike articulates how these community interactions can have multiple benefits for the students:

I have been sending them up all over the place, because I've made a connection... through your own activity you find people. I responded to something... There's a kind-of anti-terror policy in each area and a prevention strategy and she was asking whether we had students that would like to present a presentation in [Town] about what the police had been doing, what other agencies had been doing in relation to tackling anti-terror. I've been sending [the students] to all these things because not only are they getting access to some of the stuff that I'm telling them about theoretically but now they're seeing it from a practitioner's point of view but also they're making connections with these practitioners as well. You know they came back and said: we spoke to the senior inspector and I said: ya, I know. (Ike)

Ike, without a formal placement module, is providing students access to the practice and the practitioners, which can further both the disciplinary and the employment objectives.

Bringing the elements of change and employability, Tennant (1993) relates:

One of the reasons for employing graduates is that they bring 'higher-level skills' to an organisation. It is through these higher-level skills that graduates are able to make a contribution towards transforming the organisation. In a world of rapid change, organisations have to adapt and evolve. Graduates, as we have seen, are perceived as a major element of the strategy for dealing with change. (p. 59)

And as Knight and Harvey (1996) state 'The qualities that employers seek are ones that can be advanced by using certain ways of working within degree programmes and by ensuring that a good range of learning activities is provided' (p. 110). A learning opportunity may or perhaps should include the ability to navigate personal TL experiences.

Placement learning can help students transition from their university experience to employment: helping develop skills, professional introductions and knowledge about different sectors, as well as increasing their knowledge and skills towards resolving social issues. Pedagogies that include discussions about TL potential and offer multiple perspectives on issues of common importance could further assist in employment, disciplinary and civic development aims.

6.3.4 Independent and Lifelong Learning

The changes to university teaching practices called for by Knight and Harvey (1996) appear to be slow in being realised, but there are indications there is some progress. Recalling that the QAA (2012b) outlines that the student be 'enabled to develop as an

independent learner' (p. 6), there are indications that in placement learning modules this is indeed occurring through the placement acquisition, activities, assignments and assessments. This is another area for further study. Because this is not a comparison study of non-placement and placement pedagogies, it is not known if the learning in non-placement modules has also similarly evolved.

Harvey and Knight's study indicates that the agenda for independent and lifelong learning is being assisted through the placement pedagogies. An issue coming to the forefront now is that learning how to navigate one's own TL process may be an important lifelong learning skill. It may help to know TLT and to recognise and support the phases for one's self, and for supporting others as well. While it is definitely important in community development and social work, it can be argued that it is knowledge of potential benefit to many learners.

The following discussion contrasts two different programmes as discovered in this study. Valerie and Alan are both mature practitioner-educators, from programmes that have existed for a long time. First is a description from Valerie, a social work ASP, who relates the experience of a student apparently going through a TL experience:

She's come twice and she's sat in that chair and she's almost ready to burst. She's a 40-year-old woman who's discovered global social injustice and she wants to be out there doing it. And we talk about what that means in social work and then she's kind-of decanted enough steam that she can go and study a bit more. (Valerie)

The support for this is seen as important and Valerie's teaching team members are on board with this kind of support for students. Valerie continues to talk about placement learning, which they call practice learning:

So it's just immensely variable and the practice learning managers do the same. We have a duty system here in practice learning, so a student or a supervisor or anybody can come in at any time, or phone at any time and get a PLM (Placement Learning Manager) to talk to. And so we absolutely encourage people to say really early on that something's not right. And it's modelling what we think good practice is I think. (Valerie)

Compare this with Alan's experience as he shares that he sees nurses who can navigate their deeper reflections as ones who will become leaders:

Some nurses will use [reflection] enough to pass their assignment and not be bothered with it unless they have to and others will thrive on it and realise that it will move from something on the page that they write down to actually something that enters their head and their heart so that it almost becomes an automatic way of thinking and doing and again those are the nurses who I think will potentially lead others. (Alan)

The social work programme works to instil the concept that the process is for everyone, with support provided by staff. Alan's example shows that it is only a few students, those who become leaders, who engage with the full benefit of reflection. Alan goes on to explain his understanding of professionalism:

I do think at times they have to face some incredibly [difficult] dilemmas because of the type of course they're on. It's half-theory. It's half-practice. The books tell you one thing but the books don't tell you everything. You have to learn to read between the lines. You have to expose yourself to human angst every day of the week and this old saying that nurses have to be really tough is nonsense. A tough nurse isn't the most useful nurse. A nurse has to be sensitive and hurt like anyone else but at the same time learn to be a professional as they stand beside their patient. That's I think where you see leadership shining through whenever nurses are able to stand or sit beside someone, for example, who's dying and still actually offer care to the family afterwards as well as care to the person at the time without breaking down. That's real professionalism. (Alan)

Alan relates that he thinks it is necessary to go through TL by one's self. This could be indicative of his belief, based on his TL own experience. He describes a work situation:

My politics were entirely turned upside down and inside out when I became a health visitor and I was really challenged by poverty. I'd never seen the like of poverty in my life as I saw in [Town]. The worst poverty I've ever seen. And I came from Ireland and you think you would see it there. I visited with a district nurse and saw people who kept coal in the bath. So they never had a bath, but they had somewhere for their coal. So they weren't able to wash properly. They had very little in their house. And that threw me back in myself and my value system was severely questioned and came under a great strain and I had to think my way through that and that was kind-of a disorientating dilemma for me. But it was a good one. So I had to be mature enough and honest enough to deal with it. And nurses have to be the same. (Alan)

One might think that this is an extreme example, as most placements may not have students facing dire poverty in such a direct fashion, but arguably we all are facing these kinds of issues. According to other programmes such as community development and social work, an individual undergoing a potential TL can be supported in the process. This may be a good thing: perhaps the more of us who can ‘sit beside’ another in time of great transition or pain and offer care, the better. Perhaps with some understanding around the TL process we would have a bit of an easier time of it. Perhaps we would like more nurses to be the kind of professionals who, in time of need, can sit beside our loved ones and us. Perhaps, as well, we all need an opportunity to decant as we learn about injustices, enough to go on with our work, and to know how to plan and to act towards sustainable and just solutions. Perhaps the more of us who can support others while they share their difficult learning experiences, the better. Perhaps we can teach and learn to do this at university.

In the next example a SL-type placement module is about to be offered in the business studies programme, having undergone its pilot stage. There are elements that suggest it could potentially have TL for some students:

The focus of that module is going to be called employability and enterprise skills. The focus of that module is manifold really but it’s partly addressing the transitioning into higher education. So what skills do they need, in terms of essay writing, communication, presenting yourself professionally. So it’s partly study skills and researching. It’s partly what we’re calling big picture. So our students connect with big issues like global warming, sustainability, global poverty and do they understand their perspective on those issues in relation to their learning? And we’re also including in there issues around some key themes like sustainability and enterprise so that students are kind-of clear what those areas are but also sitting within there is preparing them to do this consultancy exercise. So it will be building up skills that will support them doing the consultancy exercise. So things like decision-making, problem-solving...and we do that largely through these business games. So that they’re getting familiar with this idea of organisations not as a HR, marketing, economics, duh, duh, duh. You need that knowledge but you need to apply it in a more realistic [way]. (Lena)

There are multiple goals here: HE academic and professional skill development, local and global issues, consultancy skills, problem-solving. Learning about the global challenges can be overwhelming. The concern here might be that these are very great aims, and that some students may not be as supported as they could be, if they do have TL experiences. Lena has indicated that the students at her university come from fairly ‘middle class backgrounds’ and may not be aware of many social challenges, inequalities and social

justice issues. There could be several opportunities for TL triggers and it is not clear that the AS have the skills to support students in the process.

While Harvey and Knight (1996) do not mention Mezirow or TLT, their understanding of the process appears to be very similar to TLT. They propose that for individual learners the goal is transformation:

From [domain-specific and skill-based approaches] can be created higher forms of learning, characterised by intelligent self-actualisation, where meta-critique enables learners to develop an intelligent conception of themselves with a moral stance towards the world of human life. The key point is that human being is best realised when we deploy our learning to help us to reach a position about life, not just about skills and subjects. Necessarily, this involves the scrutiny of values, the development of a reasoned beliefs system, an attitude of continued learning (and not just learning within a profession or job, but also learning for life) and the motivation to do so. Therefore, higher education is about transforming the person, not (simply!) about transforming their skills or domain understanding. (p. 133)

Laura seemingly echoes this aim of developing an ‘intelligent conception’ of oneself with ‘a moral stance towards human life’ and relates that the goal of her educational programme is to enhance human capacities:

Your capacities as human beings in these situations are what matters and how you develop those. Then you are then equipped to deal with the different things the world will throw at you rather than equipped to deal well technically with a particular set of intellectual questions.

Further, this developing of one’s capacities can include empowerment. Knight and Harvey (1996) claim that:

...empowering students involves giving power to participants to influence their own transformation. It involves students taking ownership of the learning process. Furthermore, the transformation process itself provides the opportunity for self-empowerment, through increased confidence, self-awareness and so on (p. 8).

TL is a part of this development, with some ASPs in placement modules witnessing, supporting and even fostering it. In certain areas of education, it is what we as educators seek to do. However, we may need to expand the goals beyond individual independent and lifelong learning to group engagement and that might be best served by including dialogue.

The role of academic staff in helping students develop these skills is apparent, but they need not necessarily be experts but be open to new learning possibilities, as King (2005) points out, ‘Teachers as learners bring transformative learning to life’ (p. 91).

6.4 Participatory Elements

As stated earlier, that while this study is predominantly an exploratory interpretive one, it also includes a few questions and the presentation of the TLT that request participation from the ASPs. In the semi-formal interviews, many ASPs are asked what they think of their interview, to which they respond that they appreciate being able to reflect on their practice, which they do not often get the time to do. Sara exemplifies this:

...it’s been interesting. I think what’s been quite good is even the opportunity to sit and talk about it. I realise that what we do in this degree and what we’re really hoping to do and the changes we’ve made really do assist our students in becoming this reflective teacher. And I think I’ll need to read [TLT] up now. It will make me want to read more about this certainly [now that] I’m aware of this. (Sara)

Most ASPs ask to keep the TL Information sheet. As Laura comments ‘This is good, this is really good’ and Lena says ‘I can sort-of see this working quite well within that project actually. Yea, can I keep this thing?’ This indicates a readiness to learn more, that TL may be an area of interest and value for AS. The response to the question of ‘Is there anything you’d like to ask of the research?’ garnered responses like: ‘Glasgow is also an area with much deprivation; how are they doing it?’ and ‘if you find any networks that will be useful, anyone doing a similar project that we could network with, that would be good’ (Lena).

Alan further reflects and wonders if ‘the assessment protocols will inhibit or enhance the possibility of that experience?’ As he continues:

Probably it would be useful to know about the deeper impact of assessment and practice because it’s tempting just to think it’s another process, it’s another hoop the students go through which most of them do okay but there must be a deeper impact and I’m not quite sure what it is on patient care. How they look after people as well as on the students themselves. So it would be useful to know if anything comes from your research around the impact of assessment on the students although that’s maybe very difficult to measure. How would you measure it? I suppose there might be

themes around that, the relief of their assessment or the disaster of the assessment or it verifies my practice or it points out to me that I'm a can-do person or it tells me what I thought anyway but somebody else did it officially so it must be right--those sorts of impacts. (Alan)

Alan has questions of pedagogic practices in assessment. These kinds of reflections could lead the way to more learning about educational practices and improvement. Additionally, Tomas has thoughts around other business schools' experiences with community organisations, or the 'voluntary side':

...business school students occasionally do venture into the voluntary side and so on. So although it's limited in my part, it would be interesting to know how our type of experience relates to the type of experience in the other schools, the other universities. Well certainly I'm always looking for anything useful that we can pose to the students that they can actually take a new angle. (Tomas)

These represent the kinds of reflections that could form the basis for further explorations around placement pedagogies in universities.

Harvey and Knight (1996) express very strong ideals regarding the way universities should perceive their mandates:

Education is a participative process. Students are not products, customers, consumers, service users or clients: they are participants. Education is not a service for a customer (much less a product to be consumed) but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant. (p. 8)

It does appear that the notion of the student as a participant in their education is very possible in placement learning modules. The ASPs relate how students develop their own learning and use reflection to understand and further plan their learning. ASPs also talk about how students change and grow more confident through their experiences. As well, as Ivan relates 'there wasn't full rigorous research done, but those who'd been on placement ended up on average with better degrees. Now whether it was better students who went on placement, or the placement changed them [we are not sure]' (Ivan). The changes, especially in confidence, that ASPs relay that they see in their students attests to this development potential, but requires further research to confirm.

Rita discusses a potential change as a result of the interview discussion about student-to-student dialogue. She shares that the opportunity for discourse is not currently purposefully available in the module but she is involved in discussions with a colleague at another university who has set up a ‘buddy’ system in her placement modules. ‘So I don’t do that but I think it’s an absolutely brilliant idea that I’d like to bring in the future running’s of the module’ (Rita).

These examples of discussions and reflections on practice indicate a participatory element of this research.

6.5 Universities

This section gives a short overview of the findings of the original questions in the early designs of the research. The second part looks at the changes occurring in the universities and the ones that may still need to be made.

The important role of TL is iterated in Harvey and Knight’s (1996) book *Transforming Higher Education*, of which they say:

Transformation lies at the heart of this book as the title implies. The deliberate pun in the title is intended to highlight both the need to transform higher education for the twenty-first century and that higher education is itself a major transformative process. (p. vii)

It is unsure if the pedagogical practices found in this study, which are less traditional, are also found in other non-placement pedagogies.

This study detects very little difference between the universities. This could most likely be due to the small sample of participants. It could also be due to the ASPs commonality of working in placement modules. At least two ASPs brought up educational activities directly relating to their universities’ mission statements. The two reasons for not reporting on this are: one) it may indicate the identity of the university and two) it is only in a few instances where this occurs and it is not particularly important to this study. Wider

inclusion of more academic staff may reveal differences that are attributable to the university cultures and missions.

There are many examples of students in placement modules being asked to partake in team activities. This indicates that these pedagogies may be moving away from competitive models and individual grading, that placement pedagogy at least, has moved beyond traditional educational provision, to what Moore (2005a) in her earlier work sees little of:

Unfortunately collaborative models are difficult (but not impossible) to create within current academic systems that emphasise individual grading and other competitive models of success. Despite having academic freedom in teaching and research, few professors engage in alternative models for teaching and learning in their classrooms or emphasise social change as an outcome of their classes. (p. 78)

For the non-professional preparation programmes in placement learning and the assignments in these modules, the ASPs are engaging in 'alternative models for teaching and learning'. These tie into larger university mandates that are being discussed. As Benneworth and Osborne (2014) state:

Making engagement central to a university necessitates changes in its full portfolio of activities. When students must complete a community engagement project to graduate, all staff must accept that engagement matters, rather than some staff being enthusiastic where it is voluntary. (p. 215)

The above quote captures the enthusiasm AS have for community projects, and the perceived need for increased recognition and adoption of more modules that include community engagement. The ASPs in this study claim many advantages to placement learning and many discuss their work with enthusiasm. The AS working in placement learning modules may have more pedagogically in common with each other than with their more traditional discipline bases. Perhaps in an interdisciplinary space there would be opportunities for new dialogue, support system or a community of practice where ASPs can consider their common pedagogical issues. In this context ASPs should be supported to practice authentic discourses (practice here is being used in both senses of the word: the professional practice and the practicing of skills to become better at them). What is suggested is that, as the AS practice authentic discourse on how to help students, they also

practice the skills of authentic discourse. This could set up the framework and expand as more AS are required to engage with more placement and SL provision.

[As an educationist] it's quite hard when I see some of the things that are going on in the name of either work-based learning or even just teaching and learning generally. I think, if only they'd read a bit of theory.

Gail: And then do what?

Then maybe transform their practice as a result. (Uma)

7 Conclusions, Recommendations and Epilogue

This chapter reviews the research questions and answers. It relates the conclusions and recommendations emanating from this study. The epilogue is a final statement about the researcher's journey.

7.1 The Research Questions and their Answers

As an exploratory study this research begins with some questions and as it progresses it evolves to include other discoveries and questions. The format here is to restate the question and overview the discoveries.

- How do academic staff report assessing students in SL modules in Higher Education in the UK?

This study reports only one programme that has a named SL module. Comparisons are then made between SL and the placement pedagogies of the ASPs and their modules and programmes. Many similarities are found in that the pedagogies in the UK mirror much of the SL literature. However, programmes of professional preparation, like social work and nursing, as well as business studies programmes that are included here would not necessarily be considered SL. Medical programmes here include community projects that are very close to SL provisions.

ASPs report that their modules ask students for reflective accounts of their learning. Assessment methods such as presentations and portfolios are indications that ASPs acknowledge, and in some cases support TL. When ASPs assess TL it is in support of student learning and development.

- What do academic staff know of TL Theory'?

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine ASPs report understanding some degree of TL, with ten ASPs indicating prior knowledge of the theory. For the purpose of this study, the four core phases of TL (disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, dialogue and action) are used as the framework for identifying the presences of TL in the ASPs reports.

- How do academics see TL in their modules?

There are a variety of reports on how ASPs see TL: from use of the theory to help students prepare for their employment in social work and community development programme, to not wanting to change student beliefs in a drug and alcohol studies programme.

- How do ASPs react to being exposed to the theory in the interview?

Generally the ASPs are very receptive to the theory with many asking to keep the TLT information sheet (Appendix B), including those who report prior knowledge of TLT.

- How do the ASPs report assessing for TL?

ASPs do not assess for TL for summative purposes. It appears that the best way to assess TL is supportively, that is to inform students about TL and support them through the experience.

- Do university contexts such as location in Scotland or England, or the focus of teaching-intensive, or research-intensive have any bearing on the provision of SL or the ASP's assessment of TL?

This study finds no differences in Scotland and England in the answers to the research questions: both jurisdictions have ASPs reporting an understanding of the process of TL, with examples from their experiences with students. Likewise both research-intensive and

teaching-intensive universities have ASPs reporting modules with recognition of the phases of TL. Professional development programmes and community placements are present in all four universities.

Generally the phases of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, dialogue and action are reportedly present in the modules. Disorienting dilemmas are reported as students' reactions to experiences with the different pedagogies and/or the people they engage with in the placements. The community modules for medicine and dentistry projects are set up purposefully for students to learn about people, their needs and community resources. Most ASPs ask students to reflect on their learning and practice, thus creating an opportunity for TL. However these opportunities may come shy of asking students to reflect on the premises of their beliefs, and thereby lowering the TL potential. While social work and community development set up for teaching and supporting students through dialogue, other programmes lack this phase. The two programmes that use degree shows for sharing and assessing student work appear to provide students an opportunity to share their processes, which is akin to the action phase in TL. The reflective accounts and the reporting to staff on action planning allow the opportunity for providing a phase, but at this point they appear to fall short of optimising the TL opportunity.

7.2 Conclusions

The intention of this research is to discover the intricacies of AS assessing TL in their placement learning modules. While tentative conclusions can be drawn from this exploratory research, the number of participants is too small to generalise. Some of the themes discovered in this research may be found in more universities, with more academic staff participants but would need further verification. This study serves to begin the conversation about TLT in UK placement learning modules.

There are valuable points of comparison between placement learning in the UK and SL in the US. There are many similarities, which may provide opportunity to further explore these areas especially if, as Butin, (2010), suggests, plans for disciplining SL go ahead. At this time, there is much that can be learned from the ASPs working in the UK in placement modules, and this learning can serve others working in similar contexts. These findings can also serve student learning and university mandates for graduate attributes.

Returning to the framework of four basic elements in TL (disorienting experience, critical reflection, rational dialogue and action), some elements are more evident in the modules than others. The majority of ASPs, 82.6 per cent, report that their modules assign assessed reflection exercises. This may increase the potential of TL in that critical reflection is one of the ‘non-sequential’ phases of TLT. The ASPs report understanding ‘disorienting experiences’, and some action phases, and often this action phase is reported in reflection exercises. The phase that appears most lacking is dialogue, especially the opportunity to dialogue in class, amongst peers. The ASPs appear to know that TL happens in their modules through the assignments and assessments; however there are more supports that could be used to increase TL potential.

Many of the ASPs in this study describe their openness to educational provision where there is TL potential. Indeed many express an intention for students to expand their understandings of society. However many do not have the pedagogical tools to support an increase in the potential.

There are no differences found in the potential of TL, or the research protocols between the university type of research or teaching intensive, or between Scotland and England. All of the universities have ASPs who acknowledge witnessing TL. All of the universities have ASPs who indicate intention for TL potential. One research university in this study has only one ASP, working as an educational consultant, who reports knowledge of TLT. This ASP is not currently assessing students on placement and little can be surmised from this since this study includes few participants from that university.

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine ASPs involved in placement learning report observing students in what could be phases of TL in the course of conducting their pedagogies in placement learning modules. This, plus the literature, indicates that TL is occurring in HE and more specifically in community placement learning. This study mainly explores placements in non-profit organisations, but there are indications that it occurs in for-profit organisations as well.

This study’s findings further suggest that ASPs’ support of student TL experiences does not depend on their knowledge of TLT. The ASPs in this study respond well to being

presented with an overview of the TLT, especially those with advanced degrees. This could be indicative of ASPs being adroit at learning theory, especially theory that has to do with their experience and practice. This could further confirm TLT and confirm that TL is a process students undergo in HE, particularly in placements. As well, it could be confirming the King and Kitchener (2004) study showing AS being at the high level of their reflective judgement scale. These findings suggest that professional training programmes in social work and community development assist their students navigate TL. A dramatic arts project and a master's dissertation with additional report to the placement hosts also show an understanding of the TL process through assessment by degree show, which involves presentations to peers and community members.

The assessment protocols reported in these placement modules include much variety and seemingly provide for TL potential. They transcend those traditional university protocols often criticised in the literature. This is perhaps an indicator that placement module pedagogy, as experiential learning and therefore different from traditional HE learning, has had to evolve assessment protocols to match the learning contexts. This could indicate progress in HE, in this area of placement learning, as Harvey and Knight (1996) proposals for transforming HE suggest:

The assessment of student learning is a powerful element in the development of transformative learning. Assessment tasks have the power to reinforce the goals of transformation or to subvert them completely. Transformed higher education needs transformed and transforming assessment. (ix)

This study suggests that these transformations in assessment are underway, with ASPs working in placement learning leading the way with their use of many authentic learning and assessment activities. Still much more can be learned and done to further the benefits of TL.

The following recommendations section outlines some suggestions regarding research and practice.

7.3 Recommendations

For this section, I am reclaiming the use of the personal subjective pronoun 'I'. I do this because I am taking evidence from this study, as well as my personal background, as suggested earlier by Wolcott (1994). As an adult educator, a career counsellor, an educationalist (in adult learning), and as an owner of a social enterprise, with many proposals written and programmes delivered, I now make these proposals and recommendations based on these experiences, along with this study and the literature. This section is about transformation: that of students, academic staff practice and learning and that of universities.

I recommend that AS's research into their professional activities as educators in HE be considered important and that it be reflected in considerations for scholarship and employment advancement. I further join Gordon (2006), Buchanan et al. (2002), Taylor (2009a) and Erasmus (2007) in their recommendations that academic community endeavours be considered for tenure and promotion.

Further research into the reflection exercises elucidating the TL potential could be fruitful. The ASPs report assigning reflective exercises in their modules and some report providing a framework to their students. The reflective exercises, to increase TL, would need to ask students to reflect on the premises of their beliefs. It is further suggested here that a study of this type be done as a participatory qualitative study, somewhat like this one, so that the research performs multiple duties and informs the participants of TL so it may be of potential use to the AS and their students.

This study reveals that the educational practice of ASP may benefit from learning about TL. As King (2005) states:

The educational environment should support questioning and reflective learning, and leave open options for learners to move into transformation at their own pace. Some learners may not take an explicit or public step during a course. Instead, they may consider their choices and perspectives for an extended period. Educators who can cultivate an environment that includes safety, respect, and freedom can set the scene for learners to continue to engage in critical reflection of their understandings of the world. (p. 113)

I recommend research into the practice of ‘placement pedagogy’. While placement pedagogy has a long history in certain professions, it is new to others. Even with established programmes newer academic staff can learn from the more experienced ones. The TL potential as well as assessment considerations may be different from those in classroom, or Internet-bound teaching contexts. While research into university educational staff ‘theories-in-use’ compared to ‘espoused beliefs’ (Schön, 1987) and (Kane et al., 2002) could be useful, especially for training new academics in teaching roles, what is suggested is a process that can accommodate research and practice activities, as a form of Continuing Professional Development, managed and delivered by AS themselves.

Harvey and Knight (1996) are in agreement with this as they propose professional staff development:

...if students are to be transformed during their undergraduate careers, then first universities need to transform themselves, moving from the rituals of teaching to the mysteries of learning. We argue that professional development of staff is a key element in that transformation’. (ix)

It is this aspect of professional development of staff that is being applied to academic staff working in placement modules. However the recommendations here do not need to wait for universities to be transformed. Indeed, these recommendations can easily be implemented and contribute to the transformative process.

A challenge to this endeavour is to meet several criteria that an academic professional development model should include:

- Being respectful for the learning sophistication of academic staff participating;
- Being useful in the areas of importance to academic staff: those of research, teaching and service;
- Modelling and practicing a method of teaching experientially where learning is enhanced and has a high likelihood of being useful in their AS’s own pedagogy;
- Being conducive for participants to learn from each other as professional practitioners, both experienced and novice;

- Being inclusive of learning about TL, especially the warning signs and ways to support disorienting experiences so students can have a higher chance of reaching their full TL potential, and especially learn about discourse or rational dialogue (Glisczinski, 2007); and
- Being experientially authentic: participants learn to conduct dialogue sessions by experiencing dialogue sessions with their peers.

Universities already have all the components necessary for this endeavour: the mandates, the staff, the knowledge and the facilities. One of the remaining challenges may be that, as Knight and Harvey (1996) relate:

...getting such teams together is not always easy, especially among academic staff, given the individualism of much teaching and a reluctance to spend time on pedagogic issues when a much higher return for effort appears to be achievable from research activity. (p. 111)

In this proposed professional development model, research minded academics might be more inclined to attend ‘work and learn’ sessions where they can work on their practice of teaching and assessing as well as learn more about research, perhaps even adding to their own research agendas.

There is a continual need for research into matters of provision and practice, supported by such scholars as Dirkx (2006):

I argue for an approach to practice that is guided by an overarching aim of giving voice to the particularities of specific practice settings, the insider perspective of practice. This view stands in sharp contrast to the outsider perspective reflected in EBR (Evidence Based Research). Insider research can involve a focus on technical issues and use traditional quantitative methodologies to investigate these issues. But such moves are understood within a broader narrative that seeks to give voice to the world of practice as perceived, understood, and struggled with from the inside. (p. 276)

I recommend that academic staff at universities working in placement modules be given this opportunity. There is a pedagogy involved with placement learning that, while having a long history in certain professional preparation programmes, is brand new to others. This pedagogy is akin to the US provision of SL and can be informed by its practices and

research. It would not be far afield of the university missions and would comply with governance and accountability. This recommended professional development model could contribute to the ‘culture of continuous improvement’ as Harvey and Knight (1996) propose:

An effective model is one that develops a quality culture of continuous improvement. Such a model shifts the primary emphasis on quality from external scrutiny to internal effective action. In terms of teaching and learning, for example, this means devising a quality system that drives improvement from the staff student interface. However, accountability is ensured through external quality monitoring, which audits the quality activities of effective teams, in much the same way that the financial accounts are audited. Continuous quality improvement must be driven from two directions: bottom-up and top-down. The key is to encourage and ensure the former, whilst developing a sensitive but effective external monitoring process. (p. 118)

I propose it follow the tenets of adult education, and in particular Participant Action Research (PAR). PAR underscores the intent of the research for and by the participants. Reason and Bradbury (2001) summarise the main purposes of action research:

- ‘To produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives;
- To contribute through this knowledge to increased well-being - economic, political, psychological, spiritual - of individuals, communities and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with wider ecology of the planet; and
- To combine practical outcomes with new understanding since action without theory is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless.’ (p. 2)

The Bath University Centre for Action Research into Professional Practice (2014) relates:

Our interest and concern is with approaches to action research, which integrate action and reflection, so that the knowledge gained in the inquiry is directly relevant to the issues being studied; and in which there is increased collaboration between all those involved in the inquiry project. Our work aims at helping the individual practitioner develop skills of reflective practice and to help organisational members develop communities of inquiry, as well as contribute to wider understanding of the place of inquiry in the development of professional practice. (p. 1)

There is evidence that this kind of research can work in all kinds of adult education milieus. Two far-flung examples from the literature show that PAR is valuable with a variety of participants, and so trying it in academia, on academic practice, could be likewise successful.

James Powell (1999) discusses an action learning project process in the construction industry:

Four construction based AL SETs have been set up in different parts of the UK; a SET is a group of people, normally between 6-8 people with complementary problems, who band together as ‘partners in adversity’ to discuss how they might learn from their own actions as they attempt to resolve key and complex issues. (p. 1)

The practice of participatory research is also shown to be useful for agricultural extension workers. Percy (2005) brings together the topics of sustainability and TL:

Extension workers are essentially adult educators. Furthermore, when they are employing participatory approaches, they may well be seeking to enable rural people to analyse and reflect on their livelihoods in a way that could be said to be empowering or transforming. (p. 127)

Of course, the real determinants of the academic professional PAR would be the participants themselves. This recommendation extends the Kember and Gow (1992) proposal for HE action research for staff development. It meets the criterion as ‘Action research is based upon collaboration, participation, democratic decision making and emancipation through critical self-reflection’ (p. 301).

Taylor (2007) links TL and action as he comments on the basic compatibility between TL and action research:

They share similar assumptions and outcomes about teaching for change, such as a participatory approach, the emphasis on dialogue, the essentiality of a reflective process in learning and the need for action. More research is needed that simultaneously engages action research and transformative learning to better understand their relationship, ultimately resulting in a more informed practice for fostering transformative learning and an effective method of classroom research. (p. 188)

Taylor calls for more research to inform practice. Kincheloe's (2001) idea of research as bricolage is also of use here, where interdisciplinary work is also seen as boundary work where the separate disciplines may benefit from larger collaboration. This academic staff placement pedagogy PAR would be an example of an interdisciplinary space: 'the frontiers of knowledge work best in the liminal zones where disciplines collide' (p. 689).

I propose that the placement pedagogy puts academic staff on the boundary, which is a new unexplored place, and can put academics at some risk. The best support for being on the boundary will be working with others who share the space and practice. Support for staff, especially those who are new to teaching in modules with placements, would assist with initiation into the practice. This has the potential of community creation to which AS can pose questions and debrief after difficult episodes of practice. They would also have a place to talk about their own TL journeys. As one ASP relates, 'I come away with a completely different perspective every time I go [to the prisons]' (Anna). Being able to share these perspectives may be useful to Anna and to others involved in placement pedagogy. Taylor (2007) says of the TL potential of this kind of process: 'through trustful relationships that allow individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly, and achieve mutual and consensual understanding' (p. 179).

Buchanan et al. (2002) relate that group discussions appear to be central for learners to process their learning. This aligns with the social-constructivist philosophy which states that an individual must engage socially through talking and activities to make meaning Merriam et al. (2007). Should AS working together determine their need to learn to facilitate group discussions they can do so, learning perhaps from those who already use them in their pedagogies.

There is another element to this kind of work, as Ursula shares:

It's a different kind-of teaching altogether ... it's a bit like bell hooks (2003) says about teaching is love, it's like love and kindness and I think I get that back sometimes from the students. It's special. I used to criticise the literature, a lot of literature on service-learning because it seems very evangelical and not very critical but do you know I've kind-of lost myself in it. (Ursula)

The work can be profoundly affective and moving, and can add much meaning to the educational experiences of AS. The rewards of being an engaged educator whose students learn deeply are evident.

AS can create and manage professional development education on placement pedagogy and TL. What is proposed here is a different pedagogy, different from conference presentations on research topics, where academics would be participants in actual action research working sessions. These sessions could function as continuing professional development and potentially tie into research mandates as well. An example might be a research project of the teaching of a particular disciplinary concern publishable in education or discipline-specific journals. This way the multiple facets allow for double or triple or quadruple duties, especially welcome benefits for over-extended academic staff and universities with shrinking resources. This would be a multidisciplinary space where the experiences and strengths of the disciplines can be shared and developed.

I propose that the university is an organisation sharing attributes with other kinds of organisations. Universities, like governments, have bureaucratic tendencies; they have business interests where they must be concerned with income and providing services (to the individual students and to society). They have facilities to run, human resources to consider and pensions to dispense. I hereby propose that universities are similar to social enterprises, in that they have organisational incomes, goals and costs, but do not need to focus on profits. They deliver teaching and research through professionals, and as such should offer professional development opportunities to their staff. This professional development idea is different from that conducted for other professions. It is unique in that academic staff professionals have distinct characteristics from other professionals and they are multi- skilled and well-educated individuals. They can read and conduct research and they can lead. I provide a few thoughts on this endeavour.

As the United Nations Report, People's Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education, relates:

Higher education institutions are well positioned to link the regions, transcend disciplinary boundaries as well as local and global dimensions of development. They are recognised for their influence on policy directly, as well as indirectly, through the

education of policy makers. They are influential in the development of leaders and shaping histories. (Copernicus Alliance, 2013, p. 1)

Positioning the institutions of HE as having a multiplicity of influences, they can be used as promoters of learning across the boundaries as well as within its professions. The Treaty also discusses the importance of universities being able to transform themselves.

The assessment regimes found in these placement modules show that they are authentic, and the assignments are often supportive of providing opportunities for TL. The assessment of TL however, would be awareness AS have about a student's process. As part of a supportive assessment regime an AS could offer acknowledgment and reference to the literature when they assess that a student may be undergoing, or has experienced a TL experience. Academic staff could therefore provide supportive assessment to students.

Butin (2014) comments that digital technologies are disrupting and changing HE and will continue to do so. He says that we are at 'a critical moment to articulate how it may be possible to embrace technological disruption for the benefit of place-based civic learning and strengthen the relevance and resonance of higher education' (p.1). This is a call to universities to strengthen their missions and roles, especially towards promoting democracy and student service in their communities. While some may consider the employment of new technologies a threat to traditional educational provision, Butin says universities can embrace them and strengthen their educational provision through dealing with these changes. Indeed other threats are far more menacing, as he states:

Rather, colleges and universities are far more threatened by other longstanding challenges: the shift to a contingent faculty; the abysmal retention rates at many institutions, especially for students of color and low-income students; and the need for many more students to graduate with higher-order thinking skills. The key issue is thus how we use technology's strengths to support, rather than displace, the larger vision of higher education as a democratic good. For while some of what we want students to learn can be described in "modularized" terms, much of it cannot. Higher education should be an apprenticeship into democracy rather than into Wikipedia.

Service and placement learning are solid pedagogies for universities to employ, as their pedagogies can be part of students' development:

Thus, instead of handing students a prefabricated map to guide them on their civic learning journeys, we involve them in a wide range of civic practices—including service learning, community-based research, participatory action research, and project-based learning—that help them close their textbooks, step outside the campus walls, and begin to engage, explore, and collide with the complexities and consequences of issues such as poverty, race, citizenship, and power. These civic practices embody the hallmarks of a liberal education, exactly because they do not provide predefined and singular instructions for moving from point A to point B. Rather, they provide opportunities for unexpected realizations, the “aha” moments that make us understand that our habituated and “normal” ways of seeing and being in the world may not be so “normal” after all. (p. 3)

The role of educators is clear, and students’ contributions as members of the university communities pivotal, as Butin continues:

Innovative educators are of course always experimenting with new uses of technology, but no MOOC or app, it seems to me, can foster transformational learning. This is where technology as a means of facilitating content delivery meets its limits—and, I would suggest, it is where we must begin if we are to rethink the role of the civic in higher education in this age of disruption. (p. 4)

Educators can then use technology creatively, but need to remember that it is a tool in content delivery, their underlying support for the student’s learning and development is still an educational necessity.

I would like to extend the recommendations here to universities to enhance their community engagement mandates to further and enhance the utilisation of placement learning to strengthen themselves and their communities by encouraging the multiple stakeholders and partners (universities, agencies, students, academic staff, etc.) to engage in equitable, ethical and democratic modes of operating. This includes growing support for use of digital technology, especially in the area of supporting student learning outside the university walls. More community service and placement learning, supported by staff who themselves are supported in their practice is key, and would provide multiple benefits to those involved. Further, I recommend that the university provide a PAR continuing professional development model for staff to develop their practices in their three mandated areas of teaching, research and service.

Out on the boundary between a university and its communities, between service and learning, between disseminating knowledge and supporting learning, between old

perceptions and new ones, between theory, practice and the creation of knowledge, between teaching, research and service, between the disciplines, is where a UK pedagogy of placement learning may materialise. In the space where the disciplines come together there is much to learn from each other and much to gain by working together. This work can further bring together the main aims of the university: research, teaching, and that somewhat elusive mandate of service. When the topic is assessing for TL and academic staff participants are able to practice their profession, research and improve their practice towards supporting and even fostering TL for their students on placement, they may even transform their practice, and their universities, to better prepare students for their lives and their world.

7.4 Epilogue

When we finish I have to bring them back down to earth and we look back on what we've done and say this is the end of the journey back to where you started from, but with a different view. And maybe this is the beginning of another journey for you, or maybe it's just part of your process. (Ursula)

In the last few weeks of writing this thesis, I find myself still enjoying the journey, enjoying the ASPs' voices and wisdom. I find myself in an interesting place of 'returning to the beginning'.

The article that sparked this exploration is Gloria Gordon's (2006) research and article: 'Transforming Thinking Amongst British African Caribbeans as an Academically Based Community Service Contribution'. While at the beginning of the study I did not understand the 'wholeness' of her research and discussion, her work was enough for me to want to find out where else, in academia, TL might be manifesting. Gordon's work provided me with the motivation and knowledge that service, academic work, transformative learning and social change could be combined to enhance many missions, and fulfil many goals and aspirations.

As Crick and Wilson (2005) say:

Without a vision, regularly revisited, of what things might be, we shall as a society ossify. It is, we claim, possible for every person to learn to learn better than he is or

she has hitherto. There are ways in which this can be nurtured and encouraged, which can be learned and enjoyed by both teacher and student. What is more, they are the essential ingredients of human community. Yes, we plead guilty to idealism and with confidence; because it is also our understanding that this ideal is realisable. (p. 372)

In thinking of ways ‘for every person to learn to learn better’, I have come to recommend PAR be used in academia, with academic staff, to explore and build their practices in assessing, supporting and fostering TL in their placement modules. Within that, I also hope and assume that they will build a supporting community of practice to enable them to dialogue and support each other. To that end, I began yet another literature quest and found the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice in Bath, UK, devoted to this kind of research. And there, on the website, being honoured, is Dr Gloria Gordon: ‘the first graduate of the CARPP Postgraduate Programme in Action Research has published her first book: *Towards Bicultural Competence: Beyond Black and White* (Gordon, 2007)’. A circle is made and I return to the beginning.

Another circle that has come full round is Mezirow’s work. I am deeply interested in how people can and do change their distorted frames of references and come to partake in important decisions and I embarked on this enquiry where I find programmes in community development in the UK endeavour to do just that. In early January 2014, while trying to check a reference, I found another early work by Mezirow (1962): ‘Community Development: Democracy’s Social Technology’. It outlines his work with the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Programme of Pakistan (Village AID). It appears to have ended with some frustrations and I can see how he may have been thus motivated to further understand this process.

In this dawning of the millennium, I find myself, through the process of this thesis, and having the time, to understand further the importance and the issues of justice, especially ecological sustainability. I believe we are going to have to do the work through community development and through education to grapple with and enact solutions for the immense issues we face. With this knowledge I think we owe it to the students to help them prepare for the 21st Century as best we can. I think we also need to support academic staff, especially the ones such as the ASPs in this study, on the boundaries.

Thank you.

Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Assessing Learning in Community and Service-learning: (Participant refers to research participant interviewee, not student participant in AS classes)

Name _____

Date _____

Orientation

- Sign consent form
- info on the study
- assessment of service-learning
- agreement to be recorded

Interview

Initial Questions Begin

1. Please tell me about the [name programme(s)].
 - a. When it was started,
 - b. how it was developed,
 - c. the aims of the programme
 - d. number of students
2. Please tell me about yourself, your academic background.
 - a. teaching background,
 - b. research interests etc.,
 - c. experience in the programme,
 - d. has s/he developed all or some of the programme and/or the assessment?
 - e. collect: examples of syllabus, learning activities, assignments, etc.

3. Can you please describe what your expectations are of students' learning in this course, what are the expected learning outcomes?
 - a. instrumental/communicative/emancipatory
 - b. cognitive development, self-identity, subject identity, professional identity, cultural capital
4. What are the assignments?
 - a. How do the assignments tie into these learning expectations
 - b. Critical thinking, reflection, critical reflection,
 - c. Learning to learn
 - d. Personal development
 - e. instrumental/communicative/emancipatory
 - f. cognitive development, self-identity, subject identity, professional identity, cultural capital
 - g. group work
5. How are the assignments assessed?
 - a. Formal, non-formal, informal
 - b. Some tutors use a combination of formative and summative assessment.
 - c. Peer assessment,
 - d. Self-assessed
6. Do you see any sort of changes in students?
 - a. How do the assignments tie into these learning expectations
 - b. Critical thinking, reflection, critical reflection,
 - c. Learning to learn
 - d. Personal development
 - e. instrumental/communicative/emancipatory
 - f. cognitive development, self-identity, subject identity, professional identity, cultural capital
7. What do you attribute these changes to?
 - a. Experience for the community service?
 - b. Reflection?
 - c. Assignment
 - d. Assessment
8. Are you familiar with Transformative Learning Theory?
9. If yes, proceed

10. Tell me about some instances where you think a student may have had a transformative learning experience. If yes, proceed
11. Probe for details – of participant's views and perceptions of the student's TL
12. How was the experience relayed, assessed (formal, non-formal, informal)?
13. If no
14. Describe the theory (share hand out on premise transformation, with 10 stages)
15. Can you see any similarities of TL experiences and any of your students' experience?

Ending Questions Begin

16. Have we covered all aspects of the student learning?
 - a. Have we covered all aspects of assessment?
17. Is there anything about the discussion that you would like to add?
 - a. personal insights
 - b. anything about the interview here, and reflection on your practice?
18. If you think of anything post interview you may contact me
19. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
20. Is there anything you would like to ask of this research? (I will get back to you)
21. Would you be willing to be further interviewed or be part of a focus group?
22. Thank you.

Appendix B: Hand-out to ASP(s) on Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative Learning Theory

‘Perspective transformation, or transformative learning, is the emancipatory process of becoming aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings’ (Mezirow, 1981 p. 6).

In Transformative Learning, a non-sequential pattern of experience has emerged:

- a disorienting dilemma;
- self-examination;
- a critical assessment of personally internalised role assumptions and a sense of alienation from traditional social expectation;
- relating one’s discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues-recognizing that one’s problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter;
- exploring options for new ways of acting;
- building competence and self-confidence in new roles;
- planning a course of action;
- acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plan;
- provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback;
- A reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective’ (Mezirow, 1981 p. 7)’.
 - Later, in response to his and others additional work with the theory, he adds another step: ‘renegotiation of relationships and negotiating new relationships’ (Mezirow, 1994b, p. 224)

Transformative Learning Theory is a reconstructive theory, in that it ‘seeks to establish a general, abstract, and idealised model that explains the generic structure, dimensions, and dynamics of the learning process’ (Mezirow 2009 p. 21), and as such would agree that it underpins learning as ‘both the process of being and of becoming; it is about achieving our potential’ (Jarvis 2001 p.150).

Appendix C Table 4-1: ASPs Reporting of Knowledge of TL and TLT				
1 University type	2 PHD	3 Reports knowing	4 Reports phases of	5 Comments
Least Familiar – unaware of TLT and do not report using Transformative Learning				
EnRes	No	No	No	States that students realise there are many volunteer opportunities
ScTau	No	No	No	States that students are exposed to people with problems that surprise them
Somewhat Familiar - engages with idea that students may have TL				
EnTau	ABD	No	Maybe	Likes the theory, thinks of using it with placement students
EnTau	PhD	No	Maybe	New placement programme will look at global, local and environmental issues
ScTau	PhD	No	Maybe	Engages and relates TL to PhD process and his work in volunteerism
EnRes	No	No	Maybe	'I am willing to learn'
Familiar – reports not knowing TLT but indicates phases in practice				
EnRes	PhD	No	Yes	'I guess that's what we've got going on, I just wouldn't have put the name transformative learning but that's really going on'
EnRes	In Progress	No	Yes	'You certainly, certainly, see students who think about certain things ... in terms of the clients they meet'.
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'I think I might be playing at this'
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	Pedagogy includes social justice, gives example TL of individual student
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'This looks familiar ... I mean transformation is an area that I am interested in ... I'm not familiar with the author'
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	Brings up 'change perceptions' prior and uses TL language after
EnTau	PhD	No	Yes	'Yea that's exactly what is being set up here. It's completely what we do'

ScRes	PhD	No	Yes	Not Mezirow TLT, but transformation and all the elements in TLT
ScRes	PhD	No	Yes	'Tell me about it. I've heard of it but I've just never taken it up'.
ScRes	No	No	Yes	'It's not unlike the reflective process'
ScTau	No	No	Yes	Relates experience in a simulation experiential course.
ScTau	No	No	Yes	Relates a story of students in a community programme
ScTau	No	No	Yes	All the elements are relayed as being part of the course
Very Familiar - both knows TLT and indicates practices have TL phases				
EnRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	'Yea Mezirow. Yea I have read some Mezirow'
EnTau	PhD	Yes	Yes	Reports using many theories and TLT when student brings it in
EnTau	No	Yes	Yes	'Yes, yes with intension'
ScRes	No	Yes	Yes	'Yes I think so. I think I've used some of that in some of the stuff I've written'.
ScRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	Studied TLT and uses it in teaching
ScRes	PhD	Yes	Yes	'Yea Mezirow ... we are looking for this kind-of progression'
ScRes	No	Yes	Yes	Reports use of many theories, Mezirow included
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	'We had Mezirow's Transformative Learning very much in mind ... in evaluating the two observational learning experiences'
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	Relates TLT to reflective process
ScTau	No	Yes	Yes	'I'm sure there is transformative learning for some people'

Appendix D: Graduate Attributes of the University of Glasgow

Taken from University of Glasgow Student Services (2014) website.

Graduate Attributes

Definition

‘Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond, the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents for social good in an unknown future.’

(Bowden, 2000)

Graduate attributes are the academic abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills which all students will have the opportunity to develop as part of their University of Glasgow experience. (University of Glasgow definition)

View the University of Glasgow’s graduate attributes at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_183776_en.pdf

Rationale

Provides staff with:

- A University-wide framework and common language for discussing skills development with students
- An articulation of the value of teaching and assessing students’ transferable skills and of supporting students in their longer-term development goals
- A clear statement of the added value of University learning and experience for students’ longer term development and future employability

Provides students with:

- A tangible, outcomes-focused model to benchmark their own skills development against
- A framework and vocabulary for articulating the value of their University experiences to prospective employers and other key figures.
- Essential skills and competencies required to achieve career goals.

Implications for programme and course design

- Include employability-related learning outcomes
- Provide incremental opportunities within the curriculum for the development of skills and graduate attributes, knowledge and understanding (MacFarlane-Dick, 2004)
- Encourage students to monitor their learning and development through each stage and record this as part of personal development planning
- Include activities which support the development of student self-reflection and require the demonstration/communication of acquired skills
- Build time into the curriculum for self-reflection (MacFarlane-Dick, 2004)
- Include opportunities for self-assessment (MacFarlane-Dick, 2004)
- Include assessment tasks which require collaborative work between students (MacFarlane-Dick, 2004)
- Provide opportunities for work-based learning through well supported student placements
- Use work placements to support the development of student confidence, self-awareness and competence (MacFarlane-Dick, 2004)
- Invite guest speakers from relevant workplaces to contribute to the curriculum
- Build partnerships with employers (UCB, 2008)

Examples

University of Glasgow School of Geographical and Earth Sciences – Careers A-Z

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/ges/careersa-z/>

University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/employability/>

Resources

University of Glasgow, Graduate attributes

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/graduateattributesemployabilityandpdp/>

University of Glasgow, Learning and teaching Centre links to good practice resources

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/employability/>

Teaching for Employability Audit Tool

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id396_teaching_for_employability_audit_tool.rtf

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<http://www.ucb.ac.uk/downloads/policies-and-regulations/quality-and-curriculum-development/quality-manual.pdf>

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http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id396_teaching_for_Employability_Audit_Tool.rtf

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) (2007) *Curriculum Design*

<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/casqe/event/docs/curriculum.pdf>

University of Glasgow graduate attributes

The academic abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills which all students will have the opportunity to develop as part of their University of Glasgow experience.

Attribute	Academic Dimension	Personal Dimension	Transferable Dimension
Subject Specialists	Understand and respect the values, principles, methods and limitations of their discipline(s).	Possess a breadth and depth of knowledge within their disciplinary area(s).	Possess discipline-relevant professional skills, knowledge and competencies.
Investigative	Are intellectually curious and engage in the pursuit of new knowledge and understanding.	Are able to locate, analyse and synthesise information from a variety of sources and media.	Are able to investigate problems and provide effective solutions.
Independent and Critical Thinkers	Identify, define and assess complex issues and ideas in a researchable form.	Exercise critical judgement in evaluating sources of information and constructing meaning.	Apply creative, imaginative and innovative thinking and ideas to problem solving.
Resourceful and Responsible	Are experienced in self-directed learning and authentic research-led enquiry.	Are motivated, conscientious and self-sufficient individuals capable of substantial independent work.	Manage their personal performance to meet expectations and demonstrate drive, determination, and accountability.
Effective Communicators	Articulate complex ideas with respect to the needs and abilities of diverse audiences.	Present their ideas clearly and concisely in high quality written and spoken English.	Communicate clearly and confidently, and listen and negotiate effectively with others.
Confident	Defend their ideas in dialogue with peers and challenge disciplinary assumptions.	Possess excellent interpersonal and social skills fostered within an internationalised community.	Demonstrate enthusiasm, leadership and the ability to positively influence others.
Adaptable	Experience multi-disciplinary and/or inter-disciplinary learning in an internationally renowned institution.	Respond flexibly and adapt their skills and knowledge to excel in unfamiliar situations.	Demonstrate resilience, perseverance and positivity in multi-tasking, dealing with change and meeting new challenges.
Experienced Collaborators	Engage with the scholarly community and respect others' views and perspectives.	Are experienced in working in groups and teams of varying sizes and in a variety of roles.	Conduct themselves professionally and contribute positively when working in a team.
Ethically and Socially Aware	Consider and act upon the ethical, social and global responsibilities of their actions.	Welcome exposure to the richness of multi-cultural and international experiences, opportunities and ways of thinking.	Have a practical and contemporary knowledge of relevant professional, ethical and legal frameworks.
Reflective Learners	Use feedback productively to reflect on their work, achievements and self-identity.	Set aspirational goals for continuing personal, professional and career development.	Identify and articulate their skills, knowledge and understanding confidently and in a variety of contexts.

Glossary

Term	Use in this Thesis
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Acronyms

AS	Academic Staff
ASP	Academic Staff Participant
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SL	Service-Learning
TL	Transformative Learning
TLT	Transformative Learning Theory

Pseudonyms of the four UK Universities studied in this thesis

EnRes	English research-intensive university
EnTau	English teaching-intensive university
ScRes	Scottish research-intensive university
ScTau	Scottish teaching-intensive university

Academic Terms

post compulsory education	Further education (often abbreviated FE) in the United Kingdom and Ireland; a term used to refer to post-compulsory education that is distinct from the higher education offered in universities.
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UK Academic Usage of Selected Terms for the North American reader

thesis	work submitted for the PhD
dissertation	work submitted for the taught Masters level
tutor	a university or college teacher responsible for the teaching and supervision of assigned undergraduate students
module	An academic course delivered to students

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