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**Transformative Learning:  
An Exploration of the BA in  
Community and Family Studies  
Graduates' Experiences**

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A thesis submitted October 2018,  
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National University of Ireland, Galway,  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BA in Community and Family Studies .....	BCFS
BA in Early Childhood Practice Studies .....	BCP
Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development.....	CALPD
Diploma in Community Development Practice .....	CDP
Higher Education .....	HE
Interactive Management.....	IM
Transformative Learning.....	TL
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre .....	UCFRC

## **Declaration**

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as otherwise acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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Full name

October 2018

## **Abstract**

This thesis explored the existence and impact of transformative learning experiences among adult learner graduates of the BA in Community and Family Studies programme (BCFS). The researcher sought to consider whether graduates of the BCFS programme which is a part-time distance learning degree programme for adult learners accredited by NUI Galway; experienced transformative learning during the course of the BCFS programme. The overarching research question that this empirical study sought to respond to was: What effect(s) has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths? Therefore, this core research question was addressed in this study through four study objectives which underpinned the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. Comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences were drawn. The empirical study sought to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full-time and part-time), and personal life circumstances.

Transformative Learning theory (TL) according to Mezirow (2000) is constituted from historical, social and development experiences that occur in 'epochal' and/ or 'incremental' stages for learners. Mezirow developed TL theory to document the positive stages of development that were identified in adult learners' personal and educational life paths.

The study participants were all graduates of the BA in Community and Family Studies programme (BCFS) between the years 2010-2014. The graduate participants for this study were selected based on the premise that they were BCFS graduates. The empirical data was collected through a mixed methods approach which included surveys, interactive management and semi-structured interviews. Interactive management was used in this study as it is a new methodology to the social science discipline. It is a thought and action mapping strategy to aid individuals and groups from

diverse perspectives to develop dispositions and outcomes through engagement in discussion and deliberations as a collective. The multi-modal approach used in this study enabled respondents to deliberate upon their experiences in Higher Education and to offer insight on future andragogical research, policy and practice.

The overall study findings indicated that the developmental experiences; emotional intelligence awareness and growth were the most self-professed evident aspect of the TL<sup>1</sup> journey for the BCFS graduates. In particular, the impact of the transformative learning experiences through participation on the BCFS programme increased graduates' interest in community engagement; the second impact of the BCFS programme was that it enhanced graduates social relationships and networks at a personal and community level. Thirdly, the graduates shared that their participation on the BCFS programme had developed their mentoring and peer support roles towards other learners in their social network.

In conclusion, Transformative Learning (TL) was considered a key experience of the BA in Community and Family Studies programme (BCFS) graduates within this study. The andragogical process was considered core to the acquisition of the skills and qualities the graduates now possess. All respondents agreed that these attributes belonged to them on completion of the programme and have positively impacted on their life paths.

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<sup>1</sup> TL- Transformative Learning

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The last six years of my life considering, reflecting, stressing and writing this thesis while working full time has created a rollercoaster of emotions. I am very grateful to all who have helped me along this enlightening journey of learning.

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My mother, Nellie Casey is now 90 years young but still expects each of us in the family to stand tall and use our own ‘moral compass’ to guide us in life. No doubt my father, Paddy Casey is guiding me too from his place of rest.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Introduction

The importance of providing access to learning opportunities whether formal, informal and non-formal across the life course is fundamental to personal, community and societal development (Illeris 2004, 2009, 2018; Jarvis and Watts 2011; Jarvis 2012). The early theorists associated with learning across the life course included Dewey (1902, 1938) who emphasised the importance of critical thinking within the practice of learning, whilst Erikson (1950, 1968) informed identity development through learning and social discourse. However, it was in the nineteen seventies that learning as a theoretical construct developed a humanistic and social dimension which reframed learning theory (Faure *et al.* 1972). Knowles as an adult educator devised that engagement with adult learners required a specific teaching and learning approach, which he coined andragogical theory (Knowles 1970). This new learning theory was underpinned in the social liberation and emancipation of learning and educational practices in wider society which were captured in the work of Freire (1970) and Negt (1971). Equally, the lifelong learning theorist and pioneer of transformative learning theory who emphasized the importance of recording adult learners' experience in adult and community education was Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2006). Bandura's work (1977) on the practice of social imitation through learning in society was added to by Jarvis (1987) who denoted the importance of the social dimension of learning in lifelong learning. This social context of the learning experience was further developed by Lave and Wenger's (1991; Lave 1993, 2009; Wenger 1998) work on communities of practice and social learning. Therefore, the development of formal learning theories has been an incremental journey over time, in particular, the development of adult learning theories.

However, as the body of empirical and evidence based knowledge of part-time adult learners in higher education is limited, this study intends to explore the 'lived life' experiences of graduate learners from the part-time, blended learning, Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies

(BCFS) programme in NUI Galway. This doctoral study sets out to consider whether the BCFS adult learners who graduated from the programme between 2010 and 2014 experienced transformative learning while participants of this part-time blended learning degree programme<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the study focuses on exploring the transformative learning experiences of adult learner graduates of a formal higher education programme and deliberates on the andragogical approach including formal, non-formal and informal educational experiences it provides to the graduates. Therefore, this specific empirical study takes place in a Community and Adult Education context in an Irish University setting. However, the researcher would deem the research findings and the graduate insight and perspectives gained from this body of research to be equally relevant in wider national and international settings to support adult learners to navigate within and gauge their experiences in adult and higher education.

This introduction provides an overview of the development of learning theory over time and situates within it the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) programme and lifelong learning context. The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections, section one will underpin the theoretical constructs of transformative learning, attachment theory and emotional intelligence within the framework of adult and higher education in terms of the study. Then section two presents an overview of this doctoral study's rationale and research objectives, whilst section three presents a structured overview of the thesis layout and sequence.

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<sup>2</sup> This 2010-2014 period denotes the BCFS programme's inaugural five years of graduates.

## 1.1 Section One: Introducing the Theoretical Constructs of the Study

The diversity of learning and learning supports required to work with adult learners reflects the heterogeneity of the community in question. The literature espouses that many life course factors influence adult learners' daily lives in a plethora of different ways depending on where they are situated in their life-path at that given juncture (Fleming and Finnegan 2011; Field *et al.* 2010; Schuetze *et al.* 2012). Therefore, the diversity and individual nature of adult learners' capacities and potential learning needs must be considered in a holistic way by higher education institutions. More flexible entry routes, diverse patterns of study, innovative curriculum development and creative pedagogical interventions are required in order to attract, sustain and retain adult learners in higher education going forward. The connection between Bowlby's attachment theory (1979, 1988) and the andragogical and learning experience of adults (Fleming 2008, Fleming *et al.* 2017) is considered in the Study. The importance of mapping the attachment experience and emotional security of learners throughout their life-path enables the educational process to support adult learners on their personal 'lived life' educational journey.

Transformation theorists would assert that the process of transformation within an educational setting is a symbiotic process in which both the educator and learner should be free to engage in a dual learning experience to transform their epistemologies (Snyder 2008; Cranton and Taylor 2012; Mezirow 1978, 2000, 2006). However, in this context, the researcher would advocate that, in order to assist learners and educators to change epistemologies or ways of knowing, both partners in the process should develop a certain emotional intelligence or maturity that would assist them to transform. This knowledge of the life course of the individual is paramount for the adult educator in order to plan an appropriate path of learning with the learner. Therefore, the process of engagement with adult learners is pivotal to the success of the learning journey as all experiences are deemed to be 'meaning-forming' and influential in the holistic development of the learner (Mezirow 1978, 2000, 2006).

Jack Mezirow has been chosen as the key theorist upon which this study on transformation theory and transformative learning characteristics has been written, as his career as an andragogical educator reflected his understanding of the necessity to interject in certain adults' lives who require additional supports to redirect their life course. Mezirow (2000, p.8) defines transformation theory as

...how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others- to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear thinking decision makers.

This premise of being able to identify with the learner at a given point in life reiterates the basis upon which adult education within higher education offers significant opportunities for transformative education initiatives and interventions for the learner, educator, learning institution and wider society. Therefore, the researcher wishes to purport that Mezirow's transformative learning perspective is a pragmatic andragogical theory. However, it is a necessary constructive developmental approach in higher education institutions especially among adult learners who may have been exposed to poor prior learning experiences in formal educational environments. The literature indicates that learners that possess a greater sense of secure attachment in childhood can experience more positive and engaging life experiences because of that attachment in their adulthood (Daniel 2013; Fleming 2008). The importance of fostering emotional intelligence among adult learners in order to assist them through the learning experience will be considered (Armstrong *et al.* 2011; Schutte *et al.* 1998). In addition, the evident relationship between recognition theory, identity development of learners and emotional well-being of adults, and how these issues are intrinsically linked together and potentially foster transformative learning in adults will be discussed (Honneth 2003, 2005; Fleming 2011).

## 1.2 Section Two: Study *raison d'être*, Rationale and Objectives

The rationale for exploring the existence of transformative learning experiences among non-traditional adult learners on a part-time distance learning degree programme, the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS)<sup>3</sup> in a higher education setting stems from the researcher's interest and andragogical experience over the past twenty two years in NUI, Galway. In addition, due to the limited research footprint pertaining to andragogical experiences of part-time adult learners, this study aims to contribute to the empirical body of knowledge on this invisible population of part-time learners and their learning experiences. Furthermore, due to the diversity of adult learners' life paths and influences, higher education institutions need to consider unique and adult learner centred approaches to engaging and aiding adult learners to succeed in higher education. This is necessary in order to respond to the changing learner demographic in society especially the adult learner population base (CSO 2018). Therefore, the intention of the researcher through this doctoral study is to contribute to andragogy teaching, practice and policy outcomes that aid the development of adult learners' life path in higher education.

Consequently, the overarching research question that this empirical study seeks to respond to is: *What effect(s) has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths?* Therefore, this core research question will be addressed in this study through four study objectives which underpin the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. The four objectives within this study intend to draw on comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences. The objectives seek to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn

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<sup>3</sup> The BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) programme is a blended learning, part-time programme offered to adult learners in NUI, Galway.

from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full-time and part-time), and personal life circumstances.

The four objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion
2. Consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and Transformative Learning (TL), relative to Non-BCFS graduates.
3. Appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.
4. Identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

The research community in this study are graduates of a part-time distance learning degree programme, the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). In addition, a number of the BCFS graduates had previously undertaken another programme of study from the community education suite of programmes with NUI Galway, namely, the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP). So, the researcher seeks to include their experiences too from that earlier programme of study in this research. In addition, comparative distance and non-distance learning graduate cohorts of learners, named the Non-BCFS, are engaged in the empirical research to enable the researcher compare results across part-time and full-time, distance and non-distance programmes. The invisibility and disenfranchised characteristics associated with the adult learner community's access routes to adult and higher education have been fraught with barriers and difficulties in adult and higher education (HEA 2015; Field, Morgan- Klein, Fleming, Finnegan, Holliday, West 2010; Fleming

and Finnegan, 2011). Thus the purpose of this research is to explore the existence of transformative learning among adult learner graduates following their engagement within a higher education setting through a blended learning degree programme, namely the BCFS. The empirical research will explore whether a sense of emotional security and positive new trajectories can be provided through supportive adult and higher education interventions on the BCFS programme and whether it can offer learners an alternate option for any life changing or transformative life experiences. Therefore, it will be the core intention of the researcher to establish whether adult learners/ experienced practitioners who participated on the BCFS programme have acquired transformative learning experiences while undertaking the programme and whether such skills were sustained post programme completion.

### **1.3 Section Three: Thesis Structure - Chapter Sequence and Organisation**

This thesis is divided into Seven Chapters. The literature review in Chapter 2 presents the connections between learning theories, andragogical approaches to the learning experience and learning issues which impact upon the participation of adult learners in adult and higher education. The literature review will deliberate upon the pivotal role that transformative learning can play in adult learners' lives and its relationship to emotional intelligence and adult attachment experiences.

Chapter 3 presents the methodologies of the three components of the study conducted, with respect to rationale, aims and objectives; design; participating samples; materials and measures; procedures; and ethics. Component one of the study entails an online survey questionnaire; component two comprises an interactive management process whilst component three composes a series of semi-structured interviews. These three distinct methodologies are used to extend the capacity of the research process to capture and frame the BCFS part-time adult learner graduate perspectives on the four research objectives. These objectives are to explore transformative learning experiences; measure emotional intelligence and

attachment levels and consider the relationship between transformative learning, attachment and emotional intelligence; explore whether the andragogical experience on the BCFS programme promotes emotional intelligence; and identify the transformative learning impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

Chapter 4 provides the background and context to the study in which the BCFS was formed and developed in NUI Galway. The geographical and historical context of the university setting and the related issues that the impact of space and time dimensions has on part-time adult learners in terms of access, retention and success within NUI Galway as a higher education institution in Ireland will be discussed. Equally, the higher education policy context from a European, National and University perspective will be considered in light of its impact on the adult learner population, specifically the BCFS participants. Therefore Chapter 4 will review the socio-historical, geographic and policy context of adult and higher education and its relationship to the BCFS programme.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the study. This chapter presents the findings from the three study components; the online questionnaire (component one); the interactive management session (component two); and semi-structured interviews (component three). These components are presented sequentially under each of the four objectives of the study. The online survey questionnaire component of the study has the largest cohort of participants from the BCFS and Non-BCFS population. Data from component one forms the basis of the quantitative results which informs component two of the study with BCFS participants. Component three includes Non-BCFS participants and BCFS participants. Therefore, participants from the Non-BCFS cohort are included in two of the three study components (components one and three) as a comparator, whilst BCFS graduate participants form part of all three study components.

Chapter 6 explores the key empirical results of this study into adult learner graduates' perspectives on whether they experienced transformative



learning as part of the BCFS programme. As the findings are sourced from both qualitative and quantitative primary data collection approaches with adult learners, the discussion will be presented in a form that reflects on the four research objectives across the spectrum of this mixed methods research process. The empirical data will be interpreted in line with literature and policy developments pertaining to this population of under-researched adult learners within the frame of explaining the importance of the mixed methodologies to provide meaning and resonance to the data. In particular, attention will be paid to the core study constructs of Transformative Learning, Attachment and Emotional Intelligence in order to present the evident patterns in which the BCFS and non-BCFS population match the NUI Galway graduate attributes framework, despite the personal, social, financial and cultural barriers experienced by adult learners, specifically the BCFS cohort. Equally, adult learners as agents of change and their role within higher education (HE) and the responsibility of NUI Galway as an agent of change within the community and higher education process will be considered.

Chapter 7 provides an overall conclusion to the doctoral study. It also explores the policy, practice and future research recommendations that accrue from the research process and their relevance to the BCFS current and future programme scaffolding. The relationship between the BCFS programme, NUI Galway as an institution and the adult and higher education policy process are considered in the summative conclusions.

#### **1.4 Chapter 1 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the importance of learning and education to society and its relevance to adult and higher education. The study's rationale which seeks to contribute to adult and higher education teaching, practice and policy based on the empirical research on this under-researched community of the BCFS part-time adult learners is presented. Equally, the four study objectives are considered which intend to explore transformative learning experiences; measure emotional intelligence and attachment levels and consider the relationship between transformative learning, attachment and emotional intelligence; explore whether the andragogical experience on the BCFS programme promotes emotional intelligence; and identify the transformative learning impacts resulting from the BCFS programme. The relevance of the three study components and their role in the research process are considered. The empirical results across all three components of the study will examine whether the transformative learning experiences are self-identified, evident and tangible experiences for the BCFS graduates. A notable aspect of the empirical data collection process and analysis is to gauge the attachment and emotional intelligence levels among the BCFS cohort and to compare them to the non-BCFS programme participants. Additionally, the influence of the BCFS community education ethos and andragogical approaches influence on emotional intelligence growth among participants will be examined.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

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## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The review espouses that many life course factors influence adult learners' daily lives in various different ways, depending on where they are situated in their life-path at that given juncture. Therefore, the diversity and individual nature of adult learners' capacities and potential learning needs must be considered in a holistic way by Higher Education institutions. More flexible entry routes, diverse patterns of study, innovative curriculum developments and creative andragogical interventions are required in order to attract, sustain and retain adult learners in higher education going forward.

The current literature review has been divided into three key parts to facilitate the connections between transformative learning theories which influence adult learners, andragogical approaches to the learning experience and key transition factors which impact upon the transformative experiences of adult learners in adult and higher education. Thus, transformation theory and its theoretical deliberations will be discussed in the first part, section 2.2. Key perspectives by theorists and pedagogues of transformation theory will be critically analysed. Then, in section 2.3, the second part of the literature review will consider the pivotal andragogical styles and approaches to adult learning and development in adult and higher education.

In particular, the core developmental issues for non-traditional adult learners in higher education settings will be discussed. The interplay between community development, community education, family support and transformative learning principles will also be explored. The third part of the literature review, in section 2.4, will consider the three key constructs of the study and their relationship to each other in the literature: transformative learning (TL), emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment experiences. Furthermore, the significance of Honneth's theory of recognition and the link between a learner's personal sense of identity, self-belief and andragogical engagement strategies among adult learners will be discussed. Finally, the impact of transformative learning, emotional intelligence and

positive attachment experiences in adult learners' life paths will be critiqued. To summate, it is advocated in this review that all three transition agents can exist independently in adult and higher education. However, the presence of all three factors - emotional intelligence, positive attachment experiences and transformative learning are deemed to increase the opportunity for positive community and higher education learning to transpire.

## **2.2 Section 1: Transformative Learning and the Adult Learner Community: An Overview**

### ***2.2.1 Section Introduction***

This section of the literature review sets out to examine the key theoretical context within which transformation theory and the practice of transformative learning is understood across a diverse range of adult and higher education settings. Thereafter, the key characteristics of transformative learning and their respective interpretations by transformative learning advocates and critics are discussed.

In this section it is important to outline a working definition of the key terms which inform, underpin and characterize transformation in a higher education setting. Within this section, the key characteristics of the following theories will be examined: transformation theory, transformative learning and transformative pedagogy. Some of the perspectives of the classical and contemporary theorists will be reviewed and their respective theories will be critiqued in detail, as they demonstrate the factors and stages which can foster transformation among the adult learning community.

Transformation theory has been deliberated upon by a number of theorists including, Freire (1970), Habermas (1984), Boyd (1991), Brookfield (2006), Taylor (1998) and Dirkx (1998, 2012); however, Mezirow (1975, 1978, 1990 and 2009) has written most significantly on these concepts. Moving forward, discussion will refer mainly to his perspectives on transformation

theory and transformative learning and how they relate to the empirical case the researcher plans to study.

Jack Mezirow has been chosen as the key theorist upon which this section on transformation theory and transformative learning characteristics has been written, as his background in adult education curriculum delivery and teaching reflects his understanding of the necessity to interject in certain adults' lives who require additional supports to redirect their life course. Being able to identify with the learner at a given point in life reiterates the basis upon which adult education within higher education offers significant opportunities for transformative education initiatives and interventions for the learner, educator, learning institution and wider society. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that Mezirow's transformative learning perspective is a pragmatic andragogical theory yet it is a necessary constructive developmental approach in higher education institutions, especially among adult learners who may have been exposed to poor prior learning experiences in formal educational environments.

### ***2.2.2 Transformation Theory and Transformative Learning: key conceptual developments and debates***

This section considers the core terms and concepts associated with transformative learning theory. In particular, a historical insight will be considered in order to trace where the transformative learning process has evolved from to where it is placed in contemporary educational contexts.

In the context of this research, the term, 'transformation' is described as a primary outcome and signifies a deep and lasting change, a perspective transition, whilst 'transformative learning' is more concerned with what the learner does, feels and experiences. 'Transformative education' refers to the pedagogical practices or educational interventions which can be implemented to foster transformative learning (Stevens-Long 2012, p.184). Mezirow (2000, p.8) defines transformation theory as

...how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others- to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear thinking decision makers.

*2.2.2.1 Historical Developments of Transformation Theory*

The Transformative Learning Centre<sup>4</sup> describes transformative learning as ‘a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings and actions’ (cited in Kitchenham 2008, p.104). In addition, Mezirow classifies transformative learning as a problem-solving strategy: by ‘defining a problem or by redefining or reframing the problem’ (2000, p.20). Moreover, Moore (2005b, p.401) described the goals of transformative learning theory as being ‘...to achieve self-emancipation through self-knowledge, overcome systematically induced distortions of perception and communication, and strengthen one’s autonomy through rational discourse.’ Transformative learning theory sits comfortably in the discipline of lifelong learning and adult education as it is more concerned with the educational/ learning process than the outcome per se.

According to Kitchenham (2008) Mezirow’s early writings on transformative learning theory were heavily influenced by Kuhn’s (1962) paradigm, Freire’s 1970’s conscientization and Habermas’s 1971 and 1984 domains of learning. Freire (1970, p.17) spoke of three stages of consciousness: ‘intransitive thought’ is explained as being when people feel disempowered and have no control over their life paths, while ‘semi transitive’ thought is where people try deal with one issue at a time rather than deal with the macro issues or problems that create a particular dilemma. Then, the third stage of consciousness is described as ‘critical transitivity’, in which people think ‘critically and globally about their present conditions and decide to take action for change’ (Kitchenham 2008, p.108). It is quite apparent, according to Kitchenham, that Freire’s ‘critical transitivity’ stage influenced Mezirow and led him to outline certain core components of the transformative learning process such as ‘disorienting dilemma’, critical reflection and critical discourse.

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<sup>4</sup> Transformative Learning Centre is based in the Department of Adult Education and Counseling Psychology  
Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada

Habermas's pioneering theory on three domains of learning in 1971, which advocated technical, practical and emancipatory learning, also influenced Mezirow's development of his description of 'perspective transformation' in 1981. He defined it as:

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

(Mezirow 1981, cited in Kitchenham 2008, p.109)

In addition, Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984) which stressed the significance of people communicating with one another in order to come to a greater understanding of one another's perspectives, further influenced Mezirow's transformative learning theory and its connection to the adult education process.

So, Mezirow then developed three types of learning in 1985 based on Habermas's three domains of learning and his interpretation of the emancipatory process of self-directed learning. 'Instrumental learning' can be explained as the way in which learners best learn the information; while 'dialogic learning' can be described as the most optimal timing and location conditions in which learning can take place. The third type of learning is known as 'self-reflective' learning which outlines to learners why they are learning the given information (Kitchenham 2008). According to Mezirow, adherence to these three types of learning is central to perspective transformation. Perspective transformation involves development of learners' 'meaning perspective' and 'meaning schemes'. Mezirow (1985, p.21) describes a meaning perspective as 'the structure of cultural and psychological assumptions within which our past experience assimilates and transforms new experience'; while he later defines a meaning scheme as 'the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feeling which shapes a particular interpretation' (Mezirow 1994, p. 223).

Thus, according to Kitchenham, 'a meaning perspective is a general frame of reference comprising a series of specific meaning schemes' (2008,



p.110). Mezirow demonstrated this further by devising three types of meaning perspectives: epistemic, sociolinguistic and psychological, which related respectively to the knowledge gained and its usage by the learner; the language and its usage in social settings. The third meaning perspective - psychological - referred to how people viewed themselves (Mezirow 1991).

The constructivist viewpoint of transformative learning was adopted by Mezirow in 1991 when he argued that the ‘personal meanings that we attribute to our experiences are acquired and validated through human interaction and communication’ (cited in Kitchenham 2008, p.113). This reinterpretation that learning is personal and that the process starts with the individual, whether one is the learner or educator, aligns Mezirow with the constructivist theorists such as Piaget (1969), Knowles (1975), Kolb (1984) and the social constructivist, Vygotsky (1978). In addition, throughout his writings, Mezirow was adamant to reiterate the point that meaning only became significant to learners through critical discourse with others.

#### *2.2.2.2 Mezirow and his contemporaries' contribution to Transformation Theory*

Of the ten precursor steps designated by Mezirow (1978, 1994) to precede transformative learning, the three key steps were outlined by Brock (2010) as critical reflection, disorienting dilemma and trying on new roles. In 1985, Mezirow argued that transformative learning can occur as an ‘accretion’, or an ‘epochal’ moment, or both. Kovan and Dirkx (2003, as cited in Brock, 2010) have challenged Mezirow in that they claimed that he only advocated the epochal occurrence of transformative learning. According to Brock (2010), Kegan (1994) suggested that there are three stages of developmental growth within the learning process- the socialised mind, the self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind. Brock made the point that Kegan and Miller, in their 2003 study, emphasised that the ‘self-transforming mind’ development stage does not usually occur until after students graduate from University or establish themselves in a work setting.

King developed the Learning Activities Survey (1998) to measure transformative learning experiences among adult learners, which she

developed based on Mezirow's ten precursor steps (King 2000, 2009). The author adapted and applied King's LAS<sup>5</sup> to gauge Transformative learning experiences in this study which will be detailed in Chapter 3, the Methodology. Similarly, to Mezirow and King, Poutiatine (2009) outlines nine principles upon which to understand transformation and the transformational process. He posits that 'transformation is not synonymous with change...[it] always involves all aspects of an individual's or organisation's life...transformation is always a movement towards a greater integrity of identity - a movement towards wholeness' (2009, pp.192-193). He argues that change does occur on a continual basis but that transformation does not occur in such a predictable pattern and thus 'change' should not be confused as a synonym for 'transformation' as their characteristics do not equate to each other. In essence, transformation is a deeper process in which perspective change occurs which is irreversible (Poutiatine 2009). He refers to this 'paradigmatic shift' and calls it a 'second-order change'. This phase of the transformation process is aligned to other transformational learning theorists' perspectives such as those of Mezirow (2000) and Kegan (2000).

The holistic change required as part of the transformation process involves a deep-rooted change in beliefs, values and identity, as opposed to behavioural or outward change. Korthagen (1986) compares this multifaceted and multi-layered process of change that is involved in transformation as involving the whole 'onion' in the experience (cited in Poutiatine 2009). Poutiatine (2009) further posits that learners have to let go of the notion of control within their learning process whether it is real or mythical, as it can be a negative force and has the potential to reduce their personal sense of agency or ownership of their learning experience; this in turn can reduce the possibility of transformation occurring.

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<sup>5</sup> LAS- Learning Activities Survey

2.2.2.3 *Personal-Social Learning Journeys within Transformative Process*

A number of theorists of the transformative learning school of thought debate the personal, community and societal aspects of this process. Mezirow (1991a) is seen as the forefather of the rational cognitive learning approach, while other transformational learning theorists, such as Dirkx and Taylor, promote the importance of the emotional, moral and collaborative aspects of the learning process. For instance, Mezirow (2003) and Merriam *et al.* (2008) suggested that a minimum level of education is required in order for learners to be able to become critical thinkers and in turn experience perspective transformation. However, this limiter on a learner's capacity to foster transformative learning experiences is rebuked by Wright, Cranton and Quigley (2007), who researched learning journeys among adult learners with limited formal educational experience, and concluded that transformative learning can be fostered among adult learners of all educational abilities (cited in Groen and Hyland-Russell, 2010).

Artiles *et al.* cite Wertsch (1985) who suggests that the learning experience should not be preoccupied with the end outcome but that it should more so reflect the expression: 'the process is the product' (2006, p. 102). This perspective reflects the ideology of most transformative learning theorists who have dedicated due time to researching and tracing the learning journey of students and their educators. The example offered by Groen and Hyland-Russell (2010) which reflects the importance of authentic and identity development in educators, cites Kreber *et al.* (2007) who outline the authentic teaching qualities as 'being genuine, becoming more self-aware, being defined by one's self rather than by others' expectations, bringing parts of oneself into interactions with students, and critically reflecting on self, others, relationships and contexts' (pp.40-41). Cranton and Carusetta (2004, cited by Groen and Hyland-Russell, 2010) further reflect on the stages between levels of authenticity which they describe as 'beginning authenticity' and 'mature authenticity'; they argued that the development from one stage to another comes with time and experience of teaching. This personal and social dimension to authenticity in teaching emphasises the pivotal role educators can play in the adult learning process. This aspect

would reflect Dirkx's and Brookfield's emphasis on esteem-building and emotional intelligence among learners and educators to ameliorate the learning process for all.

A further aspect of this viewpoint is that learning outcomes cannot be the only proof that learning has taken place. This emphasis refers to the personal learning process and experience that lies in the emotional maturity and esteem building that can be fostered as an integral, but not planned, constituent of learning. Cranton (2006) argued that discourse that placed emphasis on personal experience rather than on a more streamlined rational discourse, would facilitate adult learners to interpret their learning experiences from a broader perspective and thus increase the possibility of experiencing transformative learning. Flexibility in the learning process is key to assist adult learners to foster a sense of transformative learning. Brookfield (2006) emphasises this perspective when he suggests that instructors/ educators need to balance their roles as both 'an ally and an authority' (cited in Groen and Hyland-Russell 2010, p.240) within a learning milieu with adult learners in order to gain trust and co-ownership of the learning experience. E. W. Taylor (2007) further reiterates this point in his note of warning that universities' over emphasis on policies and procedures can be potentially too rigid and thus stifle the possibility of transformative learning, especially among the adult learner community.

Mezirow refers frequently to the importance of environment and how a setting can create a cultural experience which may be transformative for learners. This sense of ease or comfort within the classroom, be that a physical or virtual one for adult learners, is deemed a requisite to fostering transformative learning. So, solidarity, empathy and trust among adult learners are deemed as core elements of the learner's environment which may lead to a transformative learning group or transformation for individuals within a group per se. Boyd (cited in Taylor 1998, p.13) asserts that transformation is an individual journey of self-reflection and a process of discernment: 'a fundamental change in one's personality involving conjointly the resolution of a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration'. Freire's approach

to transformation was more focused on the social transformation of society and the promotion of critical consciousness among communities through an engaging pedagogical process.

According to Ntseane (2011), transformative learning is an individual experience. However, Ntseane purports that, 'it is contextualised by that individual's interpretation and meaning making of his or her environment' (2011, p.318). Ntseane (2011) outlines that Taylor (2007) places emphasis on the role of relationships in transformative learning. In her article on African cultural development through the learning process, Ntseane (2011) emphasises that adult education should foster change while simultaneously maintaining respect of traditions, cultures and identities of learners (Ntseane, 2011). This perspective that advocates for a culturally sensitive approach to adult education is deemed by Ntseane to add positivity to transformational learning theory.

This aspect of the review considered some of the key theoretical precepts upon which the transformation theory debate is structured. It traced some of the historical deliberations added to the frame by many theorists from Freire to Habermas to Mezirow. This section set the context for the impetus that strong emotional bonds, identity development and critical thinking play in fostering transformative processes among learners.

#### *2.2.2.4 Transformative Learning Process in Adult and Higher Education Settings*

In learning and teaching, emotions are ever present. Ignoring or suppressing these emotions harms students and teachers alike.

(Liston 2003, cited in Mortiboys 2012, p.1)

How it is possible that some experience transformation and others do not is a constant inquiry for most researchers within the field of transformative learning. Therefore, it is important to consider the learning process and the ways in which people create meaning and interpret learning at an individual or group level to establish whether there are patterns or circumstances which are more conducive to fostering transformative learning than others. Mezirow (1991b) outlines that perspective transformation is difficult to

achieve for many learners and that some find it hard to work through certain stages versus others. However, he concludes that, once perspective transformation is complete, it is irreversible. Taylor (1997, cited in Moore 2005b), however, questions Mezirow's viewpoint as to whether a learner's perspective continues to change, regress or remain static.

Bernstein (1970, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.30) stated that 'education cannot compensate for society'. However, this section considers how the crucial role that positive and genuine engagement with the learner can truly foster transformative, life changing experiences for learners. In addition, this potential life transitioning experience at a personal or individual level for the learner can likewise have a ripple effect on the wider social setting in which the learner lives.

#### 2.2.2.5 Engagement with the learner

Stevens-Long *et al.* (2012) posit that education should move beyond the 'life of the mind to incorporate the emotions of the learner and the needs of society' (2012, p.180). E.W. Taylor (1998) reiterates the point that more research is required on the relationship between learner-centred teaching and transformative learning and the impact of context and relationships. According to Schoenholz-Read (2000), personal development of emotions and self are deemed to be the 'stretching' or 'broadening' of perspective which occurs through critical reflection (cited in Stevens-Long *et al.*, 2012, p. 182). Consedine and Magai (2006) further emphasise the importance of 'emotional maturing' as a core component of developing advanced cognitive agility (cited in Stevens- Long, 2012, p.182).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) define transformative learning as,

...a wholistic change in how a person both affectively experiences and conceptually frames his or her experience of the world when pursuing learning that is personally developmental, socially controversial or requires personal or social healing.

(Yorks and Kasl 2002,cited in Stevens- Long *et al.* 2012, p. 184)

Stevens-Long *et al.* (2012) further posit that there is a paucity of literature on the development of emotional intelligence of adult learners and their

experience of education. This aspect will be addressed through the researcher's empirical study. Morgan (2012) emphasises the 'relational intimacy' aspect to developing relationships within the learning process. The importance of relationship building to enhance the prospect of transformative learning is reiterated by Stevens-Long *et al.* (2012).

Groen and Hyland-Russell (2010) discuss aspects of creating, cultivating and sustaining authentic and sustainable relationships with students in order to promote the development of transformative learning experiences among marginalised students of a programme in Canada. These researchers make note of the dearth of research which pertains to reviewing the possibility of transformative learning among marginalised non-traditional adult learners within the humanities discipline. The paucity of published research on adult learners' experiences of Transformative Learning has prompted the researcher to undertake this empirical work.

Much of the focus within the study reviews 'pathways for transformative learning' (Groen and Hyland- Russell 2010, p.225) for non-traditional adult learners. They document the multiplicity and layered aspects of learning barriers that exist among this cohort of learners. For instance, they refer to Cross's 1981 model of barriers to learning: dispositional, situational and institutional barriers. Dispositional barriers are concerned with adult learners' self-perceptions and attitudes such as self-esteem, while situational and institutional barriers are outlined as external barriers; situational barriers could involve financial or childcare responsibilities while institutional barriers could relate to course timetabling, structures or locations. Each barrier can be difficult to overcome as a single obstacle for an adult learner within any educational setting; however, as Bowl (2001) outlines, 'university entry is experienced as a dislocation and disjunction, which is intensified if the learner is non-traditional in more than one sense' (cited by Groen and Hyland-Russell 2010, p.226).

In addition, one needs to focus on who is doing the learning, and under what circumstances, to gain insight into the transformative learning process. This would require the educator and learner alike to genuinely engage in a

relationship of trust, emphasised by Mezirow's point about relationship building as a requirement for transformative learning. It also highlights the necessity for the educator to create and make meaning out of the educational experience for the learner in order for the learner to really benefit from the educational experience (Mezirow, 2000). This process of learning and teaching must take cognizance of the patterns by which one learns: intentional and incidental. So, Mezirow and his colleagues emphasize that educators need to be aware of how and what students are learning, either directly or indirectly, as all learning and teaching can have an impact on the whole andragogical experience.

Furthermore, the adult educator and adult learner must be conscious of their intentional and incidental learning experience as it may have a ripple effect on the whole transformative pedagogical experience. Habermas (1984) refers to two domains of learning: instrumental learning and communicative learning. Instrumental learning could be defined as a task-oriented, problem-solving approach to control learners or their environments in order to achieve outputs or improve performance, while, communicative learning is deemed to be more concerned with the meaning and feelings exchanged during the learning process. Therefore, Habermas advocates that communicative learning is more conducive to creating transformative learning experiences (1984). De Laine, cited in Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 40), noted that 'emotions should not be seen as disruptive of research or as irrelevant but central to it, just as they are central to human life'. She advocates, as an egalitarian feminist, for more empathy, reciprocity and egalitarianism in educational processes especially through curriculum design and development practices. It was deemed pivotal by the researcher as a research contribution of this study, to consider the role of emotional development among graduates of the BCFS programme in the Higher Education milieu.

Moreover, Mezirow refers to transformative learning as an action or process that can occur in two forms: epochal, caused by a particular event or incident which triggers a reaction, and incremental, which, as the name suggests, can occur in a more gradual, staggered process of enlightenment.



These transformations in habits of mind, according to Mezirow, can occur through subjective or objective reframing. He suggests that ‘objective reframing involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others encountered in a narrative or in task-oriented problem-solving as in ‘action learning’ (Revans 1982). Subjective reframing involves critical self-reflection of one’s own assumptions’ (Mezirow, 2000 p.23). Mezirow speaks about meaning perspectives or frames of reference which are the ways in which one interprets experiences from one’s daily life and which assist one in reflecting upon the cultural assumptions, beliefs, or values which determine the way one interprets the world and related experiences. Mezirow (2009) asserts that these meaning perspectives can take three forms: cognitive, affective and conative. Furthermore, Dirkx (1998, p.9) argues that ‘transformative learning is essentially a way of understanding adult learning as a meaning-making process aimed at fostering a democratic vision of society and self-actualization of individuals’.

#### *2.2.2.6 Emotional Bonds and the Transformative Learning Process*

Dirkx (2012) purports that the educational process should nourish the learner’s soul and inner sense of being. He emphasises the perspective that all learners and educators should give due attention to the inner lives and emotional bonds created through the learning experience in higher and adult education. He advocates that such attention to one’s inner self will promote greater meaning and emotional security from that whole learning experience for all. This stance corroborates with Goleman’s perspective (1996, 2001) on emotional intelligence and social empathy being garnered from learners’ interactions, consciously and subconsciously, with other learners and educators. Furthermore, this viewpoint is connected to Fleming’s view on Bowlby’s attachment theory and how it impacts on learners’ lives in adulthood. Fleming (2007a; 2008) would argue that learners’ behaviour in educational processes as adults is mirrored from how they develop relationships in childhood and adolescence with their families and care givers. He espouses that the social empathy, relationship bonds and emotional intelligence adult learners display and foster during their learning experiences occur based on learners’ prior experiences of positive

interaction and support with others and a sense of inner happiness with oneself. As outlined by Dirkx, 'our relationships with others are only as strong and deep as the relationships we have with ourselves' (Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton 2006a, p.129).

Many psychological tests which measure emotional intelligence levels such as Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Test (MEIS) and Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) suggest that learners who achieve high emotional intelligence rates on these tests are primarily defined by their ability to solve emotional problems that they encounter in their life course (Kylonen *et al.* 2008). Furthermore, one's ability to foster emotional bonds with others in adulthood is deep-rooted in the potentially positive or negative experience of attachment the learner experienced in earlier life (Bowlby 1979, 1988; Fleming 2003, 2008). Kafetsios and Mitchell's study in 2001 noted that emotional perception and capacity were positively related to secure attachments and negatively related to fearful and preoccupied attachment (cited in Kylonen *et al.*, 2008).

Mezirow (1997, p.11) cited in Taylor (1998, p.12) asserts that transformative learning is core to adult education because the goal of adult education is 'to help the individual become a more autonomous thinker by learning to negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purpose rather than uncritically acting on those of others'. Therefore, information learning adds to one's knowledge base while transformative learning expands one's knowledge base, as it helps one to reconstruct and reinterpret the context of knowledge acquired. In essence, transformative learning skills are deemed to offer the learner additional reflective and critical analysis capacity. Therefore, when Kegan (2000) applies the constructive-development approach to the transformation learning process, which traditionally applied to the discipline of psychology, it makes sense to do so in this context. This is the case as the basis of this constructive-development theory suggests that 'what truly forms part of the human mind has the capacity to be transformed through 'meaning forming' experiences' (Kegan 2000, p.53). This stance reinforces Mezirow's perspective on learners' possessing frames of reference which in essence, are one's way of knowing.

However, in this context, the researcher would advocate that, in order to assist learners and educators to change epistemologies or ways of knowing, both partners in the process should develop a certain emotional intelligence or maturity that would assist them to transform. In addition, transformation theorists would assert that the process of transformation within an educational setting is a symbiotic process in which both the educator and learner should both be free to engage in a dual learning experience to transform their epistemologies. This knowledge of the life course of the individual is paramount for the adult educator in order to plan an appropriate path of learning with the learner. Therefore, the process of engagement with adult learners is pivotal to the success of the learning journey as all experiences are deemed to be ‘meaning-forming’ and influential in the holistic development of the learner.

Furthermore, students who have decided to access third-level education may already possess a certain maturity of thought which may allow them to change their epistemologies and ultimate life-path. Thus, this emotionally intelligent mind-set should assist the learners to be more attuned and willing, to experiment with new educational experiences once they have the appropriate support framework within the educational setting. As Kegan (2000, p.60) outlines, ‘a constructive-developmental perspective on transformational learning creates an image of this kind of learning over a lifetime as the gradual traversing of a succession of increasingly more elaborate bridges’. This evolving model, in which the learning is paced and enjoyable for both the educator and learner, does seem to favour the process of transformation. Kegan refers to this process as the ‘move from the socialised to the self-authoring mind’ (2000, p.65).

To summarize, it is espoused in this section that relationship forming is core to engaging adult learners in higher education; and that, positive life transitioning seems to be fostered more readily when learners’ sense of emotional maturity and life narrative experiences are considered by the educators and learners alike.

### **2.2.3 Transformative Pedagogy**

The importance of considering the whole educational circle is pivotal to considering the possibility of fostering transformative pedagogy. In essence, the learner cannot experience transformative learning unless the educator genuinely partakes in the learning experience too.

#### *2.2.3.1 Andragogical Processes- Genuine or Token Engagement?*

Transformative pedagogy involves a dialectical and didactic relationship between oneself and wider agents of change such as the social, political and cultural context within which one lives. Dirkx (1998, p.11) describes transformative learning and transformative pedagogy as a ‘way of *being* rather than a process of *becoming*’. This fragile andragogical relationship must begin as a personal journey for both the educator and learner in order for it to evolve, rather than assuming that it can be forced to occur just because an individual or group deem it necessary. The literature would indicate that adult educators should deliberate upon the difference between setting and achieving goals as educators and helping learners to achieve objectives. In order to foster transformative learning, the adult educator must be aware of what the individual learner wishes to learn. This symbiotic relationship of understanding is crucial to arrive at a ‘way of being’ which could foster transformative learning rather than a ‘process of becoming’ in which the learning experience is forced, or thwarted, for either the learner or educator.

One of the concepts that require further consideration in this discussion of transformative pedagogy is ‘productive pedagogies’ (McFadden and Munns, 2002, p.357). The importance of engaging pedagogies cannot be underestimated in the challenge to achieve educational success for the learner and educator alike. Durrant and Green (2000) further emphasize that student engagement in the learning process involves ‘finding ways of enabling and encouraging learners to enter into communities of practice, discourse and inquiry...to become an “insider” in the culture of the classroom’ (cited in McFadden and Munns 2002, p.360). Therefore, the cultural context of both the learner and educator must be taken into

consideration in order to fully appreciate the community of practice or cultural production of any learning and teaching situation. In essence, this theory suggests that pedagogy cannot be understood from the educator's perspective alone but must also include 'an understanding of the structured, collective cultural interpretations of the pupils' (Durrant and Green 2000, cited in McFadden and Munns, 2002, p.361).

In addition, Taylor (1998, p.33) emphasizes the importance of 'educators to embrace a developmental perspective of teaching'. This perspective would reinforce the debate that the culture and context of learning and education must be cognizant of the learner and the issues that may enable, or disable, one's learning journey. Therefore, transformative pedagogy has a greater chance of being fostered in an environment in which relationships between learners and educators are sensitive to cultural issues and engagement in learning is seen more as an on-going process rather than an end product of education. This productive pedagogical framework permits the learner to self-direct the learning journey under the guidance of an educator who, through the engagement process, is also learning and who potentially is also constructing a more positive self-image as a learner (McFadden and Munns, 2002).

Saavedra (1996) and Taylor (1998) highlight the necessity for learners to take responsibility for fostering transformative learning experiences and also that the path to transformation is not the sole responsibility of the educator. Furthermore, the issue of steering a group of learners or individuals toward transformative learning outcomes if they are unwilling participants is also questioned by Taylor. Consequently, the fragile praxis between active participants in the process of learning and potential transformation is a key factor that requires further analysis in the researcher's empirical work.

#### 2.2.3.2 *Global Education Policy Influences*

Artiles *et al.* (2006) considered the influence of the globalisation context on learning in terms of the politics and framework within which schools and any educational processes transpire. For example, they discuss the neo-

liberalist influence in the management of inclusive educational programmes within the American school system. For instance, the concept of ‘social efficiency’ suggests that:

Education plays a fundamental role in the production of capable workers to contribute to the economic health of the nation and the corporations that employ them. The social efficiency view also requires that educational systems work efficiently. They must produce workers who have the knowledge and skills to contribute to the knowledge economy.

(Artiles *et al.* 2006, p.76).

Therefore, the employability of learners and the end outcome of their learning journey on completion of their studies can take precedence over the process of learning itself and the situated experience that such learning can generate may be overlooked by an efficiency driven educational system. This is especially problematic for non-traditional adult learners who may not perform as visibly efficiently in a rigid or outputs-driven pedagogical system. Furthermore, as many adult learners engage in the humanities or social science disciplines to partake in ‘knowledge-gain’ processes rather than merely for ‘career gain’ or employment reasons. This pattern of engagement by adult learners in andragogical processes in higher education institutions has led some management authorities to marginalise the social sciences disciplines under the ‘social efficiency’ construct (Collins 2000; Artiles *et al.* 2006; Jarvis 2011).

In summary, the social aspect of engaging in a learning experience cannot be deconstructed from the learning process: ‘conceptually, learning was a function of academic performance rather than a complex phenomenon that encompasses social, cognitive, cultural, aesthetic and spatial dimensions’ (Artiles *et al.* 2006, p.93). Therefore, according to Artiles *et al.* (2006), and (Cincinnati *et al.* 2016) the role of culture and social background in learning is under researched, and they advocate a more systematic understanding of the political and cultural aspects of learning. An impetus of this empirical study is to illuminate the disenfranchised adult learner perspectives of andragogical experiences in Higher Education in Ireland and to fill the heretofore research vacuum with adult learner voices and critical insight.

In addition, Artiles *et al.* (2006) reinforce the point in their article about the importance of a deeper analysis of the learning process, and they offer reflections through a review of inclusive education studies in the US and Britain. They refer to Lave's (1993) theory of learning, which is composed of three parts: 'telos', which could be framed as the evolution or change learners go through over time; 'a subject-world relation' refers to one's perception of where one situates oneself in the world and how one engages in that perceived reality; and the third dimension of Lave's learning theory is referred to as 'learning mechanisms', which could be described as the tools or techniques of making learning happen. These three dimensions provide a base from which to discuss the process and outcome of learning at both a theoretical and empirical level within education with particular reference to adult education.

#### 2.2.3.3 Critiques of Transformation Theory and Characteristics

One of the critical reviewers of transformative learning theory and practice, Newman (2012) argues that transformation theory is an exaggerated theory and that it equates to nothing more than 'good learning', that all learners go through and experience in some form or another. Therefore, Newman would suggest that transformative learning should not be considered a unique process. Newman suggests that the transformative learning, described by Mezirow's 1978 study about a group of women returning to study, which was the commencement of Mezirow's writings on the theory of transformative learning, was not genuine transformation. Instead, Newman purports that they were 'changed by accident and not design' (2012, p. 39). He posits that the social context at the time, as opposed to the learning process, influenced their development. However, consideration of the model of learning theory promulgated by Lave (1993, 2009) would offer the proponents of transformation learning theory a reinforced standpoint from which to defend the process of transformative learning.

The influence of sociocultural theories, such as Wenger's 'communities of practice' and their connection to the learning process were cited by Artiles *et al.* (2006). For instance, Wenger's (1998) discussion on communities of

practice denotes the importance of ‘meaning that is created through participation and reification’ (p. 82). Ainscow and his colleagues (2003), who were also cited by Artiles *et al.* (2006), reinforce Wenger’s perspective that learning in communities of practice accounts for the interplay between participation in learning and reification concepts.

Snyder (2008) reviews a model of transformative learning in higher education, positing that researchers should place less emphasis on whether transformation occurs, but that more research should be carried out on how transformative learning can inform curriculum development and instruction. Snyder outlined that, ‘Improving adult learning improves communities and societies’ (2008, p.161). Snyder reiterates that learners’ prior history and context shape their experience. This toolbox of prior experience in turn helps individuals to frame their meaning perspective or perhaps reframe or alter such perspectives (Snyder 2008). The importance of understanding the learner and his or her learning history will be discussed in later sections on emotional intelligence and attachment.

Snyder (2008) notes that Mezirow differed from previous developmental theorists such as Piaget, Freud and Maslow by suggesting that adult learners need to act intentionally if they wish to develop their perspective transformation. Mezirow (1991) outlined that a person has to make ‘a decision to negate an old perspective in favour of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new’ (cited in Snyder, 2008, p.166). Kegan (1994) proposed a theory of developmental consciousness which placed transformational theory within the wider framework of adult learning and he saw all development as potentially transformative. He argued that a learner moved from ‘being a part of the social order to having agency over the social order’ (cited in Snyder, 2008, p.166). Berger (2004) referred to this period of transition between one perspective and another as the ‘growing edge’, while, Featherstone and Kelly (2007) further deliberated upon the threshold point at which learners move from one viewpoint to another as learners’ ‘tentative/ partial situatedness at the limits of discursive knowing/ being’ (cited in Snyder 2008, p.169).



Therefore, Synder (2008) advocates that educators and institutions of learning need to place greater importance on the emotional needs and orientations of participants through more attention to the 'affective domain' of curriculum design, which in turn will facilitate greater opportunities for transformative learning among learners.

Snyder (2008) advocates that the process of transformation is more important than the actual transformation itself. This correlates with many transformational theorists including Mezirow and Dirkx, who advocate a greater emphasis on the process rather than on the end outcome so as to improve how adults learn and are taught. This andragogical approach to adult education is reflective of the community education ethos in which the learners play a central role in their educational experience (Fitzsimons, 2017). Synder (2008) refers to Whitelaw's 2004 study on the importance of 'situated practice' which in essence means that, in order to optimise the likelihood of transformative learning taking place, 'the learning must take place in a contextually relevant setting for the learner' (2008, p.177). Synder outlines that '...adult learners need to have a reason for learning. Without that reason, there is no commitment to the transformative process' (2008, p.179).

There are many similarities and characteristics that the transformative learning processes fostered by Mezirow and his colleagues share with the community development approach and the community education ethos which is advocated by many theorists such as Curtin, Twelvetrees, Crow and Allen, Connolly and Fitzsimons. The core synergies between these complementary approaches will be discussed in greater detail in another section of this review.

Following a review of the main theories associated with transformation, it can be concluded that an understanding of the environment and cultural issues faced by adult learners is pivotal in the journey to self or community transformation. In addition, understanding the personal history and context of the learners and their educational concerns or issues, is crucial in order to arrive at a place where the framework for transformation is possible.

Therefore, learning occurs and evolves, as does the learner's perspective, sometimes unbeknown to the learner until he/ she acquires distance from the process through reflective practice. However, much of the literature considered proposes that emotional intelligence and critical reflection are core ingredients in the mix to foster transformative learning; yet, the presence of same do not ensure that transformation will occur.

Therefore, the role of the educator in the transformative learning process cannot be set aside from the learner's experience of education. In essence, it is a dual journey for both through the educational highway of learning. In addition, the importance of considering the learning environment and situated learning experiences cannot be overlooked in adult and higher education in order to assist the transformative andragogical process.

#### **2.2.4 Section Summary**

Transformation theory, when applied to learners in an educational context, should not be used as a synonym for change. It is more than that; it is a life-changing perspective or an altered sense of self, usually fostering a higher sense of self-esteem and confidence within learners. In essence, transformative learning, according to the key theorists reviewed in this section such as, Cranton, King, Taylor, and Poutiatine, leads to a paradigmatic shift in one's perspective on life, including one's sense of educational attainment. In addition, Mezirow, as the core transformative learning theorist upon which this section has balanced its review, advocates that transformative learning can only truly occur in adulthood, as it is in this stage of life in which learners acquire their critical thinking capacity to decipher life affirming skills from other, less permanent change factors or passing influences.

To summate, elements that need consideration to assess whether transformation can occur in an educational setting include an in-depth understanding of the life history of the learner and educator, a profile of the adult learner's pedagogical issues and a student-centred environment in which the educator can create opportunities to encourage the learner to devise a personal development plan to self-direct one's andragogical journey. Therefore, the dual role of fostering the andragogical and emotional development of learner and educator seem to be paramount in the promotion of transformative pedagogy. Finally, it cannot be assumed that transformation will occur, even in the presence of the factors outlined; however, it can be argued that the presence of these factors does help to facilitate transformative learning processes.

## **2.3 Section 2: Andragogy and Learning Transitions in Higher Education- An Overview**

### **2.3.1 Section Introduction**

The importance of understanding the individual learner, his/ her educational history and cultural expectations of the learning initiative are all crucial aspects in the andragogical learning process:

Whatever our age, our zest for life is generated through the exploring and sharing of interests in a supportive companionable way.

(Daniel 2013, p. 84)

In this section, some of the key learning issues pertaining to learning styles and approaches within adult and higher education are discussed. In addition, the importance of fostering a positive learning environment, especially for adult learners, is posited as a crucial factor to generate greater emotional maturity among learners, educators and wider society.

In particular, the issues which impact upon and influence the participation of non-traditional adult learners in the andragogical process will be discussed in the first part of this section. In addition, the specific issues which bear consequences on the context of learning and student retention will also be reviewed. Thereafter, the key policy and management influences on learning within the adult and higher education sector in Ireland will be debated. The next sub-section will consider the varying learning styles and approaches which promote positive and 'deep' learning experiences for adult learners. Finally, the third aspect of this section will review how community development and family support principles and value systems complement the context of lifelong learning and assist the promotion of transformative learning experiences.

### **2.3.2 Non-traditional Adult Learners: Issues and Perspectives**

*What does one mean by the term non-traditional or dis-enfranchised learner?*

Sanders and Munford (2006a) posited that the importance of modelling positive respectful relations is crucial in all adults' lives. In essence, they note that mirrored behaviour forms part of the learning process. Likewise educators and learners have a dual role to model their behaviour on positive and respectful pedagogical practices. In this sub-section, particular issues that pertain to non-traditional adult learners will be deliberated upon, with a view to presenting the necessary and inclusive processes required to assist this cohort reach their potential in an environment which is, for the most part, unfamiliar or outside of their normal setting.

There are varying perspectives on the terminology to be used to define adults who return to education in their adulthood. For instance, the term 'veterans of practice' or 'adult practitioners' is often used to refer to workers from community development or family support disciplines who decide to engage in accredited learning after accruing multiple years of experiential learning either in a paid or voluntary capacity in the chosen discipline (Devaney and Dolan 2017). In more recent years, there is a certain cohort of adult learners who are returning as paid professionals to partake in accredited 'continuous professional development' programmes and modules. Alternatively, many of these professionals are changing career due to personal or perhaps economic pressure and are returning to adult and higher education as 'flexible' learners to up-skill or re-skill. This term was coined to reflect the fact that flexible learning initiatives were mainly devised to refer to programmes offered in flexible or blended learning modes, either on campus or virtually, to adult participants.

However, the term 'non-traditional' or 'disenfranchised' adult learner is the main term used in this empirical study to capture the nature and distinctiveness of this cohort of learners. This is so as, for the most part, community development and community education disciplines within higher education cater mainly for adult learners who are trying to access

higher education as adults because ‘life course’ circumstances prohibited them from partaking in higher education in earlier life. In essence, these adult learners did not engage, or did not have an opportunity to engage, in higher education due to socio-economic or cultural barriers as school leavers (Fleming and Finnegan 2011).

Notwithstanding this approach to adult and higher education, language and terminology can sometimes have a stigmatising effect on the learner and therefore higher education management and educators alike have a personal and professional responsibility to ensure that the naming and phrasing of promotional and educational content in the adult education discipline is not counterproductive to the adult learner engaging in the process (Fleming *et al.*, 2010).

#### *2.3.2.1 Retention Levels and Participation Rates*

The participation rate of adult learners in higher education institutions, and especially of non-traditional learners, has increased significantly between the late 1980s and the late 1990s across a number of OECD countries studied (Schuetze and Slowey 2000; Slowey and Schuetze 2018). However, it is argued that the increase in adult /mature learners participating in third level education does not necessarily equate to successful retention or achievement levels per se. According to Slowey and Schuetze (2000, 2018) infrastructural and policy processes within certain higher education institutions can be elitist and exclusionary to adult learners’ needs, due to the ‘non- traditional’ nature of such learners’ needs within a structure that was originally designed for traditional learners and predictable requirements of a school leaving learner community. So, in practice, it is claimed that higher education institutions are not as successful as they should be in terms of bridging the gap to meet the non-traditional adult learners’ needs in terms of student integration policies and flexible design, delivery or student support mechanisms (Thomas 2016). Davis (2013) through research on the

CREANOVA<sup>6</sup> advocates the perspective that flexible and collaborative learning strategies in early years' educational services and among multi professional roles promotes agency and voice which leads to social justice and creative learning experiences and environments.

Collins (2000) places huge significance on the necessity for Irish higher educational institutions to democratise the process for the recruitment and participation of mature students in higher education. He outlines that it is not sufficient for educational policy makers to merely open up access opportunities for non-traditional learners, but that they should rethink their processes to both improve retention levels and promote recruitment of new quotas of mature students going forward. Morgan (2012) refers to 'ground of being' which she sees as one's inner self. This process occurs through contemplative processes and development of meaning. A correlation is made between the concept 'ground of being' and 'interiority', a phrase coined by Merleau-Ponty in 1968, which refers to one's inward self and 'identity' development within learners which Dirkx (2006b) posits as essential to an integrated view of education, particularly adult education (Morgan, 2012).

McDonald, Cervero and Courtenay (1999) outlined that transformational learning theory 'is more of a journey and less of a decision at one point in time' (cited in Moore 2005b, pp.403/404). Morgan-Klein and Osborne (2007) consider whether lifelong learning journeys through the higher education framework act as an empowering or controlling force for adult learners. Most certainly, they would advocate that understanding learners' social situations and social contexts is paramount to promoting successful personal and educational outcomes for learners, educators and society. Eliasa (2012) cites the United Nations (UN) and United Nations,

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<sup>6</sup>CREANOVA was a European funded project between Scotland, Aquitaine and Basque regions to assess frameworks for creative interventions in educational interventions with children.

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) four key pillars of education: Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to be; and Learning to live together. Each of the four pillars she advocates can be related to adult learners and requisite supports to achieve learning outcomes with which they feel satisfied. Eliasa posits that higher education must promote favourable conditions that favour learning and development, both of the individual learners and the community of learners. Furthermore, she notes that, in adult education in particular, students need a learning context that supports their well-being and complements their sense of esteem.

Ecological theory builds on how various social experiences form individual experiences and character. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed this theory and argued that individuals should be seen as forming learning experiences as they develop. In essence, human beings are seen by Bronfenbrenner as sculpting and restructuring the environments in which they live. Eliasa (2012, p. 5704) cites Santrock as he outlines that a learning institution or school has a 'role or responsibility in helping the students achieve their development tasks'. Eliasa cites many of the learning theorists such as Dewey, Vygotsky and Piaget and emphasises the importance of active and interactive learning where the student should remain focused and play an active role in the learning journey and that students and educators must engage in an interactive process which stimulates symbiotic learning. A forthcoming section will build on the importance of understanding family support theory and applying it to the learning and pedagogical process necessary to engage non-traditional adult learners.

Eliasa (2012, p.5706) states that 'the understanding of self and other roles in learning groups is a foothold in socialising in the society (learning to live together)'. Moreover, Eliasa argues that offering motivational strength to learners and fostering it among students facilitates learners to 'improve oneself continuously' (Eliasa, 2012, p.5706). The researcher will examine whether the BCFS programme can be promoted as a mechanism to foster adult learners to move towards a more socialised state of being. As noted by Eliasa (2012), adding to adults' sense of self-esteem and confidence tends to lend itself favourably to creating a more socialised individual.



Davis et al (2014) reiterates that personal development and confidence-building were outcomes of the acquisition of the early years' degree qualifications in Scotland based on the SSSC<sup>7</sup> study. The researcher's empirical study intends to deliberate on the personal and professional learning outcomes of the BCFS degree graduates and compare experiences to non-BCFS groups (one of which is an early years' cohort of graduates).

### *2.3.2.2 Real or Perceived Accessibility Routes for Non-traditional Adult Learners*

Garratt (2011) posits that adult learners, especially non-traditional adult learners, have become the passive agents within an educational policy agenda which seeks to widen participation in higher education across UK higher education institutions. He suggests that structural and physical developments have occurred to assist a more diverse community of students to enrol and register in programmes. However, Garratt argues that the cultural bridge required by many adult and mature students to traverse and survive higher education has not been thought out sufficiently by management and educators. This hiatus between the practice of facilitating access to higher education and encouraging active student learning is more apparent among adult learners who come from families who are not culturally accustomed to university life and the patterns of learning therein. Therefore, this cohort of first generation third level participants may have many personal, social, economic, educational or cultural barriers which have hindered their previous participation in the formal higher education sector. Garratt argues that higher education should be more concerned with widening 'capability' in learning as opposed to just opening up more positions within actual institutions.

The process of reviewing students' skills and their breadth of knowledge and prior life learning, especially informal learning, would offer any

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<sup>7</sup> SSSC- Scottish Social Services Council

academic institution greater 'cultural wealth' and diversity. In turn, Garratt (2011) maintains that this process would lend itself to creating a more 'socially just pedagogy' (p.211) as educators would see non-traditional adult students and their attributes in a holistic way rather than as a new and different cohort to accommodate in their daily work. The practice, which has occurred because of policy change, cannot according to Garratt (2011) be blamed entirely on the lecturers and teaching staff; he posits that higher education management must be cognisant of their responsibility to both their new intake of adult learners and their teaching staff. In addition, Garratt in his study suggests that providing additional training for educators in accommodating diversity and alternate learning styles would greatly aid the process for educators and students alike to adjust to the learning experience.

### *2.3.2.3 Culture and Learning Environment*

Bourdieu (1977) claimed that there were three types of cultural capital: embodied, objectified and institutional. He explains that embodied cultural capital pertains to one's style of dress or speech; objectified refers to one's capacity to partake in cultural activities such as play an instrument, and finally that institutional cultural capital could pertain for instance to one's previous schooling or educational merits. It is espoused by him that cultural capital affects learner engagement and learners' identities (cited in Morgan-Klein and Osborne 2007). Therefore, this perspective reflects the point that adult learners, especially students from families who do not have a tradition of attending higher education, may find it more difficult to engage and 'acclimatize' to formal higher education and learning settings.

Additionally, Garratt (2011) refers to Giddens' 1987's work on the matter of how social arrangements in education can constrain or liberate one's situation. Likewise, he refers to Bourdieu's 1977 work on hiatus and 'cultural capital' which demonstrate that learners can feel a sense of cultural unease when they embark on their journey into higher education as it can be a socially and culturally different experience from their norm. This ineptness or unfamiliarity with such 'social, cultural and educational

arrangements' (Garrett 2011, p.215) can force many adult learners to actually question their 'internal capabilities' and sense of worthiness to be part of such an educational experience. Yosso (2005) (cited in Garratt, 2011, p.215) refers to life experiences of adult learners as being 'under-utilised assets' as their rich life tapestry could add valuable and enriching learning context to the student body, institution and wider society.

In essence a 'capabilities' approach emphasises existing skills rather than deficits in adult learners' knowledge base. Garratt cites Hodkinson and James (2003) who note 'the value of learning as a form of social practice' (2011, p.216). This process of writing and reflecting on one's established social practices or lack thereof through reflective logs adds to one's capacity to amend or cement a course of action going forward. Thus, Garratt suggests that reflective journal writing assists students to 'become' social and develop a sense of social network within their educational environment, thus adding 'internal capabilities' to their skill set. Sen (1999, xi, cited in Garratt 2011, p.217) noted that 'the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us'. This aspect will be further considered in a later section dealing with the social responsibility of University to the adult learner community.

Therefore, according to Malcolm and Zukas (2001), the authorities in the University sector have not drawn sufficient learning from wider adult education communities of practice such as devising student profiles and adapting curriculum to learners' requirements for post-programme development. Instead, it seems to try to assimilate adult learners into classroom practices that suit the traditional university and higher education sector students, despite the fact that adult learners now constitute a significant proportion of the student population in universities.

Morgan-Klein and Osborne (2007) posit that the social milieu of learning situations needs attention. In essence, it is promulgated by many adult pedagogues that one should not only concentrate on pedagogy and content as in how and what one teaches but equally be attentive to the learning

setting or environment itself. Thus, learners can be restricted by their personal confidence or sense of role within the learning environment and by structures imposed by the educational setting: therefore, all learners need resources and learning tools to augment their given situation. Garratt (2011) proposes that the reflective learning log is an ideal medium to express one's capabilities as a starting point to progress as a student, especially for non-traditional students who have many identified barriers to surmount. In addition, a later section of the review will consider how reflective practice journaling can act as a conduit for capacity formation among the adult learner cohort.

The importance of understanding the non-traditional learner and his or her expectations of the learning environment and context is paramount in adult and higher education settings. In addition, the pivotal role educators and higher education management structures should play in the recruitment and fostering of genuine participation practices among adult learners was discussed. Furthermore, the policy-practice dichotomy and its impact on Adult Learners was considered in this subsection. Finally, the interplay between the cultural context of the learning environment and the learner's life history with one another was deliberated upon in this subsection.

### ***2.3.3 Andragogical Learning Styles and Approaches***

In this subsection a spectrum of learning styles and approaches to adult learning and development will be considered. The purpose of highlighting certain styles will consolidate the importance of tuning or adjusting the learning styles to suit the adult learner, in particular the non-traditional adult learner.

#### ***2.3.3.1 Learner and Educator as Companions in the Learning Process***

According to Dirkx (1997), learning is viewed from a constructivist perspective in which it should be concerned with 'a process that takes place within the dynamic and paradoxical relationship of self and other' (cited in Morgan 2012, p.54). Comparisons can be drawn between Morgan's 'ground of being' perspective and the practice of reflection and contemplative

education, which Morgan posits produces ‘fertile ground for pedagogy’ (Morgan 2012, p.55).

Learning theorists advocate a diverse range of approaches and models of engagement which, they advocate, foster positive learning outcomes for learners, both at individual and societal level. One would advocate that developing more reliable beliefs about the world, exploring and validating their dependability, and making decisions on an informed basis is central to the adult learning process. It is transformation theory as defined by Jack Mezirow that explains this psycho-critical process of constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations (beliefs) of the meaning of one’s experience (Cranton and Taylor 2012, p.196).

Other theorists, according to Cranton and Taylor, add the extra-rational to the rational to further elaborate on this process of transformative learning. For instance, Jung (1921), Boyd (1991) and Dirkx see transformation of the ‘self’ as core to transformation process, in that all transformation must begin with inner reflection and personal growth. Dirkx (2006b, p.19) argues that ‘conscious participation in this process directs our psychic energy toward creative, life-enhancing, constructive, and potentially transformative activities’. Freire (1970) advocated social transformation – conscientization, which he outlined as an awakening of critical consciousness among people who feel oppressed by political, social or economic factors in society.

Cranton and colleagues (Cranton and Carusetta, 2004; Cranton and Wright, 2008) have noted that educators should accompany learners on their journeys and act as learning companions. This process reiterates Taylor’s perspective that genuine and authentic engagement with learners promotes transformative learning. In addition, these supportive structures within a learning environment reinforce what Freire (1984) and Jarvis (1999, 2012) outlined as necessary elements to promote learners’ sense of self and in turn nurture others in the process. Holistic knowing is seen as ‘affective knowing’ in which feelings and emotions are part of the reflective process of learning (Cranton and Taylor 2012). Dirkx (2006b) emphasised the importance of this holistic process of seeing and working with learners as a

human entity with feelings and emotions rather than just as recipients of academic knowledge. In addition, an awareness of learners' prior experience and life circumstances is deemed necessary in order to assist students in working through their respective life experiences and potentially foster transformative learning. Berger (2004) refers to this awareness as a point at which learners are in a 'transitional zone of meaning-making' (cited in Cranton 2012, p. 201). Lange (2004, cited in Cranton and Taylor 2012, p.198) speaks about 'pedagogical entry points' which could be described as the biding point at which learners, through a given personal experience, may experience transformation. Lange notes that the educator has a role at this 'personal dilemma' stage to facilitate the process of change (cited in Cranton and Taylor 2012, p. 198).

### 2.3.3.2 Collaborative Learning

Swartz and Triscari (2011) argue that collaborative learning is deemed to promote higher levels of reasoning and problem-solving. This learning approach facilitates learners in spite of the individual nature and competitive environment of most higher education learning settings. The concept of synergy is tied into the process of collaborative learning which connects with the perspective of Cranton *et al.* (2012) which advocates that transformative learning requires educator and learner to co-learn and accompany one another on an authentic journey of learning. The process of collaborative learning undertaken by the authors Swartz and Triscari (2011) led to a change in the authors' meaning perspective which reflects Mezirow's transformation theory. It also facilitated emancipatory knowledge, as defined by Habermas, as the research process assisted both authors to work and reflect on research as a pair and 'see as one' (Swartz and Triscari 2011, p.327). However, Swartz and Triscari concluded that transformative learning is a 'potential outcome of collaboration, not one that is guaranteed' (2011, p.331).

Davis and Smith (2012) advocate that 'collective reflexivity' in which learners provide collective support through sharing perspectives can effect change. Corner (2012) cited in Davis (2013) notes that creative learning

raises standards and learner expectations which enables a diversity of behaviour and outcome.

In contrast, Malcolm and Zukas (2001) warn that higher education structures need to be mindful of their engagement approach with adult learners:

The new specialism of teaching and learning in higher education has developed without reference to adult education and takes little account of who the students are; instead it concentrates upon the processes and outcomes of the classroom transaction, rather than its content, context or purpose.

(Malcolm and Zukas 2001, p.1)

In addition, Malcolm and Zukas (2001) refer to how the 'commodification of higher education encourages a conceptualisation of learning as product, rather than process' (Malcolm and Zukas 2001, p.4). This perspective is reiterated by Fleming (2012), who notes that Fromm, and later Habermas, were suspicious of the move towards a more market driven educational framework rather than educational settings within which more critical thinking could transpire. Therefore, a more free-thinking, democratic and open-minded education and wider society perspective lends itself more easily to a greater opportunity for achieving a learning-centred society (Fleming 2012).

### *2.3.3.3 Engaging Adult Learning Styles and Processes*

Kolb (1984) developed a whole new method to interpret learners' experiences on their learning pathways; in particular, he was keen to gauge the experiential learning narrative of adult learners. He created a four stage adult learning process- which involved one engaging in a 'concrete' learning experience, reflecting on it and learning from it through 'abstract conceptualisation' and thereafter integrating the learning experience into all new experiences through 'active experimentation'. Duckworth and Tummons (2010, p.10) note that 'according to Kolb, learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'.

Honey and Mumford (1982) developed four key learning styles which they claim pertain to all learners at some stage of their development in learning process. They are activist/enthusiast, reflector, theorist/logical and pragmatist/practical. However, they make the point that based on different learning experiences, learners may oscillate between styles.

Jerome Bruner (2004) deliberated upon active thinking; he encouraged retrospection and cultivated reflectiveness in the learning process (cited in Entwistle, 2009).

Gleaming 'meaning-making' learning from events, workshops or tutorials is key for learners, especially for adult learners, when they have multifactor life pressures. This social view of learning for life reiterates Mezirow's, Dirkx's and Cranton's perspectives that interactive and collaborative learning approaches foster transformative learning in adults.

Ausubel (1978) notes that the core principle of understanding learners pivots on the educators establishing what the learners already know about the subject matter (cited in Entwistle 2009). This common sense yet pragmatic principle is crucial in the adult education discipline within higher education structures as getting to know the student body and their life issues and learning influences improves the andragogical process for all.

Davis and colleagues deliberated upon creativity, resilience and 'stickability' through collaborative work and styles of engagement in early years sector but equally deemed the learning applicable to wider family support and adult and community education contexts (Davis 2011, 2013; Davis and Smith, 2012; Davis et al 2014).

Entwistle (2009) refers to 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivations within the learning process. Intrinsic motivation comes from the experience of what is being learned and feelings of pleasure derived from the process of learning itself. Extrinsic motivation is more connected with external rewards such as grades and praise, which is more associated with traditional higher education learning environments.



Community Education as a style and approach to engaging with learners is as diverse as the learners that partake in the educational journey (Ryan *et al.* 2009; Connolly and Hussey 2013; Connolly 2014; Fitzsimons, 2017). Adult and community education tries to encourage more intrinsic motivation factors among adult learners. However, in adult education, it is argued by Entwistle (2009) that many adult learners partake in educational process for ‘vocational motivation’ reasons. It is argued that one can interpret this perspective to mean that learners feel a social responsibility to access learning programmes so as to benefit others such as family members or community members. This sense of vocation motivation and social responsibility to others among adult learners could have a positive or negative impact on their learning experience. For instance, it may cause achievement motivation for some or fear of failure pressure for others.

#### *2.3.3.4 Social Responsibility and Resilience*

Brewer (2010) deems that universities have social and cultural responsibilities to their students and potential students to reduce and ideally eliminate the ‘cultural shock’ effect that higher education can impose on learners, especially non-traditional adult learners. In addition, Brewer (2010) deliberates upon the importance of considering and taking cognisance of learners’ toolkit of resilience and their capacity to sustain and succeed in higher education. She acknowledges that distance learning does offer more flexibility to adult learners and can be especially appealing to non-traditional learners who may have other life and family commitments or who may not have a prior experience of adult education.

The staying power or resilience factors possessed by adult learners with a plethora of life experiences are sometimes overlooked by prospective educators in higher education according to Brewer (2010). For instance, Brewer cites Brenner (1997) who reported on effective skills for success in education such as significant levels of self-discipline, self-planning and self-organisation among adult learners who garnered these core skills through various life events. In addition, Brewer cites Harackiewicz (1997) who noted that adult learners can sometimes be more focused on particular

achievement goals than traditional learners in higher education. For instance, Brewer cites a number of theorists such as Holder (2007), Pulford and Sohal (2006) and Busato *et al.* (2000) who noted in their research that non-traditional adult learners tend to possess more transferable life skills than traditional students; such transferrable skills include competitiveness or conscientiousness or study management skills which add uniqueness to adult learners' capacity to succeed in higher education if offered the appropriate supports in the transition period from non-study to formal education. Brewer's (2010) research posited that adult learner students' sense of self-esteem rises when they gain access to education and also when they have an opportunity to achieve personal goals.

#### *2.3.3.5 Identity development or identity isolation in student hood?*

Field and Morgan-Klein (2010b) argue that all learners perceive their launch into 'studenthood' in a multitude of different ways. They argue that this transition for all learners can be a difficult task as it requires learners to question their sense of self and rethink their sense of identity. Field and Morgan- Klein refer to Victor Turner's social anthropologist's idea of 'liminality' where one passes from one status role to another. This rite of passage, 'interstructural situation' is borrowed by Field and Morgan- Klein (2010) to compare learners' transition from pre-student- student- graduate roles and its implications for their participation and retention in higher education. Therefore, according to Field and Morgan-Klein (2010), a student's sense of identity affects his or her successful participation and retention in higher education. Illeris has written extensively on learner identity, the learning process and transformative experiences (Illeris 2004a, 2009, 2014, 2018). This perspective is further considered in terms of educational identity in Northern Ireland in which cultural identity and transformation through a human rights approach is posited as a more culturally sensitive process in times of transition (Worden and Smith 2017).

In addition, Field and Morgan-Klein (2010) refer to Bourdieu, Reay and other theorists' perspectives on the links between habitus, disposition and various capitals in higher education. It is argued, therefore, that students,

especially students from non- traditional backgrounds who are not familiar with the culture of higher education, may falter in such an environment as it is an ‘alien’ experience and completely atypical from all previous life experiences in which they have been immersed. This culturally dichotomous world that non-traditional learners may have to co-exist within during their time in higher education can add additional pressures to adult learners’ lives, as they have to try strike a balance between their old world and their new found world of education. This apparent division between the formal education world and life outside the learning institution can be particularly pronounced for adult students who are first-generation adult learners (Fleming and Finnegan 2011; Jarvis 2012). Furthermore, they have to adapt to the ‘temporality’ of the education experience as described by Field and Morgan- Klein (2010) in which their identity is crystallised as a student, which for some non-traditional learners can be an isolating experience from their peers both outside and within the walls of the educational institution. Alternatively, students who have an established sense of identity and self-confidence seem to adapt more readily to the student mode and can adopt a new identity more easily than students with a lower sense of self-esteem. Thus, Field and Morgan-Klein (2010b) would argue that retention levels in higher education could be critically improved if greater processes were set in motion to assist learners, especially those who do not possess a cultural identity with studenthood. Such processes should be fostered to assist learners, especially non-traditional adult learners, through their potential transitional identity during their higher education experience.

#### *2.3.3.6 Capacity Development among Adult Learners*

A core concept in the promotion of a positive lifelong learning experience is the importance placed on understanding the socially situated nature of the learning experience for students. An understanding among adult educators and policy makers of the existence of the diversity of adult learners’ life histories and narratives is deemed to liberate learners and offer them a more democratic educational milieu to operate within. This open and flexible approach to lifelong learning is deemed to foster an environment in which

transformative learning and positive social recognition can take place (Closs and Antonello 2011).

Bauman (2007) reflects on lifelong learning and refers to his concept of ‘capacitating’, which is deemed to promote the adaptability of learners so as to make them more resilient by building up their social powers to engage with other players in the education field, whether they are other learners or educators. This enabling or capacitating process with learners is deemed by Bauman to rebuild a flexible learning environment which should prove successful for lifelong learners and society in general (cited in Closs and Antonello 2011, p. 77). This mirrors Freire’s perspective that human beings are conditioned, but not determined by social forces. Furthermore, Fleming and Finnegan (2011) argue that the key retention factor in adult and higher education among adult learners is their personal ‘resilience’ and capacity to cope in the given situation, even if it is apparently difficult for them. Therefore, learners and educators must act as agents of change in order to permit personal and/or organisational transformation (Closs and Antonello 2011; Fleming 2012; Fleming *et al.* 2017).

Davis and colleagues (Davis, 2011, 2013; Davis et al 2014) reiterate this ‘stickability’ and resilience characteristic among graduates of the Scottish early years degree qualification that has transformed their working relationships in the sector and in wider society. The researcher in this study intends to explore the transformative learning and emotional development among BCFS and non-BCFS graduates in this study which capture the capacity development and ‘stickability’ theme.

This study argues that life course influences on adults such as home, work, tradition, culture, economics, political and social issues affect each and every learner in a plethora of different ways depending on where they are situated in their life-path at that given time. Therefore, innovative interventions by higher education educators and institutions to encourage and sustain learners in the process of education are crucial elements of lifelong learning’s future success. In essence, it is argued by Holliday *et al.* (2010), that it is psychosocial capital – support offered by significant others

such as peers, educators, administrators, family relatives and so forth- that can assist learners to manage anxieties in the transitory time in higher education and build their learner identity for successful progression. The individual, idiosyncratic and diverse nature of adult learners and their needs must be considered: a uniform approach will not work, as outlined by Schuetze and Slowey (2000, 2012). This theme will be discussed in more detail in a later sub-section of which advocates that Community Development approaches promote psycho-social and cultural development of individuals and communities.

This sub-section deliberated upon the collaborative and inclusive learning strategies and approaches that foster supportive and inclusive adult learning and development. In addition, processes that develop the adult learner's identity and capacity at a personal, social and societal level were considered.

#### ***2.3.4 Community Education, Community Development and Family Support Theories relationship to the Adult Learning Process***

In this sub-section, the core concepts and characteristics of community education, family support and community development constructs that complement andragogical processes will be considered. The importance of deliberating upon the named theories will demonstrate how symbiotic and interdependent relationships, people-centred practices and collaborative approaches play a crucial role in the practice of adult and higher education. Furthermore, the sub-section reiterates the pivotal roles reflection and learning from practice can play in adult learners' life course development.

The empirical study is based on two NUI, Galway accredited programmes- the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS), both of which are embedded in the disciplines of community development and family support and taught through a community education ethos. Therefore, this sub-section will consider practices and characteristics of these disciplines which are aligned to adult education principles and higher education settings.

*2.3.4.1 Community Development-Key Definitions and Characteristics*

In this context as community development is a pivotal module of study which underpins the syllabus of the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) programme, the key characteristics of the concept of community development are considered in this section. The modular structure of the BCFS and the Diploma in Community Development Practice are described in detail in Chapter 4, the context chapter.

Community development as a concept cannot occur without people development- so all development must strive towards a person-centred approach to community empowerment and change. There are a range of definitions and descriptors of what community development is or is not in the literature. The underpinning of the chosen definitions demonstrates the commonality and people-focus of what community development represents:

A community is a group of people who, more or less consciously, share common interests.

(Laver, 1983, p.67).

Community Development may be said to involve organized collective efforts at creating public benefits within localities.

(Professor Chris Curtin<sup>8</sup>).

Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channelled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals.

(Coetzee, 1994, p.269)

Community Workers Co-operative (2008, p.11) describes community development as:

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<sup>8</sup> Professor Chris Curtin, Department of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway , public lecture 1995

...a developmental activity composed of both a task and a process. The task is the achievement of social change linked to equality and social justice, and the process is the application of the principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and coordinated way.

Community development is, in essence, two terms: 'community' and 'development'. Seers (1977, p.2) defined 'development' as, 'the realisation of the potential of the human personality'.

It is only in understanding the 'human' aspect of development that community development as a term can be truly interpreted. The concept of development has, in some instances, been seen as a negative term. But it is only through in-depth analysis of the term that one can see its diversity of interpretation.

#### *2.3.4.2 Community Education -Key Definitions and Traits*

The core programme under consideration in this empirical study, the BCFS is designed, delivered and assessed through a Community Education lens. Equally, given the dearth of published research on part time adult learners' experiences in higher education in Ireland, this study contains a core objective of ascertaining graduates perspectives on the effects of adopting a community education approach to adult and higher education.

Community Education has been presented by Tett (2006, p. 2) '*community education sees a community as a group of people who perceive common needs and problems, have a sense of identity and a common sense of objectives*'.

Johnston (2000, p. 14) deems '*community education provides a localised focus for a social purpose education whose key values are a commitment to social justice, greater social and economic equality and a more participatory democracy*'.

The literature on adult and community education posits that positive intervention through the community education ethos is required in the 'scaffolding' of adult and higher education programmes in a neoliberal society (Fleming et al. 2017; Fitzsimons 2017). This is deemed necessary

by the adult and community theorists as a laissez faire approach to education will not benefit all in society, especially lower socio-economic households. The empirical study will address this aspect further in the results and discussion chapters.

It is argued that community education as an ethos and approach to practice in adult learning and community education programmes stems from the principles of community development theory which is underpinned by characteristics of equality, social action and participant empowerment. The community education ethos could be closely aligned with Freire's 'problem-posing' approach to andragogical teaching and practice approach in which the individual becomes the driver of the learning experience and the educator becomes the facilitator of the learning journey or process (Freire, 1970; 1973).

The community education model of engagement is premised on the principle of valuing individuals and community of learners' perspectives. This characteristic is reflective of community development ethos that all development is premised on 'people development' and improving life outcomes for individuals, communities and society.

#### *2.3.4.3 Interplay between Community Education and Community Development Principles and Practices and Lifelong Learning*

In essence, community development could be deemed to be a process through which people and communities acquire the attitudes, skills and abilities for active participation in creating meaningful futures and dealing with community issues (Community Development Academy 2000).

The term 'process' is a meaningful one in the discipline of community education and development as it accounts for the way in which development work is undertaken- the focus is always on the journey or process rather than the destination or outcome (Crow and Allan, 1994). This key approach to development mirrors adult education methodologies whereby learners are encouraged to participate and engage in learning experiences and not to be overly concerned with the end outcome of the learning experience. This framework encourages retention levels in education as it eases learners into



educational pathways and practices (Holiday *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, it reduces the shock factor of returning or adapting to a new learning environment especially for non-traditional learners (Fleming and Finnegan, 2010; Fleming *et al.* 2017).

‘Community Development’ is deemed a process of communal action engaged in by members of a given community to address a local need or issue (Twelvetrees 1982). In addition, community development encourages a sense of connectivity and belonging to a group, class, programme, and university. This sense of connectivity to others further complements the adult education approach of fostering reciprocal relationships with others who are experiencing similar journeys (Saavedra, 1996). A core objective of this empirical study is to consider the emotional development evolution through the andragogical process and to identify its impact on learners’ personal and professional life paths. The community education ethos and principles of community development applied to the BCFS educational ethos and andragogical strategy will be deliberated upon in the context, findings and discussion chapters respectively.

Additionally, as outlined in an earlier section, no two learners are the same. Likewise, community development theory posits that no two communities are the same - they are idiosyncratic or individual in nature (Lillis, 2005). Therefore, a personalized approach to working with adult learners has been modelled by the NUI Galway, Community Education unit on this community development ethos of starting where the student is located at that given juncture and working towards a joint understanding by educator and learner of achievable learning outcomes. This community education ethos and approach adopted on the community education suite of programmes in NUI, Galway is further elaborated on in the context chapter, Chapter four.

Poutiatine (2009) reiterates the importance of learners feeling comfortable with the learning process and developing trust in the educational milieu. This principle is connected to the community development values system which advocates that when community development followers trust one

another and the development process, then more productive and positive outcomes for all can be achieved (Kennedy and Kelleher 1990; Scott and Lewis 2011).

In addition, Harris (2005) posits that community development values include promoting social justice, encouraging reflective practice, creating sustainable communities, working together to reach achievable targets and genuine participation in the process. These core values and principles of practice genuinely complement the adult education ethos required within higher education to sustain learners. Many non-traditional adult learners join third level programmes feeling uneasy about their presence or right to be partaking in education. The community development ethos fosters confidence building among learners as it encourages them to build 'learning communities' which assist learners to work in team building exercises which in turn develops communal and personal esteem and retention levels in education (Snowden, 2004).

Community Education as a model of practice in Adult and Community Education could be defined as a facilitative, supportive process of learning and engagement to enable learners' achieve their respective learning milestones (Connolly, 2014; Fitzsimons, 2017; Fleming, 2009).

Therefore, collective action as a tool of engagement with adult learners is crucial to encourage and sustain learners' especially non-traditional adult learners. The social justice principle is a pivotal one in adult and higher education as it aligns the learner and educator to a framework of positive and collaborative engagement in the educational process where all partake as equals to effect positive change. This principle reiterates Freire's 'critical transitivity' concept which advocates that education is a foundation to assist transition from one state of existence to another, more life affirming one (Freire 1970; Kitchenham 2008).

To summate, community development is a catalyst for change for many communities and individuals that partake in community development work. Likewise, adult education that engages students through a community development and community education ethos promotes and supports

learners to be agents of change. Therefore, andragogical support through the transitioning phases is deemed to foster transformative learning behaviour among adult learners.

#### 2.3.4.4 Individual to Community- Micro to Macro Development

One of the key debates linked to transformation theory is whether the choice to participate in social action resides with the individual learner or whether it depends on a group context. Through a greater connectedness with the wider community, according to Dirkx (1998) a deeper sense of understanding of oneself as a person may be achieved. The Freirian (1970) perspective would advocate conscientization (consciousness-raising) at an individual and social/community level as necessary for emancipation and liberation of self and community to occur. This critical perspective on transformative learning would also be corroborated by community development theory advocates which suggests that community engagement and community development work allows one to develop at an individual level while participating in community development activity.

Artiles *et al.* (2006) reflect upon the connection between the concepts of 'participation' and 'identification'. These concepts constitute a core part of a community of practice and the ethos of community education and community development. It is outlined by community development advocates such as Commins (1985), Crow and Allen (1994) and Lillis (2005) that community development cannot occur without genuine participation at both a personal and community level. In addition, identity development comes about through a process of self-reflection and emotional intelligence which can lead to critical reflection skills and a greater sense of emotional maturity. These skills contribute to the principles and best practice model of community development which are aligned to the same toolbox of skills described by transformative learning theorists. It is posited in this review that the connections between community education, community development theory, adult education and transformative learning experiences are interwoven. The empirical study results and discussion chapters will consider the graduates perspective on the

relationship interplay between these concepts and theoretical perspectives among the BCFS and non-BCFS graduates.

#### 2.3.4.5 Family Support - Key Traits and Characteristics

In the context of this study, a review of the key working definitions and characteristics of family support is presented as it is a fundamental module of study which underpins the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) programme syllabus construction and foundation. The key traits of the concept of family support are considered in this section to provide insight as it is a crucial element of the BCFS programme which is the core programme under exploration in this empirical study.

There are many definitions to encapsulate the meaning and process of family support work. Dolan (2005, 2006) (Canavan *et al.* 2016) centres the importance of family support on creating social networks among individuals. They refer to Cutrona's (2000) 'informal' networks which are associated with help from family and friends and 'formal' support networks which are distinguished as networks that offer help through professional services. Dolan considers the four types of support as concrete, emotional, esteem and advice. Furthermore, he posits that the quality of those support networks for individuals and families is key to their effect on those in need. The three key aspects of a quality network are expected to feature - closeness, reciprocity and durability. Likewise, such traits could be associated with adult education as learners and educators social networks require learning processes to be based on closeness/understanding; reciprocal in that both learner and educator should gain from the process, and durable as learning experiences must endure high and low curves on the pedagogical journey.

Dolan (2008, 2009) outlines that family support includes the following four factors: resilience, social support, social capital and civic engagement. Resilience concentrates on building on capacity to deal with life issues; social support is concerned with individuals' support networks and relationship bonds. Social capital is related to how people use their connections with others as forms of support and civic engagement is

concerned with developing people's personal and social responsibility as citizens. These four factors complement community development and lifelong learning approaches too. Canavan posits that in the future family support services must consider building measures of success into practice (Canavan *et al.* 2016). This would support the practice that reflective learning and collaborative learning processes would create and reinforce this learning through people engagement and foster the principle of reciprocity.

The Ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the cyclical effect on people's transitions throughout life - the four levels within the model are micro, exosystem, meso and macro - wherein one level impacts on and informs the other systems. Ecological theory builds on how various social experiences form individual experiences and character. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed this theory and argued that individuals should be seen as forming learning experiences as they develop. In essence, human beings are seen by Bronfenbrenner as sculpting and restructuring the environment in which they live (Eliasa 2012).

Catherine Broom (2011, p.20) notes that:

An ecological system is understood to be comprised of multiple entities that interact with each other in open and closed systems, and that need each other to live. One entity is not considered "better" than another; rather, all play a part in sustaining the system as a whole, sometimes in symbiotic relationships.

Furthermore, she posits that a consideration of one's emotional well-being and needs assist learners to reflect on where they are situated in the process and where they need to transition towards:

Transformed emotion can alter thought, and vice versa. Emotions are the drivers of motivation and thus of the desire to engage in learning.

(Broom, 2011, p.21).

2.3.4.6 Key Synergies that exist between Community Education, Community Development, Family Support and Adult Learning

Lave and Wenger's (1991) Community of Practice concept posited that newcomers attempt to acquire the sociocultural practices of the given community in which they participate. In essence, these theorists were attempting to promote formal change in professional, social and family support practice through the community of practice model. In essence, the principle of reification - which involves development being negotiated and enhanced through meaningful participation between individuals and communities, is deemed as core to both family support and community development theoretical dispositions. People are central to all development work both as volunteers and professionally paid employees - without people there can be no true or genuine development. Similarly adult education within higher education cannot operate in a truly inclusive way without considering the learners themselves and their needs.

Johnston (1999, p.184) notes that 'Reflexive learning is reflective, self-critical and dynamic'. Reflexivity requires self-conscious awareness by participants, both educators and learners, in the learning process of one's learning practices and approaches (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Therefore, reflexive thought lends itself easily to the disciplines of family support, community development and lifelong learning. Reflective practice has been used as tool in family support work for many years. Davis and Smith (2012) and Davis (2013) argue for 'collective reflexivity' forums and structures in education and multi-professional family support settings to enable collective understanding and to build trusting and creative relationships. This model of engaging with people at the learning point of their given life course complements both a community development and adult education approach to people-centred processes. Adams *et al.* (2002) argues that reflection on it is own leaves a situation unchanged while 'critical practice offers the prospect of transformation by not being bound by the status quo' (cited in Dolan *et al.* 2006, p. 87).

Furthermore, developing leadership capacity and fostering a sense of self-esteem among individuals is a shared concept between transformation,

community development and family support theories. It is therefore important for learning institutions and educators to engage with adult learners as partners in the learning experience as opposed to anonymous or invisible recipients of learning. Entwistle (2009) argues that all potential learners possess varying learning styles/ ways of engaging. However, the social world and community of practice cannot be disentangled from the learner as a 'person of the world'.

The principle of fostering personal and social responsibility is core to both community development and family support theories and this aspect works in synthesis with lifelong learning. Wallman (1977) noted that communities should have more of the properties of teabags than balloons. This adage could be applied to the lifelong learning discipline where learners should have the freedom and flexible structures to work within while equally fostering ease of transition and development to another stage.

Family support is based on a model of working in teams or collectively to reach outcomes which reflect the community education and community development approach. Therefore, the synthesis between these constructs and the programme of study under consideration will be presented in the forthcoming empirical study which will discuss the interplay between these theoretical contexts. This section solidifies the importance of understanding the life course factors which impact on learners lives. Therefore the empirical study will consider such factors and how they pertain to the graduates of the Diploma in Community Development Practice and in particular, the graduates of the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS).

#### 2.3.4.7 Section Summary

The section discussed the key learning approaches and models which impact upon adult learning and adult learners within higher education institutions. In addition, some of the main barriers and issues which affect adult learners' participation and retention in lifelong learning were debated. Furthermore, the particular issues such as identity transition and educational culture disconnect which impact upon non-traditional adult learners in Higher Education were deliberated upon in this section.

The process verses the outcome debate features prominently in the academic discussion in the interplay between community education, community development and family support constructs (Connolly; Curtin; Dolan, Pinkerton and Canavan; Fitzsimons; Fleming; Twelvetrees). Likewise, the importance of focusing on the adult learning process as opposed to just the educational outcomes for learners is promulgated by many pedagogues (Freire, Illeris, Jarvis, and Mezirow).

‘Education is not an outcome but rather a process in which both faculty and students are active participants in the social construction of knowledge’

(Snowden, 2004, p.292).

Therefore, it is evident from this section of the review that how learners settle into their role as students and the self-confidence they possess, or not, in that role undoubtedly affects their academic progress, particularly in the early stages of their undergraduate studies (Entwistle, 2009).



## 2.4 Section 3: Transformative Learning Catalysts among Adult Learners

### 2.4.1.1 Section Introduction

This section will consider the key factors or agents that are deemed paramount to aid the transformative learning process among adult learners in higher education. Key emotional intelligence theorists' work such as Goleman (1996, 2001) Colston (2008), Schutte (Schutte *et al.* 1998, 2002; Schutte and Malouff (2011), Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Majeski *et al.* (2017) on how emotional maturity impacts on learners' development and life trajectory will be reviewed. Thereafter, the importance of attachment theory to learners' lifelong learning pathways will be deliberated upon with reference to key theorists on the topic such as Bowlby (1979, 1988), Kaplan and Main (2008) and Fleming (2008, 2016). Thirdly, the pivotal role critical thinking and reflective practice play as characteristics of Transformative Learning in the fostering of secure andragogical thought processes will be considered in this section. Reflective Practice and critical thinking theorists' perspectives such as Moon (2004, 2007) Thompson (Thompson and Pascal 2012) and Dolan (2008; Houston and Dolan 2007) will be deliberated upon in this section. Finally, the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Attachment and Transformative Learning will be critiqued as the fundamental catalysts in creating life changing processes and practices among adult learners in higher education.

Many theorists, such as Cranton and Taylor (2012) and Dirkx (2012), advocate a socially transformative approach to lifelong learning which includes an approach which considers the learner's identity, reflective practices and critical thinking dexterity. Entwistle (2009) deliberates upon the nature of academic understanding among learners and he notes that it is actually 'understanding' rather than 'knowledge' of a topic that gives learners that sense of confidence/ self-belief; one's understanding of a topic cannot be undone. This transition point in the learning process for many can be the evolution of a personal or social transformative learning trajectory.

### **2.4.2 Fostering Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Promoting Identity Development among the Adult Learner Community**

In this section, the review will address the key connections between an individual learner's sense of self- emotional intelligence, which can be traced back to one's previous experience of attachment or bonds in earlier life. Then, this section will review the key elements of recognition theory which foster three fundamental aspects of identity development: self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem. This review considers the presence of these three factors as crucial to the potential development of the personal, social and cultural life of the learner.

#### *2.4.2.1 Emotional intelligence (EI) – Key Factors and Characteristics*

Many theorists argue that encouraging learners to develop their emotional intelligence levels is the fundamental agent so as to encourage learning and sustain adult learners in the educational process. The theorists, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso have contributed significantly to the EI debate since the early nineties. They have argued that emotional intelligence involves the ability of the learner to accurately appraise, express and promote emotional maturity both at an individual level and among others. In addition, Goleman is deemed to be one of the founding fathers of the term 'Emotional Intelligence' (EI). He defined the term as 'the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in our relations' (Goleman 1995 cited in Mortiboys 2012, p.2).

Mortiboys (2012) reiterates the importance of fostering emotional intelligence too. He posits that educators' capacity to impact upon the teaching and learning situation is significantly compromised if educators do not use their emotional intelligence capacities within the teaching environment. Stone and colleagues echo the importance for researchers to record the benefits of lifelong learning especially the importance of logging the transformative ones (Stone *et al.* 2017).

Therefore, emotional intelligence development is a crucial agent within the adult education milieu, especially if transformative learning experiences for both learner and educator are to be fostered.

#### *2.4.2.2 Honneth's Theory of Recognition and Identity Development*

Axel Honneth (1995) emphasised the crucial importance of identifying and situating learners' current situation as a necessary precursor step to developing a proper communication process with them. He argued that:

...the reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation to- self only when one has learned to view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee.

(Honneth 1995, p.92)

Therefore, the importance of 'inter-subjective recognition' (understanding one's private and public sense of self) and awareness of one's colleagues and community, according to Honneth, is crucial for positive social engagement and narrative exchange. Honneth (1995, 2003, 2007) advocated that the theory of recognition presents three fundamental aspects of identity development: self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. Honneth's contributions to the theory of recognition debate consider these three aspects of identity development in significant detail. He emphasises that everyone has a 'public' and 'private' sense of self (inter-subjective recognition) and that those perceptions and presentations of oneself are affected by one's sense of confidence, respect and esteem levels.

The three elements of self-confidence, self-respect and self- esteem which underpin one's sense of identity according to Honneth's recognition theory encapsulate both an individual and social sense of self. He argues that one's self-confidence is boosted when one experiences love and caring attachments with others. It is this process, according to Honneth, that assists individuals in forging an identity based on the recognition they receive from others. Thus, the processes of being loved and displaying love to another cements one's sense of individuality and unique characteristics, ultimately leading to a heightened sense of self- confidence (Fleming and Finnegan 2010), while the recognition of one's legal rights in society boosts one's

sense of self-respect as one is recognised as a legally mature person with autonomous rights. This second element of Honneth's theory, forms of relating to self, also ebbs out to the public arena as respect towards others demonstrates an individual's recognition that other people have rights too and require respect. The third element of identity development is self-esteem, which can be fostered by honouring one's contribution to community and society in general (Honneth 2007). However, reciprocal respect and acknowledgment of one another's contribution to society reinforces self-esteem and develops communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). This sense of embellished self-esteem in turn promotes community spirit and contributes greatly to one's sense of identity and association with a given geographic or issue based community (Crow and Allan 1994) This cyclical process of symbiotic relations between oneself as a person and community identity was discussed in an earlier section pertaining to community development and family support.

#### *2.4.2.3 Emotional Maturity and the Learning Process*

Honneth's theory of recognition provides the fundamental theoretical understanding of the connection between one's sense of identity as an individual and its impact on one's potential learning journey. Honneth's theory forces educators and adult learners to reflect upon their current sense of identity and sense of self confidence so as to foster a more positive internal and external disposition which can promote greater self-esteem and also foster a stronger sense of emotional maturity. An intrinsic link to the development of higher education for non-traditional/ adult learners is traceable between the work of Honneth's theory of recognition and attachment theory. Both theories emphasise the importance of gaining an understanding of the learner's life history in order to map out a learning journey. This holistic approach to identifying a learner's journey across a certain timeline offers both the adult educators and students a navigation system which is crucial to both the adult student's retention and achievement capacity in higher education (Fleming and Finnegan 2011; Humphrey *et al.* 2007; Maguire *et al.* 2017).

One of the key factors which influence the development of effective learning in adulthood seems to stem from the existence or the opportunity to foster emotional intelligence and literacy. Rudd outlines that the term emotional intelligence: ‘means being able to feel your emotions, read those of others and deal with them appropriately’ (2012, p.46). She argues that the term ‘emotional intelligence’ is linked to the premise of learning and that adults, whether educators or students, who possess a definite awareness of their emotional intelligence, seem to progress with greater ease through the learning experience. Rudd advocates that when one is conscious of and manages emotions it leads to a more balanced life and sense of wellness. She refers to Ornish’s (1996) study which purports that opportunities to disclose emotional experiences, especially ones that are difficult to share, prolong life. This research reinforces the perspective that emotional literacy can be learnt, even in adulthood. This standpoint solidifies the approach that adult learners and educators can mould and remould a new trajectory through educational experiences in adulthood with the appropriate emotional supports.

Hardiman (2003) notes the importance of the presence of emotionally intelligent educators in the education process as they can positively influence the learning experience by creating and securing more insightful learning environments for learners (cited in Rudd, 2012). The existence of emotionally literate educators creates a more neutral balance of power within the learning space which can in turn activate a more proactive learning experience for students in which they can share and gain confidence about their contribution and potential gain from the learning process. Rudd (2012) cites Stamm (2007), who draws a correlation between people’s levels of emotional security and their capacity to concentrate and pay attention which in turn affects one’s memory. This reiterates LeDoux’s (2003) perspective that people remember easier and can recall their learning when they are in a more positive emotional space (cited in Rudd 2012).

Preece (2012) discusses the connections between gender and learning and the varying influences on how and why adults learn. She posits that knowledge acquisition is influenced by one’s sense of self and that, in turn,

one's learning experiences influence one's sense of identity. Preece (2012) refers to the two forms of knowing- 'connected knowing' and 'separate knowing' which espouse two varying ways in which adults learn. She purports that women tend to favour 'connected knowing' as it follows a more collaborative, supportive and subject-centred andragogical process. Meanwhile, 'separate knowing' asserts a more objective, scientific and individualistic approach to knowledge acquisition and delivery. Therefore, adult learners' sense of self and their learning preferences should be recognised in order to foster positive learning experiences in adult and higher education environments.

Tett reiterates Preece's point as she argues that many adults have 'fragile identities as learners' (2011 p.77). Therefore, adult educators need to know learners' life histories in order to be able to offset any learning issues that may interrupt their learning experience. Tett notes that negative learning experiences in earlier life can affect adults' decisions to re-engage with the learning process. Schueller (2004) posits that identity is a socially constructed entity; therefore, it is a fluid concept and is subject to change or evolution over time (cited in Tett, 2011). This premise is apposite to adult and higher education pedagogy as it offers learners, especially adult learners, an opportunity to rethink and forecast a new educational identity. Tett (2012) purports then that improving one's sense of identity can be promoted through a positive learning experience as it builds self-confidence and a sense of worth among learners.

In adult and higher education, educators must build on the tacit knowledge that learners bring to the learning table in order to assist in moving to the next stage of knowledge creation and development (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This gradual and staged approach to adult learning builds on existing knowledge and, additionally, it improves learners' confidence in the educational experience. This concept merges with Honneth's theory of recognition as it promotes self-respect and identity development by recognising where learners are situated on their life paths.

#### *2.4.2.4 Narrative Development among Learners*

Fleming and Finnegan (2009) argued that more critical interventions are necessary in higher education to facilitate greater access and retention levels among adult learners. They posited that more one-to-one developmental learning experiences and opportunities for learners to tell their 'narratives' could foster greater recognition and identity development among learners in higher education going forward. In addition, the internal logic of people's lives pertains to one's particular narrative or history which will be unique and can only properly be understood, according to Finnegan and Fleming (2010) by framing it within Honneth's recognition theory's three core fundamentals: self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. Narrative therapy, according to Fleming, (2003) is a framework within which one can interpret and reframe one's social and cultural understanding of a situation or experience in order to experience a sense of transformation and gain another perspective. This narrative therapy process according to Fleming (2003) is particularly relevant to facilitate the recounting of attachment stories among adult learners.

In essence, it is posited by Fleming that, as author and main character in an attachment narrative, one can gain more critical perspective of one's life journey and this in turn empowers one to plot the future of the narrative. Therefore, it is espoused by Fleming that story-telling can be an emancipating experience for many adults as they become the agents of change to transform their own future educational paths. This perspective would echo Mezirow's theory of transformation in which the learner plays a crucial role in re-sculpting his/ her journey through perspective transformation. In addition, White and Epston (1990), who reiterate the importance of narrative therapy as a reflective practice exercise for both the story-teller and audience alike, outline that the 'consciousness of one's production of one's productions, provides for a context of reflexivity' (cited in Fleming 2003, p.3). Therefore, the power of reflective practice and critical thinking in relation to one's narrative and life experiences cannot be underestimated in assisting adult learners' progress through their lifelong learning journey. Furthermore, narrative therapy provides a useful

pedagogical tool for adult educators to facilitate transformative learning experiences. This concept will be explored in more detail in a forthcoming section on the importance of reflective practice and critical thinking for adult learners' successful progression.

Fleming and Finnegan (2010, 2011) argue that recognition theory offered significant insight into the study of adult learners' access and retention levels in higher education. They argued that students' identity, motivation and retention levels in higher education could be traced back to learners' sense of confidence, respect and self-esteem. The researcher acknowledges Honneth's theory of recognition but wishes to explore whether learners' previous negative inter-subjective experiences can be intercepted in adulthood by positive constructive andragogical processes in higher education through the BCFS programme. The theory of recognition mirrors Bowlby's internal working model of social relating where one plots one's future experiences based on attachments formed in childhood. The internal working model of social relating has been defined as 'an interpersonal process of support and recognition that build self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem' (Fleming 2011, p.100). The communicative action and emancipatory learning theme expressed here by Fleming, Bowlby and Honneth in relation to attachment and recognition theory are reminiscent of Habermas' and Mezirow's perspectives on transformative learning theory.

#### *2.4.2.5 Emotional intelligence and Critical Thinking- Key Constructs in the Transformative Process*

Halpern (2008, cited in Kylonen 2008) posits that sufficient research exists to note that students can be taught to become better thinkers and that these 'improved' thinking skills can be transferred to 'novel situations' when students are taught how to transfer or replicate those skills. Halpern 2008 refers to five key categories in which she suggests critical thinking can be gauged at higher education levels. They are verbal reasoning; argument analysis skills; skills in thinking as hypothesis testing; ability to use likelihood and uncertainty and decision-making and problem-solving skills.



Goleman (1996) and Mezirow and associates (2000) reiterate the point that learners engaging in critical reflection will use emotional intelligence to sift through the skills, knowledge and capacity they are letting go of in order to attain higher order capacities. Poutiatine concludes that ‘transformational change then represents an enlargement of our capacity to construct meaning perspectives’ (2009, p.203). Transformative change is, in essence, a re-alignment of our integrity of practice - as Shostrom (1976) outlines: self-actualisation is ‘to be on the outside what one feels within’ (cited in Poutiatine 2009, p.203).

In this sub-section, the importance of fostering emotional intelligence among adult learners in order to assist them through the learning experience was considered. In addition, the evident correlation between recognition theory, identity development of learners and emotional well-being of adults, and how these issues are intrinsically linked together and potentially foster transformative learning in adults was discussed. The forthcoming sub-section will discuss attachment theory and its prospective contribution to the lifelong learning debate.

### ***2.4.3 Attachment Theory: its importance within the Lifelong Learning Process***

This section discusses the importance of attachment theory as a core premise which informs and impacts upon learners’ educational life paths. In addition, a broad spectrum of learning theories which inform adult and higher education practice are discussed. Then, the connection between adult learning theories and attachment theory are debated.

#### ***2.4.3.1 Bond Development and Attachment***

This section outlines the connection between Bowlby’s attachment theory and the lifelong learning process. In particular, the pivotal role that adult attachment theory can play in the andragogical and learning experience of adults will be discussed. Then, the relevance of adult attachment theory will be linked to the process of how and why certain non-traditional students engage and succeed in adult and higher education.

Bowlby developed attachment theory in the early 1960's and contributed additional research to the area in the 1970's and 1980's. Attachment theory is crucially concerned with tracing how adult carers and children develop bonds with each other and the effects such bonds, or lack thereof, have on identity development throughout a learner's life. Bowlby defined attachment behaviour as:

...any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, who is usually conceived as stronger and/ or wiser.

(1979, p.129).

The essence of attachment theory purports that children's bonds, even infants' bonds with their care-givers, especially their mothers, lead to 'secure' or potentially 'insecure' attachments throughout their lives. Bowlby developed many studies reflecting on the connection between children's experience of 'secure' attachment and their sense of self-esteem, identity and security levels. In addition, he analysed children's reaction to 'insecure' attachments such as stress, loss, and separation anxiety and he concluded that the absence of consistent attachment to a significant adult caregiver in childhood can lead to insecure adult attachment experiences for those children as they develop through their respective life experiences (Bowlby 1979, 1988).

Ainsworth (1978, cited in Fleming, 2007a) made additional contributions to the study of attachment theory. She developed the 'strange situation' perspective which she noted to be the stressful experience resulting from the separation of a child from its mother. Fleming (2007, p. 6) discusses Bowlby's 'internal working model of social relating' which is, each child's internal mosaic/building blocks of his or her experience of relationships. This internal working model is the foundation upon which the child devises his or her understanding of social behaviour and from which a child models relationships throughout his/ her life. Attachment theory, therefore, has to be considered in an intergenerational context, as one's experience of attachment is set in place early in life and when learning is absorbed by a child, it can transfer from his or her generation to the next generation.

Therefore, the replication of relating to others/creating attachments, whether secure or insecure, can have significant impact on a whole family's life chances. Furthermore, the internal working models are sculpted early in life and are not easily adjusted thereafter, so this issue has implications for adults wishing to reform/readjust their previous experience of attachment in order to redirect their life paths. Fleming reviewed the work of Bowlby's attachment theory, paying particular attention to the effects of attachment in adulthood. Fleming (2008) was particularly interested in establishing the connection, if any, between learners' earlier life experiences of attachment and the effect on their participation in adult and higher education. Riley's research (2009, p.633) outlined that some adult educators felt prompted to choose the teaching profession as an 'emotional corrective measure' in order to rebalance their personal experience of attachment (or lack thereof) by forming new attachments with students. This theory reiterates the hugely influential role an educator can play in a learner's life, whether the learner is a child or adult learner (Bowlby 1988; Kesner 2000, cited in Riley, 2009).

The role of parent(s) or primary care-givers in carving a learner's emotional intelligence and potential academic achievement is emphasised by Vahedi and Nikdel (2011). They deliberate upon the theoretical thinking of Rasinki and Fredrick (1988) and Cotton and Wikelund (2005) among others and note the invaluable link between parental involvement in their children's learning processes and its impact on children's emotional intelligence development.

Goleman (1996) promoted the importance of Emotional Intelligence across a diversity of disciplines including education. It is measured by assessing a series of competencies and skills. Goleman posits that 80% of one's intelligence is social and emotional and twenty percent relates to IQ intelligence. Ultimately, the development of children's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and their self-management skills can be traced back to their formative bond with their parents or primary caregivers. Vahedi and Nikdel (2011, p.332) note that 'Emotionally intelligent behaviour is wise behaviour. To behave wisely requires the synergistic effect of the emotional mind with the cognitive mind'. According to Salovey and Mayer (1993)

cited in Vahedi and Nikdel (2011) an emotionally intelligent person possess four definite skills- 'identifying, using, understanding and regulating emotions' (2011, p. 333). Schutte and colleagues consider the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in terms of the four subscales; perception of emotions; managing one's own and managing others emotions and utilisation of emotions (Schutte *et al.* 1998). This measure is used by the author to measure study participants EI levels and will be considered in detail in Chapter 3, the methodology.

Many researchers are forming connections between the presence of high emotional intelligence and academic achievement and leadership performance (Humphrey *et al.* 2007; Maguire *et al.* 2017). The cultivation of social and emotional competencies therefore should not be overlooked by educators during all levels of education intervention with students whether in primary, secondary or higher education levels. In addition, researchers Vahedi and Nikdel (2011) advocated Henderson and Berla's (1994) perspective that family involvement in a child's education is a more accurate predictor of the child's achievement than a family's level of income.

In addition, Fleming and Finnegan (2011) advocates that a genuine understanding of adult learners' life histories, especially those students designated as 'disadvantaged' or non-traditional learners, should be allocated significant time at the commencement of the adult education programme or course so as to facilitate a more holistic understanding of the students' issues. Many adult learners join educational initiatives with multiple barriers to overcome; some of those hurdles are self-imposed, while others are beyond their control. It is argued; therefore, that time invested in understanding adult learners' previous experience of attachment will assist the student and educator to map out a more constructive learning path. Furthermore, Fleming and Finnegan (Fleming *et al.* 2017) posit that this time investment at the outset of the adult educational journey will benefit both the learner and educator alike to navigate the process more successfully.

The premise of the debate connecting attachment theory to lifelong learning is that, when learners feel at ease with their own identity and comfortable with their sense of self, their development as learners will thrive (Fleming 2007a: Fleming 2009). Therefore, secure bonds and secure attachments developed between children and their carers in childhood offer a lifelong foundation of security and sense of identity which, in turn, creates a positive environment in which community engagement and adult learning becomes more attainable (Fleming, 2007a).

Daniel (2013, p. 80) cites McCluskey (2011b, p. 14) who argues that ‘access to an effective caregiver is central to the well-being of a person throughout the whole of their lives’. This sense of support and camaraderie between people cannot be underestimated as it affects one’s sense of self from the past and one’s sense of self going forward. McCluskey suggests that all clients in therapy, no more than all students in educational settings, need to be welcomed at the start of the process to assist them establish a sense of belonging (cited in Daniel, 2013).

#### *2.4.3.2 Attachment Experience Influences on Adult Learning*

Daniel refers to trying to create relationships based on ‘fear free relating’ (2013, p. 84). This involves therapists ‘centring’ themselves before settling or ‘centring’ clients. This balancing creates an explorative space for clients to consider their issues and feel at ease to discuss attachment experiences. Similarly, in adult education settings, the educator is responsible for ‘centring’ and settling the group, so that they are in a space that is favourable to develop and learn at their own pace.

Whatever our age, our zest for life is generated through the exploring and sharing of interests in a supportive companionable way.

(Daniel, 2013, p. 84).

The importance of placing attachment theory within the milieu of adult learning theory cannot be understated in this review. Jarvis (2012) debates the plethora of adult learning theories and teaching techniques which have informed the learning styles and education processes in adult and higher education institutions for a number of decades. He traces the evolution of

the terms of 'pedagogy' by Piaget to Knowles' interpretation of the term 'andragogy' which envisioned andragogy as a teaching technique rather than a learning theory. Knowles (1975) proposed that andragogy was 'the art and science of helping adults learn' (cited in Jarvis, 2012, p. 135). However, Illeris developed the term of 'humanagogy' which emphasised the premise that it involved teaching humans irrespective of their gender or age. Developments in the theory of learning in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Fry and Kolb led to the emergence of the 'experiential learning cycle' by Kolb which placed significant emphasis on logging learners' behaviour and cognitive developments in order to support them through the learning process.

Bourgeois (2012) deliberated on Piaget's constructivist perspective on adult learning and debated whether the learning process could be considered an individual or social process. The 'Neo-Piagetian' standpoint advocates that adult learning is an inherently inner cognitive process which thrives on 'cognitive conflict' at an individual level (Bourgeois 2012, p.343). In addition, the Vygotsky perspective on adult learning, views it essentially as a social process. In essence, Bourgeois (2012) concludes that the cognitive, social and psycho-social dimensions of adult learning could be captured by recording more biographical and identity dynamics of learners' lives through the learning process. This viewpoint reiterates Fleming's (2003) perspective that narrative therapy is a route to record learners' attachment history and other psycho-social factors which impact upon one's learning. Jarvis (2012, p. 140) reiterates the viewpoint of other learning theorists such as Bourdieu and Fleming when he states that 'It is in learning that we incorporate culture into ourselves; this we do in most, if not all, of our learning experiences'. Therefore, the importance of habitus and knowing the individual adult learners disposition and attachment narrative cannot be separated from the learning process if adult educators are to foster development learning approaches.

Jarvis (2012, p.140) emphasises the importance of questioning the 'socially accepted meaning' of culture in order to be able to transition to another space. This process of questioning was referred to as 'disjuncture' which

mirrors Mezirow's 'epochal' transformative learning perspective. Jarvis notes that 'it is the ability to recreate disjuncture and question the socially accepted meaning through reflection and criticality that empowers individuals to develop their individuality' (Jarvis 2012, p. 142). Jarvis (2012) refers to human experiences of learning in two categories: primary experience and secondary experience. Primary experience evolves from one's senses and first-hand experience of engaging with a learning experience. This in turn helps the learner to develop one's personal meaning from the experience. So, for instance, an adult delivering a presentation to colleagues in class for the first time can invoke a sense of personal anxiety; however, on completion of the presentation, the adult learner will feel relieved and may have acquired coping skills to deal with such situations going forward in the learning process. The secondary experience stems from interaction and sharing of knowledge and emotional support. So, in using the earlier example of the student making a presentation, one could extrapolate that the audience of fellow learners who received the presentation likewise participated in the learning experience and gained life-skills and knowledge from the process. Jarvis (2012, p.141) notes that:

It is the process of transforming the whole of our experience through thought, action and emotion and thereby, transforming ourselves as we continue to build perceptions of external reality into our biography. However, we have to combine these two processes and recognise that the whole person has both these primary and secondary experiences, usually simultaneously, and learns.

#### *2.4.3.3 Attachment Narrative, Identity Development and Critical Reflection – Key connections in the Transformative Process*

Fleming (2008) has written significantly on the importance of considering the adult learner's life history so as to engage them effectively in the educational process. Many theorists (Daniel 2013; Cranton 2006; Holliday *et al.* 2010) have suggested that requesting undergraduate adult learners to engage in narrative therapy has multiple positive outcomes for them. It assists them to consider their educational life paths to that juncture, and to reflect on their attachment history and it assists them to plan future educational goals based on life course lessons learned to that point.

Sands and Tennant's research in 2010 discusses the evolution of thought, identity development, exploration of meaning and its relationship to transformative learning, 'life stories as continually under construction' (cited in Jones and Galloway 2012, p. 92).

The matter of identity has a multifaceted role in transformative learning - the learning process for the individual, the educator and wider society must be considered for the process to be genuinely transformational. Jones and Galloway (2012) reflect on the premise that an individual does not abandon one particular identity in order to gain another throughout the life-path but in essence, 'the process has involved blending dimensions of each epistemological position into subsequent and previous identities' (p.101). Mezirow refers to one's sense of identity and association as ever evolving but once transformation occurs, one's identity cannot regress to previous disposition.

Chapman (2001) outlines a competence learning model which involves navigating, sometimes obliviously, through a learning experience to another place until a later point is reached where the learning process becomes clearer, more evident to learner. This journey of discovery does not replace previous knowledge but fuses with it to make the learner more discerning. This transition or bridging to another space is in essence critical reflection, being able to look back on an experience or series of them with a new or more detailed lens.

Learning is ultimately a process of enablement and learners' cultural backdrops and social histories must be considered so as to facilitate a holistic learning experience for adult learners. Furthermore, policy-makers and management structures within educational institutions have a duty of care to students and educators to assist their engagement in the learning process. So this process of transition to a more self-authoring and confident standpoint required by all agents involved in adult education reinforces the importance of understanding learners' attachment history and life narratives. In addition, recognition theory and emotional intelligence factors which have been discussed in greater detail in a previous sub-section play a crucial



role in prompting positive adult learning experiences. Finally, the forthcoming piece on the fundamental role of promoting critical reflection capacities among adult learners will appraise the pivotal role reflective processes and techniques play in fostering independent, self-confident adult learners and educators.

#### ***2.4.4 Critical Reflection Practice and Learning Strategies and their pivotal role in the Transformative Learning Process***

Cranton (2006) outlines that transformative learning ‘occurs when people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view’ (p.19). Mezirow posits that transformative learning can only occur in adults, as pre-adulthood learning processes do not have the capacity to allow learners to reflect critically on their learning experiences. This critical reflection characteristic is designated by Mezirow as an essential dimension in the assessment of the transformation process. In addition, Mezirow argues that once transformation occurs, it cannot be undone.

Several theorists firmly conclude that transformative learning cannot occur without the presence of critical reflection or critical reflective practice. Mezirow (1995) devised three types of reflection and outlined their roles in the transformation process: content, process and premise reflection. The first two involve a change in meaning schemes but the third, premise reflection, involves a change in meaning perspective. Thus, Kitchenham advocates that, in essence, ‘critical reflection is the process of premise reflecting’ (2008, p.114).

In 1998, Mezirow devised a framework to assess how critical reflection of and on certain assumptions among learners in educational settings occur. He outlined that it can be refined into objective and subjective reframing. Objective reframing involves narrative or action critical reflection of assumptions. Subject reframing is equated to critical self-reflection on assumptions. Kitchenham outlined that subjective reframing tends to include one of the following four forms of critical self-reflection on assumptions: narrative, systemic, therapeutic and epistemic. In essence, the distinction

between subjective and objective reframing of the critical reflection process means that the first three involve an analysis of what causes an assumption to take place, while the last one is an analysis of the actual assumption itself (Kitchenham 2008).

Brookfield (2005, as cited in Thomas 2009), deems that critical thinking is a process within which learners reflect on their current 'taken for granted' perspective and then distil those assumptions to arrive at another perspective or viewpoint. Brookfield (1987, as cited in Thomas 2009) outlines a number of core characteristics of critical thinking which have three main elements: identifying and challenging assumptions; being conscious of how contexts affect thoughts and actions and developing and devising new ways of engaging. Furthermore, Duffy (2006, as cited in Brock 2010), made the point that, among a study group of unemployed people, certain activities did promote critical reflection, including role playing, journal writing and group discussion. This process of learning fostered transformative learning.

Thomas (2009) argues that there is a lack of emphasis on fostering critical thinking skills among students and educators within the university pedagogical process. Thomas's research pertained to teaching sustainable education within the Australian educational systems and the methodology that shaped that process of learning. According to Thomas, problem-based learning and a student-centred approach were designated the most effective practices to assist in the generation of critical thinking as they emphasised the process of learning as key to the overall experience. In addition, Thomas argued that there are identifiable links between transferrable skills and transformative learning. He outlined that such 'transferrable skills', also known as 'metaskills' (Assiter 1995, cited in Thomas 2009) are increasingly important for graduates as they seek employment or re-deployment.

Thomas (2009) argues that 'universities have a particular responsibility to facilitate alternative thinking' (2009, p.255). He reiterates the point made by Wals and Corcoran (2006), who note that universities 'have a profound role to play in developing students' dynamic qualities and so-called competencies' (cited in Thomas, 2009, p.255). Therefore, these perspectives

would suggest that universities have a responsibility to accommodate a diversity of approaches and methodologies to acquiring learning in order to support students in gaining critical thinking skills which Donald (2002) calls 'higher order learning' (cited in Thomas, 2009, p. 257).

Neuman (1996), cited in Taylor (1998, p.34), purports that 'transformative learning and critical reflection have an interactive and interdependent relationship'. Moreover, Brookfield (2006) argues that critical reflection is an essential element of transformative learning; however, it is not a synonym for it. In addition, he posits that not all reflection could be defined as critical reflection and that critical reflection is culturally contingent, that it is in essence created and learned from social interactions. However, he argues that the presence of critical reflection among learners does not presuppose that transformative learning occurs or follows. Brookfield (2000) concurs with Mezirow that transformative learning can only be named as such when and if 'it involves a fundamental questioning and re-ordering of how one thinks or acts' (p.139). Reflective discourse involves a critical reflection of assumptions. Goleman (1998), referred to in Mezirow (2000), emphasises the necessity of emotional intelligence and emotional maturity as key characteristics among learners who participate in reflective dialogue and potentially arrive at a state of transformative learning. This process also suggests that there will be a transfer of authority from the educator to the learners if a level of emotional maturity is evident whereby the educator becomes a collaborative learner in the educational process. This stance reinforces Freire's perspective (1970) on problem-posing as opposed to the banking approach to teaching and learning in which the transfer of knowledge between the learner and educator should be more demonstratively communicative in order for it to be deemed to be genuinely transformative pedagogy.

#### 2.4.4.1 What are the benefits of a Critical Thinking Framework within Higher Education?

Closs and Antonello (2011) reiterate Cunliffe's (2004) perspective that promoting critical thinking in management education and organisations, which is an essential component to enable transformative learning, would in turn create more critical thinkers and principled professionals. This life skill enhancement dynamic that transformative learning can generate according to Closs and Antonello (2011) is a reinforcement of the higher order, transferable or metaskills outlined by Thomas (2009). This aspect would complement higher educational institutions' strategic objective to make their graduates more employable post-graduation.

Glisczinski, (2007) posits that 'higher education that fails to develop learners beyond the acquisition of instrumental knowledge contributes to the poverty of American society. Individuals must be able to think and act dynamically- rather than linearly- in postmodern world' (2007, p. 319). Therefore, the flexibility of approach required within the adult education learning process requires intentional and deliberate decision-making by policy makers and educators to think and act in alternate ways. This shift from developing cultural capital to developing human capital may be a difficult transition for higher education institutions (Glisczinski 2007).

The importance of a 'critical pedagogy approach', as described by Freire 1970, is noted by the authors, Closs and Antonello (2011) as crucial in education despite the resistance to change by some. For example, Van Woerkom (2004) makes the point that there is a social pressure attached to learners who dare express their critical thinking ability as it may deem them as outspoken and to be isolated (cited in Closs and Antonello 2011).

Davis and colleagues (Davis *et al.* 2016) have considered a conceptual framework approach that could be applied to a higher education context to enable partners in community and higher education include the voice of adult learners in future andragogical programme and higher education planning and curriculum developments. This critical thinking approach would offer educational integrity to learner and educational institutional

processes. This matter will be considered in more detail in the conclusion chapter, chapter six.

#### *2.4.4.2 Reflective Practice Process and its relationship with Critical Thought and Higher Education*

The next section discusses whether reflective practice and critical thinking tools can be used to enable learners to move from high dependency and low self-esteem positions to more open, independent, and self-confident dispositions.

In education but especially in adult education, educators and learners must develop ‘inclusive practices’ which Duckworth and Tummons (2010, p. 24) refer to as ‘a broad ethical or philosophical set of values’. This perspective complements many adult learning pedagogues’ teachings that adult education must value learners so as to gain their trust and confidence. Reflective practice journaling is deemed as a proactive tool to establish an inclusive yet engaging approach with adult learners who possess a plethora of biographies that can impact on their learning experience.

Perkins (cited in Entwistle 2009) refers to ‘thinking dispositions’ which are in essence groups of concepts that act together to affect how people think. Therefore, critical thinking and reflective practice processes and techniques encourage and engage learners in approaches that assist reformulate their ‘thinking dispositions’. This practice is particularly useful among adult learner cohort as it allows them personal time to reflect on their current/ real time experience of the learning environment.

Walker outlines that journal writing was classed as a pedagogical technique to promote reflection among students of an athletics training programme.

Reflection has been defined as a process regarding thinking about and exploring an issue of concern, which is triggered by an experience.

(Walker, 2006, p. 216)

Furthermore, Garratt (2011) posits that asking adult students to engage in keeping a learning log for certain duration while undergraduates improve their reflective practice and critical thinking skills. This process ameliorates

students' 'capabilities' and learning confidence which has a positive ripple effect on students especially non-traditional learners' sense of self-esteem as it prompts them into developing a sense of place and belonging in university, a previously culturally alien place.

Therefore, reflective practice logs should be used as a proactive, positive tool to educate and inspire deeper reflection on learning experience by non-traditional adult learners within higher education contexts. As Garratt (2011, p.213) notes, 'critical reflections should be used positively to educate and inspire deeper reflection on learning in the context of higher education'.

Schon (1983; 1991) was one of the forefathers of developing reflective practice processes in the education system. He developed a model to assist educators and practitioners in adopting more flexible approaches to problem solving rather than rely entirely on more traditional text-book approaches. The model was based on three core concepts- 'knowledge- in action'; 'reflection-in action and 'reflection-on action'. Respectively these concepts represent, one's instinctual or tacit knowledge, one's on the spot responsiveness to an experience and thirdly one's post-event consideration of the matter.

Gibbs (1988; 2007) developed a six step reflective cycle- which was developed to assist adult learners thread their experiences and learn from the process. The first stage involves the learner presenting a 'description' of a learning event or episode. Then the learner maps an account of the 'feelings' involved in the learning experience. Thereafter, the learner must log an 'evaluation' of the positive and negative aspects of the learning experience and present an 'analysis' of the event. Then the learner draws up 'conclusions' and an 'action plan' based on what he or she would do if he or she were to engage in that learning experience again. This practical, yet methodical reflective practice model, has changed the abstract nature of critical thinking and reflective thought into a more applied interactive measure for adult learners to grasp and remould to suit their own learning journey (Duckworth and Tummons 2010).

Moon (1999, 2004) has written significantly on critical thinking and the reflective process and the role they can play in cementing the learners' personal, social and educational goals. She has contributed both to the theoretical and applied bank of knowledge on the critical reflective practice processes. She refers to assisting adult learners through the learning process by 'transforming conceptions' (2004, p.17) using reflective practice journaling as the conduit for same. Moon (2004), purports that all learning experiences have both internal and external cultural influences and that each learner creates his or her own frame of reference to deal with the cultural divergence between him/herself as learner from his or her colleagues or educators. This 'figure and ground in learning' description demonstrates the varying learning outcomes that learners and educators alike glean from partaking in a given learning experience at the same event or workshop. Moon refers to 'figure' as experiences or narratives and 'ground' representing the event or workshop (Moon 2004, p. 24-25). Reflective journaling therefore equips all learners with a voice to express their thoughts on the given journey. Goleman (1996, p.28) noted that emotional intelligence 'guides our moment to moment decisions...enabling and disabling through itself'. Moon (2004) suggests that emotional intelligence can bring about a change in perspective or a 'change in orientation' (2004, p.51). This emotional insight is deemed to be achievable through engaging in reflective practice processes.

Dyke and Bryant (2011, p.363) note that 'each person has an autobiographical uniqueness...' therefore our difference as learners and educators is a pivotal aspect of the learning process all partners must consider. Reflective practice offers a process through which to express that uniqueness while also engaging in the learning journey. Furthermore, learning to partake in reflective practice and critical thinking techniques equip learners with life skills than cannot be eroded.

Thompson (2008) and Thompson and Pascal (2012) have written significantly on the connection between reflective practice and phenomenology. This work relates mainly to the discipline of family support but is concerned with individuals extracting meaning and making

meaning of their lives through self-reflective processes. Clark and Rossiter (2008), note that narrative learning assists learners to make meaning of experiences which form part of the constructive learning theory framework. In essence, a narrative approach provides us with an internal view of the external world. However, Clark and Rossiter reiterate the point that one must be mindful that this is a subjective analysis of learning events, like all reflective practices. Taylor and Lamoreaux (2008) posit that reflective writing and journaling frames and re-frames learners' thinking capacity and permits one to consider future considerations of oneself and one's learning needs.



#### *2.4.4.3 Section Summary*

The section concludes that fostering positive pathways to educational change for adult learners and educators is possible through promoting the following factors among adult learners and educators: emotional intelligence awareness and supports; positive educational attachment interventions; learner centred identity development and access to reflective thinking and collaborative learning strategies.

Dirkx and Mezirow agree that rational thought processes are essential components of critical thinking within the learning experience that forms part of adult learners' transformative learning processes. However, Cranton points out that Dirkx places additional emphasis on the more subjective aspects that lead to transformation and that Mezirow has no issue with such a perspective on transformative learning evolution as long as transformative learning is founded in a 'critical assessment of assumptions to ensure that it is not based on faith, prejudice, vision or desire' (Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton 2006, p. 137).

In essence, the fundamental change agent in the education process is people and therefore all stakeholders need to consider a person/ learner-centred approach to higher education in order to assist adult learners, especially non-traditional adult learners alter their life course. Thus, theorists (Fleming; Honneth; Dirkx; Schutte and colleagues) posit that a greater understanding of the emotional intelligence and educational attachment experiences of learners aids the adult and higher educational journey to be transformative for all stakeholders.

Transformation theory and transformative learning practices must be considered as the bedrocks of the future if adult and higher education is to achieve positive learning outcomes for all partners in the education process-learners, educators and society.

## **2.5 Review Conclusion**

In this literature review, the researcher presented the key learning theories and styles of andragogical practice associated with adult and higher education. In addition, some of the core learning issues associated with adult learners, especially non-traditional adult learners, were addressed in the three core sections of the review. The adult learning educational journey is a fragile praxis within which the supportive and nurturing of adult learners' needs, especially those of non-traditional adult learners, must be fostered in order to create conditions in which more transformative learning experiences can flourish.

Specifically, the first section discussed the pivotal importance of transformation theory and transformative learning experiences to the discipline of lifelong learning. It deliberated upon the concept of learners developing 'self-transforming minds' (Kegan and Miller, 2003) and moving to a stage of 'self-actualisation' (Dirkx 2008).

Section two reviewed key issues pertaining to the adult and higher education context in Ireland and debated the significant learning approaches which foster supportive and adult-friendly andragogical measures of retention. Poutiatine (2009) reiterates the point that learners must relinquish their personal power base so as to fully engage in the learning process. This trust building process is connected to the community development and family support principles of practice such as networking and collaborative approaches that are likewise advocated in lifelong learning strategies.

The third section considered the importance of key factors that can trigger transformative learning experiences. The theories considered in this section demonstrate the evidential connection between one's past history or narrative experience and one's potential future learning and sense of personal worth. Furthermore, the final section of this review paid particular attention to the development of one's sense of identity and relationship building as key to transformational learning outcomes. Thus, the thesis espouses that the adoption of more innovative and flexible learning and teaching interventions and methodologies are paramount in facilitating adult

learners, especially non-traditional adult learners, to succeed in adult and higher educational institutions. Furthermore, it is advocated in this literature review that transformative learning experiences once achieved can thereafter have a life-changing effect on the learner and their personal and social network.

The model (see Figure 2.1) was devised by the researcher in relation to the emerging themes from the theoretical constructs within this literature review. This conceptual model will inform the primary data collection process. In addition, Table 2.1 presents a brief overview of the main constructs and theorists consulted in this literature review.

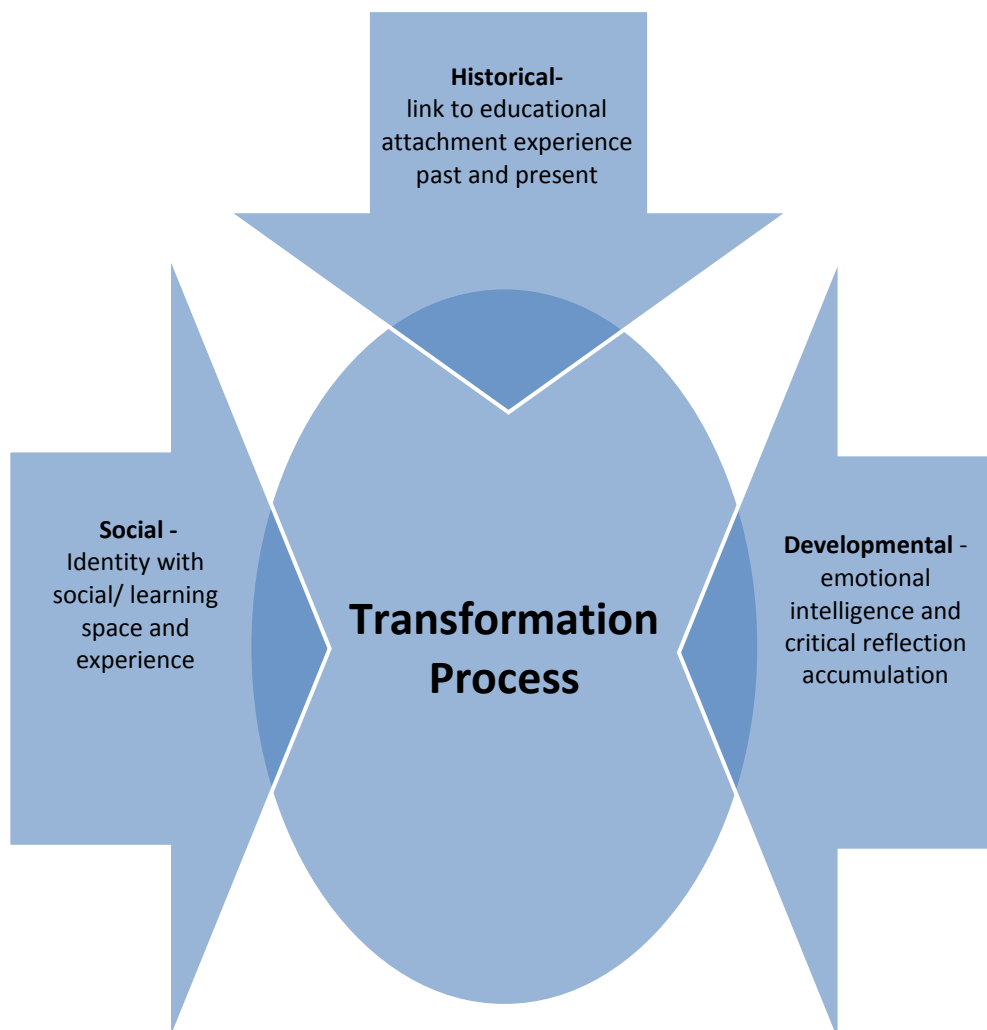


Figure 2.1 Researcher's Interpretation of TL Process based on Literature Review Synthesis

Table 2.1 Literature Review and Theoretical Constructs Overview

<b>Core Construct</b>	<b>Main Theorists Consulted in Review</b>	<b>Related Constructs</b>	<b>Theorists Consulted in Review</b>	<b>Measure linked to Theory</b>
<b>Transformative Learning /Transformation Theory/ Transformative Pedagogy</b>	Mezirow, King, Cranton, Poutiatine, Fleming , Taylor	Community Education Approach	Connolly, Fitzsimons, Tett	King’s Learning Activities Survey (1998)
<b>(Adult) Learning Theory</b>	Habermas, Illeris; Jarvis; Field; Schuetze and Slowey	Community Development	Collins, Curtin, Twelvetree;	
<b>Attachment Theory</b>	Bowlby Kaplan and Main Fleming	Identity Development	Honneth, Fleming, Field, Morgan-Klein	Kaplan and Main Adult Attachment Protocol (1985)
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	Schutte et al Goleman Dirkx Brookfield	Reflective Practice and Learning Strategies	Dewey, Kolb, Moon, Thompson	Schutte et al Measuring E I Scale (1998)
		Family Support	Canavan, Davis, Devaney, Dolan, Pinkerton	

## Chapter 3: Methodology

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## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology for the three components of the current study with respect to their rationale, aims and objectives; design; participant selection; materials and measures; data collection and analysis procedures; ethics and limitations. The study used a participant sample of former BA in Community and Family Studies Programme (BCFS) adult learners and investigated their potential for transformative learning (TL) through a mixed methods approach. The research methods included: an online survey; interactive management; semi-structured interviews. These three components were conducted over a two-year period, between 2014 and 2015. In addition, the research study outline (see Figure 3.1 at the end of this chapter) presents an overview of the process.

### **3.2 Rationale, Aims, Objectives and Research Framework**

The rationale for exploring the existence of TL experiences among non-traditional adult learners on a part-time distance learning degree programme - the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS)<sup>9</sup>, stems from the observed dearth of research pertaining to andragogical experiences of part-time adult learners in higher education. The current study aims to contribute to the empirical body of knowledge on this BCFS population and their learning experiences. Furthermore, due to the diversity of adult learners' life-paths and influences, higher education authorities need to consider unique and adult learner centred approaches to engaging and aiding adult learners to succeed in higher education. This is necessary in order to respond to the changing learner demographic in society, especially the adult learner population base (Eurostat CSO, 2018). Therefore, an aim of the current research is to contribute to andragogy teaching, practice and policy

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<sup>9</sup> The BCFS programme is a blended learning, part-time programme offered to adult learners in NUI, Galway.

outcomes that aid the development of adult learners' life-paths in higher education; specifically, through establishing whether adult learners/experienced practitioners who participated on the BCFS community education programme for part-time adult learners, have acquired TL experiences while undertaking the programme and whether such experiences were sustained post programme completion.

As the research literature pertaining to part-time adult learners' experiences in higher education is limited, the current research aims to explore the life experiences of graduates from the part-time BCFS in terms of TL, emotional intelligence and attachment experiences. As addressed in Chapter 2, research indicates that learners who possess a greater sense of secure attachment in childhood can experience more positive and engaging life experiences in their adulthood (Bowlby 1979, 1988). However, transformation theory posits that one's life course with the appropriate supports and encouragement in adulthood as a learner can be positively re-adjusted or altered despite earlier life attachment or emotional insecurities (Fleming 2007a, 2008; Kenny and Fleming 2009). Thus, the current research examines whether a sense of emotional intelligence growth and positive education attachment can be provided through supportive adult and higher education andragogical interventions on the BCFS Programme to aid learners navigate their new life path life course trajectories through adult and community education.

The three empirical components of the current study seek to examine whether TL experiences are self-identified by graduate participants of the BCFS and comparator, Non-BCFS programmes. The three components of the study (an online survey; interactive management; semi-structured interviews) are included to illustrate the mixed methods triangulated approach to the data collection, analysis and synthesis of learning in this empirical study. Equally, the research process seeks to record the participants' experiences of attachment and emotional intelligence in earlier life and establish whether they later experienced secure life reassurance and positive emotional bonds and emotional intelligence growth while participating on the BCFS part-time higher education programme.

Ultimately, the three empirical components seek to explore whether the BCFS programme offered participants an alternate option for life changing or transformative life experiences, irrespective of earlier life (emotional or attachment) experiences. The BCFS curriculum, assessment structures and procedures; adult education models and policies; teaching methodologies; andragogical mentoring and critical thinking skills; management styles; student-centeredness/tutor empathy with learners needs; as well as practical and professional skills will be considered in the context, Chapter 4 and discussion, Chapter 6.

Therefore, the overarching research question that this empirical study seeks to respond to is: *What effect(s) has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths?* Therefore, this core research question will be addressed in this study through four study objectives which underpin the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. The four objectives within this study intend to draw on comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences. The objectives seek to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full time and part time), and personal life circumstances.

The four objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion
2. Consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and Transformative Learning (TL), relative to Non-BCFS graduates.



3. Appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.
4. Identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

A research framework for the current study which has mapped the core objectives against the methodological process is outlined in Table 3.1. This research framework details the three components of the study and their relationship to the study objectives. Then the study population is outlined which includes the BCFS and the non-BCFS participant cohorts and their participation across the three components of the study. The final column in the table outline the measurement instruments that will be used to measure the core constructs of transformative learning, emotional intelligence and attachment in the current study.

Table 3.1 Research Framework for the Study

Study Components	Objectives	Participants	Measurement Instrument/ Scales
<b>Component 1:</b> Online Survey Questionnaire	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> TL existence and sustainability</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> EI, Attachment and TL relationship</p>	<p>BCFS graduate participants</p> <p>Non-BCFS part-time graduates (<i>nonBCFSdl</i>)</p> <p>Non- BCFS and non-distance learning graduate (<i>nonBCFSnondl</i>)</p>	<p>King’s Learning Activities Survey (LAS) 1998 was adapted and used to examine TL<sup>10</sup> in participants in the online survey questionnaire</p> <p>Schutte <i>et al.</i>’s Assessing Emotions Scale/ (1998) was used to examine EI levels in participants. This EI measure was used in its original form and not adapted within the study.</p> <p>Kaplan and Main’s Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol (1985) on attachment was adapted for use to log the attachment experiences of graduate participants.</p>
<b>Component 2:</b> Interactive Management (IM)	<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Andragogy and EI</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> TL Impacts</p>	<p>BCFS graduate participants</p>	<p>This core target question on TL was used to thread the IM discussion: ‘What aspect(s) of the BCFS programme impacted on your life with respect to Transformative Learning?’</p>
<b>Component 3:</b> Semi-structured Interviews	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> TL existence</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> EI, Attachment and TL relationship</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Andragogy and EI</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> TL Impacts</p>	<p>BCFS graduate participants</p> <p>BCP -Non-BCFS part-time graduate cohort (<i>nonBCFSdl</i>)</p>	<p>King’s LAS items were adapted for discussion.</p> <p>Schutte <i>et al.</i>’s Assessing Emotions Scale- subscale headings (to be detailed in section 3.5) were used to guide interview discussions</p> <p>Kaplan and Main’s Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) 5 categories (to be detailed in section 3.5) framed the discussion.</p>

<sup>10</sup> TL- Transformative learning

### 3.3 Study Design

In this section, overarching themes pertaining to a mixed methods research design will be described with respect to each of the three empirical Components of the study which are online surveys; Interactive Management (IM) and semi-structured interviews.

#### 3.3.1 Mixed Method Design

Theoretical insight to capturing adult learners' experiences within adult and higher education purports the importance of engaging in diverse approaches to data collection among adult learner cohorts, especially non-traditional learner populations (Wang and King 2008; Fleming *et al.* 2017; Wang *et al.* 2017). Therefore, a mixed methods design was deemed the best fit to capture the breadth and depth required to pursue the objectives given the nature of this research study. In this context, the researcher chose Creswell and Clarke's (2011) definition of mixed methods which states;

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.'

(Creswell and Clarke, 2011 p.5).

Therefore, a mixed methods design was chosen to offer the respondents and participants a variety of forums within which to share their perspectives. This process was developed by the researcher from lengthy discussions with the GRC<sup>11</sup> members and on advice from the researcher's supervisor, Professor Dolan. As indicated earlier, the reasons for deciding on a mixed methods approach is to capture the heterogeneity of the adult learners'

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<sup>11</sup> Graduate Research Committee

experiences within this study. The researcher considered the current study to possess both elements of inductive and deductive reasoning based on Bryman's work on mixed methods design and relevance in the social sciences (Bryman, 2004,2006,2013). Thus, the three diverse methodological tools have been chosen to investigate the inductive and deductive reasoning in the current study; online surveys; interactive management and semi-structured interviews. As outlined in Table 3.1 the research framework is mapped out to illustrate the methodological process chosen for the study.

Theorists in the social sciences that have informed the mixed methods design approach include Bryman (2006, 2013) Brannen (2005) and Creswell (2011, 2013a, 2013b). As suggested by Brannen (2005) a mixed methods approach to design and data collection enables researchers to borrow from and inform other disciplines of research. This sharing of methodologies idea encouraged the researcher to borrow the Interactive Management (IM) methodology from the psychology discipline for use in this study. However, the challenge as outlined by Bryman (2006) and Brannen (2005) is that in using a mixed methods approach that the breadth and scope of the methods used in studies are situated in diverse disciplines and therefore one's identity in a given research discipline as a researcher may be clouded. Notwithstanding, the challenges associated with mixed methods design as outlined by the theorists, the researcher chose it to capture the voices and experiences of adult learners, as it facilitates the inclusion and interpretation of a diverse range of approaches and measurement tools. Brannen (2005, p. 7) refers to the three 'p's' 'paradigms, pragmatics and politics' for choosing a research methodology. Therefore, the researcher will consider the relevance of these terms as they pertain to the mixed methods choice of design in this current study.

### *3.3.1.1 Paradigm, Pragmatics and Politics*

The research design was based on Brannen's (2005) perspective, who advocates that researchers should choose the methodology based on the knowledge they seek to generate. As Brannen suggests, the exploration of both paradigms (ontology and epistemology) within a study has merit.

Therefore, the researcher used a positivist approach which deals with the quantitative data in Component 1, which added breath/ scope to the study, and the interpretive approach added depth and richness through the qualitative data in Component 3. Component 2, the Interactive Management, contributes to both the qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The choice of design as noted by Creswell (2013, 2011) Bryman (2006, 2013) and Brannen (2005) is always influenced by the politics or more specifically, the rationale that prompts the researcher to engage in the study and recruit the research population. As suggested by Brannen (2005) the feasibility of choosing a certain design is often influenced by the research context. This issue resonates in this research as the BCFS study population were graduates of a distance learning programme (BCFS) and were located in geographical dispersed localities, therefore the use of an online survey method to gather their perspective made pragmatic sense for Component 1 of the study, to widen the accessibility of the study to as many BCFS graduates as possible. In this context, the rationale to gain insight into the BCFS part-time learners' higher educational experience prompted her to use the mixed methods approach to gain that depth and breadth through a mixed methods design.

### *3.3.1.2 Triangulation*

Triangulation is a process in social research that is enabled to reflect on different measurement tools and how they aid the researcher pursue the study objectives. A range of research tools in this study are used to showcase and bring the voice of the adult learner to the surface. The researcher has noted the importance of triangulation, using a number of different methodologies to ensure accuracy of points being raised (Bryman 2013). In particular, the adult learner population in this study has come from a disparate educational background as will be evidenced in the results chapter, Chapter 5. Therefore, the forms of expression and inclusion of their perspective need to be diverse to capture the words and meaning within the quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, as this doctoral study aims to

add to the body of research on this under researched adult learner population, this mixed methods study aims to advocate for the improvement of adult learners agency within higher education and society. This design approach mirrors Sweetman *et al.*'s (2010) study which purports to use mixed methods as a transformative framework to advocate for the inclusion of part-time adult learners voices within social research.

### **3.3.2 Mixed Methods (Quantitative and Qualitative) Tools**

The primary data collection process consisted of three distinct study components which are:


#### *Component 1: On line Survey Questionnaires*

Component one comprised of a series of on line survey questionnaires which were distributed to adult learner graduate participants of the BCFS and BCP part time distance learning programmes. In addition, on-line survey questionnaires were distributed to non-BCFS graduates from non-distance learning degree programmes in order to enable comparisons among graduates to be considered between the part time blended learning and full time traditional classroom based taught programmes of study (see Appendices 2-5).

#### *Component 2: Interactive Management (IM) Process*

Component two of the study consisted of BCFS graduate engagement in the Interactive Management (IM) Process. Interactive Management is a computer assisted process that enables participants to build a structural model during the face to face engagement process with the facilitator which was the researcher in this given study. The IM process enables participants to present ideas, discuss emerging themes and prioritise relationships between the themes and issues under discussion. In this study, the BCFS graduates considered the following prompt question within the IM process: *What aspect of the BCFS programme impacted on your life with respect to Transformative Learning?* Therefore, the Interpretative Structural Model (ISM) that evolved from the IM process was generated through the

emergent themes from the participants' discussions and brainstorming session.

 *Component 3: Semi-Structured Interviews*

Component 3 comprised of twenty six (n=26) Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews which were conducted with part time adult learner graduates. The interview population consisted of eighteen (n=18) graduates of the BCFS programme (nine of whom had previously completed the Diploma in CDP) and eight were graduates (n=8) from the BCP programme.

The design of these three research tools within the above mentioned components which constituted the mixed methods empirical process will be detailed in the forthcoming sub-sections.

*3.3.2.1 Quantitative Research design*

As quantitative methods including postal and online surveys aid the collection of measurable, quantifiable data (Bryman 2006), an online survey was chosen as the quantitative data collection tool in order to capture the statistical and quantifiable data from the BCFS and non-BCFS comparator population. Quantitative analysis was conducted based on data collected from four online questionnaires that measured the three key constructs: Transformative Learning (TL); emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment experiences. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, sample sizes and frequency were reported. A series of t-tests and multivariate analyses of variance were conducted to compare TL, EI and attachment among groups. Pearson correlations were also conducted. The detailed survey implementation process is outlined in section 3.6, and the quantitative results are presented in Chapter 5.

*3.3.2.1.1 Questionnaire Piloting and Design*

The pilot questionnaire was issued to seven BCFS student respondents and there were a few edits suggested to the pilot template by the respondents. These suggestions included the sequence of certain questions and personal information details and formatting of the survey structure. Also the

inclusion of an incentive to participate in the survey in terms of a voucher offer was suggested by another pilot respondent. These suggestions were implemented in the final survey edition issued to graduates and as outlined in Appendix 2.

The online survey questionnaire was designed in March/April 2014 and was piloted in June 2014 with a cohort of BCFS adult learners who were students, not graduates, of the BCFS programme. The researcher consciously decided to not issue the pilot version of the survey to graduates in case it biased their responses in the final survey edition. In addition, one member of the GRC<sup>12</sup> tested the pilot questionnaire to reflect on the accessibility and formatting of the survey before final design was considered. The final and approved survey questionnaire was designed and issued to all users via an online survey tool, called SurveyMonkey. This technology assisted the graduate participants to work through the key stages of the questionnaire in a structured focused way at a location accessible to them.

The survey questionnaire was chosen as a data collection tool as it was deemed to be a reasonable instrument to target a large cohort of participants at a reasonable timeline and cost. Equally, as the BCFS and other comparison cohorts lived at a distance from the researcher and campus, it was deemed useful to choose a tool that did not depend on the respondents' geographic proximity to campus. This was a necessary condition for the researcher in Component 1 of the research process to ensure the widest possible audience had the option to partake. The online survey format offered a flexible medium to graduates to share responses with the researcher. Factors that influenced the choice of questionnaire design included the time, speed, cost and access issues to all graduate respondents.

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<sup>12</sup> GRC- Graduate Research Committee



There were four different editions of the online survey issued to different graduate cohorts via email as outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Online Survey Respondent Characteristics

<b>Group</b>	<b>Age Profile</b>	<b>Nature of Programme</b>	<b>Respondent Number and Gender</b>
<b>BCFS</b>	21 years and over	Part-time distance learning degree programme in Community and Family Studies	N= 87 Female N= 17 Male <b>Total =104</b>
<b>BCP</b>	21 years and over	Part-time distance learning degree programme in Early Childhood Studies	N=17 Female <b>Total =17</b>
<b>E and T</b>	21 years and over	Part-time distance learning degree programme in E and T	N= 4 Female N= 1Male <b>Total =5</b>
<b>Non-DL</b>	18 years and over graduates	Mixed degree and postgraduate levels in traditional taught, face to face programmes	N= 28 Female N= 10 Male <b>Total =38</b>
			<b>Total =164</b>

One of the key aspects that arose in the design stage was to emphasise each of the core theoretical constructs in equal and measured processes within the questionnaire. Survey one was issued first as it was for the largest cohort, the BCFS graduate respondents. This was issued in August 2014 to all BCFS graduates who had completed the programme between autumn 2010 and summer 2014 (see Appendix 2).

Thereafter the next two surveys were issued to the other distance learning/blended learning part-time degree students in early August 2014. These two surveys were issued to adult graduates of two part-time distance learning degree programmes within CALPD<sup>13</sup> in NUI Galway.

Then the final survey, survey 4, was issued to a non-distance learning cohort through social media links and Facebook in mid-October 2014. This cohort was not a distance learning degree grouping, so were included as a comparator to the other cohorts. This ensured that all surveys were created and issued in a six month period to all required cohorts including survey piloting. Table 3.3 details the audiences and characteristics of the survey respondents who participated in Component 1 (the online surveys).

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<sup>13</sup> Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development

Table 3.3 Survey target, question number and response rate

<b>Questionnaire Number</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>	<b>Response rate to Survey</b>
<b>Pilot</b>	Non-graduate and GRC Member	102	7/7( 100 % response rate)
<b>Survey 1</b>	BCFS graduates	98	104/147 (71% response rate)
<b>Survey 2</b>	BCP group - adult distance learning graduates	98	17/ 53 (33% response rate)
<b>Survey 3</b>	Ed and Training group- adult distance learning graduates	98	5/12( 41% response rate)
<b>Survey 4</b>	Non-distance learning cohort	95	38/ 63 (60% response rate)

### 3.3.2.2 Interactive Management (IM)

Interactive management was the second measurement instrument used in this study. Interactive management software and related methodologies is a very structured system which is useful in assigning specific roles and functions to the researcher/facilitator and the research participants. This systematic approach through the IM data collection technique is crucial to the creation, clarification, structuring, analysis and fine-tuning of ideas into constructs and model of quantifiable outcomes. The fine balance of managing the IM process is based on balancing the behavioural and personality aspects of the participants with the technical and logistical aspects of the software requirements to proceed through the stages of data collation and analysis (Dwyer *et al.* 2014; Dwyer *et al.* 2017). In essence, IM is a blend of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The literature on interactive management outlines that in a classic IM session, a group of participants who are knowledgeable about a particular situation engage in (a) developing a personal understanding of the situation as a research participant, (b) establishing a collective basis for thinking about the future of the issue under consideration, and (c) producing a framework for effective action that is agreeable to all participants who partake in IM process. In the process of moving through these phases, group members can develop a greater sense of teamwork and gain new communication and information-processing skills (Dwyer 2014; Dwyer 2017).

Therefore, IM was chosen as a data collection tool in the current study to gain the personal perspectives of the BCFS graduates on the Impact of Transformative learning on their lives. Interactive management was administrated in one session across two phases; specifically, in Phase 1, the Nominal Group Technique (see Table 5.17) was utilised, followed by Interpretive Structural Modelling in Phase 2 (see Figure 5.1 in results, Chapter five). The IM process is further outlined in the section 3.6.

Interactive Management has many features and traits which lend it as a suitable technique to gain insight to the views of similar and disparate individuals and groups. A key aspect of the IM process is that it allows participants share their perspective openly with the researcher and fellow research participants. The output of engagement on the given research theme in the Interactive Management process is the creation of an Interpretative Structural Model (ISM) which describes relationships between themes and concepts that are selected and prioritised by the participants.

In essence, Warfield and Staley (1996) advocated that Interactive Management aids structural thinking and problem solving. Therefore, this methodological process was deemed intrinsic to the primary data collection approach undertaken by the researcher to enable a constructive and communal based opportunity to the BCFS graduates to present their perspectives and to contribute to the study's data through a collective process of engagement.

The Interactive Management process of collective and individual engagement was deemed a suitable tool for use within this study too by the researcher as it reflected traits of being inclusive to all voices through its facilitation of individual and collective perspectives through its data collection model. It could also be deemed democratic given the nature of the private, individualised vote by each participant on the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) list of collective ideas. These priority ranked ideas/themes decided by the participants then informed the Interpretative Structural Model (ISM) that formed part of the ISM final graphic reflecting the outputs of the prompt research question. In this study, the ISM reflected the BCFS graduate' perspective on the impact of the BCFS programme on their lives. Equally, the collective working through ideas and generating outcomes to issues, problems and events is reflective of effective community development engagement strategies and techniques (Lee, 2006; Lillis, 2005). So the alignment between the features of the Interactive management process (Dwyer et al., 2014a; Dwyer et al., 2017) and the community development approach (Curtin and Tovey, 1996; Lillis, 2005) in

terms of collective action and empowerment, motivated the researcher to include IM as an integral component of this study as it resonates with the ethos of community education and centring of the adult learner perspective in the research process (Fitzsimons, 2017).

### *3.3.2.3 Interactive Management Piloting and Design*

The researcher engaged with one of her graduate research committee members to mirror the trialling of the IM process that was undertaken with colleagues on another piece of academic research in the School of Psychology in NUI, Galway. This approach was undertaken as the doctoral student wished to learn a best practice approach for the IM design from the GRC colleague who uses this approach in his research work with the School of Psychology. This shadowing of another colleague in the implementation of the IM process ensured that the structure was observed and the stages to map the conceptual model were followed effectively in the current study.

Interactive management (IM) was conducted with a sub-sample of the BCFS group (N = 6), who were asked the target question: ‘What aspect(s) of the BCFS programme impacted on your life with respect to Transformative Learning?’ This prompted participants to generate their own ideas and, subsequently, share them with fellow participants. Specifically, each participant took turns presenting what they identified as one of the most important impacts to the group. Elaboration or explanation on the ‘impact’ they had presented was asked for and provided when required. Discussion was opened to the group after each presentation for clarification. If an idea had already been presented, or if there was significant overlap in conceptualisation (without distinction) between ideas, the second person would then present their second most important ‘impact’. Participants’ initially generated 18 distinct ideas and nine were carried forward to the structuring phase. The results from the IM process will be detailed in Chapter 5.

The IM process proved very engaging and interesting to the BCFS graduate participants in this study as they could see an outcome of their deliberations

and discussions before the closure of the process. This outcome based approach to research could be deemed a useful model for adult learners in future social science studies and will be considered further in the conclusion, Chapter 7.

#### *3.3.2.4 Qualitative Research Design*

Semi-structured interviews constituted Component 3 of the research process. The qualitative data design in this component of the study is based on the premise of a constructivist ontological approach (a self-evident process of revelation by the adult learner graduate participants) in which the data reveals sentiment and emotions which in many situations had not been considered or reflected upon previously by the study population. The purpose of engaging semi-structured interviews within a qualitative research design in social science studies enables participants to express personal and emotional perspectives that cannot be measured in a quantifiable manner (Bryman 2006; Tracy 2010). The semi-structured interview approach was chosen in order to negotiate space and opportunity within the interview process for the participants to share and contribute perspectives not addressed in the interview schedule. The data analysis approach, the researcher used was to ensure the participants voices surfaced through a thematic analysis and indigenous themed approach to the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The conceptual model that evolved from the IM process (see Figure 5.1) acted as a coding tree to further deduce and analyse themes from within the qualitative interview data.

Therefore, a qualitative research approach was used to design and conduct semi-structured interviews with graduates of the BCFS and non-BCFS distance learning degree (i.e. in this context, BCP) participants. This process enabled the researcher gain the richness of perspectives on transformative learning experiences and emotional intelligence growth that could not be captured in quantifiable approaches. The detailed interview implementation process is outlined in section 3.6.

### *3.3.2.5 Semi-Structure Interview Piloting and Design*

Two pilot interviews were conducted to ensure clarity of questions and timing of the semi-structured interviews. The final interview schedule was adapted following the pilot process to ensure additional time for the interview participants to expand on learning recollections and Transformative Learning experiences was included. The 26 interviews were hosted by the researcher in geographic locations proximal to the interviewees to ensure their accessibility to the process. The interviewing process is further outlined in the section 3.6.

## **3.4 Selection of Study Participants and Sampling**

In this section, overarching themes pertaining to research participants' selection and the convenience sampling technique will be described with respect to each of the three empirical components of the study.

### ***3.4.1 Rationale for Sample Chosen***

The rationale for choosing the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) graduates as the chosen population in this empirical study stemmed from the reality that the researcher wished to contribute to the research gap / hiatus among this community of learners in Higher Education. In essence, the researcher sought to provide 'voice' to part time adult learners' 'lived life experiences' in higher education especially part time, blended learning graduates. In particular, the BCFS programme or its graduates who formed the core of this empirical study had never been researched previously. This unique insight into the graduates lives was deemed a unique opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge on this un-researched community of learners.

Transformative Learning (TL) is a pragmatic andragogical theory as outlined in the Literature Review as it shows how to interject in learners' lives and aid learners to re-path their trajectory. In this sense, it is a constructive rationale that was adopted by the researcher to identify whether these part time adult learners experienced Transformative Learning (TL)



during the course of their studies on the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) and whether it was sustainable post programme completion.

Critical reflection is a pivotal aspect of Transformative learning, emotional efficacy and maturity (Fleming, 2012a, 2012b; Mezirow, 2000, 2006). Therefore, the researcher sought to garner insight into her professional teaching and practice as an adult educator in a higher education context through this empirical study with part time adult learner graduates. Equally, as the researcher had taught this graduate cohort of previous BCFS part time learners, she had established a trust relationship with them over a number of years as students on the programme and they willingly self-selected into the research process. This convenience sample enabled the researcher to readily access all BCFS graduates in component one (the on-line survey) of the study and contributed to the high response rate among graduate participants of the on-line survey.

Palmer (2004) considered the role of adult and higher education to provide opportunities through the andragogical process to provide harmony in life. Insight into this under-researched part-time adult learner community of BCFS graduates was pivotal to the research rationale. In particular, the researcher sought to capture the deeper meaning transformative learning experiences referred to as 'second order change' experiences (Poutiatine, 2009) of this under-researched community of learners through empirical research on their educational attachment experiences and engagement in the community education andragogical ethos. The impact of transformative learning on this graduate population of adult learners was a core objective of the study to enable the researcher capture empirical data for future andragogical engagement with part-time, under represented adult learners.

Equally, the study sought to capture the BCFS graduates experiential experiences of transformative learning and explored the construct relationship between TL, attachment experiences and emotional intelligence among this BCFS community of learners. Equally, it compared the experiences of graduates on both distance learning and non-distance learning programmes as a comparison. This new departure to compare these

three constructs, Transformative Learning, Emotional Intelligence levels and Attachment Experiences among graduates across programmes was pursued due to the dearth of such research both nationally and internationally. In addition, the demographics of the adult population is increasing in Ireland (CSO, 2018), therefore, the researcher wished to include the voice of adult learners in empirical research to inform future Higher Education policy and practice endeavours for this heretofore under researched part time adult learner community.

Furthermore, as the researcher has worked with adult learners in a community and higher education context for over twenty two years, she wished to engage in action based research with this peripheral community of part-time adult learners and record their perspectives and insight to higher education engagement and the ‘lived life’ sustainability of the experience. This investment in teaching and learning as a realm of passionate scholarship became a driver for the researcher to pursue and gain further reflective practice and critical insight into this part-time adult learner community and it provided a pivotal opportunity to learn from previous learners’ andragogical practices and principles of engagement. Equally, many advocates of Transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; Cranton, 2006; Poutiatine, 2009) and critics (Taylor, 1998; Newman, 2012) have researched this construct from a personal learning perspective or lens. However, in this study, the researcher also sought to capture the personal and collective TL<sup>14</sup> views of other part-time adult learner graduates who had participated in similar blended learning type programmes of study such as the Education and Training and BCP cohorts. This graduate comparison was included in this empirical study to enable the researcher to benchmark the experiences of the BCFS cohort against non-BCFS communities of graduates.

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<sup>14</sup> TL- Transformative Learning

### **3.4.2 Sampling Process**

A convenience sampling approach for Component 1 of the current study was utilised for the BCFS group, as the full population (n=147) were invited to participate in the online survey. Similarly, a convenience sampling approach was used for all Non-BCFS survey respondents. In addition, a convenience sampling technique was used among BCFS participants in Component 2 and Component 3 as sixty-four (n=64) BCFS graduate participants were available to partake based on their expressed consent to participate in Component 2 and Component 3 following their participation in Component 1. A convenience sampling technique was used to ensure all consenting participants had an equal opportunity to be chosen for selection in Component 2 and Component 3 (Creswell 2011, 2013; Bryman 2006). In Component 2, six participants engaged whilst in Component 3, eighteen (n=18) BCFS interviewees engaged; nine participants were available who had previously completed the Diploma in CDP and the other nine consenting participants represented a cross section of BCFS graduates from across the five years of graduates. A convenience sampling technique was used to select the BCP<sup>15</sup> cohort for interviews in Component 3 as all eight (n=8) available were selected and participated. The *Procedures* section details the implementation process pertaining to the respective study components and convenience sampling technique.

### **3.4.3 Participants**

BCFS Respondents were selected to participate in the study on the basis of being a programme graduate. Therefore, all BCFS programme graduates (N=147) who completed their studies between 2010 (when the first set of BCFS graduates finished) and 2014 (when the empirical process commenced) were deemed eligible to partake. In addition, Non-BCFS adult graduates were recruited from two part-time distance learning programmes

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<sup>15</sup> BA in Early Childhood Studies Participants / NON-BCFS group

(BA in Early Childhood Practice Studies [BCP] and BA in Education and Training [E and T]) as a comparator adult learner cohort. Furthermore, a Non-BCFS, non-distance learning degree cohort (Non-DL), from mixed disciplines, was included as an additional comparator to the BCFS programme. Thus, comparisons among BCFS, Non-BCFS and Non-distance learning participants could be made.

#### 3.4.3.1 Component 1 (Online Survey) Participants

Component 1 Participants were chosen based on convenience sampling as all graduates of the respective programmes were deemed eligible as graduates to partake in the study. Therefore, all graduates who exited the BCFS between 2010 and 2014 were eligible to participate (n=147). Equally, all BCP and Education graduates that completed their studies in 2014 were eligible. In terms of the non-distance learning population, all respondents to the social media links that self-identified as full-time, non-distance learning graduates were eligible to partake.

#### 3.4.3.2 Component 2 (Interactive Management) Participants

Nineteen BCFS graduates had consented to partake in Component 2 but only a subset of the BCFS population (see Table 3.4) were available on the scheduled IM evening due to unforeseen personal circumstances that prevented the participants' involvement in the IM session. This matter will be further considered in the study limitations section of this chapter.

Table 3.4 IM Participation

<b>Group</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Nature of Programme</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>BCFS</b>	6	BCFS degree graduates only	6 females

3.4.3.3 Component 3 (Semi-structured Interviews) Participants

In terms of BCFS population (Population 1 and Population 2), the eighteen were chosen on a convenience sampling basis from the available population of sixty four (n=64). Population 3 were selected based on a convenience sample too as all available participants were included in the process (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Interview Participation

Name	Number of Interviews	Nature of Programme	Characteristics
<b>Population 1<sup>16</sup></b> (Participant 'a- i')	9	BCFS degree graduates only	2 males and 7 females
<b>Population 2<sup>17</sup></b> (Participant 'j- r')	9	BCFS and Diploma in CDP graduates	4 males and 5 females
<b>Population 3<sup>18</sup></b> (Participant 's- z')	8	BCP graduates only	8 females

Component 1, Component 2 and Component 3 participant characteristics are outlined in the earlier table, Table 3.2.

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<sup>16</sup> **Population 1** consists of graduates of the BCFS only.

<sup>17</sup> **Population 2** consists of graduates of the BCFS who had previously completed the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programme.

<sup>18</sup> **Population 3** consists of graduates of another part-time distance learning degree programme at NUIG, the Bachelors of Arts in Early Childhood Practice (BCP).

### 3.5 Materials and Measures

The previous section considered the Study participants and the sampling technique for their selection. In this section the measures used to collect and code the empirical data across the three components of the study are presented.

#### 3.5.1 *Approved Measures*

The materials and measurement instruments in this study were chosen to enable the empirical process present a deeper knowledge and insight into adult learners lives specifically, the BCFS population. The three core measurement instruments were selected based on academic literature consulted on the instruments use and relevance to this current study. King's work on transformative learning theory (King 2000, 2002, 2009a; Cranton and King 2003) and its application to andragogy practice has been considered in Chapter 2. Equally, Schutte and colleagues' work (Schutte *et al.* 1998, 2002; Schutte and Malouff 2011; Bhullar *et al.* 2012) on emotional intelligence measurement as discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. In addition, the importance of recording attachment experiences across the lifecycle is discussed in the literature review ( Main *et al.* 1985; Bowlby 1979, 1988; Fleming 2008; Kaplan and Main 2008; Daniel 2013). Therefore, the academic validity of the measures consulted and applied in this current study was discussed in detail with the doctoral supervisor before the instruments were adapted in the case of the attachment and TL measure. However, as Schutte *et al.*'s EI measure has a universal open access policy, its implementation in the study did not require any adaption.

Therefore, the three approved measurement instruments; King's (1998) Learning Activities Survey (LAS); Schutte *et al.*'s Emotional Intelligence Scale (1998) and Kaplan and Main's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol (1985) were selected to gauge the core constructs of transformative learning, attachment and emotional intelligence in the current study. The specific adaptations are mapped alongside the theoretical constructs of the study in Table 3.6. The finalised surveys, IM and interview schedule templates are available in the appendices (see **Appendices 1-6**).

Table 3.6 Map of the Study Constructs to the Approved Measures

Construct	Measurement Instruments
<p><b>Transformative Learning (TL) Experiences</b></p>	<p>Permission for adaption of Kathleen King’s (1998) Learning Activities Survey (LAS) for use within the study was granted by King to the researcher in 2014. The adaption of the LAS based on terminology and language use in Irish educational context as opposed to US model was deemed necessary by researcher (See Appendix 1 for adapted LAS). King’s LAS was based on Mezirow’s (1978) 10 phases to experience TL (see Table 3.7 for listing of King’s LAS items and Mezirow’s TL phases).</p> <p>The researcher’s LAS adapted questions were issued to all graduates in the final online survey questionnaire (Component 1) (see appendices 2-5)</p> <p>In the IM process (Component 2), the researcher set the following target question to engage the participants in the discussion: <i>‘What aspect(s) of the BCFS programme impacted on your life with respect to Transformative Learning?’</i></p> <p>The LAS was also adapted for use in the Semi-structured Interview schedule to cross check understanding and meaning of the TL concept among respondents (see IM protocol in Appendix 9)</p>
<p><b>Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels</b></p>	<p>Schutte <i>et al.</i>’s Emotional Intelligence Scale (1998) with the 4 subscales (Perception of Emotions; Managing own Emotions; Managing others’ Emotions and Utilisation of Emotions) was used in its original form with no adaption in the online survey (Component 1) of the study (see EI scale in Appendix 6).</p> <p>In Component 2 (IM) and 3 (interviews), discussion on the meaning of EI to participants was considered across Schutte <i>et al.</i>’s four subscales.</p>

Table 3.6 Continued

<p><b>Educational Attachment Experience</b></p>	<p>Kaplan and Main’s Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol (1985) was adapted for use in the study as no model to measure educational attachment experiences of adults could be sourced. The five categories adapted from Kaplan and Main’s model were: Nonfamily Attachment Influences; Child Attachment Experience in the home; Attachment Experience in School as a Young person; Attachment Experience in Education as an Adult; Other Family member Attachment Influences. However, the coding of the protocol did prove complex as the researcher did not have full access to Kaplan and Main’s model as it was restricted access due to copyright and costs. Therefore Component 1 analysis required an SPSS interpretation of the attachment question data presented (see Appendix 7 for the researcher’s adaptation of the attachment questions and coding used).</p> <p>All participants in Component 1, the online survey questionnaire were asked to consider their early childhood, adolescent and adulthood attachment experience especially in relation to formal education based on Kaplan and Main’s AAI -5 categories.</p> <p>In Component 2 (interactive management), the BCFS graduate participants were asked to outline ideas and constructs that reflected attachment and educational attachment experiences linked to transformative learning experience during or on completion of the programme. (see Appendix 9 for IM protocol)</p> <p>In Component 3 (interviews), the attachment themed questions within the semi-structured interviews focused specifically on educational supporters and mentors in participants lives. (see Appendix 15 and 16 interview schedule detail)</p>
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Table 3.6 Continued

<p><b>Andragogical Process</b></p>	<p>In all three Components of the primary data collection process, questions were devised and discussions focused on the teaching and learning experience of graduate participants during the BCFS programme.</p> <p>All respondents in Component 1, the survey questionnaire were asked questions on the learning and andragogical experience within the LAS<sup>19</sup>.</p> <p>In Component 2, the interactive management process, respondents were asked to relate concepts from the part-time educational process that impacted or influenced their lives post programme completion.</p> <p>In Component 3, the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to consider how and why the educational journey influenced their experience.</p>
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### **3.5.2 Component 1: Materials and Measures**

#### *3.5.2.1 Transformative Learning (TL) measure*

Transformative learning was coined as a theoretical construct in 1978 by Mezirow as outlined in Chapter 2 and this development in understanding perspective change in adult learners' lives assists in deconstructing why learning and the meaning of distinct perspectives and frames of reference vary among adult learners. TL assists in the process of demystifying for many educators and learners why and how people learn in different andragogical processes.

For the researcher, the discovery of Mezirow's theoretical perspective and his construction of the Transformative Learning (TL) Ten Phases (1978) have assisted in the deductive approach to using this theoretical framework to design and measure this construct in this research process (see Table 3.7).

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<sup>19</sup>King's Learning Activities Survey

However, it was difficult to find a TL measure that would map specifically the approach to this study that the researcher wished to pursue. King’s Learning Activities Survey (LAS) that she devised in 1998 while working with adult learners across a spectrum of community and higher education initiatives in the US echoed with the researcher as a model that would mirror her work in community and higher education in Ireland. King had mirrored the LAS measure on Mezirow’s ten TL phases which were discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. The researcher has matched and summarised the theoretical constructs that both theorists presented in this table to evidence the applicability of the LAS Measure to the current study objectives to explore TL (see Table 3.7).

**Table 3.7 King (2009) and Mezirow (1978) TL Construct Comparison Summary**

<b>Mezirow’s 10 TL phases ( 1978)</b>	<b>King’s LAS Items (1998)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Experiencing a disorienting dilemma</li> <li>2) Undergoing self-examination</li> <li>3) Conducting a deep assessment of personal role assumptions and alienation created by new role</li> <li>4) Sharing and analysing discontent and similar experiences with others</li> <li>5) Exploring options for new ways of thinking</li> <li>6) Building competence and self-confidence in new role</li> <li>7) Planning a course of action</li> <li>8) Acquiring knowledge and skills for action</li> <li>9) Trying new roles and assessing feedback</li> <li>10) Reintegrating into society with a new perspective</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act.</li> <li>✚ As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.</li> <li>✚ I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.</li> <li>✚ I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.</li> <li>✚ I feel uncomfortable with traditional social expectations</li> <li>✚ I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.</li> <li>✚ I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.</li> <li>✚ I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.</li> <li>✚ I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.</li> </ul>

The researcher wrote to the publisher and Kathleen King as the LAS author and requested permission to use and adapt the model for her research. The response from the author, Kathleen King was very positive and she granted full permission to adapt the survey as required. So the main adaptations (as outlined in Appendix 1) that the researcher had to make to the model were concerned with language use of the educational structures in Ireland that differed from the US original model.

Another key aspect that the researcher had to adapt was to ensure that she did not ask questions through the online survey questionnaire that were so personal that could have triggered an emotional reaction amongst participants while completing the survey. So if there were questions pertaining to personal life triggers of change in perspective such as divorce or bereavement, all learners were given the choice to/ not to complete those questions. This will be discussed further in the ethics section in terms of ensuring no emotional harm is caused to respondents through the researcher's work.

The LAS measure and question sequence was really useful and guided the researcher to complete the survey design in a structured manner in order to capture both the epochal and incremental TL experiences of TL within the online survey questionnaire issued in Component 1 to all BCFS graduates. However, the analysis and coding of King's LAS measure became difficult as guidance on the coding and values /weightings given to specific questions was specific to the LAS measure and did not cater for the adaptations. Therefore, the researcher had to devise a value system through SPSS to decipher indicators of TL among respondents in the closed ended questions. However, the open-ended TL statements and quotes issued by respondents were also captured in the thematic qualitative analysis in the Results and Discussion chapters.

#### *3.5.2.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI) Measure*

Emotional Intelligence measurement in Adult and Higher Education is an under-researched concept in Ireland. The Emotional Intelligence measurement process is deemed significant to gauge in this study as the

majority of the adult learners who have participated on the BCFS have returned to education after significant absence. The emotional intelligence of adult learners is armour that can equip them with resilience and endurance throughout their studies (Schutte *et al.* 1998, 2002; Schutte and Malouff 2011; Maguire *et al.* 2017). Therefore, the researcher is committed in this study to exploring whether this is a suitable EI measurement tool to capture participants' EI levels on completion of the BCFS programme and compare EI levels to other distance learning programmes and non-distance learning programmes' participants.

Schutte *et al.*'s (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale was deemed suitable for a number of reasons. It had an identifiable series of questions that could be included in the online survey questionnaire (Component 1) that did not require adjustment for the Irish context. This was an ideal fit for the BCFS cohort and the related questionnaires that seek to measure the EI levels of graduates of the programmes in question. In addition, Schutte and colleagues' coding guidelines were in open access format and very easy to follow and implement in the analysis stage. Equally, Schutte's measurement of EI was clearly mapped into four subscales (Managing one's own emotions; Managing others' Emotions; Perception of Emotions and Utilisation of Emotions) which added significant validity to the data analysis process when analysing adult learners EI levels. The EI results will be mapped out in Chapter 5.

### 3.5.2.3 Attachment Measure

The attachment experiences of adult learners are an essential element in the learning journey to consider within this study. Fleming and Finnegan (2011) and (Schuetz and Slowey 2012) refer to the life experience and barriers that life issues can have on access, retention and success in higher education. Therefore, the researcher wishes to consider what the attachment experiences of these adult learners were and whether the BCFS programme, learning or pastoral support, impacted upon the attachment experience.

There was no formal log or recording of attachment experiences of BCFS graduates on entry to the programme. However, informal discussions and

information provided by the graduates while students of the programme suggested that attachment experiences for some in early life impacted upon their educational pathways in life. Therefore, the researcher sought to explore the BCFS graduates attachment experiences and whether it was influenced by participation on the BCFS programme. As attachment experiences can have a huge emotional reaction for learners, the researcher sought to concentrate on recording and analysing the educational connection of the attachment experience. The researcher considered many models of therapeutic based attachment, however as her training was in the social sciences she chose to adopt and adapt Kaplan and Main's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol (1985) as it was deemed the most detailed one in terms of its review of the educational impact of attachment. So core questions that related to role models and specifically educational supports and supporters across childhood, adolescence and adulthood were included in this study's measure of attachment. The five categories of attachment adapted from Kaplan and Main's AAI Protocol were Nonfamily Attachment Influences; Child Attachment Experience in the home; Attachment Experience in School as a Young person; Attachment Experience in Education as Adult; Other family member Attachment Influences. However, the coding structure of the questions was not available to the researcher through Kaplan and Main's protocol due to copyright issues, so the researcher devised values in SPSS to consider the educational attachment evidence that was presented in Kaplan and Main's adapted model in the study.

In Component 1, the online survey, the questions were adapted and responded to clearly by most BCFS respondents and the other distance learning programme respondents. However, some graduate respondents from the non-distance learning programmes did not complete the attachment questions. The researcher suggests that as the non-distance learning respondents did not know or have a previous trust relationship with the researcher this may have impacted on the poor response rate from this Non-BCFS cohort for this aspect of the online survey. This will be further considered in the discussion, Chapter 6.

### **3.5.3 Component 2: Materials and Measures**

#### *3.5.3.1 Transformative Learning Measure*

As outlined in Component 1, King's Learning Activities Survey items informed Component 2 of the process. The second component was Interactive Management which enabled the researcher pose a target question on the impacts of transformative learning to participants in line with Objective 4 of the overall study. This IM process with the BCFS graduates has provided an evidenced based conceptual model of the 'lived life' transformation that the BCFS programme has offered the graduate participants. The findings and graphic (Figure 5.1) will be displayed in the results, Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6 respectively. However, it is important to note from a methodological perspective, that the IM face-to-face engagement process offered a research space and continuum to BCFS graduate participants to personally and collectively share a wealth of rich and valuable factors that they agreed upon that have led to the development of TL<sup>20</sup> in adult learners on the BCFS programme and that have been sustained post programme completion. Equally, the adult participants present found it valuable to see a conceptual model evolve from their engagement and develop while they discussed TL and the other study constructs.

#### *3.5.3.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI) Measure*

The EI concepts and ideas such as self-esteem, mentoring and motivation were presented by the BCFS participants which reflect EI development and growth while they were participants and later graduates of the BCFS programme. These ideas and concepts that evolved in the IM process are reflective of Schutte and colleagues' (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale and its four subscales (see Appendix 6). This personal and collective discussion through the IM process offered valuable critical thinking time to

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<sup>20</sup> TL- transformative learning

the participants. For some BCFS graduates, the IM research process was an emotional awakening and consciousness that was an unintended outcome for them as study participants and they remarked on the positive benefit of this aspect from the process to the researcher in email communications post the IM engagement. The unintended effects of the research tools and measures will be considered in the study discussion, Chapter 6. The IM conceptual model (Figure 5.1) reflects each of the four EI subscales in the thematic output framework outlined in the results chapter, Chapter 5.

#### *3.5.3.3 Attachment Measure*

The IM modelling process evidenced significant educational attachment experiences that impacted positively on BCFS graduate participants in the BCFS programme. Notably, BCFS graduates raised concepts during the IM session such as the ‘value of education’ and ‘social relationships’ that reflect positive education attachment from the BCFS programme. The detailed results and discussion of the IM conceptual output and results will be dealt with in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

### **3.5.4 Component 3: Materials and Measures**

#### *3.5.4.1 Transformative Learning Measure*

As outlined in Component 1 and Component 2, King’s Learning Activities Survey (LAS) items informed the Component 3 process. The third component in which the researcher used King’s LAS adapted measure was the semi-structured interviews. In this stage, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selection of BCFS and BCP graduates. The semi-structured interviews offered a more fluid and open-ended approach to the discussion of TL with respondents through the semi-structured interview schedule questions. Once again the adapted LAS questions from the online survey in Component 1 were tweaked for the interview process to enable a more natural discussion evolve to tease out meaning and understanding. The face to face interviews were very valuable in terms of explaining in person to the participants the theoretical constructs of TL and opening up the conversation to seek their perspectives on its existence through the

BCFS programme or other life experiences. It did unfold in the analysis of Component 1 and 3 that some participants that engaged in both components had a different perception of what TL meant to them based on the interview questions in comparison to what they recorded in the original online survey. The discussion, Chapter 6, will explore and consider the reasoning for some of these developments.

In terms of the methodological observation on King's LAS measure, the researcher would suggest that the TL LAS measure adapted in this Component 3 is more amenable as a construct to consider in a qualitative research approach such as the semi-structured interview than it was as a quantitative online survey tool.

#### *3.5.4.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI) Measure*

Schutte *et al.*'s (1998) four subscales were used as prompts in the semi-structured interview schedule in Component 3, and this allowed the BCFS respondents to consider each of the subscales separately and collectively in terms of examples offered to the researcher of their meaning. The qualitative data from this thematic review of EI through the subscales is showcased in the results, Chapter 5. From a methodology perspective, the researcher posits that requesting graduates to consider EI levels using Schutte *et al.*'s Scale and the four subscales across the three components increased the richness of the data shared.

#### *3.5.4.3 Attachment Measure*

In the third component, the attachment questions from Kaplan and Main's AAI<sup>21</sup> protocol (1985) were addressed in a more open-ended prompt format within the interview schedule and participants from the BCFS and BCP programme were asked to discuss role models in their educational life path and the impact of those people on their access and retention in education in

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<sup>21</sup> AAI- Adult Attachment Interview



adulthood with respect to the BCFS and BCP programmes respectively. This process provided really rich personal experiences, a selection of them are recorded in the qualitative section of the results, Chapter 5.

In the next section, the data collection and analysis processes will be considered.

### **3.6 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

Within this section, the specific data collection and analysis procedures undertaken in this specific study will be considered with respect to each of the three study components; Online surveys, Interactive Management and Semi-Structured Interviews.

#### **3.6.1 Component 1: Online Survey Procedures**

The four online surveys were issued on a phased basis commencing with the BCFS population, thereafter the non-BCFS distance learning grouping and finally the non-BCFS non-distance learning community (see survey template for each survey in Appendices 2-5). As the researcher used survey monkey as the instrument to issue and collate the initial survey data, it provided a secure, password protected repository for participant data which was accessible only by the researcher and used to cross-check throughout the analysis and SPSS coding process. The data gathered in Component 1 was the fundamental building block that informed the other two Components of the research process. The attachment measure based on Kaplan and Main's (1985) adult attachment interview protocol and the transformative learning measure based on King's LAS (1998) respectively had to be adapted for the online survey to safeguard against potential emotional harm occurring to respondents operating at a distance from the researcher. However, Schutte *et al.*'s Emotional Intelligence Scale was used in its original form. Equally, a robust level of participation was evidenced in Component 1 survey responses especially among BCFS respondents, which is indicated in Chapter 5, Table 5.12.

In Component 1, the validity and reliability of the measures were considered concisely to ensure that all measures would stand up to the rigour of assessment and review. Equally the reliability of these measures used in other educational settings was researched in advance of the researcher undertaking this study (Schutte and Malouff 2011). The online survey tool was deemed valid and the reliability of the measures considered therein required significant time and piloting. Therefore, the key aspects that had to be considered in this component were that each of the variables to be measured (EI, TL and Attachment) was clear in the survey.

As Schutte *et al.*'s EI model and measure existed and was not adapted in the survey stage, there was no concern in terms of reliability and validity of the measure. It was checked in SPSS for reliability on Cronbach's Alpha across the thirty three item Emotional Intelligence Scale which captures the four subscales (see Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8 EI Reliability Statistics**

<b>EI Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.837	33

However as King's LAS Transformative Learning and Kaplan and Main's AAI, Attachment measures required adaption before inclusion in the questionnaire, the researcher had to ensure the validity and reliability was evident in the analysis of the data through SPSS coding. Cronbach Alpha reliability scale (see Table 3.9) was used to check Kaplan and Main's AAI adapted measure which was conducted across the forty one item attachment scale devised across the five attachment categories (detailed earlier in section 3.6).

Table 3.9 Attachment Reliability Statistics

<b>AAI Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	41

Equally, the researcher checked King's adapted LAS measure based on the researcher's adapted scale of identification or non-identification of TL. An SPSS review for reliability using Cronbach Alpha reliability scale was undertaken.

There was no specific measure used to measure the effectiveness or impact of the andragogical approach on the graduates as it was deemed most suitable to the qualitative data collection process as part of Component 3. However a series of perspectives in the open ended questions in Component 1 and the experiences shared in researcher-participant discussions within component 2 and 3 were used to gauge this construct's value in the study. This approach was checked and approved by the researcher's supervisor and another member of GRC for coherence to the research objectives and core research ethical precepts.

Component 1 included the empirical data to be collected through an online survey data collection tool, Survey Monkey. Then the data was analysed in SPSS (version 23) to produce the comparative and descriptive analyses of the survey data. This data is presented in statistical form in Chapter 5 and the data is analysed and interpreted in line with the research objectives in the discussion, Chapter 6 of this study.

### **3.6.2 Component 2: Interactive Management Procedures**

In this study, the Interactive Management (IM) Process provided an opportunity to engage participants in a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. This mixed methods approach within IM offered learners face to face qualitative discussions and engagement with fellow graduates while also offering participants opportunities to quantitatively

weigh up the prioritised themes to include in the Interpretative Structural Model (ISM). In this context, IM provides both a qualitative and quantitative lens in which to pursue the overarching research question.

The IM process in this study included six BCFS graduates (N=6) who had completed the programme at different intervals between 2010 and 2014. Even though this was a subgroup of the BCFS graduate population, it was deemed valid based on the work of researchers (Dwyer et al., 2017; 2015 and 2014b). These researchers espouse the premise that a small population participating in the IM process do not negatively impact on the depth and richness of the data presented. These academics (Dwyer et al., 2014b; Dwyer et al., 2017) have argued that the IM process should be conducted with clusters of six participants; therefore, a singular grouping of six participants as used in this research study did not compromise or negatively impact on the reliability or validity of the output. The results evident in the IM structural map (Figure 5.1) reflected the originality of thought and range of perspective shared by each graduate participant in the IM process.

IM possesses a very structured, systematic process of engagement with participants through a designated set of procedures, designed to respond to each stage of group interaction and the requirements of the IM situation. The most common methodologies used in IM are the nominal group technique (NGT), idea writing, interpretive structural modelling (ISM), and field and profile representations. The first two methodologies are primarily employed for the purpose of generating ideas that are then structured using one or more of the latter three methodologies into a conceptual model (Dwyer *et al.* 2017).

In the IM process, the researcher shared the following definition from Dirkx (1998, p. 9) 'transformative learning is essentially a way of understanding adult learning as a meaning-making process aimed at fostering a democratic vision of society and self-actualization of individuals' with the participants before the NGT process commenced, thus, all participants shared a working definition of 'transformative learning' for the purposes of the IM session. The researcher chose to use the nominal group technique to assist the

generation of the ideas among BCFS participants. The nominal group technique (NGT) is a method that allows individual participants' ideas to be pooled and is best used in situations in which uncertainty and disagreements exist about the nature of possible ideas (Dwyer *et al.* 2014; Dwyer *et al.* 2017). The researcher considered the NGT technique appropriate for this idea generation stage of IM as many of the graduate cohort selected for the IM process were not familiar with one another and had not worked collectively previously. In addition, the topic under discussion, transformative learning possesses many different meanings to adult learners, so the nominal group technique was deemed most suitable to arriving at a working model of ideas for consideration.

The nominal group technique involves five key steps based on the identified best practice literature: (a) presentation of a stimulus question to participants; (b) silent generation of ideas in writing by each participant working alone; (c) "round-robin" presentation of ideas by participants, with recording on flipchart by the researcher of these ideas and posting of the flipchart paper on walls surrounding the group; (d) serial discussion of the listed ideas by participants for sole purpose of clarifying their meaning (i.e., no evaluation of ideas is allowed at this point); and (e) implementation of a closed voting process in which each participant is asked to select and rank five ideas from the list, with the results compiled and displayed for review by the group (Warfield and Cardenas 1994; Dwyer 2014).

This gradual and systematic idea generation by individuals offered all BCFS graduate participants' time to reflect upon and present their own ideas in a safe setting before sharing them with the collective of fellow BCFS participants. This opportunity to work as individuals firstly and secondly as a member of a collective is a noteworthy aspect of the IM methodology especially for data collection purposes among vulnerable or disadvantaged communities in the social sciences. This idea generation phase was a very energetic and engaging process which took the participants about one and a half hours to collate ideas which was facilitated by the researcher.

The innovation of applying the IM data gathering tool into this adult and community research process was very informative to the researcher. It enabled the researcher to marry classical data collection tools such as online surveys and semi-structured interviews with a modern instrument that is not traditionally associated with data collection in the social sciences discipline, but is more so used in the psychology discipline. This mixed methods approach within the same given instrument enabled the scope and richness of the participants' data to be showcased as the brainstorming and discussions evolved in the IM methodological process at the given data collection experience. However, the IM process did not reflect in detail on attachment life experiences as it was an open public focus group and the personal histories of participants had to be safeguarded. The output of results through the IM conceptual model was deemed a tangible and constructive approach to data collection by all the BCFS participants in this component of the study. The validity and reliability of this structured IM collection tool enabled ethical principles to be safeguarded by the researcher.

The IM modelling tool has a recorded valid and reliable structure and format devised by Warfield and Cardenas (1994) that the researcher followed. This enabled the management of the ideas, concepts and themes to emerge in a respondent driven environment. The conceptual model (see Figure 5.1) developed through the IM engagement can be viewed in the results, Chapter 5. This concept model offers a robust and valid measurement indicator of the IM process which serves as a connecting component between the quantitative and qualitative approaches to this study.

The data analysis methodology adopted by the IM process was self-evident in the conceptual map (Figure 5.1) that the IM process created. This conceptual model that evolved from the IM process acted as a coding tree to further deduce and analyse themes from within the qualitative interview data and these interpretations are collated in the discussion, Chapter 6 of this study.

### **3.6.3 Component 3: Semi-Structured Interviews Procedures**

Two pilot interviews were conducted to ensure clarity of questions and timing of the semi-structured interviews. The final interview schedule was adapted following the pilot process to ensure additional time for the interview participants to expand on learning recollections and Transformative Learning experiences was included. All feasible recommendations were accommodated. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in the local community, home or venue of choice in which the participants lived to enable their access to the process. Each interview was recorded with consent from participants, which varied in length from forty-five minutes to two hours. The reliability was sustained in Component 3 by the researcher re-emphasising questions from Component 1 in the semi-structured interviews. This was particularly emphasized in terms of re-enforcing the same understanding of the three main constructs; TL EI and Attachment in the interviews that was used in Component 1 and 2. However, only two cohorts participated in the interviews that had participated in the surveys (the BCFS and BCP cohorts). So respondents from survey 1 and survey 2 within Component one were the core focus of ensuring valid and reliable alignment to questions was sustained across the interview questions within both components of the study. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed a more open-ended interpretation of the themes on occasion. This was particularly fruitful for the TL aspect as it became apparent that some learners in survey one and survey two that participated in the interviews had a greater understanding of the meaning and could map experiences more fluidly when they met the researcher in person in Component 3.

This reiterates the point that adult learners need diverse research tools and processes to express and share their voice. It could be extrapolated that the distance, non-contact form of the online survey tool did not suit all respondents to share their perspectives. Meanwhile the face-to-face semi-structured interview process with the researcher became a more reliable and a safer space for adult graduate participants to share their personal perspectives.

In this study, the researcher used a Thematic Analysis Approach to interpret and present the qualitative data findings. Braun and Clarke's Thematic Approach (2006) is framed on the construct that words, phrases and patterns within qualitative interview data create meaning and insight into participants lives that require understanding and consideration. The data analysis methodology adopted by this study for the qualitative element in Component 3 is based on the principles of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). As Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 18) point out:

*...words are the way that most people come to understand their situations; we create our world with words; we explain ourselves with words; we defend and hide ourselves with words.*

Therefore, in qualitative data analysis and research results interpretation,

*...the task of the researcher is to find patterns within those words and to present those patterns for others to inspect while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it.*

(Maykut and Morehouse 1994, p.18).

The Thematic Approach adopted by Braun and Clarke has evolved from Maykut and Morehouse (1994) approach in which the philosophical reasoning for engaging in qualitative data collection and analysis is premised on the posture of 'indwelling' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, pg 5). 'Indwelling' is a posture which is concerned with one's 'way of being' and refers to one's state or condition in relation to other persons or situations. Therefore, the researcher through the qualitative analysis was keen to decipher individual and collective meaning from each of the twenty six interviews conducted with part time adult learner BCFS and BCP graduates.

This process of data analysis was undertaken through a series of five phases that provided a triangulated approach to the researcher (see Figure 3.1). Phase one consisted of repeated listening to the interview recordings, transcription of the interviews into word documents which were read and re-



read in conjunction with field notes and interview observations. Each interview was transcribed into a word document and coded for themes based on results from the Interactive Management (IM) primary data collection process in Component 2. The thematic analysis based on the IM model facilitated the researcher to seek out threads of perspective and sentiment based on identified variables by other graduates within the study. All interviews were transcribed and cross-checked with participants via email with them to ensure it reflected their 'voice' before any analysis was undertaken.

Phase two, involved the researcher creating a PowerPoint coding map of the interactive management (IM) themes that reflected on the initial observations from phase one of the thematic analysis. The researcher used the Interpretative Structural Model (ISM) which is the model which evolved from the graduates engagement and participation in the Interactive Management Process (IM) in component two of the study. Therefore, the ISM from the IM process (see Figure 3.2) was used as a coding tree for preliminary data analysis to aid the thematic process used to interpret the qualitative semi-structured interview data.

Phase three of the thematic analysis directed the researcher to introduce Mezirow's three theoretical themes of transformative learning; social, developmental and historical experiences. The researcher scoped the qualitative interview data using Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (2000) three pronged approach to capture transformative learning experiences from the qualitative primary data. These three stemmed themes are social, developmental and historical transformative learning experiences. The researcher sought to log, categorise and record any incidents of these TL experiences within and across the twenty six interviews which comprised of three populations (Population 1, BCFS; Population 2, subset of BCFS who previously completed Diploma in CDP and the third population were the BCP graduates). This triangulated process enabled the researcher to search for both transferability of patterns and meaning and uniqueness of experiences among the twenty six participants.

Phase four directed the researcher to write memos linking each population cluster's experiences to theory from the extant literature review including Mezirow's work. This process also enabled the researcher to identify 'emergent', 'divergent' and 'convergent' themes that surfaced in the interview data. The interviews were really pivotal to the expansion of emergent themes such as adult learner agency, identity and civic consciousness and theoretical constructs such as TL, EI and Attachment considered in Component 1 and Component 2. It enabled the multi-dimensional and heterogeneity of the adult learner participants' experiences to surface.

Phase five of the process facilitated the researcher to create a thematic framework for the study results chapter write up per population where quotes were selected and grouped based on overall research objectives and emergent themes of importance based on the previous four phases of analysis. This process facilitated the researcher to group the qualitative quotes per population and research study objective. The semi-structured interview process gave voice and empirical evidenced examples to the personal learning journey of the participant graduates of part-time community and higher education programmes in NUI Galway. The requirement to ensure anonymity to the personal learning experiences shared was safeguarded by the researcher through the allocation of alphabetised details instead of named participant details in the Results, Chapter, 5.

Bazeley (2007) reflected that deeper level analysis of qualitative data provides a richer texture and meaning to data shared through qualitative processes. Therefore, the phased approaches intended to draw meaning and deeper insight through cross checking the IM and Mezirow's theoretic framework with the 'incidents' and lived life experiences that surfaced in the interview data. Thus the five phases chosen to contextualise and make meaning provided insight to these graduates' voices within and across the qualitative data. This equally provided purpose and function to the thematic process undertaken. It was in essence a consolidated strategy to gauge meaning by describing, comparing and relating qualitative data to the extant

literature and the other empirical primary data collection components (surveys and IM) of the study.

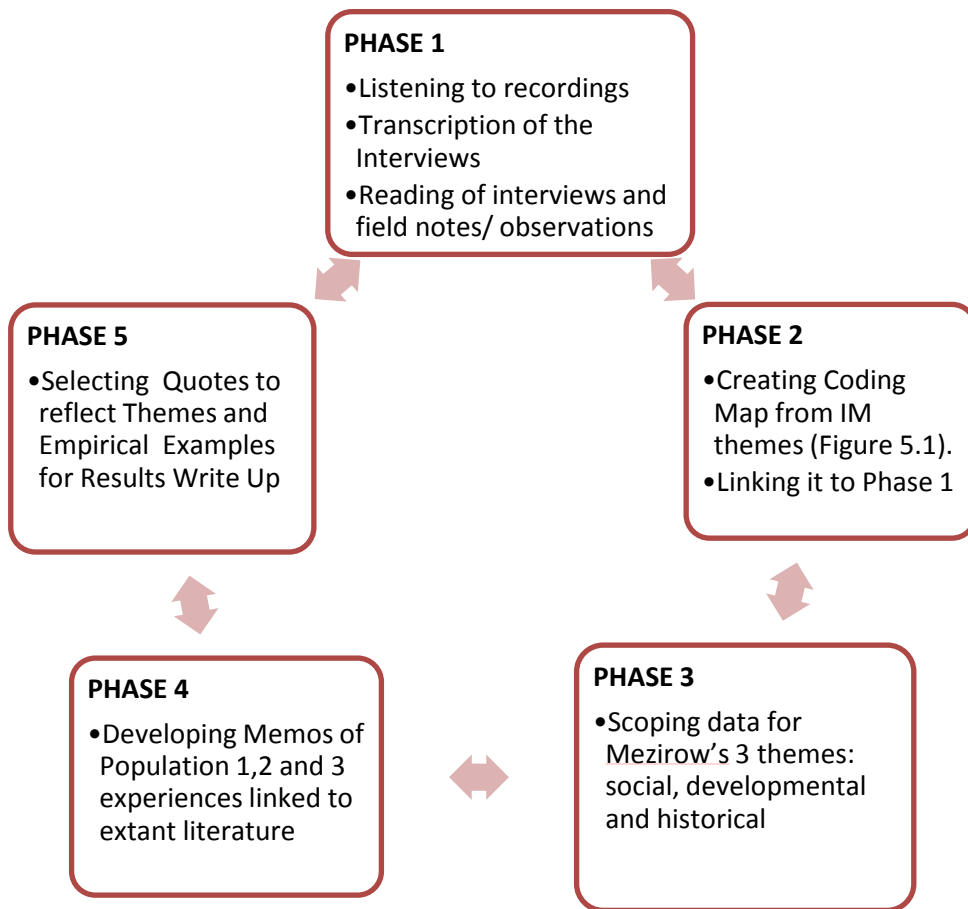


Figure 3.1 Thematic Analysis of Component 3: Model and Approach

Figure 3.2: IM outputs as coding tree for Phase 2 of Thematic Analysis

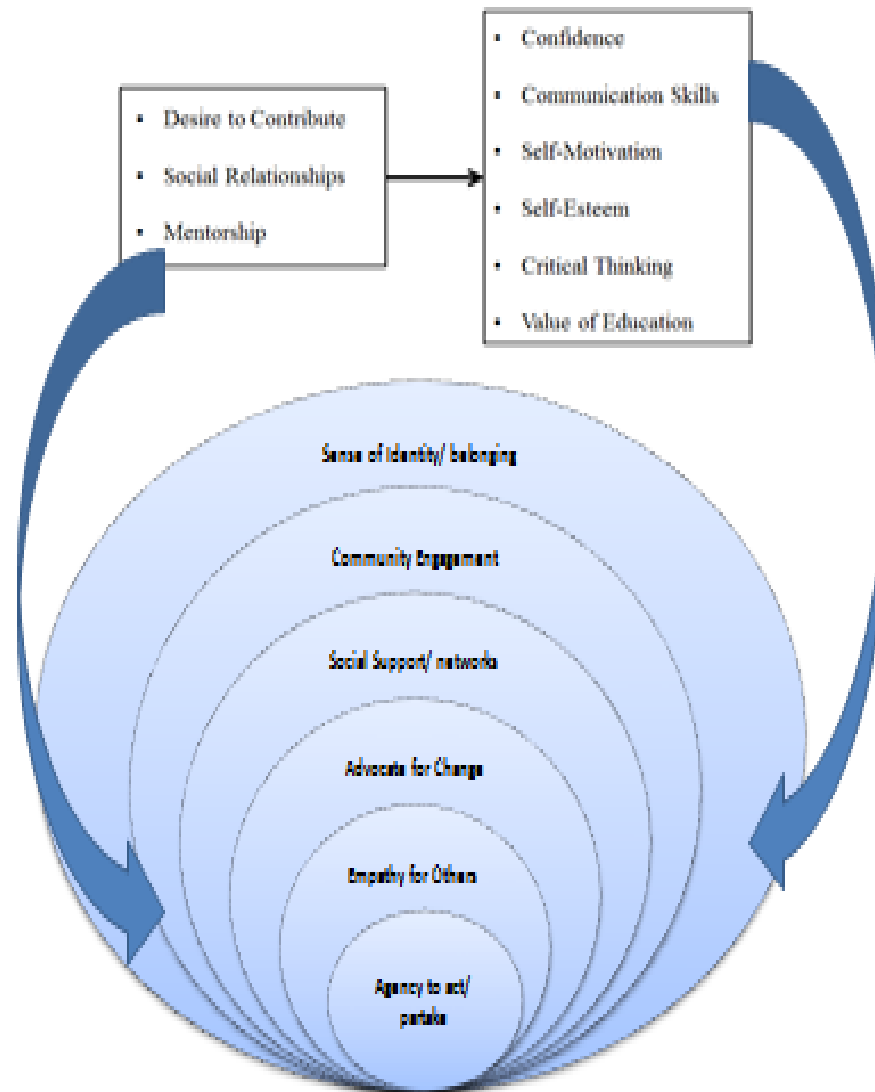


Figure 3.2 IM Outputs as a Coding Tree in Phase 2 of Thematic Analysis

Consequently, the data analysis approach the researcher used in Component 3 was constructed to ensure the participants' voices surfaced through a thematic analysis and indigenous themed approach. The conceptual model that evolved from the IM process acted as a coding tree to further deduce and analyse themes from within the qualitative interview data (see Figure 3.2).

Table 3.10 provides a brief summary of the Study procedures across Component 1, Component 2 and Component 3.

**Table 3.10 Participants and Participation Levels across Study Components**

	<b>Component 1</b>	<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Component 3</b>
<b>Study Participants/ Respondents</b>	<b>Online Survey Questionnaire</b>	<b>Interactive Management Component</b>	<b>Semi- structured interviews</b>
<b>BCFS Adult Distance learners (BCFSADL)</b>	N=104 responded	N=6	N=18
<b>Non- BCFS Adult Distance learners (NONBCFSADL)</b>	N= 22 {N=5 (Education and Training programme) N=17 (BCPprogramme)}	None	N= 8 (BCP Programme)
<b>Non- BCFS Non-distance learners (NONBCFSNONDL)</b>	N= 38	None	None
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>N= 164</b>	<b>N=6</b>	<b>N= 26</b>

### 3.7 Ethics and Limitations

#### 3.7.1 Ethical Considerations and Processes

The researcher compiled her research ethics documentation and received full approval to proceed with the study in December 2013 by NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee. The core ethical considerations are outlined in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Study Ethical Considerations

Ethical Issue	Contingency Action
Willingness of non-BCFS research community/ students and or stakeholders to participate in research.	The researcher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined clearly the purpose of study to all populations/ samples selected.</li> <li>• Engaged with collegiate and university networks to recruit non-BCFS, distance learning and non-distance learning respondents.</li> </ul>
Personal / researcher bias that had to be factored into research process. The fact that the researcher is a staff member involved in the design, management and delivery of the BCFS programmes had to be considered.	The researcher enabled graduate participants to respond anonymously, openly and objectively in Component 1 which was the online survey questionnaire. The researcher also chose to only engage with graduate participants to reduce the bias or potential pressure BCFS non-graduates might anticipate if they engaged with their programme director as a research participant.

The specific ethical considerations for the three empirical components of the study include:

#### *3.7.1.1 Informed Consent*

All participants across all 3 components of the process had to sign a pre-approved consent form. The approval process was overseen by the Graduate Research Committee (GRC) in tandem with the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee. No participant questioned the approval or consent process and understood the research protocols of the given study component. Appendices 8-10 include a copy of a blank consent form, protocol and debriefing sheet for each component of the primary data collection process.

#### *3.7.1.2 Negotiating Access*

The most difficult aspect of negotiating access pertaining to the BCFS cohort related to accessing current personal email addresses and contact details to engage the population in the approval process and final online survey process. The other major difficulty in terms of negotiating access pertained to sourcing/ recruiting a comparator cohort, so sourcing non-BCFS, distance learning graduates through University networks and sourcing non-distance learning graduates through online social media sources absorbed a significant timeline that the researcher had not anticipated in advance.

### **3.7.2 Study Observations and Limitations**

Limitations in the research process transcend time and requirements of the actual research process. Some of the limitations are personal/ internal to the researcher's role in the process and others are external/ not controlled by the researcher (policy, structural, environmental, behavioural, and attitudinal).

The study will address how the internal limitations and external factors manifested themselves in the actual study through each of the stages of data design, collection and analysis.

### 3.7.2.1 Personal/ Researcher Limitations

#### **Researcher bias**

Researcher bias could be deemed a limitation in that respondents might not have engaged or responded in an honest/ open manner to the empirical research process. However, to counter balance this limitation, the researcher decided to only engage with graduates of the BCFS and all other programmes considered in this PhD study in order to reduce the incidence of pressure on respondents who might still be students of the BCFS or other programmes within the research cohort. Therefore, the selection of only graduates removed or at least reduced the possible restricting factors on graduates to be open and honest with their perspectives on the BCFS programme as it did not impinge on any likely grade or outcome academically for them as respondents. The researcher is conscious that this concern/observation to the study is more perception rather than reality as bias issues were not voiced by any of the adult learners in the study.

#### **Terminology Knowledge Assumption**

The researcher assumed that all survey respondents' knowledge of the Transformative Learning (TL) concept existed when issuing the instrument, the survey questionnaire. The researcher had issued a brief overview of the theoretical meaning of the concepts to set the research in context. However, the researcher was cautious to not over-load the respondents with theoretical concept knowledge when issuing the online survey. Some BCFS respondents that engaged in Component 1 (the online survey questionnaire) and Component 3 (the semi-structured interviews) brought it to the researcher's attention that it was only during Component 3 that the real meaning of TL became apparent to them following the researcher's in person explanation of the TL concept and meaning. This assumption of concept/ variable knowledge among the research community was




a definite oversight by the researcher. Therefore, a recommendation of the research process is that terms and theories need to be explained in a more robust process in future research. Assumptions about prior theoretical knowledge of graduate participants should not be expected. This will be considered in the conclusion, Chapter 7.

### **Questionnaire**


One key limitation of the survey questionnaire is that it was issued in an online format to all respondents. Therefore any respondents who did not have access to the internet or had changed email addresses could not be reached by the Component 1 data instrument. Gaining access to graduate participants personal email addresses was a difficult undertaking as once learners graduate from programmes on campus, their NUI Galway email address becomes defunct. In this study, some graduates had completed the BCFS programme in 2010, so when the researcher was undertaking the empirical component of data collection in 2014, many of the email addresses was obsolete. This created a logistical time delay for the researcher in terms of seeking out access to BCFS graduate email addresses. Therefore a core recommendation to sustain and enable on-going links with the alumni is to maintain live NUI Galway email addresses for all graduates. This will be considered in the conclusion, Chapter 7.

### **Interactive Management**

The scheduling of the IM process in October did not suit all interested and consenting BCFS adult learner graduate participants, so this limited the participation rate, only six (n=6) of the scheduled nineteen (n=19) could attend on the given evening. A recommendation will be considered in the conclusion chapter in terms of the IM methodological process use.

 **Self- selection**

All graduates self-selected themselves into each component of the empirical research. However, the monetary token offered to all respondents did assist in the response and participation rate.

 **Logistics of Study Access Observation**

Gaining access to non-NUI Galway email addresses as outlined earlier became a timely and logical barrier for the researcher in advance of commencing empirical data collection. As the BCFS is a distance learning degree programme, many of the participants at the time of the empirical data collection lived at a distance from campus or had relocated overseas, so participation in Component 2 and 3 of the research was limited to some respondents.

Equally, the cost factor for the researcher to travel to meet with participants for interviews in other geographic locations in Ireland and hire venues to meet were overheads the researcher had to incur personally.

 **Sample size Limitation**

The non-BCFS adult learner graduate respondents were a small cohort in terms of class size. However, on completion of Component 1 (on line survey questionnaire), the five (n=5) respondents in survey 3 (Ed and T cohort) opted out of any additional stages. So this reduced the non-BCFS distance learning sample cohort available for Component two and three. Therefore, the researcher decided on completion of the Component one analysis to only engage the BCP cohort which was survey group two from the non-BCFS distance learning cohort in Component 3 (the semi-structured interviews). Therefore, the BCFS cohort engaged in all three components of the study whereas the BCP cohort (n=8) were the only other cohort engaged in Component 3 (semi-structured interviews).

 **Response rate Observation**

The response in the Facebook/social media on line aspect of Component 1 of the degree/ non distance graduates was quite small. The limitation of this factor could have occurred due to the researchers' non-connection with the requested participants. Equally, it could be linked to the medium used to connect with the respondents.

*3.7.2.2 External to Researcher Limitations*

 **Attachment Measure Limitation**

Pre-programme entry attachment experiences or records were not available for any study participants. Equally, access to the full AAI protocol measure and coding was unavailable to the researcher due to copyright issues.

 **Emotional Intelligence Measure**

There was no recording of EI levels on entry to the BCFS programme. This is a shortcoming of the university entry procedures/ protocols. A recommendation from this study pertaining to capturing EI levels on entry will be considered in the conclusion, Chapter 7.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The rationale, aims and objectives for this research seeks to explore through three empirical components whether the community education andragogical approach in NUI Galway promoted the development of transformative learning, emotional intelligence and positive educational attachment among BCFS graduate participants. In essence the purpose of the study is based on the premise of giving ‘voice’ and a forum to a previously un-researched part-time BCFS population of learners in NUI Galway.

The study’s design was constructed on a mixed methods model and approach in terms of using methods that collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The ethical process of approval and participant safeguarding within the university’s ethics committee was rigorous but necessary given the personal and emotional factors that were being considered among the respondents.

The learning from the research process was significant for the researcher in terms of engaging with the graduates in a different capacity as a researcher post BCFS programme completion. Equally, the researcher gained significant insight into the varying processes and methods that worked in terms of giving ‘voice’ for the different cohorts of adult learners and graduate cohorts. The rich empirical data that was shared by participants through the diverse methodological processes will be presented in the results, Chapter 5. Finally, in order to guide the reader, the sequence and research study outline is illustrated in Figure 3.3 below.

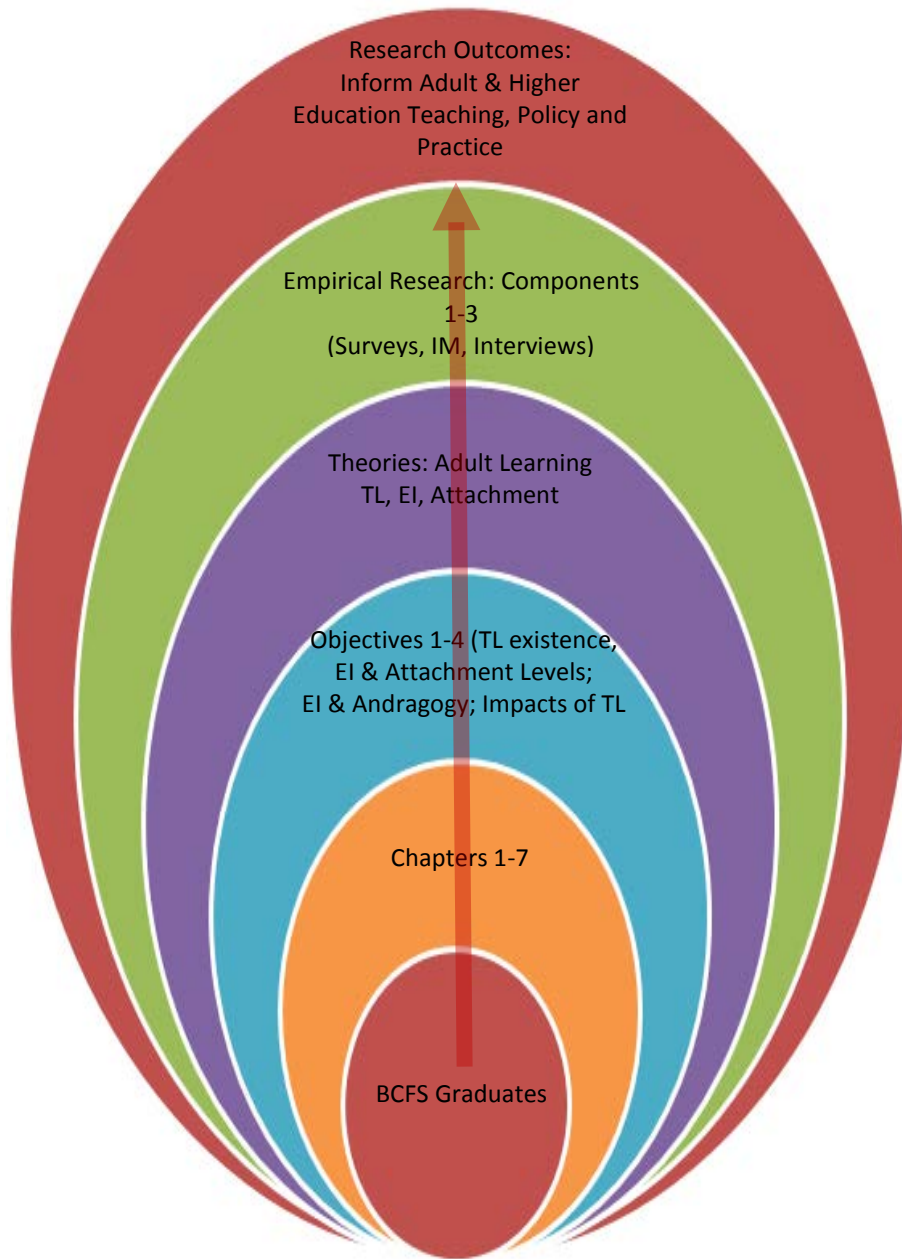


Figure 3.3 Research Study Outline

## Chapter 4: Context of the Study

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## **Chapter 4: Context of the Study**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter intends to outline the key background and contextual setting within which the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) was formed and developed in the National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway. In order to address this contextual overview, the geographical and historical timeline of adult and higher education within NUI Galway as a higher education institution in Ireland will be discussed. Equally, the higher education policy context from a National and University perspective will be considered. Section 4.2 discusses the setting of the study and the geographical context in which the BCFS programme is located. Section 4.3 reviews the historical development of adult education programmes and learner related issues that pertain to community, adult and higher education in the West of Ireland. Section 4.4 will outline the community education suite of programmes in which the BCFS is situated. Section 4.5 presents a policy overview of adult and higher education policy influences on the BCFS programme.

### **4.2 Study Setting and Geographical Context**

#### ***4.2.1 Section Introduction***

An insight into the topography, landscape, community engagement and part-time learner development is paramount to this study. In this section, the landscape within which NUI Galway is located and the regional diversity it presents will be considered in terms of how it impacts upon the part-time adult learner cohort. The community development and community education ethos of working with adults and communities in the region will be discussed in this section. Specifically, the section will present the influence the geographical context has had on part-time adult learners and how the community education ethos and approach has endeavoured to re-navigate non-traditional and disadvantaged part-time learners in particular onto educational pathways in order to circumnavigate the barriers that the physical and geographical landscape has presented to learners.

### **4.2.2 West of Ireland Context**

Ireland is currently an island of approximately 4.5 million people. However, the population is not dispersed evenly throughout the land but concentrated more particularly across regional cities. According to Census 2016 figures; Dublin city and suburbs has a population of 1,173,179 whilst Galway city and suburbs has 79,934 people. Therefore, the population spread is very uneven across the country (Eurostat CSO 2018). This concentration of growth around the capital and regional cities such as Galway has placed an unbalanced development of the bigger towns and cities to the detriment of certain rural and peripheral towns and villages located less proximal to the economic hubs. Galway is the largest city on the western seaboard of Ireland and its importance as a regional gateway and corridor link within the national spatial planning strategy is pivotal to the future development of the region and NUI Galway within that context. Therefore, the geographical location of the University is intrinsically tied to its future growth and development and heavily shaped by its past positioning and location. However, as NUI Galway, formerly known as University College Galway, is the only university on the western seaboard, this unique position of advantage must be fostered, especially in the West, North West and Midlands region. Equally, the cluster relationship with the other university located in the mid-west of Ireland, University of Limerick, has been developed in the past 20 years by management and university personnel through formal and informal alliances.

### **4.2.3 Location and Historical Significance of NUI Galway as a University**

NUI Galway's main campus is physically located in the west of Ireland in Galway city and facing the Atlantic Ocean. Galway city is a vibrant city with a diverse population and cultural mix. The 2016 census figures reflect that Galway city and county population is 258,552 (Central Statistics Office 2018). Therefore, the topography of the city and county has influenced the culture of the University and campus since the University was built in 1845. This long established university heritage and structures have shaped the



cultural traditions of Galway city throughout this timeline. The influence of NUI Galway as a university on County Galway and the wider region has been more piecemeal and steady in the last fifty years. The staff and student population was small when the University first opened its doors in October 1849 with sixty-eight enrolled learners. Equally, the university archives and historical artefacts play tribute to the influence the local community and people have added to the University's history and legacy. Currently, NUI Galway serves a student population of 18,000 full-time and approximately 2,000 part-time learners. In addition, the staff population is now 2,500 and the University has five different colleges and a number of research centres and academic support units. So the physical development of buildings and student and staff populations on campus and in satellite, off-campus locations in Connemara and Donegal, are testament to the growth and change that the University, its staff and learners has experienced in this timeline.

#### ***4.2.4 Community Education (CE) Organisational and Management Structure***

The Community Education unit which is one of the five cognate areas of NUI Galway's Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD)<sup>22</sup> is based in Nun's island in Galway city. The unit was renamed in 2014 under new Directorship. CALPD is an administrative unit which co-ordinates and develops part-time classroom, online and blended learning part-time programmes for adult learners. However, each cognate area requires academic stewardship for its programme design, development and delivery in accordance with university protocol. The fact that CALPD does not hold an academic remit within NUI Galway highlights its dependence on academics and schools to steer programmes and suites of programme offerings. Community Education and the Office of Adult and Continuing Education have had a long and healthy academic relationship with the

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<sup>22</sup> CALPD was previously known as the Office of Adult and Continuing Education(ACE)

School of Political Science and Sociology. Professor Chris Curtin, School of Political Science and Sociology head of school was academic director of all community education programmes from the early eighties until 2009. Thereafter, in 2010 Professor Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair and Director of the Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC) undertook the role for four years. In 2014, Dr Cormac Forkan, lecturer in the UCFRC NUI Galway became academic director of all community education programmes housed within CALPD. Therefore as outlined in the reporting structure below, the Community Education Officers (of which the researcher is one) has a dual reporting structure within the University. The CALPD director reports to the Registrar. The Community Education Officers report directly to the CALPD Director for administrative issues and they report to the current Academic Director, Dr Cormac Forkan for all academic guidance and stewardship in relation to all community education programme matters.

The Community Education unit within CALPD comprises of two Community Education Officers who hold the day-to-day operational and academic management role of the suite of community education programmes. These posts sustain a heavy teaching, assessment, programme co-ordination, academic moderation and administrative duties.<sup>23</sup> In addition, two other full-time community education trainers, appointed in mid-2000's respectively undertake certain administration and teaching roles with community education. Two other administration posts are held by one full-time and one part-time course administrators. Furthermore, the internal NUI Galway community education teaching staff is supported by occasional part-time external teaching staff who work in community, family support or youth based practice settings. The staff-learner ratio is particularly low considering the nature and approach required in adult learning settings in

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<sup>23</sup> The researcher of this study holds the post of Community Education Officer. She commenced this role in 1997 and became permanent in 2002. She worked in the role since 2002 as a permanent staff member teaching, designing and moderating on part-time adult learner community education programmes.

higher education. This is especially the case in community education given the issues of social and educational disadvantage many learners who partake in programmes with the community education discipline have experienced in prior educational initiatives. However, this partnering with practitioners in the community, youth and family sector who have recognised academic credentials to work in higher education equally, add a richness to the practice based Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programmes. The community education staff and tutors work very closely with the target groups who are current students but also those who are potential students and graduates of the two varying accredited community education programmes. The two community education programmes which will be considered in this chapter are the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS as they are the specific programmes undertaken by the main cohorts of the study in question.

#### ***4.2.5 Community Development Approach Within NUI Galway***

People development is the critical ingredient to the development of a university, its institutions and its academic value and positioning in the landscape whether that geography is local, regional or global. Therefore, the staff and student bodies that form part of the University become the shapers of the landscape in which it will thrive or not. Equally, the people that work, study and live within and external to the campus walls will be impacted by the value placed on human capital.

Community development as a theoretical approach to working and shaping educational programmes for learners within the University is a non-traditional approach that became central to ACE<sup>24</sup> from its inception in 1968. This people focused development of courses and programmes of study was the driver of the extra mural programme of work from the early 1970's in the western region. The community development approach

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<sup>24</sup> ACE- Office of Adult and Continuing Education.

adopted by University academic staff in conjunction with ACE to working with communities and groups to further their development had a direct impact on the local geography of communities in Galway city, county and region from a social and cultural perspective. This centring of the individual and communities of people at the heart of University objectives and operational plans is crucial to strategies of inclusion of learners' especially part-time learners who have been disadvantaged due to life circumstances. Thus this learner centred approach to working with adult learners has been the core approach within ACE since its origins which has been promoted and sustained by Community Education Officers and tutors since 1997 to date.

#### ***4.2.6 Blended Learning and its Relevance to Landscape and Topography***

The physical, geographical landscape in which adults live, work and spend their lives, shape the people they become and the lived lives they dwell (Thomas 2016; Massey 2005). Thus adult learners experience many barriers to participation in higher education including fee policy limitations, family circumstances or the physical distance from a higher education institution. Therefore, the development of educational technologies to enable and support learners' access higher education virtually while remaining physically at a distance from campus is crucial to move beyond this physical, geographical access barrier to higher education.

The development of technological access through distance and blended learning modes for adults, especially those seeking to study part-time while juggling other life commitments, has developed significantly in NUI Galway in the last decade. Thus part-time learners have been enabled to register and become part-time students and undertake programmes and remain a physical distance from campus while undertaking a programme of study. This access to blended learning programmes of study and technology has opened up significant opportunities for learners who wish to study or progress their studies in certain disciplines such as science and technology.

However, in the social sciences and specifically, community development and family support programmes, the physical peer-to-peer and group learning settings cannot be replaced with technology. However, virtual learning environments such as Blackboard™ and Moodle™ have assisted learners in this discipline to complement their campus based study while off campus. Thus part-time adult learners in the social sciences, specifically community development, youth work and family support programmes of study, cannot replace the physical learning interaction in the classroom with sole on line programme delivery but they can complement the process. Thus off campus, outreach models of part-time programme delivery to adult learners in peripheral communities that have experienced social, cultural and economic disadvantage cannot be out ruled on economic cost models for a university such as NUI Galway with its back to the Atlantic and communities at its feet. Equally, part-time learners that travel to campus from the region throughout the calendar year, not necessarily the academic year, sometimes travelling 200 miles to campus for an evening or weekend workshop need to be supported and considered in the servicing and supports offered while on campus by NUI Galway. So the geography and structures of the internal campus can be an impediment to the part-time, less visible learner as they access the campus on flexible, non-traditional timetables sequenced to suit their other life requirements which differ entirely from the traditional, full-time learner timetable.

Therefore, blended learning options for the part-time learner have to be considered from an internal topography and external geographical understanding to ensure the non-traditional learner is not overlooked by the traditional focus on full-time, mainstream learners attending programmes on the physical NUIG campus.

#### ***4.2.7 Ethos of Community Education (CE) and Adult Learner Focus***

Community Education (CE) is a model of education which places learners and their respective educational, social and community context at the centre of the educational journey (Fitzsimons 2017). Therefore, this approach is dependent on educators engaging with learners in a supportive, pastoral and

emotionally intelligent manner to enable learners, especially those with poor prior experience of formal education, to thrive and succeed.

The pedagogical approach adopted by NUI Galway Community Education staff is based on the principles and practices of community development which encourages the development of people empowerment and collective action. This model of engagement with adult learners is based on the premise that individual's personal development is central to societal development. Therefore, Community Education staff engages in the learning process by starting the learning process from where the adult learners are situated in their life paths at that given juncture. Learner engagement and capacity building are deemed fundamental learning blocks of the community development approach to adult learning and development. This community development approach endeavours to build personal and social agency skills among learners and tutors through engagement in the Community Education suite of programmes.

The history of engaging and working with communities, especially disadvantaged or marginalised ones, was embedded in the Community Education centre ethos from the outset. The approach of enabling students to succeed was and remains central to the Community Education unit's engagement with current, past or future adult learners. Bamber and Tett (2001) note that higher education institutions have a responsibility to enable students, especially non-traditional students, to access and be successful across their educational lifecycle within any educational institution. Thomas (2009) concurs with the Higher Education Authority (2008) perspective which purports that it is not sufficient to merely open access routes to education for learners but one has to assist their retention and successful completion within academic lifecycle too.

Therefore, the learner-centred approach to community education is paramount to the inclusion of disenfranchised adult learners. The community education suite of programmes have no educational pre-requirement so adult learners have hugely varying levels of capacity and academic skills sets on entry to the formal programmes of study. This can

be problematic when progressing through coursework with certain part-time learners, especially if they have mixed educational capacity and ability. Therefore, Community Education staff work on enabling the self-esteem and confidence of learners whilst teaching the required academic content. This learner-centred approach is a resource heavy model within a structure that is very conscious of the financial cost of each unit of work. Therefore, the community education model of work does not fit comfortably within a neo-liberalist viewpoint of outcome driven parameters. The policy implications of the external and internal influences will be considered later in the chapter.

#### ***4.2.8 Section Conclusion***

The landscape within which NUI Galway is located supports the life changing impact it can effect on individuals, families and communities in the western region. NUI Galway's Community Education unit and ACE<sup>25</sup> history and its relationship with the city and region have evidenced a network of engagement that has nurtured development with communities of disadvantage. Therefore, the outward-facing and community engagement strategies of higher education must consider the influence of topography on the learner, whether full-time or part-time, into the future. It can be deduced that part-time adult learners are equally as influenced by their geography as they are by their family structure, income, culture and heritage. Therefore, the learning landscape both within and external to the University is a fundamental aspect of the learning journey that has to be considered to garner the impact of it on part-time adult learners in NUI Galway past, present and future.

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<sup>25</sup> ACE - Adult and Continuing Education (now called CALPD - Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development)

### **4.3 Community, Adult and Higher Education in NUI Galway – Historical Overview**

#### ***4.3.1 Introduction***

Community Education, the extramural and outreach education model and historical evolution within higher education in NUI Galway will be mapped in this section. In particular, each of the four decades will be presented to trace the social, cultural and political milestones that have impacted on community, adult and higher education in NUI Galway.

#### ***4.3.2 1980s-1990s: University-Community Collaborations***

The Office of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) focused mainly on delivering extra mural, outreach community education initiatives in the western region during the early to mid-eighties. This design and delivery of community based rural and community development programmes and events was organised by the Director of ACE, in conjunction with the Professor of Political Science and Sociology and some academic colleagues in School of Geography and Economics, who delivered programmes in the evenings in rural communities to encourage local and community groups to develop and grow. This outreach education approach by the University's ACE developed a solid and sustained network of community organisations that developed working relationships with ACE into the 1990s and thereafter. University College Galway (which changed its name to NUI Galway in the mid-90s) held a stalwart reputation for community activation and development. This standing facilitated the growth of partnership relationships in the 1990s by the University with community, voluntary and statutory partners in the Borders, Midlands and Western (BMW) regions. In tandem with the delivery of extra-mural education initiatives in the region, the Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Professor Curtin, developed in the mid-1980s a post graduate full-time Masters in Arts in Community Development, which produced skilled community development practitioners to work in the region. This dual approach of engagement and development with communities by the University personnel secured trained professional development workers to work with stakeholders in the region



on completion of the Masters. It equally produced employment opportunities for the graduates of the MA programme. This network of community development alumni working in community development projects in the region provided a close working relationship between regional community education organisations and NUI Galway ACE and School of Political Science and Sociology.

### ***4.3.3 1990-2000: European Funding supported ACE Community Education Model***

The strong working relationship with community partners developed by ACE and the adjunct academics in Sociology, Politics, Geography and Economics in the eighties facilitated NUI Galway's involvement in the governing boards of the newly formed area based partnerships in the early nineties. The partnerships secured European funding to combat poverty on geographic and issue-based factors in the region. There was a definite emphasis by the ACE Director and Professor of Political Science and Sociology on the design and delivery of community development programmes in the region. This was facilitated through local development agencies in the Western Seaboard region, called LEADER development companies and Area Based Partnership Companies. Significant European funding was secured by these companies between 1993 and 2008 to deliver accredited community development training programmes (Lee 2006) NUI Galway was strategically placed given its relationship with the partnership companies to tender and provide this accredited community development training in the region. The programme designed and delivered by NUI Galway through ACE and the School of Political Science and Sociology was the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP). This Diploma in CDP programme acted as a pivotal change agent in the regional landscape as it offered access and inclusion in theoretical and practice based community development and education that had not previously been available to non-traditional, part-time adult learners. The specific programme features and modular structure of this programme will be discussed at a later point in the chapter.

#### **4.3.4 2000-2010: Part-time Programme accreditation and progression developments**

The Community Education team within ACE, specifically the researcher and her fellow Community Education Officer, recognised in their engagement with regional and community development groups of learners in the later 1990s and early 2000s that the Diploma in CDP was still popular, but the policy and qualification requirements in the community and family support sectors was obliging graduates to obtain accreditation for programmes of learning. Therefore, in conjunction with the support of the ACE director and Professor of Sociology and Politics, the Community Education Officers sought approval and matched the learning outcomes of the Diploma programme to the National Framework of Qualifications requirements for a Level 7, single subject award. The achievement of this thirty ECTS<sup>26</sup> accreditation alignment with the University and National Framework facilitated graduates of the CDP to become more employable and to further their professional contribution to the community development and family support sector. Equally, it enabled NUI Galway to hold a very strategic role, external and internal to the university, in terms of its model of flexible part-time community education and adult-learner focused education. Therefore, NUI Galway Community Education Officers concentrated on working with established development partnerships for the early part of this decade and delivered numerous Certificate and Diploma in Community Development programmes. In addition, it developed some pre-development and non-credit based ‘taster’ courses in community development with identified marginalised communities both in the Midlands and Western regions.

Furthermore, an established need for part-time accredited progression routes from the Level 7 community development accredited Certificate and

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<sup>26</sup> ECTS European Credit Transfer System which allows credits be used as currency across the EU among similar programme structures and comparable disciplines of study.

Diploma programmes to higher awards was identified by the Community Education Officers following research undertaken among graduates of the Diploma in CDP programmes. Therefore, the development of a part-time blended learning degree progression route from the Level 7 Diploma in CDP award commenced in 2005 and the first cohort for the new degree programme in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) was recruited and started the four year degree programme in September 2006. Therefore, an annual intake of degree participants continued, and significant curriculum and content design continued throughout the decade.

In addition, an overseas local development training programme in local and community development, based on the CDP programme model, was developed and funded under Irish Aid and managed by Community Education Officers on behalf of NUI Galway, and delivered in Kosovo during this timeline.

#### ***4.3.5 2010-2018: Economic Impact on Community and Higher Education Programmes***

The policy and economic climate within which the University had to operate changed drastically during this timeline due to European policy and higher education funding changes and shortfalls. The resource cut backs and moratorium on staff recruitment was particularly difficult for ACE, due to the funding model in place and the dependency on external funding to subvent the community education development interventions in the region. Therefore, the part-time nature of adult education delivery and co-ordination of programmes encountered a significant curtailment in the delivery of pre-development and Level 7 community educational offerings hosted in the region. Additionally, the ACE Director who had been in situ for the previous forty years retired in January 2012. An interim Director was appointed until February 2013 as the position and role was revamped by senior university management. Therefore, the new position was deemed a senior management position and the responsibilities of the post were realigned to target new niche markets and professional development initiatives.

Community Education became one of five cognate areas of adult education, which was renamed as the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD) in 2014. This restructuring of the unit by senior University management affected the funds available for community education outreach work from mid-2013. However, the delivery of the community education suite of programmes were sustained in the city on a shoestring budget by community education staff, and on an outreach basis in the midlands where collaborative education ventures with community partners and regional bodies such as ETB<sup>27</sup> and Local Authorities, were sourced by Community Education Officers to sub vent some of the outreach delivery costs in the region.

In addition, the nature of the community education ethos and model of education to support the part-time distance learning students was compromised given the staff and funding shortages within the University and particularly in CALPD (formerly ACE). This external and internal budgetary strain compromised the extent to which community education staff could engage in regional development and community outreach, extramural work. This funding shortfall impacted on the numbers of part-time learners accessing community and higher education programmes due to the cost of part-time programme fees and related costs of accessing higher education on a part-time basis without access to subvention.

Consequently, the community education model of practice within CALPD and in the wider University has not been easy to sustain during the last decade of financial and economic malaise within NUI Galway. The part-time adult learner participation rates have fallen, especially among the cohort of non-traditional adult learners accessing the BCFS, who are dependent on the ancillary financial and resource support to access, sustain and achieve their learning outcomes. However, the lower participation rates

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<sup>27</sup> ETB – Education and Training Boards, formerly known as the VEC, Vocational Education Committees

are not indicative of reduced interest in youth, community or family support programmes of study by the general adult population, but reflective of the University interpretation of education and fiscal policy and the restrained perspective of senior management to accommodate a more inclusive, flexible regional and community engagement remit of community education work with all learners, especially adult learners from disadvantaged households and communities in the region and nationally.

#### **4.3.6 Section Conclusion**

The historical overview presented the community and adult education journey within NUI Galway over the past forty years. In particular, it has mapped the importance of the University and wider community relationship that has been fundamental to adult learner access and progression through adult and higher education in NUI Galway. However, it has signalled that forward facing community engagement by the University is pivotal to future adult learner participation in higher education based on past experiences of positive engagement with the community external to the University walls.

### **4.4 NUI Galway Community Education Suite of Programmes<sup>28</sup>**

#### **4.4.1 Section Introduction**

This section will present two of the fundamental community education programmes on offer through the Community Education cognate area within CALPD namely, the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). These two programmes are explained as the BCFS is the core programme the Study respondents have undertaken, whilst a cohort of the same population have undertaken the Diploma in CDP. A detailed description of each of the

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28 This section includes a description of the BCFS and Diploma in CDP as they are deemed central to this study

programmes in terms of learning outcomes, modules and andragogical approach and assessment methods will be discussed.

The BCFS programme syllabus description and delivery style will be outlined in greatest detail as this is the programme upon which this study is based. Progression routes through each of the community education suite of programmes will be mapped out to give an overview of the pathways available to part-time learners that access community education accredited courses in NUI Galway.

#### ***4.4.2 Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP)***

This subsection on the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) presents the origins and purpose of the programme and the programme modular description and structure.

##### ***4.4.2.1 Origins and Purpose of the CDP Programme***

The main community education part-time adult learning programme that existed between the 1980s and early 2000s was the Diploma in Community Development Practice. It was developed by ACE as a skills enhancement programme for community activists and volunteers. Then in early 1990s, the Diploma programme was developed as a Level 7 award which carried 30 ECTS<sup>29</sup>. This accreditation development with the Diploma programme extended its appeal to the community and voluntary sector in the Borders, Midlands and Western regions in Ireland. There is no educational pre-entry requirement to the Diploma in CDP, so the adult learners who join the programme have hugely varying levels of academic capacity. This requires adeptness of teaching and facilitation skills and capacities among the programme staff within the community education unit.

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<sup>29</sup> European credit transfer system

When the Diploma in CDP was developed in the early 1980s, within a number of years, it became apparent that a precursor to the Diploma or a more gradual process towards the same learning outcomes was deemed necessary. Therefore the Certificate in Community Development Practice was developed to offer adult learners more options to gain accredited learning with a 15 ECTS course, while not having to commit entirely to the full Diploma programme award or commitment. This additional entry option for adult learners in community and voluntary settings provided accredited learning pathways to part-time learners that carried University recognition and educational options that had previously not existed in the sector or region. Then in the early millennium, the Community Education Officers<sup>30</sup> noted the absence of part-time accredited degree programmes available in the community development discipline and they identified the need for a part-time degree as a progression route for graduates of the Certificate and Diploma in CDP award. Simultaneously, while developing the BCFS degree, it was noted that some pre-development and capacity building non-accredited, but esteem building, community development programmes were required to encourage and cement the community sector's interest in adult and higher education in the region.

Therefore, the community education approach is conscious of the balancing act between entry, access, retention, progression and outcome options for part-time adult learners. This breadth of support for part-time adult learners is required as most of this cohort access the community education suite of programmes having previously experienced educational, social or cultural disadvantage in their lives. Therefore, the module structure and layout are pivotal to learner accessibility and success.

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<sup>30</sup> The doctoral candidate is one of the Community Education Officers within NUI Galway.

*4.4.2.2 Description of CDP programme – modules and layout*

The programme works on a basis that students come together for weekly workshops to discuss and experience a shared learning process akin to andragogical theory, where the adult learner is pivotal and the lecturer adopts the role of a facilitator. There are six core modules to work through on this part-time Diploma in Community Development Practice programme: CD Theory and Practice; Social Analysis; Group work and Community Leadership; Research Techniques; Project Planning and Public Policy. The modules are structured into a timetable based on twenty years teaching these modules to ‘fragile’ adult learners so as to encourage them to build up the personal and professional confidence to reach their own personal success levels. Therefore, the three modules that comprise the 15 ECTS Certificate in Community Development Practice award are Community Development Theory and Practice; Social Analysis; Group work and Community Leadership. These are sequenced earlier in the programme to facilitate learners who do not wish to progress to the Diploma in CDP award to exit with accreditation, and a platform to progress from in the future.

Each of the modules carry a weighting of 5 ECTS and are assessed independently of each other through continual assessment processes. This Diploma in CDP programme and the Certificate programme in CDP named earlier were developed to assist part-time learners ease back into the learning process, so no exams form part of the assessment on either the Certificate in Community Development Practice or the Diploma in CDP. All module assessments are practical written tasks that assist learners apply the learning from their programme involvement in practical tools and written assessments that aid their personal, social and community contribution. However, in order for most part-time adult learners to entertain the idea of writing academic essays or practical project submissions, the community education teaching team work continuously through the programme duration with all part-time community education Certificate and Diploma students to develop confidence in their written and presentation skills, to ease the learning anxiety, and improve retention, programme enjoyment and programme success rates.



### **4.4.3 BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS)**

This subsection on the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) presents the origins and purpose of the programme, its relationship to the Diploma in CDP, the progression route it offers learners and the programme modular description and structure.

#### *4.4.3.1 Origins and Purpose of BCFS*

In the late nineties and early millennium, the Community Education Officers designed newsletters which promoted the CDP programmes in the region and offered reflections on graduates' experiences of the programme. This newsletter also showcased feedback from a survey of past Diploma in CDP students' interest in participating in a part-time degree in community and family studies. The CDP graduates expressed interest in a part-time progression route from the Diploma in CDP programme into a higher award such as a degree that reflected the same teaching ethos, part-time structure that was also adult learner focused, and where fee payment could be scheduled in line with personal payment plans. The significant response rate and interest of seventy five per cent of previous CDP programme graduates generated the momentum to progress the development of a new part-time, blended learning degree programme for adult learners. Therefore, this research study with CDP graduates informed the Community Education Officers to commence the design the BA in Community and Family Studies during the academic year 2005-2006.

The BCFS<sup>31</sup> programme was devised with many learning outcomes, but the overarching learning objective of the programme is to enhance the adult learners' personal and professional capacity to function effectively within society. Additionally, many adult learners want to gain access to a degree that would merit equal value for them as their counterparts are accessing on a 'full-time' equivalent. Therefore, the Level 8 honours award aspect is a

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<sup>31</sup> BA in Community and Family Studies

key factor for many enrolling part-time students. Furthermore, when the BCFS programme commenced in 2006, it was the only part-time distance learning degree programme on offer in Ireland which catered for an interdisciplinary approach to community development and family support studies. The BCFS was developed to assist adult learners interested in the disciplines of community development and family support gain access to a part-time adult education honours degree programme. As the Community Education ethos is to assist communities and families improve their employability and life skills, the BCFS programme was devised with both a strong theoretical framework and applied contextual understanding of what individuals and communities would merit from the award. For example, the modular building block framework was carefully chosen to assist the andragogical development of adult learners from month to month and year to year. This 'bite-size' approach to releasing modules was devised to assist learners gradually absorb and adjust to the learning curve they were engaged in at that given juncture. The contextual connection to contemporary life and issues was factored into the programme through the creation and development of a spine of project based study and application across each year of the four-year programme. This process facilitates learners to apply learning from the given modules to wider community and family based social issues through the development of supervised literature reviews and independent research projects.

The blended learning model of delivery devised for the BCFS programme was advocated by the Community Education Officers to facilitate learners who could not financially afford to commit to education on a full-time basis. Therefore, the part-time model workshop attendance had to be structured in a manner that enabled adult caregivers and family members' flexibility to access the programme on a timetable that permitted a work-life balance too. Thus the scheduling of workshops and on-campus programme commitments had to be sequenced with a view to supporting part-time learners' progress forward on the learning journey, while being mindful of the other commitments they had to juggle to sustain their studies.

*4.4.3.2 BCFS Relationship to the Diploma in CDP Model*

The progression option from the part-time Community Development Practice programme (CDP) to a part-time BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) was identified as an educational opportunity by community education personnel within NUI Galway. It was evident from the survey and Diploma evaluation feedback that the community education supportive ethos provided to learners within the community education model enabled learners to feel confident and succeed in higher education. The community education model facilitated learners to progress forward and seek access to a degree which was being offered by the same teaching staff and educational process. This familiar structure and setting instilled confidence in the learners to apply for the part-time degree model. The BCFS differed from the Diploma in CDP programme in a number of aspects. It was to be delivered on a part-time model too but sequentially over a month rather than weekly like the Diploma in CDP. This would require learners to structure their other work commitments to be able to attend monthly workshops scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays. Equally, as the level of the BCFS award was at a higher level than the Diploma in CDP, it required learners to commit to additional study and personal learning time to progress their studies from the Diploma in CDP, Level 7 to the BCFS level 8 award.

*4.4.3.3 BCFS- Adult Learner Progression Route*

The blended learning model devised for the BCFS programme was chosen to assist part-time students continue their educational journey while working or maintaining their other work or life responsibilities. Therefore, the Friday/Saturday schedule was seen as less intrusive for learners who had other work commitments throughout a given week. Equally, for part-time learners in formal employment, it was deemed more manageable for learners to seek annual leave for one day per month rather than two, so Saturdays became a workable solution to limit the leave quota taken by learners to attend the programme workshops.

Furthermore, as the BCFS offers students opportunities to achieve exit awards at Certificate or Diploma in Arts awards levels, or take the degree at

a pace that suits their respective life issues, this contributes to the high retention figures within the programme. Learners within the BCFS programme have sustained an average of 90% retention levels across all years since the commencement of the programme intake in 2006 to present. This has been attributed to the pastoral and supportive structures in place to sustain and progress learners through their educational programme of choice. So learners can exit after year one with a Certificate in Community and Family Studies award which merits them 45 credits. In addition, students can exit after two years with a Diploma in Arts award worth 90 credits. Thereafter students can progress on to complete the level eight honours award on completion of the cumulative year three and year four programme of study.

The community based research project module structure across the four years of the BCFS, according to external examiner reports, provides learners with a solid research foundation that is unique to the BCFS programme and a framework which offers learners greater opportunities to proceed on their learning journey through to post graduate research study. Additionally, the scaffold provided through the research based modules in each year have provided the learners with the blend of theoretical, methodological framework to progress their practical and applied community and experiential context to a practice based project model. This applied research module showcases the practice and theoretical skills, knowledge and dispositions of adult learners and enables their graduate attributes for future community engagement in a professional or voluntary capacity.

Furthermore, learners with accredited prior learning gain exemptions to the BCFS. This has provided all adult learners with Level 7 accredited awards in the social sciences gain access to and exemption from certain modules from the suite of the BCFS programme. Equally, the marks and standards for the BCFS programme permit all graduates of the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) to gain full credit exemption (30 ECTS) when they progress onto the BCFS programme. This exemption model has assisted many non-traditional adult learners to progress with their

studies due to the course credit and financial exemption process created by this community education approach to higher education.

#### *4.4.3.4 Description of BCFS Programme – Modules and Layout*

The BCFS part-time modular structure in which exit awards were built at varying levels has enabled part-time adult learners to step into and out of the educational process in line with personal and professional life commitments. Therefore, each module in each year is chosen to complement the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. A gentle balance between a range of modules which complement community development theory and family support theory are chosen in each and all years of the programme.

Each programme year requires the accumulation of 45 credits, which equates to 180 credits across four years. The modular structure has enabled learners to work through the development of learning pillars in theory, policy and practice in community development, youth, family support and research skills. The modules are structured in a developmental manner to provide learners in year one with the fundamental learning objectives across community development and family support studies. Therefore, the module list in year one includes: An Introduction to Sociology and Politics; Understanding Communities; Social Research Skills; Introduction To Family and Society; Promoting Positive Mental Health: Policy and Practice; Research Project 1: Literature Review and one of the five credit elective options. While in year two of the programme, the developmental milestones increase and the learners expand their skills and knowledge in the core modules and related topics considered in year one and furthered into year two. These include Practising Sociology and Politics; Research Project 2: Developing a Proposal; Issues in Contemporary Family Life; Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. Then in year three, the learners proceed to the Level 8 award and work on the degree cycle modules including, Research Methodology in the Social Sciences; Family and Societal Interactions; Childhood and Adolescence; and Research Project 3. Then in year 4, the final 45 credits capture modules on Project Planning; Equality and Diversity; Lifelong Learning, Professional Development and Research

Project 4. Elective module options in year one and year two of the BCFS have been offered since the programme commencement in 2007/2008 to aid part-time learners gain opportunities to select and gain credits in optional modules not deemed core to the programme of study but complementary to the core modules. The inclusion of the elective topics was premised on modules that learners could gain exemptions from having completed similar Level 7 modules on the Diploma in CDP or related programmes. The elective modules were all 5 credit modules, which required attendance at a one day workshop and completion of written assessments and/or exam included: Community Health; Youth Work Policy and Practice; Volunteering Policy and Practice and Understanding Conflict.

In July 2017, the BCFS programme board received approval from the College of Arts in the University to extend the programme title to include an additional stream to respond to the sectoral changes and professional opportunities a part-time degree in this discipline would provide. The new programme title is called the 'BA in Community, Youth and Family Studies' (BCYF). Therefore, the 45 credits per year across a four year cycle was sustained, but the modules were revisited and some new modules were included to reflect the 'youth stream', while other modules that existed in the previous edition of the BCFS programme were downsized from 10 credit to 5 credit modules to facilitate the module and programme restructuring. This alignment of the credit weighting process also enabled the balancing of the fundamental modules across all strands of the programme; the community development, youth and family support to be represented across all four years of the programme roll out.

Thus 2017-2018 was the first academic year where year one to year three part-time learners participated in the new stream of the BCYF. Therefore, the new modules complementing the youth sector from a policy and practice perspective were devised and delivered for year one to year three of the new programme. However, the year four part-time students continued on the existing BCFS model as their year three and four are bonded, so the exit award had to reflect their year three and four programme of study. However, these learners were offered an opportunity to study a five credit module on

child protection and safeguarding that was not included in their earlier years of study and deemed core in the 2017/18 intake into the new BCYF programme. This modular restructuring is necessary to capture sector and learner identified changes following twelve years of programme delivery.

#### ***4.4.4 Section Conclusion***

The two community education programmes considered in this section were the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). The origins and structures of both programmes and their relationship to each other were considered in this section. Equally, the role of both programmes to provide an access and progression route to part-time adult learners was considered.

### **4.5 Higher Education Policy Developments' Influence on the BCFS and Part-time Adult Learners**

#### ***4.5.1 Introduction***

In this section, a selection of current national and NUI Galway specific policy documents that are influencing policy and practice developments in adult and higher education will be considered. Additionally this section will review the infrastructural and pragmatic issues that these policy and strategy documents are not addressing to aid the lifelong pathways of part-time adult learners based on the empirical study findings. The imperative question pertaining to policy and this research is whether Higher Education and NUI Galway policy design, development and implementation aids the inclusion or exclusion of part-time adult learners.

#### ***4.5.2 National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030***

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (DES 2011) was published by the Department of Education and Skills in 2011, which is a significant timeline for a government education policy document to plan for and anticipate, given the changing nature of adult and higher education in Ireland. This attempt at forecasting development across a nineteen year period is fraught with pragmatic and logical issues for policy makers, higher

education institutions and most importantly, the part-time adult learner. The expectation of this strategy was to forecast plans to widen participation in higher education. However, it was written in the context of the ‘smart economy’<sup>32</sup> therefore the emphasis on research priorities in higher education (HE) institutions can be attributed in part to this strategy. Evidently, research is an integral aspect of higher education but the overemphasis on it to the detriment of investment in teaching and pedagogical processes has not served the higher education learner, especially the part-time ‘non-traditional’ learner in the last decade during this strategy’s implementation. However, this parity of esteem between research and teaching roles for staff or among the HE sector has not materialised based on this strategy’s objective.

On a positive note within NUI Galway, the community education unit of CALPD have responded to this objective to prepare all part-time students for a positive teaching and learning experience. The feedback by learners and graduates has been deemed exemplary by the adult learner cohort based on internal programme evaluations and student consultations and is further reflected in this study by BCFS graduates. Therefore, the part-time adult centred community education model of teaching and learning could be used as a model of best practice within the institution to enable retention across other part and full-time models of education in NUI Galway and the Higher Education sector.

In terms of widening access for under-represented cohorts through flexible provision, and the intention to include additional weighting for these cohorts, has not been adept enough as yet to capture the most disadvantaged part-time learners in the equation sufficiently. Part-time learners accessing part-time, on line continual professional development skills and qualifications have skewed the quantitative measures of success on this

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<sup>32</sup> In this context, the smart economy refers to enabling learners’ IT and employment ready skills as opposed to the soft, socio-emotional supports of the learning process.



aspect. Given the continuation of fees required by all part-time adult learners to access blended learning part-time educational options in higher education such as the BCFS, further alienates a cohort of prospective learners given the cost of fees and related HE programme participation costs.

The system wide collaboration to assist learners progress through diverse institutions and progression pathways has not impacted on the BCFS entry route for learners from the further education (FE) sector, and the transition gap is not flexible enough or programme curriculum and credits are not aligned sufficiently to enable part-time learners navigate this pathway with ease. This is a significant loss to the HE sector as it would provide full and part-time learner options if alignment of programme offerings and credit systems across FE and HE systems were reviewed. This pathway for socio-economic prospective students would enable greater access to further and higher education across the social sciences especially in community development, youth and family support sectors.

Furthermore, the intellectual leadership and authoritative opinion aspect discussed within the engagement with the wider society section of this national strategy provides a significant opportunity for higher education institutions to open the campus and offer outreach educational supports to communities in its region. NUI Galway held a significant extra-mural education programme in the region throughout the eighties and nineties as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, due to funding constraints, this community collaboration and engagement approach has operated on a shoestring budget since 2012 by the Community Education within CALPD. Therefore, this community engagement and social responsibility objective to offer intellectual leadership needs to be re-envisioned across the HE sector, especially in NUI Galway, and implemented with resources reflective of the strategy's objective.

### **4.5.3 Higher Education Systems Performance Framework 2018-2020 and the National Skills Strategy 2025**

Higher Education Systems Performance Framework 2018-2020 (HEA 2017) was designed to map six objectives to enable Ireland to strive to be the best higher education system in Europe and to position itself as a global innovation leader. The targets to attain this global leader approach within the higher education sector are not currently achievable. For example, the objective one target to increase to 10% the number of those aged between 25-64 years engaged in lifelong learning by 2020 and to 15% by 2025 in line with the National Skills Strategy 2025 (HEA 2017) target, is currently only 6.7% in 2018, so not on target. However within the performance framework, objective five on quality assurance and academic best practice includes an emphasis on quality learning experience for students to share their perspective on quality and relevance of teaching. This Irish Students Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) should be calibrated as a model to capture full and part-time students' perspectives on HE and to monitor that students are progressing through studies and are engaged in their academic programme and feel supported by their institution. This ISSE measure would be really useful for BCFS and other non-traditional learners to complete as this research reflects their extreme satisfaction levels with programme supports and retention levels in educational model. This national recording within HE would be a positive measure and record for non-traditional models of best practice to get additional supports and resources for future expansion to additional life path models of education in HE for non-traditional learners.

### **4.5.4 Measuring Higher Education, Civic and Community Engagement Framework**

Measuring Higher Education, Civic and Community Engagement Framework (HEA 2017) has evolved from objective two of the HE Systems Performance Framework. Additionally, its Campus Charter for Civic and Community Engagement contain a ten point charter that the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has set out for the HE sector to abide by during 2018-2020. This strategy intends to guide the Irish Universities to seek to

progress these aspects of the charter. However, the naming of community engagement and social responsibility is a very positive development from the community education perspective as the ten point charter reiterates the community development and community education ethos that is espoused on the BCFS, the Diploma in CDP and all part-time, adult centred programmes housed within the community education suite of programmes within CALPD in NUI Galway. However, the practice implementation and the policy directives dichotomy for genuine participation and support of the part-time, distance learner cohort accession to, retention in and successful progression through higher education is hanging in the balance while policy makers and university management decide on their interpretation of the best financial return on public spending.

#### ***4.5.5 NUI Galway Vision 2020 Strategic Plan and the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019***

NUI Galway Vision 2020 Strategic Plan (NUI Galway 2016) refers to the principles of equity and access and regional development priorities. This is reflective of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 (HEA 2015). However, the centring of part-time, first generation adult learner priorities are not embedded in the operationalization of many programme offerings and university services according to many NUI Galway graduates, specifically the BCFS and Non- BCFS graduates consulted in the study. For example, flexible fee payment options are not available through central fees services so the community education team within CALPD have to manage student fees locally in the unit to facilitate part-time payment plans for part-time adult learners on low income to pay fees by instalments and to enable and sustain their participation in programmes of study in particular, the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS. This cultural divide between the established and traditional fee and levy collection process needs to be revamped to enable flexible, part-time payment plans and options to be introduced to the central fees system in order to alleviate a two tiered payment system for non-traditional verses traditional students and to integrate a more staggered and fluid fee payment process for all. This flexibility is of particular importance to adult learners

as they are required to pay fees in order to access part-time education models within the higher education structure in Ireland. In essence, adult learners pay on average €2,900 per annum for access to a blended learning degree programme such as the BCFS across a four year timeline; therefore, in order to sustain fee payment, they are obliged to work fulltime in a traditionally underpaid family support sector or community development employment so as to maintain fees payment. This is a huge stress factor for part-time, low income learners as evidenced in the BCFS empirical data of this study.

In addition, the part-time orientation of programme delivery for adult learners is crucial to their participation in the chosen blended learning programme. For example, BCFS participants have noted in internal programme evaluations that the weekend workshop delivery mode was a pivotal deciding point for them to access the BCFS programme as opposed to other more traditional programmes of study. This facilitated the adults in question to maintain their existing work during the week and engage in the programme of study on the Saturdays and occasional Fridays without absorbing their full quota of annual leave for programme attendance.

Another national policy and local implementation of policy within higher education that requires attention based on this research's results is the structural void in support to part-time adult learners that require access to student support services, in particular, written language supports for learning difficulties. This issue is particularly important in the context of non-traditional learners who experienced difficult earlier life education and family support circumstances. The open access policy to the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programmes facilitated learners to join these programmes, notwithstanding the reality that the majority of entrants have not completed formal secondary education and many had exited out of formal education early due to learning and personal life barriers that were mounted against them. In addition, the financial cost to part-time adult learners to access educational psychologists is a huge barrier for learners to seek learning support interventions and to reflect their true potential in higher education programmes in its absence. Therefore, higher education

policy and procedures needs to reflect the need to support and fund marginalised adult learner retention rates in higher education by supporting disability support services for part-time learners to be identified and supported through their learning needs.

It is deemed necessary by the researcher based on literature reviewed that part-time adult learners especially those from disadvantaged or ‘under-advantaged’ settings (Fleming and Finnegan 2011; Schuetze and Slowey 2012) gain equal and full access to all higher educational institutions’ services and programme offerings. The researcher uses the term ‘under-advantaged’ deliberately as many part-time adult learners get labelled on entrance to or during their learning experience as ‘access’ or ‘disadvantaged’ learners when in essence, it is the policy or institution that is reinforcing this mind-set on students. This undermining of the learner can have a significant impact on the learning experience of those adults as they feel ‘set apart’ or ‘different’ by the University label or negative status applied to them. This is genuinely undermining for many adult learners as the initiation into higher education programmes of study is a highly stressful and overwhelming experience but particularly so for those part-time learners who are first generation students in university education programmes.

Thus the researcher is keen in this context chapter to reflect upon the importance of university authorities employing a strong social and cultural responsibility to its current and prospective part-time learner cohort. Therefore, the forthcoming NUI Galway strategic plan to follow from Vision 2020 (NUI Galway 2015) must foster and support an action plan from a social justice perspective and community education based approach in higher education enrolment and induction processes to ensure that the part-time adult learners needs are deemed equally as relevant to the ‘traditional’ full-time learners’ hierarchy of needs. Additionally, the voice of part-time learners and flexible community educational models of best practice within Irish Universities such as the BCFS and Diploma in CDP within NUI Galway must be supported through the current and future national strategies and performance frameworks to ensure the visibility of

non-traditional learners in the higher education sector. This will only be possible if more open and inclusive measures such as the Irish Students Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) capture the part-time community education cohort of learners among blended, part-time learner framework within NUI Galway's response to the national student survey.

#### **4.5.6 Section Conclusion**

The educational policy context emphasises that the national and university policy indicators in Ireland are completely dependent on the European and Irish fiscal strategies and developments to function. Therefore, the regional disparities and geographical barriers that non-traditional learners in the West of Ireland face in order to access higher education due to poor regional infrastructure and underfunded broadband networks is reinforced when National and European educational policy plans equate supports to higher education universities irrespective of socio-cultural landscape impacts on the learner community. Therefore, this fragile understanding or consideration by policy makers in Europe and in Ireland of the remoteness and peripheral nature of certain universities, such as NUI Galway, within the higher education structure is impacting negatively on part-time, non-traditional learners. The adverse impact of that disconnection in education policy provision and supports on adult learners, especially the most vulnerable part-time learners who have previously been disenfranchised from participation in higher education, is 'widening the gap' between the traditional and non-traditional learners' access and retention in higher education in Ireland.

Therefore, a more robust, inclusive funding model to target and support non-traditional learners from recruitment to graduation is required to counteract this current piecemeal lifelong learning policy approach due to funding shortages. Thus financial supports for the implementation of this community education approach to lifelong learning policy within NUI Galway are significantly limited and unsustainable to resource this labour intensive but necessary model in order to gain traction on the European and

National targets of increasing the percentage of non-traditional learners in higher education.

#### **4.6 Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, NUI Galway as an academic institution, its West of Ireland setting and its Adult and Community Education history and policy context were considered. Therefore, the geographical context considered in section one, the historical context in section two, the community education programme overview in section three and the policy perspective considered in section four underpin the context of the study. In particular, this chapter mapped the education funding policy and developments that occurred in the mid-nineties in Europe that affected the national and regional development focus in Ireland. Equally, as European regional development funding became more focused on physical infrastructural development as opposed to social and community development it had a huge negative effect on the funding income CALPD, formerly ACE, and especially Community Education within NUI Galway could access to offer outreach community education initiatives between 2009 to present time.

Therefore, the forward facing context for adult learning within the higher education model in NUI Galway requires review in the next strategic plan post Vision 2020 and its operationalization. An institutional change perspective is needed to promote a more holistic social inclusive approach to part-time adult and higher education. It cannot be the responsibility of a few but rather a more cohesive strategy that transects NUI Galway as an institution. In the discussion chapter, part-time learners, the university and society will be considered as agents of change in this study.

# Chapter 5: Results

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## Chapter 5: Results

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the three components of the study undertaken in this research. Specifically, this chapter presents results from the mixed methods approach: the quantitative analysis from the online questionnaire (Component 1); the interactive management (IM) session (Component 2); and qualitative analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews (Component 3). These components are presented sequentially under each of the four objectives of the study.

Therefore, the core research question that this empirical study seeks to respond to in this study is: *What effect(s) has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths?* This core research question will be addressed in this study through the four study objectives which underpin the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. The four objectives within this study intend to draw on comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences. The objectives seek to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full time and part time), and personal life circumstances.

The four objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion
2. Consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship

with each other and Transformative Learning (TL), relative to Non-BCFS graduates.

3. Appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.
4. Identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

### ***5.1.1 Summary of Participation Levels and Patterns***

All BCFS graduates engaged in this study participated in Component 1 (n=104) whilst two non-BCFS populations (distance learner cohort N=22; non-distance learner cohort N=38) participated. However, graduate participants from Component 1 who wished to participate in Component 2 and 3 were only selected for one of these additional phases in order to widen the scope and spectrum of perspectives across the mixed methodologies approach in this component. Component 2 contained BCFS graduate participants only (n=6) whereas Component 3 consisted of 18 BCFS graduates and 8 Non-BCFS (BCP<sup>33</sup>) graduate participants. A mixed methods approach is used to extend the capacity of the research to capture and frame the BCFS part-time adult learner graduate perspectives on the four research objectives and compare them to Non-BCFS graduate participants.

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<sup>33</sup> BA in Early Childhood Studies Participants / NON-BCFS group

Table 5.1 Summary Table: Study Components, Research Objectives and Results Source

Objectives	Study Components	Results Source
Objective 1: <b>TL existence and sustainability</b>	Component 1: Online Survey Questionnaire	Descriptive Statistics
Objective 2: <b>EI, Attachment and TL relationship</b>		Multivariate Analyses and Pearson Correlations
Objective 3: <b>Andragogy and EI</b>	Component 2: Interactive Management (IM)	Brainstorm Ideas (Table 5.17)
Objective 4: <b>TL Impacts</b>		TL Impacts Conceptual Map (Figure 5.1)
Objective 1: <b>TL existence and sustainability</b>	Component 3: Semi-structured Interviews	Social, Developmental and Historical experiences shared through interviews with BCFS and comparator BCP interviewees
Objective 2: <b>EI, Attachment and TL relationship</b>		
Objective 3: <b>Andragogy Approach in promotion of EI</b>		
Objective 4: <b>TL Impacts</b>		

The identified sample characteristics of the BCFS and the Non-BCFS populations from Component 1(of which a selection of the same participants engaged in Component 2 and Component 3) are presented in Section 5.2 to contextualise the current study. These characteristics and demographic results will be presented through the following categorisation of the data results: Gender; Age; Geographical Location; Income levels and Prior Education Attainment.

Section 5.3 presents three study vignettes which were collated by the researcher to illustrate the experiences of participants from Component 3, the semi-structured interviews. Section 5.4 details each of the results across the four objectives which were collated from the three components of the study.

## 5.2 Sample Characteristics of Study Participants (BCFS and Non-BCFS)

Three groups of participants were recruited based on convenience sampling for Component 1 (online survey questionnaire): graduates of the BCFS (BCFS: N=104; 87 females, 17 males), graduates of other distance/ non-BCFS learning programmes (DL: N=22; 21 females, 1 male) and graduates of non-distance learning programmes; that is, traditional classroom-based (non-DL: N=38; 28 females, 10 male).

### 5.2.1 Gender

#### 5.2.1.1 BCFS Participants

Eighty-seven (n=87) respondents were female, a pattern reflective of participation rates in both higher and part-time adult education in NUI Galway. The higher participation rates of women in paid and voluntary community development and family support sectors would also reflect this BCFS female dominance.

#### 5.2.1.2 Non-BCFS cohort consisted of two groups:

1. Non BCFS Adult distance learners
2. Non BCFS Non-distance learners

##### 5.2.1.2.1 Non BCFS Adult distance learners

Participants in the Non-BCFS adult distance learners group (n=22) completed their part-time, distance learning degree programmes in 2014, (BCP and Ed and T<sup>34</sup>) of which 18 were female. This is not an alarming finding as all BCP participants on this programme are females and one male from Ed and Training

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<sup>34</sup> ED & T- BA in Education and Training / Non-BCFS Group

programme participated. This gender pattern is reflective of the preponderance of female care-givers employed in these early years and education sectors.

#### 5.2.1.2.2 Non BCFS Non- distance learners

The Non-BCFS, Non-distance learners group consisted of 38 individuals (28 females, 10 males) who participated in this online survey questionnaire (see Appendix 5) through social media request for degree graduates respondents.

### 5.2.2 Age

The mean age of graduate participants in the BCFS group was 48.65 years ( $SD^{35} = 10.10$ ), in comparison, to the Non-BCFS DL<sup>36</sup> ( $M^{37} = 43.88$ ,  $SD = 9.11$ ) and Non-BCFS non-DL<sup>38</sup> ( $M = 35.24$ ,  $SD = 10.10$ ). Table 5.2 details BCFS and Non BCFS age range.

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<sup>35</sup> SD- standard deviation

<sup>36</sup> DL- distance learning graduates

<sup>37</sup> M- mean age

<sup>38</sup> Non- DL – non distance learning/ traditional study mode

Table 5.2 Age Range (BCFS and Non-BCFS) Respondents

	Frequency	%
<b>Non-replies</b>	25	15.3
<b>21-24</b>	9	5.5
<b>25-29</b>	1	0.6
<b>30-35</b>	1	0.6
<b>36-39</b>	6	3.7
<b>40-45</b>	19	11.7
<b>46-49</b>	10	6.1
<b>50-55</b>	35	21.5
<b>56-59</b>	18	11.0
<b>60-65</b>	29	17.8
<b>70-75</b>	5	3.1
<b>86-90</b>	5	3.1
<b>Total</b>	163	100.0

### 5.2.3 Geographic Location

With respect to geographic location, 48 participants of the BCFS group were rural dwellers (n=32 urban), whereas within the General Adult Distance Learning, 7 participants were rural (n=4 suburban; n=0 urban) and within the non-Distance Learning cohort, 10 participants were rural dwellers (n=6 suburban; n=7 urban).

**Table 5.3 Geographic Location: BCFS and Non BCFS Participants**

		<b>Non Replies</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Urban</b>	
<b>Group</b>	<b>BCFS</b>	24	48	0	32	104
	<b>General Adult Distance Learning</b>	11	7	4	0	22
	<b>College Degree Non-Distance</b>	15	10	6	7	38
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>164</b>

Further detail in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 on the counties from which the participants reside illustrates that the BCFS cohort are representative of a diverse geographical spread from across the country with a prevalence of Galway city and county (n=10; n=20), Westmeath (n=12) and Clare (n=9) whereas the non-BCFS cohort is reflective of a smaller cohort from each county with a slightly higher frequency of respondents from Galway city and county (n=2; n=5), Waterford (n=6) and Dublin (n=4) (see Table 5.5). However, the non-response rate to this geographical location aspect was evident across the survey, twenty-four (n=24) among BCFS cohort and twenty-six (n=26) among non BCFS cohort respondents.

Table 5.4 BCFS Respondents per County

County	Respondent Number
Leitrim	1
Westmeath	12
Sligo	1
Offaly	6
Meath	2
Mayo	3
Limerick	2
Kildare	2
Galway City	10
Dublin	8
County Galway	20
Cork	1
Clare	9
Cavan	3
<b>Total Replies</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>NON-Replies</b>	24

Table 5.5 Non-BCFS Respondents per County

County	Respondent Number
Tyrone	1
Derry	1
Donegal	1
Kerry	2
Waterford	6
Meath	2
Mayo	3
Limerick	3
Galway City	2
Dublin	4
County Galway	5
Cork	1
Clare	2
Tipperary	1
<b>Total Replies</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>NON-Replies</b>	26



## 5.2.4 Income Levels

### 5.2.4.1 BCFS

In relation to low-income factors among the BCFS cohort, 31 of the 99 respondents (31%) responded that they earn less than €20,000. In this regard, graduates were asked if they receive unemployment benefit or are in receipt of state welfare assistance, 10 of the 99 BCFS respondents (10%) responded that they fit within this category. Equally, this category accounts for unpaid carers too, which is a significant area of responsibility for community and family component graduate participants (see Table: 5.6).

**Table 5.6 BCFS Income Overview**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Non-replies</b>	6	6.0
<b>2. Unemployed in receipt of social protection payment e.g., working in the home or unpaid carer</b>	10	10.1
<b>3. Additional income</b>	9	9.1
<b>4. Earning €10,000</b>	7	7.1
<b>5. Earning €20,000</b>	5	5.1
<b>6. Earning €30,000</b>	16	16.2
<b>7. Earning €40,000</b>	19	19.2
<b>8. Earning €50,000</b>	12	12.1
<b>9. Earning €60,000</b>	10	10.1
<b>10. Earning €70,000</b>	2	2.0
<b>11. Earning €80,000</b>	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	99	100.0

Furthermore, a significant proportion of the BCFS graduate respondents, 47 of the 99 (47.5%) rest in the lower to middle income range as they have indicated that they earn between €1,000 and €50,000. Additionally, only 15 of 99 respondent graduates (15.1%) earn €51,000 or more. Therefore, the unwaged and lower income level students constitute 78 of the 99 BCFS component respondents.

#### 5.2.4.2 BCFS Combined with Non- BCFS Income levels

In total, 47% BCFS and Non-BCFS ( n=78 of 163) graduate respondents documented an income of €30,000 or less, suggesting that the majority of respondents in this survey sit within the low to middle income range as graduates (see Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7 Income Scales of BCFS and Non-BCFS Survey Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Non-replies</b>	26	15.95
<b>2. No income/ unemployed</b>	14	9.00
<b>3. Additional income</b>	13	8.00
<b>4. €10,000</b>	8	5.00
<b>5. €20,000</b>	12	7.40
<b>6. €30,000</b>	31	19.01
<b>7. €40,000</b>	22	13.50
<b>8. €50,000</b>	15	9.20
<b>9. €60,000</b>	15	9.20
<b>10. €70,000</b>	3	1.84
<b>11. €80,000</b>	4	2.50
<b>Total</b>	163	100.0

## 5.2.5 Prior Educational Attainment

### 5.2.5.1 BCFS Graduates

This table outlines the previous educational achievements of the BCFS graduate participants that exited the programme with a degree award between the years 2010 and 2014. Ninety nine (n=99) from a total of one hundred and four (n=104) graduate participants of the BCFS programme responded to this question (see Table 5.8).

The prior educational attainment table reflects the diverse educational spectrum of the BCFS cohort on entry to the programme. A third (31%) of this cohort had completed a leaving certificate achievement. Equally, the chart shows that 3% of the BCFS graduate respondents had left school following completion of primary school. So in essence the formal education gap for this cohort was extensive between primary school and commencement of the BCFS Programme. However, the chart also reflects that 21% of the BCFS graduate participants had previously completed a degree and 3% had completed a Master's programme.

**Table 5.8 BCFS Qualifications on Entry**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Non-Replies</b>	6	6.06
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	21	21.21
<b>Intermediate Certificate</b>	6	6.10
<b>Leaving Certificate</b>	31	31.31
<b>Masters award</b>	3	3.03
<b>Other Qualifications</b>	29	29.30
<b>Primary School completion</b>	3	3.03
<b>Total</b>	99	100.0

### 5.2.5.2 BCFS comparison to Non- BCFS Prior Educational Attainment levels

The comparison table, Table 5.9, reflects that the majority of non BCFS participants had a degree on entry to the respective programme of component (n=29) twenty nine non- BCFS respondents in comparison to twenty-one (n=21) BCFS participants. The tables illustrate that only 4 participants in total within component one that replied to this question had only completed primary school. The earlier figures noted in Table 5.8 presents the data that three of these four participants that had only previously completed primary school were BCFS graduate participants. So this indicates that the most diverse educational entry participants were the BCFS cohort (see Table 5.9).

**Table 5.9 BCFS and Non-BCFS Component Participant Qualifications on Entry**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Non Replies</b>	22	13.50
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	50	30.70
<b>Intermediate Certificate</b>	10	6.13
<b>Leaving Certificate</b>	38	23.31
<b>Masters award</b>	3	1.84
<b>Other Qualifications</b>	36	22.10
<b>Primary School completion</b>	4	2.45
<b>Total</b>	163	100

## 5.2.6 Nationality

### 5.2.6.1 BCFS

As many part-time adult learners that have accessed community education and higher education programmes in NUI Galway, the nationality of the 2010-2014 BCFS graduate cohort was captured to gain insight on these learners pathways to education in the west. The table reflects that 96 participants of a total of 104 (92%) replied to this question.

**Table 5.10 BCFS Nationality**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Irish</b>	87	90.62
<b>African</b>	1	1.04
<b>British</b>	1	1.04
<b>Irish Traveller</b>	1	1.04
<b>Naturalized Dutch</b>	1	1.04
<b>Nigerian Irish</b>	1	1.04
<b>Scottish</b>	2	2.08
<b>Zimbabwean by birth and Irish by naturalisation</b>	2	2.08
<b>Total</b>	96	100

5.2.6.2 BCFS and Non-BCFS Nationality Comparison

A similar dominant nationality pattern is evident across all survey participants in component 1 (n=130) graduate participants are Irish (see table 5.11).

Table 5.11 BCFS and Non-BCFS Nationality

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Irish</b>	130	79.75
<b>African</b>	1	.62
<b>British</b>	2	1.23
<b>Irish Traveller</b>	1	.62
<b>Naturalized Dutch</b>	1	.62
<b>Nigerian Irish</b>	1	.62
<b>Scottish</b>	2	1.23
<b>Zimbabwean by birth and Irish by naturalisation</b>	2	1.23
<b>Non Replies</b>	23	14.11
<b>Total</b>	163	100.0

## **Summary of Key Sample Characteristics Results:**

### **Gender:**

#### **Component 1(On line Survey)**

BCFS: N = 104; 87 females, 17 males

Non-BCFS learning programmes DL<sup>39</sup>: N = 22; 21 females, 1 male

Non-BCFS non-distance learning programmes: non-DL: N = 38; 28 females, 10 male

#### **Component 2 (Interactive Management (IM))**

BCFS : N = 6 ( females)

#### **Component 3 (Semi-Structured Interviews)**

BCFS: n = 18 (Population 1; 2 males, 7 females) (Population 2; 4 males, 5 females)

Non-BCFS/ BCP: n = 8 (Population 3; 8 females)

### **Age:**

BCFS group was 48.65 years (SD = 10.10)

Non-BCFS DL was 43.88 years (SD = 9.11)

Non-BCFS Non-DL was 35.24 years (SD = 10.10)

### **Geographic Location:**

**BCFS** cohort are representative of a diverse geographical spread from across the country with a prevalence of Galway city and county (n = 10; n = 20), Westmeath (n = 12) and Clare (n = 9)

**Non-BCFS** cohort from Galway city and county ( n = 2; n = 5), Waterford (n = 6) and Dublin (n = 4).

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<sup>39</sup> DL means Distance Learning

## **Summary of Key Sample Characteristics Results**

*(continued):*

### **Income:**

**BCFS comparison to Non- BCFS Income levels**, 47% BCFS and Non BCFS ( n = 78 of 163) graduate respondents documented an income of €30,000 or less- low to middle income range

### **Prior Education Attainment:**

BCFS cohort had the most diverse educational entry credentials. Notably, **n = 4 of 163 surveyed** had only completed primary school, while the majority (n = 29) of **non-BCFS** participants had a degree on entry and (n = 21) BCFS participant had a degree.

### **Nationality:**

BCFS; n = 87 were Irish; Non-BCFS; 47 were Irish (N = 130 of 163 survey participants).



### 5.3 Vignettes

The three vignettes hereunder are presented to illustrate the educational stories of the study participants. They offer a brief insight to the social, developmental and historical experiences of transformative learning across the three populations who engaged in component three, the semi-structured interviews. These vignettes reflect the collective transformative learning experiences of graduates from each of the three populations interviewed as part of Component 3, the semi-structured interviews. They capture all four research objectives but especially objective one, on the presence and sustainability of transformative learning among graduate participants. These vignettes were developed to give a voice to participants who have experienced marginalisation in education - so this is a space within the study to share their journeys.

#### 5.3.1 Population 1<sup>40</sup> Graduate Vignette

Gina<sup>41</sup> is a female graduate of the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). She commenced the programme in September 2006 after viewing the advert in a national broadsheet. The part-time nature of the programme delivery and staggered routes of exit attracted the fifty five year old working mother of four adolescent children to apply for the BCFS programme.

Gina worked in a low-paid family support service as an administrator when she commenced the programme but wished to gain employment as a development worker role in the future. However, as she left secondary school at fourteen due to the death of her mother and necessity to gain employment to support her siblings, formal education was ended abruptly. In addition, she was the first generation to consider third level access within

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<sup>40</sup> **Population 1** consists of graduates of the Bachelors of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCF) only.

<sup>41</sup> Gina is a pseudonym for this graduate in Population 1 to protect her anonymity and identity in the study

her household, so the cultural understanding of higher education access was absent from her experience.

The BCFS graduate gained access to the course in 2006 and paid the course fees by instalments based on a personal payment plan she arranged with one of the BCFS programme managers (the researcher in this case). This facilitated Gina to continue to sustain her post as an administrator while studying part-time. The achievement of the 45 credit Certificate in Arts in Community in Family Studies after year one and the Diploma in Arts: Community and Family Studies, 90 credit award after year two completion, enabled Gina to gain confidence and sustain her motivation to proceed to the degree level for the final two years. The graduation ceremony at the end of year two offered Gina and her family an opportunity to experience and celebrate the achievement of the Diploma award, which motivated her to continue to the degree cycle of the programme.

In year three of the programme, Gina decided to apply for an internal position in her workplace as a development worker with adolescents. The Community Education programme manager (the researcher) offered the student some guidance on sector based updates on development in policy and practice in the youth sector in advance of the interview and advised the student to avail of the Career development services on campus. As a result of the acquisition of the related programme module content undertaken and the Diploma in Arts award achieved, Gina contacted the Careers Office in the University and sought and received guidance on preparing an updated curriculum vitae and personal statement for the job application.

Gina successfully completed the interview and gained the promotion into the development worker role and continued with the degree and exited with a 2.1 honours award in October 2010. She has remained a huge advocate of blended, part-time learning and three of her adolescent children later accessed higher education as a result of their mother's positive role modelling and the value she placed on education as a progression route in life.

### 5.3.2 Population 2<sup>42</sup> Graduate Vignette

Tom<sup>43</sup> was a forty-five year old father parenting alone. He spotted the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) advertisement on a community noticeboard in the local community centre when attending a parent and toddler group session. He was attracted to apply as the level 7 part-time CDP Programme was being offered on a week-morning when he had access to community childcare for his son and so he was free to participate in the three hour weekly class.

Tom had moved to the new community after a relationship breakdown and saw adult education as an opportunity to meet new people and develop a social network for himself and his child.

The flexible, community education ethos embedded in the Diploma in CDP appealed to Tom's learning style. Equally, the pastoral and social support network offered by the programme managers on a consistent basis throughout the Diploma programme fostered confidence and resilience in Tom. In addition, the weekly workshops with fellow learners encouraged Tom to manage his own and other people's emotions more effectively and that enabled him to progress to the level 8 BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) programme.

Furthermore, the recognition of prior learning exemptions offered from successful completion of the Diploma in CDP into the custom made BCFS programme by the programme managers (one of which was the researcher) facilitated Tom to gain the reduction in fees and module credits in year one and year two of the BCFS levels. This had a positive impact on the financial cost and the reduced module scheduling commitment for him. Equally, as

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<sup>42</sup> **Population 2** consists of graduates of the Bachelors of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCF) who had previously completed the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programme.

<sup>43</sup> Tom is a pseudonym for this graduate in Population 2 to protect his anonymity and identity in the study

the degree was scheduled on a part-time weekend mode, it enabled Tom to plan childcare options in advance.

The module syllabus on the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programmes created a safe andragogical framework to critically reflect and manage the personal and family impact of the life events he had experienced. Tom's community and social involvement evolved during the Diploma in CDP and BCFS programmes, so on foot of the programme learning, he supported other lone fathers' participation in community education in his community.

Adult learning became an enabler for Tom to work through the personal family issues and he progressed to undertake a part-time Masters programme in the social sciences on the successful achievement of a first class honours award in the BA in Community and Family Studies. Equally, the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programmes of study, offered Tom an opportunity to be a role model in education to his child and to foster a value in formal education for the child's future life path.

### **5.3.3 Population 3<sup>44</sup> Graduate Vignette**

Sarah<sup>45</sup> was a thirty year old mother of two young children. She had worked in a private child care setting for over ten years with limited formal training (Level 2 and 3 FETAC<sup>46</sup>) and wished to gain access to improved financial and career opportunities in the future. She received an email advert through the county childcare committee structure informing her of the newly devised NUI Galway BA in Early Childhood Practice (BCP) blended learning degree programme in July 2010 for commencement in September 2010.

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<sup>44</sup> **Population 3** consists of graduates of another part-time distance learning degree programme at NUIG, the Bachelors of Arts in Early Childhood Practice (BCP).

<sup>45</sup> Sarah is a pseudonym for this graduate in Population 3 to protect her anonymity and identity in the study

<sup>46</sup> FETAC- Further Education and Training Awards Council

Sarah was really hesitant to enquire further about the degree programme as she had left school early due to the social isolation and bullying issues she experienced in secondary school as she lived in a designated area of disadvantage and the labelling attached to her community presented barriers for her to progress through secondary school successfully. This social stigmatisation of her community of origin shadowed Sarah into her working life and adulthood as it had caused her significant personal trauma in her teenage years.

However, Sarah's personal sense of curiosity and inner determination to overcome her earlier life experience encouraged her to apply to the distance learning degree programme that was scheduled over weekends, so she could maintain her work to pay for the programme.

Sarah's confidence grew as she progressed through the programme modules and she attended the graduation at the Diploma in Arts award stage which boosted her personal confidence to progress to achieve the degree award. Equally, the graduation ceremony offered the adult learner the opportunity to invite her family along to experience the graduation ceremony and enjoy Sarah's achievement. This education milestone in her life provided her with the opportunity to progress to the degree cycle and achieve an honours degree award.

Since completion of her degree in 2014, she has provided talks to adolescents in the secondary school she attended and acted as a role model for them on the possibilities educational access and achievement can provide. This voluntary community commitment by Sarah has enabled other young adults to remain in school and complete their leaving certificate.

These vignettes were developed to give a voice to participants who have experienced marginalisation in education and in their life journey –so this space within the study was allocated to share their journeys. In the next section, the empirical data from this mixed methods study will be presented per research objective.

## 5.4 Objective 1-4 Results

### Introduction

The empirical results pertaining to each objective are outlined in this section. The three study Component findings are presented sequentially with respect to each of the four objectives.

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>To explore whether the BCFS<sup>47</sup> graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and deemed it sustainable post programme completion</b>
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#### 5.4.1 TL Results in Component 1: (Online Survey)

Transformative learning responses across the participant cohort in Component 1 are outlined in this section and detailed in Table 5.12. The positive response rate to TL statements across 12 of the 13 statements among BCFS and non-BCFS cohorts reflects participants' experiences of transformative learning. Fifty eight (n=58) from a population of sixty (n=60) Non-BCFS participants were captured in the Transformative Learning descriptive statistics. In terms of BCFS participants, ninety-eight (n=98) from a population of one hundred and four (n=104) responded. The transformative learning statements are mirrored on King's (1998) Learning Activities Survey template whereupon one positive agreement with one statement indicates experience of transformative learning. The methodology chapter maps King LAS constructs back to Mezirow's Transformative Learning phases.

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<sup>47</sup> BCFS means the BA in Community and Family Studies

Table 5.12 further indicates collective positive agreement with a number of the TL statements by respondents, in particular, statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Therefore, 85% (n=132) of the respondents in survey one identified with at least one transformative learning statement. Equally twenty-four (n=24) of the one hundred and fifty six (n=156) responses indicates that 15% did not identify with any of the twelve transformative learning experiences.

**Table 5.12 Transformative Learning Responses among BCFS and Non- BCFS (King’s LAS Template (1998))**

	<b>N</b>
<b>1. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act</b>	23
<b>2. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (Examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)</b>	15
<b>3. As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.</b>	15
<b>4. Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations</b>	19
<b>5. I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.</b>	15
<b>6. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.</b>	14
<b>7. I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations</b>	11
<b>8. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.</b>	9
<b>9. I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.</b>	4
<b>10. I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.</b>	3
<b>11. I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.</b>	2

Table 5.12 Continued	
<b>12. I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.</b>	2
<b>13. I do not identify with any of the statements above.</b>	24
<b>Total Replies</b>	156

#### ***5.4.2 TL Findings in Component 3: Semi- Structured Interview***

In relation to this research objective on transformative learning (TL) experiences among adult learner graduate cohorts, the experiences expressed by the interviewees were based on Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning differentiation of the two types of Transformation Context which are namely, Incremental and Epochal. Incremental Transformation as the name suggests refers to TL that occurs over time and gradually in adult learners, whilst 'epochal' occurs based on a pivotal life event or experience that triggers a more immediate, instant change in the learner's perspective or outlook.

Mezirow's (1994, 2000) Transformative learning process across either the 'epochal or 'incremental' mode is based on the transition through one or more of the three stages which are historical experiences, developmental experiences and social experiences ( see interpretation figure in literature chapter, Figure 2.1). This thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun 2013) is based on the indigenous coding principle where qualitative data findings are mapped through a deductive approach of stemming the findings upon the congruent parts of Mezirow's theory of TL. In the context of Component 3, the researcher has categorised the historical experiences to capture the early life and attachment journey of the adults, whilst the developmental experiences are recorded in terms of the emotional intelligence accumulation and awareness of learners, and the social experiences are captured in the value placed on the educational setting and environment learners expressed in the interviews.



#### 5.4.2.1 POPULATION 1: BCFS Participants

##### 5.4.2.1.1 Incremental Transformative Learning Experiences

All participants in **Population 1** reflected experiences of transformative learning that were akin to incremental, gradual developments of transformation and perspective change. The examples of incremental TL across the nine BCFS graduates were evidenced across the three pathways; social, developmental and historical experiences. A sample of the interviewee perspectives has been included in this chapter.

The '**Social Experiences**' as documented in the interview findings with Population 1 consider the varying levels of social support and the diverse learning environments that the graduates experienced during their studies on the BCFS programme and in their previous educational and home settings.

##### **Social Experiences:**

**Participant 'a'** from **Population 1** expressed her initial fears on coming to campus and trying to 'fit in' were huge barriers to her as an adult learner. *"I went in the harry potter gate and parked up...it was like a maze to me and I saw these young kids and felt upset and like a lost older lady"*.

**Participant 'c'** from **Population 1** reflected on the link between 'mentorship' and the 'value of education'. He shared his experience of the opportunities access to formal education brings to some and not all members of society. *"I became very much aware that there is a social problem there, if you're in a certain class unless you're somehow taken out of that, your opportunities are really limited"*.

**Participant 'i'** from **Population 1** remarked on the life-change effect of returning to education as a part-time adult learner was the adjustment to campus and its structures. *"You had all the newness of the learning but also the newness of academia as well"*. She recalled her first solo visit to the NUIG library and the confidence boost and sense of fitting in there it gave her was pivotal in her on-campus learning experience.

**Population 1<sup>48</sup> ‘Social Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ BCFS programme deemed a pivotal change agent in the life journey among Population 1 because it
  - ❖ Enabled graduates unburden themselves from previous negative social and educational experiences
  - ❖ Facilitated graduate participants to move forward with their formal educational journey.

This summary is reflected by **Participant g** from **Population 1** when she highlighted that the BCFS programme was a lifeline to re-path her life through adult learning and education *“I think it is actually one of the only ways to change your path, through education”*.

The **‘Development Experiences’** in these interview findings with **Population 1** consider the varying emotional intelligence milestones and experiences that the graduates experienced during their studies on the BCFS programme and in their previous educational and home settings.

✚ **Developmental Experiences:**

**Participant ‘b’** from **Population 1** expressed that the programme encouraged the interviewee to reflect on framing opinions and perspectives during workshop discussions; it enhanced his ‘critical thinking’ and ‘communication skills’ of the interviewee to manage his and others’ emotions; *“certainly there were times when it got heated and you wouldn’t agree with their opinions and you would have to keep your own emotions in check a certain amount of the time”*. He added that the opportunity to build and form ‘social relationships’ with

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<sup>48</sup> **Population 1** consists of graduates of the Bachelors of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCF) only.

other learners was a key aspect of the BCFS programme for him. ***“I think the bonds of friendship helped each other’s emotions to keep going”***. This participant also expressed that the mentorship provided on the programme was significant for the graduate. ***“I couldn’t thank the staff in NUIG enough because when times got tough they encouraged us to keep going”***.

**Participant ‘d’** from **Population 1** commented that the programme triggered a critical change in her perspective of how her self-esteem was affected by her social network and she developed greater capacity to manage her own and others’ emotions through participation on the programme. ***“I have put a lot of negative people out of my life since college”***.

**Participant ‘g’** from **Population 1** remarked that the value of mentorship and support on the BCFS programme enabled her transformation in self and worldview; ***“once the support system is strong you can definitely change”***.

**Population 1 ‘Developmental Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ **Population 1** emphasised the strong social relationships between programme staff and learners and between fellow learners
  - ❖ enhanced the emotional maturity, confidence and self-esteem building in learners
  - ❖ helped all to reach professional and personal life achievements

**Participant ‘f’** from **Population 1** summarised the personal emotional transformation developed through the BCFS programme in terms of ‘self-esteem’ growth to complete tasks and follow through on commitments to family based on learning from the programme. ***“I got stickability; I will not allow somebody to treat me wrongly now”***.

The third core element of Mezirow's Transformative Learning process relates to '**Historical Experiences**'. Historical experiences mirror the attachment and emotional bonds of the participants both in advance and during the BCFS programme. The historical experiences of '**Population 1**' will be captured in this section.

 **Historical Experiences:**

**Participant 'f'** from **Population 1** expressed a strong attachment to her mother as she raised her on her own. But the interviewee's mother did not support or value formal education as she had left school early herself and never learned to read or write throughout her life. The interviewee repeated same practice and left school at fifteen; *“my mother, I would class her as a great influence in my life and I love her dearly as she would have been always there for me...I don't judge her for not getting me to continue school”*.

**Participant 'h'** from **Population 1** expressed the attachment and social relationships influences on her; *“your childhood really does affect you in your adult life...there is a level that your parents and upbringing affects you but I think your experience in childhood is what really affects you throughout your life”*. This interviewee also remarked that family pressure and a culture of education expectation from her parents to achieve a degree in Nigeria as a young adult forced her to take a formal education path that was not of her choosing. *“When I was younger I was doing it to be called a graduate. All your friends are graduates and you are from a graduate family”*.

**Participant 'i'** from **Population 1** expressed that the life and work experience and motivation to access and progress through the BCFS programme was linked back to her mother's encouragement of the interviewee to succeed in life as a young person; *“she was constantly telling us that we were brilliant”*.

**Population 1 ‘Historical experiences’ Key Findings:**

✚ **Population 1’** reflected that the presence of positive social support and peer respect while on the BCFS programme

❖ Compensated for any previous negative attachment relationships that had disempowered learners in previous educational experiences.

❖ Encouraged learners to foster positive attachments with others

**Participant ‘e’ in population 1** reiterated the importance of an encouraging social support network; *“yes, you definitely need a good social support system”*.

**5.4.2.2 POPULATION 2: BCFS and Diploma in CDP Participants**

The examples of incremental TL across these 9 BCFS graduate participants who were previous Diploma in CDP graduates were evidenced across the three pathways; social, developmental and historical experiences.

The same thematic approach to present findings based on Mezirow’s three domains of ‘social’ ‘developmental’ and ‘historical’ experiences of transformative learning was used among **Population ‘2’**.

✚ **Social Experiences:**

**Participant ‘k’** from **Population 2** remarked on the accessibility of modules and the part-time nature of the BCFS attracted her to the programme; *“it was so unbelievable that you could do a degree like this and not have to take time off and not be in college every day. That was just wonderful”*. She added that the graduation ceremony and what it inspires and represents for families was also expressed as a key milestone for her following both awards, the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS. *“The graduation was also a big thing for me, having the kids see me in the gown, my whole life had changed”*.

**Participant ‘p’** from **Population 2** expressed that in terms of the andragogical ethos on the community education programmes, that the tutors and co-ordinators were aware of learners’ fears of formal education and used informal and adult-friendly mediums to assist learners make sense of the module content; *“it was just the respect for adults...I just thought that it was handled very well”*. He remarked that the Diploma in CDP was the reintroduction to formal education for the interviewee and he expressed how positive a learning experience it was. *“I remember it being a thoroughly enjoyable experience”*.

**Participant ‘r’** from **Population 2** expressed that the supports and format of the Diploma programme and the credit and financial exemptions offered from completion of the Diploma in CDP to access the BCFS really assisted the learner to succeed in higher education. *“But it fed in very nicely with the degree. The credits, and I felt it prepared me. The Diploma was like dipping your toe in to see what the water was like...I think it (the Diploma in CDP) made it considerably easier and it prepared me mentally for it (BCFS)”*.

**Population 2<sup>49</sup> ‘Social Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ **Population ‘2’** mirrored many of the experiences of **Population ‘1’** in that
  - ❖ Many of these participants had to overcome previous ‘life unease’ about educational experiences to participate in the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS.
  - ❖ NUIG’s Community education inclusive and supportive andragogical model offered to Population ‘2’ was expressed as pivotal to the transformative experience of graduate participants.

The second aspect of interpretation of Mezirow’s Transformative Learning experiences within Population ‘2’ experiences relate to ‘developmental experiences’.

✚ **Developmental Experiences:**

**Participant ‘1’** from **Population 2** reflected upon the importance of positive role modelling for her children and the significance of working hard and studying part-time; *“they (the children) were very immersed in my education... I think it was very good for their own personal development and confidence too. They were very comfortable around campus”*. Strong ‘social relationships’ and bonds with friends from secondary school were earmarked by this interviewee too as core to her perseverance through her adult education journey.

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<sup>49</sup> **Population 2** consists of graduates of the Bachelors of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCF) who had previously completed the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programme.

**Participant ‘p’** from **Population 2** expressed the emotional intelligence and sense of self respect and dignity that was instilled by his parents. This interviewee’s critical thinking skills were traced by the interviewee to his parents. *“I would be quite clear on how I would view things. I would say I got that from my mother and father...I would say that we were reared to be quite independent thinkers”*.

**Participant ‘r’** from **Population 2** expressed that the camaraderie and support on the community education programmes enhanced his emotional awareness of other’s perspectives. *“I think there was great camaraderie and support. Every time you would meet you would discuss how everything was going for you. There was considerable support in the group and by year four (of BCFS programme) friendships were formed”*.

**Population 2 ‘Developmental Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ Among **Population ‘2’** the emotional support provided by staff through both programmes (Diploma in CDP and BCFS) was paramount to the retention and survival of part-time adult learner students in NUIG
  - ❖ Population 2 expressed that the Diploma in CDP was the benchmark transformative experience for them upon which they rated the BCFS programme
  - ❖ Social relationship building within groups of peers and managing one’s own and others emotions was high on interviewees’ radar throughout both programmes.
  - ❖ The monthly workshops and the support from community education tutors and staff were deemed key to the bonds developed. Interview participants felt they grew to know the community education staff base across a longer duration of time and remarked on the bond as stronger to sustain them on their educational pathway.



The third element of Mezirow's model relating to experiences that contribute to Transformative Learning are 'historical experiences' and are mapped against **Population '2'**.

 **Historical Experiences:**

**Participant 'j'** from **Population 2** reflected on her positive attachment experiences with her father, one school teacher and her own children and she deemed boundaries and expectations as key to supporting learners through life whatever their age. *"I think that you will lift yourself to an expectation, if the expectation is there for you as a child, you will push yourself to that expectation"*. The interviewee places a different 'value on education' having completed the programmes with NUIG and as she was the first in her generation to attend third level; she is stronger and more resolute with her own children that they need access to formal education. Despite her own father's interest in education, he did not push her or her siblings to do further components; *"yes I think you need the encouragement and the push more"*.

**Participant 'n'** from **Population 2** remarked upon the community education staff and tutors andragogical guidance and mentorship ethos to guide learners; *"the patience and the understanding they (the tutors) had with us, it has rubbed off on me"*.

**Participant 'o'** from **Population 2** expressed that her parents were very positive role models and encouraged her and all her siblings to finish secondary school. *"My mother was very intuitive and my father was full of emotional intelligence. They would have always told you to push yourself but not over the limit"*. However the primary school bullying by teachers negatively impacted on the interviewee's academic progression. This life experience also negatively impacted on how this interviewee perceived her abilities in comparison to her siblings. However, the confidence boost gained on the Diploma in CDP and the BA finally balanced the scale for this interviewee to feel equal to her siblings, who had progressed to third level after secondary school. *"I am definitely on par with them and I am definitely more confident. A lot*

*of people think I have greater insight than them; I would be more philosophical than they would be. I am definitely on par with them if not a little bit higher. That is how I feel now”.*

**Participant ‘r’** from **Population 2** reflected that his parents and an uncle were kind to him in his youth but that economics became the priority, not education, in his household growing up, so they were encouraged as a family to seek jobs that paid. *“I suppose education in my house, especially third level education, wasn’t promoted in my home and it was an economic factor, we simply didn’t have the money”.* However, in adulthood a work colleague, in addition to a life partner, encouraged him to undertake and complete the Diploma and BCFS. *“I think that support is vital alright. I think if you are in a relationship with somebody and they are not supportive in an endeavour like study it would make it very difficult. If they’re not with you they’re against you, you know, so it makes it impossible”.*

#### **Population 2 ‘Historical Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ Among **‘Population 2’** the importance of attachment to others whether in early life to family members, neighbours or educators was an expressed influence
  - ❖ It impacted on informal and formal educational experiences, it paved for them as an instrument of change and development.
  - ❖ The ‘mentorship’ and guidance of others in life was deemed crucial to shape the transformative learning experience.
  - ❖ The Diploma in CDP and the BCFS became an emancipator from previous negative or unsupportive attachments and the programmes acted as enablers of graduate participants into new educational experiences and pathways for personal and professional growth.

### 5.4.2.3 POPULATION 3: BCP Participants

There were examples of incremental TL evidenced across the three pathways; social, developmental and historical experiences among the eight BCP that is non-BCFS graduates, within Population 3. The thematic experiences were mirrored on the same indigenous experiences across each of Mezirow's three fundamental benchmarks of transformative learning; social, developmental and historical.

#### Social Experiences:

**Participant 'u' from Population 3** found the small group setting in the outreach venue confidence building during the degree cycle as it facilitated learners to get to know one another and experience alternative perspectives on the world. *“Absolutely... I have to say that you come in with one perspective but everybody when they spoke, their reasoning and their perspective, it was valid and I definitely took on a lot of that as well, you're challenged...you had to go through the journey in the four years to really get the purpose of it”*. However she did remark on the overpowering experience of the year one induction day when all learners came together and how disconcerting that setting on campus was for all due to the nervousness among students on day one, and not having an opportunity on the day to do group work or get to know each other; *“no I wouldn't have been very confident at all. You didn't know what you were walking into and I remember the first day, the orientation day, the big hall was full, you didn't know who you were sitting next to, you didn't know where they were coming from and there wouldn't have been much talk really in the initial couple of modules because people were just trying to find where they were”*.

**Participant 'v' from Population 3** reflected that the development of the new part-time, blended learning BCP programme in 2010 made it accessible to her as she worked full-time at a distance from campus. However, the virtual learning environment called Blackboard™ and the IT literacy skills required to undertake the programme were extremely challenging to this interviewee; *“when we started it (the programme) you didn't need*

*fantastic IT skills, you needed a laptop and internet and I had all those things but the user was the problem. That was my biggest challenge. The content of the programme I was able to deal with a lot of it was familiar and a lot of it was new but it was the IT that nearly finished me*". The social setting of undertaking the programme on campus resounded with the learner and offered a prestige to the effort. This was also expressed in the opportunity to attend a graduation at the Diploma award stage which instilled her with momentum to progress to the degree cycle. *"I was thinking of next time I will have my full degree, etc. It was nice. They are lovely occasions. The one day you get to strut your stuff and say I did it. It is just a bit of paper at the end of the day but it is well worth it"*.

**Participant 'y' from Population 3** remarked that at a practical level, the flexible, part-time nature of the NUIG BCP programme timetable and structure enabled her to sustain her private business as a childcare service provider on a full-time basis and study part-time. *"In a sense it probably is the best of both worlds. If you were to go fully into the student life, you would lose a lot of connection to the adult life, of learning and just doing your normal adult life. It certainly was the best thing for me; I can't imagine giving up my school"*. Equally the opportunity to study part-time presented itself at a pivotal time in the interviewee's life as her youngest child was transitioning from teenage years to adulthood and did not need the same level of support. *"Well I suppose the whole reason I started it was the fact that my daughter was moving away. That would have been a big influence, the fact that she was leaving home and I could now give my time to this"*.

**Population 3<sup>50</sup> ‘Social Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ Population 3 had two main differences from population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ The induction day in year one was deemed impersonal and overwhelming for Population 3 participants
  - ❖ All BCP graduates are women and work in the early years services as employees or owner/ managers of services
- ✚ Population 3 had two main similarities to population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ The part-time flexible nature of the programme structure reflected manageable work life balance for learners
  - ❖ The degree was life changing for them in their personal and professional lives.

✚ **Developmental Experiences:**

From a developmental perspective, the transformative learning process was enabled on the BCP programme with fellow learners who could show empathy and understanding to one another. All of the interviewees in Population 3 shared a common bond; they all worked in early childhood settings across the country, so their work environments and the pressures and stress of those work settings were familiar to all.

**Participant’s’ from Population 3** expressed that. *“I would say meeting the other girls on the other courses was really good because I have made some firm friends...they were all managers or practitioners or working in the field and it was good to get everybody’s different perspectives”*. She remarked that a child protection issue in her work setting and a family bereavement during the programme caused significant personal strain. However, the esteem supports such as a “confidential ear” and concrete supports such as “an assignment proof-reader’ offered to her by her fellow learners on the BCP programme

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<sup>50</sup> **Population 3** consists of graduates of another part-time distance learning degree programme at NUIG, the Bachelors of Arts in Early Childhood Practice (BCP).

enabled her to grow her emotional intelligence and resilience. ***“I got so much support from the other girls on the course at the time. I could talk to them and they knew whatever I said it had to be kept confidential, which was good”***. This support network between this interviewee and another ten colleagues from the degree programme has developed and sustained itself since the programme completion in 2014, despite the fact that none of them knew each other personally or professionally before they commenced the programme in 2010.

**Participant ‘u’ from Population 3** expressed the social relationship and esteem building among fellow learners on the BCP was noteworthy; ***“there were good friendships; I have a lifelong friend now that I didn’t know before the programme. And I think as well, even for adults, learning to stand up and to give a presentation, those kinds of skills. My confidence really grew throughout that programme”***.

**Participant ‘x’ from Population 3** remarked that the social support by her husband and fellow colleagues made the progression through the degree more attainable. ***“They were all very supportive and to be fair I don’t think I could have done it without the support from my husband and family. It must be very difficult for people who don’t have that support”***.

**Population 3 ‘Developmental Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ Population 3 had two main differences from population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ The interviewees in population 3 did not remark as a collective on the tutoring process influencing their developmental skills as opposed to population 1 and 2 who expressed the community education model as pivotal to the EI development.
  - ❖ The social network developed during the BCP programme among learners has sustained itself on completion of the programme.
- ✚ Population 3 had two main similarities to population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ They found the programme syllabus learning hugely beneficial to their personal and professional growth
  - ❖ They found the peer-to-peer learning hugely beneficial to their work in the paid and voluntary sector.

✚ **Historical Experiences:**

**Participant ‘s’ from Population 3** expressed that her value of education stemmed from her mother but that she was an adult, over forty years of age before she could realise her dream and save enough money to attend third level and undertake a degree. However, she expressed that she expects her own children to value education too and to succeed. *“My mother was embarrassed by not being able to read or write. She did not want that for any of the rest of us. I suppose and having my own children now, I would imagine them to go into college, I’m not just happy that they can read and write where my mother was happy that we could read and write. I want the next step for all of mine”*. The attachment and support of her mother enabled this interviewee to seek out and value formal education for herself and her children in turn.

This transformative learning experience changed this learner's life path and that of her family.

**Participant 't' from Population 3** expressed that her 'nana' rather than her parents was a huge influence in her early life as she was a very independent and resilient person despite the life trauma of losing her husband at a young age and having to raise her family alone. The interviewee found primary school very difficult due to the corporal punishment issue but that they moved to the midlands when she was finishing primary school and so her secondary school experience was more positive. *"I thought secondary school was just heaven. You didn't have punishment, you were supported by the teachers and there would have been a few who were very supportive"*. In adulthood, the interviewee expressed that her husband and his family whom she met at eighteen, was a very positive influence on her; *"so he would have influenced me a good bit and their family had a really good work ethic, there wasn't anything to do with college, as soon as you left school you started working"*. The personal determination coupled with the work ethic and sense of independence shaped this learner's focus on helping others through the setting up of an early years' childcare service.

**Participant 'x' from Population 3** expressed that education at any stage in life for her was a valued and a revered commodity by her parents and that respect for formal education was transferred to her as it enabled change to happen. *"Education was encouraged in our home regardless of whether you were doing it for a degree or for an interest... I suppose from my own background and point of view I was a bit nervous with a group of people on the first day. From the perspective of going into third level education I don't come from a family where everyone goes to college and all of that, for me it was a big jump and an adventure but I was looking forward to it. It was exciting to have the opportunity to do it but at the same time I did wonder if I was capable of doing it and is it going to be something that I can achieve? From my immediate family I was one of the first to go and get the degree. I think adult education is great for everybody,*



*especially if you have had some harder experiences while you were younger”.*

### **Population 3 ‘Historical Experiences’ Key Findings:**

- ✚ Population 3 had one main difference from population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ Two of the eight interviewees in population 3 lost their mother in early life and this unfortunate life event derailed their formal education involvement until they joined the BCP programme
  
- ✚ Population 3 had three main similarities to population 1 and 2:
  - ❖ They experienced varying levels of attachment in early life and formal education until they joined the BCP programme
  - ❖ The earlier life attachments and lack thereof for some graduates in this cohort within Population 3 instilled a sense of determination and resilience to gain fulfilment as an adult through education
  - ❖ Participants wanted their children to value education and gain a positive experience of formal education early in life.

### **5.4.3 TL Sustainability Findings in Component 3: Semi- Structured Interview**

In this subsection, the qualitative data findings from Component 3 of the study are presented which comprises of three Populations (Population 1; BCFS; Population 2; Diploma and BCFS and Population 3; BCP).

#### **5.4.3.1 POPULATION 1:**

**Participant ‘b’** from **Population 1** expressed the opportunity to share and build on one another’s experience as learners during the programme was crucial to ‘confidence’ and ‘esteem’ building on completion. *“I got employment after finishing the degree”*. Equally the participant added that the course created a change of life path and confidence in the graduate. *“It certainly changed my life for the better”*.

**Participant ‘h’** from **Population 1** expressed that her critical thinking skills achieved through the BCFS programme has impacted on her wider life relationships and choices; *“the course gave me a lot of resilience ...it gave me confidence to move on and believe in myself”*.

**Participant ‘i’** from **Population 1** expressed that the BCFS bestowed professional advantage to her as a learner and her career options opened while doing the degree as a result of the learning and currency the BCFS programme presented; *“the people that I worked with most did not have degrees so having it gave you the edge”*. This sense of membership to a ‘degree club’ provided a social support network of learning and personal growth that could not be unravelled once attained; *“no person is an individual on their own, you are part now of the bigger picture... I think that there has to be somebody who believes in you at a personal level and then you have to believe in yourself”*.

#### 5.4.3.2 POPULATION 2:

**Participant ‘j’** from **Population 2** reflected on her personal transformative change in perspective and attitude as a result of the programme. *“I feel like I have allowed and helped my mind to grow and be broadened, my experiences to be broadened , my thoughts process has been furthered”*.

**Participant ‘k’** from **Population 2** expressed the sense of confidence that the formal education process instilled in the interviewee, and triggered a change in her perspective that is irreversible. *“I think it was me developing within myself, maybe because of my previous experiences and being more open and opening my eyes a little bit to the world and that’s why I think that the whole education thing was a huge part to that really”*. The interviewee further reflected on her critical thinking skills and capacities to distil learning from the programmes and their relevance in her life reflected the emotional intelligence growth in the graduate; *“you’re almost forced to think...I didn’t accept things as they were, whereas I would have before (degree)”*.

**Participant ‘n’** from **Population 2** expressed that her advocacy and research skills and sense of promoting positive community change was a

key learning aspect from the Diploma in CDP. This change is earmarked as a concrete, irreversible change in herself; *“yes I have definitely taken something from that (programme) and it has changed my perspective...forever yes”*.

**Participant ‘r’ from Population 2** expressed the holistic learning experience as crucial to his development but especially his perspective on gender was transformed through the modules on the BCFS programme, especially ‘sociology’ and ‘family and society’. *“I think there has been a difference in my engagement with everybody. Both the diploma and degree challenged my perception of the society and how the society works, how power works and how families work. Even my own attitude to the gender difference if you like- It really challenged me”*.

#### 5.4.3.3 POPULATION 3:

**Participant ‘s’ from Population 3** expressed that the personal resilience and emotional intelligence to manage her own and others emotions has grown significantly through the programme, partly in line with the module content learning and the confidence it has given her in her professional life. This transformative learning has ebbed into her work colleagues’ and family’s life as the skills and attributes she now holds are transformed ad infinitum on completion of the degree. *“I didn't even know what resilience was until I did the degree, you know you’re going to help the kids but you don't realise how important it is until you have done it and you realise how important that thing was”*.

**Participant ‘w’ from Population 3** remarked that she did experience transformative learning and that the module ‘reflective practice’ enabled that transformation in her, both personally and professionally; *“there was one module in particular, the reflective module where we were doing the reflective learning where you looked back on what you had done and reflected on it. That module had a huge impact on me. I remember distinctly saying to one of the tutors that looking back to when I had done it in year one and when I did it in year four, asking myself was it the same*

*person... and I got more confident in what I was doing, my thinking changed and I knew I could do it”.*

**Participant ‘x’ from Population 3** reflected on the change in her personal and professional perspective that occurred and has sustained following that exposure to fellow learner viewpoints and course content and syllabus through the BCP programme. *“I think it was more of an attitude change. It was more of a personal change. The reflective part was difficult at first, going through a definite process made it more concrete and doing that for four years it just becomes part of what you are doing. So I think after the four years it became a definite part of what I was doing. Now a year later I think I am still doing it”.*

**Participant ‘y’ from Population 3** expressed that making new friends through the programme and learning reflective practice techniques has changed her world. *“I think it’s a life change. Absolutely the friendships and the reflective practice. It’s worth putting the time into reflective practice. It’s a skill for life and it’s therapeutic. Even when you lie in bed at night and think through the day and process what happened – it helps you to process what has actually happened and not to just react to things straight away. You actually work out why things happened in the first place. It’s a very positive way of thinking”.* In addition, the interviewee expressed that the transition in her personal role within the family was noteworthy during and on completion of the degree. *“The transition from being a mother, somebody at home all the time to having a different status in the house. The learning journey was huge!”*

<b>Objective 2:</b>	<b>To consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and TL, relative to Non-BCFS graduates.</b>
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In the following section, emotional intelligence and attachment levels will be presented from the empirical data. Subsection one includes the quantitative data from Component 1; the online surveys.

#### ***5.4.4 EI and Attachment Results in Component 1***

Fifty-one (n=51) Non-BCFS completed Schutte's (1989) 33 item Emotional Intelligence Scale (see Appendix 6) with the four named subscales, whilst ninety-five (n=95) BCFS participants replied. The BCFS responses based on mean were highest across all EI subscales in comparison to non-BCFS group. The standard deviation for subscale perception of emotion reflected the greatest differential across both BCFS and Non-BCFS (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.13 Means and Standard Deviations of Emotional Intelligence Subscales

<b>EI SUBSCALES</b>	<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Managing Others Emotions	Non-BCFS	40.50	3.93	51
	BCFS	43.38	4.76	95
	Total	42.38	4.68	146
Managing Own Emotions	Non-BCFS	46.13	3.94	51
	BCFS	48.59	5.78	95
	Total	47.73	5.33	146
Perception of Emotion	Non-BCFS	46.82	6.07	51
	BCFS	52.30	6.04	95
	Total	50.39	6.58	146
Utilisation of Emotions	Non-BCFS	28.58	3.80	51
	BCFS	32.59	3.93	95
	Total	31.19	4.32	146

The attachment experiences of participants were collated based on an adaption of Kaplan and Main's (1985) Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol. Five categories which reflect Kaplan and Main's Attachment Protocol to capture attachment experiences across the lifespan were sought in survey 1. In terms of BCFS (n=95) responded whilst (n=45) among Non-BCFS population. The BCFS responses based on mean were highest across all attachment categories in comparison to non-BCFS cohort.

Table 5.14 Attachment per 5 categories (Kaplan and Main's (1984) adapted model) among BCFS and Non-BCFS

		BCFS	General Adult Distance Learning	College Degree Non-Distance
<b>Nonfamily Attachment Influences</b>	Mean	46.60	36.08	32.46
<b>Child Attachment Experience in home</b>	Mean	41.09	35.00	29.22
<b>Attachment Experience in School as Young person</b>	Mean	28.63	22.31	18.82
<b>Attachment Experience in Education as Adult</b>	Mean	30.27	22.35	17.24
<b>Other family member Attachment Influences</b>	Mean	37.97	27.23	26.19

#### 5.4.5 EI and Attachment Findings in Component 3

The quantitative data results outlined above on EI and Attachment based on Schutte's (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale (EI) and Kaplan and Main's (1985) Attachment Protocol indicate the levels of the two constructs among the BCFS and Non-BCFS grouping. The qualitative findings in this next section will illustrate the emotional development and attachment bonds of BCFS graduates among Population 1 and Population 2, whilst Population 3 reflects the non-BCFS perspectives on EI development among participant BCP programme graduates.

##### 5.4.5.1 POPULATION 1:

**Participant 'c'** from **Population 1** expressed that a supportive formal secondary education changed his outlook and opportunities as one of his school mentors encouraged and built 'confidence', 'self-motivation' and

‘self- esteem’ in him as a student. *“I suppose he’s (the teacher/ religious order brother) the first person I came across that treated people based on who or what they were. He kind of knew that one model doesn’t fit everybody”*. In addition, the graduate claimed that the BCFS programme improved his communication and people management skills. Certain modules required the interviewee to see alternative opinions and perspectives to undertake/tackle issues in community and family support work. *“I think I was maybe too much goal oriented...I became a lot more interested in developing people than I would have been previously.”*

**Participant ‘f’** from **Population 1** expressed the significant sense of self awareness and understanding of self. This aligns with Schutte’s (1998) EI scale, as this learner declared a greater ability to manage her own emotions as a result of participation and supports gained on the BCFS programme. *“This course did help me a lot in my own life because it made me make sense of my own situation”*. The importance of ‘social relationships’ with fellow learners and members of the BCFS programme staff became a significant feature of resilience building and personal growth.

**Participant ‘h’** from **Population 1** expressed that she focuses on relationship building and more open communication skills between herself and her children now based on the positive influence of the BCFS programme. *“I will explain to them now why I think something is wrong and I will let them explain to me why they think it is right”*. The emotional consciousness and EI increase has been expressed as a result of the BCFS programme by this participant to help manage her own and others’ emotions; *“it (education) gives you the tools to manage them (your emotions) but it depends on you again if you are willing to accept those tools and use them”*.

#### 5.4.5.2 POPULATION 2:

**Participant ‘l’** from **Population 2** expressed that the achievement of a degree was deemed as a transformative agent to create a new identity for the interviewee and her family and not be stigmatised with one identity as a lone parent and nothing else. *“I just didn’t want the label of lone parent as*



*my identity, I wanted more than that. I wanted a job and I knew I wanted a good job”.*

Mentorship’ and strong ‘social relationship’ building was expressed by **Participant ‘n’** from **Population 2** with fellow learners and community members. *“I don’t know is it because I am getting older or because of NUI, I am able to sit down and ask the right questions. Somewhere along the line something has helped me help others. People know they can trust me and talk to me and normally a friendship grows from it”.* The BCFS programme was deemed the key reason to persevere with life by **Participant ‘n’** despite personal health issues unfolding for the learner during the degree programme; *“if I hadn’t been doing that (BCFS programme) at the time, I don’t know how I would have been because I wouldn’t have had a reason to keep doing something”.*

**Participant ‘r’** from **Population 2** reflected on the importance of empathy and understanding of others that evolved from learning on the community education programmes which positively impacted on his personal and professional life. *“A realisation that just because people studied community and family studies didn't mean they were all suitable for the area or that we were even self-aware enough to realise that it wasn't just about ourselves. In the community voluntary sector you need to be empathetic and you need to be able to look around and make sense of what is going on and that was an eye opener”.*

#### 5.4.5.3 POPULATION 3:

**Participant ‘s’** from **Population 3** expressed that her self-belief has been accentuated by the achievement of the learning from the programme modules and content, and the life issues she dealt with at home and at work while undertaking the degree has heightened her EI levels significantly. *“I suppose I am more confident in myself, I have more self-assurance and I feel like more of a professional since doing it. I'm more in touch with where I want to be in my life and I have more determination of where I'm going and what I want to do and achieve. Even being able to delegate to different people as well was a skill you kind of had to learn and that*

*coping mechanism for dealing with the hard times and you are a stronger person after doing it”.*

**Participant ‘u’ from Population 3** expressed that her resilience and coping skills increased from doing the BCP programme as it forced her to manage her own emotions and use them differently in addition to the newly acquired knowledge and skills; *“it was just great to look back and have succeeded. I suppose because as an adult learner, I was running my own business, I had family life and juggling all of that at times I have to say was quite stressful, but I suppose I learnt an awful lot of skills on how to manage those things. When I look back it was absolutely completely worth it”*. This fear of failure on commencing the programme was escalated as the interviewee had dropped out of a third level programme as a school leaver and did not want to let herself down; *“so I kind of carried that with me, a huge pressure”*. However she expressed the exit awards in terms of acquiring a Certificate and then the Diploma at the end of year one and two sustained her for two years, but that year three was difficult as there was no award and it affected her motivation that year, but the camaraderie developed with a fellow learner on the programmed sustained her through it. *“We built up that very strong bond and friendship over that four years and we had been through a lot with each other, we had the highs and the lows and that was a friendship that was going to be lifelong”*.

**Participant ‘y’ from Population 3** reflected on the importance of emotional attachment to others to build self-esteem and confidence. She expressed her strong emotional bonds with her father in early life and her husband in adulthood enabled her to become independent. However, the ‘mothering role’ she adopted on the death of her mother when she was a teenager instilled a caring for others skillset in her that assisted her support fellow learners and receive support emotionally on the BCP programme. *“It made me feel good that I could actually help. I felt a great sense of achievement from helping people. It would help me process that particular area as well because I was talking it through with other people. Networking within the group really helped. It was self-created but it was excellent and I found this very supportive”*.

#### **5.4.6 Relationship between EI, Attachment and TL in Component 1**

This section of Objective 2 outlines the statistical analysis of the relationship between the three study constructs, emotional intelligence, attachment and transformative learning within the quantitative data.

Descriptive statistics on the three core constructs, Emotional Intelligence, Transformative Learning and Attachment are presented in Table 5.15. Whilst Table 5.16 presents inter-correlations between measures and age demographic included in Component 1. A series of t-tests were conducted to examine potential differences between the BCFS and non-BCFS groups on emotional intelligence (EI), attachment and transformative learning (TL). Preliminary analysis via Levene's test of equality of variance indicated that there was homogeneity of variance between the groups. Results of the t-tests revealed a significant difference between groups on emotional intelligence ( $t = -5.67$ ,  $df = 144$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.01$ ), with the BCFS scoring significantly higher. There were no effects on attachment ( $t = .25$ ,  $df = 138$ ,  $p = .804$ ) or TL ( $t = -.60$ ,  $df = 154$ ,  $p = .553$ ).

A multivariate analysis of variance was also conducted to examine potential differences between the BCFS and non-BCFS groups on the five attachment sub-scales of: child attachment experience in the home, attachment experience in school, other family attachment influence, non-family attachment influences and attachment experience in adult education. Preliminary analyses via Levene's and Box's tests indicated no violation of equality of variance or covariance. Results revealed no effect of BCFS on any of the sub-scales.

A multivariate analysis of variance was also conducted to examine potential differences between the BCFS and non-BCFS groups on the four EI sub-scales of managing others' emotions, managing own emotions, perception of emotion and utilisation of emotions. Preliminary analyses via Levene's and Box's tests indicated no violation of equality of variance or covariance. Results revealed significant differences between groups, with the BCFS scoring significantly higher than non-BCFS, on managing others' emotions ( $F [1, 145] = 13.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\text{partial } \eta^2 = .09$ ), managing own emotions ( $F$

[1, 145] = 7.40,  $p = .007$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ ), perception of emotion ( $F [1, 145] = 27.15$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .16$ ) and utilisation of emotions ( $F [1, 145] = 35.49$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .20$ ).

**Table 5.15 Means and Standard Deviations**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Attachment</b>	Non-BCFS	45	43.05	6.82
	BCFS	95	42.72	7.57
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	Non-BCFS	51	162.03	13.49
	BCFS	95	176.87	15.87
<b>Transformative Learning</b>	Non-BCFS	58	3.62	2.85
	BCFS	98	3.92	3.12

### Correlations

Table 5.16 presents inter-correlations between all dependent measures included in this component. Specifically, age was significantly correlated with Schutte *et al.*'s (1998)<sup>51</sup> overall EI ( $r = .25$ ;  $p = .01$ ), Emotional Perception ( $r = .18$ ;  $p = .05$ ), Managing Others Emotions' ( $r = .25$ ;  $p = .01$ ), and Utilisation of Emotions ( $r = .28$ ;  $p = .001$ )

Kaplan and Main's (1984) 5 attachment categories<sup>52</sup> were correlated with overall attachment experience. Notably, Attachment experience in education as adult was correlated with overall attachment ( $r = .93$ ;  $p = .001$ ) and child attachment experience in the home ( $r = .76$ ;  $p = .001$ ) and attachment in school as a young person ( $r = .81$ ;  $p = .001$ ). On the contrary, Attachment experience in education as adult, was negatively correlated with overall Emotional IQ ( $r = -.18$ ;  $p = .01$ ) and 3 of the 4 subscales perception of emotion ( $r = -.18$ ;  $p = .01$ ); managing one's own emotions ( $r = -.17$ ;  $p = .01$ ); managing others emotions ( $r = -.16$ ;  $p = .01$ ).

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<sup>51</sup> Schutte *et al.* (1998) Assessing Emotions Scale has 4 subscales: perception of emotions; managing one's own emotions; managing others emotions; utilisation of emotions

<sup>52</sup> Kaplan and Main's 5 categories of attachment :child attachment experience in the home; attachment experience in school as young person; attachment experience in education as adult; other family member attachment influences; non-family member attachment influences.

Table 5.16 Correlations (Pearson's) among TL, EI Attachment and Age

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Transformative Learning	-												
2	Age	.16	-											
3	Emotional IQ	.11	.25 <sup>2</sup>	-										
4	Emotional Perception	.03	.18 <sup>1</sup>	.82 <sup>3</sup>	-									
5	Managing Own Emotions	.14	.11	.78 <sup>3</sup>	.42 <sup>3</sup>	-								
6	Managing Others Emotions	.02	.25 <sup>2</sup>	.81 <sup>3</sup>	.54 <sup>3</sup>	.59 <sup>3</sup>	-							
7	Utilisation of Emotions	.16	.28 <sup>3</sup>	.76 <sup>3</sup>	.54 <sup>3</sup>	.48 <sup>3</sup>	.49 <sup>3</sup>	-						
8	Attachment	.08	-.03	-.13	-.14	-.11	-.12	-.02	-					
9	Child Attachment in home	.11	-.10	-.12	-.16	-.06	-.12	-.02	.85 <sup>3</sup>	-				
10	Attachment in School (Youth)	.11	.04	-.12	-.13	-.12	-.12	.01	.89 <sup>3</sup>	.70 <sup>3</sup>	-			
11	Attachment in Education (Adult)	.05	-.01	-.18 <sup>2</sup>	-.18 <sup>2</sup>	-.17 <sup>2</sup>	-.16 <sup>2</sup>	-.05	.93 <sup>3</sup>	.76 <sup>3</sup>	.81 <sup>3</sup>	-		
12	'Other Family' Attachment	.08	.01	-.08	-.09	-.05	-.10	.00	.94 <sup>3</sup>	.71 <sup>3</sup>	.79 <sup>3</sup>	.84 <sup>3</sup>	-	
13	Non-family Attachment	.03	-.06	-.10	-.07	-.11	-.10	-.03	.93 <sup>3</sup>	.68 <sup>3</sup>	.76 <sup>3</sup>	.83 <sup>3</sup>	.87 <sup>3</sup>	-
Significance levels <sup>1</sup> = <i>p</i> at the .05 level; <sup>2</sup> = <i>p</i> at the .01 level; <sup>3</sup> = <i>p</i> at the .001 level.														

<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>To appraise whether the BCFS programme graduates deem that the andragogical approach adopted on the BCFS programmes promote the development of EI skills.</b>
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In the following section, objective 3 results will be presented based on the IM process which is a mixed methods approach to data collection.

### **5.5 EI development through Andragogical Process from Interactive Management (IM): Component 2**

Interactive Management (IM) is a data collection process which enables a researcher to act as a facilitator of participants' ideas and perspectives through a collective meeting structure and aided by technology. Interactive Management enables participants' perspectives to be prioritised into a structural model output reflective of individual and collective viewpoints. The researcher acts as a facilitator of the process and not the initiator. Therefore, IM enables a partnership approach between the researcher and the participants. Warfield and Perino (1999) and Warfield and Cardenas (1994) espouse that Interactive Management (IM) had its origins in Aristotle's 'Problematique' approach which was premised on the idea that group problem solving processes through collective action provide liberation of thought and opportunities for development.

In the Interactive Management process, BCFS graduates (n=6) generated their own ideas and, subsequently, shared them with fellow participants. Participants' initially generated 18 distinct ideas and the nine agreed grouped preferences were carried forward to the structuring phase which reflected the participants' choices. The tabulated impacts reflect the participants grouped preferences in order of priority (see Table 5.17). Figure 5.1 in Objective 4 outlines the resulting structural map, describing relations among TL impacts.

However, the ideas chart from this IM process is relevant to Objective 3 and Objective 4 of this study. In relation to this current one, objective 3, the descriptions mapped by BCFS graduates in Table 5.17 indicate the graduates experienced effect of the andragogical process on their emotional development. In particular, BCFS graduates have remarked on the 'value of education' and 'social relationships' as pivotal issues.

The approach used in the Interactive Management Process in this study consisted of two key phases; Nominal Group Technique (NGT) and Interpretative Structural Model (ISM). The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) which enabled the participants to share their perspectives and input both at an individual and collective level. The individual perspective was shared through the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) which is an opportunity for learners to brainstorm their ideas based on a driver question. In this study, the driver question was 'What aspect(s) of the BCFS programme impacted on your life with respect to Transformative Learning?' The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) aids divergent views to surface as part of the Interactive Management process.



Table 5.17 Ideas Chart created by BCFS Participants

	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	<b>Desire to Contribute*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Motivation, enthusiasm/ desire to learn for personal development, job satisfaction, self-esteem, different learning styles, cultures and educational background, to understand one another and work effectively.</li> <li>✚ Volunteering and developing one's sense of social responsibility has taken on new meaning for graduates.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Social Relationships*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ New Relationships and networks developed through the programme have led to openness for change and willingness to leave previous 'comfort zone'.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Mentorship*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Graduates taking on more leadership roles in family, community and work settings to impart and share knowledge as a result of BCFS programme.</li> <li>✚ Studying and gaining degree award as adult learner has led graduates to become a role model within family and community.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Confidence*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ New skills evident which build competence and self-confidence in graduates' lives in both paid and unpaid work.</li> <li>✚ Personal growth and development among graduates, they have a more confident/ outgoing perspective on life.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Communication Skills*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Improved Communication Skills, creating new life meaning from the exposure /interactions with different people and experiences on the degree programme.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Self-Motivation*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Self-confidence and self-esteem gained on programme is motivating graduates to consider further study.</li> <li>✚ BCFS programme provided impetus for self-direction and self-motivation.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Self- Esteem*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Degree achievement has given graduates confidence to take on other life experiences/ challenges.</li> </ul>

Table 5.17 Continued

8	<b>Critical Thinking*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Openness to Change, clearer sense of right and wrong as a result of the programme, an interest in improving the world around them.</li> <li>✚ Critical Thinking capacity and competency skills enhanced through BCFS programme</li> </ul>
9	<b>Value of Education*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Value of education is evident as result of BCFS programme especially in skills and attributes developed.</li> <li>✚ Professional development knowledge in paid and volunteering positions has increased significantly as a result of BCFS programme.</li> <li>✚ Cultural responsiveness of the BCFS Programme</li> <li>✚ Creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment, that enables learners to engage in group discussions and achieve learning outcomes.</li> </ul>

\*Denotes 'impact' carried forward

## 5.6 Andragogical Approach and Promotion of EI in Component 3

Objective three qualitative findings in this section pertain to the BCFS (Populations 1 and 2) in terms of the research objective. However, the findings of Population 3, (BCP programme) are included to establish the contrast between the different andragogical experiences of graduates and its influence on their emotional intelligence development.

### 5.6.1 POPULATION 1:

**Participant 'e'** from **Population 1** expressed that the supportive educational process on the BCFS programme was different in comparison to earlier formal education experienced by the interviewee; *“it was completely different in NUIG”*. The participant’s social consciousness and empathy for part-time and full-time student struggles also increased on foot of her own study commitments on the BCFS; *“it is not what they taught you, it is how they made you feel”*.

**Participant 'g'** from **Population 1** expressed the importance of teamwork and group exercises as crucial in the BCFS programme to build the ‘social relationships’ and personal resilience of learners. *“I learnt the importance*

*of teamwork from the BA... I learnt about academic writing and discipline through the course*". The participant added that the value of education was transformational. *"It is amazing how you feel when the penny drops, you would be on such a high and you see things through a different view. It really is a personal journey"*.

**Participant 'h'** from **Population 1** presented evidence of critical thinking and reflection through exposure to course syllabus. *"I found a lot of things there (in childhood and adolescence and equality and diversity modules on the BCFS programme) that affected me positively because I began to see why some people were different to others"*. She expressed that the educational process on the BCFS influenced her to develop her emotional intelligence skills; *"you have to believe in yourself that you want to change...my education here (BCFS) has made me handle my emotions differently and I have been able to accept the hand given to me and I have worked a lot and it has really helped me cope and move on and believe in myself and to look forward to a bright future. It is possible"*.

**Participant 'i'** from **Population 1** remarked on the 'Imposter feeling/syndrome' as experienced by many adult learners and the necessity of pastoral supports to cosset the learning experience. The interviewee remarked that until she had the degree, she felt compromised in work settings and presenting at public conferences *"for me, the degree as an adult would not have worked so well if we hadn't have been so well minded... we were minded in the degree, it was anchored"*.

### **5.6.2 POPULATION 2:**

**Participant 'k'** from **Population 2** expressed that the format and layout of the modules were useful for adult learners who had busy lives and could refer back to content if content did not 'gel' at the workshop, or you had life distractions that caused you to not concentrate on the workshop day. *"I thought the books were very good...they had a very simple layout and were easy to follow"*. The interviewee also remarked upon the andragogical approach adopted on the community education programmes in terms of the

insight offered by teaching staff into course topics. *“The tutors and the lecturers gave a different perspective”*.

**Participant ‘l’** from **Population 2** emphasised the importance of building and forming ‘social relationships’ with other diverse community members and adults was a key part of gaining structure, support and communications skills through the educational process on the Diploma in CDP; *“it was people from different backgrounds which was fantastic so you got a snapshot of everybody’s different experiences which you could learn from”*. The interviewee also remarked on the ‘self-esteem’ and ‘confidence’ development among peer learners and tutors throughout both programme as very enlightening; *“it was a circle of trust”*.

**Participant ‘n’** from **Population 2** named the teaching and support process as a key aspect of her TL process – the preparedness and adaptability of tutors and staff to engage with learners was remarked upon by the graduate. *“I think the tutors must have prepared along the line for the type of people that they were working with because they got us you know”*.

**Participant ‘p’** from **Population 2** expressed the importance of the connection between the emotional intelligence of educators and the andragogical process. *“I thought it (the teaching process) was always handled professionally and I enjoyed the degree thoroughly and I looked forward to coming in”*.

### **5.6.3 POPULATION 3:**

**Participant ‘s’** from **Population 3** shared a different perspective on the emotional support offered to learners by the programme management and staff than learners from the BCFS and the Diploma in CDP. She expressed that learners were expected to be focused on individual learning and that collective learning experiences were limited until fostered by the learners themselves, informally. Equally, assignment feedback was limited and delayed throughout the programme which was seen to curtail the learning experience of learners. In addition, the emotional understanding and extension leeway given in times of personal crisis was limited. *“I felt like*

*there was a little bit of support but there wasn't enough because it was such a major life issue for me*". However she recognised that this might have been the case as they were the 'guinea pigs' in terms of the first cohort through the programme, so the university staff was testing the programme on them as the maiden voyage which had its drawbacks.

However, **Participant 's'** found the experience of the writing and the tutor review of the learning journals really useful for her personal and professional transformation. *"You try and see things and that really helped and it helped me work through it a bit myself as well because I knew they were confidential, whatever she( the tutor) read it wasn't going to go any further but it did help me work through a couple of the (childcare work stress) issues"*.

**Participant 't'** from **Population 3** expressed the lack of relationship building opportunities with tutors and fellow learners in the first two years of the programme and that this impacted on EI growth, according to this interviewee. *"It was very isolating so you never got to know your tutor; you were in for that one day and then off you went"*. However, she expressed that the empathy of the tutors with students was evident as many of them too were adult learners with families and life issues. The interviewee believed that the sequencing of modules on a monthly basis and the distance learning nature of the programme impacted negatively on building or sustaining a social bond between students and tutors. *"The disconnection of not being on campus all the time made it harder to get to know your tutor but I'd say in third year you were actually emailing back and forth for assistance and you got to know them a bit more and then we had a repetition of some tutors in year 3, we had them for a few different modules which helped as well"*.

**Participant 'u'** from **Population 3** expressed that her experience of the tutors and programme staff, especially in the degree cycle, was very positive and supportive in her pursuit of personal and professional development *"I have to say that the tutors and the lecturers in year three and year four were really in tune and really in touch with the fact that we were adult*

*learners and they really acknowledged the effort and the difficulties and the worry along the way. My confidence really grew throughout the programme*". However she did remark that eight out of twelve learners experienced significant life events during the programme, and protocols about extensions or workshop compensation processes were not clear as some students did not receive or experience a positive support network from the programme management on the BCP programme during those life events. *"I know there's mechanisms as well that a course has to run or the whole thing would fall apart but as I said things happen along the way and the whole thing can't stop, so there's a bit of having to have a grown up attitude to things as well. But then there's the other side of empathizing with somebody and seeing where they were at. My experience was positive but I'm not sure that it was for everyone else"*.

**Participant 'w'** from **Population 3** remarked that parents of children in the childcare setting remarked to her on the positive difference among their children in the interviewee's care in comparison to colleagues. The interviewee expressed that the learning of different approaches to childcare, especially play therapy, positively influenced her practice. *"I was doing my degree so I personally think parents did see a change"*. The interviewee expressed that the social support offered by NUIG tutors and staff influenced her retention on the programme especially in times of crisis; *"it was nice to have that support. If she (the tutor) wasn't there at that time I probably would have given up at that time"*.

<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>To identify TL Impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.</b>
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In this section, the objective 4 results from the IM process are presented. However the outcomes from this IM process are relevant to Objective 3 and Objective 4 of this study as indicated earlier in Objective 3.

### 5.7 Impact of TL on BCFS graduates lives from Interactive Management (IM): Component 2

In relation to this current objective 4, the tabulated impacts reflect the participants grouped preferences in order of priority (see Table 5.18). In addition, the Interpretive Structural Map (see Figure 5.1) which outlines the resulting structural map, describing relations among TL impacts.

This opportunity to ensure graduates voices were offered a platform was a key part of all four research objectives but in particular objective four which sought to establish the impact of the BCFS programme on graduates lives.

Table 5.18 Ideas Chart created by BCFS Participants

	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Desire to Contribute*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Motivation, enthusiasm/ desire to learn for personal development, job satisfaction, self-esteem, different learning styles, cultures and educational background, to understand one another and work effectively.</li> <li>✚ Volunteering and developing one's sense of social responsibility has taken on new meaning for graduates.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Social Relationships*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ New Relationships and networks developed through the programme have led to openness for change and willingness to leave previous 'comfort zone'.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Mentorship*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Graduates taking on more leadership roles in family, community and work settings to impart and share knowledge as a result of BCFS programme.</li> </ul>

Table 5.18 Continued		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Studying and gaining degree award as adult learner has led graduates to become a role model within family and community.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Confidence*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New skills evident which build competence and self-confidence in graduates' lives in both paid and unpaid work.</li> <li>Personal growth and development among graduates, they have a more confident/outgoing perspective on life.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Communication Skills*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Communication Skills, creating new life meaning from the exposure /interactions with different people and experiences on the degree programme.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Self-Motivation*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-confidence and self-esteem gained on programme is motivating graduates to consider further study.</li> <li>BCFS programme provided impetus for self- direction and self-motivation.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Self-Esteem*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree achievement has given graduates confidence to take on other life experiences/ challenges.</li> </ul>
8	<b>Critical Thinking*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness to Change, clearer sense of right and wrong as a result of the programme, an interest in improving the world around them.</li> <li>Critical Thinking capacity and competency skills enhanced through BCFS programme.</li> </ul>
9	<b>Value of Education*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of education is evident as result of BCFS programme especially in skills and attributes developed.</li> <li>Professional development knowledge in paid and volunteering positions has increased significantly as a result of BCFS programme.</li> <li>Cultural responsiveness of the BCFS Programme</li> <li>Creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment, that enables learners to engage in group discussions and achieve learning outcomes.</li> </ul>

\*Denotes 'impact' carried forward



IM<sup>53</sup> participants' initially generated 18 distinct ideas and the nine agreed grouped preferences were carried forward to the structuring phase which reflected the participants' choices. The tabulated impacts reflect the participants grouped preferences in order of priority (see Table 5.18). The resulting structural map, Figure 5.1, describes relations among impacts which reflect on the personal, family and societal impacts of the TL experiences through the BCFS programme.

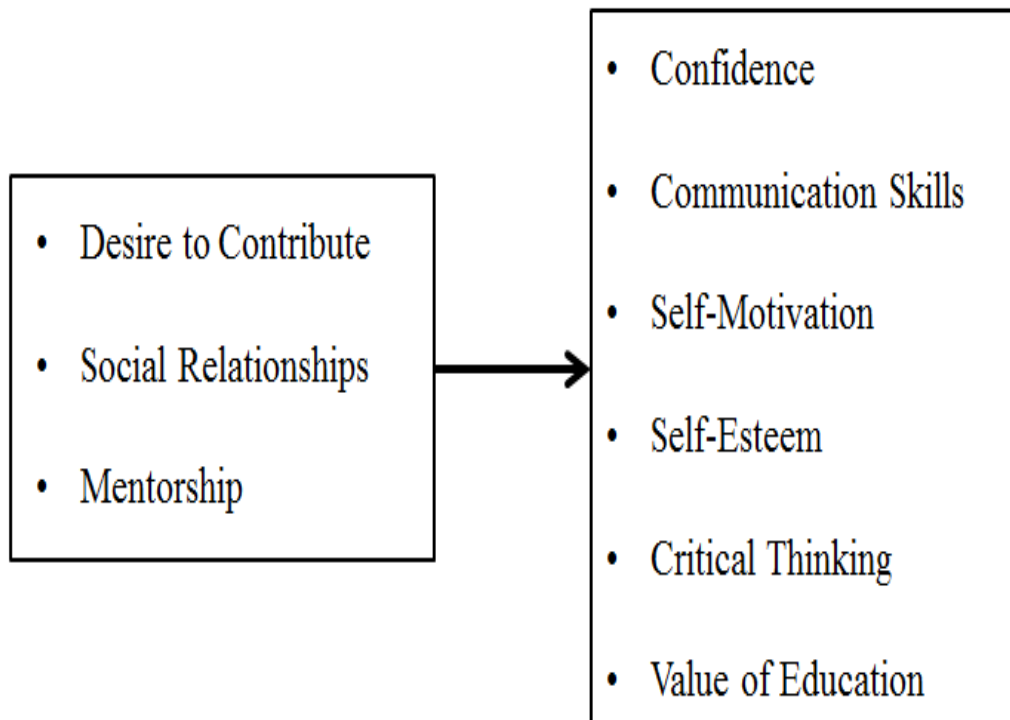


Figure 5.1 IM Structural Map of TL Impacts (composed from BCFS Respondents' Ideas process)

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<sup>53</sup> IM- Interactive Management

## 5.8 Impact of TL on BCFS graduates lives from Semi-Structured Interview Findings

The impact of the TL process on graduate participants' lives pertains to the BCFS (Populations 1 and 2) in terms of the research objective but the qualitative findings of Population 3 (BCP programme) are included to establish the contrast in these adult learner graduate qualitative experiences.

### 5.8.1 POPULATION 1:

**Participant 'c'** from **Population 1** remarked that the support / 'mentorship' he received on the BCFS programme fostered in him a wish to support others. *"I think it's easier to support other people in a group like that when you're getting the support yourselves and we all (the group) felt that we did"*.

**Participant 'd'** from **Population 1** remarked on her critical thinking skills and capacities on foot of the BCFS programme. *"Yes definitely it broadens your mind and makes you realise there is a lot more out there"*. This interviewee expressed the evident links between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Transformative Learning (TL) and the value of education pathways. *"It (the BCFS) has already changed my life, first of all who my friends are, what I expect out of life has totally changed. I am not willing to just settle, I want more"*.

**Participant 'g'** from **Population 1** expressed that her 'critical thinking' and reflection capacities improved through participation on the BCFS programme; *"the modules made me think about things I would have never thought about"*. The interviewee expressed that the BCFS programme created a new worldview for her in terms of 'boosting her self-esteem' and 'confidence'. *"The degree gave me confidence but it was also that I was equal to my peers as well. I used to think that society had changed but it was me who had changed"*.

**Participant 'h'** from **Population 1** presented significant Transformative Learning (TL) and critical reflexivity on completion of the BCFS. *"I didn't want to accept that a lot of the things that happened in my childhood*

*affected me as a person or rather affected me as an adult*". The BCFS and adult education became the trigger for change in this participant's perspective and understanding; *"people are very different and not because they want to be but that is how they are"*.

### **5.8.2 POPULATION 2:**

**Participant 'j'** from **Population 2** expressed that the Diploma in CDP and BCFS were instruments/ agents of change in interviewee's life by improving her academic knowledge and Emotional Intelligence (EI) skills; *"wanting to make a change I would say would be one of the big ones because I can make changes if I can make a point . I think it (BCFS) broadens your mind"*.

**Participant 'k'** from **Population 2** reflected that through the programmes she took control of her life and that education became a lever to account for family life turbulence and explained many of the issues that had impacted on her personal life. *"I remember reading somewhere that you have no control over someone else's life; you can only change your own"*.

**Participant 'n'** from **Population 2** expressed that the 'value of education' in early life for her was traced back to the interviewee's bond with her father and his love of reading and history. Whilst in adulthood, community members encouraged the learner to commence and progress through the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programme which were pivotal as agents of change at a personal and community level. *"I would I think it (education) is the only tool really (to change people's lives) whether you are educating yourself not to be a drug addict or if you are educating yourself to work in a group"*.

**Participant 'q'** from **Population 2** expressed the realisation in one's personal responsibility as a learner and change agent. *"Unless there is an understanding that education is a lifelong thing and that you are responsible for it. No amount of tutors or books can lodge the desire and necessity for it in you"*. The interviewee remarked that the Diploma more so than the BCFS had the greater influence on him in terms of his EI

development and sense of connection to fellow learners as a community. *“Even in the social context you can tell who has emotional intelligence and who doesn't. The two things go hand in hand. The more your emotional intelligence increases, the more you understand the necessity to educate yourself, the more your emotional intelligence increases. As you educate yourself you open the doors to more interesting society and more challenging society”*.


### **5.8.3 POPULATION 3:**

**Participant ‘t’** from **Population 3** expressed that the critical thinking skills to articulate and advocate for change is evident to her in others now on completion of the degree programme; *“you can nearly spot the people who have been through the education of the formal degree”*. She remarked that the social and emotional bonds with others in life are crucial to one’s success and happiness. *“I would say that it is more the interactions and the closeness of a person that will help them to be good learners... If you had strong emotions it would be easier to get on with it and manage”*.

**Participant ‘u’** from **Population 3** expressed that the nurture and emotional support from her parents throughout life has been added to by meeting fellow learners with differing perspectives and approaches to life on the BCP programme. *“I have grown up with people who have this natural resilience. So I think that the pursuit of education is from my father but actually what I ended up doing is strongly influenced by my mother. Financially, emotionally, she (my mother) just believed that you should have your own income coming in and that you should have a circle outside of your family life, which was so important to keep your own identity, she might not have articulated it that way but that is what she really encouraged”*. Therefore the journey through the degree programme and its achievement was a huge sense of personal and professional accolade in light of her parents ‘value on education’ for her throughout her life. The interviewee summarised the personal transformative learning experience as follows; *“you have to walk the hill to enjoy the view”*.

**Participant ‘w’** from **Population 3** expressed that self-confidence, determination and motivation to succeed can overcome barriers in life. *“Yes, I think emotions will definitely influence your educational path because as I said if you are driven and want to succeed, you are going to do it. Whereas if you’re not, you are not going to do it”.*

Table 5.19 Key Results Summary per Component

<b>Component 1: Online Survey Questionnaire</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In total, 95% of BCFS and 44% of non-BCFS graduates experienced TL and where identified it was deemed permanent (see Table 5.12).</li> <li>• Transformative Learning (TL), Emotional IQ and Attachment levels were higher on average among BCFS than Non-BCFS (see Table 5.15).</li> <li>• Emotional IQ levels were statistically significant (See Multivariate analysis of variance in Section 5.4.6).</li> <li>• EI levels among BCFS in comparison to Non-BCFS were significantly higher (See multivariate analysis in Section 5.4.6)</li> <li>• TL was not correlated with Emotional IQ, Attachment or Age factors (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> <li>• Emotional IQ was correlated with each of its four subscales among BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> <li>• Emotional Perception was significantly correlated with age among BCFS and Non-BCFS participants (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> <li>• Attachment was correlated to each of its five categories among BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> <li>• Conversely, pertaining to attachment category; attachment experience in education as an adult was negatively correlated to overall Emotional IQ, and three of the four subscales with the exception of utilisation of emotions (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> <li>• Age was correlated to overall Emotional IQ and three of the four subscales excluding managing one’s own emotions (see Table 5.16 for correlations).</li> </ul>
<p> <b><u>Gender:</u></b></p> <p>Component 1 (On line Survey)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCFS: N = 104; 87 females, 17 males</li> <li>• Non-BCFS learning programmes DL : N = 22; 21 females, 1 male</li> <li>• Non-BCFS non-distance learning programmes: non-DL: N = 38; 28 females, 10 male</li> </ul>





<b>Table 5.19 Continued</b>
<p>Component 2 (Interactive Management (IM))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCFS : N= 6 ( females)</li> </ul> <p>Component 3 (Semi-Structured Interviews)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCFS: n=18 (Population 1; 2 males, 7 females) (Population 2; 4 males, 5 females)</li> <li>• Non-BCFS/ BCP: n=8 (Population 3; 8 females)</li> </ul>
<p> <b><u>Age:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCFS group was 48.65 years (SD = 10.10)</li> <li>• Non-BCFS DL was 43.88 years (SD = 9.11)</li> <li>• Non-BCFS Non-DL was 35.24 years (SD = 10.10)</li> </ul>
<p> <b><u>Prior Education Attainment:</u></b></p> <p>BCFS cohort had the most diverse educational entry credentials. Notably, n= 4 of 163 surveyed had only completed primary school, while the majority (n=29) of non-BCFS participants had a degree on entry and (n=21) BCFS participant had a degree (See Table 5.8 and Table 5.9)</p>
<p> <b><u>Income:</u></b></p> <p>47% BCFS and Non BCFS ( n= 78 of 163) graduate respondents documented an income of €30,000 or less (see Table 5.7)</p>
<p> <b><u>Nationality:</u></b></p> <p>In terms of nationality, on the BCFS, n= 87 were Irish; Non-BCFS; 47 were Irish (n=130 of 163 survey participants) (see Table 5.11)</p>

Table 5.19 Continued

<b>Component 2: Interactive Management Process</b>
<p>Results from the IM session discovered, based on the participation of six BCFS female graduates, that there were three critical drivers (impacts) of transformative learning in their life in light of their experience with the BCFS: a desire to contribute to society; improved social relationships and mentorship capacity (see Figure 5.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Specifically, it was found that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>the desire to contribute</b> to society influenced the following factors in the majority of situations, confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> <li>✚ The second finding was that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>improved social relationships</b> influenced the following factors in the majority of situations, confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> <li>✚ The third finding was that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>mentorship skills</b> influenced the following factors in the majority of situations, confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> </ul>
<b>Component 3: Semi-structured interviews</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ BCFS programme deemed a pivotal change agent in the life journey among Population 1 and Population 2.</li> <li>✚ BCP programme deemed pivotal change agent in the life journey among Population 3.</li> <li>✚ Community education ethos and andragogical process was a positive influence on TL perspective change among BCFS population</li> <li>✚ BCFS programme has provided impetus to be more critically reflective and emotionally secure and independent learners</li> <li>✚ The emotional intelligence growth aided by the BCFS programme andragogical process has provided personal and professional life enhancing skills</li> <li>✚ BCFS programme supports and community education ethos has enhanced the graduate participants personal identity development and family network's resilience</li> <li>✚ Educational attachment provided through the community education ethos on the BCFS programme counteracted poor earlier life attachment experiences.</li> <li>✚ BCP and BCFS graduates reflected upon their own experiences and considered that emotional intelligence growth was a greater life enabler than attachment bonds.</li> </ul>

## **5.9 Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, the results have been presented for each of the four research objectives across the three Components (online survey; IM and semi-structured interviews) of the study. The insight and perspective that the primary data findings shed on the research population through the quantitative and qualitative lens presented in this chapter reflects the breadth of adult learners' experiences of Adult and Higher Education based on this specific research study. However, the findings do indicate a pattern of andragogical engagement and positive transformative learning experiences among BCFS graduates that could be mirrored into other educational interventions in national and international settings. Therefore this BCFS programme provides a benchmark of positive andragogical practices that could be translated into other national and international Adult and Higher Educational settings which will be considered further in the following chapters, the discussion and the conclusion.

In the next chapter, the discussion chapter, the researcher will deliberate upon in detail the impact of the 'lived life' experiences of the BCFS population across the three primary data collection components and compare it to the literature in terms of the transformative learning, emotional intelligence and attachment experiences recorded.



## Chapter 6: Discussion

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## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

### **6.1 Chapter Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher will deliberate upon the key results which were presented in Chapter 5 of this study into adult learner graduate perspectives on whether they experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme<sup>54</sup>. The findings were sourced from both qualitative and quantitative primary data collection approaches with adult learners. The discussion on these findings will be presented across the four research objectives which stem from the core research question<sup>55</sup> within this mixed methods research study. Therefore, this core research question addressed in this study through the four study objectives underpins the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. The four objectives within this study draw on comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences. The four objectives seek to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full-time and part-time), and personal life circumstances.

The characteristics of the BCFS and Non-BCFS study participants will be discussed in relation to their relevance to the study objectives and contextual framework of the study. Thereafter, the researcher will discuss each of the research objectives; in particular, attention will be paid to the core study constructs of Transformative Learning, Attachment and Emotional

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<sup>54</sup> The BCFS programme is a blended learning, part-time programme offered to adult learners in NUI, Galway.

<sup>55</sup> What effect has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths?

Intelligence in order to present the evident patterns from the empirical data that is underpinned in the literature within this study. Finally, the BCFS and non-BCFS graduate attributes will be matched against the NUI Galway Graduate Attributes framework to illustrate the BCFS graduates' alignment to the framework.

It is noteworthy that this specific empirical study takes place within a Higher Education context in an Irish University setting. However, the researcher would deem the research findings and the graduate insight and perspectives gained from this body of research to be deliberated upon in this chapter to be equally relevant in wider national and international settings, to support adult learners to navigate within and gauge the impact of their educational experiences in adult and higher education. Therefore, this study provides a benchmark of andragogical practice that can be mirrored in national and international Adult and Higher Educational settings.

## **6.2 Discussion on the Nature and Relevance of Study Participants' Sample Characteristics**

In this section, the relevance and meaning of the sample characteristics of the Study participants will be presented to frame the discussion and analysis of the four research objectives. The four objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion
2. Consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and Transformative Learning (TL), relative to Non-BCFS graduates.
3. Appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.

4. Identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

The NUI Galway BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS) graduate participants that were the core focus of this study comprised of adult learners from diverse social and community contexts. Equally, the Non-BCFS cohorts that were included in the study as a comparison comprised of adult learner graduates from part-time and full-time programmes of study both within and external to the Irish higher education structure. Therefore, the BCFS and comparator Non-BCFS profile will be considered in this section in terms of the study's results pertaining to gender, age, geographic location, income levels, prior educational attainment and nationality.

### **6.2.1 Gender Factor**

The interpretation of the female prevalence among the NUI Galway BCFS and the other part-time distance learning programme respondents<sup>56</sup> is related to two core factors; current employment patterns in the Human health and social work activities sector and family barriers to participating in full-time study. Research into patterns of study in adult and higher education indicates that part-time, flexible education offerings favour female participants in light of other family or caring responsibilities (Fleming and Finnegan 2011; Fleming *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, the part-time, blended learning nature of the BCFS and the other two NUI Galway distance learning part-time programmes considered in this study compliments this family life balance factor that underpins many adults who parent or are caregivers' decision to participate in any educational endeavour. The National Adult Education Survey (2017) documents the national pattern in which females are more attracted to part-time flexible modes of study over full-time models due to family responsibilities (CSO, 2018). Additionally,

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<sup>56</sup> NUIG Non-BCFS Distance learning programmes studied: BA in Early Childhood Practice Studies (BCP); BA in Education and Training (ED & T)

the employment sector within which graduates from the BCFS and BCP programmes seek work is predominantly female, based on national employment record evidencing 75% of workers in the human health and social work activities sector are female. This is reflected in the Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2 (CSO 2018) in which 228.5 thousand females in comparison to 57.5 thousand males work in the sector. Graduate participants in the non-BCFS, non-distance learning cohort were composed of graduates from diverse degree programmes in addition to the social sciences discipline across different higher education institutions in Ireland and overseas. Thus no specific patterns can be identified on their gender participation profile per programme type studied.

### **6.2.2 Age Factor**

As the Mean age of the BCFS group was 48.65 years in comparison with the DL<sup>57</sup> (M = 43.88) and non-DL age mean was 35.24 years reflected that all were mature, adult learners. Therefore due to their age profile, the respondents reflected the capacity to experience transformative learning based on Mezirow's theory (Mezirow 1991, 2004, 2009) that transformative learning can only be experienced in adulthood once life experiences can be accumulated. Therefore, the significance of profiling the age of study respondents was deemed necessary through statistical analysis to gauge its relationship if any to Transformative Learning. However, age and transformative learning factors were not statistically correlated in this study. This is reflective of the literature (Shipley *et al.* 2010; Chen 2014; Roessger 2014; Stone *et al.* 2017) which outlines that the absence of a quantitative measure to statistically consider the factors related to TL of study participants needs further consideration. This reinforces the findings in this study that the qualitative approach to gauging participants' transformative

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<sup>57</sup> DL – Distance learning

learning perspectives lends itself easier to ‘surfacing’ TL experiences rather than quantitative approaches.

However, age as a factor was statistically significant to Emotional Intelligence factors including three of the four EI subscales, in particular emotional perception. Therefore, given the mature age of the BCFS population in this study, this factor could have influenced the heightened emotional intelligence result and growth factor among BCFS graduate participants (Schutte *et al.* 1998, 2002; Schutte and Malouff 2011). Equally, the existence of Schutte’s quantifiable measure to gauge EI levels aided the statistical analysis of the relationship between age and EI within this current study.

All adult learners entering part-time programmes of study are required by NUI Galway regulations to be at least twenty-one years of age on the January prior to programme commencement. Therefore all NUI Galway BCFS and non-BCFS part-time adult learners were at least twenty-one when they commenced the degree programme. Furthermore, as the BCFS and non-BCFS programmes are four year part-time distance learning degree programmes, all the graduates’ ages are reflective of the average age of adult learner graduates. However as the study mode of the non-BCFS, non-distance learning respondents’ is not recorded, these graduates could have participated in full-time degree programmes, which are on average three years duration and shorter in duration than a part-time mode. Therefore the varying difference in the age factor of graduates could have been affected by the full-time or part-time nature and duration of the programme experienced. Equally, the standard deviation results pertaining to age for the non-BCFS, non-distance learning respondents’ reflected that these respondents could have only been twenty-five on completion of the survey. So this age factor could have impacted on their timeline in adulthood and opportunity to experience transformative learning and experience emotional intelligence growth based on Mezirow’s (1991, 2004, 2009) and Fleming’s (Fleming *et al.* 2010, 2017) perspectives on the importance of maturing and life experience as factors that influence Transformative Learning occurrence and sustainability .

### 6.2.3 Geographical Factors

Geography and geographical distance from higher education institutions acts as an identified barrier to accessing adult and higher education for learners, especially disadvantage learners (HEA 2017). Therefore, in this study, the diversity of graduate participants' journey through higher education in terms of physical, social and emotional experiences is an important study factor to deliberate upon in this discussion. The meaning of the geographic boundary 'urban', 'suburban' and rural' in the context of the Irish landscape was open to interpretation by respondents as thirty-three (n=33) across the BCFS and Non-BCFS populations did not reply to this question in Component 1<sup>58</sup>. This reflects the multiple identities and geographical space disconnects often associated with adult learners in transition through education (Massey 2005; Kasworm 2008, 2018; Thomas 2016). The geographical county analysis of the BCFS graduate participants and Non-BCFS graduate participants in this study reflects the national pattern that learners with proximal access to a higher education institution are more likely to participate in education than those at a distance from a campus whether learners are undertaking distance or traditional modes of study (HEA 2017; Eurostat 2017). Notably, 37% of the BCFS participants were Galway city and county based residents; whilst 20% of the Non-BCFS graduate participants were Galway city and county based residents. Given the andragogical part-time structure of the BCFS programme suggests that it provided an accessible route for residents of Galway and other counties to access a part-time blended learning model of education. However, this geographical and higher education institution access pattern within the study and evidenced in national statistics does point towards the necessity for a more inclusive outreach strategy by universities to target counties with learners that do not have a university or higher education provider on their doorstep.

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<sup>58</sup> Component 1 was the on line survey questionnaire phase of the empirical data collection process.

### 6.2.4 Income Factor

Since the BCFS programme commencement in 2006, the majority of the programme participants have come from economically disadvantaged households. This is evidenced in the proportions of adult learners seeking access to the CALPD student scholarship fund<sup>59</sup>. Therefore, the researcher wished to gauge the BCFS participants' income levels and its influence on their learning experiences within this study. Specifically, 10% of the BCFS participants indicated in this study that they were unemployed or within the social welfare dependency category in terms of unpaid carer or working in the home responsibilities. This additional life commitment to any part-time student's workload requires definite people management and emotional intelligence capacities<sup>60</sup>. The existence or absence of financial security among adults affects their access and retention in higher education (Field *et al.* 2010a; Fleming and Finnegan 2010; Fleming *et al.* 2017). Income levels affect the whole household (CSO, 2018) therefore, income and financial security has significant implications for all adult learners in terms of their decision to access part-time study and whether they can sustain family and other life commitments in the process. Adult learners have to consider the impact of their decision to return to full or part-time study on all dependents in their care. The HEA Access Plan (2017) indicates that the part-time fee paying policy in higher education constrains lower income households from participating in part-time study and given the low income threshold of the BCFS and Non-BCFS participants, this is a significant barrier to educational progression and further higher education access in the future as outlined by BCFS and BCP<sup>61</sup> participants within the semi-structured interviews as part of this study.

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<sup>59</sup> Internal CALPD fund which offers 30% fee reduction to learners in receipt of designated social welfare payments and allowances.

<sup>60</sup> Based on Schutte's 4 subscales- perception of emotions; managing one's own emotions; managing others emotions and utilisation of emotions.

<sup>61</sup> Non-BCFS participants in Component 3 were the BCP (BA in Early Childhood Studies) participants



According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO 2018) the average annual earnings in Ireland for people working full-time in the Human health and social work activities category in 2017 was €36,313, which would capture personnel from community development and family support disciplines whilst the national average annual earnings for 2017 were €46,402. So the statistical outline of incomes in the empirical data of this study would suggest that 66 of the 99 BCFS respondents (66%) earn less than the current industrial income for this sector based on national statistics. Additionally, the overall BCFS and Non-BCFS income comparison (see Table 5.7) indicates that 47 of the 163 respondents (29%) earned less than €30,000 per annum. Therefore, empirical evidence from this study would suggest that the majority of the BCFS and Non-BCFS graduate participants earn less than the average industrial income of €46,402. National wage agreements and the employment moratoriums in the sector during recent times had a negative effect on income mobility and earning power for graduates from the BCFS programme between 2010 and 2016 and more generally for the human health and social work activities category in Ireland (CSO 2018).

### ***6.2.5 Prior Educational Attainment Factor***

As there is no education pre-requisite for entry to the BCFS programme, the researcher sought to record and to interpret this factor within this empirical study through a quantitative approach in Component 1. The BCFS participant education levels in this study (see Table 5.8) reflects the disparity of formal education level attainment on entry to the programme among the BCFS graduate participants; 3% of the BCFS graduate respondents had left school following completion of primary school whilst 21% had completed a degree and 3% had masters qualifications. So in essence, the formal education gap among many of the BCFS study participants was extensive between leaving primary school and the commencement of the BCFS Programme. The evidenced BCFS educational differential levels among fellow students on entry across the five years researched (2010-2014) suggests the necessity for additional andragogical supports required by NUI Galway community education academic team to

enable learners' progress through the BCFS curriculum and meet their own educational milestones of success. Studies by Clegg (2000, 2012) Field *et al.* (2010b) Cincinnato *et al.* (2016) and Maguire *et al.* (2017) emphasise the importance of knowing learners prior emotional and educational background so as to aid their educational journey in higher education. This reinforces the researcher's findings in this study which suggest that the community education ethos and approach aided learners, especially those with poor early life emotional or formal education experiences.

The prior education comparator table within this study (see Table 5.9) indicates that the non-BCFS had higher prior educational attainment records on entry to their university degree programme than the BCFS population. The finding reflects the education diversity of the part-time adult learner cohort accessing, progressing and graduating from the BCFS and non BCFS programmes. Therefore, the heterogeneity of the academic capacity, prior educational attainment within formal education and diverse andragogical approaches required to enable the BCFS population to progress through the varying learning milestones from point of entry to degree graduation will be considered further within Objective 3 of this discussion chapter.

### **6.2.6 Nationality and Cultural Diversity Factors**

The cultural diversity coupled with varying prior educational levels and capacities of part-time learners accessing this BCFS programme is noteworthy. At first glance, the majority of the BCFS graduate grouping is Irish (87%) (Table 5.10). However, as identified earlier in the study, the previous formal educational attainment levels of this BCFS cohort is diverse. Additionally, it is clear from reviewing the results on nationality, that a diverse population of graduates of which English was their second language participated on the BCFS programme. This social and cultural diversity of nationality, ethnicity, and prior educational attainment within the BCFS programme graduate population reflects national access objectives to Higher Education (HEA 2015). Equally, the impact of culture and diversity in education is reflected in the literature (Merriam and

Bierema 2013; Cincinnato *et al.* 2016). Furthermore, the personal and societal impact of this inclusive BCFS community education andragogical approach and supportive pastoral engagement strategies is evidenced in the empirical data shared in the IM structural map (see Figure 5.1) and the qualitative data shared in the semi-structured interviews. The personal and community impacts of the BCFS programme on graduates' lives will be considered further within Objective 3 and Objective 4.

However, the diversity of nationality and culture is not evident among the non-BCFS cohort of respondents in this study. Therefore, the researcher would posit based on the empirical evidence within this study that the accessible entry route and andragogical supports during the BCFS programme acts as an enabler for a diverse part-time adult learner population to access and succeed in higher education.

### 6.3 Relationship and Relevance of the Empirical Results to the Research Objectives

In this section, the empirical data and its relevance to the literature across the four research objectives will be discussed. Specifically, within this section four pivotal empirical results have been distilled into Table 6.1 and will be considered in relation to the research objectives.

**Table 6.1 4 Pivotal Results from the Empirical Study**

1. The majority of BCFS graduates (95%) experienced Transformative Learning (TL) and where identified it was deemed permanent whereas 44% of non-BCFS participants self-identified with experiences of TL.
2. Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels among BCFS graduate participants were significantly higher in comparison to Non-BCFS graduates. Specifically, Emotional Perception was statistically significant to the Age factor among BCFS and Non-BCFS participants.  TL was not statistically correlated with Emotional IQ, Attachment or Age factors among BCFS or Non-BCFS participants.

Table 6.1 Continued
<p>3. The accelerated Emotional Intelligence growth and development has been attributed by the BCFS graduate participants to the programme's 'learner centred' andragogical process which has provided personal and professional life enhancing skills.</p>
<p>4. BCFS graduates expressed 3 core personal and professional impacts of the transformative learning experiences from the BCFS programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• increased desire to contribute to society as civic engagement capacities were improved as a result of the BCFS programme</li><li>• improved personal networks and social relationships developed from gaining the BCFS degree</li><li>• evident role as mentor within personal, community and professional circles as a result of the programme has had a positive 'ripple effect' on graduates attributes</li></ul>

<b>Objective 1:</b>
<b>To explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced TL<sup>62</sup> as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion</b>

A unique finding within this study from the quantitative data based on King's LAS measure is that (95%) of the BCFS respondents self-identified as having experienced TL as part of their programme studies. However, the quantitative analysis presented that only 44% of Non-BCFS respondents experienced TL based on positive responses to at least one TL statement. These empirical results echo transformative learning theorists including Mezirow (1975, 1998a, 2000, 2004; Dirkx *et al.* 2006a) King (2000a; Cranton and King 2003; King 2009) Cranton (2006; Cranton and Kasl 2012) who espouse that transformative learning can only occur in adulthood once life and critical thinking experiences have been accumulated. Therefore, as all survey participants were adults they were 'eligible' to experience transformative learning based on Mezirow and colleagues TL theoretical perspectives (Dirkx *et al.* 2006; Mezirow *et al.* 2009; Mälkki 2010) .

Notably, all participants in this study espouse that incremental transformative learning was the self-identified pattern of the transformative learning (TL) evolution for them. This finding in the empirical study reflects Mezirow's (1989, 2000) theoretical construct that once transformative learning occurs, it cannot be deconstructed or revoked as a learning experience among adult learners. However, the study findings also reflect the perspective of Swartz and Tricari (2011) that transformative learning is always a possibility but not guaranteed. This perspective by Swartz and Tricari might account for the 15% non-identified TL experiences within this study's findings. One observation that the researcher is presenting here is that as all the Non-BCFS study respondents did not know the researcher or

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<sup>62</sup> TL- Transformative Learning

have an established trust relationship with her, this could have impacted on the TL non-replies rate among the non-BCFS population in the quantitative data (Component 1).

Consequently, it requires certain knowledge and skills within the learning environment, space and learning discourse to enable the transformative learning process to incrementally accumulate or occur in an epochal manner as posited by Mezirow (1975, 1998, 2000 2004; Dirkx *et al.* 2006a). Mezirow and colleagues (Kitchenham 2008a; Snyder 2008; Thomas 2009a; Nesbit 2012) espouse the necessity of critical thinking development to be able to experience TL. However, part-time adult learners experience 'busy lives' and have little time to self-reflect on their learning journey (Moon 1999, 2006, 2008) despite its benefits. However, the researcher noted that engagement in Component 1 triggered learners to reflect on the learning experience thereafter and with the distillation of time between the quantitative and qualitative data collection processes, the study participants were able to identify and scaffold some personal experiences of TL. This enabled graduates who proceeded to the qualitative data collection stage to be more explicit on examples at that juncture that reflected their personal TL journeys.

An interesting finding from the qualitative process is that a number of the BCP interview participants expressed that it was not until the interview process was in session that they realized that their participation and learning experience from undertaking the programme(s) which they had named as 'challenging' or 'different' in the quantitative process were actually life changing. This self-realization process was deemed transformative by the respective graduates who were still navigating through their personal transformative learning journey. This critical transition in the TL learning process is reflective of Mezirow and colleagues work on the phases and incremental process of TL that lead to a perspective change in adults (Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Mezirow 2009; Illeris 2012). This notable finding reiterates the view from the literature (Broom 2011; Stone and Duffy 2015; Stone *et al.* 2017a) that adults need to transition from a critical thinking to a critical being sense of place to experience transformative learning.

Another noteworthy TL finding in the qualitative data within this study was that the value and effect of peer/ fellow learner support has impacted on all learners' perspective change. This perspective change or attitude shift emanated from learning from the course/ syllabi content and related contextual life events in the childcare, community and family study sectors. It is evident though from the qualitative findings that social supports, whether that materialized as concrete, emotional or esteem support was deemed crucial by all BCFS and BCP graduates to sustain and attain their degrees and experience transformative learning. Davis et al (2014) in the SSSC<sup>63</sup> review of the Scottish early years' degree programme outcomes identified the socio-emotional and educational networks that evolved from participating within and completion of the early years' degree programme for participants. This focus on people development and social justice reiterates the characteristics of transformative learning, family support (Dolan *et al.* 2006; Canavan *et al.* 2016; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009) and community development theory (Twelvetrees 1982; Lillis 2005a; Forde *et al.* 2016) which was discussed in the literature review and is echoed in this study's empirical findings.

A notable finding in this study was that all 26 interview participants shared their social, developmental and historical transformative learning experiences with ease through the qualitative data collection process. This finding would suggest that the process of self-identification with TL experiences for some adults requires different strategies to surface those experiences (King 2000; Cranton and Carusetta 2004; Brannen 2005; Cranton 2006; Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Wang and King 2008; King 2009; Erichsen 2011; Cranton and Kasl 2012). Therefore, in this study the richness of the transformative learning findings were shared within the qualitative process more so than the quantitative approaches. Mezirow (1978a, 1997, 2009) posits that historical, developmental and social experiences enable

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<sup>63</sup> SSSC- Scottish Social Services Council

transformative learning in adult learners lives. In this study, Population 2 (BCFS and Diploma in CDP) graduates declared that the majority of the incremental developmental and social learning experiences transpired across their first programme of study with the community education team, that is the Diploma in CDP<sup>64</sup> programme. Yet, it is apparent that the historical learning insights into self and others were a slower development and realization process for those interviewed in this grouping. The social and concrete support from the community education programme coordinators and tutors was more evident in the findings from BCFS (Populations 1 and 2) rather than from Population 3 (BCP) graduates based on the interview findings. As all members of Population 3<sup>65</sup> worked in the childcare service, results indicate an evident network of post-programme support and camaraderie that has sustained itself since completion of the BCP programme. This informal social support network among graduates has aided and fermented the transformative learning process for the BCP graduates.

Qualitative interview findings among Population 2<sup>66</sup>, suggests that the greater exposure to the community education model of delivery and learning style presented a more balanced self-reflection by graduates into their social, developmental and historical experiences of Transformative learning among this cohort, more so than the other two populations (1 and 3). This finding is indicative of the literature on the benefits of a community education and adult education ethos and approach in education to aid learners' identity development and sense of self in education (Clegg 2000; Ryan *et al.* 2009; Clegg 2012; Connolly 2014; Fitzsimons, 2017; Cinnincato *et al.* 2017). Equally, the higher levels of self-identified TL experiences (95%) among the BCFS graduates in comparison to the Non-BCFS (44%) from the

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<sup>64</sup> Diploma in CDP is a part-time 30 credit Diploma run by Community Education as part of NUI Galway programme offering.

<sup>65</sup> BCP programme graduates

<sup>66</sup> Diploma in CDP and BCFS graduates



quantitative process suggest that identity development awareness and skills were heightened among BCFS respondents. This identity development evidence is reflective of Honneth's and Fleming's work on the relationship between identity development, emotional maturity and transformative learning (Honneth 1995, 2003, 2005, 2007; Houston and Dolan 2008; Fleming and Finnegan 2010).

Interestingly in this study, only 5% of the BCFS population did not respond to the TL statement within the survey and therefore the researcher could not identify whether this small cohort experienced TL or not. However, across the quantitative data, the results indicate that 15% of the BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents (that is 24 of the 156 respondents) indicated that they did not identify with any of the twelve transformative learning experiences statements. This identified disconnect among the BCFS and non BCFS graduate respondents between the term TL and its characteristics typifies the criticisms of a non-universal identification with the characteristics and features of transformative learning within the literature on TL (Taylor 1998, 2008a; Christie *et al.* 2015). The non-identification with the construct and meaning of transformative learning was not evidenced in the qualitative data collection process within this study.

Notably, the self-identified TL experiences expressed by the BCFS and Non-BCFS graduates within this study, dispute Taylor's (1998, 2007, 2008b) perspective of transformative learning being a transient or temporary experience as discussed in the literature. Therefore, the researcher included multiple data collection approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to triangulate the data within this study on whether TL was evidenced and sustainable for the BCFS population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007). Thus transformative learning literature (Mezirow 2009; Poutiatine 2009a; Mälkki 2010; Fleming 2016) espouses the perspective that the acquisition of transformative learning is permanent and irreversible among adult learners once achieved. Therefore, the researcher deemed to establish if this premise was corroborated in the empirical data. All respondents that engaged with the researcher through face to face data collection processes, that are the IM and the semi-structured interviews, unequivocally stated that the TL

experiences that they had incrementally acquired during the BCFS and BCP programme respectively have sustained on completion.

Findings within this study across the quantitative and qualitative processes indicate each of Mezirow's three types of TL reflection; content, process and premise reflection which leads to transformative learning. As outlined in the literature, (Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Kitchenham 2008b; Snyder 2008; Mezirow 2009) the pathways to transformative learning pivot on journeying through the three types of reflection; content, process and premise reflection. Content reflection is where learners can describe the issue or problem they are dealing with in the education milieu. Process reflection denotes the capacity of learners to seek out the best problem solving strategy to the issue. Premise reflection then leads the learner to the transformation of their meaning perspective. These three types of TL reflection which lead to TL according to Mezirow (1978, 1992, 2000) and colleagues (Wang and King 2008; Wang 2017) will be mapped in a later section of this chapter against the NUI Galway Graduate Attributes process of knowledge, skills and dispositions.

This study has found that the use of qualitative methods to gather transformative learning experiences are more amenable to evidencing the rich, personal contribution that the TL experiences have bestowed on BCFS graduate participants. To summate, the presence of incremental transformative learning in the BCFS graduates is evidenced across the empirical data collection process, especially within Component 3 which was the qualitative data component. Equally, the absence of a specific adaptable mixed-methods TL measure similar to Schutte's (1998) EI measure was deemed a limitation of the study by the researcher. However, the adaption of King's (1998) Learning Activities Survey did act as a suitable interim measure as evidenced by its use in another study (Stone and Duffy 2015; Stone *et al.* 2017) to map transformative learning.

This study raises a future research observation for the researcher that a more robust mixed methods TL measuring tool is required for quantitative and qualitative data measurement among adult learners to enable them to self-

identify and map their own transformative learning experiences and journey. The development of adult learners' capacity to reflect on experiential learning across cognitive, affective and value dimensions would enrich all learners' future academic and personal development as outlined in the literature (Dewey 1902, 1938; Kolb 1984; Thompson and Thompson 2008; Thompson and Pascal 2012).

Another interesting finding from the BCFS and BCP participants reflection during the interview process in this study was that graduates expressed that King's LAS measure assumes learners can self-identify their transformative learning experiences through this quantitative measure. Therefore, an assumption is made in the use of this LAS measure that respondents can self-identify all experiences of transformative learning or wish to share those experiences in a non-face-to-face research experience. This finding is reflective of Stone and Duffy's (2015; Stone *et al.* 2017) view that the LAS is an interim measure to gauge TL while a more comprehensive one to capture qualitative and quantitative experiences is sought. A noteworthy outcome of the semi-structured interview process in this study is that it provided learners with a more amenable environment to self-identify and share transformative learning experiences and the impact of those social, developmental and historical transformative learning experiences on their life paths since completion of the BCFS programme.

Therefore, this study's research objective one speaks to the existence and sustainability of the incremental transformative learning experience that graduates gain on the BCFS and comparator programmes. This is evidenced in the quantitative data among graduates in Component 1 and elaborated on more specifically in the interpretative data evident in Component 3, the semi-structured interviews.

**Objective 2:**

**To consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and TL, relative to Non-BCFS graduates.**

A significant finding in this study was the evident high levels of emotional intelligence recorded among the BCFS respondents through Schutte's EI measure. Notably, these EI recordings were significantly higher than the comparator, non-BCFS programme participants. Results from this study in relation to emotional intelligence and attachment concur with Thompson and Thompson's (2008) perspective that cognitive, value and affective supports foster critical thinking which can lead to transformative learning and emotional intelligence growth and are impacted upon by one's earlier life attachment experiences. Therefore, the 3 components of the empirical process were constructed to appeal to the diverse cognitive, value and affective based dimensions of the adult learner study population. The heterogeneity of the adult learner cohort as considered in the work of adult learner theorists (King, 2000, 2009; Mezirow, 2009; Fleming *et al.* 2010; Fleming *et al.* 2017) who posit that critical thinking acquisition is a core aspect of transformative learning enablement. This three dimensional critical thinking enablement presented by Thompson and Thompson (2008) offer a grounded theoretical lens to mirror the BCFS critical thinking skills and attributes which reflect NUI Galway graduate attributes (McLaren 2015) concisely in terms of dispositions and characteristics and 'sense of being' among adult learner graduates. The BCFS graduates alignment to the NUI Galway attributes will be considered later in this discussion chapter.

The evidence from this study shows a statistical significant differential in self-identified emotional intelligence levels among BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents. As discussed in the literature (Schutte *et al.* 1998; Goleman 2001; Schutte *et al.* 2002b) the importance of developing the socio-emotional development of individuals across the life-span is a fundamental aspect of their development. Results on the personal development and social and emotional development theme among graduates in this study could be

compared to the findings of increased confidence building and emotional development in the Scottish SSSC study (Davis et al, 2014) as it reflected the BCFS graduates perspectives on transformative learning influences, social, emotional, and historical developments.

Notably, the BCFS graduates themselves attributed the EI growth to the supportive educational and learner centred community education ethos espoused on the BCFS programme. However, an outlier in the BCFS data was noted when the researcher ran an SPSS analysis which reflected that the EI subscale ‘managing one’s own emotions’ does not have as effective an impact as the other three EI subscales among the BCFS graduates. The researcher suggests that this differential is due to the nature of the sector these graduates work and volunteer within in community, youth and family support sectors. These BCFS graduates are evidently emotionally connected to supporting others and less mindful to reflect on their own sense of self. Additionally, as adult learners, these BCFS graduates have evolved from ‘busy’ other lives where attachment and self-identity and confidence may not have been prioritized by social networks or family support structures. The literature reflects similar patterns to the study findings (Schuetze and Slowey 2000, 2012; Houston and Dolan 2008; Canavan *et al.* 2016; Illeris 2018; Slowey and Schuetze 2018).

The statistical correlation between age and emotional intelligence among BCFS and Non-BCFS graduates was a significant finding in this study (see Table 5.16). This suggests that age and ‘maturity’ (Dirkz 2006) of emotions lends itself well to enabling transformative learning and academic performance as indicated in the literature (Thomas 2009b, 2016; Maguire *et al.* 2017a). So adult and higher educational institutions and authorities would gain a valuable return for investment in devising adult learner supportive methodologies for this committed, achievement driven and dedicated mature learner community. Smith (2014) cited in Wang and Hansman (Wang *et al.* 2017) reflect on the importance of empathetic understanding required by educators to see the learning process from the adult learner perspective, which is deemed to lead to transformative and emancipatory self-directed learning. This is reflective of Merriam (Merriam

*et al.* 2008; Merriam and Bierema 2013) view that educators and facilitators in the andragogical process need to focus on discovering and understanding past life and learning experiences of adults to help them form new learning mind-sets to aid their progression through the life-path.

Qualitative findings in this study shows that the graduates developed emotionally throughout the BCFS programme and their self-awareness of that growth and emotional development was evidenced during the interview stage of the empirical data collection process. All 26 interviewees in this qualitative process shared momentous life experiences which reflected their critical awareness of using those emotions and managing others' emotions equally. Therefore, the EI levels and experiences demonstrated a heightened awareness and growth among graduates of their own and fellow learners' EI development (Salovey and Mayer 1990; Schutte *et al.* 1998; Goleman 2001; Schutte *et al.* 2002b). Merriam and Bierema (2013) reiterate that the meaning and emotional investment in learners should be the whole reason for considering andragogical approaches to learning. In essence, the learning experience would be deemed blighted according to Mezirow if the holistic learner perspective; social, historical, developmental (Mezirow 1996, 2000a) is not considered throughout the learning journey with adult learners. As BCFS and BCP graduate participants shared experiences during the qualitative process which echoed dispositions and narratives reflective of all four of Schutte's subscales; this triangulated approach to data collection within the study enabled the adult learner participants reflect and expand on their 'lived life' examples of emotional efficacy during the BCFS and BCP educational journey.

Emotional intelligence evidence is significant across the data presented in this study. This was gauged based on the use of Schutte's EI model and analysis tool. The lower scoring on 'managing one's own emotions' across the BCFS cohort was attributed by the researcher to the practice of altruistic and civic engagement to aid others as the priority over personal or self-appreciation by these BCFS graduates. This pattern echoes the community development evidence on members volunteering and overcommitting to community instead of oneself as a community member (Crow and Allan

1994; Lillis 2005b; Lee 2006; Fleming 2007a). However, the reflection on self and managing one's own emotions in this study prompted discussions in the qualitative interviews which has led to critical reflection and self-motivation among BCFS graduates interviewed to be 'conscious' and to 'value' their personal contribution to self and society. Garratt (2011) and Maguire *et al.* (2017b) reiterate the societal return on investing in learners emotional development. So adult and higher educational institutions would gain a valuable educational benefit and societal return for investment in mirroring and extending andragogical programmes such as the BCFS model, given the evident findings of high emotional intelligence recorded within this study.

A pivotal finding within this study is the statistical relationship between age and emotional intelligence perception. This is a noteworthy reminder to adult educators and higher education policy makers to lobby for additional resources and supports for community education models of andragogical practice with part-time mature adult learners, given their mature outlook on educational investment, retention and success rates based on this study's findings pertaining to the BCFS cohort and comparator populations. This investment in mature and committed adult learners is evidenced in the literature (Shatalebi *et al.* 2012; Love 2014; Fleming *et al.* 2017).

In the Interactive Management process, the conceptual model developed by the BCFS graduates reflected 'mentorship' and 'social relationships' as pivotal to 'self-esteem' and 'self-confidence' building, which reflect the emotional intelligence and attachment connection in this study. So as outlined in the literature, the attachment supports of one significant adult in life can enable life changing events in any individual (Kenny and Fleming 2009; Fleming and Finnegan 2010). Therefore, Fleming and colleagues have recorded that positive life attachments in adulthood and supportive educational attachment can aid adults to achieve a more positive emotional wellbeing and sense of identity. This will be further considered within objective four of this study discussion.

The literature shows that attachment experiences in adulthood is significantly influenced by individuals' emotional intelligence experiences in early life (Main *et al.* 1985; Bowlby 1988; Main 2008; Kenny and Fleming 2009; Daniel 2013). Therefore, the researcher in this study considered the educational pathways of the learners through the lens of their attachment and emotional intelligence development. The attachment experience of graduates is captured in all the empirical data but especially evidenced in the interviews. This consideration leads acutely to the recognition of identity and space as key concepts to be reflected upon in this study's discussion about adult learners and their 'lived life' experience on the BCFS and non BCFS programmes in NUI Galway. Massey (2005, 2013); Solnit (2013) and Thomas (2016) reflect on the impact of space and one's sense of belonging as a mature, adult learner and how geography and landscape can ever change and evolve one's ownership of the learning experience. These factors of identity, space and shared ownership are intrinsically linked to the educational attachment experience of adult learners in this study. Notably, within the interview findings, the importance of experiencing positive 'social experiences' and a 'sense of place/identity' with the university as a space for part-time distance learners and graduates echoes the literature on including mature adult learners in the space continuum in higher education (Massey, 2005; Thomas, 2016) .

This study found that early life attachment experiences significantly influence one's happiness and emotional wellbeing. Equally, all graduates reflected that the existence of one significant adult in their lives enabled them to reconsider education in adulthood despite previous life experiences, even in incidences of poor early life experiences of attachment. However, all BCFS and BCP interviewees reflected upon their own experiences and considered that emotional intelligence growth and skills development was a greater 'life enabler' than attachment bonds. Notably, all twenty-six graduates interviewed reflected that access to part-time, flexible models of adult education and specifically the BCFS, Diploma in CDP and the BCP programmes offered by NUIG was an enabler of emotional intelligence growth in their lives which alleviated and rebalanced any of the earlier life



educational attachment and emotional dysfunction. This finding within the study is reflected in the literature (Colston 2008; Vahedi and Nikdel 2011; Shatalebi *et al.* 2012; Maguire *et al.* 2017).

### **6.3.1 Relationship between Graduates TL, Attachment and EI Skills**

This study found that transformative learning was not correlated with Emotional Intelligence (EI) or Attachment constructs within the quantitative data analysis process of Component 1 among BCFS and Non-BCFS graduate participants. This is an interesting finding for the researcher as it provides optimism for adult educators and education authorities who need to provide educational access to individuals and communities who experienced poor earlier life attachment, emotional insecurity or poor early life educational experiences. This is reflective of Fleming's work on transformative learning, which he espouses offers an opportunity to adult learners to change their life-path through education in adulthood (Fleming 2016b; Fleming *et al.* 2017a).

Mezirow and colleagues (Inglis 1998; Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Fleming 2007b; Fleming and Finnegan 2010b; Mälkki 2010) purport that Transformative Learning (TL) experiences in adulthood can compensate for poor or insecure early life attachment experiences and that TL can be experienced once one has reached adulthood and gained life experiences to reframe one's perspective. This theoretical viewpoint on transformative learning espoused by Mezirow (Mezirow 2009) and Fleming (Fleming 2008; Fleming and Finnegan 2009) that the accumulation of TL experiences in adulthood is not dependent on positive attachment or emotional security in early life offers respite to adults who have encountered 'challenging' earlier life experiences. Therefore, the qualitative findings in this study among BCFS and BCP graduates reflect Fleming and Mezirow's perspective that TL experiences and supportive andragogical experiences can interject and redirect learners despite poor earlier life educational or personal experiences. This will be further considered in objective three.

In conclusion to objective two of this study; it can be deduced based on the data collated that the BCFS graduates experienced positive educational attachment based on Kaplan and Mains (1985) five categories<sup>67</sup> during the BCFS programme. Graduates that experienced poor earlier life attachment experiences had opportunities through the BCFS community education ethos and programme supports to foster strong emotional intelligence across all four of Schutte's subscales<sup>68</sup>. Therefore, the researcher would posit that supports to foster positive educational attachment through adult and higher education structures and interventions can aid first generation adult learners to succeed in higher education. Additionally, this research suggests that cognisance of poor earlier life attachment experience by educators would facilitate more successful learner and educational outcomes for all. Equally, emotional intelligence mapping of all University entrants especially adult learners with previous cultural, social or economic experiences of disadvantage could aid educators to direct supports and apply an 'adult learner centred approach' to higher education. This social inclusive approach across adult and higher education could be captured in the new national 'Campus Engage' strategy of the Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020 (HEA 2017).

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<sup>67</sup> 5 Attachment Categories: Nonfamily Attachment Influences; Child Attachment Experience in the home; Attachment Experience in School as a Young person; Attachment Experience in Education as an Adult; Other Family member Attachment Influences.

<sup>68</sup> 4 EI subscales: perception of emotions; managing of others emotions; managing of own emotions and utilisation of emotions

**Objective 3:**

**To appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.**

A key finding in this study is that the BCFS graduates emphasised the importance of the adult friendly approaches and ‘minding’ they received as part of the BCFS programme. They attributed this pastoral care to their educational transformation and identity development journey and deemed it pivotal to remapping their educational trajectory. The literature indicates that part-time adult learners, especially those who have been estranged from formal education for a duration require andragogical supports, emotional supports and supportive pastoral interventions to ease their access, retention and opportunities to succeed in higher education (Taylor 2007; Maguire *et al.* 2017; Kasworm 2018). Rogers (1983) cited in Wang and Hansman (Wang *et al.* 2017) reflected that humanistic perspective in andragogical work and posited on the importance of adults being personally involved in the learning process. This reflects the findings from BCFS graduates who reflected on the positive experience of feeling central and involved in the community education learning experience.

The BCFS graduates in all three components of this study reflected on the community education ethos, informal teaching space layout and empathetic tutors as pivotal to their learning experience and pathways to transformative learning. Correspondingly, as Snowden *et al.* (2015) and Brown (1998) advocated, a polymorphic educational process, where many methods are used to teach learners lends itself to greater exposure to critical thinking capacities. The diverse teaching methodologies and approaches were reflected upon by BCFS learners in this study as enablers of their critical thinking and emotional intelligence development which they self-identified as facilitating transformative learning capabilities and experiences. This was particularly evidenced in the IM structural map results output (see Figure 5.1) that the BCFS graduates created during this study.

Sammons et al (2005) (cited in Davis et al., 2014) refer to the benefit of using mixed methods approaches for providing insight to complex and pluralistic social contexts and diverse life and experiences and perspectives of participants. This disposition has parallel justification with the researcher's engagement with a mixed methods approach in the BCFS study to add voice to the graduates' experiences and to illuminate their voice and perspectives. An effective andragogical approach to Higher Education (HE) involves devolved leadership and non-hierarchical structures. This facilitation of knowledge exchange between agents is fundamental to emotional development. This devolution of power between educators, learners and community members is reflective of SSSC study (Davis et al 2014) of early year's graduate attributes and earlier studies by Lawler and Bilson (2010), Davis (2011) and Davis and Smyth (2012). The emotional intelligence characteristics and emotional development theme in TL among BCFS and BCP graduates in this study is reflective of the confidence and leadership skills iterated in the SSSC study among graduates (2014) in which graduates knowledge, skills and dispositions which formed part of their graduate attributes resonated with one another in terms of sectoral, community and societal impact of the ripple effect of effective educational engagement. Critical reflection and autonomous and independent learning among graduates was particularly evident in the IM and interview findings of this empirical study.

Another interesting finding that the BCFS participants in this study raised was the positive ripple effect of the supportive andragogical experiences on their own emotions and its ripple effect on their family and community network. This was expressed as a new found value that they attached to learning and education as adults as a result of the BCFS programme engagement. The literature reflects the importance of developing learners' emotional intelligence in order to improve academic achievement and community engagement (Humphrey et al. 2007; Colston 2008; Illeris 2009; Mortiboys 2012; Majeski *et al.* 2017). Therefore, this study concurs with the literature on the effect that positive physical and emotional support can add to learners' lives through higher education.

Notably, the finding on the statistical relationship between emotional intelligence and age among BCFS and Non-BCFS graduates in this study emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence investment in adult learners' lives through adult and higher education. This is reflected in the literature by Schutte *et al.* (1998), Garratt (2011), Schutte and Malouff (2011) and Chen *et al.* (2016). Specifically, in this study, the statistical analysis of the results indicated that BCFS participants' EI levels were significantly higher than the non-BCFS graduates EI levels. In the qualitative data collection process, BCFS graduates attributed their emotional development and critical thinking awareness to the supportive, adult centred community education ethos espoused on the BCFS programme.

The findings gathered from the interactive management (IM) data collection process with BCFS participants (Figure 5.1) reflects on the strong 'social relationships' that evolved between learners and tutors. Additionally, the 'mentoring' life skills and 'desire to contribute to society' that the BCFS graduates espouse in light of supportive adult learning teaching processes they experienced was a marked finding pertaining to this objective. The self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem growth the BCFS graduate participants reflected upon across the IM empirical data was accredited to the positive educational experience on the Diploma in CDP and BCFS with the community education team. The relationship between andragogical supports, identity development and emotional growth is reflective of the literature by Honneth (2003, 2005, 2007) Fleming (2007b, 2009, 2016) Ingram (2013) and Poutiatine (2009).

The self-identified critical thinking skills and capacities results expressed as a core value among the BCFS graduates in the interactive management discussion and outlined in the IM conceptual model output (Figure 5.1) reflects the importance of this critical reflexivity disposition to the BCFS graduates within this study. In essence, Thompson and Pascal (2012) refer to 'reflexive practice' as a '*form of practice that looks back on itself, that is premised on self-analysis*' (p.319). BCFS graduates in the qualitative data collection process attributed this 'reflexive practice' skillset to the

community education ethos and pedagogical process, in which critical thinking skills enabled their EI attributes and transformative learning experiences. Whilst among Population 3 (BCP) participants, the teaching methodology was not remarked upon as frequently as a key influencer in their EI development. This perspective reiterates Brewer (2010) and Ingram (2013) who advocated for the centring of adult learners in the learning process. The BCFS graduate participants contribution to the IM process reflected theoretical critical thinking and emotional development capacities which reiterate the transformative learning process characteristics espoused by theorists (Stevens-Long *et al.* 2012; Lotz-Sisitka *et al.* 2015; Illeris 2018). This reflexive process of self-analysis and insight among the BCFS adult learners in this study underpins the relationship between the andragogical process, emotional intelligence, age, transformative learning and attachment experiences.

A key finding in this study is that all adult learners interviewed (BCFS and BCP participants) attributed the access to a part-time, blended-learning model of education as a key life changing opportunity for them as life circumstances prevented them from accessing this subject matter and model of delivery in earlier life. The literature on adult and community education posits that positive intervention through the community education ethos is required in the 'scaffolding' of adult and higher education programmes in a neoliberal society (Fleming *et al.* 2017; Fitzsimons 2017). This is deemed necessary by the adult and community theorists as a *laissez faire* approach to education will not benefit all in society, especially lower socio-economic households. However, the results in this study indicate that in order to ensure the weakened voice or marginalized members of society are not excluded from the process of higher education access and learning experiences, additional models of inclusion, positive discrimination towards under and un-represented community members and more inclusive campus civic engagement strategies within higher education will have to be considered. The new 'Campus Engage' (HEA 2017) national strategy and its ten point charter to scaffold an inclusive engagement policy within Higher Education Institutions is a welcome development.

An interesting finding in this study was the gendered nature of the BCFS and BCP programme participation rates. This female preponderance for accreditation in the community, youth, early years and family support domains is a pattern that is reflected in the national employment statistics for this population, as indicated earlier in the chapter within the gender and income factors section. Notably, Burke (2013) and Clegg (2000, 2012) posit that pedagogical relationships are affected by gender, race and class. Thus adult and higher education authorities, educators and learners need to work collaboratively to enable a positive educational experience for learners to access, sustain and progress through adult and higher education structures irrespective of gender, income, race, class or age.

Interestingly, the andragogical collaborative process evidenced by the BCFS participants in this study is reflective of Mezirow's objective and subjective reframing perspective of the transformational learning discourse (Mezirow 1978b, 1990, 1998b). This collaborative educational process facilitates critical thinking as espoused by Snowden *et al.* (2015) and Brown (1989). Therefore, this study's findings suggest that effective and supportive andragogical processes among BCFS learners further enhances their possible access to transformative learning experiences in higher education. This is aligned to Mezirow and transformative learning colleagues' work (Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Brookfield 2009; Poutiatine 2009b; Glowacki-Dudka *et al.* 2012). Graduates in this study have emphasised that the supportive, collaborative process has further developed their graduate attributes on exit from the BCFS programme. The BCFS graduate attributes alignment to the NUI Galway framework will be further considered in the next section of this discussion chapter. Therefore, the personal and professional relevance of the pedagogical process and enabling learners' EI skills needs constant consideration (Dweck, 2017). Dweck further reflects on the growth mind-set in her work and reflects that one's intelligence is malleable and can be developed. This theoretical perspective is a positive insight for adult learners who wish to re-path from previous barriers of space, identity and conditioning based on social, emotional, cultural and economic barriers that

negatively impacted on their access to or progression through formal educational initiatives earlier in life.

Another interesting finding in this study is that the peer support among fellow learners during and on completion of the BCFS and BCP programme was noted as a definite influence on their EI development and fundamental to the social support network created by graduates of these programmes. The researcher would deduce that one's capacity to be more reflexive and insightful can be fostered with maturity of age and garnering of life experience based on Moon's (1999, 2006, 2008) work on reflective practice and critical thinking in education settings. Wang, Keefe and Sedivy-Benton (2017) reflected on the work of Confucian humanism, in which the reflectivity was referred to as 'sagehood' and becoming an 'authentic person'. Confucius advocated that self-criticism and reflectivity was necessary to achieve sagehood and wisdom. This perspective would relate the accumulation of transformative learning experiences in the BCFS programme to the breadth and depth of life experience; and the provision through the BCFS programme of pathways to express those 'lived life' experiences through emotionally sensitive andragogical, community education mentoring processes. This supportive milieu and humanistic perspective according to Wang and Hansman (2017) is deemed pivotal to social relationship building between adult learners and educators, culturing educational attachment and growing adult learners' emotional intelligence.

In conclusion, the professional status and self-confidence growth associated with achieving a degree was espoused by all graduates, especially the BCFS participants in this study. The 'value of education' and the achievement of a degree despite life barriers and pressures were posited as a life-path changer for BCFS participants within the IM results. Additionally, the role modelling and formal and informal mentoring roles the graduates have adopted on completion of the degree is fostering emotional intelligence growth among peer and family networks, as evidenced in the qualitative findings within this study. This is reflective of humanistic mentoring that Hansman (Wang *et al.* 2017) considers necessary for adult learners in supportive social relationship building. This life changing perspective that



the BCFS programme graduates reflected upon in this study in terms of the EI growth and the impact of the supportive community education methodologies fostered is deemed irrevocable and identity transformative by the study participants.

<b>Objective 4:</b>
<b>To identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.</b>

One of the key impacts according to BCFS participants in the IM and Interview processes was that the ‘sense of agency’ that the BCFS programme provided has been life changing for them. ‘Agency’ is interpreted within this study from an adult learning and family support context in which the individual becomes the change agent for them and their environment (Honneth, 2003, 2005; Houston and Dolan, 2008; Field, 2011; Devaney and Dolan, 2017). Agents of change that arise in this study are particularly premised on the three frames of reference that form a pattern across the empirical data. These three frames of the role of the part-time learner as an agent of change pivot on the historical, social and developmental transformative learning experiences that Mezirow (2000; Mezirow and Taylor 2009; Lundgren and Poell 2016) posits are required for sustainable transformative learning. This reflects the academic literature discussed in Chapter 2 that theorizes that learners and educators can act as agents of change to enable transformative learning (Closs and Antonello 2011; Fleming 2012).

The structural map (see Figure 5.1) of the IM process suggest that the BCFS graduate participants prioritized the importance of the ‘desire to contribute to society’ which as a term is akin to ‘active participation’ a core principle of community development practice and theory (Twelvetrees 1982; Commins 1985; Kennedy and Kelleher 1990; Curtin and Tovey 1996; Lillis 2005; Dolan 2008). This empowerment of participants embeds acutely in community development theory which encourages personal and collective problem solving techniques in society (Commins 1985; Lave 1991; POBAL

1999; Community Workers Cooperative 2008). This connection between community development theory and transformation theory as models to assist personal and social development were also considered in the literature review. The personal, societal, professional and community impact of acquisition of the BCFS or BCP degree in this study is reflective of the professional development impact of the early years' degree outcomes reflected in the SSSC study (Davis et al. 2014). The second impact of TL according to BCFS graduates through the IM process that was seen as pivotal to transformative learning is 'social relationship' building. The development of social and personal networks and relationship-building espoused by community education theorists (Fitzsimons 2017) and family support theorists (Dolan, Pinkerton, and Canavan 2006; Canavan *et al.* 2016) reflects the ethos developed within the community education suite of programmes, including the BCFS programme. The Impact of achieving a degree on the personal and professional status of BCFS and BCP graduates and their perception in their family and wider community mirror the early years' graduates' perspectives in the SSSC study (Davis et al. 2014).

This further supports the results outlined earlier from the quantitative data that attachment and social relationship bonds with other adult learners have a positive effect on one's emotional intelligence and growth. This is embedded in attachment theory and emotional intelligence academic literature espoused by Fleming and Finnegan (Fleming 2008b, 2016c; Fleming and Finnegan 2010b; Fleming *et al.* 2017), Kaplan and Main (Main *et al.* 1985; Kaplan and Main 2008). The third core impact of TL distilled from the IM process by BCFS participants was 'mentorship'. This people-centred skill of positive role modelling and adult learner engagement in the andragogical process is reflective of andragogical theory (Schuetze and Slowey 2002; Mezirow and Taylor 2009; Jarvis and Watts 2011; Jarvis 2012; Illeris 2014, 2018; Wang *et al.* 2017; Slowey and Schuetze 2018) which espouses that adult learners' critical thinking and human agency develops by experiencing mentoring through educational pathways.

Therefore, the significant statistical correlation between emotional intelligence perception and age as recorded in the quantitative data ( $r=.18$ ;  $p=.05$ ) among BCFS and Non-BCFS graduates emphasizes the importance of developing adult learners' emotional intelligence capacities and skills to enable their propensity to experience transformative learning is a key finding in this study. This is reiterated in a recent Irish University study by Maguire *et al.* (2017) which emphasizes that emotional intelligence investment in learners rewards all parties including the learners, their families, their peers, university staff and wider society. Bruner (2004) theorizes on the importance of 'emotional scaffolding' for children in the early years, however the researcher would marshal the point that scaffolding of emotions is equally as important in community and adult educational interventions in order to provide an inclusive and diverse academic landscape in higher education. Supporting and investing in the development of emotional intelligence skills among learners especially those who have experienced poor prior education or life attachment experiences is pivotal to the future scaffolding of adult and higher education (Fleming 2016; Fleming *et al.* 2017).

In the Interactive Management process, the community education ethos and positive adult centred educational attachment framework within the BCFS programme was identified by BCFS participants as pivotal to their perspective change and emotional development. The structural map (Figure 5.1) evidences the BCFS learners experiences on the programme and the positive 'ripple effect' that the transformative learning experience has bestowed on graduates' social relationships; mentoring and contribution to civic society. Thus this sense of self-identified growth in confidence, esteem and agency at a personal, social and community level has impacted on these BCFS graduates' lives. This sense of agency is closely identified with Honneth's theory of recognition and identity development (1995, 2003, 2005) which was discussed in Chapter 2.

In addition, Jarvis and others (Illeris 2009, 2018; Jarvis 2012; Lotz-Sisitka *et al.* 2015; Boeren and Holford 2016) denote the ever changing global world of learning requires an adoption of 'transgressive learning' deemed an

active agent of transformative learning in which reflexive social learning and learner advocacy for social justice becomes the norm. This context of graduates as agents of change needs to be framed within the graduate attributes to capture its importance for full and part-time learners into the future. The importance of aligning the BCFS graduates to the University graduate attributes framework will be considered in the next section. In addition, the societal benefits of investing in a community education ethos and approach to education are reiterated by many community and adult education practitioners and academics (Ryan *et al.* 2009; Tett 2011; Connolly and Hussey 2013; Fitzsimons 2016). The research results in this study reflect that the societal value and benefits of providing supportive community education approaches to enable the ‘weakened’ voices of adult learners and community members to access and succeed in higher education is pivotal to the BCFS engagement approach in community and higher education in NUI Galway. In addition, the empirical results has identified that the ‘ripple effect’ of this educational investment in part-time adult learners such as the BCFS participants has a positive socio-emotional domino effect in wider family and community networks. This is evidenced in the interactive management process and structural map (Figure 5.1) outcomes devised by the BCFS graduates. This evidence is reflective of Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and Family Support Theory (Pinkerton and Dolan 2007; Canavan *et al.* 2016) in which the influence of one’s personal and lived life experiences influence one’s wider family, community and societal network.

Qualitative findings in this study illustrate that based on Mezirow’s TL theoretical analysis of the three domains; social, developmental and historical experiences (Mezirow 2000) (see Figure 2.1) that the BCFS graduates reflected on shifts across all three domains whilst others denoted more evidential TL on one domain more so than others. However, the developmental (EI) transformative learning experiences at a personal growth perspective were the most self-professed of all three domains among the BCFS and BCP interviewees. This finding is reflective of the results in the quantitative data within Component 1 which mapped correlations

between graduates' Emotional intelligence, and all four EI subscales based on Schutte et AL's (1998) EI scale. Therefore, the importance of strong emotional perception, ability to manage one's own and other peoples' emotions and then having the capacity to use those emotions effectively in society were core attributes the BCFS and BCP interviewees espoused and identified within this study as enablers of transformative learning.

BCFS and BCP graduates during the qualitative interview process reflected on the permanent, sustained change in their personal perspective on foot of curricula learning and development through the programmes. The 'ripple effect' of the change in these graduates perspective through the educational interventions and experiences continues to have a positive domino effect on their personal, social and professional networks following programme completion. These personal and societal effects of adult and higher educational access are reflective of the literature (Boeren and Holford 2016; Fleming 2016; Thomas 2016; Fleming *et al.* 2017). The emotional development and self-awareness among BCFS and BCP graduate participants of their own personal growth was an evident pattern in the interview process. An interesting finding within the qualitative data was that the community education andragogical process during the Diploma in CDP and the BCFS programmes gradually created TL experiences for these graduates that sustained and grew through the BCFS programme. Equally, participants noted that the motivation and empowerment instilled through the Diploma in CDP and BCFS programmes reinvigorated these graduates to be agents of change among their support network both at a personal and community level. In terms of the BCP graduates, the sense of personal and professional achievement among this first cohort of graduates of the newly designed part-time distance learning degree in early childhood studies was hugely apparent. This academic achievement was remarked upon by the BCP participants during the interviews given the under-recognised and poorly financially remunerated sector they represent.

Fleming (2017) reiterates the importance of Honneth's Theory of Recognition (2003; 2005) and the importance of identity development through respect, confidence and esteem building among adult learners to

achieve transformative learning as espoused by Mezirow (1978b, 2000b; 2009). Fleming further advocates that the learning experience and pedagogical process requires educators to become agents of change to possess strong self-confidence, self-respect and high levels of esteem in order to recognise its importance in the andragogical process to become facilitators of change in adult learning within higher education settings. This mirrors Confucius's perspective (Wang *et al.* 2017) that self-criticism and insight is the pathway to the 'authentic person' and 'sage hood'. This liberated and facilitator of learning approach to achieve transformative learning reflects the ethos espoused by Freire (1970) who was an advocate of creative, liberal adult education methodologies and promoted a community education approach. Equally, Cranton and King (2003) King (2000b, 2009) became staunch supporters of the transformative learning andragogy within higher education that was firstly promoted by Mezirow (1978).

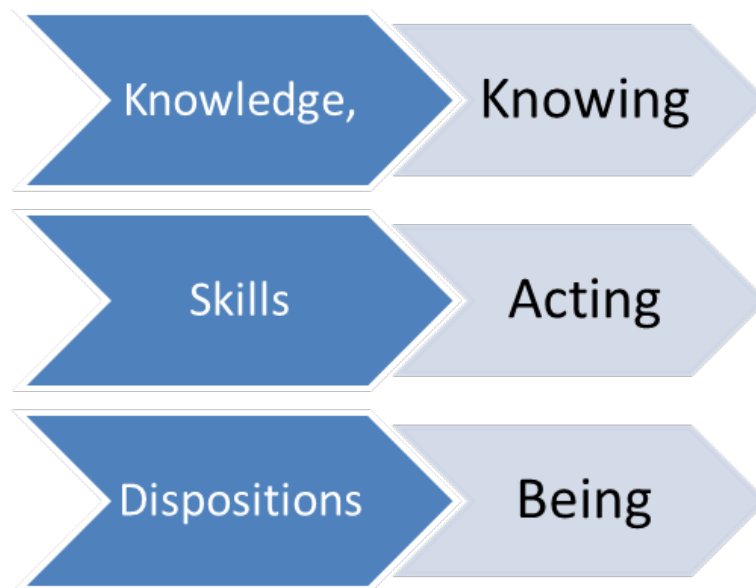
In conclusion, the theoretical and empirical data presented on the benefits and impacts of transformative learning through this BCFS programme evidences the ripple effect positive adult and higher education can have on learners and wider society.

#### **6.4 BCFS Part-Time Adult Learners Alignment to NUI Galway Graduate Attributes Framework**

This section considers the NUI Galway graduate attributes framework and its relevance to the contextual role of higher education to shape and develop its learners. In particular this section will reflect on the BCFS programme and its graduates characteristics gathered in this study. These features and characteristics of the BCFS population are in essence; these graduates' attributes which have enhanced their personal, family and social contribution to society. Intrinsic to the development of attributes is the building blocks of knowledge, skills and dispositions which become the enablers of graduate attributes. Evidence from the empirical data has framed the BCFS graduates capacities, skills and attributes based on the experiences shared in this study. In particular, the impacts of the Transformative

learning (TL) experiences which were considered earlier within Objective 4 will be reviewed in relation to their relevance to the NUI Galway Attributes Framework.

The three main elements of the NUI Galway Graduate Attributes framework include Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions. The three frames of reference evolved from studies (Barnett and Coate, 2005; Barnett, 2011) who matched the Graduate Attributes to the following process, see Figure 6.1:



**Figure 6.1 Relationship between Attributes and their Acquisition**

The NUI Galway Graduate Attributes as outlined by McLaren (2015) and later interpreted through the lens of an adult learning programme co-ordinator in CALPD, Walsh (2016) are mapped in Appendices 17 and 18. However, in this section the relevance of the process to attain graduate attributes will be considered in the context of the graduates within this specific study. It will be framed within the University wide strategy, Vision 2020 and its consideration of adult learners within the University's strategic plan. The researcher will map some specific emerging examples from the study to demonstrate how the study participants speak to the graduate attribute process from their knowledge and skills acquisition to achievement of dispositions. Thereafter, the specific importance of 'centring' the adult

learner profile within policy and strategic plans within the university will be considered.

Adult learners' motives for participating in and completing degrees in higher education institutions, especially those partaking in part-time programmes of study, can differ to the younger student and graduate reasons. Fleming and Finnegan (Fleming 2009, 2016; Fleming *et al.* 2010; Fleming and Finnegan 2011) denote the characteristics of adult learners and in particular the additional personal, social, cultural and financial barriers adult learners, especially those from disadvantage settings, face to access and sustain themselves in higher education. In particular, as the study is focused specifically on exploring the existence of transformative learning experiences among graduates of the BCFS programme, it is important to measure the graduate experiences from this BCFS programme against the template of NUI Galway graduate attributes.

Therefore, the researcher wishes to reflect upon the University's graduate attributes framework and to see if it is inclusive and reflective of the part-time adult learner cohort considered in this study. In the first instance, the researcher has mapped the graduate attributes process as outlined by McLaren (2015) informed by an earlier study by Barnett and Coate (2005, 2011). This staggered process of accessing and gaining knowledge across the formal syllabus and programme modules is fundamental to this 'knowledge' stage. In this regard, the study participants and their exceptional module participation and completion rates achieve this aspect. This stage of 'knowing' is not a stationary stage for adult learners but an ever evolving one; this is reflective of the study graduates due to the complex and demanding other life commitments adult learners are required to juggle while studying 'part-time'.

In line with the theory outlined by Mezirow and colleagues (1978; Dirkx *et al.* 2006a; Mezirow 2009) in terms of the types of reflection and its pathway to transformative learning for adult learners, the researcher has included this aspect of the process to map the reflection process as it navigates towards transformative learning. In essence, content reflection is the stage in which

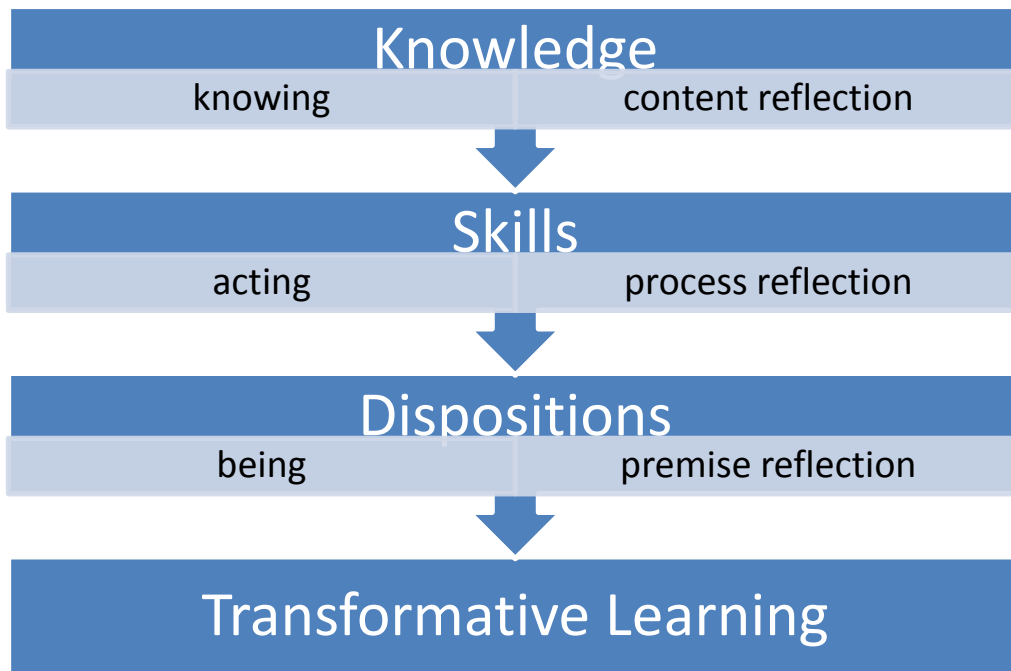


the adult learner is able to describe a problem or issue arising within a module or as part of the curriculum of study. This is a gradual discovery process for learners which take time and support to navigate. It is apparent from the study findings that many adult learners in Component 1 identified with this stage of the reflection process.

The next stage of the graduates' attributes journey is mapped as the skills acquisition stage in which the learners develop capacities to action knowledge gained through formal learning and module content. In terms of the graduates, participants in Component 3, the face-to-face interviews, shared examples of abilities to be able to write more proficiently and speak with new found confidence as a result of BCFS programme learning. This in turn relates to Mezirow's second type of reflection, namely, process reflection. Process reflection is the stage in which learners adopt and adapt strategies to solve problems with their learning experience. For example, graduates within the study denoted the need to seek out extensions and additional time in times of family crisis to complete assessments as part of the BCFS programme. This action on learners part, reflects their process reflection to take control of the issue arising and seek solutions. This evidence based stage of the journey towards incremental transformative learning was most evident in Component 3, the qualitative data analysis.

The third layer of the graduates' attributes process is called dispositions, which speak to the characteristics and ways of working that evidence themselves in this study among graduates. This stage of 'being' can be difficult to self-identify with as an adult in the midst of busy lives but where 'premise reflection' as theorised by Mezirow is evident, learners can self-acknowledge this growth. This stage in the primary data was equally most evident in the hermeneutic data of the interview transcripts in which graduates reflected on the increased capacity to manage their own and others emotions and effect change in their own and others' lives. Within Component 2, the BCFS graduates referred to role modelling and mentorship approach they have adopted on foot of learning from the programme and tutor and peer relationships. This transformation in meaning

perspectives is the pivotal changing stage from reflection to genuine transformative learning based on Mezirow's theory (see Figure 6.2).



**Figure 6.2** Researcher's interpretation of Study Participants' alignment to NUI Galway Graduates Attributes and Mezirow's Types of Reflection

In relation to Vision 2020, and more importantly the next strategic plan, it is imperative for university management to frame the policy context and NUI Galway's Strategic plan alignment to graduate attributes and specifically adult learner progression pathways through knowledge, skills and disposition acquisition as learners within NUI Galway.

Nevertheless, as many adult learners have acquired an abundance of life experience and often many practical life skills in advance of enrolling on programmes such as the BCFS, they prioritise focusing their attention specifically on formal learning and gaining content based knowledge and developing personal and professional dispositions. Notwithstanding, this attention to certain features that a programme may offer or that an adult learner may wish to develop; NUI Galway is a higher education institution located on the western seaboard of which its strategic policies aspire to accommodate part-time adult learners. Therefore, the university must ensure the graduate attribute framework capture all its learners especially, the non-

traditional/ dis-enfranchised, part-time, distance learner cohort such as the BCFS grouping.

## 6.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed the four pivotal findings distilled from the empirical results pertaining to the four research objectives across the BCFS and Non-BCFS population. The study has explored the BCFS graduates' transformative learning experience while participating on the BA in Community and Family Studies. The BCFS graduate participant responses to the study and respective objectives have clearly indicated the existence and impact of transformative learning among BCFS graduates. The study results have demonstrated that the pastoral and education supports espoused by the BCFS graduates through the community education ethos and model have cossetted all community education learners. Honneth (2003; 2005) Fleming (Fleming *et al.* 2017) and Field(2011) espoused that identity development among adult learners enhances participation and successful outcomes. This is evidenced in the civic and social attributes evident among BCFS graduates through these study findings. This 'learner centred' community education model in NUI Galway is premised on the perspective that adult learners are entitled to access and participate in higher education. Equally, the study reflects on the University's responsibility to act as a change agent to enable 'transgressive learning' and demonstrate social and cultural responsibility to lead part-time adult centred learner education models of excellence and advocate for their inclusion in higher educational policy and academic practice within the higher education sector, especially in NUI Galway.

Additionally the review of the NUI Galway Graduate Attributes was discussed in this chapter to reflect upon the data collated from the BCFS and non-BCFS cohorts and to align the attributes espoused by the graduates with the University's framework of graduate attributes. This review would posit that part-time adult learners on the BCFS programme champion graduate attributes despite the significant proportions of the BCFS graduates who had to overcome personal and social barriers to access, sustain and achieve the

BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). To summate, the post programme sustainability of the transformative learning experience and the ripple effect of the andragogical mentoring, emotional intelligence development, critical thinking attributes and peer network capabilities from graduates into their family, social and professional networks was deemed hugely valuable and ‘life changing’ by the graduate participants especially the BCFS population.

# Chapter 7: Conclusion

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## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the transformative learning experiences of part-time adult learner graduates who had engaged in a University based community and adult education programme, namely the BA in Community and Family Studies (BCFS).

The research community in this study are graduates of a part-time distance learning degree programme, the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS). In addition, a number of the BCFS graduates had previously undertaken another programme of study with NUI Galway, namely, the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP). So, the researcher sought to include their voices too in this research. In addition, comparative distance and non-distance learning graduate cohorts of learners, named the Non-BCFS, were engaged in the empirical research to enable the researcher compare results across part-time and full-time, distance and non-distance learning programmes. The core research question<sup>69</sup> addressed in this study through the four study objectives underpins the research purpose and mission of this empirical study. The four objectives within this study illustrated comparisons across and between BCFS graduate participants' experiences and their fellow graduates' respective experiences. The four objectives sought to inform future andragogical practice, teaching and policy both nationally and internationally based on the learning and insight drawn from the diverse graduate perspectives, programmes of study (BCFS and Non-BCFS), modes of study (full-time and part-time), and personal life circumstances.

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<sup>69</sup> What effect(s) has the BCFS programme on the personal and professional development of graduates' life paths?

The four objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore whether the BCFS graduate cohort experienced Transformative Learning (TL) as part of the BCFS programme and whether it is sustainable post-programme completion
2. Consider the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and attachment among graduates of the BCFS programme, as well as their relationship with each other and Transformative Learning (TL), relative to Non-BCFS graduates.
3. Appraise whether the programme graduates consider that the andragogical approach, adopted by the BCFS programme, promote the development of EI skills.
4. Identify Transformative Learning (TL) impacts resulting from the BCFS programme.

The rationale for exploring the existence of TL experiences among non-traditional adult learners on a part-time distance-learning degree programme - the Bachelor of Arts in Community and Family Studies (BCFS)<sup>70</sup>, stems from the observed dearth of research pertaining to andragogical experiences of part-time adult learners in higher education. The current study aims to contribute to the empirical body of knowledge on this BCFS population and their learning experiences. Furthermore, due to the diversity of adult learners' life-paths and influences, higher education authorities need to consider unique and adult learner centred approaches to engaging and aiding adult learners to succeed in higher education. This is necessary in order to respond to the changing learner demographic in society, especially the adult learner population base. Therefore, the current research study sought to contribute to andragogy teaching, practice and policy outcomes that aid the

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<sup>70</sup> The BCFS programme is a blended learning, part-time programme offered to adult learners in NUI, Galway.

development of adult learners' life-paths in higher education; specifically, through researching BCFS graduates TL experiences and exploring the impact of those transformative learning experiences post-programme completion. Even though this specific study took place in a Higher Education institution in the West of Ireland, its relevance to other national and international educational contexts holds resonance given the socio-emotional impact of this BCFS andragogical distance learning degree programme on part time, disenfranchised learners and their respective personal and professional networks.

## **7.2 Reprise of the Study Methodology and Results**

Study participants were graduates of the BCFS programme and their adult attachment experiences were logged and related to their sense of self-confidence and sense of emotional intelligence as adult learners. The empirical research explored whether a sense of emotional security and positive new trajectories were provided through supportive adult and higher education interventions, and whether they fostered transformative learning experiences among adult learners. The literature argues that secure and supportive attachment offered to adult learners can be the transition stage for many adults to rethink their sense of personal identity and sense of worth that otherwise may not have occurred. Thus the empirical research examined whether the presence of secure attachment in earlier life was experienced by the graduates of the BCFS programme and whether they later experienced secure life reassurance or positive emotional bonds while participating on the BCFS programme which offered them an alternate option for any life changing or transformative life experiences.

Ultimately, the three empirical components of the current study; an online survey, Interactive Management and Semi-structured interviews, sought to explore whether the BCFS programme offered participants an alternate option for life changing or transformative life experiences irrespective of earlier life emotional or attachment experiences. The three components of the study are included to illustrate the mixed methods triangulated approach to the data collection, analysis and synthesis of learning in this empirical



study. There was a number of angles considered in this exploratory study including: expectations and actual outcomes from the BCFS learning experience, assessment structures and procedures, adult education models and policies, teaching methodologies, mentoring/ critical thinking skills, management styles, student-centeredness/ tutor empathy with learners needs, and practical and professional skills. Therefore, it was the core intention of the researcher to establish whether adult learners/ experienced practitioners who participated on the BCFS programme acquired transformative learning experiences while undertaking the programme and whether such skills were sustained post programme completion.

Therefore, the researcher wished to assess whether the BCFS is a praxis that is truly transformative or if this sense of change or altered experience among adult learner graduates was coincidental. Therefore, the researcher considered the exploratory study under four core objectives which consisted of BCFS graduates Experience of Transformative Learning (TL) and its sustainability post BCFS completion; Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Attachment levels among BCFS graduates and their relationship to TL; Model of Andragogy and its influence on EI and the Impact of TL on BCFS graduates lives.

Consequently, as transformative learning is very personal to the holder, the researcher sought to explore the respective learners' experience of transformative learning within an under-researched cohort of part-time adult learners. In relation to objective one, it became apparent in the analysis of Component 1, the quantitative data, that respondents reflected the characteristics of experiencing transformative learning based on Mezirow's TL three themes of social, historical and developmental experiences. The data analysis from the survey reflected gradual, steady transformative learning growth which is referred to as 'incremental' transformative learning according to Mezirow (1991, 2000). However, the diverse responses to the transformative learning survey questions modelled on King's (1998) Learning Activities Survey within Component 1, identified for the researcher that a cohort of the survey respondents held a hesitation or

realization of the personal Transformative Learning (TL) signals and the meaning of transformative learning until they engaged in the qualitative process in Component 3 which were the semi-structured interviews.

The researcher also sought to capture a more qualitative, insightful perspective from graduates which was directed through the Interactive Management (IM) process in Component 2. This process led to the creation of the conceptual model which facilitated and reflected the graduates sharing of experiential growth and the impact of transformative learning among BCFS graduates. The third component of the study, the semi structured interviews enabled graduates from across the BCFS and non-BCFS programmes share specific social, developmental and historical transformative learning experiences that clarified and consolidated their earlier contributions through the other data collection processes. The researcher would advocate that as transformative learning is a multi-faceted experience for all adult learners, it is necessary to use a range of data collection approaches to capture the scope of the transformative learning experiences among a diverse adult learner study population.

In relation to objective two, Schutte's Emotional Intelligence measure (1998) and Kaplan and Main's Adult Attachment measures (1985) were adopted by the researcher in Component 1 to measure the emotional intelligence and attachment experience of graduates respectively, and to gauge their relationship to each other and TL. However, the limitation of the process is that the researcher did not have an existing reading of the EI or attachment levels of the adult learners on their entry to the BCFS and respective programmes. In particular, the EI measure and its relevancy to the adult learner community has motivated the researcher to develop a study recommendation which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. Equally, the quantitative results and statistical analysis in Component 1 indicated that the correlation between emotional intelligence perception and age maturity was significant. However, an interesting result was that within this study, there was no statistical relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) attachment or transformative learning (TL).

In terms of objective three, the researcher sought to establish whether the BCFS andragogical process promoted emotional intelligence growth among BCFS graduates. However, it is noteworthy from the quantitative; IM and qualitative empirical data that emotional intelligence development and educational attachment levels of growth were espoused by all BCFS graduates and credited to the programme's personal, pastoral and professional supports. Equally the non-BCFS graduates reflected on emotional intelligence growth but attributed it to a diverse source of personal and professional sources both within and external to the BCP programme. The SCCC report (Davis et al. 2014) reflected that distance learning graduates expressed a slightly lower level (5%) of knowledge impact than face to face degree participants. This was not evidenced among the research participants in this empirical study which compared BCFS non-BCFS participants' higher education experiences and specifically transformative learning experiences and impact of TL on graduates' lives. The researcher's study which focussed on historical experiences and earlier life influences on education as one of transformative learning themes within Mezirow's three themes of transformative learning (historical, developmental and social) provided additional insight to a theme raised in SCCC 2014 study which recommended that greater insight and research was required into the reasons and circumstances in which some learners find the bridge to formal learning difficult.

Pertaining to objective four, the impacts of the transformative learning process on the BCFS graduates could be condensed to three pivotal drivers as outlined in the IM process. These impacts were the graduates willingness and desire to contribute more to society on foot of the BCFS programme, so civic engagement growth; the second one is that graduates deemed they possess improved social networks and relationships as a result of the BCFS programme and the third core impact of the BCFS programme was the mentorship skills and capacities gained from the programme had increased their self-confidence and sense of identity within society.

Therefore, Table 7.1 summarises the core objectives, study components and the core findings of this current study.

Table 7.1 Summary of the Core Objectives, Study Components and the Core Findings of this Current Study

Objectives	Study Components	Results/ Findings
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> TL existence and sustainability</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> EI, Attachment and TL relationship</p>	<p><b>Component 1:</b> On-Line Survey Questionnaire</p>	<p>In total, 95% of BCFS and 44% of non-BCFS graduates experienced TL and where identified it was deemed permanent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Emotional IQ was correlated with each of its four subscales among BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents</li> <li>✚ EI levels among BCFS in comparison to Non-BCFS were significantly higher</li> <li>✚ Emotional Perception was significantly correlated with age among BCFS and Non-BCFS participants</li> <li>✚ Transformative Learning (TL), Emotional IQ and Attachment levels were higher on average among BCFS than Non- BCFS</li> <li>✚ TL was not correlated with Emotional IQ, Attachment or Age factors</li> <li>✚ Attachment was correlated to each of its five categories among BCFS and Non-BCFS respondents</li> <li>✚ Conversely, pertaining to attachment, experience in education as an adult category was negatively correlated to overall Emotional IQ, and three of the four subscales with the exception of utilisation of emotions</li> <li>✚ Age was correlated to overall Emotional IQ and three of the four subscales excluding managing one’s own emotions</li> </ul>

Table 7.1, Continued.

<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Andragogy and EI</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> TL Impacts</p>	<p><b>Component 2:</b> Interactive Management (IM)</p>	<p>Results from the IM session discovered, based on the participation of six BCFS female graduates, that there were three critical drivers/ impacts of transformative learning in their life in light of their experience with the BCFS: a desire to contribute to society; improved social relationships and mentorship capacity (see structural map, Figure 5.1 in results chapter).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Specifically, it was found that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>the desire to contribute</b> to society influenced the following factors in the majority of situations; confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> <li>✚ The second finding was that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>improved social relationships</b> influenced the following factors in the majority of situations; confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> <li>✚ The third finding was that in order to achieve transformative learning, <b>mentorship skills</b> influenced the following factors in the majority of situations; confidence, communication skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking and value of education.</li> </ul>
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Table 7.1, Continued

<p><b>Objective 1:</b> TL existence</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> EI, Attachment and TL relationship</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Andragogy and EI</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> TL Impacts</p>	<p><b>Component 3:</b> Semi Structured Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ BCFS programme deemed a pivotal change agent in the life journey among Population 1, Population 2.</li> <li>✚ BCP programme deemed pivotal change agent in the life journey among Population 3.</li>   <li>✚ The emotional intelligence growth aided by the BCFS programme andragogical process has provided personal and professional life enhancing skills</li> <li>✚ Educational attachment provided through the community education ethos on the BCFS programme counteracted poor earlier life attachment experiences.</li>   <li>✚ Community education ethos and andragogical process was a positive influence on TL perspective change among BCFS population</li> <li>✚ BCFS programme supports and community education ethos has enhanced the graduate participants personal identity development and family network's resilience</li>   <li>✚ BCFS programme has provided impetus to be more critically reflective and emotionally secure and independent learners</li> <li>✚ BCP and BCFS graduates reflected upon their own life experiences and considered that emotional intelligence growth was a greater life enabler than attachment bonds.</li> </ul>
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### **7.3 Adult Learner Support Model and Andragogical Contribution**

The Adult Learner Support Model (see Appendix 19) has been developed by the researcher as a research outcome to inform future andragogical work in community and higher education. This core recommendation for future best practice developed from this research process aims to enable adult learners develop opportunities to map their EI and learning experience in Adult and Higher Education at pivotal points in their learning journey (see Appendix 19). Investing in the development of Adult learners EI levels could be aided by measuring EI on entry into year-one of all part-time, adult learner programmes such as the BCFS programme. Then the academic support programme co-ordinator should map the lower EI subscale items with the learner while they journey through year one of the programme. This will enable the learner to develop personal and social reflexive learning skills. It is important to also encourage the learner to complete an EI test (such as Schutte et AL's EI Measure) at the end of year one to record variance in the EI performance. Then the recording of EI measure should be undertaken each subsequent year on commencement and year completion. This will provide the learner and academic team with a learner specific profile of need and a development map to aid academic staff and learners' educational development plans.

Emotional intelligence perception is correlated in this study to Age, therefore the earlier adult learners have an opportunity to develop their Emotional intelligence awareness and efficacy, the greater their potential will be to foster their identity development through self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect based on Honneth's (2003, 2005) and Fleming's studies (2008, 2010, 2017). Additionally, identity development aids the development of critical thinking and transformative learning based on Mezirow and colleagues work (2009). Therefore, the pathway for TL will be aided by self-identity and emotional development as an adult learner (Field 2010; Honneth 2003, 2005). The development of transformative learning capacities in learners aids 'transgressive' social learning, community activism and civic awareness and campus engagement (Lotz Sisitika 2015;

Twelvetrees 1982) This adult learner development strategy benefits the learner, the educational institution and wider society (Dweck 2017; Field 2010; Slowey and Schuetze 2018).

The contribution this Adult Learner Support Model (see Appendix 19) makes to the study captures the merger of Transformative Learning Theory, Constructive Andragogical Processes, Emotional Intelligence Mapping, Identity Development and Positive Educational attachment and Macro Education and Structural Policies. Therefore, the connection between Figure 2.1 in the literature review chapter and the Adult Learner Support Model (Appendix 19) indicate the praxis of merging the empirical and the theoretical evidence from this study into a model of practice to aid the development of transformative learning opportunities and experiences among part-time adult learners and educators in higher education.

As outlined in the empirical evidence in this study and corroborated by the theoretical underpinnings, the earlier in formal higher education that adult learners can identify and map their emotional intelligence levels (using an approved scale such as Schutte et al's self-report EI Scale) and potential challenges in an EI log, the greater potential they will have to nurture these dispositions. In tandem with the EI mapping, the ability to develop one's identity as an adult learner requires nurturing of self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence based on Honneth's Theory of Recognition as discussed in the literature review. Thus the Community Education and Adult Centred Support Andragogical Process enable the growth of identity development and education attachment to evolve in learners during and throughout the higher education process based on the model of engagement with the learner and their respective educational needs. This non-hierarchical, devolved leadership approach in community and adult education model as evidenced in this empirical study in which the learner and educator become co-facilitators of knowledge, skills and dispositions leads to Transformative Learning (TL) experiences that sustain learners post programme completion. However, the historical, social and emotional TL experiences require emotional supports, educational attachment mentoring and social belonging and identity resourcing on a continuous basis with the adult learners



especially learners from previously under and un-represented adult learner communities in higher education. This in turn enables the learners and educators to work in unison to activate University communities to consciously create campus communities which are inclusive and provide equality of opportunity and outcome to all learners whether full-time or part-time. Equally, the 'ripple effect' as evidenced by the graduates in this study advocates for investment in the development of civic and community engagement strategies and approaches to community and higher education as it has personal and societal benefits for 'on campus and 'wider society' campuses of community networks.

Thus the community and adult education approach which scaffolds the community education suite of programmes in NUIG, in particular, the BCFS programme andragogical model denoted an effective model of practice in higher education which attracts and sustains high levels of part time non-traditional learners' retention and satisfaction and sustained post programme TL experiences. This model of practice and its contribution to adult and higher education access and retention strategies has potential to be replicated on a wider scale both nationally and internationally once the fundamentals as outlined in the Adult Learner Support Model (Appendix 19) are considered as core factors in the process. In this context, the BCFS model of community and adult education praxis is cosmopolitan in perspective and has evident potential scope for internationalisation with diverse community and higher education contexts.

#### **7.4 Recommendations to Fellow Researchers and Higher Education Institution(s)**

The recommendations section will consider Policy, Practice and Future Research recommendations that have evolved from the research process. The recommendations will be addressed in three sections, namely Future Research Recommendations; Adult Learning Teaching and Practice Recommendations and Adult Learner and Higher Education Policy Recommendations. All the recommendations have evolved from this empirical research process with graduates of a Higher Education Institution,

namely NUI Galway in the West of Ireland. However, the recommendations have both a national and international relevance given the heretofore dearth of empirical research on this cohort of part time adult learners and the Transformative learning (TL) personal and professional life outcomes evidenced in this study. In essence, the three domains of recommendations have global resonance for andragogical teaching, policy and practice. All policy recommendations denote the importance of future strategies to enable the disenfranchised voices of part-time adult learners to play an active role in their educational outcomes whether in a national or international education context.

#### **7.4.1 Future Research Recommendations**

- ✚ As Age was significantly correlated to Emotional Intelligence, especially perception of emotions in Component 1 (on-line survey) among BCFS and non-BCFS respondents, a recommendation of this research is that a longitudinal study and further research be conducted on adult learners and their emotional intelligence development and potential transformative learning experiences should be mapped to inform Higher Education policy and practice (see Table 5.16).
  
- ✚ The researcher would recommend to social science colleagues and andragogical practitioners to use the interactive management techniques (IM) as a data collection tool with adult learners as it was well received by participants in this study. Equally, as the research outcomes are mapped as the IM process develops, it offers an empirical, engaged approach to adult learners while participating (see Figure 5.1). This is a methodologically robust process and defensible in terms of reliability and validity given the output conceptual model, so it would be deemed a model data collection tool for working with adult and mature learners given its blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Dwyer et al. 2014; Dwyer et al. 2017).

- ✚ On foot of the researcher's experience of having to adapt existing transformative learning and attachment measures for this doctoral study; a key research recommendation identified is that there is a need for the development of an open and accessible Transformative Learning and Attachment measurement tool that can be used for mixed methods studies. This learning and reflection has been gained from the researcher's experience of being able to freely access Schutte et al's Emotional Intelligence Scale for use in this study which has aided the researcher's research process significantly (see Table 3.6).
- ✚ Research into Adult and Higher education themes and topics should be funded and supported by Higher Education Authority (HEA), Irish University Association (IUA) and Department of Education and Skills (DES) to enable the research voice of the part-time under-researched adult learner cohorts be published and included in academic publications through diverse printed and online mediums. This recommendation responds to Component 3(semi-structured interviews) findings (see Table 5.19) and the government policy document, 'Measuring Higher Education, Civic and Community Engagement Framework' (HEA, 2017).
- ✚ The practical research recommendation that this researcher would suggest to fellow researchers is to consider the timing of scheduling primary data collection phases to reflect possible temporal life patterns of respondents, especially when engaging a cross section of part-time, full-time, blended learning and traditional based learners and programme types in a population sample (see Section 3.7.2 in Methodology Chapter).

#### **7.4.2 Adult Learning, Teaching and Practice Recommendations**

- ✚ Given the noteworthy Emotional Intelligence levels recorded by the BCFS population respective to the non-BCFS population in the study (see Section 5.4.6 Multivariate Analysis of Variance,

Quantitative results from Component 1), the researcher intends to extend and promote the Community Education andragogical model in Adult and Higher Education Professional Practice. The Adult Learner Support Model (see Appendix 19) which was devised by the researcher is a constructive outcome from this empirical research process. The Adult Learner Support Model should aid educators to map learner access, retention and success matters while simultaneously providing positive educational opportunities and outcomes for learners whether full time or part time.

- ✚ The researcher would recommend to all andragogical educators to teach and practice a mixed methods andragogical and social research approach with adult learners in formal higher education part-time and full-time undergraduate programmes of study. The BCFS graduates advocated that the applied nature and inclusive andragogical methodologies taught on the BCFS programme entrusted learners with a fundamental foundation in personal development and academic skills which aided access to employment and postgraduate study opportunities (see Table 5.17 pertaining to Component 2 (IM Process) and Section 5.6 which furnished qualitative data findings (Component 3) on EI development relationship to andragogical approach).
- ✚ The researcher is going to promote future best practice among adult learner pedagogues to measure their own Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels and work on complementing challenges therein to advance their personal and professional skills as educators and facilitators of learning. This recommendation is reflective of the theoretical studies considered in the literature review (Field et al 2010a; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009; Schutte et al. 1998; Schutte and Malouff, 2011; Schutte et al., 2002) and evident in the IM discussion on the personal and societal benefits of EI development (see Figure 5.1).
- ✚ The Researcher intends to establish graduate network to enable BCFS graduates and fellow community education programme

graduates to gather as a network of practitioners to support each other in the community, youth and family support sector and act as a University alumni forum. This reiterates research findings on social relationships and mentorship from Component 2 (Interactive Management (IM) Process- see Figure 5.1). Equally, it responds to the policy document, ‘Campus Charter for Civic and Community Engagement’ remit as part of Higher Education policy and practice strategies to give ‘voice’ to the learner and alumni population (HEA, 2017).

### **7.4.3 Adult Learner and Higher Education Policy Recommendations**

- ✚ The researcher recommends that at the Higher Education Institution (HEI) level across all universities and nationally in the HEA that the importance of identity development and mapping of part-time learners’ educational needs and requisite supports to succeed in higher education should be embedded in all higher education adult learning programmes and funding models (see Table 5.7 and Table 5.19). This is especially required where part-time adult learners who are representative of the national target cohorts currently underrepresented in HE are concerned. For example, HEA and IUA policy makers need to ensure part-time adult learners voices are recorded in the Irish Students Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) to capture the data required to plan forward in Higher Education (HEA, 2017).
  
- ✚ The Department of Education and Skill’s policies and respective university action plans such as the ‘National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030’ (DES, 2011) need to reflect more supports to enable part-time adult learners’ access social science based subjects. The current springboard emphasis on STEM based subjects is marginalising the social science, community, youth and family support potential adult learners from access to or retention within Higher Education (HE). The Interactive Management (IM) results reflect the personal and societal impact of engaging part-time

learners in social science studies in Higher Education (see Figure 5.1; Table 5.18 and Table 5.19).

- ✚ NUI Galway and fellow Higher Education University management teams need to collate a holistic University wide consultation and strategy group of academics and support staff who work directly with full and part-time disadvantage students and community partners to action the IUA guide to higher education institutions namely the ‘Measuring Higher Education Civic and Community Engagement’(DES, 2011; HEA, 2017). This charter and campus engage document offers a bench mark for social and civic responsibility but it requires a ‘shared vision’ inclusive of academic, professional services and UMT leadership to implement in order for the voices of the peripheral adult learner to be given resonance both in NUI Galway’s and fellow HE institutions future landscape.

## **7.5 Chapter Conclusion**

The empirical results across all three Components (surveys, IM and interviews) of the study reflected that the transformative learning experiences were self-identified, evident and tangible experiences among the BCFS graduates. A notable result in the empirical data was that emotional intelligence levels among the BCFS cohort was higher than participants on the comparator, non-BCFS programmes. The study found that the community education ethos and andragogical approach played a pivotal role in adult learner identity development and emotional intelligence growth among the BCFS participants. These factors enabled transformative learning experiences to incrementally develop for the BCFS community of learners. Recommendations have been presented to improve Higher Education policy, practice, and teaching based on the empirical findings of this study. This research contribution intends to foster better outcomes for adult learners, education providers and society both nationally and internationally.

An interesting outcome of completing this study and using the mixed methods data design itself has offered a 'voice' to the BCFS graduates to share their respective learning and transformative learning experiences which had not been shared heretofore. This was evidenced by the graduates' informal communication with the researcher post-study completion. In this regard, a short two page summary of the pivotal study findings will be collated and shared with all study participants on completion of this thesis. In conclusion, this research journey and rich and honest contributions by the study participants has given great insight to the researcher which she intends to use to improve her own future andragogical experience in higher education and enable her to pursue additional research endeavours with under-researched adult learners in adult and higher education both nationally and internationally.

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# Appendices

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Researcher's adapted version of King's LAS

#### The Learning Activities Survey (LAS)\*

\*Adapted with permission from the author: **King, Kathleen (2009) The Handbook of the Evolving Research of Transformative Learning based on the Learning Activities Survey**

#### LAS Format

This Survey helps us learn about the experiences of adult learners. We believe that important things happen when adults learn new things. Only with your help can we learn more about this. The survey only takes a short time to complete, and your responses will be anonymous and confidential. Thank you for being part of this project; your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

1. Thinking about your educational experiences at this institution, **NUI Galway**, check off any statements that may apply.
  - a.  I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act
  - b.  I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (Examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)
  - c.  As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
  - d.  Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations
  - e.  I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.
  - f.  I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
  - g.  I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations
  - h.  I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
  - i.  I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.
  - j.  I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.

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- k.  I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.
- l.  I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.
- m.  I do not identify with any of the statements above.
2. Since you have been taking this course (BACFS)/ these courses (Diploma in CD Practice and BACFS) at this institution, do you believe you have experienced a time when you realised that your values, beliefs, opinions or expectations had changed?
- Yes. If “yes” please go to questions #3 and continue survey
- No. If “no” please go to question #6 to continue the survey.
3. Briefly describe what happened.

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4. Which of the following influenced this change? (Check all that apply).

Was it a person who influenced the change  yes  no?

If “YES” was it ... (check all that apply)

Another student’s support  a challenge from your lecturer/ tutor

Your classmates’ support  your lecturer/ tutor’s support

Your advisor’s/**programme manager’s** support  other \_\_\_\_\_

Was it part of a class/ **module task**/ assignment that influenced the change?

Yes  no

If “yes” what was it? (Check all that apply)

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- Class/ group projects                       verbally discussing your concerns
- Writing about your concerns               term papers/course assignments/ essays
- Personal journal/ reflective log           self –evaluation in a course
- Non-traditional structure of the course     class activity/ exercise
- Internship or co-op (to be removed as N/A)       lab experiences to be removed as N/A
- Deep concentrated thought                   personal reflection
- Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments
- Assigned readings                               research project
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

- Yes                       no

If “yes” what was it? (Check all that apply)

- Marriage                       relocation to another community/ city/ county
- Birth/ adoption of a child     change of job
- Moving house                       loss of job
- Divorce/ separation                   retirement
- Death of a loved one                   other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Thinking back to when you first realised that your views or perspectives had changed, what did your being in school/ education – a member of this course/ these courses have to do with the experience of change?

6. Would you characterise yourself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour?  yes                       no

Would you say that you frequently reflect upon the meaning of your studies for yourself, personally?  Yes                       no

7. Which of the following has been part of your experience at this institution NUI Galway? (Please check all that apply.)

- Another student’s support                       a challenge from your lecturer/ tutor

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your classmates' support   | <input type="checkbox"/> your lecturer/ tutor's support                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your advisor's/ <b>programme manager's</b> support                       | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class/ group projects  | <input type="checkbox"/> verbally discussing your concerns             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing about your concerns  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>term papers/course assignments/</b> essays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal journal/ reflective log   | <input type="checkbox"/> self –evaluation in a course                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-traditional structure of the course                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> class activity/ exercise                      |
| <b>Internship or co-op</b> (to be removed as N/A) <b>_lab experiences to be removed as N/A)</b>   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep concentrated thought  | <input type="checkbox"/> personal reflection                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ <b>critical thinking assignments</b> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assigned readings  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>research project</b>                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |  |

Which of the following occurred while you have been taking **this course (BACFS) or these courses (Diploma in CD and BACFS)** at this institution, NUI Galway?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage<br><b>community/ city/ county</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>relocation to another</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth/ adoption of a child                 | <input type="checkbox"/> change of job                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving <b>house</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> loss of job                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/ separation                        | <input type="checkbox"/> retirement                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death of a loved one                       | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____                 |

8. Sex:

- Male       female



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### 9. Marital Status:

Single       married       partner

Divorced/ separated       widowed

### 10. Race:

White, non-Hispanic       black, non-Hispanic

African       Asian or Pacific Islander

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 11. Nationality:

Irish       European       African       American

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 12. Geographical Location:

Urban dweller       rural dweller

Please state locality and or county \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g.  
. Stradbally, Co Laois)

*Please note: All points in black are original aspect of LAS, while points highlighted in red are additions and the points highlighted in yellow are recommended edits to be removed.*

## Appendix 2: Online Survey Instrument: BCFS population

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

Welcome to the 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'

1st August, 2014

Dear Graduate,

As part of ongoing research on Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A Profile of the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) Programme Graduates Experiences 2010-2014 at NUI Galway, it would be greatly appreciated if you would take the time to complete the following 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'.

The aim of this research is to explore graduates' experience of transformative learning as a result of their engagement on the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) and previously the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programmes. As an adult learner and graduate of NUI Galway BA in Community and Family Studies, insight into your experiences of education throughout your life and particularly in adulthood is invaluable. Your perspective and feelings towards how your educational path was developed is also of considerable interest.

The attached survey should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. Your participation is important and as such, we would like to offer you a token of appreciation for completing our survey. Upon completion of this survey, you will be awarded a €20 One-for-All voucher.

Please note that your responses and any data collected will be kept confidential and your anonymity is assured. By completing this survey, you have consented to participate. As a participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm;
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

If during the completion of the survey, you have any queries or concerns about any questions posed, please feel free to email me, Helen Casey, directly via [helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or phone me on 091 493110; or alternatively the research supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan ([patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie)).

Kind regards,

Helen Casey, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Cand.  
091 493110

# Appendices

[helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie)

## Adult Learning Experiences Survey

1.

Please state BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) graduation year

2.

Are you a graduate of the Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP)

year of graduation

## Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

3. Thinking about your educational experiences at NUI Galway, please check off any statements that may apply.

- a. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act
- b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)
- c. As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
- d. Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations
- e. I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.
- f. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
- g. I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations
- h. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
- i. I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.
- j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.
- k. I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.
- l. I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.
- m. I do not identify with any of the statements above.

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

4. Since taking this course (BACFS)/ these courses (Diploma in CD Practice and BACFS) at NUI Galway, I have experienced a change in my values, beliefs, opinions or expectations.

(If you agree with this question, please answer question number 5 and continue survey, if you disagree please go to question number 9 to continue the survey)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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5. Briefly describe what happened.

6. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a person who influenced the change

If "yes", was it ... (check all that apply)

	Yes	No
Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

7. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it part of a class/ module task/ assignment that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

8. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

9. Which of the following has been part of your experience at NUI Galway? (Please check all that apply).

Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>



## Appendices

10. Did you experience any of the following during your time taking this course (BACFS) or these courses (Diploma in CD and BACFS) at NUI Galway?

Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

11. I would characterise myself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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12. My participation in higher education specifically as a member of this course/ these courses has triggered/ caused the change in my perspective.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I had a close family bond with my parents / guardians when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I feel closer to my parents/ guardians than anyone else.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I knew my grandparents and relations when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

16. My parents were physically affectionate when I was a child and would hug me or hold me when I was upset.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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17. I remember being separated from my parents/ guardians as a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. When I was a child,I was often separated from my parents/guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I was upset by the separation from my parents /guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. My parents/guardians were upset by the separation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

21. I was often frightened or worried as a child in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

22. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. I was often frightened or worried as a teenager in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

27. As an adult learner, I often feel frightened, rejected or worried in relation to an educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. I confide in somebody about these negative educational experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. These situations are eased by the person's intervention or awareness of the situation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Overall, my attachment experiences with my parents/ mentors have affected my adult personality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. There are aspects to my early life educational experiences that caused a set-back in my development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

32. There were adults, other than my parents, with whom I was close, as a child/ young person.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. This individual(s) influenced my personality (for instance, personal life-path and general wellbeing or development).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. A family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

38. A family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

42. A non-family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

46. A non-family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendices

47. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

50. My informal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACF.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. My formal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACF.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

52. My participation on and completion of the Diploma in Community Development Practice has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

53. My participation on and completion of the BA in Community and Family Studies BA has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

54. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

57. Other people find it easy to confide in me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

58. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

59. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

60. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

61. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

62. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

63. I expect good things to happen.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

64. I like to share my emotions with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

66. I arrange events others enjoy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

67. I seek out activities that make me happy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

69. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

71. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

## Appendices

72. I know why my emotions change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

73. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

74. I have control over my emotions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

76. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

77. I compliment others when they have done something well.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

78. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

79. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

80. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

81. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

82. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

83. I help other people feel better when they are down.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey

84. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

85. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

86. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

87. Sex:

- Male  
 Female



## Appendices

### 88. Geographic Location:

Urban dweller

Rural dweller

Please state locality and or county  
(eg . Stradbally, Co Laois)

## Adult Learning Experiences Survey

### 89. Marital Status:

Single

Married

Cohabiting partner

Divorced

Separated

Widowed

Other (please specify)

### 90. Race:

### 91. Nationality:

## Adult Learning Experiences Survey

92. Income:

- Unemployed
- In receipt of social protection payment: please state which ones:
- Working in the home
- Unpaid carer
- Earning below €10,000
- Earning between €10,000-20,000
- Earning between €21,000-30,000
- Earning between €31,000-40,000
- Earning between €41,000-50,000
- Earning between €51,000-60,000
- Earning between €61,000-70,000
- Earning above €70,000
- Other (please specify)

93. Prior Education:

- Primary school completion
- Intermediate certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters award
- Other (please specify)

## Appendices

---

94. Age:

- 21-24
- 25-29
- 30-35
- 36-39
- 40-45
- 46-49
- 50-55
- 56-59
- 60-65
- 66-69
- 70-75
- 76-79
- 80-85
- 86+
- Other (please specify)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

95. Are you willing to participate in the next stage of this doctoral study, the interview process?

- Yes, I would like to participate in the follow up interview
- No, I would not like to participate in the follow up interview

## Appendices

96. Please fill in the following details if you replied 'yes' to the question above:

- Best time to call to arrange interview:
- Comments/questions for the researcher:

please specify

97. Respondents contact details

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

98. If you would like to receive information about the study/ research findings, please tick the relevant box:

- Yes, I would like to gain access to the final findings of the study
- No, I would not like to gain access to the final findings of the study

Adult Learning Experiences Survey

THANK YOU

Thank you for your time and for completing this survey!

### Appendix 3: Online Survey for BCP cohort (Distance, Non-BCFS)

#### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

Welcome to the 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'

9th August, 2014

Dear Graduate,

As part of ongoing research on Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A Profile of the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) Programme Graduates Experiences 2010-2014 at NUI Galway, it would be greatly appreciated if you would take the time to complete the following 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'.

The aim of this research is to explore graduates' experience of transformative learning as a result of their engagement on the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) Programme. As an adult learner and a graduate of an NUI Galway part-time distance learning programme namely, the BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (ECSP) programme insight into your experiences of education throughout your life and particularly in adulthood is invaluable. Your perspective and feelings towards how your educational path was developed is also of considerable interest.

The attached survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation is important and as such, we would like to offer you a chance to win a token of appreciation for completing our survey. Upon completion of this survey, you will be entered into a draw to win a €20 One-for-All voucher.

Please note that your responses and any data collected will be kept confidential and your anonymity is assured. By completing this survey, you have consented to participate. As a participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm;
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

If during the completion of the survey, you have any queries or concerns about any questions posed, please feel free to email me, Helen Casey, directly via [helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or phone me on 091 493110; or alternatively the research supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan ([patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie)).

## Appendices

Kind regards,

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### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

1.

Are you a graduate of the NUI Galway BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (ECSP) programme?

year of graduation

2.

Are you a graduate of the NUI Galway Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programme?

year of graduation

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

## Appendices

3. Thinking about your educational experiences at NUI Galway, please check off any statements that may apply.

- a. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act
- b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)
- c. As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
- d. Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations
- e. I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.
- f. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
- g. I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations
- h. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
- i. I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.
- j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.
- k. I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.
- l. I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.
- m. I do not identify with any of the statements above.

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

4. Since taking this course / these courses at NUI Galway, I have experienced a change in my values, beliefs, opinions or expectations.

(If you agree with this question, please answer question number 5 and continue survey, if you disagree please go to question number 9 to continue the survey)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Briefly describe what happened.

## Appendices

6. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a person who influenced the change

If "yes", was it ... (check all that apply)

	Yes	No
Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)



## Appendices

7. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it part of a class/ module task/ assignment that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

8. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

## Appendices

9. Which of the following has been part of your experience at NUI Galway? (Please check all that apply).

Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

## Appendices

10. Did you experience any of the following during your time taking this course or these courses at NUIGalway?

Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

11. I would characterise myself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. My participation in higher education specifically as a member of this course/ these courses has triggered/ caused the change in my perspective.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

13. I had a close family bond with my parents / guardians when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I feel closer to my parents/ guardians than anyone else.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I knew my grandparents and relations when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

16. My parents were physically affectionate when I was a child and would hug me or hold me when I was upset.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I remember being separated from my parents/ guardians as a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

18. When I was a child,I was often separated from my parents/guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I was upset by the separation from my parents /guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. My parents/guardians were upset by the separation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

21. I was often frightened or worried as a child in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

23. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. I was often frightened or worried as a teenager in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

27. As an adult learner, I often feel frightened, rejected or worried in relation to an educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

28. I confide in somebody about these negative educational experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. These situations are eased by the person's intervention or awareness of the situation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Overall, my attachment experiences with my parents/ mentors have affected my adult personality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. There are aspects to my early life educational experiences that caused a set-back in my development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

32. There were adults, other than my parents, with whom I was close, as a child/ young person.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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33. This individual(s) influenced my personality (for instance, personal life-path and general wellbeing or development).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. A family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

## Appendices

38. A family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

42. A non-family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

43. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

46. A non-family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

48. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

50. My informal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (ECSP).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. My formal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (ECSP).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. My participation on and completion of the Diploma in Community Development Practice has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

53. My participation on and completion of the BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (ECSP) has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

54. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

57. Other people find it easy to confide in me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

58. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

59. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

60. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

61. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

62. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

63. I expect good things to happen.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

64. I like to share my emotions with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

66. I arrange events others enjoy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. I seek out activities that make me happy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

68. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

69. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

71. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

72. I know why my emotions change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendices

73. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

74. I have control over my emotions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

76. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

77. I compliment others when they have done something well.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

## Appendices

78. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

79. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

80. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

81. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

82. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

83. I help other people feel better when they are down.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

84. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

85. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

86. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

87. Sex:

- Male  
 Female

88. Geographic Location:

- Urban dweller  
 Suburban dweller  
 Rural dweller

Please state locality and or county  
(eg . Stradbally, Co Laois)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

89. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Cohabiting partner
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Other (please specify)

90. Race:

91. Nationality:

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

## Appendices

### 92. Income:

- Unemployed
- In receipt of social protection payment: please state which ones:
- Working in the home
- Unpaid carer
- Earning below €10,000
- Earning between €10,000-20,000
- Earning between €21,000-30,000
- Earning between €31,000-40,000
- Earning between €41,000-50,000
- Earning between €51,000-60,000
- Earning between €61,000-70,000
- Earning above €70,000
- Other (please specify)

### 93. Prior Education:

- Primary school completion
- Intermediate certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters award
- Other (please specify)

### 94. Age:

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

95. Are you willing to participate in the next stage of this doctoral study, the interview process?

- Yes, I would like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.
- No, I would not like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.

96. Please fill in the following details if you replied 'yes' to the question above:

- Best time to call to arrange interview:
- Comments/questions for the researcher:

please specify

97. Respondents contact details

<b>Name</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Address</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Address 2</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>City/Town</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Country</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Email Address</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Phone Number</b>	<input type="text"/>

98. If you would like to receive information about the study/ research findings, please tick the relevant box:

- Yes, I would like to gain access to the final findings of the study
- No, I would not like to gain access to the final findings of the study

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 2

THANK YOU

## Appendices

### Appendix 4: Online Survey for Education and Training cohort (Distance, Non-BCFS)

#### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

Welcome to the 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'

19th August, 2014

Dear Graduate,

As part of ongoing research on Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A Profile of the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) Programme Graduates Experiences 2010-2014 at NUI Galway, it would be greatly appreciated if you would take the time to complete the following 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'.

The aim of this research is to explore graduates' experience of transformative learning as a result of their engagement on the BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) Programme. As an adult learner and a graduate of an NUI Galway part-time distance learning programme namely, the BA in Training and Education programme, insight into your experiences of education throughout your life and particularly in adulthood is invaluable. Your perspective and feelings towards how your educational path was developed is also of considerable interest.

The attached survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation is important and as such, we would like to offer you a chance to win a token of appreciation for completing our survey. Upon completion of this survey, you will be entered into a draw to win a €20 One-for-All voucher.

Please note that your responses and any data collected will be kept confidential and your anonymity is assured. By completing this survey, you have consented to participate. As a participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm;
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

If during the completion of the survey, you have any queries or concerns about any questions posed, please feel free to email me, Helen Casey, directly via [helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or phone me on 091 493110; or alternatively the research supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan ([patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie)).

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## Appendices

Kind regards,

Helen Casey, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Cand.  
091 4931110  
helen.casey@nuigalway.ie

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

1.

Are you a graduate of the NUI Galway BA in Training and Education programme?

year of graduation

2.

Are you a graduate of the NUI Galway Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) programme?

year of graduation

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3



## Appendices

3. Thinking about your educational experiences at NUI Galway, please check off any statements that may apply.

- a. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act
- b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)
- c. As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
- d. Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations
- e. I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.
- f. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
- g. I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations
- h. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
- i. I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.
- j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.
- k. I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.
- l. I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.
- m. I do not identify with any of the statements above.

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

4. Since taking this course / these courses at NUI Galway, I have experienced a change in my values, beliefs, opinions or expectations.

(If you agree with this question, please answer question number 5 and continue survey, if you disagree please go to question number 9 to continue the survey)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Briefly describe what happened.

## Appendices

6. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a person who influenced the change

If "yes", was it ... (check all that apply)

	Yes	No
Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

7. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it part of a class/ module task/ assignment that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

8. Which of the following influenced this change? (Please check all that apply).

a. Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

## Appendices

9. Which of the following has been part of your experience at NUI Galway? (Please check all that apply).

Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your lecturer/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your lecturer/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/programme manager's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self –evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	
<input type="text"/>	

## Appendices

10. Did you experience any of the following during your time taking this course or these courses at NUIGalway?

Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

11. I would characterise myself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. My participation in higher education specifically as a member of this course/ these courses has triggered/ caused the change in my perspective.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

13. I had a close family bond with my parents / guardians when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I feel closer to my parents/ guardians than anyone else.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I knew my grandparents and relations when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

16. My parents were physically affectionate when I was a child and would hug me or hold me when I was upset.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I remember being separated from my parents/ guardians as a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

18. When I was a child,I was often separated from my parents/guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I was upset by the separation from my parents /guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. My parents/guardians were upset by the separation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

21. I was often frightened or worried as a child in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendices

23. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. I was often frightened or worried as a teenager in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

27. As an adult learner, I often feel frightened, rejected or worried in relation to an educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

28. I confide in somebody about these negative educational experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. These situations are eased by the person's intervention or awareness of the situation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Overall, my attachment experiences with my parents/ mentors have affected my adult personality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. There are aspects to my early life educational experiences that caused a set-back in my development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

32. There were adults, other than my parents, with whom I was close, as a child/ young person.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

33. This individual(s) influenced my personality (for instance, personal life-path and general wellbeing or development).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. A family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

## Appendices

38. A family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

42. A non-family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

43. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

46. A non-family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

48. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

50. My informal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BA in Training and Education.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. My formal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BA in Training and Education.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. My participation on and completion of the Diploma in Community Development Practice has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

53. My participation on and completion of the BA in Training and Education has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

54. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

57. Other people find it easy to confide in me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

58. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

59. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

60. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

61. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

62. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendices

63. I expect good things to happen.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

64. I like to share my emotions with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

66. I arrange events others enjoy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. I seek out activities that make me happy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

68. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

69. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

71. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

72. I know why my emotions change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

73. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

74. I have control over my emotions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

76. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

77. I compliment others when they have done something well.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

## Appendices

78. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

79. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

80. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

81. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

82. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

83. I help other people feel better when they are down.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

84. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

85. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

86. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

87. Sex:

- Male  
 Female

88. Geographic Location:

- Urban dweller  
 Suburban dweller  
 Rural dweller

Please state locality and or county  
(eg . Stradbally, Co Laois)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

89. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Cohabiting partner
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Other (please specify)

90. Race:

91. Nationality:

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

## Appendices

### 92. Income:

- Unemployed
- In receipt of social protection payment: please state which ones:
- Working in the home
- Unpaid carer
- Earning below €10,000
- Earning between €10,000-20,000
- Earning between €21,000-30,000
- Earning between €31,000-40,000
- Earning between €41,000-50,000
- Earning between €51,000-60,000
- Earning between €61,000-70,000
- Earning above €70,000
- Other (please specify)

### 93. Prior Education:

- Primary school completion
- Intermediate certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters award
- Other (please specify)

### 94. Age:

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

95. Are you willing to participate in the next stage of this doctoral study, the interview process?

- Yes, I would like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.
- No, I would not like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.

96. Please fill in the following details if you replied 'yes' to the question above:

- Best time to call to arrange interview:
- Comments/questions for the researcher:

please specify

97. Respondents contact details

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

98. If you would like to receive information about the study/ research findings, please tick the relevant box:

- Yes, I would like to gain access to the final findings of the study
- No, I would not like to gain access to the final findings of the study

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 3

THANK YOU



## Appendix 5: Online Survey for Non-distance, Non-BCFS Cohort

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

Welcome to the 'Adult Learning Experiences Survey'

8th October, 2014

Dear Participant,

As part of ongoing research at NUI Galway on Transformative Learning, it would be greatly appreciated if you would take the time to complete the following survey.

The aim of this research is to explore transformative learning experiences; thus, insight into your experiences of education throughout your life, is invaluable. Your perspective and feelings towards how your educational path was developed is also of considerable interest.

The attached survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation is important and as such, we would like to offer you a chance to win a token of appreciation for completing our survey. Upon completion of this survey, you will be entered into a draw to win a €20 One-for-All voucher.

Please note that your responses and any data collected will be kept confidential and your anonymity is assured. By completing this survey, you have consented to participate. As a participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm;
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

If during the completion of the survey, you have any queries or concerns about any questions posed, please feel free to email me, Helen Casey, directly via [helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or phone me on 091 493110; or alternatively the research supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan ([patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie)).

Kind regards,

Helen Casey, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Cand.  
091 493110  
[helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:helen.casey@nuigalway.ie)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

**1. Prior Education:**

Please check off any answer that may apply.

- Did not complete Primary school
- Primary school completion
- Intermediate certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters award
- Other (please specify)

**2. Thinking about your educational experiences, please check off any statements that may apply**

- a. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act
- b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (examples of social roles include what a mother or father should do or how an adult child should act.)
- c. As I questioned my ideas, I realised I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
- d. Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realised I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations
- e. I realised that other people also questioned their beliefs.
- f. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
- g. I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations
- h. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
- i. I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.
- j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.
- k. I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behaviour.
- l. I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.
- m. I do not identify with any of the statements above.

# Appendices

## Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

**3. Since taking part in formal education, I have experienced a change in my values, beliefs, opinions or expectations.**

(If you agree with this question, please answer question number 4 and continue survey, if you disagree please go to question number 8 to continue the survey)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4. Briefly describe what happened.**

**5. a. Was it a person who influenced the change**

If "yes", was it ... (check all that apply)

	Yes	No
Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your teacher/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your teacher's/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/principal's support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

6. a. Was it part of a class/ task/ assignment that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

## Appendices

7. a. Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

If "yes", what was it? (check all that apply)

	YES	NO
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

## Appendices

8. Which of the following has been part of your most recent educational experience?(Please check all that apply).

Another student's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
A challenge from your teacher/ tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your classmates' support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your teacher's/ tutor's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your advisor's/principal's support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class/ group projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally discussing your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing about your concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course assignments/ essays	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal journal/ reflective log	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-evaluation in a course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-traditional structure of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class activity/ exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deep concentrated thought	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal learning assessment (PLA)/ critical thinking assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assigned readings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

## Appendices

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

9. Did you experience any of the following during your most recent educational experience?

Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relocation to another community/ city/ county	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth/ adoption of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce/ separation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

10. I would characterise myself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. My participation in formal education has triggered/ caused the change in my perspective.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

12. I had a close family bond with my parents / guardians when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I feel closer to my parents/ guardians than anyone else.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I knew my grandparents and relations when I was a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

15. My parents were physically affectionate when I was a child and would hug me or hold me when I was upset.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I remember being separated from my parents/ guardians as a child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. When I was a child, I was often separated from my parents/guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendices

18. I was upset by the separation from my parents /guardians.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. My parents/guardians were upset by the separation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

20. I was often frightened or worried as a child in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. I was often frightened or worried as a teenager in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

24. I confided in someone about the frightening experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

26. As an adult learner, I often feel frightened, rejected or worried in relation to an educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. I confide in somebody about these negative educational experiences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. These situations are eased by the person's intervention or awareness of the situation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. Overall, my attachment experiences with my parents/ mentors have affected my adult personality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

30. There are aspects to my early life educational experiences that caused a set-back in my development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

31. There were adults, other than my parents, with whom I was close, as a child/ young person.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. This individual(s) influenced my personality (for instance, personal life-path and general wellbeing or development).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. A family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

36. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

37. A family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

## Appendices

41. A non-family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

45. A non-family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. I was a young child when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

47. I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. I was an adult when this influence occurred.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

49. My informal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of my most recent formal educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

50. My formal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of my most recent formal educational experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. My participation on and completion of this most recent formal educational experience has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

## Appendices

52. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

53. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

54. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. Other people find it easy to confide in me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

57. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendices

58. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

59. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

60. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

61. I expect good things to happen.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

62. I like to share my emotions with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

63. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4



## Appendices

64. I arrange events others enjoy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65. I seek out activities that make me happy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

66. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

69. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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70. I know why my emotions change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

71. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

72. I have control over my emotions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

73. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

74. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75. I compliment others when they have done something well.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adult Learning Experiences Survey 4

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76. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

77. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

78. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

79. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

80. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

81. I help other people feel better when they are down.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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82. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

83. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

84. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

85. Sex:

- Male  
 Female

86. Geographic Location:

- Urban dweller  
 Suburban dweller  
 Rural dweller

Please state locality and or county  
(eg . Stradbally, Co Laois)

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### 87. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Cohabiting partner
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Other (please specify)

### 88. Race:

### 89. Nationality:

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### 90. Income:

- Unemployed
- In receipt of social protection payment: please state which ones:
- Working in the home
- Unpaid carer
- Earning below €10,000
- Earning between €10,000-20,000
- Earning between €21,000-30,000
- Earning between €31,000-40,000
- Earning between €41,000-50,000
- Earning between €51,000-60,000
- Earning between €61,000-70,000
- Earning above €70,000
- Other (please specify)

### 91. Age:

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### 92. Are you willing to participate in the next stage of this doctoral study, the interview process?

- Yes, I would like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.
- No, I would not like to participate in the follow up interview which will be take place in October/ November 2014.

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93. Please fill in the following details if you replied 'yes' to the question above:

- Best time to call to arrange interview:  
 Comments/questions for the researcher:

please specify

94. Respondents contact details

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

95. If you would like to receive information about the study/ research findings, please tick the relevant box:

- Yes, I would like to gain access to the final findings of the study  
 No, I would not like to gain access to the final findings of the study

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THANK YOU

Thank you for your time and for completing this survey!

**Appendix 6: Schutte's Emotional Intelligence Scale**

**Assessing Emotions Scale / Schutte's 1998 Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale**

*E I Scale Source:*

*N. S. Schutte et AL. Personality and Individual Differences 25 (1998) 167-177*

Instructions for respondents:

Please complete each item of the following 33-item emotional intelligence scale. It has a 5 point scale where

- 1 =strongly disagree with statement
- 2=somewhat disagree with statement
- 3= neither agree or disagree with statement
- 4= somewhat agree
- 5=strongly agree

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| (1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others  | <b>12345</b> |
| (2) When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them       | <b>12345</b> |
| (3) I expect that I will do well on most things I try  | <b>12345</b> |
| (4) Other people find it easy to confide in me   | <b>12345</b> |
| (5) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*                              | <b>12345</b> |
| (6) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important | <b>12345</b> |
| (7) When my mood changes, I see new possibilities  | <b>12345</b> |
| (8) Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living                                      | <b>12345</b> |
| (9) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them   | <b>12345</b> |
| (10)I expect good things to happen   | <b>12345</b> |
| (11)I like to share my emotions with others  | <b>12345</b> |
| (12)When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last                                   | <b>12345</b> |
| (13)I arrange events others enjoy  | <b>12345</b> |
| (14)I seek out activities that make me happy   | <b>12345</b> |



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(15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	12345
(16) I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others	12345
(17) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me	12345
(18) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	12345
(19) I know why my emotions change	12345
(20) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	12345
(21) I have control over my emotions	12345
(22) I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	12345
(23) I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on	12345
(24) I compliment others when they have done something well	12345
(25) I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	12345
(26) When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself	12345
(27) When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	12345
(28) When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail*	12345
(29) I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	12345
(30) I help other people feel better when they are down	12345
(31) I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	12345
(32) I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	12345
(33) It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*	12345

Note for administrator/ researcher:

Items 5, 28 and 33 are reverse scaling. Scores range from 33 to 165 with higher scores indicating more characteristics of EI.

*Source: N. S. Schutte et al. Personality and Individual Differences 25 (1998) 167-177*

**Appendix 7: Researcher’s adapted questions from Kaplan and Main’s Attachment Protocol (1985)**

<b>Attachment Question List ( Adapted from Kaplan and Main( 1985)</b>
I had a close family bond with my parents / guardians when I was a child.
I feel closer to my parents/ guardians than anyone else.
I knew my grandparents and relations when I was a child.
My parents were physically affectionate when I was a child and would hug me or hold me when I was upset.
I remember being separated from my parents/ guardians as a child.
When I was a child, I was often separated from my parents/guardians.
I was upset by the separation from my parents /guardians.
My parents/guardians were upset by the separation.
I was often frightened or worried as a child in school.
I confided in someone about the frightening experience.
The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.
I was often frightened or worried as a teenager in school.
I confided in someone about the frightening experience.
The situation was eased by the intervention of the person in which I confided.
As an adult learner, I often feel frightened, rejected or worried in relation to an educational experience.
I confide in somebody about these negative educational experiences.
These situations are eased by the person’s intervention or awareness of the situation.
Overall, my attachment experiences with my parents/ mentors have affected my adult personality.
There are aspects to my early life educational experiences that caused a set-back in my development.
There were adults, other than my parents, with whom I was close, as a child/ young person.
This individual(s) influenced my personality (for instance, personal life-path and general wellbeing or development).
A family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.
I was a young child when this influence occurred.
I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.
I was an adult when this influence occurred.
A family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.
I was a young child when this influence occurred.
I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.
I was an adult when this influence occurred.
A non-family member has positively influenced my educational pathways.
I was a young child when this influence occurred.

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I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.
I was an adult when this influence occurred.
<b>A non-family member has negatively influenced my educational pathways.</b>
I was a young child when this influence occurred.
I was an adolescent when this influence occurred.
I was an adult when this influence occurred.
My informal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACF.
My formal learning experience(s) from earlier life have influenced my participation in and completion of the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACF.
My participation on and completion of the Diploma in Community Development Practice has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.
My participation on and completion of the BA in Community and Family Studies BA has been a pivotal/ life changing experience.
<b>Note: Questions highlighted in yellow to be reverse coded.</b>
<b>Attachment experience as child in the home/care situation</b>
attach 1-8; attach 38-39;
<b>Non- family attachment influences</b>
attach 20-21; 30-37;
<b>Other family member attachment influences</b>
attach 22-29
<b>Attachment experience in school setting as young person</b>
attach 9-14; attach 19
<b>Attachment experience in education settings as adult</b>
attach15-18; 40-41

**Appendix 8: Interactive Management (IM) Consent forms**



**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (Interactive Management Process)**

**Study Title:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Researcher: Helen Casey**

It is a necessary and routine practice to gain informed consent from all participants taking part in research. As a research participant, your rights are as follows:

- -To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- -To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- -Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- -To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- -To be protected from any physical or psychological harm
- -Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- -To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

**Researcher**

I, Helen Casey (researcher) agree to abide by all the guidelines and standards for conducting research with consenting participants as described by the Sociological Association of Ireland and other professional sociological associations.

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**Please initial box**

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated September 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I am satisfied that I understand the information provided about the study and have had enough time to consider the information.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
- I agree to take part in the above study and contribute to the outlined primary data collection methods.

### **Participant**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant signature here)  
have been informed about the general nature of this study and agree to participate voluntarily. I have read and understand my rights as a participant; and I understand that they will be guaranteed to me.

Date:

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ (block letters)

**Participant Identification Number in Study:**

## Appendix 9: Interactive Management (IM) Protocols



### Interactive Management Protocol

#### **Purpose:**

The interactive management process will seek to garner qualitative data from the graduates' pertaining to their educational experiences, emotional development and intelligence and stories of learning transitions in their lives. In addition, this process with all consenting graduates aims to gauge graduates perspectives of the transformative learning experiences in the discipline of community and family studies.

#### **Duration:**

Once off two hour focus group meeting in person with fellow graduates of the BACF programme. The researcher will discuss with the study participants, themes similar to the sample ones outlined below through a series of questions and discussions.

#### **Sample Themes:**

- Positive Early life Education Experiences
- Negative Early life Education Experiences
- Role Models which influenced educational experience –
- Stories of key learning transitions/ trajectories in early life education
- Stories of key learning transitions/ trajectories in adult education specifically on Diploma in CDP and BACFS programme
- Impact of Diploma in CDP and BACFS programmes on graduates' life since completion of programme.

#### **Researcher Contact details:**

Helen Casey

PhD Candidate

[Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie)

087 2228233/ 091 493110

**Appendix 10: IM Debriefing Materials for Empirical Study**



**Debriefing Sheet following interactive management session:**

**Title of Study:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Research questions for study:**

1. Did the BACF graduate cohort experience transformative learning experiences as part of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
2. Is that transformative learning experience sustainable post programme completion?
3. What is the Emotional Intelligence (E. I) levels among graduates of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
4. Do the programme graduates feel that the pedagogical approach adopted on the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes promote the development of EI skills?
5. Is there a relationship between the BACFS programme graduates experience of attachment and their emotional intelligence skills?

**Closure:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interactive management process. Should you wish to clarify anything, feel free to contact me- my email address is [Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) and my mobile contact details are 087 2228233. In addition, my research supervisor is Professor Pat Dolan and he can be contacted by email [Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie).

**Appendix 11: BCFS Semi-Structured Interview Information Sheet and Consent form**



**Participant Information Sheet: semi-structured interview**

**Date: February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Research Title: Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Researcher: Helen Casey**

You are invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. This participant information sheet will tell you about the main purpose and objectives of this study. If you agree to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

The aim of the current research is to develop greater understanding of the informal learning and related experiences of graduates who have participated in two adult education programmes with NUI Galway; namely, the Diploma in Community Development Practice and subsequently, the BA in Community and Family Studies. Factors such as emotional development and emotional intelligence, identity development and esteem building will be explored. Specifically, the study will examine if, and to what extent, graduates experienced life transitions or transformative learning experiences which impacted on their personal, social or community lives during or upon completion of the named programmes.

The current research is being conducted by a PhD candidate, who is asking graduates of both the Diploma in Community Development Practice and the BA in Community and Family Studies to participate in this study. In addition, the primary researcher is also an employee of NUI, Galway and holds joint academic co-ordination responsibility for both the Diploma in Community Development Practice and the BA in Community and Family Studies. This research is being undertaken under the academic supervision of Professor Pat Dolan, Child and Family Research Centre.

As a participant, you will be asked to engage in a semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher. The duration of the interview will be approximately one-hour. With your permission, the interview will be audio-



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recorded. The interviews will be transcribed and used as part of the PhD research. Your real name will not be used in any publication or presentations of the work. If you would like to access the findings of this research, I would be happy to share them with you.

All information that is gathered from you during the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a manner that protects your identity. All stages of the research process will be consistently deliberated upon by the researcher with her supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan and with the Graduate Research Committee (GRC), where required<sup>71</sup>.

I will store the original audio recordings securely until transcriptions have been made after which they will be destroyed in adherence with the NUI Galway data retention policy. If there is anything you are unsure of or do not understand, I will be happy to explain it to you. Please take as much time as you need to consider this request. You should only consent to participate when you feel that you understand what is being asked of you and have enough time to think about your decision. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time or a decision not to take part will not affect your rights in any way<sup>72</sup>.

Thank you for your consideration of this information sheet and the study discussed herein. Your participation and input would be invaluable should you wish to partake.

If you would like any further information about this study or have any other questions about what it involves, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Helen Casey

NUI Galway Community Education Officer,

Nun's Island

Galway City

[Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or by phone 087 2228233.

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<sup>71</sup> However, the researcher wishes to note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to respondents if matters pertaining to Children's welfare or protection are divulged or raised as part of the research process. Therefore, it is imperative that all potential participants are aware of the researcher's obligation to report and refer child welfare and protection matters to the authorities if any disclosures arise as part of study.

<sup>72</sup> In addition, if you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact the Chairperson of the NUI, Galway Research Ethics Committee: c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI, Galway [ethics@nuigalway.ie](mailto:ethics@nuigalway.ie)



## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

### **Research Title:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies**

**(BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Researcher: Helen Casey**

It is a necessary and routine practice to gain informed consent from all participants taking part in research. As a research participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

### **Researcher**

I, Helen Casey (researcher) agree to abide by all the guidelines and standards for conducting research with consenting participants as described by the Sociological Association of Ireland and other professional sociological associations.

**Please initial box**

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- I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I am satisfied that I understand the information provided about the study and have had enough time to consider the information.
- I agree to the interview being audio-recorded
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
- I agree to take part in the above study and contribute to the outlined primary data collection methods.

### **Participant**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant signature here)  
have been informed about the general nature of this study and agree to participate voluntarily. I have read and understand my rights as a participant; and I understand that they will be guaranteed to me.

Date:

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ (block letters)

**Participant Identification Number in Study:**

## **Appendix 12: Non-BCFS Semi-Structured Interview Information and Consent Form**



### **Participant Information Sheet: semi-structured interview**

**Date: February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Research Title: Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Researcher: Helen Casey**

You are invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. This participant information sheet will tell you about the main purpose and objectives of this study. If you agree to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

The aim of the current research is to develop greater understanding of the informal learning and related experiences of graduates who have participated in adult education programmes with NUI Galway. Factors such as emotional development and emotional intelligence, identity development and esteem building will be explored. Specifically, the study will examine if, and to what extent, graduates experienced life transitions or transformative learning experiences which impacted on their personal, social or community lives during or upon completion of the named programmes.

The current research is being conducted by a PhD candidate, who is asking graduates of NUI Galway adult learning degree programmes to participate in this study. In addition, the primary researcher is also an employee of NUI, Galway and holds joint academic co-ordination responsibility for both the Diploma in Community Development Practice and the BA in Community and Family Studies. This research is being undertaken under the academic supervision of Professor Pat Dolan, Child and Family Research Centre.

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As a participant, you will be asked to engage in a semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher. The duration of the interview will be approximately one-hour. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded. The interviews will be transcribed and used as part of the PhD research. Your real name will not be used in any publication or presentations of the work. If you would like to access the findings of this research, I would be happy to share them with you.

All information that is gathered from you during the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a manner that protects your identity. All stages of the research process will be consistently deliberated upon by the researcher with her supervisor, Professor Pat Dolan and with the Graduate Research Committee (GRC), where required<sup>73</sup>.

I will store the original audio recordings securely until transcriptions have been made after which they will be destroyed in adherence with the NUI Galway data retention policy. If there is anything you are unsure of or do not understand, I will be happy to explain it to you. Please take as much time as you need to consider this request. You should only consent to participate when you feel that you understand what is being asked of you and have enough time to think about your decision. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time or a decision not to take part will not affect your rights in any way<sup>74</sup>.

Thank you for your consideration of this information sheet and the study discussed herein. Your participation and input would be invaluable should you wish to partake.

If you would like any further information about this study or have any other questions about what it involves, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Helen Casey NUI Galway Community Education Officer,  
Nun's Island  
Galway City  
[Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) or by phone 087 2228233.

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<sup>73</sup> However, the researcher wishes to note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to respondents if matters pertaining to Children's welfare or protection are divulged or raised as part of the research process. Therefore, it is imperative that all potential participants are aware of the researcher's obligation to report and refer child welfare and protection matters to the authorities if any disclosures arise as part of study.

<sup>74</sup> In addition, if you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact the Chairperson of the NUI, Galway Research Ethics Committee: c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI, Galway [ethics@nuigalway.ie](mailto:ethics@nuigalway.ie)



## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Research Title:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Researcher: Helen Casey**

It is a necessary and routine practice to gain informed consent from all participants taking part in research. As a research participant, your rights are as follows:

- To be informed of the general nature of the research;
- To participate in research in a strictly voluntary manner;
- Entitlement to withdraw from the study at any time;
- To be assured that data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential;
- To be protected from any physical or psychological harm
- Not to be deceived in any way that can be harmful or unnecessary;
- To be debriefed via e-mail or web-site post, where the core findings will be summarised.

**Researcher**

I, Helen Casey (researcher) agree to abide by all the guidelines and standards for conducting research with consenting participants as described by the Sociological Association of Ireland and other professional sociological associations.

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**Please initial box**

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I am satisfied that I understand the information provided about the study and have had enough time to consider the information.
- I agree to the interview being audio-recorded
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
- I agree to take part in the above study and contribute to the outlined primary data collection methods.

### **Participant**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant signature here)  
have been informed about the general nature of this study and agree to participate voluntarily. I have read and understand my rights as a participant; and I understand that they will be guaranteed to me.

Date:

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ (block letters)

**Participant Identification Number in Study:**

**Appendix 13: Non BCFS Interviews Debriefing Materials for Empirical Study**



**Debriefing Sheet following interview:**

**Title of Study:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Research questions for study:**

1. Did the BACF graduate cohort experience transformative learning experiences as part of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
2. Is that transformative learning experience sustainable post programme completion?
3. What are the Emotional Intelligence (E. I) levels among graduates of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
4. Do the programme graduates feel that the pedagogical approach adopted on the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes promote the development of EI skills?
5. Is there a relationship between the BACFS programme graduates experience of attachment and their emotional intelligence skills?

**Closure of interview:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interview process. Should you wish to clarify anything, feel free to contact me- my email address is [Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) and my mobile contact details are 087 2228233. In addition, my research supervisor is Professor Pat Dolan and he can be contacted by email [Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie).



**Appendix 14: Non-BCFS Interview Debriefing Materials**



**Debriefing Sheet following interview:**

**Title of Study:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Research questions for study:**

1. Did the BACF graduate cohort experience transformative learning experiences as part of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes ?
2. Is that transformative learning experience sustainable post programme completion?
3. What are the Emotional Intelligence (E. I) levels among graduates of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
4. Do the programme graduates feel that the pedagogical approach adopted on the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes promote the development of EI skills?
5. Is there a relationship between the BACFS programme graduates experience of attachment and their emotional intelligence skills?

**Closure of interview:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interview process. Should you wish to clarify anything, feel free to contact me- my email address is [Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) and my mobile contact details are 087 2228233. In addition, my research supervisor is Professor Pat Dolan and he can be contacted by email [Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie).

**Appendix 15: BCFS Semi-structured Interview Schedule and Debrief**



**Qualitative Semi-structured Interview Schedule-  
BACFS GROUP**

**Introduction to Interview:**

Welcome to this semi-structured interview process ...(add name of graduate here):

I'm going to be interviewing you about your educational experiences as a graduate of the NUI Galway BA in Community and Family Studies (and formerly the NUI Galway Diploma in Community Development Practice programme). So I wish to garner your perspective on whether your educational pathways have been influenced by your family, friends and other relationships. So with your consent, I will ask you some questions about your childhood experiences of education, and how those experiences may have affected your adult personality in terms of engaging in education as an adult learner. So, I'd like to ask you about your early relationship with your family, and what you think about the way it might have affected you throughout your life. We'll focus firstly on your childhood, and then to what's going on right now as an adult. In addition, we will talk about your experience specifically on the BACFS and whether that programme may have shaped your outlook on the world since the completion of the programme. Furthermore, we will discuss the potential impact the experience higher education has had on your life path both personally and professionally.

Finally I'd like to acknowledge for the record that you have signed the written consent form and that you are still agreeable for the interview to be audio recorded. Please feel free to stop me at any stage if you wish to take a break or wish to discontinue the interview. Thank you for your agreement to partake in this PhD Study and I will issue you with both my supervisor, Professor Dolan and my contact details at the end in case you have any questions following completion of this stage of the study. Additionally, I will debrief you on the research following completion of this interview process.

This interview is scheduled to take approximately one hour, but it could take between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. Is this timeline still convenient for you, if so let's begin.

With thanks, Helen Casey -PhD Candidate

**Warm –up /general questions**

1. What learning experience during the Diploma In Community Development Practice (CDP) and/ or Bachelor of Arts Community and Family Studies (BACFS) was most memorable/ positive for you? Why is that the case?
2. What aspects of this educational journey would you change if you had an opportunity to do so? Why?
3. Have any other family members or close friends attended third level studies? If so, how did your experience of third level compare to theirs? If not, why did they not attend third level programmes in your opinion?

**TL – Transformative Learning**

*One key aspect of my study considers the theory of transformative learning and its impact on the life of adult learner graduates of the BACFS. In essence, ‘transformative learning’ is deemed to be the lasting or sustained change in a person’s perspective or outlook based on some lived life experience that causes the change to occur.*

1. Do you feel you experienced TL during the course of your studies on the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACFS? If yes, would you mind sharing some examples of the TL experience with me?
2. Did your participation in higher education, specifically as a student on the Diploma in CDP or the BACFS programme, influence any change in your perspective? If so, did this change take place during your studies on this or these programmes or on completion of the programme or programmes?
3. Did any life experiences, external to your studies, influence the change in your perspective? If so, could you outline what the experience was and how it influenced your perspective?
4. Do you feel the transformative learning experience(s) has had a sustained/ long term impact on your perspective/ life outlook? If so, why is that the case/ not the case?

**EI – Emotional Intelligence**

*The second key aspect to my research, considers emotional intelligence levels among adult learner graduates of the BACFS. Emotional Intelligence is deemed to have four key elements: emotional perception i.e. how we view our own emotions; managing emotions i.e. how we deal with our own emotions; managing others emotions i.e. how we deal with other*

*people's emotions and utilising emotions i.e. how we make use of our emotions in the day to day world.*

1. How would you relate to each of these four elements of EI:
  - *emotional perception,*
  - *managing emotions,*
  - *managing others emotions and*
  - *Utilising emotions*
2. Tell me about how your EI levels changed during your participation on the Diploma in CDP and/ or BACFS in NUI Galway? How did this occur?
3. Would you consider the teaching/ educational approaches adopted on the Diploma in CDP and/ or the BACFS programme to have influenced your EI levels? Why might this be the case?
4. Since completion of the BACFS, how would you rate your EI awareness in both your home and/or community settings?

#### **Attachment Experiences**

*The third element of my research, considers attachment theory influences among adult learner graduates of the BACFS. Attachment theory considers the security of the relationship/bond between two individuals- usually a child and a carer/ parent and how those earlier life relationships can influence adulthood development.*

1. Who would you name as the most influential person (family or non-family member) on your life as a child? Why is that the case?
2. Would you say that this person has had a significant influence on your educational pathways? If so, in what capacity?
3. Do you feel that your emotions and feelings have been influenced by your relationship with this person/ these people? Can you explain the nature of the influence?
4. Who would you name as the most influential person (family or non-family member) on your life as an adult? Why is that the case?
5. Would you say that this person has had a significant influence on your educational pathways as an adult learner? If so, in what capacity?
6. Do you feel that your emotions and feelings have been influenced by your relationship with this person? Can you explain the nature of the influence?

**Final Question...**

- 1. Do you think there is a link between your emotional intelligence, your experience of attachment and your transformative learning experiences? If so, can you explain in your own words, what is your understanding of the connections, if any, among these factors?**

Now, it is your turn to ask me any questions of clarification or to make any additional comments.....

**Interview conclusion:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interview process.



**Debriefing Sheet following interview:**

**Title of Study:**

**Transformative Learning in Adult Education at NUI Galway: A profile of Diploma in Community Development Practice (CDP) and BA in Community and Family Studies (BACFS) programme graduates experiences 2010-2014.**

**Research questions for study:**

1. Did the BACF graduate cohort experience transformative learning experiences as part of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes ?
2. Is that transformative learning experience sustainable post programme completion?
3. What are the Emotional Intelligence (E. I) levels among graduates of the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes?
4. Do the programme graduates feel that the pedagogical approach adopted on the BACFS and Diploma in CDP programmes promote the development of EI skills?
5. Is there a relationship between the BACFS programme graduates experience of attachment and their emotional intelligence skills?

**Closure of interview:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interview process. Should you wish to clarify anything, feel free to contact me- my email address is [Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Helen.casey@nuigalway.ie) and my mobile contact details are 087 2228233. In addition, my research supervisor is Professor Pat Dolan and he can be contacted by email [Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Patrick.dolan@nuigalway.ie).

## Appendix 16: Non-BCFS Semi-structured Interview Schedule



### Qualitative Semi- Structured Interview Schedule-

#### NON-BACFS GROUP

##### Introduction to Interview:

Welcome to this semi-structured interview process ...(add name of graduate here):

I'm going to be interviewing you about your educational experiences as a graduate of an NUI Galway Adult learning degree programme. So I wish to garner your perspective on whether your educational pathways have been influenced by your family, friends and other relationships. So with your consent, I will ask you some questions about your childhood experiences of education, and how those experiences may have affected your adult personality in terms of engaging in education as an adult learner. So, I'd like to ask you about your early relationship with your family, and what you think about the way it might have affected you throughout your life. We'll focus firstly on your childhood, and then to what's going on right now as an adult. In addition, we will talk about your experience specifically on the degree programme and whether that programme may have shaped your outlook on the world since the completion of the programme. Furthermore, we will discuss the potential impact the experience higher education has had on your life path both personally and professionally.

Finally I'd like to acknowledge for the record that you have signed the written consent form and that you are still agreeable for the interview to be audio recorded. Please feel free to stop me at any stage if you wish to take a break or wish to discontinue the interview. Thank you for your agreement to partake in this PhD Study and I will issue you with both my supervisor, Professor Dolan and my contact details at the end in case you have any questions following completion of this stage of the study. Additionally, I will debrief you on the research following completion of this interview process.

This interview is scheduled to take approximately one hour, but it could take between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. Is this timeline still convenient for you, if so let's begin.

With thanks, Helen Casey -PhD Candidate

**Warm –up /general questions**

4. What learning experience during the degree programme was most memorable/ positive for you? Why is that the case?
5. What aspects of this educational journey would you change if you had an opportunity to do so? Why?
6. Have any other family members or close friends attended third level studies? If so, how did your experience of third level compare to theirs? If not, why did they not attend third level programmes in your opinion?

**TL – Transformative Learning**

*One key aspect of my study considers the theory of transformative learning and its impact on the life of adult learner graduates. In essence, ‘transformative learning’ is deemed to be the lasting or sustained change in a person’s perspective or outlook based on some lived life experience that causes the change to occur.*

5. Do you feel you experienced TL during the course of your studies on the degree programme? If yes, would you mind sharing some examples of the TL experience with me?
6. Did your participation in higher education, specifically as a student on the degree programme, influence any change in your perspective? If so, did this change take place during your studies on this degree programme or on completion of the degree programme?
7. Did any life experiences, external to your studies, influence the change in your perspective? If so, could you outline what the experience was and how it influenced your perspective?
8. Do you feel the transformative learning experience(s) has had a sustained/ long term impact on your perspective/ life outlook? If so, why is that the case/ not the case?

**EI – Emotional Intelligence**

*The second key aspect to my research, considers emotional intelligence levels among adult learner graduates. Emotional Intelligence is deemed to have four key elements: emotional perception i.e. how we view our own emotions; managing emotions i.e. how we deal with our own emotions; managing others emotions i.e. how we deal with other people’s emotions and utilising emotions i.e. how we make use of our emotions in the day to day world.*

5. How would you relate to each of these four elements of EI:



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- *Emotional perception,*
  - *Managing emotions,*
  - *Managing others emotions and*
  - *Utilising emotions*
6. Tell me about how your EI levels changed during your participation on the degree programme in NUI Galway? How did this occur?
  7. Would you consider the teaching/ educational approaches adopted on the degree programme to have influenced your EI levels? Why might this be the case?
  8. Since completion of the degree, how would you rate your EI awareness in both your home and/or community settings?

### Attachment Experiences

*The third element of my research, considers attachment theory influences among adult learner graduates. Attachment theory considers the security of the relationship/bond between two individuals- usually a child and a carer/ parent and how those earlier life relationships can influence adulthood development.*

7. Who would you name as the most influential person (family or non-family member) on your life as a child? Why is that the case?
8. Would you say that this person has had a significant influence on your educational pathways? If so, in what capacity?
9. Do you feel that your emotions and feelings have been influenced by your relationship with this person/ these people? Can you explain the nature of the influence?
10. Who would you name as the most influential person (family or non-family member) on your life as an adult? Why is that the case?
11. Would you say that this person has had a significant influence on your educational pathways as an adult learner? If so, in what capacity?
12. Do you feel that your emotions and feelings have been influenced by your relationship with this person? Can you explain the nature of the influence?

### Final Question...

2. **Do you think there is a link between your emotional intelligence, your experience of attachment and your transformative learning experiences? If so, can you explain in your own words, what is**

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**your understanding of the connections, if any, among these factors?**

Now, it is your turn to ask me any questions of clarification or to make any additional comments.....

### **Interview conclusion:**

Thank you so much for your time and participation in this interview process.

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### Appendix 17: NUI Galway Graduate Attributes templates - McLaren Edition

Graduate Attribute	Addressed in Curriculum	Co-curricular and supplemental	notes	Other opportunities
<b>Demonstrated achievement of expertise, knowledge and skill in their chosen academic field</b>	<i>Academic profile, grades, distinctions; identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u> (including laboratory and field work, technical and professional skills)</i>			
<b>Ability to tackle new intellectual challenges, solve problems imaginatively and systematically</b>	<i>Project work, relevant assessments/assignments</i>	<i>Work experience, tutoring/mentoring</i>		<i>Civic engagement activities</i>
<b>Communication skills and well-developed academic literacies</b>  <i>(academic literacies include identifying, judging and synthesizing information from a variety of sources, and confident and adept use of digital technologies)</i>	<i>Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u>; international placement and internships; project work, reports, essays, literature reviews, digital media</i>	<i>Additional courses and training via Careers Development Centre, Academic Writing Centre, Library, and other providers</i>	<i>Includes key aspects such as digital skills, information literacy and written and oral communication</i>	<i>Public speaking, writing, working with diverse groups.</i>
<b>Teamwork, collaboration and effective leadership</b>	<i>Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u>, work placement</i>	<i>Additional courses and training via Careers Development Centre, Students' union/services, and other providers. Participation in learning communities, study groups and others</i>		<i>Participation in and organization of Societies and clubs; civic engagement activities and working in the community.</i>
<b>Ability to be creative, enterprising and resourceful</b>	<i>Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u>, project work, work placement</i>	<i>Additional courses, training and experiential learning offered via Careers Development Centre, CKI, Blackstone, etc</i>	<i>Be able to provide verifiable examples and reflection on experience</i>	
<b>Capacity for self-evaluation and to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development so that they might take an active role in society and recognise the value of lifelong learning</b>	<i>Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u>, peer and self-assessment,</i>	<i>personal development planning, careers development</i>		<i>student and graduate membership of professional bodies, registration, etc</i>
<b>Valuing of ethical and professional standards, integrity, responsibility and good citizenship</b>	<i>Professional standards pertaining to academic discipline area, Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u>, relevant work experience</i>	<i>Additional courses and training via Careers Development Centre, Professional bodies and other providers, CKI</i>		<i>Involvement with appropriate <u>organisations</u>, community initiatives.</i>
<b>Appreciation of the importance of place, identity and culture in a global context</b>	<i>Identified learning <u>experiences</u> within <u>programme</u> (including, e.g., field based learning, service learning, etc), international exchange, work experience</i>	<i>Additional relevant courses and cultural participation, Diplomas (eg Gaellge), certificates, CKI</i>	<i>Rationale is to capture the distinctiveness of a Galway student experience</i>	<i>Theatre, arts, festivals; environmental groups, culture and heritage <u>organisations</u> &amp; activities</i>

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### Appendix 18: NUI Galway Graduate Attribute Statements – Walshe Edition

#### MAPPING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES TO ACADEMIC PRACTICES

ATTRIBUTE	AWARDS STANDARDS THREAD	CORE SKILLS/VALUES	ACADEMIC PRACTICES	OTHER
Achievement of expertise of knowledge, skill and competence in chosen academic field	Knowledge breadth and kind Skill and know how - Range and Selectivity	Knowledge scope and coherence Knowledge Structure Knowledge of issues	Self-monitoring Learning to learn Willingness to learn Coping with complexity Synthesising information Commitment Enthusiasm	Self-assessing assignments (being aware of writing standards, assessing your work against assessment criteria, reflecting on feedback)  Create a personal development plan Set individual learning goals Maintain a reflective journal
Ability to tackle new intellectual challenges, solve problems imaginatively and systematically	Skill and know how - Range and Selectivity	Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems Draw insightful conclusions Communicate and influence	Self-management Self-awareness Negotiating Coping with uncertainty Self confidence Resilience	Figuring out how to tackle assignments (analysing the assignment brief, planning your approach, synthesising information)  Identify strengths and weaknesses (SWOT)
Communication skills and well-developed academic literacies	Skill and know how - Range and Selectivity	Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems Draw insightful conclusions Communicate and influence	Oral and written communication skills Digital readiness Critical analysis Critical thinking	Communicating with staff and peers (maintaining email and telephone etiquette, using appropriate language and tone)
Teamwork, collaboration and effective leadership	Competence – Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight	Working with others Adaptability	Team working Interpersonal skills Group working Networking Reliability	Active participation in workshop activities (e.g. discussions, group work, sharing experiences, presenting)  Group assignments Flipped classroom Placements
Ability to be creative, enterprising and resourceful	Competence – Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight	Exercising autonomy and judgement	Exploring and creating Time management Prioritising Working under pressure	Managing self-study (planning study time, adhering to plans and deadlines, planning ahead, making contingency plans)  Providing a range of assessment tasks
Capacity for self-evaluation, taking responsibility for personal and professional development, and recognise the value of lifelong learning	Competence – Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight	Exercising responsibility  Learning and teaching	Self-awareness Critical analysis Taking responsibility Working independently Self-directedness	Reflecting on learning (reflecting on feedback, awareness of learning outcomes, awareness of expected level of learning)  Create a personal development plan Set individual learning goals Maintain a reflective journal

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### Appendix 18: NUI Galway Graduate Attribute Statements – Walshe Edition, Continued

Valuing of ethical and professional standards, integrity, responsibility and good citizenship	Competence – Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight	Attitude/disposition	Reflectiveness Ethically sensitivity Acting morally Listening Integrity Honesty	Adhering to good writing practices (supporting points made, paragraph and sentence structure, syntax, referencing, structuring)	Create a personal philosophy statement Placements
Appreciation of the importance of place, identity and culture in a global context	Competence – Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight	Attitude/disposition	Open mindedness Respecting diversity Political sensitivity Global awareness Adaptability	Maintaining knowledge of field of work/study (reading related materials, discussing with others, attending conferences/seminars)	Create a personal philosophy statement Placements

Anne Walsh \_April 2016

**Appendix 19: Researcher's Adult Learner Support Model**

