

The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process for Teacher Transformation

Von der Erziehungswissenschaftliche Fakultät
der Universität Leipzig

angenommene

DISSERTATION

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

DOCTOR PHILOSOPHIAE
(Dr. phil.)

vorgelegt

von

Colin Calleja (M.Ed)

geboren am

28. Oktober 1963 in San Gwann. MALTA

Gutachterinnen/Gutachter

Professor Thomas Hofsäss
Professor Anatoli Rakhkochkine

Tag der Verteidigung:

15. Juli 2013

SUMMARY

This research set out to explore how a group of nine educators from a Catholic Church school in Malta, who have attended the Let Me Learn professional Learning process (LMLpLp), experienced personal and professional transformation. This study investigates those factors influencing participants in their transformative learning journey. It also explores the dynamics of transformative learning and whether individual transformation affects the school's transformative learning experience. More specifically this study set out to explore how teachers who participated in the Let Me Learn professional Learning process have experienced transformative learning.

This study takes a qualitative phenomenological approach. It seeks to identify phenomena of personal and professional transformative learning through the perceptions of the educators participating in this study. Through the use of the semi-structured interview it seeks to gather 'deep' data. This data represents the voices of these educators in narrative, thus emphasising the importance of the personal perspective and interpretation. This allowed this research to understand the subjective experience, motivation and actions of the participants.

The Literature review informs the questions asked during the interview. The interview was used as a tool for gathering information regarding values, attitudes and beliefs of participants. Each interview was transcribed, translated (when response was given in Maltese) and categorised according to Mezirow's ten stages. Excerpts from each stage were further processed to generate themes. The themes were later streamlined and an acceptable interpretive framework was created. Each interview excerpt was then analysed through the framework.

Once all interviews were coded, detailed narratives were written. These narratives are meant to help the reader reflect on the process of transformative

learning. It underscores those factors highlighted by the participants, which helped bring about both personal and professional transformative learning.

This research has identified that individual constructs are strongly determined by an individual's personal learning characteristics. Awareness of these personal learning characteristics (self-knowledge) helped educators assess their practice and understand how their personal characteristics were determining their approach to teaching and affecting their interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues.

This research showed that transformative learning is a mutually interdependent experience. Individual transformation amounts to, and is influenced by, the collective transformation. This study highlighted the role of the school community in the pursuit of personal transformation.

Yet another important finding of this research is the importance of a shared language of possibility. Through a shared language, a learning community can create a dialogic environment through which intentions, beliefs and interventions can be shared among the professional community. This research accentuates the importance of a shared language as a means of articulating a change in perspective.

The study identified three main agents of change. The Let Me Learn team, as promoters and experts of this particular learning process; the teachers, who internalised the process and applied it to their practice; and the school's senior management team, who internalised the Process, positioned it into the larger vision of the school and created a conducive environment through which the whole school community was empowered to take responsibility to bring about change in practice.

A number of implications emerge from this study that could inform policy on teacher professional learning. A major implication concerns the importance of a shared language – a language that reflects the shared values and ideological position of the community. Such language frames the learning process, makes

learning visible for teachers to be able to respond effectively with strategies that respect each learner's learning preference and makes learning visible to the learner himself.

Another implication from this study arises from the finding that the transformative learning process of any individual educator and effectively of the whole school community, goes beyond the effectiveness and limitations of any one professional development programme. True and deep-seated transformative learning comes from within the individual educator. This statement has serious repercussions on any professional development programme that aims to aid participants in their quest to transform their practice.

This study also emphasised the importance that any professional development needs to be seated in the local experience and needs of the school community. Any attempts at developing comprehensive, nation-wide projects with pre-packaged approaches, are doomed to fail. What this research has shown is that for effective professional development, the identified outcomes need to correspond to the local needs of the school, rather than the national guidelines, detached from the realities of the particular school.

Finally, this study accentuated the importance of incorporating mentoring support in any professional development proposal. Delivery of information and skills without follow-up tend to lead to superficial application. Transformative learning presupposes a period of shared reflection on practice and collegial mediation of ideas through contact between teachers and their leaders and on-the-job support from their professional development mentors.

Keywords: Transformative learning, Professional Learning Process, Let Me Learn Process, Professional transformation

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Studie wurde durchgeführt, um zu untersuchen, inwiefern eine Gruppe von neun Pädagogen einer katholischen Schule in Malta, die am beruflichen 'Let me Learn'-Prozess (LMLpLp) teilnahm, eine persönliche und berufliche Veränderung erfahren hat. Sie untersuchte die Faktoren, welche die Teilnehmer bei ihrem Prozess des Transformativen Lernens beeinflusst haben. Des Weiteren untersuchte die vorliegende Arbeit die Dynamik des Transformativen Lernens und ob die Erfahrungswerte des Einzelnen die Erfahrung des Transformativen Lernens der Schule beeinflussten. Im engeren Sinne untersuchte diese Arbeit, wie Lehrer, die am beruflichen 'Let Me Learn'-Lernprozess teilgenommen haben, das Transformative Lernen empfanden.

Diese Forschungsarbeit bedient sich eines qualitativ phänomenologischen Ansatzes. Sie hat zum Ziel, Aspekte des persönlichen und beruflichen Transformativen Lernens durch die Wahrnehmung der an der Studie teilnehmenden Lehrkräfte zu ermitteln. Durch die Verwendung eines semistrukturierten Interviews zielt sie darauf ab, aussagekräftige Daten zu erheben. Diese Daten stellen die Stimmen der Lehrkräfte in Form eines Berichts dar, weshalb sie die Wichtigkeit der persönlichen Perspektive und Interpretation hervorheben. Eine solche Vorgehensweise ermöglicht das Verständnis der subjektiven Erfahrung, der Motivation und der Handlungen der Teilnehmer.

Der Überblick über die einschlägige Literatur beeinflusste die Fragen, die im Interview gestellt wurden. Das Interview wurde als Instrument verwendet, um Informationen über Werte, Verhaltensweisen und Ansichten der Teilnehmer zu sammeln. Jedes Interview wurde transkribiert, übersetzt (im Falle, dass die Antworten auf Maltesisch gegeben wurden) und in Mezirows zehn Stufen kategorisiert. Exzerpte aus jeder Stufe wurden anschließend weiter ausgewertet, um Themenblöcke zu bilden. Die Themen wurden daraufhin optimiert und in einen schlüssigen interpretativen Rahmen gebracht. Jedes Interviewexzerpt wurde dann innerhalb des Rahmenkonzepts analysiert.

Sobald alle Interviews kategorisiert waren, wurden detaillierte Berichte verfasst. Diese sollen dem Leser der Studie helfen, über den Prozess des Transformativen Lernens nachzudenken. Dies unterstreicht jene Faktoren, die von den Teilnehmern hervorgehoben wurden und halfen, sowohl das persönliche als auch das berufliche Transformative Lernen hervorzurufen.

Die vorliegende Untersuchung zeigt, dass individuelle Konstruktionen stark von den persönlichen Lerneigenschaften eines Individuums bedingt werden. Das Bewusstsein über diese Lerneigenschaften (Selbsterkenntnis) half den Lehrern ihre eigenen Vorgehensweisen zu beurteilen, und zu verstehen, auf welche Weise ihre persönlichen Eigenschaften ihren Lehransatz und ihre zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen mit Schülern und Kollegen bestimmen.

Die Untersuchung zeigt, dass Transformatives Lernen eine Erfahrung ist, die auf gegenseitiger Abhängigkeit beruht. Individuelle Veränderung bedeutet kollektive Transformation und wird davon wiederum beeinflusst. Diese Untersuchung stellt besonders die Rolle der Schulgemeinschaft im Streben nach persönlicher Veränderung heraus.

Eine weitere wichtige Erkenntnis dieser Untersuchung ist die Bedeutung einer gemeinsamen Fachsprache. Durch eine gemeinsame Terminologie kann eine Lernergemeinschaft ein dialogisches Umfeld schaffen, durch das Absichten, Ansichten und Interventionen innerhalb der beruflichen Gemeinschaft geteilt werden können. Die vorliegende Studie betont die Wichtigkeit einer gemeinsamen Fachsprache als Ausdrucksmittel einer perspektivischen Veränderung.

Die Forschungsarbeit ermittelte drei Hauptakteure, die für eine Veränderung wichtig sind: zum einen das 'Let Me Learn'-Team als Multiplikator und Experte dieses bestimmten Lernprozesses. Zum anderen die Lehrer, die sich den Prozess zu eigen machten und ihn in der Praxis anwandten, und zuletzt das Leitungsteam der Schule, das den Prozess verinnerlichte, ihn in die langfristige Planung der

Schule aufnahm und ein förderliches Umfeld schuf, durch das die gesamte Schulgemeinschaft darin bestärkt wurde, Verantwortung zu übernehmen und die Veränderung in die Praxis umzusetzen.

Die vorliegende Studie hat eine Reihe von Auswirkungen, welche die weitere Vorgehensweise des professionellen Lehrerlernens anregen könnte. Eine wichtige Folge betrifft die Bedeutung einer gemeinsamen Fachsprache – einer Sprache, die gemeinsame Werte und Ideologien der Gemeinschaft reflektiert. Solch eine Sprache rahmt den Lernprozess und macht das Lernen für Lehrer sichtbar, damit diese auf angemessene Weise mit Herangehensweisen darauf reagieren können, welche die Lernvorlieben jeden Lerner respektieren. Des Weiteren wird durch eine gemeinsame Fachsprache dem Lerner selbst der Lernprozess einsehbar gemacht.

Eine weitere Schlussfolgerung dieser Studie geht aus der Einsicht hervor, dass Transformative Lernprozesse jedes einzelnen Lehrers und besonders der gesamten Schulgemeinde über die Effizienz und Begrenzungen jedes beruflichen Fortbildungsprogramms hinausgehen. Wahres und tiefgründiges Transformatives Lernen kommt vom Innern jedes einzelnen Lehrers. Diese Feststellung hat ernsthafte Auswirkungen auf jedes berufliche Weiterbildungsprogramm, das darauf abzielt, Teilnehmern bei ihrem Bedürfnis nach Veränderung ihrer Berufspraxis zu helfen.

Die vorliegende Studie stellt zudem heraus, dass jede berufliche Weiterbildung in der örtlichen Erfahrung und den Bedürfnissen der Schulgemeinde verankert werden muss. Jeder Versuch, umfassende landesweite Projekte mit vorgefertigten Ansätzen durchzuführen, sind zum Scheitern verurteilt. Was diese Untersuchung zeigt, ist, dass die ermittelten Resultate für eine effiziente berufliche Fortbildung eher mit den örtlichen Bedürfnissen der Schule als mit den nationalen Richtlinien übereinstimmen müssen, da letztere weit von der Realität der jeweiligen Schule entfernt sind.

Abschließend hebt diese Studie die Bedeutung einer Förderung durch Betreuung jeder Art von beruflicher Fortbildung hervor. Informationszufuhr und Qualifikation ohne Nachbereitung führen zu einer oberflächlichen Anwendung. Transformatives Lernen setzt eine Phase des gemeinsamen Nachdenkens über die Praxis, den kollegialen Ideenaustausch durch den Kontakt der Lehrer zu ihren Vorgesetzten und zudem Unterstützung vor Ort durch die beruflichen Fortbildungsmentoren voraus.

Schlüsselworte: Transformatives Lernen, Professioneller Lernprozess, 'Let Me Learn'-Prozess, Berufliche Veränderung

Dedication

I dedicate this work to

My wife, Isabelle and my daughter Nicole

and to

My beloved parents to whom I will always be thankful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible were it not for the help and support I received from the many people that I now have the pleasure to thank.

Professor Thomas Hofsäss, my supervisor, for his constant encouragement and inspiration. His constant support and feedback have helped me organise and bring to completion this research.

Emeritus Professor Christine Johnston for her help, feedback and support throughout this work.

The research participants who dedicated time and patience to share their experiences and accommodate my requests, notwithstanding the busy schedules. Their sense of commitment is highly appreciated.

Graziella Vassallo Theuma who transcribed and translated all the interviews carefully, promptly and professionally.

My Let Me Learn colleagues, Valerie, Sue, Graziella, Sarah, Tania and Myriam who have been a source of inspiration and support.

My wife Isabelle who endured the long days when I had to stay away working on this thesis and who patiently proof read this work.

My daughter Nicole who had her own studies to keep up with, but notwithstanding she supported me in my work.

To all those who though not mentioned by name have supported me and offered advice in the process of completing this thesis.

Table of Contents

	Title page	i
	Summary (English)	ii
	Zusammenfassung	v
	Dedication	ix
	Acknowledgements	x
	Table of contents	1
	List of tables	7
	List of figures	8
	Glossary of abbreviations	9
1.	Chapter 1: Introduction	10
1.1	Introductory statement	10
1.2	Background to the study	10
1.2.1	Compulsory education	13
1.2.2	Secondary and post-secondary education	15
1.2.3	Important documents and reforms	16
1.2.4	Pre-service teacher education	17
1.2.5	Continuous Professional Development	19
1.2.6	The Let Me Learn process	21
1.2.6.1	The Process	22
1.2.7	My involvement and the perennial questions prompting this study	23
1.3	The research paradigm	27
1.4	Statement of the problem	27
1.5	Purpose of the study	29
1.6	Research questions	29
1.7	Research design	30
1.8	Significance of the study	31
1.9	Limitations of the study	31
1.10	Definition of terms	32
1.11	Organisation of the study	34
2	Chapter 2: Literature Review	36
2.1	Introduction	36

2.2	Transformative learning: Jack Mezirow's conceptualisation	36
2.2.1	Influences	39
2.2.1.1	Thomas Samuel Kuhn	39
2.2.1.2	Paolo Freire	41
2.2.1.3	Jurgen Habermas	42
2.2.1.3.1	The sociolinguistic context	42
2.2.1.3.2	The domains of adult learning	48
2.3	Main concepts of transformative learning theory	52
2.3.1	Disorienting dilemma	52
2.3.2	Perspective transformation	53
2.3.3	Critical reflection and critical self-reflection	56
2.4	Reflective practice	58
2.5	The development of the Let Me Learn Process – An advanced learning system	63
2.5.1	Capturing the Interactive Learning Model	64
2.5.2	Validation process of the instrument – The Learning Connection Inventory	67
2.5.3	A lexicon of terms	67
2.5.4	Learner's responsibility	68
2.5.5	Developing a reliable and valid instrument	69
2.5.6	Field-tested empirical evidence	73
2.6	Conclusion	77
3	Chapter 3: Methodology	78
3.1	Introduction	78
3.2	Research design	82
3.3	Counteracting the limitation of validity and reliability	85
3.3.1	Validity	86
3.3.1.1	Stage 1: Review of analytic categories	87
3.3.1.2	Stage 2: Review of cultural categories and interview design	89
3.3.1.3	Stage 3: Interview procedures and the discovery of cultural categories	90
3.3.1.4	Stage 4: Interview analysis and the discovery of analytical categories	95
3.4	Concluding remarks	99
4	Chapter 4: Data Processing and Analysis	100
4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	PART ONE: Horizontal analysis across themes	101
4.2.1	Phase One: Disorienting dilemma	101
4.2.2	Phase Two: Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame	105
4.2.3	Phase Three: Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions about oneself and his/her professional learning	108
4.2.4	Phase Four: Dialogue and discourse with others within or outside the professional circle	122

4.2.5	Phase Five: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions	132
4.2.6	Phase Six: Planning of a course of action	141
4.2.7	Phase Seven: reference to acquisition of knowledge and skill for implementing one's plan	150
4.2.8	Phase Eight: Provisional trying of new roles	163
4.2.9	Phase Nine: Building competence and self-competence in new roles and relationships	171
4.2.10	Phase Ten: references to a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspectives	179
4.3	PART TWO: Narratives	193
4.3.1	Introduction	193
4.3.2	Narrative One: MH – Head of School	193
4.3.2.1	The Trigger	193
4.3.2.2	Self-examination	194
4.3.2.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	196
4.3.2.4	Dialogue	201
4.3.2.5	Exploration of options	204
4.3.2.6	Planning a course of action	204
4.3.2.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	206
4.3.2.8	Trying new roles	210
4.3.2.9	Building competence	214
4.3.2.10	Reintegration into one's life	216
4.3.3	Narrative Two: AA – Assistant Head of School	221
4.3.3.1	The Trigger	221
4.3.3.2	Self-examination	223
4.3.3.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	224
4.3.3.4	Dialogue	226
4.3.3.5	Exploration of options	226
4.3.3.6	Planning a course of action	227
4.3.3.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	229
4.3.3.8	Trying new roles	231
4.3.3.9	Building competence	232
4.3.3.10	Reintegration into one's life	233
4.3.4	Narrative Three: SA – Assistant Head of School	235
4.3.4.1	The Trigger	235
4.3.4.2	Self-examination	236
4.3.4.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	237
4.3.4.4	Dialogue	242
4.3.4.5	Exploration of options	244
4.3.4.6	Planning a course of action	246
4.3.4.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	247
4.3.4.8	Trying new roles	249
4.3.4.9	Building competence	249
4.3.4.10	Reintegration into one's life	251
4.3.5	Narrative Four: JSL – English Language Teacher	255
4.3.5.1	The Trigger	255
4.3.5.2	Self-examination	255
4.3.5.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	257

4.3.5.4	Dialogue	260
4.3.5.5	Exploration of options	262
4.3.5.6	Planning a course of action	262
4.3.5.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	264
4.3.5.8	Trying new roles	266
4.3.5.9	Building competence	267
4.3.5.10	Reintegration into one's life	268
4.3.6	Narrative Five: FSL – English Language Teacher	270
4.3.6.1	The Trigger	270
4.3.6.2	Self-examination	270
4.3.6.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	271
4.3.6.4	Dialogue	271
4.3.6.5	Exploration of options	272
4.3.6.6	Planning a course of action	274
4.3.6.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	274
4.3.6.8	Trying new roles	277
4.3.6.9	Building competence	278
4.3.6.10	Reintegration into one's life	279
4.3.7	Narrative Six: RSS – Science Teacher	281
4.3.7.1	The Trigger	281
4.3.7.2	Self-examination	282
4.3.7.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	282
4.3.7.4	Dialogue	283
4.3.7.5	Exploration of options	283
4.3.7.6	Planning a course of action	285
4.3.7.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	286
4.3.7.8	Trying new roles	287
4.3.7.9	Building competence	287
4.3.7.10	Reintegration into one's life	289
4.3.8	Narrative Seven: EP – Primary School Teacher	290
4.3.8.1	The Trigger	290
4.3.8.2	Self-examination	290
4.3.8.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	291
4.3.8.4	Dialogue	292
4.3.8.5	Exploration of options	294
4.3.8.6	Planning a course of action	294
4.3.8.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	295
4.3.8.8	Trying new roles	296
4.3.8.9	Building competence	297
4.3.8.10	Reintegration into one's life	298
4.3.9	Narrative Eight: YP – Primary School Teacher	300
4.3.9.1	The Trigger	300
4.3.9.2	Self-examination	301
4.3.9.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	301
4.3.9.4	Dialogue	303
4.3.9.5	Exploration of options	304
4.3.9.6	Planning a course of action	305
4.3.9.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	305
4.3.9.8	Trying new roles	306

4.3.9.9	Building competence	307
4.3.9.10	Reintegration into one's life	308
4.3.10	Narrative Nine: CP – Primary School Teacher	310
4.3.10.1	The Trigger	310
4.3.10.2	Self-examination	311
4.3.10.3	Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions	311
4.3.10.4	Dialogue	313
4.3.10.5	Exploration of options	314
4.3.10.6	Planning a course of action	315
4.3.10.7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	316
4.3.10.8	Building competence	317
4.3.10.9	Reintegration into one's life	318
4.4	Conclusion	319
5	Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications	321
5.1	Introduction	321
5.2	The Methodology informing the investigative aspect of this study	321
5.3	What factors influence teachers' transformative learning experience?	322
5.3.1	How does awareness of one's own learning processes affect personal change?	323
5.3.2	How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?	324
5.3.3	How does educators' professional change affect the school's transformation?	324
5.3.3.1	A shared language	324
5.3.3.2	Interdependent experience	326
5.4	How has participation in the LMLpLp influenced teacher transformation?	327
5.5	The role of the Senior Management Team in the transformative learning experience	330
5.6	Limitations of the study	332
5.7	Implications	334
5.8	Recommendations for further studies	335
5.9	Final thought	336
	References	337
	Appendix 1: The LMLpLp programme outline	353
	Appendix 2: Template – Data Analysis	357
	Appendix 3: Theoretical framework spread sheet	361
	Appendix 4: Interview prompt schedule – Teachers	364
	Appendix 5: Interview prompt schedule – Head of school	368
	Appendix 6: Interview prompt schedule – Assistant Heads of school	371
	Appendix 7: Sample: 12x15cm Interview Question cards	374
	Appendix 8: Definitions of themes	376

Appendix 9: Cross-checking of themes	381
Appendix 10: 2 nd round analysis template	388
Appendix 11: Frequency Table	396
Appendix 12: Transcriptions of interviews (on CD)	403
Statement of authenticity - Selbständigkeitserklärung	404

List of Tables

Table 1	Enrolment at different levels of compulsory education (n=49,949)
Table 2	Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning
Table 3	Contrasting Models I and II (adopted from Smith, M.K. 2001)
Table 4	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 1
Table 5	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 2
Table 6	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 3
Table 7	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 4
Table 8	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 5
Table 9	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 6
Table 10	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 7
Table 11	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 8
Table 12	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 9
Table 13	Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 10

List of Figures

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Figure 1 | Habermas three domains of knowledge |
| Figure 2 | Brain-Mind Connection |
| Figure 3 | Hypothetical scenario of the transformative learning experience |
| Figure 4 | Horizontal and vertical analysis |

Glossary of Abbreviations

LCI	Learning Connections Inventory
LML	Let Me Learn
LMLpLp	Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process
NMC	National Minimum Curriculum
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
DES	Directorate for Educational Services
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
EURYDICE	Education Information Network in Europe
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Community
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
PD	Professional Development
PL	Professional Learning

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introductory statement

This research reports and analyses the perceived transformative learning experience of a group of educators, in a Church run school, on the island of Malta. Through this research, I present the voices of nine educators as they experienced the transformative power of an ongoing professional learning initiative. Through these voices, we learnt how the dynamics of transformative learning initiates in the individual and diffuses into the life of the community.

This research has shown that transformative learning lies in the individual educator who allows oneself to learn from one's own teaching and thus opens the possibility for learners to become their own teachers (Hattie, 2012). The voices of these educators show that those that have experienced a transformative learning experience have had a personal impetus that propelled them to experience transformative learning. As the RAND study found a long time ago, information from external agents played a minor role in the agency of change, unless an unspoken need for renewal already existed (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Dalin 1998, p140).

Thus, while this research set out to explore the contribution of the Let Me Learn professional Learning process (LMLpLp), in the transformative learning experience of participants, the data has swerved into other facets and has given a more complex picture of the issue. This study has shown that while LMLpLp played a crucial role in the initiation and sustenance of the transformative process, it was the complex and symbiotic interaction between different agents that led the participants to grow into effective educators.

1.2 Background to the study

A number of studies (Farrugia, 1992; Wain, 1991; Zammit Mangion, 1992) report

on a highly centralised Maltese educational system. The Education Act of 1988 puts the Ministry as the sole responsible for the provision of an efficient and effective system of schools, with the right to establish the National Minimum Curriculum for all schools, including Private/Independent and Church schools (Ministry of Education, 1998). During a political activity of the Nationalist party which at the time was in government, a renowned Maltese professor of Philosophy and former Rector of the University of Malta, the late Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, was quoted as saying, that “never in Malta did we have a situation where the central education authority left no space for freedom, originality and innovation for our teachers as was done since the national minimum curriculum was introduced” (Vella, 2013). Vella, continues to explain that “(t)he thrust of his criticism was that the implementation of the NMC reflected a vision of society that leaves no margin for democratic consultation, of initiatives from below, especially from teachers”. The *National Curriculum Framework* (2013), which replaces the *National Minimum Curriculum* of 1999, tries to respond to this challenge. Unfortunately it is still highly prescriptive, leaving too little space for local innovation.

Malta has three sectors that provide educational services: the Public state-run sector, the Private/Independent and Church sectors. Education is free in state schools and is highly subsidised in Church schools. Church schools, which belong entirely to the Catholic Church, have the salaries of their teaching and support staff, paid by the government but they may ask for an annual contribution from parents to fund the school projects (Sultana et al., 1997). Children attending one of the eight Private Independent schools pay an annual fee. The National Curriculum Framework binds all State, Independent and Church schools.

In 2006 the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) and the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) were established by an amendment to the incumbent Education Act of 1988. Through these two Directorates the Ministry for Education and Employment manages the state school system and ensures quality of educational provision throughout the whole system. Mario Cutajar (2007) states that the legal status given to the two directorates shows

that “the Ministry is taking the offensive and establishing future directions in creating a more approachable and receptive support structure” (Cutajar, 2007, p. 9). The mission of the Directorates is stipulated in the Bill of the Education Act, which states that the mission of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education is:

“...to regulate, establish, monitor and assure standards and quality in the programmes and educational services in the compulsory educational levels provided by schools, whether State schools or not, as provided for in this Act.’ (Education Act, Cap.327, Paragraph 8).

This gives this Directorate the authority and responsibility for monitoring the functioning of all three sectors, including the Church and Independent sectors.

On the other hand the Directorate for Educational Services is responsible for ensuring:

“... the effective and efficient operation of and delivery of services to the Colleges and State schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy.’ (Education Act, Cap.327, Paragraph 10)

Until the 1970, Maltese students had to sit for a selective 11+ examination to gain access to secondary education. In 1972, the Ministry of Education abolished the 11+ examinations for State schools, but the Church schools continued to hold their Common Entrance examinations for entry in any one of the church-run schools. At the time the Comprehensive school reform came under a lot of criticism especially from the teacher ranks, parents and the party in opposition. In 1981, the same Labour government stopped the comprehensive system and reverted back to a selective system, thus reopening the Junior Lyceums for the academically gifted.

In 2006 a commission was set up “with the purpose of studying the reality surrounding the transition from Primary to Secondary in different types of

schools and to map out a plan of action for the way forward which will attempt to achieve the above mentioned inter-related targets” (Grima, et al., 2008). The report was originally presented in 2007.

The 2006 amendment to the Education Act brought about a number of reforms that addressed the decentralization and autonomy of the newly established Colleges. In the document *For All Children to Succeed* (2005), the then President of the Republic explained this move as a way through which “...the Education Division will move away from its role as the operator of government schools, and evolve into a regulator of the entire sector, which includes all Public, Church and Private schools; helping all of these, as all are of service to our children”. This new development rolled out a number of initiatives that are expected to affect a qualitative leap in educational reform.

In 2008 the document that was written as a review of the end of primary examination system was published as a consultation document that started the process for the drafting of the new National Curriculum Framework. The new National Curriculum Framework draft was launched for public consultation in 2011 and a review committee was appointed to analyse the feedback received. On the 6th August 2012 a final report was presented (Ministry of Education, 2012). This report brought the consultation period to a close and initiated the period for the rewriting of the final National Curriculum Framework document. On the 14th February 2013 the new *National Curriculum Framework for All* was launched. This document will eventually replace the previous NMC in the beginning of next scholastic year (October, 2012)

1.2.1 Compulsory Education

Compulsory education in Malta is between the ages of five and sixteen and is sub-divided into two phases: the Primary phase (5 to 10+ years) and the Secondary (11 to 16 years) phase. Pre-Primary, Post-Secondary and Tertiary education, are non-compulsory. Table 1 below shows the enrolment at different levels of compulsory education for the year 2012.

LEVEL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Primary	12,583	12,141	24,724
Secondary	12,984	12,004	24,988
Special Schools	156	81	237

Table 1: Enrolment at different levels of compulsory education (n=49,949)

Source: Malta in figures: NSO 2012

The Primary phase is co-educational and caters for children between five and ten plus years. The core subjects taught at this phase are: Languages (Maltese and English language), Mathematics, Science and Technology, Health and Physical Education, Religious and Ethics education, Humanities (Geography and History), Education for Democracy and visual and performing Arts. The NCF also lists a number of cross-curricular themes, namely: Literacy, Digital Literacy, Learning to Learn and Co-operative learning, Education for sustainable development, Education for entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation and Education for diversity.

There are currently 68 State Primary schools, 23 Church Primary schools (three of which are in the sister island of Gozo) and six Independent Primary schools. Apart from these, there are a number of Kindergarten and pre-primary centres run by either the state, which are normally housed in the primary schools' premises, and Church or privately run centres. 95% of the three to five year old cohort attends these centres.

The Secondary phase in State, Church and some Independent schools, is single sex and caters for students between the ages of 11 and 16 years. There are 32 Secondary State schools, 21 Church run (one of which is in Gozo) and eight are Private/Independent schools (NSO, 2011). After the setting up of the College system in 2006 and the publication of the report *Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta: A Review* (Grima, et al., 2008), the selective policy

system was replaced in 2009 by “a shock-free process from kindergarten to secondary” (Cutajar, 2007) with students transitioning from Primary to Secondary schools without having to sit for competitive exams. General Secondary schools therefore replaced Junior Lyceums. Students now have to sit for benchmark assessments at the end of primary in the three core subjects, Maltese, English and Mathematics. On transitioning to one of the Secondary schools, students are set into different tracks for Maltese, English and Mathematics. The tracking of students is informed by the results obtained in the end of Primary benchmarking exercise. The Secondary course prepares the students for the 16+ Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examinations of the University of Malta or foreign exams (G.C.E) such as those set by the University of London. Eurostat (2005) reports that 42 per cent of Maltese students finish school with a minimum level of qualifications placing Malta in the first place in the EU league of underachievement in education. Others highlight the fact that State education, compared with Church and Private school systems, performs poorly (Vallejo and Dooly 2008; Bartolo, 2007; Debono, 2010).

This led to a relatively high percentage of parents of children of compulsory education age to opt for education provided by Church and Private Independent schools. 39% of the compulsory age children in Malta attend non-state schools. In 2005, the National Office of Statistics showed that 24.5% of primary and secondary school children attended Church schools, while 12.3% attended Independent Private schools. This trend is set to grow with all Church schools ensuring a continuous school system.

1.2.2 Secondary and Post-secondary education

Malta has one of the highest percentages of early school-leavers (Eurostat, 2012). The yearbook, *A Gateway to European Statistics*, defines early school leavers as people aged 18 to 24 who have completed at most, lower secondary education. 37% of the total population in this age bracket decides not to proceed to post-secondary education. Persons deciding to continue to post-secondary and tertiary education have the following options:

- The Junior College (University of Malta) or any one of the sixth form schools run by Church and Private Independent schools. Students attending one of these institutions will sit for the Advanced level or The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate (MATSEC) examinations. These examinations are the basic requirement for entry to one of the degree courses offered by the University of Malta or the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST).
- The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST): An educational institution providing vocational courses covering 1 to 6 of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).
- The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). This institution offers courses for the hospitality and catering industry. It offers qualifications at foundation, certificate, diploma and higher diploma level.
- The University of Malta provides tertiary education and is funded by the Government. It has thirteen faculties offering tertiary education in a range of full-time and part-time certificate, diploma and degree courses.
- A number of privately run post-secondary and tertiary education institutions that offer certificate, diploma and degree courses (in collaboration with foreign Universities) in a range of areas.

1.2.3 Important documents and reforms

The following is a list, organised by date of publication, of important reform documents published by the Ministry for Education and Employment between 2000 and 2013.

- 2000 – *The National Minimum Curriculum: Creating the Future Together*.
- 2002 – *Creating Inclusive Schools: Guidelines for the Implementation of the National Curriculum Policy on Inclusive Education*.
- 2005 – *For All Children to Succeed: A New Network Organisation for Quality Education in Malta*.
- 2005 – *Inclusive and Special Education Review* (the Spiteri Report).
- 2005 – *Mathematics in Malta: The National Mathematics Survey of Year 1 Pupils*.
- 2005 – *MATSEC Review*. This is a review of the National end-of-secondary cycle

examination system.

- 2006 – *Early Childhood Education and Care: A National Policy*.
- 2007 – *Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta: A Review*. This document reviews the end-of-primary cycle examination and assessment system and proposes alternative scenarios for assessment and benchmarking. This publication was later amended and published in 2008 as the consultation document for the new Education Reform.
- 2008 – *The Smart Island: The National ICT Strategy for Malta 2008-2010*. The strategy aims at integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) with traditional teaching systems. Interactive whiteboards, together with all the necessary audio-visual tools for interactivity have been equipped in all Kindergarten and Primary classrooms. There are also plans to have each classroom IT enabled.
- 2009 – *A National Policy and Strategy for the Attainment of Core Competences in Primary Education*. This document focuses on the need of ensuring the mastery of basic bilingual literacy, e-literacy and numeracy in the first years of compulsory education.
- 2009 – *Special Schools Reform*. This document launches the setting up of the Learning Support Zones in secondary schools and Nurture Groups in primary schools to assist students to overcome social or emotional behaviours that may contribute to learning or behavioural problems in the classroom.
- 2011 – *Draft Document: The National Curriculum Framework*.
- 2011 – *A Vision for Science Education in Malta*. This sets a vision for science education in Maltese schools.
- 2013 – *The National Curriculum Framework for All*.

The implementation of these reforms has impacted dramatically on the provision of teachers' professional development. What follows is a discussion of provisions in teacher pre-service and in-service continuous professional development in Malta.

1.2.4 Pre-service teacher education

The sole provider of pre-service teacher education on the Island of Malta is the University of Malta. There are two main routes in qualifying as a teacher; a four-year programme that leads to Bachelors of Education with Honours and a one

academic year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The Bachelors of Education has two main tracks: that which prepares teachers for the Primary level and another track for those who will be teaching one of the Secondary curriculum subjects. Student teachers following the Primary track are prepared as generalist teachers with a specialization in either the early years or the junior years. Since 2009 the Faculty of Education started offering a part-time five-year Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood and Care. Those who follow the PGCE route would first graduate as Bachelors of Arts or Science and then follow a PGCE course in one of the 17 areas offered. After successfully finishing the one academic year course they qualify as Secondary school teachers. This route is not open for those who want to become Primary teachers.

At present, the Faculty is actively discussing the possibility of upgrading its teacher qualification to a Master level. If this proposal was to be accepted, the routes into the profession will change. The first route would be for those subjects offered at Bachelors level by either the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Science. Prospective Faculty of Education students will have to graduate in a three-year general degree either in Arts or Science. They then follow a two-year Master programme in Education (M.Teach). Those students who want to follow a teaching qualification in an area which is not offered by the Faculties of Arts or Science, for instance Primary Education and Physical Education, will enrol in a three-year, first degree course in Education (B.Ed) and then continue to read for a Master in Education in the respective area. The first degree in education will be substantively different from what is offered at present and would not qualify the holder to a teacher's warrant.

The Faculty of Education also offers a Master level specialization in Education in the following areas (University of Malta website, 2012):

- Master of Education in Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
- Master of Education in Inclusion and Individual Educational needs.
- Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Master of Arts in Adult Education.

- Master of Education in Science Education.

There are two Master of Education degree courses for those who are already in-service and would like to become Special Education teachers or inclusion coordinators. These are the Master of Education in Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and the Master of Education in Inclusion and Individual Educational needs. There is also the possibility for these individuals to follow in-service courses organised by the various departments within the Directorates (EURYDICE, 2011a).

For those wanting to work in Special Education as Learning Support Assistants the University of Malta offers an undergraduate diploma in Special Education. The Directorate for Educational Services (DES) also offers a ten-week (70 hours) introductory course organised by the Student Services Department (The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2009).

Recently MCAST also started offering education courses for those intending to work as Early Childhood educators in the pre-primary years (0-3 years). There is the MCAST-BTEC National Diploma in Early Children's Care, Learning and Development, and a second programme that leads to a Higher National Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years.

1.2.5 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Pre-service training aims at equipping the prospective teacher with the foundations required by the profession. As discussed above, prospective teachers are exposed to the knowledge, skills and understandings required by professional educators that want to become effective leaders of learning.

After years of experience and research we have realised that:

“Many positive effects that are achieved during pre-service education are annulled in the initial phase of professional activity. Clearly, there is a need for a systematic model of a culture of induction of trainees and

novices in the teaching profession in individual countries.” (Zuljan and Vogrinc, 2007)

With this realisation the Maltese educational authorities started working on developing guidelines for an induction programme of newly qualified teachers, and “thus providing the support of an experienced and trained colleague who helps the NQT to settle down in the classroom, at school and into the teaching profession.” (DQSE, 2012, p. 3)

The induction programme offered by the Directorate for Quality Assurance “is rooted in the teacher’s need for ongoing professional development” (DQSE, 2012, p.4) and is meant to equip newly qualified teachers with a “structured support by more experienced and specifically trained peers as they face new roles, challenges and responsibilities” (DQSE, 2012, p. 3). Thus every NQT, before being awarded the permanent warrant is to:

1. “attend the full three-day Induction Seminar organised by the QAD (Quality Assurance Department), normally held in September prior to the beginning of the scholastic year;
2. receive and/or participate in a minimum of four classroom observation visits by/with their mentor/s, two in the first term of employment and one in each of the subsequent terms;
3. participate in a minimum of three formal meetings with their mentor/s, one per term;
4. attend the final evaluative seminar, normally held in July;
5. compile their first-year PMPDP (Performance Management and Professional Development Plan)”. (DQSE, 2012, p. 5)

It is believed that through this two-year programme, newly qualified teachers will be helped to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills acquired during their initial teacher training and form positive attitudes towards their teaching career (Bezzina, 2008). This programme also leads to an appraisal at the end of the second year, which will lead to the conferment of the teacher’s permanent warrant.

After the induction period and the successful conferment of the warrant, teachers are bound to attend yearly in-service training. In a collective agreement between the teachers' Union (MUT) and the Ministry of Education, it was agreed that every teacher within the State and Church school systems has to attend a maximum of 12 hours of professional development annually. The individual schools or college can either organise these courses themselves or ask their teachers to follow one of the centrally organised in-service training (INSET) courses. Normally teachers have the freedom to choose from a selection of courses offered, but teachers can also be obliged to enrol for a compulsory course. These courses can either be directly related to specific teaching areas or to a specific reform or innovation that requires specific training. These in-service courses "tend to fall under a top-down structure and address issues mainly at the system level that principally relate to policy and government-initiated reforms, but also to curricular needs that education officers, employed by the Ministry, perceive the need of addressing." (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010)

What follows is the presentation of a process that took a proactive stance in teacher professional development through its emphasis on teacher networks, partnerships and externalization of teachers' knowledge base (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010). The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) demonstrates that teachers' professional capital can be fostered when teachers learn together and collaboratively.

1.2.6 The Let Me Learn Process

Let Me Learn is a non-profit organisation with its head office in New Jersey, U.S.A. Its scope is to provide train-the-trainer products and offer services based on the core Let Me Learn process. As an organisation it services both the educational world and the corporate. Let Me Learn is a learning concept that enables users to achieve their goals based on an understanding of their learning selves.

Over the years the process has developed tools to work with both young and older learners. The Malta centre, which has been working in developing professional learning programmes for educators for the past 20 years, was the beneficiary of a Grundtvig European project (2002 and 2005) which involved 11 adult learning institutions and universities from six European countries. This process has also caught the attention of a network of European Universities, which in 2005 were bidding for a Marie Curie science project of 3.5 million Euros over a period of four years. The coordinators of this network asked for the involvement of Let Me Learn to help “sharpen our (the participating institutions) awareness of these issues (issues related to learning processes), and to help identify how (we can) better train our researchers. And the young researchers, once they realise how they learn best, can use this information to decide on their future career path.” (Calleja, 2005, p. 42) In 2004 Let Me Learn participated in a Comenius project collaborating with seven European countries to develop a handbook for differentiated teaching (Bartolo, et al., 2007). It was also involved in other European Grundtvig projects focusing on intercultural education programmes (SPICES – Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills; e-SPICES and BRIDGE-IT – Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe – Integration Team). Here Let Me Learn helped develop training Guidelines for intercultural education and training.

1.2.6.1 The Process

The Let Me Learn process begins with the use of a 28-question Learning Connections Inventory (LCI), an internationally statistically validated instrument that measures the degree to which learners use each of the four interactive learning patterns (Sequence, Precision, Technical Reasoning and Confluence) (LCR, 2003).

The Let Me Learn process has developed training materials designed to assist educators and trainers in various disciplines. The Process attempts to support educators in their pursuit to reach each learner under their care. It supports educators in developing teaching technologies that allow the educator or trainer

to more effectively 'teach' their students based on their knowledge of the students' learning processes. The Process also seeks to equip learners with learning tools to guide their own learning.

Presently the Let Me Learn process has programmes in place to train and certify educators in the implementation of the process. In Malta the Let Me Learn centre has developed a professional learning programme in collaboration with the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) is a six-week, non-consecutive programme, spread over one scholastic year (from November through May). The programme (Appendix 1) introduces educators to the Interactive Learning Model and to the learning tools, such as the LCI (Learning Connection Inventory), the learning profile, the metacognitive drill and an array of skills for decoding, metacognising, and adaptive strategies for meeting their personalised learning preferences. The Process also provides participants with a lexicon of terms that make up the Let Me Learn process.

1.2.7 My Involvement and the perennial questions prompting this study

Over the past 18 years, as the co-ordinator of the Let Me Learn Malta Centre, I have had the opportunity to meet a number of educators that would attribute enrichment of their teaching experience to their participation in the LMLpLp. Through these interactions, with teachers in particular, and with school leaders, I have come to appreciate the value of this experience. Throughout these years, I have also come across those who, albeit their participation, have shown no visible change in their personal and professional behaviour. Therefore, my perennial questions were: what aspects of this professional development are yielding this sense of accomplishment? What aspects of this professional practice lead participants to a visible change in their professional practice? Why are not all participants recording the same level of accomplishment when participating in the LMLpLp?

Over the years, my team has come to a number of anecdotal answers to the above questions. Though, at times, they come close to an explanation, they fall short of giving a comprehensive, reliable, valid and coherent explanation of this phenomenon. Therefore, there was a gap in knowledge over the level of effect this in-service professional development (PD) had, on participating educators year after year. There was also the question why certain schools were reporting positive experiences on the teaching and learning environment as a result of participation, while other feedback was not so encouraging. (LML 2007; Let Me Learn External Audit 2012)

One of the schools that saw the value of and invested in this professional development was a confessional Primary and Secondary boys' school with an overall population of approximately 400 students. The school belongs to a religious Order. A succession of friars used to run the school. In the early years, the college was perceived as one of the better run schools in Malta (Bezzina and Testa, 2005), however, in the early 1990s the college went through some academic and pastoral difficulties leading the friars to contemplate closing down the school. After discerning the situation and exploring different options, the school administration decided to continue running the school but to "delegate the day-to-day management of the college to a lay person who was professionally better prepared to handle educational matters." (Bezzina and Testa, 2005 p. 143)

Though the school continued to face some major problems, a new head of school worked to renew the visual image of the school and to put in place, clear educational goals that would drive the change process. At this juncture, the Let Me Learn centre, was asked to help in the transformative learning venture of the school, in their quest to become a truly learning organisation, in which a genuine community of practice is conceived, and which has at the centre of its activity, the learner.

The leadership team at the time decided to invite teachers to join the LMLpLp. The plan was that, over a number of years, teachers would be trained in the

process. The leadership team led with example and over a period of three years they also received the training.

Over the past years, the LMLpLp underwent a number of changes. Over the past 17 years, the Let Me Learn team made changes to the programme to respond to the suggestions made by participants. Initially, a course spread over two scholastic years, with phase one aiming to present the theory, followed with a second phase that focuses on the presentation of exemplars of practical applications. In time, the course was transformed, and it grew into a more grounded experience in which theory followed practice, and in turn, used to support reflection. What follows is a description of this in-service professional development as it has evolved over the past eight years.

The educational policy inherent in this Process is constructivist pedagogy – a pedagogy that “provides students with opportunities to develop deep understandings of the material, internalise it, understand the nature of knowledge development, and develop complex cognitive maps that connect together bodies of knowledge and understandings” (Richardson, 2003). It attempts to capitalise on reciprocity, teacher communities and networks to generate further learning. (Dalín, 1998; Attard Tonna and Calleja, 2010)

The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process is organised during the scholastic year on a structured and sustained basis. One of the advantages of this arrangement is that teachers are exposed to a much longer period to the training involved, and the teaching community that accompanies them during the training. Once the training sessions come to an end, all participants are offered the possibility to have one-on-one mentored support in their new endeavours and any alternative practices they may want to carry out. This increases the course’s effectiveness and the likelihood that what has been achieved through collegial interactions will not end abruptly once the course is concluded.

The LMLpLp does not depart from any policy-initiated or institutional imperative imposed by the directorates of education. The learning objectives are

continually evolving to meet the current challenges experienced by teachers (Fullan, 1991). The aim of professional development is to support teachers in differentiated instruction, but teachers start by defining their own needs, because, although the learning objective applies to all teachers, the learning needs are pertinent to each individual teacher who attends. Hence, as far as possible the process is customised to each participant, who, together with a training facilitator, marks the priorities set to be achieved and works towards gaining the necessary skills to adapt to present and future challenges. (Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006)

Although the role of the trainers/facilitators is crucial, this does not render that of the teachers a merely participatory one. Teachers do not just work in groups and do role-plays. The whole training programme is devised, and developed, with the agreement and contribution of all the educators involved. This is in accordance to what Shulman (2004, p. 514) claims, that authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an active agent in the process. Teachers need to experiment and inquire, to write, to engage in dialogue and in questioning. Professional development should provide teachers with these opportunities and with the support required for them to become active investigators in their own teaching.

Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) stress the need for teachers to become more reflective about their work. Yet Shulman (2004) admits that the nature of their work and conditions make it very difficult to do so, and they also lack an adequate discipline in documenting their practice. This makes it all the more important for teachers to team up with trained colleagues, namely the Let Me Learn facilitators, who can help them observe and monitor their own teaching behaviour, thus transcending 'the limitations of one's own subjective recollections' (Shulman 2004, 324). One of the measures adopted by the LMLpLp in this regard, is that of teachers documenting their reflections in a journal and sharing these thoughts in groups. This exercise is an interesting and engaging experience and teachers can become aware of common challenges and

dilemmas, and support each other; additionally, teachers are also asked to develop assertions about their practice as a result of this sharing. The outcomes are qualitatively different from mere acknowledgement and support (though important in their own right). During these journal-sharing sessions, teachers develop ways of reconsidering their experiences and attempting to make sense of them. They start questioning individual practices, in the full knowledge that the teacher community they now form part of, can support their hesitance with the collective wisdom collegially nourished.

1.3 The research paradigm

This research was interested in finding a model that could give a structure through which the voices of these educators could be organised and analysed. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, similar to the Let Me Learn process builds on constructivist assumptions, namely that a learner finds meaning within him/herself, locate and validate personal meanings through interactions and experiences with others within the community of learners. Sharing a similar conceptualisation, Mezirow's theory of transformative learning showed potential in framing this research that was seeking to explore what was contributing to the visual changes observed in this school and in these nine participants in particular. Since one of the common denominators in all of the participants was the participation in the LMLpLp the study set out to investigate the role played by this professional development in the transformative learning experience.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Understanding learning means, "starting with the private world of each student and the semi-private world of peer interactions, as well as the more public teacher-managed effect on students" (Hattie 2012, p. 37). The Let Me Learn process seeks to help educators make sense of their own learning experiences through understanding the dynamics driving their own learning, interact within a community which shares the knowledge of self and finally reflect on how their own personal learning process impinges, amongst other things, on their professional actions as teachers. This will allow them to create learning

environments in which young learners can experience personal learning strategies so as to “become their own teachers.” (Hattie, 2012, p. 18)

For achieving such an important function, educational institutions and individual educators within such communities, need to become what John Hattie calls “students of their own impact” (2012, p. 20). Through understanding what is impacting the learning environment and what drives their own learning, which by necessity influences what drives their teaching, educators can intentionally create environments that are open to differentiated strategies and accept different ways of approaching knowledge. An educator who learns and values difference, develops a climate of trust amongst his or her students.

Transformative learning as presented in this study mainly refers to a transformation of one’s *Weltanschauung* (Wolters, 1983). As educators, we grew in a worldview influenced and dictated by a paradigm where academic content and skills are the most important things to be learnt. A worldview in which the value of a learner is measured by his or her performance in standardised testing, where uniformity and rigour are prized and where students are meant to cover a compulsory curriculum and their success or failure is a measure of peer comparison. The desired worldview is that in which educators seek to educate the ‘whole person’, where the curriculum is flexible and personalised to give students meaningful choices, where educators show interest in the student as a person with past and present concerns and future dreams. In such a worldview a student’s performance is measured with one’s prior performance, where experience and out of school learning are valued and where students’ happiness and accomplishments are celebrated. (Armstrong, 2006)

Therefore while much has been written on transformative learning, research grounded in transformative learning theory of educators needs to be further explored. I was particularly interested in learning about the function the LMLpLp fulfils in the transformative learning process of teachers, and of a school community.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to describe the factors leading to substantial and enduring change within individual participants of the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process. This study builds on previous work regarding transformative learning and reflective practice. The assumption was made that if educators are critically and reflectively aware of their own learning patterns and the social dynamics of a collaborative learning community, this will lead to a higher personal learning and more effective instruction.

This study examines teacher transformation, and its relationship with professional efficacy. It also seeks to understand how the development of a common, shared language, can be used to promote a model of teacher professional development that offers a more holistic approach to professional learning.

1.6 Research questions

The study addresses the following central question:

- What factors influence teacher transformation through participation in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process?

More specifically the study aimed to analyse and answer the following subsidiary questions:

- How does awareness of ones own learning processes (self-knowledge) affect personal change?
- How does awareness of ones own learning processes affect professional change?
- How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?
- How does educator's professional change affect the school's transformation?
- Does participation in the LMLpLp influence teacher transformation?

1.7 Research design

This research takes a qualitative approach in that the study seeks to capture the perceptions of a group of educators about their experience of growth as individuals and as teachers or leaders within a specific learning community. The study involved a judgement or purposeful sample. Two groups of purposeful samples were selected and interviewed. The first group was made up of three members of the senior management team (SMT) – the head of school and two assistants. The second group was composed of six teachers who, at least three years prior to the commencement of this study, participated in the LMLpLp, showed sustained interest in the Process and were identified by the school's SMT as effective teachers. The Let Me Learn team was involved to confirm that the selected candidates, after finishing their formal training, continued seeking guidance and support from the centre.

A semi-structured interview was designed after careful reading of the literature. This allowed the interview design to be informed by theory. The interview was used as a tool for gathering information regarding values, attitudes and beliefs of participants.

Each interview was transcribed, translated (when response was given in Maltese) and categorised according to Mezirow's 10-stages. Excerpts from each stage were further processed to generate themes. The themes were later streamlined and an acceptable interpretative framework was created. Each interview excerpt was then analysed through the framework.

Once all interviews were coded, a detailed narrative of each participant was composed. A narrative, according to Donald Polkinghorne, "is the appropriate form of expression to display research as practice" (Polkinghorne 1997, p. 3). This research tries to examine and understand how, within a specific context, the school, and through specific interventions and interactions, an educator experiences a transformation of perspective. The research seeks to learn about these experiences through the voices of the actors themselves. Thus, as Ochs and

Capps point out, “narrative activity provide the teller with an opportunity to impose order on otherwise disconnected events, and to create continuity between past, present, and imagined worlds” (Ochs & Capps 1996, p. 19). Through the narrative approach to reporting data, a space for the voices of the participants is created.

Once the “stories” were told, a cross-theme analysis followed. This part of the research discussed the variation of voice within each theme, giving the voices an organised and transferable structure.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is neither intended to be a testimonial to the effectiveness of the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process nor a herald of individual accomplishments of its participants or the school. The significance of this study is to highlight how teachers have perceived their transformed learning experience.

“The goal of adult education is... to help the individual become a more autonomous thinker by learning to negotiate his or her values, meanings, and purposes rather than to uncritically act on those of others.” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10)

Identification of factors within a professional learning experience promoting this transformation, adds to the growing literature of transformative learning in the field of teacher education.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Because of its qualitative design, the size of the sample can be a limitation. Thus, this research makes no claims on generalizability but the measure of utility of results generated is believed to have transferability potential. Additionally, participants were all selected from one professional school. The school’s characteristics – size, ownership and history, make it unique and thus difficult to generalise the findings. This choice was intentional. It corresponds to the objective of the study: of identifying factors contributing to the transformative

experience of a group of educators within a particular community. The community's specific characteristics are also crucial ingredients in the transformative journey of individuals.

Finally the selection of participants has been done with specific, imposed criteria. Though this limits the scope of the study, it does give a more informed understanding of the research question. Martin Marshall explains "Qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are 'richer' than others and that these people are likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher." (Marshall, 1996, p. 523)

1.10 Definition of terms

The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) – A six week, non-consecutive professional development course spread over one full scholastic year introducing teachers to the Let Me Learn Process (LMLP). The LMLP is an advanced learning system for developing intentional learners. The Professional learning process introduces participants to the Interactive Learning Model and to learning tools, such as the Learning Connections Inventory (LCI), the learning profile, the metacognitive drill and an array of skills for decoding, metacognising, forging, intensifying and tethering of one's combination of learning patterns. The Process introduces the participants to a specific learning lexicon of terms that make up the LMLP. Professional learning process is deliberately chosen over the more widely used concept of professional development. With the terms professional learning the providers seek to emphasis the focused investment on learning that yields benefits for teachers in their practice. The idea of a process rather than a programme is used to emphasis the on-going, sustained learning that starts with a structured programme but continuous with support in the setting in which practice occurs (Fullan et al., 2006; Elmore 2004).

The Interactive Learning Model: Refers to the simultaneous interactions of three mental processes, identified as: cognition, conation, and affectation that operate concurrently within each of the four operational patterns that make up

each learner's brain-mind interface. The model developed by Christine Johnston (1994) is based on research conducted in cognitive psychology, learning theory, multiple intelligences, and neuroscience.

Learning Connection Inventory: Refers to the instrument (a two part, twenty-eight question self report tool with three open response written questions) that is administered to identify an individual's combination of Learning Patterns. Responses to the 28 items are tallied forming a "score" representing the degree to which an individual uses each of four Learning Patterns: Sequence, Precision, technical Reasoning, Confluence. Each score is placed on a continuum that indicates the "range" or level of use of each Pattern: Use First (26-35), Use as Needed (18-25), Avoid (7-17).

Learning Patterns: refer to a battery of learning processes, namely Sequence (referring to the learning pattern which needs to organise, plan, and complete work assignments without interruption using clear instructions, as well as a time-frame which allows for checking work), Precision (referring to the learning pattern which seeks information and details, asks and answers questions, researches and documents facts), Technical Reasoning (referring to the pattern which describes the way we seek relevant real world experiences and practical answers. This pattern is the pattern of the fewest words. It emphasises the ability to problem-solve using independent private thinking and hands-on interaction), and Confluence (referring to the pattern which describes the way we use our imagination, take initiative and risks and brainstorm ways of approaching things in a unique manner. Confluence allows the learner to link disparate pieces of information into the "big picture"). Within each of these Patterns, the source and degree of the cognitive, conative, and effective characteristics of each, determine the level to which an individual naturally "uses" each.

Self-knowledge: An introspective experience through which we see ourselves, and the world which we live in.

Transformative Learning: It is a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions in a complex and multifaceted way.

Reflective practice: This study takes the definition as proposed by Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) who define it as “a systematic and comprehensive data-gathering process, ... (in which) dialogue and collaborative effort enrich reflective practice.” (p. 65). It is believed that reflective practice forms an integral part in the transformative learning experience of teachers.

Narrative: A narrative is a form of expression to display research as practice. Through a narrative approach for reporting data the researcher will change the way in which the voices of the participants can be heard and thus the participants become the actors in the research (Polkinghorne 1997).

1.11 Organisation of the study

This study is organised into five chapters.

Chapter one is an introduction to the study. The chapter includes the general field of interest and what the study intends to accomplish. An extensive background of the Maltese Educational System is given. A description of the Professional development under study, namely the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) is given. Additionally a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the research design, significance of the study, limitation and finally a definition of key terms are provided.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature establishing the theoretical framework for the study. Areas of emphasis include transformative learning, a critical review of learning styles and a defence of the Advanced Learning System – a system which captures a set of theoretical constructs which emphasises the interactiveness of the mental processes and attributes specific behaviours to the internal interaction of four discreet operational processes. It also reviews the theoretical framework of reflective practice.

Chapter three contains a discussion of the methodology of the narrative approach and a detailed description of the research design – the design and justification of the research tool (the semi-structured interview), collection, analysis and presentation of the data.

Chapter four describes the qualitative findings highlighted from the data gathered. Part one of the chapter gives a horizontal, cross-theme analysis. Part two presents the voices of the participants in nine narratives. Both parts follow Mezirow's 10 phases of meaning.

Chapter five provides a conclusion from the study, aligned with the primary research question. This chapter discusses the significance of the factors influencing teachers' transformation, the role of the LMLpLp in the transformative learning experience of the participants, the role of the SMT and the school community in general in this experience. Implications for policy and practice follow.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for this study. This study aims to identify those factors influencing teacher transformation. More precisely, this study hopes to identify those transformative agents that teachers attribute to their acquired awareness gained through participation in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp). This chapter discusses a theoretical framework that builds on transformative learning and organisational/community change leading to inclusive learning communities. It discusses Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a transformative agent. Finally this chapter discusses the theoretical structure supporting the LMLpLp.

2.2 Transformative Learning: Jack Mezirow's conceptualisation

“Transformative learning is ‘a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions’ (Transformative Learning Centre, 2004). However, this definition belies the fact that this type of learning is complex and multifaceted”. (Kitchenham, 2008)

Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has, over the past three decades, changed the way we understand adult learning and by consequence how we do pedagogy for adults, often referred to as andragogy (Knowles, 1998). Jack Mezirow has led this movement of transformative learning with almost every article, journal, or book published on transformation and adult learning citing him. He has restated the position transformative learning holds within the learning process (Taylor, 2000; Caswell, 2007).

This theory will be used in this study as a conceptual theory through which the data for this project will be analysed and categorised. The theory's complexity

and multifaceted nature gives the possibility to better understand and analyse contextual data, which from its nature is complex and multifaceted.

A key notion pervading literature on adult learning is the role of experience and prior learning (Challis, 1996, Burke & VanKleef, 1997, Romaniuk & Fern, 2000, Belzer, 2004). Literature explores ways in which prior experience in formal learning contexts influences adult learners' views of their current context. Others (Freire, 1970; Brookfield, 1987; Boud, Keough, and Walker (Eds), 1985; Boyd, 1989; Boyd and Myers, 1988; Kitchener and King, 1990; Mezirow and Associates, 1990 and 2000; Mezirow, 1991 and 1997; Marsick and Mezirow, 2002) problematise this notion and go beyond just content knowledge acquisition and attempt to understand the conditions required to transform learning through emphasis on contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions and validated meaning by assessing reasons.

Mezirow's original study that focused on the change in perspective experienced by women returning to formal education after a long break from school, made some revealing insights on how we understand learning in adulthood and the role of prior learning. Learning, according to Mezirow (1996) was "understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 162). Such meaning making is accomplished by "projecting images and symbolic models, meaning schemes based upon prior learning, onto our sensory experiences and imaginatively use analogies to interpret new experiences" (Mezirow 1996, p.162). As can be appreciated, such insight has particular relevance to teacher education. Acculturation of teachers within the profession can only take place when they become aware of the knowledge; influences and hidden theories accrued over the years.

Mezirow's rendering of transformative learning emphasised the importance and centrality of experience, understanding one's frame of reference, the role of disorienting dilemma, the importance of critical reflection and critical self-reflection, the role of rational discourse, and of dialogue in communicating with

others. In his work he also amply discusses the conditions that foster such transformation. A discussion of these concepts would reveal “a picture of transformative learning theory that is much more complex and multifaceted than originally understood.” (Taylor, 2000)

Transformative learning theory is about becoming aware of one’s own and those of other’s, tacit assumptions and expectations, and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4). Mezirow appropriates James Loder’s five steps¹ for transformative logic and reorganises them to explain that “comprehension involves a conflict, scanning, and construal, during the latter of which a constructive act of imagination occurs, resulting in an interpretation”. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27)

Early on, Mezirow emphasised the social dimension of transformative learning and showed the importance of interacting with others “to identify alternative perspectives, to provide emotional support during the process of transformation, to analyse one’s own interpretation of one’s situation from different points of view, to identify one’s dilemma as a shared and negotiable experience... and to provide models for functioning within the new perspective” (Mezirow, 1990, p. xiii – iv). In his response to Collard and Law (1989) in which they criticised him for his lack of emphasis to the collective social action, Mezirow (1989) explains that while social action is crucial and desirable, the decision of such involvement is that of the learner, not the educator’s. The role of the educator, if it is agreeable with one’s values, is to support and help the learner in one’s quest through helping the learner “research, plan tactics and develop the skills required for appropriate action to overcome constrains in these areas...” (p. 172). Thus

¹ Loder’s five steps in transformative logic: First is *conflict* between what is known and what must be understood. This is most potent when it involves a dilemma pertaining to our view of ourselves. The second step in transformative logic is *scanning*: searching for possibilities through analysing and dissecting data. The third step is *imagination* through which one gets intuitive insight. Through such insight situations are “transformed and the learner arrives at a new perception, perspective, or worldview.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 163). Fourth step involves release and openness. In this stage the learner invests energy in the conflict and opening to oneself and the context, thus bringing forward new possibilities for problem solving. Finally, the last step involves interpretation of the imaginative solution into the behavioural and/or symbolic constructed world of the original context” (Lodger, 1981 cited in Mezirow, 2000 p. 27) by finding connections and seeking a consensus.

Mezirow, in his theory emphasises the learner's free will in closing the cycle of transformation by reintegrating the new perspective into life and acting it in the social dimension.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) define transformative learning as change, "dramatic, fundamental change in the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live" (p. 318). Clark (1993) contends that such learning "shapes people; they are different afterwards, in ways both they and others can recognise" (p. 47). Thus, through critical reflection, engagement in discourse, and reflectively and critically taking action on the transformed frame of reference (Marsick and Mezirow, 2002), learners proceed to new ways of perceiving, thinking, deciding, feeling and acting on their experience (Mezirow, 1990, p. xiv)

2.2.1 Influences

This theory evolved over the years with a number of influences that inspired and help build the major premises making up the theory. Jack Mezirow, in a major publication entitled *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (1991), identifies a number of major influences that helped him and his associates to evolve the theory into a robust theory.

Three of the early and most important influences on Mezirow's work and which helped form the basic facets related to the theory will be discussed. These include Kuhn's (1962) philosophical conception of paradigm, Freire's (1970) conception of 'conscientization', and Habermas's (1971, 1984) domains of learning and the discussion of language as communicative action.

2.2.1.1 Thomas Samuel Kuhn

Kuhn's paradigmatic transformations in scientific knowledge (1962) provided a basis for Mezirow's notion of transformative learning. Kuhn, used paradigm to refer "to a collection of ways of seeing, methods of inquiry, beliefs, ideas, values, and attitudes that influence the conduct of scientific inquiry" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 46). This came about as a result of Kuhn's realisation that among the social

scientists and the natural scientists there was a major disagreement as to what constituted a legitimate scientific inquiry (Mezirow, 1991; Kitchenham, 2008). In the process of this investigation Kuhn came up with the concept of paradigm, which Kiesel (1982 cited in Mezirow, 1991) characterises as “that which we look through rather than look at in viewing the world”. Mezirow defines it as “an articulated, theory-based, collectively held meaning perspective” (1991, p. 46). Others have subsequently used other terms to refer to the same concept: model, conceptual framework, approach, and worldview are synonyms that Mezirow detects. Such paradigms would have a basis in comprehensive theories, which generate new vocabularies, which can then serve the function of cognitive filters.

According to Kuhn (1962) a true paradigm would include a shared set of problems and solutions; a differentiated perusal of interests and a shared common worldview (Kitchenham, 2008).

Erving Goffman (1974 cited in Mezirow 1991) referred to a shared worldview or “definition of a situation that organizes and governs social interaction” (Mezirow 1991, p. 46-47) as a *Frame*. “A frame”, continues Mezirow, “tell(s) us the context of a social situation and how to understand and behave in it” (p.47). Frames are therefore similar to Kuhn’s paradigm, in that frames also hold a shared common worldview but unlike Kuhn’s paradigm, frames are tacit, that is unconscious filters which form the ‘boundary structures’ for perceiving and comprehending (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4-5). This is similar to Argyris and Schön’s (1974) mental maps, which stir and direct one’s actions (theories-in-use), often without the actor’s conscious and explicit will. Tacit memory is “culturally assimilated habits of expectation that allow us to scan and censor the experience of our senses”. (Mezirow, 1991, p.31)

In Mezirow’s theory (1985, 1991b, 2000), paradigm became the frame of reference. A frame of reference comprises habits of the mind and meaning perspectives, which in turn lead to a perspective transformation by making explicit the message system that enables us to reformulate a constraining frame of reference (Bowers 1984).

Perspective transformation alters meaning structures (frames of reference) that adults have acquired over a lifetime through an individual's cultural and contextual experiences. Such deeply ingrained experiences influence how an individual behaves and interprets events (Taylor, 1998 cited in Imel, 1998).

2.2.1.2 Paolo Freire

The Brazilian educator and influential theorist of critical pedagogy, Paolo Freire is yet another major influence in Mezirow transformative learning theory, especially in the initial stages of its development. A major concept, which Mezirow takes on board, from Freire critical pedagogy, is *conscientization*. In Freire (1970) '*conscientização*' or conscientization is defined as "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions – developing a critical awareness – so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p.19). Freire argued for a transformative relationship between all the actors in a learning environment. Such a transformative relationship is difficult, argued Freire, because teachers themselves have a difficult time getting past the "instilled certainty" that teaching is a unidirectional activity in which teachers 'bank' knowledge without involving students in a critical and dialogic relationship with this knowledge (Freire, 1974).

A democratic relationship, allows space for both the teacher (who presents critical ideas for discussion) and input from the students, thus "affirm(ing) themselves (the teachers) without thereby disaffirming their students" (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p.34). The lifeline for this democracy is conscientization and its related critical consciousness, which Freire argues is actualised through three stages of consciousness growth (Freire, 1974).

The first and lowest stage is what Freire termed as '*intransitive thought*' – a level in which an individual feels disempowered to bring about change in one's condition because all is pre-destined by fate. While the second level, '*semitransitive*', involves some thought and action for change, it still addresses

one problem at a time, as they occur, without seeing the organic nature of the problem, as one involving the whole of society. The highest level or stage of consciousness that mainly influenced Mezirow in his notion of disorienting dilemma, is 'critical transitivity'. Contrary to naïve transitivity, critical transitivity is a deep explanation of casual principles that lead to the practice of dialogue built on sound argumentation (Freire, 1974, p. 14). Thus critical transitivity is characterised by critical reflection; critical self-reflection on assumptions, and critical discourse (Mezirow, 1978a; 1978b; 1985). According to Freire, this is achieved when an individual thinks globally and critically about a problem and is able to take action for bringing about critical change as a result of critical thought "to affect change in their lives and to see what the catalyst for that change would be". (Kitchenham, 2008, p.108)

2.2.1.3 Jürgen Habermas

A major influence in Mezirow's theory is without doubt the work of Jürgen Habermas. Below we will discuss two major influences in Mezirow's transformative learning theory.

2.2.1.3.1 The Sociolinguistic Context

Mezirow (1991) attributes the sociolinguistic context of transformative learning to Habermas, in particular through Habermas's seminal work, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984; 1987)². According to Mezirow (1991) this work "suggests a new foundation for understanding adult learning and the function and goals of adult education" (p. 65). In his book *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Mezirow (1991) reviews this work under the subheadings 'The Sociolinguistic Context of Transformative Learning' (pp. 64 – 69) and 'The Dynamics of Communicative Action' (pp. 69 – 72). He then moves on to summarise Habermas's other contribution *Knowledge and Human Interest*

² Habermas's most important book for the present study is *The Theory of Communicative Action*, first published in German (*Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*) in two volumes in 1981 and an English translation in 1984 (first volume) and in 1987 (second volume). The two volumes are entitled *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* and *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, respectively (*Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung* and *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, respectively).

(1971) in which he expands on the three broad areas in which human interest generates knowledge (the three domains of learning which will be discussed further on in this analysis).

In 'The Sociolinguistic context', Habermas refers to the applications of validity criteria as "grounding". According to Habermas (1984) " 'grounding' descriptive statements means establishing the existence of states of affairs..." (p. 39), that is, when the conditions for understanding an utterance are established, and both the speaker and the hearer "understand the meaning of a sentence (and) when they know under what conditions it is true" (Habermas, 1984, p. 276). Once validity is established, true communicative action can take place and language takes a humanisation process.

For Habermas, the "process of humanisation" is found in the use of language. Following George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism, Habermas sustains that "the development of speech and self-consciousness are steadfastly bound to one another and are only possible in a social context". (Horster, 1992, p. 65)

Therefore linguistic action, which is for Habermas the ultimate model of action, must be built on truth between actors, because if we assume that most people generally lie, then language would lose its mission, and communication would be impossible (Habermas, 1984). For such understanding to take place and discourse made possible, validity claims need to be explicitly defined and any distortions cleared.

Communicative action allows human beings to interact with the world around them, with other people, and with oneself (with one's intentions, feelings, and desires) and thus the validity of what is said, implied, or presupposed is of utmost importance for communication to persist and for allowing meaning perspectives to affect the validation process and be transformed. The validation process initiates from the identification of a problem, through reflection, empirical or consensual validation, and imaginative insight to making new interpretation. Throughout this process, meaning perspectives play an

influencing role and when new interpretations are formed, transformation of meaning perspectives can occur (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 66 – 67).

Rationality in Habermas is validity testing by reasoning – using reason for weighing evidence and supporting arguments. Habermas uses the term ‘argumentation’ to refer to “that process of dialogue in which implicit validity claims are made explicit and contested, with an effort to criticize and vindicate them through arguments” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 68). Mezirow continues, “In the context of communicative action, the responsible and autonomous adult is one who is a member of a communication community that is able to participate fully in discourse devoted to assessing criticisable validity claims” (p. 68). In this excerpt Mezirow defines the role of the adult, as a communicative being with the ability to validate and interpret arguments, in a dialogic process thus negotiating “meanings and purposes instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others”. (Bowers, 1984, p.2)

In his discussion of *The Dynamics of Communicative action*, Habermas identifies three interrelated dynamics namely the dynamics of the lifeworld, learning and social integration.

Habermas (1987, cited in Horster 1992) defines ‘lifeworld’ (Lebenswelt, first used by Husserl) as follows: the lifeworld “consists of individual skills, the intuitive knowledge of how one deals with a situation; and from socially acquired practices, the intuitive knowledge of what one can rely on in a situation, not less than, in a trivial sense, the underlying convictions” (p. 21). Thus, Habermas furthers Husserl’s definition, who held that “views, intellectual spectrum and interest as the basis for perception of the world are located solely within the individual” (Horster 1992, p. 22), and ties onto Mead’s social argument who emphasised that man is a social being and thus the importance of “the social space of a commonly inhabited lifeworld that opens up in a conversation provides the key to the communication – theoretical concept of society” (Habermas *Entgegnung*, cited in Horster 1992, p. 21). Habermas claims:

“Subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the horizon of a lifeworld.... formed from more or less diffuse, always unproblematic, background convictions... [it] serves as a source of situation definitions that are presupposed by participants as unproblematic.... The lifeworld also stores the interpretive work of preceding generations” (Habermas, 1984, p. 70).

Habermas also uses phrases like "pre-reflective," a set of "taken-for-granted background assumptions," "naively mastered skills," and "[it] enters a tergo [literally, from behind] into cooperative processes of interpretation" (Habermas, 1984, pp. 335, 337). He quotes Wittgenstein, who said that the "certainties" present in one's worldview are "so anchored that I cannot touch [them]" (Wittgenstein, 1969, 103, p. 16, quoted in Habermas, 1984, p. 336).

Habermas builds on Mead's assertion that symbols (verbal, non-verbal and paraverbal) need to carry the same meaning for all participants in the interaction. Only when linguistic symbols are shared can real communication occur. Thus in Horster's words:

“Social structures then develop through language because language contains that which is necessary to form the structure of a society and, correspondingly, to allow the functioning interaction of the members of the society: customs, cultural traditions, self-evident moral principles, technical skills” (Horster, 1992, p.22).

Thus, for Mead, as for Habermas, language is the medium that draws all participants in the interaction into the communication community; it socialises the individuals, and at the same time, obliges the members to become individuals.

Mezirow (1991) in his discussion of Habermas, furthers the discussion of the lifeworld as the symbolically pre-structured world which is “culturally transmitted and linguistically organised stock of interpretive patterns”

(Habermas, 1984, p. 302) or perspectives. It is the world that is made up of “unquestioned assumptions and shared cultural convictions, including codes, norms, roles, social practices, psychological patterns of dealing with others, and individual skills” (Habermas, 1984, p. 69). It is considered to be a foundation from which learners can start negotiating common definitions of situations. Habermas identifies three processes by which the lifeworld can be reproduced – cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation – all of which have important links to the function of communicative action.

This conception of the ‘lifeworld’ is an important reference to Mezirow’s understanding of ‘meaning schemes’ and ‘meaning perspectives’. He defines the former as habitual, implicit rules for interpreting the world and the latter refers to the “structure of assumptions within which new experience is assimilated and transformed by one’s past experience during the process of interpretation” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 2). Thus, through meaning perspectives, an individual interprets one’s experience of the lifeworld.

Habermas’s second dynamic of communicative action involves the transformative nature of the learning process, which for Habermas can be achieved through critical reflection. Only through critically reflecting on one’s actions (communicative practice), is the power of the lifeworld diminished. Such critical reflection, suggest Habermas, is the process of validity testing – the process of dialogue in which “contents can be challenged through argumentative discourse that raises questions of truth, justice, and self-deception respectively” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 70). Habermas (1984) highlights four forms of discourse: *Explicative discourse* which is related to the well-formed and rule-correct symbolic expressions. The second type is *theoretical discourse* – this type has as its subject the knowledge we hold about the world that can be validated by empirical tests. Theoretical discourse is the most institutionalised and sophisticated, because it manifests itself in the development of scientific institutions and modes of argumentation (Lyytinent & Hirschheims, 1988).

The third type of discourse – *practical discourse*, “pertains to utterances that involve social norms, ideals, values, and moral decisions” (Mezirow 1991, p. 70). According to Habermas, such discourse is a rigorous form of the argumentative development of an informed opinion that can guarantee the correctness of a normative consensus. In practical discourse, disputed norms only meet with approval if the rules of discourse are obeyed – that is, when consensus is achieved through rational dialogue. The fourth type of discourse – *Therapeutic discourse*, involves feelings or intent, both of which pertain to a person’s subjectivity. Such speech acts can be challenged for their authenticity.

Habermas (1984) argues that it is through the manifestation of these four types of discourse that discursive action, is realised and thus offers the possibility to transform meaning schemes and perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). Such discourse offers the possibility to critically reflect on the lifeworld and “decentre” oneself away from an egocentric understanding of the world towards a progressive willingness and ability to participate in rational argument about the validity of what is communicated (Mezirow, 1991).

Finally in *The dynamics of communicative action*, Habermas discusses the self-regulating system of society and social interaction. Society generates its lifeworld; some with limited and closed worldviews (traditional societies) and others (like in most modern cultures) offer more open worldviews with more possibility for their members to modify their meaning perspectives in the light of their experiences.

Habermas makes a point on the need to develop the institutions that tend to promote narrow worldviews, and the communicative competence of its members to secure an effective functioning of the public sphere in which critical discourse acts as the basis for achieved agreement. This ties nicely with Paulo Freire’s concept of ‘conscientização’, a requirement for self-affirmation.

This dynamic is crucial for this study that looks at a profession that tends to promote conformity – a barrier to fostering critical reflective dialogue among its

members. Teachers are often looked at as technicians, whose lifeworld is ‘colonized’, leading “to distortion of the rational decision making and adult learning processes”. (Mezirow, 1991)

2.2.1.3.2 The Domains of Adult Learning

In his paper entitled “A critical theory of adult learning and education”, published in the journal *Adult Education* (1981) and later restated in his book *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, published in 1991 Mezirow discusses Habermas’ conception of the three generic, “knowledge constitutive” domains of adult learning. Habermas identifies three domains that generate knowledge, determine categories and modes of discovering knowledge. They establish whether knowledge claims are warranted.

The three learning domains – the technical, the practical and the emancipatory are grounded in different aspects of social existence: work, interaction and power respectively. Each would require fundamentally different methodologies of systematic objective inquiry (see figure 1 below):

Type of Human Interest	Kind of Knowledge	Aspects of Social Existence	Research Methods
Technical	Instrumental (Casual explanation)	Work	Empirical-analytic methods
Practical	Practical (Understanding)	Interaction	Hermeneutic Methods
Emancipatory	Emancipatory (Reflection)	Power	Critical theory methods

Figure 1: Habermas three domains of knowledge (modified from MacIsaac, 1996).

The first type of human interest, according to Habermas, is the technical interest. This refers to the way one controls and manipulates one's environment ("work"). Such a cognitive domain requires instrumental action (or in the case of controlling or manipulating people, "strategic") that is based upon empirically acquired knowledge and governed by technical rules. This form of learning "is essentially about getting the skills and information necessary to construct systems and devise methods for making those systems work" (Jesson and Newman, 2004, p. 261).

Instrumental action always involves prediction about observable events that can then be proved or disapproved. Thus hypothesis are confirmed through a system monitoring feedback. The empirical-analytic sciences have been developed expressly to assist us in understanding those interests that are related to work. Thus such interests are verified through an approach using hypothetical-deductive theories and permitting the deduction of empirical generalizations from hypothesis through controlled observation and experimentation.

The second cognitive interest is what Habermas calls "practical". This area of practical interest involves interaction or "communicative action". Communicative action:

"... is governed by binding consensual norms, which define reciprocal expectations about behaviour and which must be understood and recognized by at least two acting subjects. Social norms are enforced through sanctions. Their meaning is objectified in ordinary language communication. While the validity of technical rules and strategies depends on that of empirically true or analytically correct propositions, the validity of social norms is grounded only in the inter-subjectivity of the mutual understanding of intentions and secured by the general recognition of obligations. (Habermas, 1971, p. 92)

Communicative action has as its aim the clarification of conditions for communication and inter-subjectivity – “systematic inquiry which seeks the understanding of meaning rather than to establish causality”. (Mezirow, 1981)

Habermas concerns himself with the conditions under which universally valid claims might be expected to emerge. The first of these is that all members of a community are free to accept the proposed norms and procedures and must be rationally motivated, thus members must be free and un-coerced (Habermas 1989-90).

A related condition is equality. This means that all participants have an equal voice in the discussion regarding proposed norms and procedure. In particular, consensus emerges here as a requirement – the un-coerced agreement of all who are affected by a proposed norm or procedure (Habermas, 1989-90).

Mezirow (1991) explains that under these conditions, participants will:

- have accurate and complete information;
- be free from coercion and distorting self-deception;
- be able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively;
- be open to alternative perspectives;
- be able to become critically reflective upon presuppositions and their consequences;
- have equal opportunity to participate (including the chance to challenge, question, refute, and reflect and to hear others do the same) and
- be able to accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity. (pp. 77 -78)

Such conditions will help adult learners become critically reflective of the meaning perspectives. They arrive at a higher level of development and advanced meaning perspectives. At such a stage of development a perspective is

based upon complete information, free from coercion and open to alternative perspectives. It is also open to accept others as equal participants in discourse, objective and rational, critically reflective and able to accept an informed and rational consensus as the authority for judging conflicting validity claims (Mezirow, 1991, p. 78).

Interpretive (or communicative) learning in Habermas's theory involves social norms. "The focus here is on people, what they are and how they relate, on symbolic interaction, on society and social history." (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 261). Mezirow (1991) explains that this communicative action "allows us to relate to the world around us, to other people, and to our own intentions, feelings, and desires" (p.65). While this communicative action is taking place, a specific meaning – emerging from a tacit consensus agreed upon between members of a particular group – is being scrutinised for validity claims (Giddens in Bernstein, 1985, p.99 cited in Mezirow 1991). Mezirow (2000) explains:

“...understanding in communicative learning requires that we assess the meanings behind the words; the coherence, truth, and appropriateness of what is being communicated; the truthfulness and qualifications of the speaker; and the authenticity of expressions of feelings. That is, we must become critically reflective of the assumptions of the person communicating” (p.9).

Mezirow further explains that while in instrumental learning, all action is judged by its technical success in meeting one's objectives (e.g. use a teaching tactic that results in children learning); in communicative learning, one judges by one's success in coming to an understanding concerning the issue at hand. Thus “learning may involve a transformation in frame of reference in either of the (two) domains”, explains Mezirow (2000, p.9).

The third area of human interest according to Habermas is the “emancipatory”. The emancipatory interest is what challenges distorted meaning perspectives through a process of self-reflection. Thus, what distinguishes emancipatory

knowledge from the other two knowledge sources is its origin from critical self-reflection, thus it is knowledge, which “is appraisive rather than prescriptive or designative” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 87). This domain helps us understand the psychological and cultural assumptions that constrain the way we see the world and this influences the way we think, feel and act.

Emancipatory knowledge acts on forces which include the misconceptions, ideologies, and psychological distortions entrenched from prior knowledge “that produce or perpetuate unexamined relations of dependence. Habermas sustains that emancipatory interest has as its major constituent element ‘critical reflection’. Thus, emancipatory knowledge involves an interest in self-knowledge. Such self-knowledge, which comes as a result of self-reflection and self-awareness, emancipates us through awareness of the origins and reasons behind one’s problems, a step towards achieving rational control over one’s life. Therefore this form of learning is metacognitive in nature because “we learn not only to see the world more clearly but also to see ourselves seeing the world.” (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 261)

Mezirow (1996; 2000) explains that transformation theory views this third domain as pertaining to both instrumental and communicative learning domains. Mezirow renames this ‘domain’ as reflective discourse – “that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief.” (Mezirow et al., 2000, pp. 10-11)

2.3 Main concepts of transformative learning theory

What follows is a discussion of the main concepts underlying the theory of transformative learning as expounded by Mezirow. In the discussion above we discussed how these conceptualisations emerge in the work of three important thinkers whose work influenced philosophical and sociological thought in the last few decades. Mezirow’s theory, grounded in these traditions, espouses a process of transformation, which leads the learner, from a moment of

disorientation to a moment of transformative self-reflection that results in a perspective transformation.

2.3.1 Disorienting Dilemma

The 'disorienting dilemma' was one of Mezirow's original findings. In his seminal work, on the factors that impede or facilitate women's progress in re-entry programmes for women, after a period away from formal education or the workforce, Mezirow assigned a disorienting dilemma as one of the major phases that such adult learners go through in their "personal transformation".

Taylor & Elias (2012) defines a 'disorienting dilemma' as "experiences [that] illuminate and challenge heretofore invisible and unquestioned assumptions that determine how we know ourselves and the world around us" (p. 150). Mezirow believes that a 'disorienting dilemma' is triggered by a life crisis or a major transition. It causes a personal transformation, which later was revised to perspective transformation (Imel, 1998). Boyd (1989) argues that for transformation to be possible, "the resolution of a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness" would need to result in greater personality integration (p.459). According to Boyd and Myers (1988), a major critical phase which can be considered as a disorienting dilemma, is grieving. Grieving takes place "when an individual realises that old patterns or ways of perceiving are no longer relevant..." (Imel, 1998). Such a disorientation would move the agent "to adopt or establish new ways, and finally, integrates old and new patterns" (Imel, 1998). According to Mezirow (1978), such dilemmas "cannot be resolved by simply acquiring more information, enhancing problem solving skills, or adding to one's competencies" (p.108), but through "a learning process by which the subject moves from an unexamined way of thinking to a more examined and critical reflective way" (Mezirow, 1999). Clark (1993) in her study on the impact of context on the process of perspective transformation suggests, that a trigger can go beyond a single moment or a single emotion. It can be caused by what she calls "integrating circumstances". Integrating circumstances are defined as "indefinite periods in which the persons consciously or unconsciously search for

something which is missing in their life; when they find this missing place, the transformation process is catalysed” (pp. 117-118).

2.3.2 Perspective Transformation

“Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of formulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings.” (Mezirow, 1990, p.14)

In his seminal work on women returning to college (1978a, 1978b), Mezirow identified ten phases in the process of transformative learning (see Table 2). He originally contended that they follow a linear process though not always step-wise process (Taylor in Mezirow and Associates, 2000). Other studies (Coffman, 1989; Elias, 1993; Holt, 1994; Laswell, 1994; Neuman, 1996; Saavedra, 1995; Taylor, 1994 cited by Taylor in Mezirow and Associates, 2000) show “the process of perspective transformation to be more recursive, evolving, and spiralling in nature” (Taylor in Mezirow, 2000, p. 290). Yet another ‘correction’ to the original ten phase process came from Coffman (1989 cited by Taylor in Mezirow and Associates, 2000) who suggested that the second phase in Mezirow’s process “should be replaced with more inclusive feelings of intense surprise, not just limited to feelings of guilt or shame” (Taylor in Mezirow, 2000, p. 291). Morgan (1987 cited in Taylor 1997) claims that the ‘most universal and profound stage’ is “anger”. This intense feeling of anger, claims Morgan, needs to be resolved before the participant can move on.

Phase 1	A disorienting dilemma
Phase 2	A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
Phase 3	A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic

	assumptions
Phase 4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
Phase 5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
Phase 6	Planning of a course of action
Phase 7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
Phase 8	Provisional trying of new roles
Phase 9	Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
Phase 10	A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

Table 2: Mezirow's ten phases of Transformative Learning

Therefore perspective transformation is a recursive, spiral (Taylor in Mezirow and Associates, 2000) and cumulative process (Pope 1996 cited in Taylor, in Mezirow and Associates, 2000) that spreads over a period of time, "whereby many meaning schemes change over time culminating in a perspective transformation" (Taylor cited in Mezirow 2000, p.291 – 292). Mezirow (1990) also posits that perspective transformation may take place on a personal, individual level; a group or/and collectively, such as what happens in wide spread movements.

In Taylor's review of the research on transformative learning theory (Mezirow and Associates, 2000), Taylor points to the possible regressive aspect of transformation. In the journey of transformation one needs to explore the process of change over a number of years and how an individual who has responded to a transformative experience would, in a particular moment in time regress to a previous stage of behaving and acting.

In his 1991 review of his ten-phase process, Mezirow suggests another phase between phases eight and nine, “renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships” (Baumgartner, 2012, p. 106). Mezirow also emphasised the importance of critical self-reflection, and the constructivist assumptions that “meaning is individualistic and found inside ourselves” (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 113) and “that personal meanings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through human interaction and communication” (Mezirow, 1991a, p. xiv). Thus, while social interaction and social goals formed a part of Mezirow’s earlier exposition, Baumgartner (2012) explains that, it was only later (Mezirow, 1991), as a response to critiques of his work, that he expanded his theory to include with more emphasis the role of social transformation and social action as “the essential objective of all transformative learning” (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 206).

2.3.3 Critical reflection and Critical self-reflection

Freire influenced Mezirow’s conceptualisation of critical self-reflection through his understanding of conscientization. Conscientization, as discussed earlier, comes about through the process of developing critical awareness – such critical awareness leads educators to get past what he calls “instilled certainty”, which prohibits one to move away from the status quo and transform practice to affirm the needs of the students.

Freire refers to the three stages of ‘consciousness growth’, which culminates in critical thought (Shor 1993). The lowest being, ‘intransitive thought’ (when a person feels that one’s life is out of control and that change is beyond one – it’s up to fate or God); ‘semitransitive’ (this stage involves some thought and action for change – addresses one problem at a time and as they occur, thus not seeing the global view – lacks complexity - follows a leader); and ‘critical transitivity’ (at this stage a person thinks globally and critically about their present condition and decides to take action for change).

Mezirow expounds on this latter stage to inform his main notions that form his theory (disorienting dilemma, critical consciousness, critical reflection, critical self-reflection on assumptions, and critical discourse) (Mezirow, 1978a, 1978b, 1985).

According to Mezirow (1991a, 2000, 2012) critical self-reflection can bring about transformation of a frame of reference that comprises habits of mind and subsequent points of views. A habit of mind is a set of assumptions that are broad, generalised, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). Mezirow (1991a) originally highlighted three habits of the mind; epistemic (knowledge of how a person uses acquired or possessed knowledge); sociolinguistic (how one uses language in a social setting); and psychological (how a person perceives oneself). Later, in *Learning as transformation: Critical Perspectives on a theory in Progress* (2000), he lists a variety of perspectives such as moral-ethical (conscience and moral norms); philosophical (religious doctrine, philosophy, transcendental world view); and aesthetic (values, tastes, attitudes, standards, and judgement about what is beautiful, sublime and ugly).

Critical self-reflection leads to four types of learning (or transformation); learning through elaborating existing frames of reference; learning new frames of reference; learning through transforming habits of the mind and finally learning through transforming points of view. It is to be noted that an individual can change a point of view “by trying on another’s point of view” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 21). But, according to Mezirow, one cannot try on someone else’s beliefs (or habit of mind). Thus, while as educators and trainers, one can aspire to change someone’s point of view, through sharing of good practice, transformation of a habit of mind needs to come from within the learner him/herself.

Mezirow expounded on this active notion of critical reflection and proposed three types of reflection: content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. The first two types lead to what Mezirow calls straightforward

transformation – transformation which results from asking questions “what was done in the past” and “considering actions’ origins and related factors” (Kitchenham, 2008). The third type of reflection leads to more profound transformation, Premise reflection, which is achieved through considering the larger picture.

In the latter type of reflection a person evaluates one’s own value system, that which underlies one’s actions to question the basic premise of one’s actions. Such action will lead to a more comprehensive and global re-evaluation of ones practice (transformation of meaning perspective). The previous two stages bring about a change in single meaning scheme.

Over the years, Mezirow continued to refine his understanding of critical reflection and presented two new aspects. One was the critical reflection of assumptions, “whereby the learner not only looks back on something that occurred but also examines the assumptions or presuppositions that were involved in the reflection process” (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 115-116). The other aspect was that related to the concept of critical self-reflection of assumptions. This involves “a critique of a premise upon which the learner has defined a problem” (Mezirow, 1998b, p 186 cited in Kitchenham, 2008, p 116). Thus, the latter notion is akin to what Mezirow earlier referred to, as premise reflection in which “learners examine their worldview in light of their own particular belief or value system” (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 116).

The discussion above focused on the process of transformation as amplified by Jack Mezirow in his theory of transformative learning. Here we explored the different phases, which an adult learner, in our study an adult educator, goes through, when seeking to learn and thus goes through a transformative learning experience. In the next section we will discuss yet another theory, which also puts emphasis on the role of reflection in the process of surfacing one’s hidden and often taken-for-granted set of beliefs that drive one’s actions. This will lead us to a discussion of a proposal for a professional development strategy that builds on reflective practice.

2.4 Reflective Practice

Many have taken up Mezirow's claim for critical reflection and critical self-reflection. Literature dealing with change, in particular, organisational and cultural change has been numerous. It is also claimed that there can be no organisational change without individual change, unless a "dialogue about change absorbs the whole community". (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004, p. xi)

The need for creating spaces for self-reflection and dialogue has also been emphasised in Michael Fullan's work *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001). In this publication he reports on an Early Years Literacy Project in one of Toronto's districts. When teachers were asked what they wanted in future sessions, they highlighted three main requests, the need for more knowledge about practice and strategies to make things happen; being able to hear what others are doing in respect to the project and finally a reflective process where teachers would be able to reflect on their own personal practices and then relate them to the broader picture of what others are doing.

The importance of dialogue as a form of collective reflection, that follows personal or self-reflection, has been considered by many as an important tool for changing the underlying beliefs about teaching and learning (Elmore, 1992; Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey 1996). This brought Michael Fullan to propose a conceptual change in terminology regarding the practice of continuous professional development. In the publication entitled *Breakthrough* (Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006), Michael Fullan and associates claim that professional development or even professional learning communities are too conceptually narrow and they suggests the term professional learning, emphasising learning as an ongoing pursuit for each and every teacher. Such professional learning is believed to allow practitioners the space for reflecting on practice, and as a community, build strategies appropriate to the needs of the community.

Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) also problematised various professional development models and proposed a model built on reflective practice leading to

a perspective transformation that leads to informed learning. These authors define reflective practice as “a meaningful and effective professional development strategy... a way of thinking that fosters personal learning, behavioural change, and improved performance” (p. 1). This proposed model is based on the premise that organisational change begins with the individual who, through active reflection, is able to locate a discrepancy between one’s behaviour informed by the so-called ‘dominant culture of schooling’, and the desired results. Through this realisation, the individual is open to finding new ‘theories’ and practices that may lead to a desired outcome.

Osterman & Kottkamp insist that reflective practice goes beyond reflection as simply analysis. It is “a systematic and comprehensive data-gathering process” (2004, p. 65). Reflective practice is presented as an experiential learning cycle, including problem identification, observation and analysis, abstract reconceptualisation, and active experimentation (York-Barr et al, 2006). George Sparks-Langer and Amy Colton made a very similar suggestion in two of their papers (1991 and 1994 respectively). Sparks-Langer and Colton introduce a Framework for Developing Teacher Reflection, this includes the need to gather information about an experience or event; conduct analysis by considering multiple influencing variables; form a hypothesis; and test the hypotheses through implementation (York-Barr et. al, 2006). In both models the need to move from analysis to implementation is accentuated. Thus while on reflection it would be enough to analyse a situation, reflective practice requires the practitioner to actively experiment with new ideas and prove or disprove a hypothesis.

Reflective practice allows the practitioner to expose and surface those deeply hidden, often taken for granted, culturally transmitted set of beliefs, that inform our actions, and transform them to actions engrained in a new perspective informed by new assumptions and attributions on the learners under their care (Mezirow 2012; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Kottkamp & Silverberg, 2003).

Osterman & Kottkamp insist that due to the nature of our behavioural patterns and the tacit nature of our assumptions, it is difficult to develop a critical perspective on our behaviour if not in a collegial setting. They claim “analysis in a collaborative environment is likely to lead to greater learning” (2004, p. 65). Such a condition requires trust and openness of communication. Therefore the role of any facilitator is to build an environment in which individuals feel safe and assured that their openness “will not lead to unpleasant consequences in the group or the organisation” (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004, p.71).

Karen Osterman and Robert Kottkamp’s model of reflective practice is rooted in the work of Argyris and Schon (Argyris, 1982; 1993; Argyris & Schon, 1974). Argyris and Schon insist that for real changes in behaviour, one needs to examine and modify one’s mental models. They claim that these mental models are informed by the assumptions and beliefs we hold about how things should and do work (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Thus each individual has two fountains of ‘knowledge’ from which action feeds. Argyris & Schon propose that apart from espoused theories which we have presumed for long guide our actions, the real motivators are the hidden, often pervasive assumptions and beliefs that really thrust our actions. These ‘theories’ (theories-in-use) develop through acculturation – shaped over a life span to help us function in an otherwise complex world, efficiently.

Argyris & Schon propose what they called ‘double-loop learning’. This “involves questioning the role of the framing and learning systems which underlie actual goals and strategies” (User and Bryant 1989). The emphasis on reflection here is accentuated, thus, basic assumptions behind ideas or policies are confronted, hypothesis are publicly tested and processes are disconfirmable not self-seeking (Argyris 1982, pp. 103-104). Thus double-loop learning, according to Argyris and Schon “occurs when error is detected and correction in way that involve the modification of an organisation’s underlying norms, policies and objectives” (Argyris and Schon 1978, p. 2-3).

This is in contrast to single-loop learning where the emphasis is on “technique and making techniques more efficient” (Usher and Bryant 1989, p. 87) and where reflection is seen as a vehicle for making the strategy more effective. In other words, goals and values are operationalised rather than questioned.

This led these two researchers to present two models that describe features of theories-in-use that either inhibit or enhance double-loop learning. Table 3 below summarises the characteristics of these two models.

MODEL I ³	MODEL II ⁴
<p><i>Governing values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve the purpose as the actor defines it • Win, do not lose • Suppress negative feelings • Emphasise rationality <p><i>Primary Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control environment and task unilaterally • Protect self and others unilaterally <p><i>Operationalised by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unillustrated attributions and evaluations e.g.. "You seem unmotivated" • Advocating courses of action that discourage inquiry e.g.. "Lets not talk about the past, that's over." • Treating one's own views as obviously correct • Making covert attributions and evaluations • Face-saving moves such as leaving potentially embarrassing facts unstated <p><i>Consequences include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive relationships • Low freedom of choice • Reduced production of valid information • Little public testing of ideas 	<p><i>Governing values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid information • Free and informed choice • Internal commitment <p><i>Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing control • Participation in design and implementation of action <p><i>Operationalised by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attribution and evaluation illustrated with relatively directly observable data • Surfacing conflicting views • Encouraging public testing of evaluations <p><i>Consequences include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimally defensive relationships • High freedom of choice • Increased likelihood of double-loop learning

Table 3: Contrasting Models I and II (adopted from Smith, M. K. 2001)

Thus while the former meta-theory-in-use is based on a set of values and assumptions that emphasise private thought and unilateral control; Model II, in contrast, is based on an antithetical set of values and assumptions that emphasise collaborative problem solving, communication and open access to valid information (Osterman and Kottkamp, 2004). The role of reflective practice, in the scenario of Model II, is to help educators look for valid

³ Model 1 is taken from Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith (1985, p. 89)

⁴ Model 2 is taken from Anderson 1997

information, make informed choices with internal commitment for change. Professional learning based on reflective practice is a collaborative experience in which the participants are actively involved in the design and implementation of action. Professional learning should provide participants with opportunities to evaluate observable data from practice, encourage the surfacing of conflicting views and create a safe environment where open exploration and testing of ideas takes place in a community (Argyris and Schon 1996, Osterman and Kottkamp 2004, Bulman and Deal 1997, Anderson 1997 and Elmore 2004).

What follows is a discussion of literature regarding a specific process of self-awareness and professional learning, namely, the Let Me Learn process (LMLp). The LMLp, as explained by Osterman and Kottkamp (2004), is a process which engages the learner in reflective practice and enables the learner to experience double-loop learning about learning itself.

2.5 The development of the Let Me Learn process - An Advanced Learning System

Concerned with a lack of clarity and sound theoretical base pervading the study of learning (Hattie, 2012), Christine Johnston and colleagues (Johnston 1994; 1996; 1997; 2002; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; Calleja & Borg, 2006; Buchaman, 2005; Campbell, 2005; Calleja, 1998; Dawkins, 2008; Freese, 1999; Hayes 1996; Henry, 2003; Johnston & Johnston, 1997; 1998; Kottkamp, 2002; Kottkamp, 2006; Kottkamp and Silverberg, 1999; Marcellino, 2000; McSweeney 2005; Nichols, 2002; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Maher & Slotnick [in print]; Pearle 2001) sought to understand the learning process as a function of the brain-mind connection, and accessible to the learner to be used with intention (Johnston, 2009).

This model builds on the latest research in cognitive psychology, the brain-mind connection, and metacognition. This gives practitioners and learners a theoretical foundation for a renewed practice that leads to successful learning (Johnston, 2009).

During the past 20 years, Johnston and colleagues have converged earlier thoughts on learning including Piaget (1952), Jung (1923), Flavell (1980), Skinner (1989), Kant (1988), Snow & Jackson (1992), Keefe & Languis (1983); MacLearn (1978) and others (see Johnston, 1996) as well as the work of Bruer (1994), Dien et al (2008), and Flavell et al (2000) who have sought to decipher the brain-mind connection. The work of Johnston and others has yielded “insights into intentional learning... the development of a unique set of learning tools, and an array of practical skills, and a set of terms to equip learners of all ages to communicate to others about their individual learning process” (Johnston, 2009, p. 1). What follows is an examination of the theoretical, psychometric and practical application of this model.

2.5.1 Capturing the Interactive Learning Model

Originally Christine Johnston (1994, 1996) and Johnston & Dainton (2005), conceptualised a model of learning built on the tripartite theory of the mind (cognition, conation and affectation), an aspect that received attention from various perspectives and fields of study. Philosophers (Plato and Kant), cognitive psychologists (Jung, 1923 and Snow & Jackson, 1992) and research in brain-based learning (MacLean, 1978) are just a few examples.

Johnston (1994) developed a set of theoretical constructs which, emphasises the interactiveness of the mental operations, that is, cognition, conation and affectation respectively, and attributes specific behaviours to their internal interaction within each of four discreet operational processes termed learning patterns, and designated as Sequence, Precision, Technical Reasoning and Confluence (Johnston & Dainton, 2005).

According to Johnston’s conceptualisation, cognitive processing occurs within each of the four operational patterns in the form of mental activity, memory, range of experiences, and level of abstraction and concreteness. Within these same four operational patterns is found conative performing, which manifests itself as autonomy, pace, and engaged energy. Finally the four operational

learning processes consist of affectation from which comes a sense of self-worth as a learner and all attendant emotive responses to learning.

Johnston (1996) further refers to these operational patterns as “patterned action tendencies”, a phrase borrowed from Philips (1936). Johnston (1994) also posits that it is, “a composite of all four (of these operational processes) which make up an individual’s interactive learning process” (p.5).

In later presentations (2005, 2006) and publications (2007, 2009) Johnston has continued to refine the theoretical underpinning of the model through an explanation of the brain-mind connection. This development or amplification of the theory attempts to clarify further the role of the patterns as filters that sift the data channelled through our sensory stimulus.

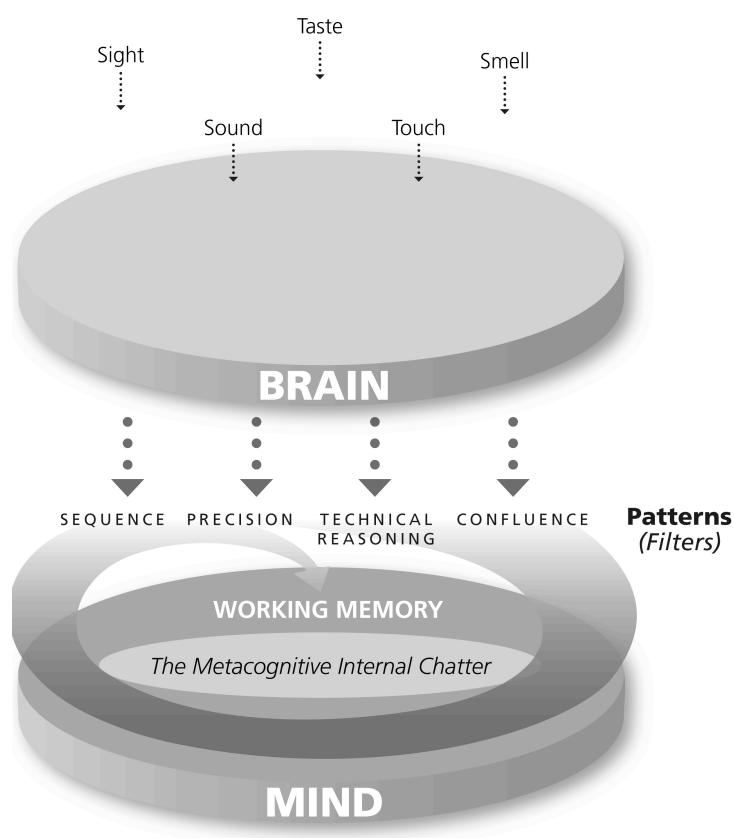


Figure 2: Brain-Mind Connection

© 2010 Let Me Learn, Inc. Used here with permission.

According to this representation the journey begins with the senses that serve as the first line receptors that initiate learning. According to Johnston's representation, stimuli enter the brain travelling through its complex neuro-circuitry. Within the brain's electrochemical processing, the stimuli are processed and ultimately enter the brain-mind interface where the stimuli are filtered by an individual's operational learning processes. Depending upon the make-up of the operational processes, the stimuli are blocked, welcomed, or given limited access to continue on their way to operate within the mind and memory. The stimuli that make it through the interface are then translated into symbolic representations and passed to our working memory to become a part of our consciousness (declarative memory) or sub-consciousness (non-declarative memory) (Johnston, 2009; Squire & Zola, 1996).

These observable, individually patterned, stable-over-time learning behaviours help an individual "take in the world around them and make sense of it" (Johnston, 2007, p. 1). In order to be able to empirically determine which operational pattern(s) we choose to Use First; which one(s) we Avoid (do not use unless forced); which one(s) we Use As Needed. Johnston & Dainton in 1994 developed a 28-item, self-report instrument, the Learning Combination Inventory (LCI), later renamed the Learning Connections Inventory. This instrument uses the scale scores derived from the Likert force-choice responses and the open-ended responses to provide qualitative confirmation of the respondent's level of use of each pattern (Johnston, 2004, p. 7). Johnston contends that it is this knowledge of one's own learning processes that makes it possible for an individual to develop personalised strategies that direct the path of his own learning. Such knowledge is also important for strategised and intentional learning (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

2.5.2 Validation process of the instrument - The Learning Connections Inventory

A common concern is the lack of empirical evidence supporting the models' claims and the implication for pedagogy and impact on students' learning (Coffield et al, 2004b). Johnston shared the same concerns, and therefore as early as 2004, she published a framework consisting of four keystone questions to be used as a means of determining the viability of an authentic learning model. The questions were the following:

1. Does the model consist of a robust and inclusive conceptualisation of the brain, the mind, and the relationship and function of each to the other in an explanation of learning – a sound theoretical foundation?
2. Does the model include a comprehensive lexicon of terms that would provide a means of communicating one's experience of learning with others – a true pedagogical tool?
3. Does the explanation of learning foster a learner's responsibility – Impact on the process of learning?
4. Is there empirical evidence revealing a measurable difference in the behaviour of learners who use the model– Impact on the learners?

The first criteria or aspect was reviewed and discussed in some detail above. What follows is an analysis of Johnston's model with respect to the three remaining criteria.

2.5.3 A lexicon of terms

The concept of metacognition as introduced by Flavell (1979) as a tool for a learner to regulate one's learning, emphasises three equally important categories of knowledge: knowledge of self, knowledge of the task variables, and knowledge of strategy. All three categories call for a common and comprehensive lexicon of terms that would facilitate communication between the learner and the learning environment.

According to Osterman & Kottkamp (2004), the learning construct proposed by Johnston introduces the learner “to a lexicon of terms that can then be practically applied to teaching metacognitive/reflective skills”. The lexicons of terms include the learning patterns and the psychological functions of cognition (thinking), conation (doing) and affectation (feeling) as associated to one’s particular profile.

In addition to the terminology associated with the self-awareness and validation of an individual’s learning profile, this advanced learning system provides related terminology of metacognition – or what Johnston refers to as the ‘metacognitive drill’ (Johnston & Dainton, 2005). This drill aims to help “learners control their four learning patterns while engaging in a learning task” (Johnston, 2009, p. 17). This according to Maher & Slotnick (in print), “enhances the process of task analysis and the related strategic choices” (p. 14). The terms associated with the drill are: Mull, Connect, Rehearse, Express, Assess, Reflect, and Revisit. According to Johnston (2009), “all of these terms foster real-time double-loop learning” (p. 17). Therefore such a process would allow the learner to reflect on one’s response and then consciously and intentionally adjust one’s reaction to the task demands. Once learners are aware of the dynamics of their personalised combination of patterns they can then manage the impact of their response to the demands of each learning task or challenge (Calleja & Montebello, 2007; Johnston, 2009).

2.5.4 Learner’s Responsibility

Johnston’s main concern is whether a learning model fosters learner’s responsibility to develop an awareness of one’s potential for developing a learning path suited to one’s learning profile. In her research on implementing the Let Me Learn Process in higher education, Pearle (2001) suggests that rather than focusing on instruction, educators should focus on “how learning occurs, and how to use understanding of learning with intention” (p. 2). Harvey (2004) also working with higher education emphasises the importance of giving the learner the skills to control *how* to make learning work, hence ensuring a more

powerful and positive learning experience, regardless of the instructional approach used. For this purpose Johnston and colleagues working in K-12 and higher education classrooms, developed what is called a strategy card (LML, 2010). Through this tool a learner reflects and generates practical strategies conducted in response to a specific learning task or expectation (Maher & Slotnick, 2012). Through the strategy card, learners first describe in practical terms how they use their learning patterns basing their description on their validated LCI scale scores. In the next stage, learners use the four-patterned combination to analyse a task's demands. Finally learners identify specific strategies to tackle the demands of the task as well as their own knowledge of their ability to utilise each pattern and the appropriate aspects of the metacognitive drill (Johnston, 2009). This will therefore allow learners to develop life-long learning skills and strategies while acting on the task at hand (Johnston & Dainton, 2004a).

This does not preclude the use of this awareness for a more intentional, strategized pedagogy that would help educators to plan their lessons with intention. Calleja and Montebello (2006) propose two metacognitive models based on Johnston's model – one highlighting the learner as an intentional performer, in which one decodes the task in terms of the operational patterns and decides whether one needs to intensify, forge or modify the personal set of patterns to perform a task at hand. The second model proposes a strategy for the teacher to plan with intention – thus going through the same process as the learner but this time with an emphasis on modification to support the learner in the process of learning. This collaborates Coffield & colleagues' propositions that a learning model should emphasise both the pedagogy and the learning process (2004a).

2.5.5 Developing a reliable and valid Instrument

Coffield et al (2004a; 2004b) and others (Sewall 1986; Curry 1987 and Bedford, 2004; Hattie, 2012) criticised the lack of empirical evidence supporting many of the learning styles' models. These authors also insist on the importance of

providing evidence that there is impact on pedagogy when applying a model of learning. Johnston presents, together with others, data to validate both the instrument and the effect of the process of learning.

Johnston, aware of the criticism and advice of researchers in the field, ensured a rigorous process of validation and reliability throughout the development of the Learning Connections Inventory, through multiple measures of validity and reliability (Johnston & Dainton, 2004). The first pilot inventory was constructed with repeated key phrases and students reported experiences collected from three previous studies (Johnston, 1994; 1993; Johnston & Dainton, 1994a and Johnston & Dainton, 1994b) during which time the researchers observed overt learning behaviours as they related to the constructs of action control theory, self-regulated learning, and action schema.

This first draft of the instrument was field-tested with 80 students (Johnston, 1994; Johnston & Dainton, 1994a). After careful analysis of the piloted responses and refinement of the pilot instrument a second iteration was conducted with over two thousand students in thirteen Private, Public, and Parochial school districts in New Jersey. Mean scores were calculated for each item and the item correlation matrix was factor analysed, and items, which did not load conceptually or psychometrically (with a minimum factor loading of .34), were eliminated.

A second analysis resulted in retaining four factors with Eigenvalues from 4.54 to 1.18 and explaining 47% of the variance. A second order factor analysis was then performed on the four first order factors or sub-scales. The four-factor solution after varimax rotation yielded two well-defined factors and a third factor which loaded on two subscales. While the first two were interpreted as discreet categories of learning connections with a target value of high to moderate (.83 – .55) the third factor required further analysis.

These pilot studies were followed by six separate studies at 16 sites in the United States of America (Johnston, C., 1997), Malta (Borg, 1996), United Kingdom

(Hayes, 1996 and Addy, 1967) and Ireland (Johnston, J. Q., 1996). The sites of this research ranged in size from 240 to 1900 and all covered various socioeconomic and geographical categories with a total population of 5193 participants.

The results from the second pilot study together with the other studies conducted with thousands of students and adults, both in the U.S.A and in other international sites, have led to the development of the current inventory with 28 items.

The adult LCI version has undergone a correlation matrix that was then factor analysed. The results strongly support the factor structure identified in earlier pilot studies. Items loaded on the appropriate subscales had high loadings on only one factor. The interactive dimension as well as the discreteness of each scale held as theoretically expected.

The instruments were further tested for reliability (test-retest studies) (McLaughlin & Angilletta, 1995; Johnston & Capasso, 1995). These studies confirmed not only the reliability of the instrument but also its construct validity which was first identified by the factor analysis when the items behaved as predicted confirming the cohesiveness of the constructs of sequence, precision, technical reasoning and confluence.

As for validity, three tests were conducted, one for content validity, one for construct validity and another for predictive validity. The test for content validity was carried out with 20 teachers teaching at different levels and types of schools. Each educator was given a single sheet of descriptive definitions of the four interactive learning patterns. They were asked to take the definitions, look at each item on the LCI, and identify to which subscale the item referred. Out of 560 possible correct classifications the participants had a 95% rate of correct responses. As claimed by the researchers (Johnston & Dainton, 2004), "the rate of correct responses indicates that the LCI has strong content validity with readily identifiable items comprising the instrument's scales" (p. 12).

The second test, for construct validity used three identical methodologies in three sites. This involved analysis of the match between students' scale scores and their written responses. Three individuals using scoring protocols with an inter-rater reliability of .92 scored the written responses. Each of the 600 respondents' three written responses were assigned numerical values and a correlation was run of the respondents' scale scores to the specific written responses. The correlation for both Form I and II occurred in the predicted directions though not significant on all scales. As the researchers explain, this might be due to students' maturation, since there were better correlations in Form II (older students) than those in Form I (younger students). One needs also to mention that in addition, the two test-retest studies discussed above, were conducted with groups totalling 242 and 803. In each case the data showed that on a scale-by-scale basis, significance at $< .01$ was achieved.

Finally the LCI manual (Johnston and Dainton, 2004) reports the level of predictive validity of the instrument. Two researchers (McLaughlin and Hayes, 1995) sought to confirm the LCI Education Form I and II's predictive validity. Teachers from four different school sites familiar with the concepts underlying the four scales (of sequence, precision, technical reasoning and confluence), had to predict how their students would score on each of the four LCI scales. Teachers' predictions of students' performance was significant on three of the four scales. This ability of the teachers to predict the range of student scale scores, according to the researchers, suggests that the learning patterns of the students are not only observable but also definable in the terms used by the LCI scales. A reason the researchers give for lack of significance in the confluence scale is that, the school culture, "is more rule-oriented where independent or nonconforming behaviour is discouraged" (p. 14) and where confluence is often perceived as lack of attention or lack of cooperation on the part of the learner.

The manual also reports international studies which in total cover over 2000 primary school students from United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Italy, and Malta who participated in tests aimed at confirming the reliability and validity of this instrument. The data from Northern Ireland that has been factor analysed,

confirms the above. From this data, emerging from the international sites, an interesting insight emerged showing that there seems to be common phraseology representative of the characteristics of each learning pattern across all ethnic and geographic locales (Johnston and Dainton, 2004, p. 14).

The previously cited studies address the concerns, which critics raised over the years of learning styles' instruments by illustrating that the tool (LCI) on which the Let Me Learn Process is built, is conceptually driven by a conceptually sound representation of the human learning process and address the issues of reliability and validity by employing methods which empirically test the level of delivery of the conceptualisation of the learning process.

2.5.6 Field-tested empirical evidence

Coffield's team also emphasises the need for empirical evidence supporting the successful implementation of a learning model. While Coffield and colleagues phrase the impact in terms of pedagogical impact, Johnston, on the other hand, is concerned with evidence that learning has been positively impacted. To date numerous studies have been presented and/or published demonstrating the impact of the Let Me Learn Process on learning from a variety of educational and workplace settings. This review will report on some of these studies.

Ruth Power Silverberg (2002) in her Doctoral dissertation documents the experiences of teachers who reported a change in their thinking about students initially perceived as problematic. This study reports that there was major qualitative change in teachers' approach to these children after they had experienced the Let Me Learn Process. Nine elementary teachers of varying ages, grades, and locations provided descriptions of their experiences regarding changes in thinking about problematic students in open, in-depth interviews. This qualitative research study showed "the importance of teachers' 'understanding' of their students and themselves as learners" (abstract). In her summary of the findings, Silverberg reported the teachers' thinking about students whom they defined as problematic as being heavily influenced by the

interaction of their learning patterns with their students' learning patterns, before they had an understanding of the Interactive Learning Model (p. 122). Teachers, according to Silverberg, looked at their problematic students through their own unknown patterns; students who had different patterns had behaviours they couldn't make sense of, so they made attributions that led to responses that didn't work. After this initial observation the study showed that once the teachers became aware of their own patterns and the students' patterns and how these allow for different modes of learning, it allowed "them to reach across their differences and connect with students with whom such a connection had previously seemed impossible" (p. 122).

This study discusses the transformative quality of the change process experienced by the participants, the power of understanding, and the importance of connection in the teaching and learning relationship. This study provided ample evidence that through personal development, teachers' professional development was effected.

Silverberg found that while prior to developing understandings of their own learning patterns and those of their students, teachers assumed and believed that:

- Students should learn the way the teacher teaches;
- Teachers attributed lack of learning to student causes, thus, students who were not learning the way the teacher taught had a character/personality defect or deficient home situation that caused failure to learn;
- Teachers felt that the cause of the problem was outside of their ability, thus there was no point in continuing to try to help the students learn;
- Teachers marginalized students who appeared to not be learning and believed that the problematic behaviour must be modified through a system of consequences.

After developing awareness and skills the teachers

- Became aware of their teaching and that they teach the way they learn. They also realised that since students might learn differently, their teaching might hinder a student's learning thus, they came to the realisation that they need to teach the way they learn , or work with them to discover a way that they can learn .
- Became aware that "if a student is not learning the way I am teaching, it is because the student needs strategies to provide access to the curriculum through his/her learning patterns" (p. 129). Thus the attribution of cause turned on the process and not any longer on the individual.
- Realised the complexity and uniqueness of the students' learning patterns, but felt empowered by the fact that they are "knowable when the students and I share tools and vocabulary for communicating about our own learning patterns" (p. 129).
- Finally the research reported better engagement with students' observed change in behaviour – students that were previously problematic are reduced and the student and his/her peers develop ways to turn disruptive behaviours into valuable contributions.

This study thus showed that the LML process allows teachers to discover their own combination of learning patterns and places them in "the problematic experience with the student" (p. 131), thus the problem is not in the actor but in the learning/teaching interaction. Also the participants indicated that understanding of students and understanding of themselves were linked in their change process.

The study also claims that in line with Mezirow's transformative learning theory, teachers have "described an experience that went beyond a change in thinking about students or a change in perspective. All the participants talked about how important it was to them that their changes in thinking and perspectives led to

an ability to make a connection with students. Eight teachers described a change in their ways of learning about all aspects of their lives” (p. 145).

Terri McSweeney carried out another doctoral study at Hofstra University in 2005. This study reports on the author’s action research project in which she investigates the relationship among teacher beliefs, student achievement, and the development of teacher and student metacognition through the implementation of the Let Me Learn process.

By grounding the Let Me Learn process within the social cognitive theory, the researcher showed how this process aimed to “develop meta-level processes and empower learners with sophisticated learning strategies” (abstract). This study, which spanned over a scholastic year, concluded that while admittedly one year was insufficient to implement the process in its entirety, notwithstanding, it was observed that teachers, through reflection and growing knowledge of their own learning process, improved their understanding of themselves and their students as learners. The study concludes, “Teachers’ self-confrontation with previously formed beliefs about teaching and learning was pivotal in re-conceptualising their classroom role, a state reached by 80% of them”.

Another study offers insight on the effect of this process on the learner. Gregory Haviland Dunham’s doctoral study focuses on the emancipation of the learner through a change in perspective of one’s leadership. It (Mezirow J. &, 2000) shows how this new understanding of the theories forming the style of leadership for learning help the leader “create an environment that would allow me to emancipate those learners that I believed were being held captive by an insensitive and uncaring system” (p. 115). Through the process of emancipation of the learner, the researcher realised yet a personal emancipation:

“The emancipation that I thought I was going to experience for the students in Cycle I, actually turned out to be my own. I was emancipating myself from the previous relationship that I had with the instruction

process. This is why I was able to view these learners through a different lens. This revelation inspired me. I had to do something” (pp. 115 – 116).

The above quote from this study shows how a study which started with the aim of emancipating the students, ended with a realisation of self-emancipation which in turn brought about a change in the learning environment and the whole learning scenario. The above exposition indicates that this is a process with a unique, rich, and scientifically developed conceptual framework that helps educators and learners participate in and benefit from, a reflective practice experience (Osterman and Kottkamp 2004).

2.6 Conclusion

Through a review of the literature on transformative learning, the role of critical reflection, critical self-reflection and reflective practice, and the Let Me Learn process, a knowledge base of how the above themes collaborate to provide effective professional learning is formed. Effective professional development that leads to effective learning is not a touch and go activity to instil information. Good professional learning is one that empowers teachers, who in turn empower students to learn. However, with this understanding, there is a need to further discover the factors leading to transformative learning of teachers and schools. There is also the need to continue exploring the role of a professional learning process, such as the LMLpLp in the said transformation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the research methodology used in this study. The research attempts to capture the nature of the phenomena it will be investigating, highlights the social realities and the entities involved in the process of professional transformation of both the individual professional and the social entity, namely the school, in which the actors perform their function. It tries to present the voices of participants who seek to understand themselves and their lived world (Moustakas, 1994; Richard & Morse 2007).

As a phenomenological study, the research attempts to understand the essence of how participants attend, perceive and interpret the world around them (Richards & Morse 2007). This research tries to explore how teachers, as social actors, attending the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) transform their understanding of their role and agency within their professional practice; how the school (as an entity in which such practice takes place) is also transformed as a result of personal professional transformation of the social actors and in turn continue to act as an agent of transformation through the cultivation and promotion of social professional interaction.

Figure 3 below attempts to illustrate the hypothetical scenario that the research presumes that will take place when teachers attend the professional development process which helps them deconstruct and problematise their practice in light of a renewed understanding of themselves as actors in a process of learning and their role in the learning process of their students. The model also illustrates that as a result of personal transformation of a critical mass of teachers (Rogers, 1995), a community of 'transformed' actors generate a more conducive-to-professional-interaction environment and thus a culture of change is developed within the entity in which these dynamics take place. The dynamics of change between the individual teachers, acting as a community, and the larger

entity in which they learn and practice is mutual. The research will also try to capture the variety of elements that impinge on the social realities of this learning site and explore the complex connections and interactions that result in a transformative experience. The transformation of the actors of this study and their immediate institutional environment should serve the main consumers of the educational institution, namely the students who should benefit from a more conducive to learning setting and a more dynamic teaching staff.

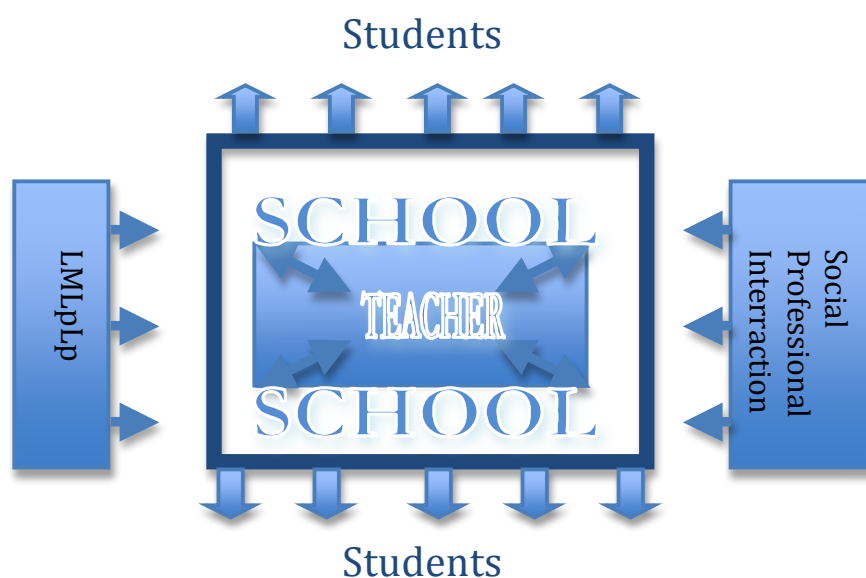


Figure 3: Hypothetical scenario of the transformative learning experience.

This research, attempts to explore the process of transformation of a group of teachers working in a confessional school in Malta. It will explore the evolution of a perspective transformation that takes place as a result of a profound understanding and conceptualisation of the self as a learner. This transformation takes place at three distinct but interconnected dimensions, namely, the cognitive, conative and affective dimensions. These three faculties of the mind, according to Johnston (1996), work alongside each other to begin the integrated process of learning (Johnston 1996).

In addition, through Mezirow's analysis, which has provided a strong conceptualisation for adult learning, the role of metacognitive understanding of the dynamics of learning within the self, as a learner, will be explored. This research emphasises the role of what Johnston terms 'metacognitive chatter' in the process of transformative action of the learning process.

In the previous chapter we discussed at length the development of transformative learning theory, in particular as developed by Jack Mezirow (Mezirow 1978; 1981; 1991; 2012; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). We showed that at a time when literature in adult education "was largely focused on describing a set of educational practices that took-for-granted beliefs about adults as learners, Mezirow called attention to the need for a formal theory of adult learning..." (Kasl and Yorks, 2002, p.1). This research, therefore, puts forward Mezirow's understanding of learning as the process of transforming "our taken-for-granted frames of reference... to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 5-8).

On the other hand, the Let Me Learn Process is believed to equip learners with tools for understanding one's learning path. Through such understanding learners can successfully engage in a personalised meta-analysis of the dynamics of learning, and construct a personalised route to learning. Such a route map would respect the dynamics of learning and help develop personalised strategies for responding to contextualised learning needs of individual learners, and act as guides for future learning.

The process of transformation is considered as a form of deep learning – where actors develop higher-order cognitive skills to construct long-term understanding (Roberts, 2011). Thus the Let Me Learn Process refers to that process by which a learner is equipped with metacognitive, affective and conative skills. Such skills help the learner transform one's taken for granted frames of reference and intentionally decide to change course, congruent to the

new awareness of a perspective previously hidden. Similar to Mezirow's conceptualisation, Let Me Learn insists on the centrality of reflection in bringing to the forefront the dynamics of the learning context and one's own personalised response, thus enabling a process of transformation through self-awareness and intentional response.

Reflection, as understood here, goes beyond rationality as a function of intellectual meta-cognition. It includes the three functions simultaneously: namely cognition, conation and affectation. Each pattern of learning manifests itself on these three platforms realising the person as a whole – thus sustaining that true transformation is not the result of one faculty but the simultaneous interaction of thinking, acting and feeling. Each faculty sustains the other to realise 'change', thus achieving deep learning. Such deep learning is not implicitly reached rationally, but leads to an intentional action that has effectively impacted one's life. Only such change can be sustained over time.

3.2 Research Design

In order to capture the above dynamics this research opted for a qualitative approach, since as Krathwohl (1998) points out, "Qualitative research is especially helpful when it provides us with someone's perceptions of a situation that permits us to understand his or her behaviour" (p. 230). These perceived situations were captured through the use of the interviewing tool, created after careful reading of the literature. According to Kvale (1996, p. 14 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007), an interview has the purpose of interchanging views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Interviews therefore "enable participants – be it the interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 349). The research interview, according to these authors, has three main possible functions:

1. As a principal means of gathering information which has direct bearing on the research objective
2. As a means to test hypothesis or suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships
3. As a tool used together with other tools and methods for validating, to follow-up unexpected results and/or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do.

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 350 – 351)

In this study the interview was used as a tool for gathering information regarding the values, attitudes and beliefs of those who have participated in this LMLpLp process. It tests the hypothesis that the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process has a structure and content which apart from providing knowledge and information regarding application of such a process within the classroom, bring about a perspective transformation within the individual and the school as a community.

Since the purpose of this research was to unearth the beliefs and the feelings of the participants as they experienced the phenomenon, the author opted for a semi-structured interview methodology so as to allow the feelings of individuals as they experienced the process emerge and guide the research agenda. While this type of semi-formal interview, allows the topics and issues to be covered to be specified in advance, it also allows space for the interviewer to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording, explain them if need be and/or add more questions to clarify further the issue being mentioned (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 351). Each interviewee had a few minutes to read the questions. While in theory interviewees had the option to start from whichever question they liked, all participants opted to follow the sequence set by the researcher. This arrangement further allowed for a conversational style that respects the interviewee's pace and need to think over his answers. The interviewer, on the other hand intervened to ask for further clarification, review

with the interviewee certain key data, and add oral notes for identification purposes.

Each interview was then transcribed in full by a third person and translated verbatim into English (where response was given in Maltese) (Appendix 2). For the purpose of analysis the researcher used the English Translation.

Patton (1980) highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of interviews. The interview set for this research falls between what Patton calls Interview guide approach and the Standardised open-ended interview. The exact wording was determined in advance and a tentative sequence of questions was proposed. All interviewees were asked the same basic questions. The interviewer had the freedom to ask additional questions and/or vary the wording of the question in the course of the interview. This variation though was kept to the minimum possible.

In the choice of this tool, the researcher was also aware of the limitations that this particular method of collecting data would pose. Robson (2002) highlights two major limitations. The first limitation is a major concern that has to do with the lack of standardisation, thus raising concerns about the reliability of the data collected, making it difficult to rule out biases. The second has to do with the management of the tool due to the fact that it is a very time-consuming methodology that requires hours of interviewing time and preparations that need to be done in making arrangements to visit, securing necessary permissions and rescheduling appointments. This method also offers particular challenges when the interviews are transcribed and subsequently analysed.

For the purpose of responding to these two main concerns, an outline of the arrangements that were followed will be discussed. As a response to the first identified limitation, this study opted to follow the four-step method of inquiry as outlined by McCracken (1988) for qualitative interviews.

3.3 Counteracting the Limitation of Validity and Reliability

In his paper “Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research”, Nahid Golafshami (2003) explores how these two concepts vary in their use in qualitative research as compared with quantitative methodologies.

Quoting Joppe (2000), Golafshami (2003) points out that while in positivist quantitative methodologies the idea is that of ‘replicability’ or repeatability of results or observations, naturalistic approaches seek to understand context-specific phenomena and thus the emphasis is on illuminating and understanding the context and extrapolating the data to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). Thus, while in the former, distance from the data source is a sign of reliability and a key ingredient for validity, for the qualitative researcher immersion into the context of the data, allowing the investigator “to be present during the changes to record an event after and before the change occurs” (Golafshami, 2003, p. 600) is a key difference, since the researcher is the instrument of the research.

Therefore, understanding reliability in the context of qualitative inquiry should be qualitatively different. Qualitative validity is found in the quality of the research, in its ability to explain and “generate understanding” (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 551). Thus, while one cannot but agree with Patton (2001) on the importance of validity and reliability as an assurance that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, one has to understand that these two concepts are qualitatively different in naturalistic research paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985), state that validity and reliability in qualitative research should lead to Credibility, Neutrality or Conformability, Consistency or Dependability and Applicability or Transferability. According to Campbell (1996) the consistency and dependability of data will be achieved when the steps of the research are verified through examination of raw data, data reduction products and process notes amongst others.

Seale (1999) introduces the concept of “trustworthiness” in the qualitative understanding of reliability. It is this component, according to Seale, that needs

to be assured. Shenton (2004) presents four criteria that could replace the traditional positivist criteria of internal validity, external validity and generalisability, reliability and objectivity. Shenton presents the criterion of credibility – by which the researcher demonstrates a true picture of the phenomenon under study – to replace internal validity. Transferability – by providing sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for the reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation. This replaces the criterion of generalisability in positivist research. Dependability can be achieved by enabling other investigators to repeat the study. This replaces the concept of reliability in research. Finally objectivity can be replaced by ‘confirmability’ – here the researcher must take steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions.

The McCracken process, discussed below, is an attempt at ensuring trustworthiness through a staged process of collecting raw data, processing and reducing it in full recognition of the process /es that are in action throughout the whole process. Trustworthiness is also ensured through the researcher’s disclosure of one’s cultural biases and interests.

3.3.1 Validity

McCracken outlines a four-stage method to ensure that qualitative interviewing methods arrive at reliable data. The four stages are:

1. Review of analytic categories and interview design
2. Review of cultural categories and interview design
3. Interview procedure and the discovery of cultural categories
4. Interview analysis and the discovery of analytical categories

What follows, is a discussion of these four stages and how this present research adopted and adapted them to ensure reliability of data.

3.3.1.1 Stage 1: Review of analytic categories

According to McCracken, at this stage, the researcher reviews the literature that will enable one to define the problem and assess it, provides the concepts on which percepts depend and sharpens one's capacity for surprise that the data might reveal (McCracken, 1988, p.31; Lazarsfeld, 1972).

McCracken contends that a critical review of the literature surrounding the area of study helps in creating the required distance to be able to "let the data of one's research project take issue with the theory of one's field" (McCracken, 1988, p.31).

The literature should also aid the researcher in the construction of the interview questionnaire. It helps in the identification of the domain, specifies categories and relationships that may organise the data and creates the boundaries of the research agenda (McCracken, 1988, p.31). Such review will establish "the ground upon which the interview will be conducted" (McCracken, 1988, p. 32).

The present research reviewed the literature in those strands that surround the focus of this study, namely transformative learning, reflective practice as a professional development model with the potential of acting as a transformative agent and finally the theory which the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process is built on. As a result of this literature review, the research questions were formulated, the questions for the 90 minutes interviews were constructed and a template for reviewing the data was established. The literature review aided the process of delineating the boundaries and identified the main analytic categories that should help shed light on the research questions.

The literature review in this study is intended to expose the main gaps in knowledge of the topic under review, help define the terminology and definitions used in this research and explore different research methodologies used by those who explored the theme of transformative learning in adult learning (Taylor & Snyder, 2012; Hart, 1998; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). To address the

main concerns of this research study, the literature review has the following objectives: the first is to provide a discussion of the origins, influences and developments of transformative learning theory. The discussion focused on the theory as developed and expounded by Jack Mezirow and Associates; the second objective is to discuss professional development in teacher education with special emphasis on reflective practice as a professional development strategy. The literature review explored the theoretical path in understanding the conceptual difference between reflection as simply an intellectual 'analysis' to a systematic and comprehensive data-gathering process that sustains analysis and empowers educators to transform their practice (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Finally, the literature review chapter also discussed the literature surrounding the Let Me Learn Process, a process that builds on the Interactive Learning Model (ILM) and acts as the foundation of the LMLpLp. Here the research explored both the theoretical literature, making up the epistemology of the theory and the validation and reliability testing of the Process and its tools.

The study takes an integrative approach. An integrative approach to literature review allows for the simultaneous inclusion of experimental, theoretical, as well as empirical literature. Integrative review also allows for the definition of concepts, review of theories and evidence on the topic (Broome, 1993 cited in Whittemore & Knafl, 2005).

Identifying the literature for this review involved searching for literature through multiple sources and strategies. It involved searching different databases – Proquest, Googlescholar, Sage, ERIC and JSTOR – using several criteria (mainly keywords and author's name). The keywords used are: transformative learning, sytematic change, perspective transformation, adult learning, professional development, professional learning, adult education, teacher education, self-knowledge, reflection, reflective practice, constructivism, Learning styles and Let Me Learn. Studies reviewed were mainly published between 1990 and 2012. Other strategies employed were searching through

reference lists of reviewed papers and books (reference chaining) and citation search, that is, following references citing key reviewed references.

The data generated from the literature reviewed is ordered, coded and categorised according to the main data groups and subgroups utilizing a theoretical framework spreadsheet to help organise the themes and subthemes generated for this research (Appendix 3).

3.3.1.2 Stage 2: Review of cultural categories and interview design

At this stage, McCracken explores the idea where the investigator uses the self as an instrument of inquiry (p.32). Patton (2002) in his treatment of qualitative research, states that contrary to quantitative research the investigator's involvement is not only desirable but is in fact a must because the investigator is the key instrument of the research. Thus, in qualitative research, while intimate acquaintance with the object of the study might dull the investigator's powers of observation and analysis, "it also has the advantage of giving the investigator an extraordinary intimate acquaintance with the object of the study. This acquaintance gives the investigator a fineness of touch and delicacy of insight that few ethnographers working in other cultures can hope to develop" (p.32).

McCracken (1988) points to three purposes to the cultural review. The first is to prepare for the construction of the questionnaire or the interview. Such a review will give the investigator the opportunity to identify cultural categories and relationships that have not been considered before and thus form the basis of question formulation. The second purpose is to prepare for the "rummaging" that will occur during data analysis to seek out "matches" in the interview data. Finally this personal cultural review helps to establish the "distance" needed to interpret the data, which according to McCracken, can only be achieved through a "clearer understanding of one's vision of the world" (p. 33), thus permitting a critical distance from it.

3.3.1.3 Stage 3: Interview procedures and the discovery of cultural categories

Construction of the Interview Prompt Schedule and Interview procedure

The first step in formalising the interview schedule (Appendixes 4, 5 and 6) was to ask for a set of biographical details to allow the researcher to ascertain the simple biographical descriptive details of the participant interviewee. These details help to cue the researcher to the biographical realities that will inform the respondents' subsequent testimony and establish the timeframe of exposure to the process. The inclusion of this section also makes sure that all of this material is readily at hand during the analysis.

For the purpose of this research the following bibliographical details were collected: name of the interviewee, which was later changed to a letter acronym for anonymity, gender, year of participation in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process, highest degree, age and total number of years teaching at the time of participation, the grade level teaching at the time of participation and at present and finally the Learning Connections Inventory (LCI) scores that identify the interviewee's preferred learning combination of patterns that drive one's learning. In the case of the Senior Management Team, a supplementary question asking for the number of years in administration was asked.

The Interview then proceeds to the identification of the perceived effects at the time of participation followed by another set of questions attempting to highlight the long-term effects as perceived by the interviewee.

The next set of questions attempted to continue probing for statements that capture those elements that show how the personal transformation brought about by this experience transfers to the community. This final set of questions also aims at accompanying the interviewer in his realisation of his role in the transformation of the educational community and vice-versa.

As stated above, the research targeted both teachers (Primary and Secondary school teachers) and members of the Senior Management Team who also participated in the training and played a crucial role in the school's adoption of this process. So three types of Interview prompt schedules were prepared, one aimed at teachers (appendix 4), another one for the Head of school (appendix 5), and another for the SMT (appendix 6). These three schedules followed the same sequence and main categories – allowing for the capturing of comparative data but worded to allow for the different roles to emerge.

Once the interview questions were drafted, the questions were transcribed on 12x15cm cards (appendix 7). These cards were given to the participants to read and act as prompts for the conversation. The categories described above were not given to the interviewee so as not to “overspecify(ing) the substance or the perspective of this talk” (McCracken, 1988, p.36). By allowing the respondent to be free to answer, and keeping “as ‘low’ and unobtrusive a profile as possible” (McCracken, 1988) the testimony could be more forthcoming. When the interviewer/researcher felt the need to ask for more clarification and/or the need to redirect the argument the interviewer made use of what McCracken calls ‘floating prompts’ – prompting the interviewee to return to utterances and expanding upon them and also at times asked clarification questions to invite the interviewee to expound on the argument or the narration expressed.

The object here was to watch for key arguments as they emerge from the testimony and to prompt the respondent to say more about them (Emerson, 1987). This allows for a conversational approach permitting at times the interviewer to take a ‘proactive’ position.

The categorisation of the questions as described above, allows the investigator to account for all of the formal characteristics of the study. Each topic category is followed by a bundle of questions that were anticipated in the construction of the schedule.

These prompting questions were also aimed at asking the respondents to recall exceptional incidents in which the research was implicated. Such questions give the respondent an opportunity to glimpse expectations that are normally hidden from them (McCracken, 1988) as one of the participants expressed towards the end of the interview: "I am glad I did it because a lot of thoughts are flowing in my mind, thoughts I haven't had for quite a time now" (Appendix 2: AA lines 640-641).

Key considerations

The Primary research question was identified namely: What factors influence teacher transformation through participation in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process? Then a set of five subsidiary questions were asked:

- Does participation in the LMLpLp influence teacher transformation?
- How does awareness of ones own learning processes (self-knowledge) affect personal change?
- How does awareness of ones own learning processes affect professional change?
- How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?
- How does educator's professional change affect the school's transformation?

The researcher had to start translating these research questions into questions for the interviews. A theoretical framework heavily influenced by criteria set by Mezirow, was adopted. This required that a thorough understanding of the field as influenced by the theoretical framework set by Mezirow's theory of adult transformative learning and Johnston's advanced learning theory is developed.

The researcher had to ensure that the schedule would help the interviewees to focus on different aspects of the study and help the project gather data that feeds the research questions. The language needed to be tested for clarity so as to

ensure that it does not deter the interviewees from the main issues. It was decided that as a form of piloting the schedule, the first to be interviewed were the senior management team, starting with the Head of school. The researcher had forged a positive professional relationship with these individuals. These individuals were willing to answer the scheduled questions and to give feedback on the questions asked. This in fact prompted the researcher to review the questions for more clarity and at instances add alternative questions.

Other considerations that needed to be taken as regards the schedule were the following:

- The schedule had to be respectful of the interviewees' personal and professional responsibilities. While it is inevitable that it disturbs their regular schedule, the interviewer had to ensure that there were enough available time slots for the interviewee to choose from so as to minimize the inconvenience.
- The length of the interview was agreed in advance and was never abused.
- The interviewee knew the conduct of the interview.
- The recording system was agreed with each and every interviewee.

The above considerations will help ensure the establishment of "an appropriate atmosphere such that the participants can feel secure" (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 361). This consideration takes time and requires the interviewer's utmost patience to ensure that such an atmosphere is created and interaction takes place in a conducive and safe environment.

Conducting the interview makes up the next stage in the process. In selecting the participants the researcher developed some criteria that were handed to the Senior Management Team, to help select the prospective candidates for this research. The aim for each criterion will be discussed below.

The following are the criteria that led to the choice of the prospective interviewees:

- Individuals signposted for participation in this study should be from the pool of teachers who have participated in the LMLpLp not less than three years prior to the commencement of this research. This requirement is to ensure the 'distance' from the training and look at this experience objectively. It will also allow participants time to use the tools and strategies learnt and objectively weigh their value.
- Selected participants need to have referred for support from the LML trainers/mentors, at least once, in the period preceding the interview. This safeguards the integrity of the process and ensures that the respondents are knowledgeable (Cohen et al, 1988, p.362).
- The choice of participants is done in full consultation with the Head of school, the Senior Management Team and the Let Me Learn trainers' team. The latter having the role of verifying that the chosen candidates have the required years of experience and have sought guidance. Guiding this choice the following sub-criteria were taken into consideration:
 - The chosen candidates use Let Me Learn language in their professional discussions
 - They reflect with colleagues about students' needs
 - They question their practice and reflect on how to improve their professional practice
 - They participate actively in the school life
- The chosen candidates need to accept to be interviewed, thus ensuring free will and informed consent.

The choice of a semi-structured interview was made to allow the participants to tell their story without undue emphasis on structure, which could limit the 'flow' of sharing the experience. Thus, the interview was viewed as an occasion for the participant to tell his 'story' and to help me as the researcher to understand the participant as a subject of inquiry (Sandelowski, 1991) and as a means of capturing the narrator's interpretation of particular experiences or events (Churchill & Churchill, 1982).

3.3.1.4 Stage 4: Interview analysis and the discovery of analytical categories

Once the interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim, each interview, where necessary, was translated into English by a third person.

This led to the next step in which a selection of the interviews were analysed to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that inform the respondent's view of the work surrounding the topic.

This research thus followed a six-stage process of analysis. The first stage was to identify from the literature those stages that a person undergoes in one's process of transformation. Literature gives "a sense of how the topic at issue is constituted in his or her own experience, and a glancing sense of what took place in the interview itself" (McCracken, 1988: 42). The identified categories of transformation, based on Mezirow's ten stages of transformative learning, illustrate the progression of an individual in the transformative process.

The second stage in this process was to identify themes that specifically describe each category. This was done through an analytical reading of three of the interviews conducted with the SMT. Excerpts from the interviews were highlighted and placed under the appropriate theme which best describes the utterance. Once this was done, each excerpt was coded. Codes/themes emerged from the excerpts either describing the action or summarising the idea that was expressed in the interview excerpt.

By the end of this exercise each phase had between four and six themes that describe different facades of the criteria as they emerged from the interviews. Each code was then defined to ensure consistency in the coding process of the remaining interviews (Appendix 8: Definitions of themes).

Once each of the first three interviews was coded a further verification was conducted. Two persons alien to the study were asked to help in this research.

These checkers were given a list of excerpts (Appendix 9: Cross-Checking themes) from the three interviews and the document with the definitions of categories. After reading through the codes and their respective definitions the checkers were asked to match the excerpts to the codes. The checkers could discuss their response with each other. The researcher was observing this interaction but was not actively involved in any discussion that took place.

The checkers had to note their observations and write any comments as they occur. Once this process was done, the researcher analysed the coding as was done by the checkers and read their comments. He also read the observations he drafted noting their interactions and the process of analysis they took in assigning the codes to each excerpt. It was observed that there was a general agreement between the two checkers. These observations were later used to review and refine the codes. From 52 excerpts, the checkers agreed 30 times with the researcher's coding of the same excerpts, thus amounting to 57.69% agreement.

Once a final template with reviewed codes was designed all nine interviews were coded by carefully reading the interviews, highlighting excerpts and pasting the excerpts against the code which best describes it. This process was repeated for each interview.

A second round analysis was made. Here the excerpts for each participant were transferred to a template (Appendix 10) that put the responses of each candidate next to each other. This simplified the process of identifying the number of times each code was used. Therefore the number of persons referring to a particular code and the number of times a particular code was used was recorded. A criterion was put in place at this stage – for the code to be kept for analysis it had to be referred to at least by two individuals. A code that was not referred to by at least two individuals was omitted from the analysis schedule. The excerpts falling under those eliminated codes were analysed for a second time to see whether they can fall under another code and if not, they were discarded. What was noted at this stage was that the higher phases received more frequent hits.

The next stage of analysis was to write short comments, which were appropriate to connect with the literature and/or expand on the interviewee's statement. At this point "reference to the transcript is made only to check ideas as they emerge from the process of observation comparison" (McCracken 1988, p.42). Here any connection observed between codes was also listed.

The next two stages aim at giving both a horizontal analysis of the criteria describing the different facets of manifestation and a vertical analysis where the complexity of the transformative process of each participant, is drawn out.

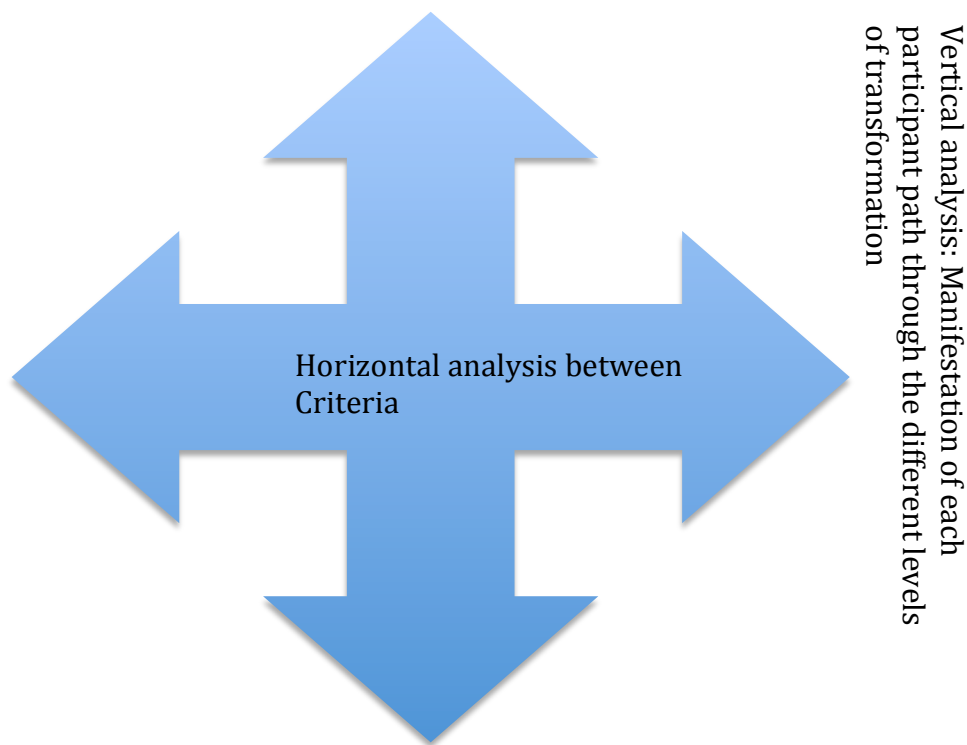


Figure 4: Horizontal and Vertical Analysis

For the purpose of this process a template was designed (Appendix 10) in which excerpts from the ten interviews were pasted against each other and arranged according to the themes. This process led to what McCracken describes as the taking of "the observation generated at previous levels and subjects them, in this

collective form, to collective scrutiny” (1988, p. 42) this will determine the “patterns of inter-theme consistency and contradiction” (p. 42).

At this stage the patterns and themes were put to a final analysis. This process of analysis inscribes a movement from the particular to the general. It begins deeply embedded in the details of the interview transcript and with each step moves upward to more general observations. This process thus gives analytic advantage and in the process it creates a record of the process of reflection and analysis that Kirk & Miller (1986) identify as a condition of the qualitative reliability check.

The final stage is to report the findings. This followed the pattern of the two-way analysis described above (Figure 4). The first part gave a detailed description of the main phases and themes as they manifested themselves in the voices of the nine participants. The purpose of this first part of the analysis is to compare and contrast the different utterances and experiences at each of the phases proposed by Mezirow. This gave the collective voice of the participants and organised the voices into categories, themes and sub-themes.

The second part reported the transformative journey of each participant, one by one. Once again the main focus was the development of voice (Bloom, 1996), examining the conceptual and personal transformations of each individual participant. Each narrative was organised around the ten phases proposed by Mezirow. This gave the narratives a comparative feature through which the different voices could be compared and contrasted. Each narrative recounts and describes the events that led the individual participants to re-evaluate and re-think their beliefs and perspectives. Through the researcher’s re-telling of the stories, as told by the participants, specific ideas and concepts, were challenged and highlighted to give coherence to what at first seemed to be incoherent experiences (Kruger, 1998; Kruger, 2004). Narratives served the researcher to understand a phenomenon or an experience (DeMarrais & Lapan 2004). The interview prompts were meant to elicit from the participants, experiences that at the reporting stage could be re-told, allowing the voices of the ‘tellers’ to

dominate the narrative. The narrative acted as a “fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13). Narrations by participant educators were often non-linear, non-sequential and often complex and fragmented. The re-telling process gave these voices context, a sense of linearity and continuity. The re-telling of the narrative also allowed for a feeling of completeness, and significance within the global meaning of experience (Kaiser & Erichson, 2012). It gave what Polkinghorne (1988; 1996 and 2007) explains as the significance of individual actions and events in the context of their effects on the whole.

3.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter gave a detailed description of the methodology deployed and justification of the tools used in the complex and systematic process of doing research. The chapter describes and discusses the various stages in the development of this research study. It starts with the stage of problem identification and development of the research questions, the process employed in reviewing the literature that informs the research questions and gives context to, and positions the present research in, the vast field of social research, particularly in the field of professional learning and transformative learning. This chapter also discussed the methodological decisions and the process of developing the instrumentation plan. Finally, the process of analysis and presentation of data, from which general observations and recommendations emerged, were discussed.

The following chapter will present the findings of the research through the voices of the participants.

Chapter 4: Data Processing and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis from nine participants. All participating educators were interviewed about the impact of the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) on teaching and learning. All participants held administrative and/or teaching positions. Three held administrative positions as Head of school and assistant Heads of school respectively. Apart from their administrative duties, they also kept a small teaching load. The remaining participants were teachers of whom three were generalist Primary school teachers and three specialist Secondary school teachers (two language teachers and one science teacher). All were persons that I had come to respect for their knowledge, dedication and curiosity about the link between the Let Me Learn Process (LMLp) and how teachers and educators could utilise this most effectively. Specifically the research questions addressed in this study were the following:

Central Question:

What factors influence teacher transformation through participation in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process?

Subsidiary Questions:

- Does participation in the LMLpLp influence teacher transformation?
- How does awareness of ones own learning processes (self-knowledge) affect personal change?
- How does awareness of ones own learning processes affect professional change?
- How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?

- How does educator's professional change affect the school's transformation?

4.2 PART ONE: Horizontal analysis across themes

In the first part of this report and analysis, the results of the findings from the data source are categorised by Mezirow's ten phases and the themes generated by this research. The purpose of this section is to present and analyse the data across the phases and themes and across the different roles held by the participating educators.

4.2.1 Phase one: Disorienting Dilemma

A disorienting dilemma is an incident or experience that disturbs the individual's current view of reality. For the purpose of this study this phase is seen as a trigger event that initiates reflection and challenges the participants' 'engrained professional behaviour'.

This study generated four themes that were seen as triggers that initiated reflection by participants on the need to transform their practice. The themes generated from the interviews with participants are the following:

- 1.1 Awareness of incumbent diversity
- 1.2 Urge for social justice
- 1.3 Incongruence between espoused and prevalent values
- 1.4 Triggered by policy decisions

The table in Appendix 11 shows a high concentration of the school's leadership references falling under the first three themes. A total of 13 references compared to four references made by the teachers.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
1	1.1	2	5	2	2
	1.2	2	3	1	2
	1.3	2	3	0	0
	1.4	0	0	5	5

Table 4: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 1

The table above shows that teachers' main trigger for attending the LMLpLp was instigated from an external force. The school leadership saw value and congruence between the values being promoted by the school and the philosophy underpinning the Let Me Learn process. This led to an open invitation to all teachers to participate in this course. Those teachers that accepted the invitation attended. The teachers were sent in groups over an extended period of time.

The school's senior management team (SMT) shared similar concerns that triggered their search for means to transform the school's "visual image and educational goals" (Bezzina & Testa, 2005, 145). Their main concern originated from an awareness of the challenge of the incumbent diversity within the student population and the need to address it efficiently. They discovered it was no easy task to encourage teachers who had developed a set of teaching behaviours to adopt different approaches to teaching which address the diversity of needs of the students.

"We have a tendency of grouping students together, we prepare and give out lessons for the whole class..." (SA2-3)

"Since we have a mixed ability school, I think that it is part of our school ethos that we, like try to cater for differences found in our students, so it was really important that we do something of the sort." (AA 2-4)

This prompted the urge for the fair treatment of all students, irrespective of their social, academic background. As a SMT they wanted to create a school that is based on the realisation of the principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values each student's dignity.

“... we are eternally engaged in the context of justice and by justice I mean the need to realise that each child is different, each needing their own space and we need to find the means, the responsibility of every educational entity is to find a means to reach each child's inspirations.”
(MH 1-5)

“I worry about those students falling behind maybe because we are not finding the best ways to tackle them...” (AA 571-572)

Often in the reality of the day-to-day practice of the school, one finds oneself in a situation where the personal and political values of an individual are incongruent with the prevalent values evident within the school community. This incongruence has prompted a concern that needed to be addressed if the school was to continue on its path to transforming its values and brings the professional practice in line with the school's ethos.

“... no teacher in his right mind will say that all children are the same, but at the same time, the way we act, we act as if we have 25 puppets that have all come out (from the same machine)” (MH 412-414)

“I believe that in actual practice we are still... whilst we work a lot on mixed ability, whilst we speak a lot about it, when it comes to teaching and learning, I believe that there is a lot that we still need to do.” (AA 188-191)

The interviews with the teachers show that they shared the same concerns with the school leadership. The impetus, though, came as a result of the leadership's

policy decisions. In the case of one of the teachers, JSL, she shared a concern for social justice but while the SMT were mostly concerned about those who are academically challenged, JSL was more concerned that:

“...we don’t give that much importance to the students who achieve and, who achieve and do well.” (JSL 406-407)

As for CP, a primary school teacher, she felt that the school’s encouragement to attending this training had addressed her need to:

“... understand the students more than I already was. To be given tools which were practical tools in the classroom.” (CP 17-18)

Thus what became evident was that there might have been initial resistance from the teaching community but there was a seminal group, which includes the participants of this study, who saw this as an opportunity to learn and transform their practice.

“There were those (teachers) who had a lot of enthusiasm, like myself, but there were others who didn’t believe and even now are still not sure; there are still people who aren’t convinced. ... however I feel that the majority had good initial reactions.” (SA105-107, 113-114)

Thus, while most participating teachers were guided by an external force, the urge to improve their practice and to serve their students better, made them more inclined to accept the school’s invitation.

“I was one of the first teachers who were approached by the headmaster, where we were told his idea of having teachers in our school trained in the Let Me Learn process... I accepted because it was something new which I wanted to be trained in.” (EP 7-9, 11-12)

4.2.2 Phase two: Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame

When a practitioner encounters a disorienting dilemma, self-examination of one's intentions follows. This research yielded four themes that could be categorised under this phase, namely:

- 2.1 Realisation of limitations
- 2.2 Recognition of 'Fad' syndrome
- 2.3 Culture of labelling
- 2.4 Sense of Scepticism

The table in Appendix 11 shows that the highest number of references across both sets of participants was for theme 2.1; realisation of limitations with all three members of the SMT making at least one reference to it, two of the teachers making at least one reference and one makes two references.

MH, as a Head of school, reflects on the initial high expectations of the teaching community when they started attending the LML training. These expectations soon fell through until they realised

“... that Let Me Learn is not a recipe but a process of understanding.” (MH 82)

The realisation of the limited view of what such a Process can give, brought about a change in expectations, re-aligning the initial expectations with the newly gained understanding.

SA, an assistant head responsible for pastoral care, refers to the limitations posed by a culture within the teaching community that tends to define the learning environment as a monochrome, a mentality which often has as its root, the fear of having to change and by consequence , the work load will increase.

“... there were others who didn’t believe and even now... there are still people who aren’t convinced. Obviously, these people are old school, people who look at discipline from the perspective of one rule fits all, so in that case, that type of mentality is very difficult to change. Another thing is what it entails, in the sense that LML requires an amount of work to be done.” (SA106-110)

AA, as an assistant head responsible for the academic programme, highlights the limitations that the administrative pressures often cause. She admits that notwithstanding the good intentions

“... what happens to us during the year, even when reflecting on what happened with the learning policy, is that you don’t have the strength, you don’t have the energy because you would have other things on your plate as well.” (AA 605-608)

YP, a primary school teacher, voices this same concern:

“... sometimes there are things which teachers go through, there is a day when you might say ‘oh I feel I haven’t dedicated so much time to that particular student’...

... sometimes you want to reach every student in class, it is like you are running against time to check that no student leaves the class with a question mark on his mind...” (YP 301-303, 308-310)

The other two teachers refer to the limitations that as teachers they were not always capable of diagnosing students’ personal learning preferences and by consequence they have failed to respond to the needs of certain students.

“... everyone has his own system of learning, and if maybe before, this fact was invisible or wasn’t seen so much...” (EP 237-238)

“... I used to work quite smoothly with those students scoring high in sequence and precision, so I had to see what I was going to do so that the technical students achieve.” (RSS 191-193)

The table below shows that when participants self-examined their actions, certain engrained professional behaviours were in dissonance with the vision the school set out to achieve.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
2	2.1	3	3	3	4
	2.2	1	1	0	0
	2.3	1	2	2	2
	2.4	1	1	1	2

Table 5: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 2

One SMT, the Head of school and two teachers, one Secondary school language teacher and one Primary school teacher make reference to a culture of labelling. The predominant academic achievement discourse seems to promote a culture of labelling students with the consequence of limiting response to a ‘condition’ and defining a learner by his adopted label.

Theme 2.2: Recognition of ‘Fad’ syndrome and Theme 2.4: Sense of scepticism are two themes mentioned by some of the participants as aspects that cause them discomfort when they self-examine their professional practice. One SMT member refers to the failure of the educational system to guard itself from novel, but not necessarily theoretically sound processes or systems of learning, which tend to fade quickly but leaving behind a trail of negative consequences.

“To tell you the truth, I was very sceptical at the beginning, and to be honest I wasn’t expecting anything really. I thought it was just another fancy programme that we encounter in everyday life.” (SA8-10)

This often leads to a culture of doubt surrounding all educational initiatives. Two participants, one SMT member and one of the participating teachers refer to their initial scepticism when the training failed to rise to their expectation. They expected that the training would give them more concrete examples of how they could apply this knowledge to their teaching.

“I believe that when you have a group of teachers and you are lecturing a group of teachers, scepticism is always there. Like, ‘OK now show me how this can be done’, sort of ‘now with all your big talk, come in my position and do it’. From that point of view, my expectations weren’t met because it was very much theory based.” (AA 84-88)

“Well I must admit that initially, how can I say it, we were quite sceptical about the whole thing, especially because, there was a lot of talking going on and no examples were given us as to how we can apply Let Me Learn in class. We had to come up with all the ideas...” (JSL 14-17)

4.2.3 Phase three: Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions about oneself and one’s professional learning

In Mezirow critical reflection plays a major role. He maintains that critical reflection helps the adult learner re-evaluate one’s assumptions and presuppositions and leads to what he termed ‘transformative learning’.

This study has generated six themes that describe the type of reflection that the participating educators underwent in their transformative process. The themes generated were the following:

- 3.1 Problemization of past intents
- 3.2 Problemization of practice

- 3.3 Global re-evaluation of the implications to one's practice
- 3.4 Reflection on the process of collective transformation
- 3.5 Reflection on inter/intrapersonal relationships
- 3.6 Reflection on the non-linearity of the process of change.

The frequency table in appendix 11 indicates a high reference level of response on most themes.

Theme 3.1, all three members of the SMT made multiple references to the problemization of past intents. Three out of the six teachers make reference to this theme.

Theme 3.2, problemization of practice, two SMTs and two teachers make clear references to this theme with one of the teachers making three references during his interview.

Two of the SMTs and all six teachers make references to how the Let Me Learn process impacted their practice (theme 3.3)

The SMTs reflected on the process of transformation of the school community. Four of the teachers also made clear reference to theme 3.4.

Two of the SMT and five out of the six teachers made clear reference to their understanding of themselves as learners and the effect of the process on their relationship with others (theme 3.5).

Finally two SMT members and one teacher reflected on the non-linearity of the process of change. The head of school refers twice to the conduct of change in a school that is still building its teaching capacity. AA refers to constraints caused by institutional and curricular demands.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
3	3.1	3	10	3	4
	3.2	2	2	2	4
	3.3	2	3	6	13
	3.4	3	5	4	5
	3.5	2	5	5	8
	3.6	2	3	0	0

Table 6: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 3

In their references to theme 3.1 the SMTs reflect on the intentions that propelled the school towards the Let Me Learn process and asked for the support of the Let Me Learn team in their search for achieving its new perspective. MH speaks of the Let Me Learn process as that which made him aware of the contradictions that often cloud one’s perspective:

“... it made us aware of a number of contradictions. Often, our mind-set, obviously, we all have our own histories, we were brought up in an educational system that was different to what we are trying to achieve now. So it’s very easy to revert to particular ruts and I think that there were a number of situations where these contradictions were evident.”
(MH 148-152)

SA reiterates this same concern when she attempted to address the different needs of the students without really knowing what was behind her actions:

“In a way, I was applying LML because I used to use pictures with a particular student, something else with another. However it was something confusing, I didn’t know what was behind what I was doing.”
(SA36-39)

MH, SA and AA saw in Let Me Learn a tool that helped them become aware of how their learning processes were ordaining their teaching:

“I think Let Me Learn was instrumental as a tool to first and foremost realise this sense of diversity even in the way we learn. Secondly, we as teachers realise why we prefer to teach in certain way and why we may distinguish between the students in the classroom.” (MH 6-8)

For SA the Process has helped her to question her practice:

“In that sense I started questioning myself, on what I was achieving in class, was I fulfilling my learning patterns or the students’? I started to notice how my learning patterns were influencing the students.” (SA67-69)

AA saw Let Me Learn as a tool that could help her rise to the challenges of her new experience within a new school with a new vision for meeting the diverse needs of the student population.

“... I used to teach in a Junior Lyceum. Students were mixed but the reality of mixed ability wasn’t as such as we presently have here. I would imagine that my initial expectations were how it was going to help me in my new challenge.” (AA 24-26)

Both MH and SA highlight their understanding of Let Me Learn as a complementary process to the school’s ethos and other processes that were already being utilised in school.

“I think that in my case, Let Me Learn fits in a paradigm that was already there, in the sense of the issue of diversity, or of social justice... Let Me Learn helped to develop these concepts... Let Me Learn helped me to continue working on these principles, even on a practical level.” (MH 374-375, 376-377, 378-379)

“It (LML) can provide a kind of mechanism but I think that it has to be stretched and combined with other tools.” (MH 37)

“... as a management team we never presented Let Me Learn on its own, it was part of our SDP (school development plan),... teachers always saw it as a part of a process.” (SA 295-296)

Two of the teachers critically reflect on the nature and structure of the training as it was delivered. Both JSL and CP bemoan the fact that there was too much emphasis on theory and lacked exemplars.

“How did I perceive the training? (I perceived it) as a lot of theory and very little practical ideas... There was more theory, theory that in hindsight needed to be given. Someone has to tell you the theory.” (JSL 64-65, 67-68)

“I remember myself saying, this is too much especially since the content that I needed could have been given to me in a shorter span of time... That although there wasn't enough practical and the work given at the end was over and above for me...” (CP 40-41,47-48)

This perceived deficit resulted in some positive outcomes, by compelling participants to join forces and find subject specific applications to the Process. Today some of these individuals who were pioneers are now promoters of the Process within their community.

“Eventually I am using it today. It has been, it is part of my teaching approach.” (JSL 58-59)

Similarly to AA, EP emphasises the fact that the Process made him re-evaluate his teaching methodology and to appreciate Let Me Learn as an opportunity to learn new ways for addressing the diverse needs of his students.

“So I think that was the first thing I kept in mind, that through the course, I could learn something new that could change my teaching format.” (EP 14-18)

JSL also reflects on the school’s policy to empower young learners. She believes that the emphasis on learning should be balanced by an emphasis on learners’ responsibility to help the teaching process.

JSL: “... we spend a lot of time of our PD (profession development) days discussing the learning process. To the part the students play in the whole process. (We talk about) what we should be doing and questioning our teaching methods when we’re not reaching particular students. A lot of focus is on the student and the learning process. Definitely. More than ever.”

Interviewer: “Which is very good!”

JSL: “Yes but it is about time we focus as well about... what the students are doing to help the teaching process as well.” (JSL 465-473)

In theme 3.2, where participants problematised and re-evaluated their practice as a result of the new awareness, three major aspects were discussed. The two participants from the SMT that made reference to this theme reflected how Let Me Learn impacted practice on different levels of communication and on the curricular and pedagogical level.

“As we said, I think that the effect it had was on a personal level, on the level of relationships and also on a curricular level, in a sense, and also on the pedagogy. It obviously helps you think about different ways of working.” (MH 557-559)

FSL reflects on how the Process has changed her perspective and her approach to teaching:

“Like I told you, this has changed my life, but this change was reflected in the way I teach...” (FSL 201-202)

SA, on the other hand, emphasised how the Process has given the community intentionality of purpose. While there was always good practice going on, and teachers always gave their best to respond to the needs of the learners, the response was not based on knowledge of students’ learning preferences:

“... it was possible for us to understand different strategies and why some weren’t working... with Let Me Learn we became aware that there are different patterns that one can develop, so in that way it helped the process that we had already started, in a way that we could help our students better.” (SA308-309, 313-316)

YP reflects on how he grew in his understanding of the Process. While in the initial stages he had used the patterns more as a label:

“I started seeing labels on top of their heads with their patterns written there... I started to become a bit obsessive on certain things...” (YP 199-200, 204-205)

Now he has a deeper understanding of what the patterns are and what they could do in one’s understanding of the learning process.

“... the patterns are not how good you are in this, that and the other, the patterns are there to show us how we learn best.” (YP 219-220)

This deeper understanding and knowledge of application to one’s practice requires time and develops slowly over time.

In theme 3.3, the participants re-evaluate the repercussions of the Process on one’s practice. MH values the process as a tool for community building which

together with other processes and strategies can effectively support the complex needs of the school community.

“I think that it can be a very important tool even to eventually interpret a sense of community that is the sense of diversity that we have among us. These differences are not only on an individual basis but also on how these influence the dynamics between us as a community.” (MH 32-35)

While they intuitively appreciate the value of the process to lead learners to success and the overall facilitation of the teaching/learning process, AA and JSL, are also very much aware of the challenges this Process puts in the way of the teacher. The daily routines often make it difficult for the teacher to apply the Process and respond effectively to all the needs of one’s learners.

“So yes I do take it into consideration when planning, but it is impossible to target each and every pattern and prepare all the resources for each.” (JSL 289-290)

Notwithstanding this challenge the teachers express their appreciation that through this Process they have acquired the skill to address individual needs and have a better understanding of how different learners learn.

“... whereas before I had one approach, which had to apply to everyone, nowadays I know that I had to change, I changed my own approach trying to appeal to more than...to individuals.” (JSL 332-334)

“I think that is it, that I value each student as an individual.” (RSS 170)

“Now you know more about them and you start off, you see the students in front of you, the ones that you have for that particular scholastic year... that one has this pattern, the other one has that one, yes you start off immediately from the very first sessions, you start taking on this idea of

Let Me Learn, how it works, how the patterns work and you start to get to know the students better..." (EP 23-27)

"... we started to understand why certain students behave in a certain way." (YP 31-32)

"I was always the type of teacher who varies the lessons. I use different methods to be able to adapt to all students, to make them more interested... I tried to target a particular student with a task, another student with another..." (CP 83-87)

CP, RSS and FSL highlighted the fact that the Process gave them the possibility to target more precisely their response to individual learner profiles. It gave them the skill to plan and respond with intention.

"I remember saying, now I have enough tools by which I can explain to students... I was given these tools and I can help the students." (CP 75-76, 78-79)

"I started to draw their (the students') attention if, for example, I know that they lack sequence or precision, I used to help them stretch those patterns to be able to tackle and do well in that particular task." (RSS 35-37)

"So there were some who did a project, others who did a hands-on activity by producing a model and it was then that I realised what it is, when I saw this lesson." (FSL 29-31)

For theme 3.4 two major positions were taken. There were those who held quite an optimistic view of how as a community the school has experienced a culture of change. On the other hand there are those who were more cautious in their evaluation. Both positions agree that there was a definite positive transformation of perspective at a conceptual level.

MH trusts that when a critical mass is formed and a culture of change takes over, progressively, others within the community will be swayed towards the collective vision. He believes that as a leader, he needs to respect the pace of different individuals that make up the school's community, without losing sight of a common vision and a clear path that leads to the realisation of the vision.

“And even if a person hasn't done it himself, and someone else has done the problematizing of the task, it rings a bell. It falls on fertile soil as opposed to having no effect at all. Because they have gone through the Process.” (MH 158-160)

SA believes that through her role and the shared vision that the school leadership promoted, she could influence the change needed in the pastoral care of the students. This collective transformation, in her opinion has been achieved.

“In fact, that is the reason why I wanted to become a deputy head. I wanted a change in this school, a change in pastoral care especially. I was lucky that during that time I met Simon (the previous Head teacher) where we started the dream of the year coordinators, the start of the process, where I wanted the students to feel cared for and that they are becoming appreciated as an individual.” (SA423-427)

AA takes a more cautious approach:

“Yes there was progress but not enough, that is it. I feel that we have progressed but not enough.” (AA 281-282)

AA acknowledges that there was progress towards a perspective of student inclusion, but there is still a long way to go. The reality, as she sees it, is that even amongst those that have received the training, there is still a lot to be done. She appreciates that there are many reasons for this situation – both originating from external pressures that weigh on the reality of teaching and personal reasons. So while the community seems to have espoused the perspective on a

conceptual level, the transfer to practice still needs doing. JSL and YP agree with AA that there is still a level of resistance within the school community.

“I wish to see more progress from the perspective of inclusion, of different students.” (AA 283-284)

“... as a whole staff, we haven’t found a way of using it effectively in the classroom, it is not there in the case of every individual who has attended the training.” (AA 149-151)

“... So from the intellectual level, it is ok, ... but the practical level needs to be implemented more... I think the transfer hasn’t been made yet, and most of the times it is not because people don’t want it, it is more of the fact that people are afraid that they won’t finish the syllabus on time.” (AA 289-290, 294-295, 297-299)

“But I must admit that, again, I don’t believe that all the teachers who took Let Me Learn, took it on board as well. I’m sure that it doesn’t always happen... Because it involves a lot of work.” (JSL 610-613)

“I think there were those who changed just a little bit and gave credit as to why we were doing the course but also why we, at the end of the day, are in the classroom with students, but there were others who remained of the same opinion, I think.” (YP 94-96)

RSS like MH believes that the process has impacted on the teaching approach and notwithstanding the limitations, there seems to be a collective effort to a creative approach to teaching.

“Here everyone tries to be creative, so it helped us to motivate ourselves and be more creative in class.” (RSS 263-264)

YP explains that an important prerequisite for true transformation is the disposition to change, a disposition to listen to other views, detach oneself from one's position and participate in an open, critical interchange of ideas and remaining open to new possibilities.

“Over here we are not in a competition, we are not competing for the best teacher of the year, but the sharing of work together, if there is something that is working, I would need to say that I have to develop that more” (YP 287-389).

The next theme that emerged from this research was on how the Process helped the participants reflect on the self as a learner and the affects of this awareness on the relationship with others (theme 3.5).

MH and SA from the SMT reflect on how the Process has helped them understand themselves better. Such an intrapersonal understanding has led to an improved interpersonal communication with colleagues and students. YP underlines this positive relationship with the school administration:

“The idea that the school has faith in you, makes me appreciate it even more. It is like they know what you can do, what you achieve and they give you a certain responsibility to carry out the work.” (YP 411-413)

MH reflects on how his new understanding of himself as a learner, has led him to discover a colleague who due to lack of communication, was hidden behind a false façade. MH explains (459-465) that he could only bypass this façade, once he understood the obstacles to communication that he was causing.

SA also highlights this aspect of how her understanding of herself has led her to a better understanding of others. She can now mentor other colleagues, in particular, in their relationship with students.

“The course was an opportunity for me for personal development even with the students. During the course I did a lot of research, about myself, about my students...” (SA100-101)

“The way I help the teacher, the way I help the year coordinator, obviously they use the same attitude with the students. I use that a lot when it comes to personal transformation. It was strategic; I pay a lot of attention to what I do. I am their role model, not only the students’ but even the teachers’, even the way I speak to the students is the way I would like them to speak to students.” (SA430-435)

RSS, CP and EP highlight their improved understanding of the students they teach and, by consequence, an improved interpersonal relationship with their students.

“I administered the LCIs (Learning Connection Inventories) to my students so there was an awareness on my part of how my students learnt best, and the students themselves became aware of how they learnt and why they did well in certain subjects and not so well in others” (RSS 27-30)

“I think that is it, that I value each student as an individual... I think the students feel this a lot, the fact that you are not relating to them in a generic manner, the fact that you continue to motivate them, you don’t give up, if there is someone facing a difficulty in a particular task, you encourage him to continue to try and not accept it, I think that is what I value most, that everyone feels comfortable in the classroom...” (RSS 170-175)

“It helps you vary much more with the students, and I can see the differences especially when a person has attended the course and a person who hasn’t attended the course, their decisions...” (CP 178-180)

“So it helps not only the students but even me. It has helped me a lot, this Let Me Learn and the students are enjoying the lessons more because they are more varied.” (EP 284-285)

MH points to the importance of certain aspects of the training process that in his words have enriched and supported the process of transformation, namely the role of the trainers as mentors. Here mentors intervene and support the school and individual teachers in transforming their practice.

“One of the positive things about the Let Me Learn team was the sense of support. In our circumstances, I think that was of great help for us in spite of your limitations as regards resources, time personnel and having to ... I think the introduction of mentoring was a very good step in the right direction. Now we didn't stop at the level of implementing the process, but we also have a helping hand.” (MH 88-93)

For JSL the experience was a bit different. She feels that this aspect of the training was not always reflecting the principles promoted by the Process.

“And you start thinking they are preaching this process but are not actually applying it.” (JSL 86-87)

On the other hand the training space gave her the opportunity to fuel her determination to grow and transform into a more effective teacher.

“Nowadays, I think I have taken a lot out of it. I used it a lot.” (JSL 87-88)

Taylor, in Wilson & Hayes (2000) suggests that the transformative learning process is not as linear as Mezirow might have suggested. Taylor and others have suggested that transformation is, in fact, recursive, evolving and spiral in nature. In this study the head of school, an assistant head and a teacher have hinted at this. MH focuses on the transformation of the community, which is often characterised, with fluidity and change.

“To a certain extent there was a transformation. I think there were things that improved. There are other things we still need to problematise the issues and the way we tackle things. And then there are the dynamics of new people coming in so you need to start... understand? It’s never static. (MH 188-191)

“... there’s a lot to a situation, to an organisation, at times you feel there are tangible improvements whereas at other times, you feel that there is the need for more, more, what can I say? (MH 469-471)

“Now we have to make sure that we continue adding this salt that shows more. This saltiness, if you know what, I mean which means that we make the process as visible as possible and it would also be important that we continue renewing the discourse...” (MH 481-44)

AA also highlights this dilemma, where notwithstanding the good intentions and examples of good practice, as teachers, they are often caught in the realities of a system which emphasises the academic, over a more holistic development of the person.

“I too try to cope with the syllabus like everyone else especially when teaching Form 5’s (last year of secondary school)... I move away from the theory and not only that but I throw everything I believe in out of the window, and I am not happy about that.” (AA 340-344)

4.2.4 Phase four: Dialogue and discourse with others within or outside the professional circle

Taylor (2009) affirms that “engagement in dialogue with the self and others” (p.9) is one of the core elements of transformative learning. Taylor defines dialogue as a “relational and trustful communication” (p.9). According to Schapiro, Wasserman and Gallegos (2012) dialogue provides a unique container for transformation. This study has generated six themes that describe the

“transformative dialogic moments” (Wasserman 2004 cited in Schapiro et al., 2012) as expressed by this group of educators. The themes generated were the following:

- 4.1 Dialogue between mentor and teacher being mentored
- 4.2 Dialogue between teachers
- 4.3 Dialogue between teachers and parents/guardians
- 4.4 Dialogue between SMT and practitioners
- 4.5 Discourse with self and others to problematise alternative perspectives
- 4.6 Development of a shared language of possibility.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
4	4.1	2	4	0	0
	4.2	1	1	6	9
	4.3	0	0	2	2
	4.4	2	4	3	5
	4.5	1	1	3	4
	4.6	2	2	3	4

Table 7: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 4

The table above shows that themes 4.1 and 4.3 were referred to only by members of the SMT and by teachers respectively. The rest of the themes were referred to by both categories with theme 4.2 (dialogue between teachers) referred to by all teacher participants and one SMT member. What follows is an in-depth analysis of the data generated under the above themes.

Two members of the SMT referred to the first theme: mentoring as a dialogic process between mentor and mentee. MH refers to the value of the process by which teachers can be guided in their practice. The dialogic process goes beyond talking about the theory to talking with the teachers and touching on the realities

of the classroom. SA, on the other hand, sees the mentor as that person who brings the knowledge and expertise into the realm of practice.

“I think the introduction of the mentoring was a very good step in the right direction. Now we didn’t stop at the level of implementing the process, but we also have a helping hand.” (MH 92-93)

“They (the LML team) were prepared and were able to answer every single question I put forward. ... the Let Me Learn team was ready to answer our questions and they weren’t answers that they had prepared beforehand.” (SA16-17, 18-20)

MH also feels that a positive relationship has been forged between the team and the teachers allowing for true communication to take place. This was further reinforced with SA’s remark about the team’s availability for teacher support.

“The team succeeded in creating a working relationship. This was crucial because at the end of the day, it is the people that make the idea.” (MH 98-100)

“The Let Me Learn team is not only there during the course, and for mentoring during the course, but they are there even through emails. They come to the school and help the teachers, visit classrooms.” (SA 498-500)

This positive relationship and the team’s insertion into the realities of the practicing teacher (what MH terms as the ‘foot soldiers’) according to MH “gave more credibility to the Process itself.” (95-96)

SA also refers to the process of mentoring and training as one that respected the pace and curiosities of the participants, allowing space for reflection and praxis.

“...they encouraged a free process, they didn’t pass on any kind of recipe. ... when I realised that it was a free process, which you discover as you go along, nothing had to be done because you had to, then obviously my expectations started to change.” (SA 20-21, 22-24)

The next theme (4.2) collects those references that capture the dialogue between teachers, on the effects of the Process to practice. All participants except one SMT member referred to this theme.

MH, as head of school at the time of the interview, spoke of the need of a safe dialogic environment, where individuals can talk without being judged or exposed to inquisition.

“I think that in certain aspects, we obviously have to be extremely careful and I think it is crucial that we don’t get stuck on this uneasiness due to political correctness. For instance, if we are met with a situation where you don’t express what is bothering you, or what is worrying you, or because you still cannot make sense of a certain mind-set, you hold back so that no one can say that you are being unfair, that you do not have social justice at heart. ... I think it is very important that the sense of dialogue is very open because if not, it is a very good risk...” (MH 342-349)

YP refers to this safe environment in his interview and claims it to be at the heart of his transformative learning experience.

“The idea that the school has faith in you, makes me appreciate it (the school) even more” (YP 411)

Such a safe environment allows for communication space to ‘think together’. JSL, FSL and RSS make reference to this. JSL claims that dialogue between teachers would lead to a better understanding of concepts and issues. FSL continue to

explain that an effective professional dialogue would lead to collective reflection and a clearer understanding of the dynamics of learning.

“Well, it took us some time until we grasped the whole process, it took some time again (to understand) how is this going to work? Until we sat down, together with other teachers to see how we could apply this in class especially in our subject, English. We had to sit down and see how it could work in English. ...” (JSL 23-26)

“she told me, I have this lesson, I am doing this. And I said what an idea! I used to do this poem but obviously that wasn’t my way of doing it. I used to do a normal lesson, read the poem and answer questions.” (FSL 36-38)

JSL, EP and YP also highlight the value of collaboration amongst colleagues which is often the basis for the professional conversations that take place.

“...we spend a lot of time, most of our PD days discussing the learning process. What we should be doing is questioning our teaching methods when we’re not reaching particular students. A lot of focus is on the students and the learning process” (JSL 465-468)

“And even between ourselves, our characters are all different, we all learn through different patterns, and one could maybe help the other depending on the other’s needs.” (EP 231-233)

“Then you obviously have sharing of experiences and one tells the other and you fill in your learning luggage.” (EP 260-261)

“I have learnt to share things that have worked for me with my colleagues... when we find something that works, we share it together...” (YP 384-386)

CP also describes an example of collaboration between a literacy support assistant and herself, a collaboration that is yielding “a huge improvement in the way these boys are developing” (410). Such collaboration came as a result of an idea that she shared with her colleagues.

Theme 4.3 refers to a dialogue between practitioners and the SMT. This communication has been highlighted by many of the participants in the context of dialogue between members of the school community. As the quote from JSL’s interview above suggests, the professional development days, apart from being an occasion in which teachers meet and discuss issues related to learning, are also structured meetings for classroom practitioners to dialogue with the school’s leadership about these same issues.

RSS refers to the professional development sessions, as an opportunity to reflect together on how one can best help the students, in their learning needs. The school leadership are the catalysts in initiating such dialogue within the school community.

“the school helped even the way it invests in the training, the fact that we have staff development, we discuss these things, in the sense the student is central to what we do and we do our best to help him out.” (RSS 267-269)

YP highlights how the active dialogue between the SMT and himself, a primary school teacher, has been one of encouragement for any initiative he takes, with respect to his class. The SMT has given a free hand to experiment and to act professionally. This sense of freedom facilitated the communication channels between the teaching staff and the school management while it ensured a motivating learning experience for the learners.

“Our leadership has given us the freedom to choose certain things (here he continues to explain a creative art activity which he organised for his class and which created a mess)... Not only did I not get – ‘oh be careful

because you will create a mess on the roof, but I was encouraged, even having them offering me materials that I needed for this activity.” (YP 400-407)

The next theme (4.4) presents data related to dialogue initiated by teachers or/and parents related to the Let Me Learn process and its impact on the learning/teaching environment. Two SMT members and three primary teachers make clear reference to this theme.

MH refers to the importance of communication and dialoguing with parents. He claims that parental exposure to Let Me Learn gave the school community a common language to talk about the teaching/learning process and to talk about the development of their son in what Freire calls, a language of hope. When shared language is a part of the dialogue, communication is facilitated, and parents truly become collaborators in the educational project.

“Probably, I think that once again there was the fact that we use a common language. In a sense, we stopped grumbling about certain clichés and the parents themselves could talk about more tangible things. They could decipher the way they could relate to their children, even since we are trying to work with them in a certain way, they understand how we are trying to work with them. They can better understand the strategies that we are using by working with their children in a certain way. (MH 284-254)

“...they (the parents) start to understand their children more” (EP 144)

CP also underlined the value of dialoguing with parents to help them understand their own children’s learning processes.

“Because even parents, sometimes they don’t accept their children the way they are, but when I am with them, and I explain the learning

patterns and that it's his way of learning, listen try to help him in this way, yes there are parents who understand..." (CP 213-215)

According to MH this will help parents "relate to their children" better and create a constructive dialogue between parents and their children.

The communication between teachers and parents helped in helping parents understand better the Process so as not to use it as a means of labelling their own children.

"They had asked what Let Me Learn was, ... They didn't seem concerned because since the scores involve numbers, certain parents label the numbers as being marks, but this was the first thing that I explained, that this wasn't a test, but a process where we, as teachers, could understand the children better, so that they could continue to improve, and we as teachers could improve as well." (YP 235-241)

Eventually through such dialogue parents became aware of the need to know their own learning patterns so as to better understand and support their children.

"Two weeks ago, I was really pleased. We had a meeting with two parents, the mum and the dad of a student who is in Form 1. These people are using LML in their learning skills, they are facing a problem of how to study with their son, and one of the things that they asked for was the LML inventory, so that they fill it out themselves, so that they check if the way they personally learn, clashed with the way their son learns." (AA 206-211)

According to AA, through such informed dialogue, one can truly and effectively involve parents in the educational process.

“The fact that you have all the stakeholders involved, so now you are speaking not only about the students but also about the parents, then I believe that, that was one of the changes that this process brought about.”
(AA 266-269)

In theme 4.5 the participants reflect on the role played by the Let Me Learn Process in the transformative process of the school. Through what is sometimes referred to as ‘dialogue with the self’, participants were problematising the experience and reflecting on the benefits of such a Process.

SA values LML as an agent that helps the school community to unify their collective experiences of learning and teaching. It helped the community to achieve coherence between what they collectively hold as sacred and the diversity of approaches to achieve it.

“I think that it helped us bring together everything we believe in. Maybe before we started to do something similar but using different methods. But the Let Me Learn, seemed to justify it and in that sense it gave it more power. In that sense, I think that without Let Me Learn we wouldn’t have arrived this far, as far as the process goes.” (SA 300-304)

JSL problematises the challenge faced by every teacher when it comes to transferring one’s newly held beliefs to practical pedagogical behaviour. She does this through a dialogue with her students where they are invited to criticise her lesson and also experience her role by preparing and giving a lesson. Through this approach the students could have a better and deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the work of the teacher.

“... I try to use as many resources as possible. Again, which is not always possible. A case in point is, we had, together with another teacher, we gave the students the opportunity to criticise our lessons. And one of the critics, they chose a lesson that they enjoyed but which I could have done in a better way, delivered in a better way. So they criticised our lesson,

“Listen you could have used this, a power point. You could have used... It was poetry I think they had chosen poetry and drama. And I said ‘Ok, you plan, create resources, deliver the lesson...’. That’s what they did using Let Me Learn. And we were there to observe.” (JSL 274-281)

Through such an exchange of experiences students could experience first hand the challenges faced by the teacher in trying to respond to their needs on a daily basis. It also brought to the surface the limitations experienced by the practitioner and the choices that need to be made to ensure equity amongst students:

“I’ve always noticed it. It helps. I mean the bright students, like they don’t always need that much help. Why? Because at school you need to be precise and sequential. If you are, you have no problems because there are not many things that are hands on, and very few occasions, unfortunately for them, to be creative, confluent. So it works mostly with the students who need help at school.” (JSL 178-182)

FSL believed the training needed to be more applied to the needs of the teachers attending. She believes that the training:

“was full of theory and I wish it were more,..., I felt that I needed someone who would have come and told me, look you are doing this story, this comprehension, how I could apply the patterns in it, not just having someone discussing just seating with us, ... what type of homework should I give? How do I do classwork?” (FSL 184-190)

Often teachers, due to practical constraints, ask for more direct support, not realising that this could lead to an imposition and a hindrance to their reflexive action. In fact FSL is one of the teachers who made up for this ‘deficiency’ by working on applications with colleagues to generate resources and lesson plans that make good use of the knowledge of the students’ learning processes.

Thus this collaborative dialogue has generated a language of possibility or what Freire would call language of hope. We have two SMT members and three teachers, one from Secondary and two from the Primary section of the school making reference to theme 4.6. MH explains how the language that the Process has generated made it possible to talk about learning needs without recurring to negative labels. This shared language was also shared with parents, who also tend to label their children.

“Yes I think the effect this had on the staff, is that we now have a common language. This was important for the staff when discussing diversity – but diversity in what? In the sense that children love to learn... If you really use the idea, it gave us different means of learning. (MH 134-137)

“For example when certain things started to happen, for example: ‘My child is very disorganised, lazy’, we started to change these labels. We no longer talk about the lazy boy but about a child who has lower sequence. So if there is this situation there are strategies. What can we do about it? How can we help him to improve? And I think that we have come to a point with other parents.” (MH 277-281)

For CP the language has given her the ability to identify the need and “name it”. It also gave her the skill to share this knowledge with the children that she teaches:

“I didn’t have the skill to use the characters to make the students understand, but the characters help the students a lot.” (CP 240-241)

SA and EP speak of a language that leads to a positive response. SA speaks of the language that helped her detach the problem from the student. In her new paradigm, the student is the learner; the problem is the challenge that feeds her strategies that will help the learner to learn. By refining the language, learners can experience the thoroughness of the dynamics of learning (EP).

“In our case, even when we speak about behaviour we believe in positive reinforcement a lot. So even the teachers during a staff development, we don’t look at students’ abilities. That I think is the biggest change and that has come about now. First and foremost you don’t see the student as a problem but you try to find out what the problem really is. So the student *has* a problem not the student *is* the problem.” (SA333-338)

“What you have to make clear is that we have the four patterns within, because they might think that we have two patterns, and that we don’t use the other two or that we have three patterns and we don’t take any notice of the other one, that we all have the four patterns but we may use one more than the other, and we can also improve so that the patterns in which we have a low score, can be stretched.” (EP 118-122)

4.2.5 Phase five: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions

This study generated five themes that were seen as falling under this phase in the path to transformative learning. The themes generated from the interviews with participants are the following:

- 5.1 The educator as a catalyst of change
- 5.2 The educator as an ‘archaeologist’ of learning potential
- 5.3 The school as an example for other schools
- 5.4 The educator exploring alternative discourse
- 5.5 The educator exploring alternative pedagogical praxis

The table in Appendix 11 shows that both the SMT and the teachers have referred to all themes. Themes 5.3 and 5.4 were the least referred to with only two persons making clear reference to them.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
5	5.1	2	2	2	2
	5.2	1	3	5	7
	5.3	1	1	1	1
	4.4	1	1	1	2
	5.5	1	4	4	7

Table 8: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 5

The table above shows that themes 5.2 and 5.5 have the highest number of references indicating a high preference in particular by teachers. What follows is an in-depth analysis of the data generated by the above themes.

Theme 5.1 refers to the role of an individual or an institution in acting as a catalyst of change within the community. Two members of the SMT and two teachers (one from the secondary sector and another from the Primary) each refer to this theme once.

AA believes that her role is primarily that of an educator, and thus she strongly believes that she needs to lead by example and apply the Process in her teaching of Math. She also wants to teach the younger students so as to be able to explore such actions, which would be difficult to do in the final year, when the pressures of examinations intensify.

“I am hoping that next year I will teach Form 1 students as well because I have a firm belief that I have to lead by example. I also informed MH that next year I would like to teach Form 1 instead of Form 5s because it is very difficult to work with them.” (AA 70-73)

SA, as a deputy head in charge of pastoral care, speaks of her experience with a young Secondary school student who was causing trouble at school. She learnt about his passion for football, and she used it as a ‘hook’ for motivation.

“And there was another one, a football fanatic. He used to play football, but he was troublesome. He didn’t want to study, and we gave him the opportunity to give training sessions, planning them out himself, and then we had the after school programme, and he started to coach six to seven-year-olds. So his reputation is that of being their coach not of someone who is creating trouble.” (SA401-405)

FSL explains that by displaying the students’ work in a foyer downstairs for all to see, she often has teachers coming up to her to learn more about her particular approach. By the sharing of practice, FSL feels that she is helping colleagues transform their practice and also it is helping her transform her own.

“For example in my case, I always invent things to do with my students, and I always put up their works downstairs. Other teachers see their work and sometimes they do approach me, it’s not like they are queuing up but sometimes they do tell me what a good idea that is. I do the same with other teachers, (telling them) how interesting that is. It would be a good idea if I do that with my students. For example, there is one particular teacher who commented on my work last year, she told me you do a lot of interesting things with them.” (FSL 471-477)

YP speaks of how structured opportunities for teachers and other educators to share their practice, served to spread the word even amongst those who have not as yet attended the training. These structured opportunities create space for cross sector sharing.

“...when we have staff meetings, and we have sharing of good practice, you start to listen to or see presentations being given out by teachers. For us, you start to see that Let Me Learn was not just being used by these individuals but it’s being used by other individuals as well. I remember a time when even JSL, who teaches in the secondary level, had given out a presentation, and I remember the benefits of Let Me Learn came out. Then obviously you give a good name, people started to know about it,

and say if it works for her and for him, it might work for me too.” (YP 356-362)

Theme 5.2 refers to the teacher’s role in recovering, surveying and excavating learning potential. Most teachers make reference to this theme together with one of the SMT who also makes three references.

SA, as a deputy head, speaks of a school that tries

“to find out what students are good at.” (329)

She explains that through a change in language, afforded by their new awareness through the Let Me Learn Process the school can now

“use what he is good at to get to the difficult situation. We do this with teachers involved in pastoral care like the year coordinators...” (SA 341-342)

This search for student potential is not easy at times but there is a persistent effort in achieving this aim.

JSL also refers to the way the school allows space for everyone to ‘shine’. Through practices promoted by the school, teachers are encouraged to transform their practice into one that focuses on the learner rather than on the institutional requirements that often detract from the focus on the learner.

“... we don’t only reward students who do well in their exams, but students who perform in Arts, have taken part in an exhibition, who have improved. They don’t have to get good marks or pass with flying colours. If they made an improvement they are rewarded for it. Their improvement has been acknowledged by this certificate.” (JSL 391-395)

RSS explains how students are encouraged to work outside their comfort zone to allow for their full potential to emerge. She also talks about a strategy she started, giving students their space to explore their personalised way of presenting what they have learnt making use of a diary in which they present what they have learnt using their preferred mode of expression.

“Not staying in the comfort zone, so I am technical and I am not good (at writing). It doesn’t stop there, this doesn’t mean that I am not using the other patterns.” (RSS 106-107)

“The diary is something which is personal, I immediately learn how a student learns from its presentation, so they have personalised even the way they study and like we already stated, we don’t stop there. Then my input begins from there.” (RSS 226-228)

Both EP and YP speak of how Let Me Learn has provided them with the knowledge of pupils’ learning processes. Through such knowledge they have a better understanding of how they can best support students in their learning and boost their self-esteem.

“Now you know more about them and you start off, you see the students in front of you, the ones that you have for that particular scholastic year,... and you start saying that one has this pattern, the other one has that one...you start taking on the idea of Let Me Learn, how it works, how the patterns work and you start to get to know the students better...” (EP 23-24, 25, 26-27)

“So when you take a look at their patterns, and you adapt your lesson to their needs, they start to realise that ‘yes even I can do this’. (EP 180-181)

“This year’s group is doing really well because we have found the right programme that can cater for them, and it is catering for their needs and

there I think that they are improving and the most important thing is that their self esteem is increasing..." (EP 182-185)

"I have experienced a huge leap in behaviour, in their attitude towards the school, and those two combined together are already a key to the success of learning. Those are the things where I saw the greatest development so far." (YP 421-424)

"You don't say, no because that's class and I can't do anything about that. You need to experiment step by step, you see what works and what doesn't." (YP 426-428)

Two participants have referred to theme 5.3 in which they could see a role for their school as a model to other schools that might also be searching to transform their service to a more learner centred approach. In their professional experience and in their professional interactions with other teachers, they learn that even in Education there is still both lack of vision and a sense of professional egoism.

"Sometimes I wonder how LML works in other schools since I know their school ethos. In the sense that we have high achievers, let us challenge those and those who fall behind, then tough luck. This is what we are, we are the anti-thesis of what I have just said, in the sense that we push the high achievers, but we will also help those who have fallen behind". (SA319-324)

"And when I hear certain teachers speaking of things like this (sharing of resources and good practice), other schools say, definitely not, I don't do that, what I do is for me, and the others have to fend for themselves. But we cannot do that, we are a small school, and still, it shouldn't be like that. We are a small school but I think that the fact that we share our work with each other it is good, because you say, this worked for me, it could work

for you too. But then obviously it is up to them to find ways of how to arrange and adapt it for their needs.” (YP 389-395)

New roles, relationships and actions instigate a type of discourse that is aligned with the new perspective. The head of school and a teacher from the Secondary mentioned the exploration of a discourse that reflects the new perspective. MH views the Let Me Learn process as an agent for problematising the traditional educational system and therefore the dominant hegemonic culture. Through the exploration of new discourse, MH believes that one can approach ‘old problems’ with a new transformed perspective.

“If we have been brought up in an educational system in a certain way, and the Let Me Learn process is helping us to ask questions and problematise the way the traditional educational system works, and we are operating in a different system, which to a certain extent, is the selective system, then we obviously had to think on different tracks and with a certain effort ... Because if you are used to working and thinking in a certain way, it does take an effort to think differently.” (MH 177-183)

RSS refers to a language, which at times might sound deterministic, but here the role of the transformed teacher comes in to help learners move away from their comfort zone and strategise to find ways to forge, intensify or/and tether their patterns to succeed in the task at hand. This is a fundamental role of a teacher who has experienced a perspective transformation and thus is exploring new ways of making his role relevant to the new perspective.

“You hear them commenting like he is precise, he is technical, he knows how to draw, so yes you hear these type of comments.” (RSS 142-143)

“Not staying in their comfort zone, so I am technical, and I am not good (at writing). It doesn’t stop there, this doesn’t mean that I am not using the other patterns.” (RSS 106-107)

The next theme (5.5) refers to the exploration of alternative pedagogical praxis that emerges from a process of reflection. SA refers to how her new awareness has made her realise how her teaching, which reflected her learning profile, could be hindering the process of learning for certain students whose processes of learning patterns differ. This awareness has brought about an intentional change in her teaching.

“I used to enter the classroom with one plan and in the middle of the lesson, I would start writing on the whiteboard starting from that side and then use arrows to indicate somewhere else, then I said ‘ in this way I am driving students who have a high sequence, crazy’. Then I started with a lot of effort on my part, to start using one side of the board and then move on to the other. Then I started using sequence. Since I teach history, I tried my best not to move to different periods of time. ...Then I learnt not to move a lot during a lesson...” (SA248-254, 256)

She asserts that this change was also observed in other teachers who have also realised that their ways might be hindering students’ learning:

“Yes there was a particular teacher who used to teach Maltese. She used to fill the board, everything in order, and then I started to see less writing on the board, a lot more handouts were given out, more tasks were given.” (SA265-267)

This concern led teachers like FSL, RSS and EP to re-think their approach to teaching and to explore other methodologies and strategies.

“Basically I changed the way I used to teach in class.” (FSL 334)

“The fact that you realise that it is not because they are no good, but because they learn in a different way, so let’s see what we can do so that I help them and make them realise, ‘yes we are good, we only learn differently from others.” (RSS 195-198)

“... when I started, I expected that I would improve, I would make changes, learn to adapt my teaching methodology so that my students benefit from it as well.” (EP 15-16)

SA believes there was a qualitative change in lesson planning and delivery and in the way teachers assessed students’ performance, and the teacher-student relationship in general.

“What changes... like in lesson planning, how lessons are delivered, how teachers are perceiving their students’ performance...” (SA326-327)

“In the beginning they used to say ‘oh let him be, he is lazy’ but now for example what I am seeing and I really like is that I am seeing teachers speaking to students on an individual level in corridors. Like ‘yes talk to me after the lesson, and you can see them, what is the problem here, do you have a personal problem with me or is it...’ So the dialogue in a sense is on the right track.” (SA363-367)

RSS explains that once she could understand the reason behind struggling students, she could explore ways of giving more focused and directed feedback.

“You will immediately notice if someone is sequential because he uses lists and a lot of bullets. Who is high in precision, presents chunks of information, uses less diagrams so I comment about this by saying that the information is correct but he needs to insert more diagrams next time round.” (RSS 125-128)

“Yes, I think the fact that you start to learn about certain things, you start saying so it may be that that boy is not understanding, is not doing well in my subject because of that, so it made me question why certain students were struggling in class.” (RSS 233-235)

JSL talks about her experience of training, that while it generally failed to reach her expectations, has pushed her to search for and explore new and alternative approaches that came as a result of reflection on one's practice.

“... initially I had to come up with all the examples and apply it in class - by trial and error. What works what doesn't work with my students? So that's it, I must admit that I came up with most of the answers later on.”
(JSL 33-35)

4.2.6 Phase six: Planning of a course of action

At this stage, in Mezirow's conceptualisation, is the planning of a course of action. This study generated four themes that represent how participants planned a course of action reflecting a new perspective.

- 6.1 Initiating others into the Process.
- 6.2 Reflecting on school policies.
- 6.3 Bringing about change at a paced growth.
- 6.4 Changing practice as a result of a better understanding of the learners.

Both the SMT and the teachers had referred to all four themes. Theme 6.2 was referred to by two of the SMT members and only one teacher. All participants referred to theme 6.4 at least once (see table below):

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
6	6.1	3	8	2	3
	6.2	2	4	3	4
	6.3	2	4	1	1
	6.4	3	4	6	11

Table 9: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 6

Theme 6.1 refers to how, in the process of planning a course of action, inspired by the new perspective, participants promoted the Process with their colleagues. It explains how they supported each other in the initial stages of the Process. All three SMT members made reference to this theme, with AA making as much as five references.

Both MH and AA make reference to the importance of a strategy that ensures the creation of a critical mass. A critical mass needs to be formed before any effective change can occur. MH explains that the strategy was to first send those who showed a positive disposition towards the Process, and were therefore willing to learn more. For AA this strategy was important because it would give the community a shared language that would facilitate communication between members of the community of practice.

“This (referring to his participation with the first group) was done in a strategic way. The first group of people who attended the training were the most receptive... This was important. If you want to create a critical mass in a school, you need to strategise, and not just send anyone for training.” (MH 106-107, 109-110)

“Then, when we decided that we were going to implement this particular Process, we were all for the training of the whole staff or at least the majority of the staff, since it wouldn’t have made sense to be discussing

something during a meeting, for example, during SDPs, during evaluations that we carry out from time to time, if they are not trained.” (AA 6-10)

SA explains how she gives feedback to support teachers in their practice, in particular new teachers who might be struggling with certain aspects of teaching. In so doing she initiates them in the new perspective. She explains how she worked with a teacher who was struggling with a group of students who were highly sequential:

“I went to speak to him and since he had not done the Let Me Learn course I started to explain to him. He realised it was right, and he did his best to change, and when he reverts back to his ways, the students tell me he did it again miss ha-ha. Now he is doing Let Me Learn because afterwards he came to me telling me that he was interested in doing the course. I think it is contagious.” (SA271-278)

RSS, as a teacher, feels that she needs to be cautious on how she imposes herself on other teachers. The most effective way for her is to work with others, and together they help students get initiated in the language of the Process.

“I know this works, but who am I to tell another teacher to do the same, I know how restricted we are, how vast the syllabus is.” (RSS 308-309)

“... two colleagues of mine and myself continued to conduct LML seminars with our students. We would have a meeting with the students of a particular year and we would spend a whole day focusing on Let Me Learn and then we would do different tasks requiring different patterns and then we would ask them where they felt most comfortable, where they felt frustrated.” (RSS 90-94)

AA recognises the limitations and hurdles that the system offers and the difficulties these impose on teachers who are trying to be initiated into this new perspective. Often this leads to initial reluctance.

“I think that this year, let’s speak of this year, there were so many things, even the fact that we were working on the learning policy and then at a certain point we had to stop. During the scholastic year there are so many things that one has to see to, so I think we need to sit down and we discuss this (how the school can continue to develop and grow in using the Process), we still have a lot of work to do...” (AA 576-579)

This calls for the need of support, not only as teachers, but also as SMT who need to be supported to keep on track and be able to support their staff.

“Even the idea of mentoring could be taken up with the SMT as well. In it’s planning and then in practice. We sometimes feel this. People are expecting a lot from you and sometimes you don’t have all the answers. So if you have the team’s backing, who has visited other schools, seen different things. So mentoring, apart from mentoring in the class, this would help as well. Now we have come to the point where we put it into practice, in this situation of inclusion of mixed ability.” (AA 588-594)

Encouraging teachers to attend the LMLpLp is seen by CP as the logical step to take in the process of initiating others into the process:

“I believe that if these teachers had to do Let Me Learn (it would help them in their relationship with their students), otherwise I don’t know where they would get it from... If they attend the course, (it will affect) the way they interact with the students, (... will) change.” (CP 373-378)

JSL believes that, initiating students into the discourse afforded by the Process, should be the first step to take. In her interview she speaks of initiating her students into the Process and working with them throughout the years she would be teaching them, to develop this language.

“So once (...) I embarked my students on the Let Me Learn project, (...) when I take up a Form 1 class, (...) I embark my students on Let Me Learn, knowing that I’ll be using it every single day for the rest of their lives here.” (JSL 135-138)

The next theme, theme 6.2, refers to the re-thinking of the school policies as part of the plan of the course of action inspired by the new perspective. AA reflects on the process of building a school’s learning policy, in which the Let Me Learn process plays an important part.

“It was a very long process (referring to the process of writing the learning policy), (... and) Let me Learn is part of the checklist, where eventually a policy is going to be introduced.” (AA 233-235)

The Let Me Learn Process is seen as forming a part of the school’s learning policy that should act as mortar for other learning initiatives.

“I would like Let Me Learn to be put into practice together with other things. At the moment, I think others have told you, we are working on a learning policy and obviously this is going to be included in it.” (AA 220-222)

EP explains that the learning patterns of every student are posted on every class list. This indicates the importance the school gives to knowing each learner’s processing patterns.

“In our case, in our class list, we have the students’ scores next to their names, so the school is making a statement that we need to know each other’s patterns, and they take them with them from primary to secondary level.” (EP 105-107)

JSL, CP and YP see that Let Me Learn is in congruence with the spirit of the schools’ ethos.

“How it fits, with the philosophy of the school. It does (fit), with the ethos of the school. Catering for the different needs of the students and helping each and everyone to reach his potential. So that’s it, it fits perfectly” (JSL 364-366)

“...as a school I feel that we give a lot of importance to the needs of the students, not students in general, but students as individuals, and Let Me Learn gives that chance so that you get to know the students on an individual basis.” (YP 345-348)

“Exactly word for word as our school ethos. I don’t remember exactly but I know that we try to help all kinds of differences. I think that, that is what Let Me Learn does, it caters for the differences that are found in the students...” (CP 320-322)

CP asserts that the school has changed her perspective of teaching and learning:

“It has changed me. ... I think it has made me the teacher I am today because the way the school operates, the way it thinks, it has made me who I am.” (CP 449, 453-454)

A school policy that respects diversity should respect the paced growth of the different members within the community of practice. Theme 6.3 refers to the importance of a paced, not rushed, change process. This allows space for participants to reflect on how this perspective affects their actions and their persuasions.

MH and AA reflect on how the school community has grown to challenge the dominant discourse. They claim that, while in the past certain values would find opposition from certain teachers, now teachers are more open to accommodate the diversity of needs of students. Obviously every course of action needs to respect the fact that different teachers might be at a different stage in

accommodating the new perspective. The school therefore needs to respect the pace of every individual within the community.

“...all of a sudden, no, not all of a sudden because throughout the process we do challenge certain concepts. Now there are a number of concepts that are going unchallenged, but at the same time there has to be an element of patience. We cannot tackle everything at once.” (MH 171-175)
“Theoretically, I think that a number of persons have already gone through this change in mentality, however, I think that we need to look at how we can put it into practice in a coherent and consistent way.” (MH 51-55)

“I believe that the process started a long time ago, a lot of things still need to be done, definitely. Even in the last two years, the language has changed, it has developed, and maybe I have become more aware of things, even the way that certain people speak. So I think it is a process, it is a process definitely. A process which has started a long time ago but obviously the drive or momentum is not always the same...” (AA 248-253)

The final theme in this stage (6.4) refers to the development of pedagogical practice fitting the new perspective to guide the course of action. MH, as a head of school, and motivator for the embodiment of the new perspective within the school community, noticed that the shared language brought about with the school involvement in the Let Me Learn process has had an impact on the classroom level. SA also referred to this; she states that even those who had initially resisted the new perspective have now shown a change in their approach to teaching.

“I think that the issue of having a common language made a difference and then you start making a difference on a practical level. With certain people, more than with others, this has translated itself into practice. The

way a lesson is done, how one reacts towards children, I think it has improved.” (MH 183-186)

“So as I stated before, even those who were sceptical, Let Me Learn have helped them. They will never admit this, but we have witnessed a change in lesson delivery, a change in the homework given, homework is varied in the sense that not everyone is given the same type of homework.” (SA 286-289)

This was sustained by JSL who claims that Let Me Learn has permeated all the work that they, as teachers, do with the children. The awareness of their learning patterns has become an important aspect of their planning for learning.

“... in my opinion we have come to the point where I think a lot of importance is given to those students with particular needs. Even learning patterns. Whatever the activity we (do), we keep Let Me Learn in mind.” (JSL 369-371)

FSL, RSS, EP, and CP all highlight the importance given to adapting to the needs of different learners and to applying strategies that meet the students’ needs. FSL, after showing me a nicely presented book with a collection of students’ products, explains the process by which she helped students come up with this final product.

“... we got to this stage through mind maps where we tried to target everybody’s patterns. ... (T)his (pointing to the book) deals with Halloween, you start off with visuals, you have a comprehension, but they would have done acrostics before this, so they would know what it is all about, the handout is in another file, I will show it to you later on, it is step by step, first you have a missing word, then you have a missing space, then you have... in this way, by using a structure, you would be helping those who I call the reluctant writers. So a student who is very confluent,

not so sequential will find this very useful, on the other hand those who are very sequential will love this.” (FSL 270-271, 273-280)

RSS explains how she started to plan with intention and to utilise strategies that would help students stretch their patterns to produce better products. She does this through modelling, employing her strength in sequence to show, step by step, how a particular skill can be achieved. So while before she would expect the students to fit her mould, now she moulds herself to the students’ needs and provide them with strategies that will help them succeed in responding to the demands posed by curricular requirements.

“ So when it comes to the students, the fact that I became aware of how they learn best, I started to use more PowerPoint, animations, Internet etcetera” (RSS 114-115)

“The fact that I am using more Power-points, more multimedia, the fact that I am getting through a larger number of students, and the fact that yes I am being technical so I am stretching my patterns, or else I am technical but at the same time even when using a Power-point, the way I present information, I am passing on tools to the technical students on what they can do to understand better, how they can memorise information. So I use bullets, I use keywords, I use mapping so I am not just telling them do this, even the way I present information I am giving them the tools so that they can stretch information, give more details and use more than just technical reasoning. I try to include everything in the Power-points, all four patterns. (RSS, 207-215)

EP explains how he incorporated technical reasoning in his lessons to accommodate those students that process with this pattern. CP asserts that now that she is varying the lessons, she is experiencing a better connection with the students.

“Yes for example we are doing fractions, we made a pizza. ...Whereas before I used to start off the lesson with a PowerPoint and diagrams on their own, today I include the technical part. To make a pizza you need some technical reasoning.” (EP 91, 99-101)

“Now, I am varying lessons more, I am understanding the students more. I think I am getting through to all students.” (CP 226-227)

4.2.7 Phase seven: Reference to acquisition of knowledge and skill for implementing one’s plan

At this stage in Mezirow’s conceptualisation, is the acquisition of knowledge and skill required in order to be able to plan and implement a course of action. This study generated five themes, namely:

- 7.1 Improved personal and professional interpersonal communication.
- 7.2 Improved understanding of learners’ needs.
- 7.3 Intuitive deciphering of learning patterns.
- 7.4 Reference to success.
- 7.5 Application of differentiated strategies.

Members of the SMT and a number of teachers referred to all five themes. Themes 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 have the highest number of references. All SMT members make reference to themes 7.1 and 7.3 with the former being referred to by all teachers except for one. There were two teachers who make no reference to theme 7.3. While all teachers refer to theme 7.2, only one SMT member makes reference to this theme. The table below shows the spread of references for each theme:

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
7	7.1	3	10	5	10
	7.2	1	1	6	12
	7.3	3	7	4	5
	7.4	1	1	4	10
	7.5	1	1	2	4

Table 10: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 7

The first theme in this stage refers to improvement in interpersonal communication within and outside the professional community. MH and SA make reference to personal understanding of self. Both MH and SA feel that through their exposure to this new knowledge they can now better understand their reactions to certain situations and contexts and the dynamics of interpersonal communication.

“ I started to make sense of the way I work. I began to understand myself better, that is, the way I work has a logical meaning behind it. I think Let Me Learn gave me a model to make more sense of what I was doing and how I was acting. It also gave more sense to my social life and relationships with others. Why did I feel more comfortable with certain members of staff and not with others? Why in certain situations, let’s say during particular meetings, I feel nervous and inhibited by some persons whereas with others I feel that my ideas can flourish and I feel at ease? Once you look at the patterns, you start to understand the reasons why... (MH 64-71)

“... I score very low in sequence compared to others, however my precision is very high. So during my lessons, my board is always full of information, obviously I supply a lot of notes to my students, I give them a lot, there is no sequence even the way I present the information on the

board. I realised that I was reaching my goals with students who had high precision, I was their favourite teacher, ...however I was driving students with high sequence crazy.” (SA 57-63)

MH also refers to the newly acquired ability to understand the processing patterns of others and therefore their communication behaviour. He explains how through the acquisition of this knowledge he could better understand a particular colleague who seemed to be “kill(ing his) spirit”.

“There was an instant when we both did Let Me Learn and we started to realise why I was frustrating her with what I was doing and why I started to feel literally strangled.” (MH 218-220)

RSS explains that she can now

“... look at people individually not like you have a whole group in front of you, I think that is it that I value each student as an individual.” (RSS 169-170)

RSS, JSL, YP and CP spoke of how this has boosted their communication with students. Students now feel valued as individual persons and not lost in a crowd. FSL, on the other hand, commented on how her improved communication skills have yielded better learning for students.

“... the fact that you are not relating to them in a generic manner, the fact that you continue to motivate them, you don’t give up (on them). If there is someone facing a difficulty on a particular task you encourage him to continue, to try and not accept it, I think that is what I value most, that everyone feels comfortable in the classroom...” (RSS 171-175)

“...it helped a lot, my relationship with the pupils... at the same time they realised that ‘look I’m interested in the way they learn’ ” (JSL 164-165, 167-168)

“ I have seen an improvement through these years, in certain categories, ... but even in the way we deal with the students...” (YP 371-373)

“I see a difference in the way we as teachers interact with students. ... I see a difference between the teachers that have attended LML and the others who haven't because of the way they behave.” (CP 358-359, 361-362)

“My relationship with them (the students) improved, they learnt more, they remember more.” (FSL 114)

SA, MH and RSS explain that through understanding of themselves as learners, they now have a better understanding of others and therefore they can communicate better:

“...as a teacher and as a leader. For me it made a world of difference, I started to understand myself better, the students and now as a deputy head I understand the teachers too.” (SA407-409)

“It helped me on a personal level, the fact that I understood myself has helped me to understand how I react and I can also understand how others react – and by others I mean teaching and non-teaching staff.” (MH 203-205)

“I started to understand myself and other people a lot better.” (RSS 55)

Both AA and FSL explain how this new awareness, has opened up a space for communication that led to a collaborative spirit amongst teachers.

“... we are not afraid of speaking about things with each other although this is not always easy to do. We have a lot of PD (professional development) days and we communicate on things other than the timetable, we also speak about practical things as well.” (AA 648-651)

“I know that this (teachers visiting each others’ classroom) has happened with an experienced teacher and a new teacher, there was this interaction, they teach the same subject and there was this interaction, feedback was given, which was excellent, but through this framework, space was given for this interaction to happen.” (AA 358-362)

“For example in my case I always invent things to do with my students, and I always put up their works downstairs. Other teachers see their work and sometimes they do approach me, ... I do the same with other teachers, ...” (FSL 471-474)

“We steal each other’s ideas, that is how we work.” (FSL 485)

Theme 7.2 refers to an improved understanding of the students, as learners and their academic, emotional and social needs. SA, EP, YP and CP feel that through the acquired knowledge they can understand better their students and adapt to their needs. FSL explains that she can now understand better certain classroom situations and comporment. CP explains how now that she understands her students, their learning pathways and what drives their actions, she can react with intentionality of purpose. She asserts that, while before, she was able to identify certain behaviours in her students, she feels that now she has a deeper understanding of what triggered such behaviours and react with more precision and skill to their needs. She is now able to identify each student’s ‘learning comfort zone’ and to initiate her response from there.

“I started to get through to the children, and it is still ongoing, it is a very long process.” (SA41-42)

“... you start to understand why certain students have certain attitudes during the lesson, towards the homework, towards the classwork... you start to understand these elements in the students, more than you understood them before.” (EP 213-214, 216-217)

“... it is like you adapt your knowledge to the students’ needs and then you realise why they are doing certain things, why certain things happen.” (YP 38-40)

“... when you take a look at a student you are not looking only at John, but you know that John has certain patterns.” (YP 189-190)

“So in class you feel it, that no matter what you do, all the students seem to enjoy it, and all of them seem to have learnt. When you look at their scores you realise why, their average scores are all between 26 and 28 (from a range 0-35), so whatever you do, you manage to reach the majority of your class.” (FSL 436-439)

“I remember even during the course, I used to say: ‘but I already know these things about my students’, but, I didn’t have the skill to give it to the students, now I can name it. I understand that you are confluent or that you are more practical or more precise, that you want everything neat...” (CP 236-240)

By understanding the students and how they process, JSL could now adapt and pace the work to their needs. While in the past she would insist on having everyone doing the same work, following the same requirements, now she adapts the work (in this case, the comprehension exercise) to the needs of her learners.

“... the fact that they didn’t like reading the, the long passages, we always broke the comprehensions down into smaller parts. I never ask them to read the whole passage as a whole, as we’re used to. So it was easier, at least one paragraph. Stop, try and understand what you’ve read, write a comment and move on to the second.” (JSL 160-164)

RSS points to her understanding of the learners’ diverse ways of approaching learning situations.

“You will see a non-technical student who is frustrated because he needs to draw a diagram, frustrated because he doesn’t know how to draw, ...” (RSS 134-135)

“Obviously it made me aware that everyone is an individual, everybody learns differently...” (RSS 47-48)

CP confesses that while in the past she would put down certain behaviour to misbehaviour, now she has a better understanding and appreciation of the students’ behaviour.

“Whereas before I put certain types of behaviour down to misbehaviour and obviously unacceptable, not where academics are concerned, but behaviour in class, the students between themselves, or how the students behave during certain parts of the lessons, that you start to wonder if this is the same student. It helped me accept them more, ... I started to accept his behaviour, why he is behaving in that way, and it helped me during the lesson.” (CP 298-301, 302-303)

The data generated from this study has suggested that theme 7.3 – Intuitive deciphering of learning patterns is very much the foundation knowledge required for the successful implementation of the sought after actions inspired by the new perspective. The ability to decode and use knowledge of learning patterns to inspire and drive one’s response is a fundamental finding of this research.

MH speaks about how his teaching staff can now respond to situations that in the past would have caused great distress. He explains that now they can communicate their needs better and respond more effectively to specific situations. He observes that teachers’ individual strengths have turned into collective strengths because they are able to recognise their learning patterns and identify those needs that can be supported by the rest of the community.

“Even the way people act, for example, sometimes you have a situation in which a task would not have been done in a logical or sequential way - probably I would have done it! - and it starts freaking them out. They themselves make sense out of it – ‘since I am a sequential person, do me a favour, and tell me how I should go about it.’ They’re making sense of it and then it obviously makes sense to me.” (MH 160-165)

The skill to decode the patterns and use specific categorisations and descriptions in one’s interpretation and evaluation of the actions of others has helped MH and YP to modify their response to the specific needs of others. Similarly, SA explains how her ability to decipher how students and teachers process has helped her understand certain reactions and behaviours. In understanding such reactions, she could then guide others in their response to alerted situations. FSL and EP on the other hand took this to their learning activities and explain how it helped them create activities that would respect the students’ learning profile while still delivering the required content.

“The fact that you can understand others through observing the things they do, and knowing how you act, you can react in a better way and you can make leeway where necessary.” (MH 211-213)

“... before I give out the (Learning Connections) inventories, before I give them out, I start to say I think he will have high technical, he will have low sequence. So as soon as we start school and during the first month, I would already start assuming certain patterns in certain students.” (YP 245-249)

“I use Let Me Learn all the time. ... I come in when a student is clashing with a teacher or he misbehaves. The first thing I do is to check his LML patterns. If I find out that he is high in technical and has low sequence, and he has chosen chemistry, biology and physics I know immediately that he has a problem.” (SA194-198)

“Honestly I did the Let Me Learn and I saw an improvement. It completely changed the way I teach, (...). I used to read in class, the usual thing. From then onwards, presentations, hands-on, completely different, and that is what I always do.” (FSL 107-110)

“... so in (my) teaching (I) try to incorporate the four elements of LML. Maybe before I used to do this unconsciously, ... now you start to include these four patterns even in your lesson plans.” (EP 59-61, 63-64)

The decoding ability has given JSL and her students a means to communicate effectively. This skill helps students use such knowledge about the learning patterns to respond more effectively to particular learning tasks.

“... my emphasis was always on, not what your weaknesses are but what you can do, the tools you need to improve and to stretch the students... I ended up having students saying, ‘Look’, we were doing Macbeth, “Ahh Lady Macbeth is really confluent, like. Can we write that in the exam?” “Yes, you can of course.” So they, they were using their patterns on the character in Macbeth. Without having been asked to do that. So they were applying their knowledge of the Learning Patterns on, on characters in literature.” (JSL 190-192, 193-198)

AA and FSL take their deciphering of the learning patterns to grouping decisions. They realised that by considering the patterns while organising their learning groups, this yielded a more successful learning experience.

“I used to use it a lot when it came to the grouping of the students through LML patterns, and I used to find it very helpful.” (AA 54-55)

“ I remember a particular instance, when I had a group who had just finished a disastrous session with me and I checked their scores. I realised that I had three students who hadn’t done the inventory and I had grouped them together. ... When I gave them the inventory I realised that

they had the same patterns and that was an eye opener for me.” (AA 58-64)

“So you put them together, you know that they are going to complement each other, you know they will help each other, they won’t get stuck because if they do, one will help the other, so patterns really help in this way.” (FSL 158-160)

Participants underscore their learning transformation by stating their successes in implementing the Process. This next theme (7.4) captures the different aspects which participants experienced as a result of their learning transformation. MH points to two observed improvements, namely the nurturing of solidarity amongst the student community and the marked improvement in the delivery of lessons. He observes that now, students are more engaged in the learning process.

“I hope that the kids have grown, in the sense of humanity; in the way they perceive each other and also the different situations they go through. ... I think even the way that they perceive each other in class, for example, children with special needs, those that are different from them, ... bit by bit, we are nurturing this sense of solidarity with others and others can show solidarity with us, ...” (MH 614-615, 617-618, 621-622)

“Secondly I think even in the quality of the lessons themselves, because at the end of the day, this is an important factor, meaning that, the biggest joy to experience is to have students who are engaged in the learning process.” (MH 623-625)

FSL and EP also make reference to their successful metamorphosis in the way they deliver their lessons. Through allowing multiple approaches to expressing one’s knowledge, the students and themselves as teachers experienced academic satisfaction.

“... when you see the way they write, the way they do the lessons, the way they present their work, and the way they do their homework, for example they had 100 marks for all of that, but who did it in writing, others did it in other ways, but whatever the way, they were still awarded the mark and I never looked back, I enjoy it, they enjoy it, they remember more and they learn more.” (Fiona121-126)

“... the patterns are helping the students so that the lesson that was usually boring or else not relevant to everyday life, these lessons and the process helped the students to enjoy learning something new.” (EP 95-98)

The quality in the delivery of lessons manifested itself in the academic improvement observed by the teachers. JSL and CP made reference to this professional success.

“... by the end of the first year I compared their first writing task to their last writing task (and) it was impressive, because I, I mainly used Let Me Learn with the writing tasks.” (JSL 154-158)

“... once they learnt a concept, once they learn something, I don't need to repeat as much as before...” (CP 272-273)

The feeling of success of the teacher reflects itself in a shared feeling of accomplishment amongst the students. JSL and EP make reference to how the students felt and how the experience has boosted their self-esteem.

Interviewer: “Ok. And the pupils (...) felt that this was working for them.”

JSL: “Yes, yes, yes, yes they did definitely” (JSL 175-176)

“This year's group is doing really well because we have found the right programme that can cater for them, and it is catering for their needs and

there I think that they are improving and the most important thing is that their self-esteem is increasing ...” (EP 182-185)

This could be achieved through enhanced communication between the teacher and the student and amongst the students themselves. JSL refers to her success in reaching more students through her understanding of their processing patterns:

“... nowadays I think I’m reaching more students than I used to do (before), with a bit of understanding. (JSL 238-239)

FSL, on the other hand, refers to observed improvement in student-teacher and student-student relationship, creating a conducive to learning environment.

“The relationship with them, the teacher-student relationship has changed, it has improved, and they enjoy the lesson more, ... they are not embarrassed of each other, they are not afraid of making mistakes because they know they are not criticising the person but the person’s work.” (FSL 514-519)

The feeling of success is the result of, and has resulted in, the application of differentiated strategies. Throughout the interviews one can find numerous references to how through the teachers’ understanding of the learning process they could respond more effectively to the needs of their learners. MH, JSL and FSL make clear references to this as a way of incarnating their perspective transformation.

MH refers to change in the approach to teaching. When reflecting on the qualitative change of his teaching, he explains how through this new awareness he can understand better his students and thus he can respond with more specific intentional strategies.

“... if I had to look at what I am doing now, as opposed to what I used to do before, it is different. So the processing of why I am doing certain things has changed, and has changed for the better.” (MH 599 -601)

“I am now becoming more aware why certain students respond in a certain way more than before, and I can make sense of it. That’s the difference, whereas before you could try something out, in your own way, without finding a way out, now I can better understand why a certain person works in a certain way and what I can do to better understand each other.” (MH 603-607)

FSL also refers to her acquired awareness and how this has changed her approach to teaching poetry.

“Basically, before it was expected of us that for poetry, we had poetry appreciation, and before I used to give them this: what is the poem about? Summarise what the poem is about in two or three sentences... Then it just clicked that certain students didn’t improve with the resources I was using. So I wouldn’t show them this but I can give them the poem, and I would leave blank spaces when we are doing the appreciation, or you could leave out phrases, first you have missing words, then missing phrases, then missing lines, obviously with different poems.” (FSL 373-375, 378-382)

JSL also makes reference to her improved skill in creating individualised strategies that respond to the needs and processing patterns of the learners. She explains how she successfully helped learners generate strategies to succeed. This could be done once the learners themselves become aware of what is driving their learning.

“Let’s say in English there’s writing tasks, comprehensions. So for a writing task you need to be Sequential and Precise. So if you’re not, what

are you going to do? And we (the students together with the teacher) came up with a list of tools they could use to improve their writing tasks.”

4.2.8 Phase eight: Provisional trying of new roles

The acquisition of knowledge and skills pertaining to the new perspective equips the learner with the tools needed to start experimenting with new roles. This study generated five themes that describe this stage in Mezirow’s conceptualisation.

- 8.1 The moment of realisation – Aha moment.
- 8.2 Exploring different venues for implementations.
- 8.3 Attempts at integrating the Let Me Learn process with other tools/methods and/or processes.
- 8.4 Application of the Process in non-formal situations.
- 8.5 Awareness of the challenges ahead.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
8	8.1	1	1	5	5
	8.2	3	6	5	7
	8.3	2	6	3	3
	8.4	1	1	1	2
	8.5	2	2	1	1

Table 11: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 8

The table above shows that five out of six teachers referred to a specific moment when they realised the usefulness of the process for their practice (theme 8.1). Only the head of school from the SMT makes reference to this theme. All participants of the study except for one teacher refer to theme 8.2. Two of the SMT and three teachers, two of who are primary generalist teachers, make reference to theme 8.3. One of the SMT makes five references to her or the

teachers' attempt at integrating Let Me Learn with other tools/methods. The next theme is referred once by one assistant head and twice by a teacher. Two members of the SMT and one teacher make reference to theme 8.5.

Theme 8.1 refers to that moment when the actor realises the usefulness of the process and starts thinking of provisionally experimenting with the new perspective in new roles. MH refers to that moment when during the training he was asked to administer the Learning Connection Inventory (LCI) with members of his team. On learning about his colleagues' processing patterns, he could apprehend how and why certain individuals behaved in certain ways. This realisation helped him explore differentiated ways of working with these individuals.

“I had told the learning assistants to do the LCI and it was very revealing as you begin to understand why certain persons work in certain ways.”
(MH 437-438)

RSS also had this experience of realising what drives certain actions and why one decides to act in ways that are different from another's, but her moment of realisation was when she learnt about herself and what was driving her actions and decisions.

“I remember that when I administered the LCIs and I started to realise why certain things happen, I started to understand things that I didn't understand before. I think it was when I realised how I learn personally. That is the thing that impressed me most. During the training I can pin point the moment when I learnt about my patterns and how I learn.” (RSS 61-65)

JSL had her 'Aha moment' when she realised that she could apply it to her teaching:

“ Well maybe the profound moment was when we were made to think about how you could apply it in class, and it dawns on you, that yes I think it might, it can work.” (JSL 90-93)

YP realised that this acquired knowledge about himself, and those around him, was crucial to help those with whom he interacts both at school and within his immediate family.

“... during my presentation, something clicked, I am not saying a miracle occurred, but I realised that we need to find a way on how to help the others around us.” (YP 155-157)

FSL, on the other hand, had this moment of realisation when she experienced the application of the Process with a colleague of hers. Her colleague who was attending the training at the same time presented a lesson in a way that respected the students’ processing patterns. Her success instigated FSL to start applying the Process in her own practice.

“As regards the profound moment, I told you that it happened when a colleague of mine and myself shared (a common lesson).” (FSL 204-205)

EP’s initial encouragement by one of his mentors propelled him to continue working and exploring ways how he could apply his acquired knowledge to his teaching.

“I believe that the turning point happened when I gave out the lesson in front of my mentor, who came to watch me deliver a lesson (in which I) applied the process of Let Me Learn. The lesson plan needed to work with the patterns, you are implementing what you have learnt, you are watching your students understanding more, so I think that the lesson plan was the turning point plus that afterwards I got an evaluation from my mentor, it was a very good evaluation, so afterwards you say so yes I am on the right track, so why not continue with this?” (EP 79-85)

Teachers experienced the Process and started to associate certain positive outcomes with the application of this knowledge to their practice. This prompted some of them to implement their acquired skills in various locations, within and outside the school environment.

MH and AA both explored how one can use the Let Me Learn process as a means to strengthen the professional collaboration amongst the teaching community. This is believed to provide a way in which the isolated and often unvoiced wisdom (Shulman 2004a, 505) of teachers is given the space to develop and blend into the perspective of the school.

“I think that it can be a very important tool even to eventually interpret a sense of community that is the sense of diversity that we have among us.”
(MH 32-34)

“However, I don’t know if it is something we could explore, like it could be some kind of development during the time that we have for ourselves.”
(AA 516-517)

MH also suggests that the Process could also benefit those that still have an important role to play in the perspective transformation of the school even though they are not teachers. CP also describes how she invited in a Learning support assistant, who, though not trained as a teacher, gave an important contribution in providing students who were struggling, an alternative learning environment where their learning processes could be accommodated.

“One of the things that would be good to do, eventually, would be to give the possibility to the non-teaching staff to be exposed to the Let Me Learn process.” (MH 205-207)

“The last thing we did as the literacy programme, we identified a person, an LSA... she is giving the lessons we are working on but with a group of students that are finding it difficult to keep up with the things being

carried out in the classroom. ... she is working with them as part of English literacy, and she presents them in different ways. They have hands-on... they are doing the same things but there is a difference in the way (they work with this LSA)." (CP 391, 393-395, 396-397, 405-406)

SA, JSL and EP explored sharing this perspective with parents. It is believed that strengthening the collaboration and communication with parents would heighten the possibility of sharing the transformed perspective with the larger community of the school.

"That the parents know what is happening in class, in anything going on in the school, helps a lot. The fact that you explained to them what the puppets are and when they are being used in class, what they mean, they see the pictures, they are given activities during the course, so that they learn about their own patterns, obviously this is going to help them understand their children more." (EP 130-135)

Eventually, all this should lead to give a better sustenance to the learner. MH explains how this awareness was transferred to strengthen the communication with the student and develop an educational experience that values all talents and learning preferences. FSL, explains how a teacher who planned different experiences, to ensure that all students experience success, inspired her. She explains, that after this experience, she continued to try to apply her newly acquired perspective in her teaching.

"So if you identify where the strengths are and place the children in these groups of different strengths, you are also instilling in the children a sense of community that 'nobody is as strong as all of us'." (MH 43-46)

"Even on the curricular level, for example, the reason behind why we decided to include certain subjects: the fact is that, although some subjects can be adapted to favour certain learning patterns rather than others, on the other hand, you have certain subjects in which it is easier to

provide for certain patterns, like for example, the Mediterranean experience in Form 1 and Form 2 to make it more relevant, and we had a number of subjects with one lesson a week, the way we are trying to amalgamate Mediterranean experience with drama that we included what we call the Education Unplugged, which is an educational space where we try to give more possibility to non-formal education. So there is more possibility to have hands on activities which will then have an effect on the rest of the curriculum.” (MH 544-554)

“... the way she handed out the homework, there were some who wrote, some who did a role play, some built a model... Who felt comfortable to write, wrote, who felt more comfortable to act out, acted out and they still got their mark. Some produced a poster, others wrote, others did a verbal presentation... I said, why not, why don't I try it out?” (FSL 221-225, 228)

The next theme (8.3) shows how participants explored ways of integrating the knowledge and skills learnt through their participation in the LMLpLp to other methodologies and subject specific processes. MH and AA refer to collaborative learning, while both the two language teachers and two Primary teachers refer to the Writing Process.

Both MH and AA, as educational leaders, believe that their guiding perspective can be translated into practice through the fusion of different techniques. Let Me learn is seen as a foundational scheme that helps one to utilise different strategies and techniques with intention.

“For example, one of the things that we still have to explore in more depth are the tools offered by for example cooperative learning – I think that cooperative learning combined with Let Me Learn can give good results, because you can build different groups which are homogeneous and which build on each other's strengths.” (MH 40-43)

“When I take a closer look at both (cooperative learning and Let Me Learn), I feel Let Me Learn gives you the theory, something which helps you in the formation of the thoughts, whereas cooperative learning is the practical side, so one helps the other...” (AA 66-68)

The two language Secondary school teachers, JSL and FSL, and two of the Primary teachers (EP and YP) refer to their use of the Writing Process, a process that has been introduced by the Malta Writing Programme (MWP). This process focuses on promoting the writing process, an interactive approach to the teaching of writing. All four teachers make clear reference to the link between the Let Me Learn process and the writing process.

FSL: “... It (the writing process) involves the students, like with peer response, with editing, cut and paste... they give feedback to each other, like this sentence is not so clear so you can add to it to make it clearer, they cut out the paper, they write down the sentence, they tape it (...) and you get comments from students who were reluctant writers, and they would say, ‘miss I know it is not the best piece of writing in the world, but for me it is. The ownership and the fun they have in writing it because they did it, they arranged it and they understood why they had to arrange it.”

Interviewer: “How did LML help in this process?”

FSL: “How did it help? Because you obviously have writing, it has to be done but then you have the hands-on element. So when you have someone who can’t sit down and write for 45 minutes, he can get up, move a bit, talk, cut out.”

Interviewer: “It gave you an understanding how to respond to students.”

FSL: “Yes, it has to do with the patterns as well, when you group them in the class, you group them according to the patterns, so you know that one is going to complement the other ...” (FSL 137-138, 140-154).

“So the writing changed, it changed a lot from when I started to do it in the beginning. For example we do more activities, first we start off with

things lined to sequence, to precision, to confluence and even with technical reasoning because you link certain things, eee, maybe a craft linked to the topic being discussed...” (YP 173-177)

Theme 8.4 refers to the use of the Let Me Learn process beyond the curricular purview. AA mentions an extra-curricular activity (Education unplugged) in which the knowledge and skills gained in Let Me Learn could be easily transferred and applied. Here AA brings to the front a reality of our educational system that is conditioned by what Armstrong (2006) calls the ‘academic achievement discourse’ – a discourse that is obsessed with documentation of results of instruction. In an activity such as ‘education unplugged’ teachers can really address each learner’s preferred modes of learning.

RSS refers to how this knowledge helped her understand her husband. She can now better understand the family dynamics and thus agree on how they can compensate for each other’s idiosyncrasies.

“The teachers have two hours in which they don’t have to think about syllabus, they are free to roam and there I believe that every pattern is being targeted in the most marvellous way possible and teachers cater for it. (...) So as you can see since teachers are not restrained by the syllabus they are ready to roam in the most splendid of ways. If I had to think about each activity that we had during the education unplugged, every pattern was targeted in each activity.” (AA 332-239)

“I also became aware of how I relate with different people, not at my work place only, but also with my husband. The fact that he has high technical reasoning and low sequence made us clash a lot and then I realised why we didn’t have that understanding. It affected me personally as well as professionally. (RSS 50-53)

“ We (husband and wife) encounter situations where Let Me Learn makes sense in our everyday life not only in the school setting.” (RSS 81-82)

In attempting to apply the new perspective in new roles, within and outside one's professional practice, one needs to be aware of the challenges and difficulties that could be encountered. Both MH and AA, as school administrators, are aware that the process of organisational change is a winding process that offers challenges, challenges that are often characterised by a resistance to change. Thus, as leaders, they need to ensure that while the transformative movement is not stalled, the pace of every member within the organisation is respected.

“Obviously, in every situation, you always have pockets, where you have pockets of persons who are working hard and truly believing in it. Probably, you also have others who need to be pushed, because there are certain difficulties when (trying to) put into practice.” (MH 334-337)

“... if we really wish Let Me Learn to make a greater impact on our teaching and learning, then we have a lot of work to do.” (AA 503-504)

4.2.9 Phase nine: Building competence and self-competence in new roles and relationships

Competence is the result of directed experience. Directed experience leading to learning involves a range of experiences in which knowledge is seen as a process of “finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives” (Fawler, 1981, p.4). Through practice and negotiation with others within and outside the community, a learner gains greater control over one's understanding and the quality of one's actions through meaningful learning (Mezirow, 2012, p. 77).

This phase generated four major themes namely:

- 9.1 Feeling of competence in adapting to response.
- 9.2 Feeling of competence in motivating students.
- 9.3 Feeling of competence in understanding oneself.

9.4 Awareness of the challenges of reintegrating the Process into new roles and relationships.

The table below shows that themes 9.1 and 9.2 were most popular with the teachers. Five teachers make reference to theme 9.1 while in theme 9.2 four teachers make reference to their success in motivating students. Only one member of the SMT in each of the first two themes, made at least one reference in each case.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
9	9.1	1	2	5	5
	9.2	1	1	4	6
	9.3	3	6	3	5
	9.4	3	3	1	1

Table 12: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 9

On the contrary themes 9.3 and 9.4 were most popular with the SMT, with all members making at least one reference in both cases. Three out of six teachers refer to theme 9.3 and only one of the teachers makes reference to theme 9.3.

Theme 9.1 refers to the sense of competence that an educator feels when responding to the needs of the learners. AA and CP refer to the successful collaboration between teachers and Learning Support professionals in supporting students who are academically challenged. Both AA and EP believe that the school has succeeded to boost these students' self-esteem, and in providing them with learning opportunities to help them develop their areas of strength.

“We work a lot with those students who are not able to get nine ‘O’ levels but manage to get one or two. There is a lot of good work being done by

the LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) with parents of these students. It is a big network.” (AA 467-469)

“The students are being given the opportunity to see their own value, which isn’t necessarily academic and then you have a lot of work which is being done with those students who need support. These, work on self-esteem...” (AA 459-462)

“... when you take a look at their patterns, and you adapt your lesson to their needs, they start to realise that yes even I can do this. (...) I think that they (the students in EP’s class) are improving and the most important thing is that their self-esteem is increasing.” (EP 180-181, 184-185)

“We have students who don’t take all the syllabus. They are given an adapted programme, with the older ones we are also working with them for visits abroad, setting out programmes, there is a lot and a lot of work being done.” (AA 462-465)

“We are also noticing a huge improvement in the way these boys are developing especially when it comes to putting the things in order and other things, like there is a rule for this and where grammar is concerned, the same thing is happening ... Marisa (the Learning Support Assistant) has been helping a lot with this.” (CP 410-412, 416-417)

JSL, RSS, YP and EP state that they have learnt to adapt to the needs of their students and respond effectively to the students’ learning profile.

“... I’ve learnt to adapt to, adapt to the children’s needs. Not just to meet their needs.” (JSL 351-352)

“Let Me Learn made me aware that everyone is an individual, a lot of boys are technical so I use a lot of visuals, PowerPoint, diagrams...” (RSS 99-100)

“I try my best so that I involve these students more during the lesson by using technical reasoning, if they understand in that way, if that is the pattern through which they learn best.” (YP 139-141)

“... when it comes to support I use it a lot, when you plan a lesson, where you have students who use support, automatically you have to include variation in your lesson.” (EP 176-178)

On the other hand RSS explains that apart from accommodation, students also need to be equipped with strategies that would help them tackle subject specific skills.

“... and at the same time they stretch their sequence and precision, so we use a type of revision diary, they don't give a brief explanation but they need to expand (on the content). (...) Not staying in their comfort zone, so I am technical and I am not good. It doesn't stop there, this doesn't mean that I am not using the other patterns.” (RSS 100-102, 106-107)

A key competence of any educator is surely the ability to motivate learners to learn. SA and JSL share their respective experiences in which they capture the 'ray of light' in some of their students who otherwise are seen as problematic. Their new perspective has given them a new awareness, forging a renewed relationship. For SA, the experience with a particular 'problematic' student gave her a reassurance of her ability to motivate the student to learn and use this experience to mentor other teachers. JSL explains how, through her renewed approach, she had successfully motivated students to give their best and never to give up.

“He (a student who was considered by many as lazy and uninterested) started to see how teachers appreciated his (art) work. Don’t get me wrong there are times when he relapses, he goes through a phase, but then at least with this process we started to build on his abilities.” (SA 356-358)

“I make them (students who due to their poor level of language proficiency are allowed to opt out of the literature classes) believe in themselves to such an extent that even though they’re not in the literature group and I know that in my heart of heart that half of them are not going to make it, they still try hard because I praise their efforts. (...) I’m very happy with the whole group because they performed, they still tried their best and they haven’t given up.” (JSL 431-434, 438-440)

RSS, FSL and CP also established that through understanding the students as learners they could improve their professional relationship and help their students forge their individual paths to learning.

“The fact that I was working with them in this way has improved my relationship with them. I use the revision diary where they start off with a diagram and then they turn that diagram into a paragraph, into information, so that would be helping them to move from their comfort zone to a situation where they need to stretch themselves.” (RSS 117-121)

“At the end of the day they reached their objectives and it helped them understand themselves as learners, but they also understand they have to do other things, I think that has helped them learn the subject more. (RSS 311-314)

“I understand the children better, why he is giving me that type of work, then I speak with them, I explain, I give initiative, I give a reason why, I explain. (...) You think, they behave in a childish way, like small children

but when you speak to them in an adult way, you explain well, you realise that they do understand, they try to please, they try to improve.” (CP 184-186, 187-189)

“I feel that the students started to love the language more, even me, they started to love me more, in the sense that they know that when they have a lesson with me, it will be different, where I will have activities and visuals.” (FSL 309-311)

This next theme (theme 9.3) deals with a sense of accomplishment achieved as a result of the new awareness and acquired skill in understanding oneself as a learner. All three members of the SMT and three of the teachers make clear reference to this competence.

MH, SA, CP and EP speak of an epiphany through which they could better understand their private and professional behaviours and actions.

“First and foremost I started to make sense of the way I work. I began to understand myself better that is the way I work has a logical meaning behind it. I think Let Me Learn gave me a model to make more sense of what I was doing and how I was acting.” (MH 64-67)

“On a curricular level, I think it has made a difference in the way I am teaching now.” (MH 595-596)

“I always faced different problems because everyone used to claim that I was strange, the way I study like I needed a lot of details, I needed to know everything and I wanted... then I realised that I wasn’t sick, a lot of people used to assert that I was sick, but I found out that I had high precision.” (SA 46-50)

“It helps you, makes you conscious of certain things. Even things that I normally do in everyday life and now I saw them on black and white, I

saw them written down, I realised it was true, I was that type of person, you know these things but you are not really aware of them, until you do the inventory...” (CP 114-117)

“I was more convinced of certain things and started to understand why I was doing them.” (CP 289)

“Your own way of teaching you start seeing your own different patterns, even when I start writing on the board, I start to see my patterns at work.” (EP 152-154)

For EP, self-discovery meant also a better understanding of the dynamics making up his environment. He can now interpret domestic interactions and understand what is compelling certain behaviour in the interactions he has with his partner. For MH this experience meant that he could comprehend the dynamics of his interactions with his staff and to act with intention. On the other hand, for AA this meant that she could better understand the students’ reaction towards her teaching and thus locate herself better to support the students.

“I try to understand the people around me, why everyone is different from me. For example in my personal life, I want everything timetabled, with a certain routine, if someone breaks that routine or the programme is just slightly changed, I start to panic. You start to understand your own patterns as well as other people’s. For example, my wife is my complete opposite, she is more technical, she doesn’t use schemes like me and you start to see these differences in other people and you start to realise that everyone is an individual.” (EP 159-165)

“It has also helped me to understand why sometimes I come up with a lot of ideas, as opposed to other people that are working with me. When someone would like to try out something, and I start shooting ideas left, right and centre, whereas the others can understand me I put myself into check so as not to simply shoot out ideas, but I also try to organise them.

So if the other person has patterns which are different to mine we can bridge.” (MH 589-594)

“Let Me Learn has helped me understand myself better for example. In this case if you are able to understand yourself, then you are in a better position to help the student. Like why are you so rigid in the teaching of mathematics? Why am I so rigid? (AA 171-179)

Theme 9.4 refers to the challenges that inhabit our lifeworld and govern our actions. Such challenges require us to sustain and reintegrate the new perspective in all our actions and environments. This requires perseverance but when achieved, a feeling of accomplishment is experienced.

MH feels content with the level of integration of the Process within the school community, but he is also aware that there is still work to be accomplished. He is also aware that the school professional and student community is in constant shift and there is a perpetual need, to ensure that the school’s perspective continues to be shared by all. SA also is pleased with the level of integration of the Process in the school community, not just amongst the teaching staff but also amongst the student community, who also have a voice in the school, which if cultivated, can be very effective.

“... salt gives the taste but does not necessarily show, but you can notice the taste and I think that for a number of people, which, luckily is not small in number, it has made a difference, do you understand? Now we have to make sure that we continue adding this salt that shows more. ... which means that we make the process as visible as possible and it would also be important that we continue renewing this discourse...” (MH 479-484)

“In a way Let Me Learn has managed to infiltrate in all the school processes. I am personally involved in student government, there are different students who are elected by the students themselves, even the

way we divide tasks, like if there is someone who scores high in sequence is our secretary, takes the meeting's minutes, if another is high in confluence, we send him to discussions, if another one is technical, we leave it up to him to organise things and put up stands. In the long run, LML has become an integral part of our school, that is the process, the change that has taken place." (SA 163-170)

Notwithstanding the limitations of the training AA and YP feel that they still found ways of integrating the learnt principles and their new perspective into their teaching. They have succeeded to come up with ideas and strategies to support their learners.

AA: "... the practical side was lacking, sort of, I had to be the one, as is supposed to be, but I think there could have been more."

Interviewer: "More input"

AA: "I had to be the one to think about ways of how to implement it in class..." (AA 80-84)

4.2.10 Phase ten: References to a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspectives.

The final phase in Mezirow's 'phases of meaning' (Mezirow, 2012) refers to the actualisation of the new perspective into the lived experience of the actor. Thus according to Mezirow (2012), "[a] mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to *act* on his or her reflective insight." (2012, p. 87) Thus for Mezirow and others a true transformative learning experience should be mirrored in action.

This research generated four themes that either point to the location in which the transformative learning is embedded or refer to statements that highlight a recognition or reaffirmation of an action informed by the new perspective. The themes generated are the following:

- 10.1 Extensive use of language conditioned by the new perspective.
- 10.2 Reference to recognition of competence from outside the school community.
- 10.3 Critical reflection as an integral aspect of professional practice.
- 10.4 Assimilation of the Process as an integral part of one's actions.

The table below records the frequency of responses for each of the themes.

PHASE	THEME	SMT (n:3)		TEACHERS (n:6)	
		Number of participants	Number of references	Number of participants	Number of references
10	10.1	3	14	4	11
	10.2	2	4	0	0
	10.3	1	4	4	5
	10.4	3	9	6	15

Table 13: Frequency of reference to themes: Phase 10

As can be deduced from the table above, theme 10.4 has been referred to by all the participants, most of whom made multiple references to observed changes in practice due to the change in perspective. Yet another important theme emerging from this research is the extensive use of language conditioned by the new perspective and the integration of the new discourse in the community's personal and professional interactions (theme 10.1). Theme 10.2 is only referred to by two of the Senior Management Team. This theme refers to recognition by outside agencies (other organisations and/or individuals) of the transformed practice. Some even go as far as to try to emulate the practice. Teachers in particular (four out of six teachers) and the Head of school gave much importance during their interview to the importance of critical reflection on assumptions made within the community (theme 10.3). They considered that, an integral aspect of professional practice is to engage in effective discourse as a means of validating one's own beliefs and experiences (theme 10.3).

The first theme (10.1) points to the level of reintegration of the new perspective in the professional discourse, and serves as a witness to the transformative learning experienced by the participants and the school as a transformed community. The integration of an inclusive language inspired by the Let Me Learn process permeates the prevalent discourse within the school community.

MH and SA refer to a language that has permeated the structures and discourse of the school (theme 10.1). MH refers to how the school adopted a discourse that articulates the perspective of inclusivity within the community. Therefore through the assimilation of a language of inclusivity a new praxis could emerge within the community of practice. Both AA and FSL, observed a wider use of the language during professional discussions amongst teachers.

“The professional attitude that we have taken is to find means of how to articulate this discourse so as not to remain the run of the mill, that we always take the common sense interpretation of things, but that now Let Me Learn has helped us continue to develop this discourse of diversity and community.” (MH 330-334)

“... there were a number of persons, the difference that it made for them was not small. These were people who had gone through the training and used it and still do.” (MH 471-473)

“Even in the last two years, the language has changed, it has developed, and maybe I have become more aware of certain things, even the way that certain people speak.” (AA 249-251)

“We try to infiltrate this idea of Let Me Learn in different things. We also train new staff members, we give a bit of mentoring as well. We do peer observation, we give hints to teachers, so where does Let Me Learn fit in? Do you have this student’s inventory? (...) so management we use it as a tool, as a tool to help us out.” (SA 179-183)

JSL and EP refer to the sharing of this language with the students to help them become aware of their learning patterns and use it as a metacognitive language for learning. Both JSL and EP refer to it as a language that helps them, as teachers, to articulate better their strategies and approaches to learning and support.

“And I said (to the students) ‘Ok, you plan, create resources, deliver the lesson.’ That’s what they did using Let Me Learn and we (JSL and another teacher) were there to observe. So they took the lesson, created resources to appeal, and in their lesson plan they said, ‘Listen here, this appeals to the ones who are confluent’, so they had to come up with ideas. ‘So this appeals to the ones who are not sequential.’ So they prepared a handout and they targeted all the patterns in the class.” (JSL 280-285)

“When you fill out the inventory with the students, you start to realise how the process is influencing the students, because they start telling you, ‘yes, it is true, I have high precision because even when I get home after the lesson, I start to research on the internet’ for example, or ‘yes it is true that I like to work by using technical reasoning because when I go home, I go to my father’s garage, dismantle something (...) So when you start the process, the students start realising, yes this is so or yes I am like that, and even between themselves they start discussing the patterns.” (EP 107-112, 113-115)

“Not just saying ‘look how careless you are’ or ‘you never learn how to write long essays’ I didn’t used to say that. I used to come to that conclusion. Or he’s weak. It’s his pattern so let’s see what we can do about it. The approach is different.” (JSL 239-242)

MH and SA refer to how they shared this new perspective with the students and their parents to help them better understand how their child learns.

“... it could be that the discourse has broadened among the parents themselves when they talk with the rest of the school community.” (MH 297-298)

“In fact this year I did learning skills and I used Let Me Learn in it as well. In the process, I got the parents involved...” (SA212-213)

MH and YP show how this language has pervaded their way of thinking about themselves. Every action is seen from the perspective obtained by this language.

“(Through this language) I could make more sense of the way I act and how I am going to act with others, ...” (MH 385-386)

“Even nowadays when I am doing something, I start saying to myself, I am doing this because I am precise, I’m doing this because I am sequential, deep down even every day thoughts would be linked to (the patterns)” (YP 121-124).

When others from outside the immediate community of the school recognise certain actions as distinctive qualities and start to associate the school with these qualities, it could be that this is a reaffirmation of a perspective transformation that has been reintegrated within the existing patterns of action, thus making a distinctive difference in the lived experience of those within this particular school community (theme 10.2). There are two contributors, both from the Senior Management Team, that reflects on this theme. As school administrators they have the opportunity to interact, share and maybe also influence others in areas that they feel strongly about.

MH mentions how their transformation has been instrumental in highlighting contradictions in values within the community of church schools. This led other schools to refer to the school under study as an example for bringing about a transformation within their own communities.

“I think that in a sense, we were a beacon. I’m very pleased to say so. In spite of all the defects that we have, and with the workload we still have to complete, I think that we haven’t even scraped the surface. But after all, even at the level of justice, that was a very important point – that we managed to highlight the contradictions, particularly in the church schools, which on the one hand are talking about evangelical justice, but on the other hand, in practice, we choose whom to educate. This is a terrible contradiction. I think that those who had a certain resistance towards it, have no answer for that. I think that our position could give credibility, we can talk through our experience because we are living it.” (MH 318-326)

“This has placed us in a very unique situation. We could be a kind of living proof that in the end, this is not rocket science, this is nothing to be afraid of, but this is something that can be acted out every day. (...) I think that we contributed to those forums in which we were present, (...) I think that the discourse that we could communicate about the advantages of operating in a context of diversity, has come across. It has come across so well that now even the church schools decided to change towards this system.” (MH 300-302, 304, 305-307)

According to MH and SA, parents also see this positive change. Parents are known to have made decisions about their children upon such choices made by the school.

“... this year we spoke to a parent of a student in Form 1 who told us that he wanted his son to attend this school because he had heard that we use Let Me Learn in this school. Even though he doesn’t know much about it, he asked me to give him some information and I gave him...” (MH 288-291)

“I think that the students here feel appreciated. Even the parents say this, they are appreciated for who they are.” (SA 466-467)

The ability to reflect on what informs our perspective and what is driving our actions (theme 10.3) is of fundamental importance in order to tackle the challenges that our professional practice presents. As we have discussed in earlier sections of this discussion, one of the major themes emerging from the interviews with this group of educators is the qualitative change in language used in their interactions and diagnostic exchanges. Language has changed to include positive action that connects with the processing patterns of each learner. Yet a major disconcert amongst these educators is that the espoused language informing their transformed perspective is often burdened with external forces “of increased performativity (Ball, 2008) and accountability in education sector driven by neoliberal policies” (Kreber 2012, p.335).

What emerged from this research and from the analysis of the interviews is that most teachers were very much aware that through the inherent shared perspective they have transformed their classroom practice and personal as well as professional relationships with their students and other adults. On the other hand the social and more global engagement whereby they practice their freedom and engage with the opportunity of renewing and creating a common world (Arendt, 1958) is still very much in its infancy amongst the teaching staff. This level of critical engagement is more evident in MH’s interview.

MH refers to the discourse related to the profession within the school community. He notes that as a community they engage in what he terms as “continual exploration” of issues that arise in the school. He talks at length about a community that is always asking and discerning their practice in light of a perspective led by social justice. This type of collective critical reflection that MH is referring to can be seen as creative professional discomfort, an attribute of change that is led by a value system that would transform on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s perspective. An interesting statement that can define MH’s understanding of transformative learning is when he states “what you believe can be done into practice and what is done in practice fuels the theory behind it and you keep on going” (563-565). MH reflects on his role to bring about an ethos that is reflected in the type of practice that takes place in

the school and which makes it different from any other school. It is therefore MH's wish to expand and 'indigenise' the Let Me Learn process within the ideological belief system that guards his actions.

"... the fact that we are talking about a number of issues, and we are engaging that kind of discourse, I think that that's the biggest plus. And so that helps us think outside the box." (MH 175-177)

"... the hallmark that we have is that it's a continual exploration. We're always asking, asking, asking, which obviously brings along certain frustrations. However, I consider it a positive frustration, in a sense that being professional is never being sure of what you're doing, in the sense of questioning, in the sense of discernment, the need for deconstruction of many ideas, ..." (MH 356-360)

"This is something that I really aspire for, that the articulation of Let Me Learn expands from the individual and psychological realm to a wider realm. I think that LML can make more sense if it is politicised." (MH 683-685)

According to Kreben (2012) we would be working towards critical reflection in our professional practice when we carefully consider the implications of our actions and examine whether what we say and do inadvertently sanctions or contributes to power relations. JSL feels that through her awareness of the differentiated learning pathways of learners she has a better understanding of the relations between her and her young students and through knowledge of their learning patterns she can help them strategise to take a central role in their own learning.

Interviewer: "Do you think it was the Let Me Learn process that gave you some of the insights?"

JSL: "Yes definitely, definitely. As I said with writing tasks, with being disorganised and so on and so forth. Now I know that it is because it is a

learning pattern. That's how they are. But then, as I said the emphasis is on tools. What's next, how can I stretch myself? It's never an excuse and I bear this in mind when I am teaching." (JSL 247-252)

YP, notwithstanding the value he puts in the knowledge of the processing patterns of his learners, still reveals the challenge he experiences in his effort to transfer this knowledge to his particular context. Referring to Cranton (2000), Kreben (2012) explains that some people, due to their psychic predisposition towards extraversion or introversion and judgement or perception, play a role in how individuals experience reflection and transformative learning (p. 334). For YP, while objectively he could reframe his ideas and take them into account in his planning, he is not always able to make the transfer to more specific contexts. As we discussed above, knowledge generated from a transformative learning experience often leads to what we earlier referred to as creative professional discomfort. YP's excerpt below is an example of this discomfort where in his quest for understanding how the acquired knowledge can be reintegrated in the wholeness of his experience, he questions himself and his actions.

"Sometimes there are other topics where I don't feel comfortable to use the four patterns, maybe it is because of me, maybe because I am not so precise or because I don't evaluate enough why that lesson wasn't so good, or maybe the time management, a lot of similar things." (YP 283-286)

CP, on the other hand, explains that through the internalisation and critical appraisal of the Process, she is now able to use the knowledge to defend her actions.

"If someone comes up to me asking me why I allowed a student to behave in that way, I can give them an answer. I'd say that boy is behaving in that way because at that time I was giving that type of lesson and for him that is not interesting, it is not part of his life, it is not concrete, I can give a reason." (CP 307-310)

While collectively, as a school, we can safely say that there was a qualitative change of perspective, one could notice that there was a qualitative difference between different members of the community on the ideological meaning given by each member to these changes. From the perspective of transformative learning, not all participants showed the same level of critical awareness. But from this analysis there is no doubt that all participants have, to one extent or another assimilated the Process and reintegrated it into their professional decision-making process. The final theme (10.4) explores how different participants integrated the Process and assimilated it as an integral part of their actions.

The Senior Management team referred to a number of locations in which the Let Me Learn perspective played a central role. Both MH and AA believe that Let Me Learn has become an integral part of their decision-making process. It has given them a framework through which they make educational decisions built on a value system inspired by the new perspective.

“(Let Me Learn) is another way of looking at things and looking at, as we are saying, this sense of diversity.” (MH 424-425)

“(…) it is always at the back of my mind (…) it influences what you are doing.” (AA 476-477, 478)

MH and AA explained how they referred to and shared this perspective outside the immediate context of their school. MH explains how on a number of occasions, he had the opportunity to talk about his school’s experience in dealing with differentiation issues, especially with those schools that are also exploring different authentic means for transforming their practice. AA on the other hand refers to how she shares her experience with student teachers during her lectures on collaborative learning.

“I think that I used Let Me Learn a lot, even with other schools. Whenever we had discussions (…) in which direction we are heading, I think I used

Let Me Learn a lot in what I felt was good practice for us and to all those who were on board..." (MH 420-421, 422-423)

"When I give out a lecture at University, I also mention them (the LML patterns of learning), so I mention cooperative learning as well as Let Me Learn, well when I work with B.Ed secondary because I feel that they complement each other." (AA 64-66)

Both MH and SA mention how the value of the new perspective was also shared with other European schools through the students themselves. This European project was an opportunity for teachers involved, to show how this perspective has given them and their students an effective means for teaching and learning.

"There was a group of them (teachers who were pioneers of the Process) who were involved in the students' voice. This was a Comenius project. It was evident that even the way in which the students' voice was conveyed, reflected the students' diversity and their patterns. Our students had to explain to foreign students from different countries about Let Me Learn, what it is and how it works." (MH 116-120)

"We speak about the students' voice not only in terms of school government but also in the way they learn. Obviously this had to do a lot with Let Me Learn. The students conducted a lesson in Hungary, and even in Lithuania, where they started to explain how a lesson is constructed, how they helped the teacher in the production of the lesson plan, and Let Me Learn featured throughout." (SA159-163)

SA states that the "Let Me Learn process has managed to infiltrate in all the school processes" (163-164). She believes that Let Me Learn "helped in our ethos, the pastoral care ethos, and we play on it like in appreciating (the students)" (468-469). AA also claims that when "I am going to make a decision about a student who needs support, we would be working with him using a particular pattern and not another." (479-480) AA, who is also guiding the

development of the learning policy, believes that the Let Me Learn Process is an important contribution and is referred to continuously. SA explains how through learning about the learning patterns of the teachers in her school, she is in a better position to understand their different approaches to teaching and thus support them in their attempts to facilitate learning in their respective subjects.

“The first thing is that I took a lot of the staff profiles, and I started to smile because I started to realise, like when you see a teacher going into a class, all files in order and then you see another teacher with charts all over the place and then you start to realise that learning is still taking place.” (SA 227-230)

“Without any doubt Let Me Learn will be part of it (referring to the learning policy). (...) So I think it is referred to continuously” (AA 244-245).

The integration of the new perspective informed by the Let Me Learn process in the personal and professional life of the participating teachers is very convincing throughout the interviews. RSS explains how her knowledge of the patterns has helped her develop a process of support for students in their scientific writing, starting from their strong pattern/s and little by little developing strategies to stretch other patterns needed to complete the task. EP explains how knowledge of Let Me Learn has impacted his planning. He thus makes a conscious effort to plan activities that respect students' diverse combination of patterns. JSL, on the other hand, explains how her knowledge of the Process and its internalisation has helped her understand her son's mode of working and allow him to learn through his modality without imposing her own.

“Even when we are working on the long answer questions, I don't tell them to start answering straight away, I tell them to start one step at a time. If needs be, we start off from the diagram. If they are sequential, they need to make a list to check what needs to be mentioned, then we

stretch it to make it a chunk of information. So we start off from our comfort zone and then we stretch ourselves.” (RSS 217-221)

“I always have this idea of trying to include the four elements, the four patterns in my lessons (...) I think that this works, this works really well with the students” (EP 169-170, 172)

“That’s what I do with my son (JSL is here referring to advice given to parents to respect their child’s diverse mode of learning). Alright, because he works, his desk is so disorganised but he still does all his work and so on and so forth, so I don’t complain any more that he is disorganised. It’s his pattern.” (JSL 227-229)

FSL explains how Let Me Learn has been fundamental in the process of changing her approach to teaching. EP, YP and CP describe how the Process has become an integral part of the way they think and how this has become an integral part of their planning for learning.

“Honestly I did the Let Me Learn and I saw an improvement. It completely changed the way I teach; honestly (...) I used to read in class, the usual thing. From then onwards, presentations, hands-on, completely different, and that is what I always do.” (FSL 107-110)

“Like I told you, this (the LML process) has changed my life but this change was reflected in the way I teach” (FSL 201-202).

“... now it seems as if it has become something automatic, I realised that for example here we have sequence, here we have... generally the four patterns feature in every lesson (EP 191-193)

“... it is part of learning and I cannot tell you that I did a particular thing in class because of Let Me Learn. No, because now it is the way I am giving

out my lessons. (...) LML is another part which makes me more conscious, more attentive to what I do.” (CP 102-103, 106-107)

For JSL, FSL and YP, Let Me Learn, has permeated their actions and they claim that it has become a foundational concept that informs their pedagogical decisions.

“The whole theory now, now I keep in there at the back of my mind. It’s a framework which I use when I’m teaching” (JSL 261-262).

“In everything we do in all the activities we bear in mind the different Let Me Learn patterns students have” (JSL 400-401).

“I don’t think about the learning patterns sort of I am catering or that student or the other, it became natural (response)” (FSL 432-433).

“Sometimes even if we do not say the word Let Me Learn, deep inside, it is part of us” (YP 374-375)

For EP this process of reintegration and assimilation was a collective effort. The school community as a whole were moving in this same direction, sharing the same perspective.

“I wasn’t on my own, other teachers did the same thing, even during the staff meetings, those teachers who attended the training had ample time to share what they had learnt with other members of the staff” (EP 248-251).

4.3 PART TWO: Narratives

4.3.1 Introduction

Elias (1997) explains that

“[T]ransformative learning is the expansion of consciousness... through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analysing underlying premises” (p. 3)

What follows is a discussion of each participant’s journey through the process of transformation as designed in Mezirow’s stages and as expressed in the responses of the participants during the interviews.

4.3.2 Narrative One: MH – Head of School

MH is the head of the Church run school under study. He served as a Science teacher for 14 years in the State sector. He originally joined this school as an assistant head at a time when the school was reviewing its ethos as a catholic school in Malta. MH is involved in the local political scene and is a spokesperson for Education. He has participated in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process with the first cohort, way back in 2004. MH tends to avoid conventional approaches, is willing to take risks and tends to generate streams of ideas. He gives a lot of importance to hands-on tasks and seeks to see relevance in his endeavours. He finds bureaucratic procedures challenging. He relishes in detail.

4.3.2.1 The Trigger

The trigger event or what Mezirow earlier termed as ‘disorienting dilemma’ is a realisation moment that causes a shift in values, beliefs, and identity, and perhaps causes a person to change their ideas. To ‘experience’ a disorienting dilemma is to live through some situations that cause one to rethink and perhaps alter one’s thoughts and course of action. On the other hand Torosyan (2007)

noted that a trigger is not necessarily a dramatic predicament but can result from a realisation of certain realities surrounding the situation of the agent.

In MH's case, as a Head of school, there are two major triggers that led him to make the first steps by contacting the LML team: the first being his strong belief that as a school, they should act justly with students and thus the realisation that as a school, they have not always been responding adequately and coherently to the needs of all learners:

“...because as a school we are eternally engaged in the context of justice and by justice I mean the need to realise that each child is different, each needing their own space and we need to find the means... to reach each and every child's aspirations.” (1-5)

From this emerges a second dilemma which he as an educator/leader faces – that while on a conceptual level, everyone seems to accept that everyone is different, in practice and in the day-to-day life of the school,

“The way we act, we act as if we have 25 puppets that have all come out (from the same machine)” (410-425)

This incongruence between what as a school, and in his personal persuasion espouse and the prevalent theories-in-use has made him realise the need to find a tool which could consciously direct one's actions to bridge the gap between the espoused beliefs and the prevalent modes of one's practice.

4.3.2.2 Self-examination

Triggers tend to lead the agent to certain realisations of a reality that is often uncomfortable to face. This could lead the agent to self-examination and a realisation of limitations inherent in the path towards achieving coherence between one's beliefs and perceived gains and practice.

MH appreciates that in Education there are no quick fixes and LML is not a magical wand but a process of self-discovery and a tool that together with other tools can reap the benefits of change:

“Probably, at a school level the expectations have changed. When we started, there could have been the expectation that with the LML training differentiation would be plain sailing and that everything would run smoothly.” (78-80)

Such realisation brought about change in expectations and a re-alignment of the initial expectations with the newly gained understanding.

“...at the end of it, those who started off with this idea were shocked until they started to realise that LML is not a recipe but a process of understanding” (80-82).

Johnston, in her list of verbs which describe the process towards achieving metacognition, proposes the verb ‘re-visiting’, an activity where the learner comes back to the original realisations and reviews them in the light of new experiences, insights and understandings.

In the process of one’s self-examination, a new realisation is unearthed and problematised – the culture of labelling ingrained in the professional attitude to simplify and compartmentalise everything. The learning patterns referred to in the LML process that describe the interaction of one’s internal patterns of operation and which we use to varying degrees to help us filter and thus allow or reject stimuli could lead to

“the tendency, particularly with the children, to say that I am like (one of the patterns) then and sometimes it could have limited them from doing a task”. (145-146)

Thus this leads to a culture of labelling, or the need to delineate everything and give it parameters so as to box it with a clear tag:

“ I think I was always scared that the students would be put into pigeonholes.” (24-26)

4.3.2.3 Critical Reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

The self-examination of the agent’s realisation of a limited view of the complex reality and the unearthing of the latent theories guiding one’s actions lead to a critical re-evaluation of one’s assumptions that guides one’s actions.

MH underwent a process by which he problematised past intents. While he mulls over the benefits of the process, namely

“The possibility of us speaking the same language. Secondly, I also think that it made us aware of a number of contradictions...” (147-148)

He also identifies as a source of such contradictions the mind-sets originating from personal histories.

“Obviously, we all have our own histories, we were brought up in an educational system which was different to what we are trying to achieve now.” (149-150)

Such histories could lead the unassuming professional

“... to revert to particular ruts and I think that there were a number of situations where these contradictions were evident.” (151-152)

Such problemisation of underlying theories leading to actions that counter one’s espoused beliefs, led MH and colleagues to try to counteract such a culture with a conscious adoption of an alternative language – a language that can help

educators describe a need without resorting to negative/pejorative terms and descriptions of the learners, well aware that choice of language reflects corollary action.

“We are now more careful when we start talking about the clever students and the less clever ones.” (152-153)

Thus, while he is aware “that there is still a language being used about students who want to learn and those who don’t...” (154-155) he can see that his teachers are now aware of it, and they are able to “problematise it.”

MH mentions three aspects in which the school benefited from participation in the LML process. First there is the awareness of the learning modalities among the professional community:

“I think LML was instrumental as a tool to first and foremost realise this sense of diversity even in the way we learn.” (6-7)

Secondly, the awareness of the diverse modes of teaching and how this pedagogical preference affects the teacher-learner relationship:

“Two is that, we as teachers realise why we prefer to teach in a certain way and why we may distinguish between the students in class.” (7-8)

Thirdly, the professional pedagogical response to diversity:

“third is that we try to find the pedagogical means to cater for this diversity” (9).

This led to the development of a shared common language by which the whole school community could communicate without discouraging anyone from learning:

“... it was also a means of having a common language; that is that we are choosing one model among many others. However, we found a model that we agree upon that is now ingrained.” (12-14)

This led to, the naissance of a community of professionals, that could ‘offer the required support’ to those still being initiated in the new culture.

Let Me Learn was seen as a vehicle for transforming these espoused ideals of social justice and the valuing of ‘difference’ into a pedagogical praxis through which teachers respond effectively to the child’s needs. In this respect, MH did not see the Process as the source of the social principles but it could sit comfortably within his paradigm because it shared the same principles:

“... I think that in my case, Let Me Learn fit in a paradigm that was already there, in the sense of diversity, or of social justice.” (374-375)

Let Me Learn was seen as a process that could help

“... continue to develop these concepts. ... helped me to continue working on these principles, even at practical level” (376-377)

This questioning or problematisation of past intents led MH to better understand how Let Me Learn could transfer into practice what he believed:

“We were trying to create a sense of inclusion. We needed to better understand and I think Let Me Learn fitted into what we were trying to achieve. There was the readiness to understand the sense of inclusion, what it means, and I think that Let Me Learn provided just this. It helped us make more sense of it and without doubt, it definitely fits within the ethos” (512-516).

Let Me Learn is seen as a process that fits within an ethos of a school that deployed a number of initiatives that all aim to address the complex reality of the school.

“I still believe that Let Me Learn on its own would be lacking as a tool and I say that it is lacking because I think that there could be the danger of it being interpreted outside a context...” (29-32).

His complex understanding of the transformative nature of the process led him to value the need of such a process in alliance with other initiatives that the school took over the years:

“I think that it (the LML process) has to be stretched and combined with other tools.” (37)

Here MH reflects on the larger picture, a complex reality that requires multiple strategies that work in cohesion for a common goal. Let Me Learn is seen as a key agent:

“a very important tool even to eventually interpret a sense of community that is the sense of diversity that we have amongst us” (32-34).

Such cohesion would continue to strengthen professional collaboration:

“... these differences are not only on an individual basis but also on how these influence the dynamics between us as a community”(34-35).

This will in turn enrich the profession with what Shulman (2004a, 505) calls the isolated and unvoiced wisdom – a wisdom that emerges from experience fuelled by pedagogical discourse.

Such collaborative reflective praxis would yield a process of collective transformation:

“And even if a person hasn’t done it himself, and someone else has done the problemisation of the task, it rings a bell. It falls on fertile soil as opposed to having no effect at all. Because they have gone through the process”. (158-160)

For such transformation to continue developing, it needs to be sustained and supported. In a culture of prescriptive education system in which teachers are regulated with a highly prescriptive curriculum, it is not easy for a teacher to move outside the mould and make significant changes in his practice. Hence MH deems “...mentoring was a very good step in the right direction....” (92) since progressive pedagogies require support from recognised authorities who not only pay lip service to the ideal but also have the ‘authority’ to defend such a stand:

“Now we didn’t stop at the level of implementing the process, but we also have a helping hand” (92-93).

The process led MH to a re-evaluation of assumptions he held of fellow colleagues. His new understanding of the dynamics of learning led him to value what before he used to misconceive as disinterest. Now he could understand that her leading pattern, technical reasoning, was the reason for her so called ‘quietness’. A person leading with technical reasoning tends to be of few words to avoid long, detailed communication and prefer to keep to oneself.

“this person was very, very assertive I think, but quiet. This was the way I perceived her previously, when in fact, her quietness was not the quietness of a quiet person... but it was the quietness of a wall which was built at this point (in our relationship)...” (459-462).

His new understanding of the dynamics of learning and how this impinges on intra- and interpersonal relationships led him to forge

“a good relationship... we still collaborate on a number of things” (464-465).

While MH sees all these positive signs, he is also aware that personal and organisational transformation is often characterised with moments of success accompanied with moments of struggle:

“There’s a lot to a situation, to an organisation, at times you feel there are tangible improvements whereas at other times, you feel that there is the need for more, more...” (469-471).

There is always something, according to MH, that makes one feel that one hasn’t achieved what he set out to achieve:

“I think there were things that improved. There are other things we still need to problematise the issue and the way we tackle things” (188-190).

Such realisation of limitations and awareness of the complexity of the transformative learning process would lead to the next level of sharing one’s understanding within and outside the professional community.

4.3.2.4 Dialogue

One of the identified assets of the Let Me Learn process indicated by MH is that the LML process gives the community a common language. This language facilitates a dialogic process between the individual teachers and their mentor, between the school professional community and between teachers and parents. This allowed them to build a community that dialogues and to build professional alliances, thus sustaining growth in a safe and conducive environment.

“... there were other teachers (here he is referring to the trainers/mentors) who could work hand in hand with those working in

class, with the foot soldiers. I think that this gave more credibility to the process in itself. It broke the myth” (94-96).

Through such dialogic interactions ‘foot soldiers’ can practice and focus their aim while ensuring equitable provision to all learners in full respect of their personalized connection with their learning self.

Dialogue between teachers allows for a problematisation process of practice. Such dialogue needs to be built on respect and on trust.

“I think it is very important that the sense of dialogue is very open because if not it is very risky and there were situations when, given the benefit of hindsight, this happened” (348-350).

Here MH is emphasising the importance of an open dialogue where everyone feels comfortable sharing without getting “on this uneasiness due to political correctness” (344). A dialogue between professionals should allow everyone to “express what is bothering you, or what is worrying you, or because you still cannot make sense of a certain mind-set...” (345-347). This, according to MH should not hold anyone back from sharing. Dialogue thus should be non-judgemental:

“no one can say that you are being unfair, that you do not have social justice at heart”(346-347).

An open, non-judgemental dialogue between professional would be transmitted to the wider community in particular the parents:

“I think that once again there was the fact that we use a common language. In a sense, we stopped grumbling about certain clichés and the parents themselves could talk about more tangible things” (248-250).

MH noted that those parents that had the opportunity to be trained in the process made a difference. The school could communicate more effectively with these parents about their children's learning needs:

“they could decipher the way they could relate to their children, even since we are trying to work with them in a certain way, they understand how we are trying to work with them. They can better understand the strategies that we are using by working with their children in a certain way” (250-254).

Parents were internalising the language and in their communication with the school a language of possibility was being developed.

“I think in terms of talk, again, I mean dialogue, which we began to use between us, we could understand each other better” (274-275).

Such improvement in communication between the school and the parents led to a better relationship between parents and their children.

“I think there was also a change in the way that the parents were relating to their children” (275-276).

He could observe how communication between the school and the parents about the students was “...no longer talk about the lazy boy but about a child who has a lower sequence” (278-279). This transformation from a discourse focused on limitations (stating of the problem) to a discourse characterised by solutions and possibilities was becoming very evident.

“So if there is this situation, there are strategies. What can we do about it? How can we help him to improve?” (279-280)

MH reckoned that the improved communication described above went beyond those who have received training:

“Even other parents, though they are not aware of Let Me Learn as a process, but I think that this discourse of the fact that we are convinced that we are all different, they get this feeling and understand that children are all different” (281-284).

This goes to show that a community that develops a shared language by which they dialogue will transmit a shared paradigm to the wider community. It also stresses the role of an individual in the development of a shared paradigm.

4.3.2.5 Exploration of options

The alternative discourse, reflecting a new shared paradigm led MH and his colleagues to reflect how their actions have been influenced by the incumbent education system, leading them to “ask questions and problematise the way the traditional educational system works” (178-179). This led them as a community to recognise the dominant culture and the discourse that purveys it

“(to) think on different tracks and with a certain effort... because if you are used to working and thinking in a certain way, it does take an effort to think differently” (181-183).

4.3.2.6 Planning a course of action

In a culture that questions the status quo and looks for an alternative praxis, the role of individuals within a critical mass needs to be guided by a solid leadership and inspired by a professional learning process that fits the paradigm that inspired the ‘new’ culture.

MH believed that as a leader, once a choice has been made on a particular process of learning, one should be “the first to attend” (104). This gave one the leverage to entice “the most receptive” allowing others the space to observe and reflect on their future participation. Thus MH believed that planning for initiating others into the process “you need to strategise and not just send anyone for training” (110).

A planned course of action requires the appreciation that individuals bring to a community, a personal history of involvement and “these conflicts need to be negotiated and reconciled at least in part if the individual is to achieve a coherent sense of self” (Handley et al, 2006, p. 643). Thus an appreciation of a paced growth:

“There has to be an element of patience. We have to wait because we cannot tackle everything at once” (173-175).

This will allow space for those that while

“theoretically, ... have already gone through this change in mentality, however, I think that we need to look at how we can put it into practice in a coherent and consistent way” (53-55).

This well planned course of action has achieved a noticeable change

“With certain people, more than with others, this translated itself into practice. The way a lesson is done, how I react towards the children, I think it has improved” (184-186).

This observation on how the transformation through the Let Me Learn process affected a number of teachers in their lesson planning and delivery, the relationship and the type and level of response to the students’ needs has had a ripple effect on the entire staff:

Interviewer: “... Do you think that there was a ripple effect?...”

MH: “Definitely! Yes definitely... if you start off with people who have fertile ground and give fruit, that has a cascading effect, definitely, because obviously teachers related with each other” (498-509).

4.3.2.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

One of the major epiphanies in his transformation was his realisation that by understanding oneself as an individual and the dynamics that this has on the social and professional relationships he could envisage his role as a transformative agent in the school.

“I began to understand myself better. That is the way I work has a logical meaning behind it. I think Let Me Learn gave me a model to make more sense of what I was doing and how I was acting” (64-67).

This self-discovery brought about a change in how he viewed himself as a learner and his personal and professional interpersonal relationships.

“It also gave more sense to my social life and relationships with others. Why do I feel more comfortable with certain members of staff and not with others? Why in certain situations, let’s say in particular meetings, I feel nervous and inhibited by some persons whereas with others I feel that my ideas can flourish and feel at ease? Once you look at the patterns, you start to understand the reasons why...” (67-71).

It gave him the possibility to position himself within the community and

“... understand how I react and so I can also understand how others react” (204).

During the interview he reflects on a specific difficult professional relationship with one particular member of his senior management team.

“Every time we had a meeting, I used to come up with a lot of ideas and she used to object to everything I said and kill my spirit...” (215-216).

On attending the Let Me Learn training:

“We both started to realise why I was frustrating her with what I was doing and I started to feel literally strangled” (219-220).

This realisation and new understanding has developed into an enriched collaboration benefitting the whole community.

“Nowadays we came to a point where we try to achieve in a sense, the best of both worlds. So when I start daydreaming too much, she helps me to round up my thoughts, which is good at times. At the same time, when she starts being too much of a wet blanket, I send her flying... For me it was clear how our relationship improved, literally, because of this” (220-226).

Another illustrative example was that of a teacher who

“was the type of person who was like a closed box... she used to act in that way because the way she used to work was completely different” (440-441; 442-443).

By acquiring this knowledge of how different combinations of learning patterns yield different strategies and demand different responses, MH can see a qualitative difference in attitude as a result of a better communication based on respect of each others learning profile.

“I remember that I realised this when I did the ...this blessed LCI (Learning Combination Inventory) and I saw her efforts and that made a very big difference. The moment I started working with this person, I tackled the person in a different way and it made a whole difference” (443-446).

His newly acquired knowledge gave him the possibility to rise above personality stereotypes and understand what made this educator special. With adaptations

from his part he managed to unleash a myriad of talents that benefitted the whole school community.

“Once we found a way of working, this person, who is very creative, musical etc...she literally exploded the best out of her...” (451-453).

As part of the acquisition of knowledge the agent felt that the acquisition of the language of patterns has helped improve communication. Such improvement in communication by which:

“they’re making sense of it (referring to the task) and then it obviously makes sense to me” (164-165).

Thus members of the community would have acquired the knowledge that in turn could develop into better communication of ones needs and an improved response to a particular situation created by others. This, according to MH, was made possible by allowing the internalisation of the language of patterns and subsequently referring to each other’s learning patterns, seeing them as individual strengths which when referred to in groups/teams, become collective strengths.

“Even the way people act, for example, sometimes you have a situation in which a task would not have been done in a logical or sequential way... and it starts freaking them out. They themselves make sense out of it. ‘Since I am a sequential person, do me a favour, and tell me how I should go about it’” (160-165).

This new understanding and the skill to use Let Me Learn categories and descriptions in one’s interpretations and evaluations of the actions of others, has led MH to “start noticing certain patterns” (211) and recognise certain characteristics of particular patterns:

“the fact that you can understand others through observing the things they do, and knowing how you act, you can react in a better way and you can make leeway where necessary” (211-213).

Thus, such understanding helps him modify his response to the profile of the person with whom he is interacting. This ability to take control of one’s ‘natural’ way of reacting and behaving and responding to particular situations by considering other perspectives, is a crucial skill that indicates growth.

MH feels that this acquired knowledge has yielded a “sense of humanity in the way they perceive each other and also the different situations they go through...” (514-615) among the students attending the school. This reference to transference of knowledge, moulded in a value system to the young learners attending the school has affected:

“the way that they perceive each other in class, for example, children with special needs, those that are different from them, I think they make sense of it” (617-619).

This process is “a gradual process,” but once nurtured a mutual sense of solidarity is generated:

“This sense of solidarity with others and others can show solidarity with us” (621-622).

Yet another aspect that was highlighted by MH as experiencing change was in the way he approached teaching:

“I had to look at what I am doing now as opposed to what I used to do before, it is different” (599-600).

This change is a result of an intentional process that yielded a critical approach to professional practice.

“[S]o the processing of why I am doing certain things has changed, and changed for the better” (600-601).

A reference to experience that made him more aware of certain pedagogical responses to his teaching:

“For example, before I start a lesson, I classify certain points. This is something I never used to do before. I used to start the lesson straight away” (601-603).

This has made him “more aware why certain students respond in a certain way more than before, and I can make sense of it” (603-604).

This helped him better understand the dynamics of learning and how this insight into the learner’s processing, guides his professional choices and actions.

“Whereas before you could try something out in your own way, without finding a way out, now I can better understand why a certain person works in a certain way and what I can do to try for us to better understand each other” (605-607).

The acquisition of this understanding and the intentional choices that guide action has helped him, as a leader, to understand and offer better support to other teachers, “...who are facing some difficulties themselves and I can try to discuss with them ways of bridging the gap” (608-609).

4.3.2.8 Trying new roles

Once one acquires knowledge, a process of experimentation starts. This next stage starts with a realisation of a potential tool for realising those beliefs/theories which one holds. MH, through learning about his and his colleagues’ processing learning patterns, could better understand the Learning

Support Assistants under his direct care. He could start to appreciate why different individuals had different ways of assisting students.

“I had told the learning assistants to do the LCI (Learning Connection Inventory) and it was very revealing. It was very revealing as you begin to understand why certain persons work in a certain way” (436-438).

This led MH to explore different ways of strengthening professional collaboration with what Shulman (2004a, 505) calls the otherwise isolated and unvoiced wisdom. MH saw a potential begging to be unlocked in his staff and recognised LML as “... a very important tool even to eventually interpret a sense of community that is the sense of diversity that we have among us” (32-34). This potential in difference, once harnessed and directed can “... influence the dynamics between us as a community” (35).

He could also see this potential evolving among the students leading to a community of learners – a crucial ingredient for learning (Ligorio, 1994; Crawford, Krajcik & Marx, 1999).

“So if you identify where the strengths are and place the children in these groups of different strengths you are also instilling in the children a sense of community that ‘nobody is as strong as all of us’. I think that it would eliminate the idea that as individuals we should have all the strengths, but we need each other’s strengths to be complete” (44-48).

This realisation has also brought about

“... a big difference (in) the way knowledge was organised. ... I think that apart from taking more notice of the overt messages, which means that the curriculum is not just acted out with Math, Physics, and Chemistry but also acted out and, probably even more, with the hidden messages we give out all the time, and that is something that we are trying to look at in a more consistent way” (538-543).

This awareness of the underlying often concealed messages passed on by the school's community brought about the intentional exploration of new ways of experiencing the curriculum.

“Even on a curricular level, for example, certain subjects we decided to include and the reason behind it... although some subjects can be adapted to favour certain learning patterns rather than others, on the other hand, you have certain subjects in which it is easier to provide for certain patterns...” (544-548).

This re-thinking brought about the creation of new subjects, which could create “... an educational space where we try to give more possibility to non-formal education” (551-552). He believed that this would “have an effect on the rest of the curriculum” (553-554), and “cater for the different needs of our pupils’ make-up” (555).

In his thinking, MH also explored the idea of branching out to the larger school community – those who though not directly involved in the teaching, could also have an impact on the learning community:

“One of the things that would be good to do eventually would be to give the possibility to the non-teaching staff to be exposed to the LML process” (205-207).

The inclusion of this category brings about a dimension which is not common in literature but which could have potential. An ethos to be effective requires it to be shared by all those involved – every aspect of the school life has a contribution to make in the application of such ethos. It will also help the communicative nature of the whole community resulting in a calmer, more relaxed school environment.

Another attempt is to explore ways of integrating different strategies and processes to benefit the learning community. MH believes that a process of

change makes use of many agents. He emphasises that the 'tool' should not be an aim in itself but the aim should be how learners can become better learners. In this respect, he explores the possibility of an alliance between cooperative learning and LML.

"I think that cooperative learning, combined with Let Me Learn can give good results, because you can build different groups which are homogeneous and which build on each other's strengths. So if you identify where the strengths are and place the children in these groups of different strengths, you are also instilling in the children a sense of community..." (41-45).

This is therefore compelling MH to explore what and how different methods and strategies can be used together with LML to better serve the learners. Such exploratory reflection on the process of collective transformation may lead to the transformation of the context of learning. This reflection on the process is crucial in bringing true transformation in himself as a person and as an educator responsible for other educators and the children attending his school.

Any attempt at change would obviously present new challenges and pockets of opposition.

"Obviously, in every situation, you always have pockets, where you have pockets of persons who are working hard and truly believe in it. Probably, you also have other pockets who need to be pushed, because there are certain difficulties when put into practice" (334-337).

The skill of the leader is to handle these challenges and oppositions in a reassuring manner and work towards achieving consensus. At the same time, he is aware that the process of organisational transformation is a winding process with to-and-fro moves and which requires a strategy that leaves space for everyone to move at their own pace and does not stall the process of transformation of the entire community.

4.3.2.9 Building competence

While very much aware of the challenges that such a decision brings, his determination to bring forward the Process has contributed in the acquisition of competence in performing new roles and in building new professional relationships. MH has succeeded in reintegrating the Process into the life of the school, while becoming more competent in integrating the Process in his understanding of himself as a person and as a professional.

He feels that the Process, though not always openly visible, has reached a good level of enthrallment in the life of the school.

“Salt gives the taste but does not necessarily show, but you can notice the taste and I think that for a number of people, which, luckily is not small in number, it has made a difference...” (479-481)

In his role as a leader he feels that he can better understand the needs and how he can continue to find new ways of integrating the Process into the daily life of the school and making the Process more visible.

“Now we have to make sure that we continue adding salt that shows more. This saltiness, if you know what I mean, means that we make the process as visible as possible” (481-483).

This visibility should materialise or continue to show in a renewed discourse.

“... it would also be important that we continue renewing this discourse...” (483-484).

The competence in understanding and leading others has to start by understanding oneself both on a personal level and professionally.

“... you cannot look at others and their diversity and not make your own personal analysis” (193-194).

MH reflects on how the LML Process has made him better understand himself as an individual and thus understand why he does what he does in the way he does it.

“... I started to make sense of the way I work. I began to understand myself better that is the way I work has a logical meaning behind it” (64-65).

He feels that the Process has given him “... a model to make more sense of what I was doing and how I was acting” (66-67). This awareness of self as a learner has contributed in his understanding himself and the role he plays in the larger context.

“... I think on a strategic level, it helps you also in the fact that I think I understood how I work” (583-584).

It helped him become aware of those patterns that he tends to avoid, but were necessary in performing his task as head of school and communicate more effectively with those that lead with those particular patterns.

“... if I am not a Sequential person, neither avoid, nor use first, and once I was conscious about it, the fact that I became aware of it, encouraged me to work harder at it” (584-586).

This made him more proficient in coming up with strategies to forge, intensify or tether his patterns so as to use his naturally embedded patterns to his benefit.

“So today I can say that the level of sequence that I need is a bit more acceptable by those around me. I think it has helped me refine it to take certain steps towards addressing certain situations” (586-588).

“It has also helped me to understand why sometimes I come up with a lot of ideas, as opposed to other people that are working with me. When someone would like to try out something, and I start shooting ideas left, right and centre, whereas the others can understand me, I put myself into check so as not to simply shoot out ideas, but I also try to organise them. So if the other has patterns which are different to mine, we can bridge” (589-594).

This competence in taking the reins of his own learning, has helped him put more intention in his actions and improve communication with his colleagues.

4.3.2.10 Reintegration into one’s life

One of the main signals of a transformed organisation is when the language of the Process becomes an integral part of the school’s professional discourse.

“The professional attitude that we have taken is to find means of how to articulate this discourse...” (330-331).

Thus the school’s language evolved into a language of inclusivity both at the level of the teaching community and at the level of the direct beneficiaries, namely the students.

“LML has helped us continue to develop this discourse of diversity and community” (333-334).

“...as a tool for children to better understand themselves” (386-387).

The evolution of the language, from one characterised by limitations, to a discourse characterised by solutions and possibilities, has helped the school community to talk about rising educational issues by “... engaging that kind of discourse, ... that helps us think outside the box” (176-177).

Yet another indication of a transformed community is when the community becomes a beacon to others from outside the immediate learning community.

“This year we spoke to a parent of a student in Form 1 who told us that he wanted his son to attend this school because he had heard that we use Let Me Learn in this school” (288-290).

A transformed community is a community that brings about changes that are evident for others to see. The transformed school will act as a catalyst for change and an example for others to emulate.

“... we could offer a system that was different from other church schools... This has placed us in a very unique situation” (299-300).

“I think that we contributed to those forums in which we were present... I think that the discourse that we could communicate about the advantages of operating in a context of diversity has come across. It has come across so well that now even the church schools have decided to change towards this system” (304-308).

Thus the integration of the process into the reality of the school has turned the school into a model school.

“It wasn’t something which was being preached about from a pulpit, but it was something which was being acted out everyday” (310-311).

This manifestation served as a “common denominator” (486) between the whole community of the school and the parents.

Transformative learning is not a static project but a process of continuous change brought about after moments of ‘discomfort’ or trigger events. While Mezirow seem to suggest a linear model (Baumgartner, 2012; Coffman, quoted in Taylor, 1997), this case study seems to be suggesting a more interactive and

spiral model in which an actor of change goes through moments of ‘creative professional discomforts’ which through discernment of one’s practice may result in a change of direction. MH speaks of the continuous questioning that characterises the school community – this causes ‘perturbance’ – a “collaborative process of people coming together to answer the question, “What’s next?”... disruptions (that) are perceived and then either ignored or responded to by communities of shared practice” (Beabout, 2012, p. 17).

“And I think that in this sense, the hallmark that we have is that it’s a continual exploration. We’re always asking, asking, asking, which obviously brings along certain frustrations. However, I consider it a positive frustration, in a sense that being professional is never being sure of what you’re doing, in the sense of questioning, in the sense of discernment, the need for deconstruction of many ideas, your brain, the challenge of weighing, and this is very tangible, the fact that you have to improvise on the spur of the moment. But at the same time, you feel the need to redirect yourself in certain things, and you know that in order to change that direction, you cannot ignore what is happening now” (356-364).

This perturbation within the community of practice allows the community to sustain and promote a personalised ethos built on the values of the community.

“What you believe can be done into practice and what is done in practice fuels the theory behind it ...” (563-565).

In this juncture the role of the leader to sustain the ethos is paramount:

“I think it does make a difference because if there was someone instead of me, we would become another St. Aloysius (a Jesuit run church school renowned for its selective policies)” (565-566).

As a leader, MH feels that the Process needs to expand its horizons and become more politicised.

“This is something that I really aspire for, that the articulation of LML

expands from the individual and psychological realm to a wider realm. I think that LML can make more sense if it is politicised” (683-685).

This will allow for the expansion of critical reflection to the wider community.

“... it could be that the discourse has broadened among the parents themselves when they talk to the rest of the school community” (297-298).

The discussion went even further to include an educational officer with whom MH discussed an alternative approach to the teaching of Science, which respects even those who might need to see relevance and concrete experimentation before they are ready to look at the content.

Reflecting on the process of change, MH realises that when people are open to change, what they learn does not stay with them only, but they pass it on to others and on to other projects.

“I think that the first group who attended was instrumental for the expansion of the process... For instance there was a group of them who were involved in the Students’ Voice. This was a Comenius Project. It was evident that even the way in which the students’ voice was conveyed, reflected the students’ diversity and their patterns” (113-118).

Sharing of practice outside the confines of the immediate community of practice becomes a hallmark of a school that has experienced a transformation. A transformed community shares with others the experience of growth. The language and experiences that become entrenched in the community will naturally spill into ones interactions with others.

“Whenever we have discussions... I think I used LML a lot in what I felt was good practice for us and to all those who were on board...” (420, 422-423).

MH, as a major actor in this process of personal and organisational transformation views, LML as a key contributor in the externalisation of an

ideology of practice and a leading force to one's actions within the community's routines.

"I think that LML has done a lot of good in this sense,... even when we recruit new staff in the school, when I come to recruit new people, ...as much as possible you try your best to make sure that the people you are employing are open to our particular ideology, who fit in with the ethos of the school, the ethos of inclusion in the school."

As a transformed individual he makes sure that the new perspective has been reintegrated into one's life and the life of the community in which such transformation took place.

4.3.3 Narrative Two: AA - Assistant Head of School

AA is an assistant head of school in the Secondary section responsible for the academic programme. She has been trained as a mathematics teacher and has read for a Masters in Education focusing on cooperative learning in the teaching of Mathematics. AA is a highly sequential person with an eye for detail. She is highly inquisitive and looks for detail in all her professional endeavours.

4.3.3.1 The Trigger

Her awareness of the incumbent diversity within the pupil population, her yearning for social justice within the community, and her awareness of the incongruence between espoused and prevalent values existing contemporaneously within the school were the three main triggers that started AA to explore the possibilities that the LML training could offer.

Her awareness of the incumbent diversity within the student community has urged her to proceed in her search for tools that could complement and support the efforts of the school to promote and cater for difference.

“Personally I had always been aware of mixed abilities, of different children, of special needs, academically good students,...” (18-19).

This awareness merged with her need to look for effective means to cater for difference.

“... I think that it is part of our school ethos that we, like, try to cater for differences found in our students, so it was really important that we do something of the sort” (2-4).

Her cognisance of different needs within the student community, fuels her urge to give each student a fair complement of support.

“I worry about those students falling behind maybe because we are not finding the best ways to tackle them,...” (571-572).

“I think being conscientious was always at the basis of my development” (21-22).

The knowledge of the limitation of the system, of which she forms part, to cater for all the needs of the students, and the often-inadequate response causes her:

“sleepless nights because when you have people looking at you, waiting for you to solve their problem, when it is something so complex, and when each decision you take is going to effect the lives of the students,...” (602-605).

Such mindfulness led her to appreciate “...the backing of the expertise, the joining of the forces” (605-606) the need to work with others. She felt that together they would be in pole position to cater for the needs of all students.

Still another reason that contributed to the search for professional support was her

“... belief that... whilst we work a lot on mixed ability, whilst we speak a lot about it, when it comes to teaching and learning, I believe that there is a lot that we still need to do” (188-191).

She acknowledges that while as a community of practice they know the direction, and over the years they have conceptually recognised the need to cater for difference, she is aware that there is still a gap between what they profess and what they would like to see happening and how this is transferred in the daily act of teaching.

This duality within professional praxis is reflecting the internal struggle between the ideals that she and others within the teaching community, as conscientious

professionals hold, and the curricular demands that weigh on and often force them to act in ways that sometimes contradict the espoused ideals.

This tension between the yearning for practice informed by notions of social justice and the pace set by external curricular forces that impose decontextualised knowledge, instigates discomfort that often causes anxiety.

4.3.3.2 Self-examination

AA fathoms how routine often poses difficulties in accomplishing those desired actions that one would like to see happening.

“Sometimes what happens to us during the year, even when reflecting on what happened with the learning policy, is that you don’t have the strength, you don’t have the energy because you would have other things on your plate as well” (605-608).

This realisation of limitations is a sign of the internal struggle between what is desired, based on the espoused personal theories, and what practice allows one to accomplish. Such a predicament could be a crucial step towards initiating the process of transformation.

Yet this challenge becomes even more daunting when faced by colleagues who in their search of relevance, would turn to you for guidance.

“I believe that when you have a group of teachers, and you are lecturing a group of teachers, skepticism is always there. Like, ok now show me how this can be done, sort of now with all your big talk, come in my position and do it.” (84-86).

AA, in her role as administrator, had to face these questions emanating from training that was still evolving - a training that was not always able to practice what it proposed to teachers to accomplish. Very often practitioners tend to

forego most theoretical discussions because of urgent practical demands. Thus in her self-examination AA became conscious of this challenge and the need to act as the unifying construct to bring the conceptual aspects which she could see fitting the paradigm she believes in, and which form part of the school ethos, into specific contexts of classroom practice. Being a practitioner herself, she could team up with other teachers to find practical classroom applications for the theory presented.

“...these are people that are on the job, and not everyone is ready to sit down and look up information, so you need to help them a bit” (112-113).

4.3.3.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

AA has considered LML as a tool for approaching a somewhat new reality of mixed ability teaching.

“... my initial expectations were how it was going to help me in my new challenge” (25-26).

Her expectations were that this training would be embedded in practice and will be able to “tell me how to go about it and how do I go about it in my particular subject, not in a general way, ...” (90-91).

Thus when her expectations were not met, together with other teachers, she reflected on how, what is being delivered during the training could be embedded in their respective subjects.

In her reflection on her professional learning and re-evaluation of her assumptions for the training, she invariably goes beyond the personal to the collective. Often these two domains are merged and when expounding the collective she would also be reflecting about her own practise.

As a community of practice, AA feels that while conceptually they have progressed and most of the staff is now very much aware of the diversity issues present in the student community, the transfer to practice is still a challenge.

“... from the intellectual level, it is ok. I don’t think that was the problem, on that level, we are o.k.” (289-290)

“... I think that there was a lot of progress. I can’t say I saw it in everyone but there was progress that obviously varies like everything but the practical level needs to be implemented more... yes I think the transfer hasn’t been made yet, and most of the times it is not because people don’t want it, it is more of the fact that people are afraid that they won’t finish the syllabus on time.” (293-299)

This anxiety for coverage of content is a reflection of the academic achievement paradigm that characterises the Maltese educational discourse. The educational community, including teachers, school administrators, educational officials and other stake holders, such as parents, has a deep-seated belief that the purpose of school is to primarily prepare students to obtain high grades and do well in national and international examinations through supporting, encouraging and facilitating the ‘learning’ of academic material. This limited paradigm of learning often sabotages the efforts of educators to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of the students.

“I too try to cope with the syllabus like everyone else especially when teaching form 5s. ... I move away from the theory and not only that but I throw everything I believe in out of the window, and I am not happy about that” (340-344).

4.3.3.4 Dialogue

Notwithstanding this dominant educational culture, AA and her colleagues seek to challenge this preponderant paradigm through the dissemination of a language that emphasises the processing patterns of the learner. This language has been shared also with parents.

“Even last year, we carried out a workshop for the parents. The fact that you have all the stakeholders involved, so now you are speaking not only about the students but also about the parents, then I believe that, that was one of the changes that this process brought about” (265-269).

The transferring of such discourse outside the immediate professional circle has not only benefitted the communication between teachers and parents but also enhanced the communication between parents and their children.

“Two weeks ago, I was really pleased. We had a meeting with two parents, the mum and the dad of a student who is in Form 1. These people are using LML in their learning skills, they are facing a problem of how to study with their son, and one of the things that they asked for was the LML inventory, so that they fill it out themselves, so that they check if the way they personally learn, clashed with the way their son learns” (206-210).

The above excerpt is evidence of a school community that is succeeding in generating a shared paradigm.

4.3.3.5 Exploration of options

AA is a strong believer of ‘leading by example’. She believes that her role as a leader should be marked by a hands-on-deck approach.

“I am hoping that next year I will teach form 1 students as well because I have a firm believe that I have to lead by example.” (70-71)

Thus by exploring this option she will be in a better position to talk with her colleagues and understand their difficulties in their pursuit to serve their students. In this way she hopes to be a more effective catalyst for change.

4.3.3.6 Planning of a course of action

One of the tasks of a leader within a community that is seeking to transform its practice is to seek ways of initiating others into the new paradigm of practice. Such a task is often met by reluctance.

“I know that we have two members of staff who are still resisting, I am not talking about a lot of people. I know who they are, sort of, ‘I have a lot to do, I will do it next year.’ I think I am only talking about just one or two people, not more” (142-145).

Such reluctance can offer initial hesitancy for a particular initiative such as training.

“I think, it is more an initial reluctance because when I ask them how did it go? This reluctance doesn’t manifest itself so much afterwards, it is more of, ‘oh we have to attend another course,’ ... I think once they start the training, they see the need for the training” (133-137).

Yet another reason could be a reaction to excessive work that a reform could bring with it.

“I think that this year, let’s speak of this year, and there were so many things... During this scholastic year there are so many things that one has to see to, ... we still have a lot of work to do...” (576-577, 578, 579).

AA reflects on this situation and stresses the need for the community to find time for reflection:

“so I think we need to sit down and we discuss this...” (579).

She also sees the need of aiding reflection by a mentoring process from individuals outside the immediate school community to help them bounce ideas off one another and transfer them into practice.

“...maybe you as a team could come in with your mentoring. Ultimately we don’t have all the answers” (580-581).

“Even the idea of mentoring could be taken up with the SMT as well like in its planning and then in practice. We sometimes feel this. People are expecting a lot from you and sometimes you don’t have all the answers, so if you have the team’s backing who has visited other schools, seen different things.... So mentoring, apart from mentoring in the class, this would help as well. Now we have come to the point where we put it into practice, in this situation of inclusion of mixed ability” (588-594).

The need for guidance and direction in setting clear targets and pursuing such targets with policies that steer the process of transformation has dominated her exchange during the interview. Once the goals have been set and the policies are in place, a strategy for putting the principles into action needs to be initiated. AA as a leader of such a course of action realised that such action should be paced as to respect each and every member of the community of practice.

“So I think it is a process, it is a process definitely. A process which has started a long time ago but obviously the drive or momentum is not always the same, so for example in the beginning of the year, when we started to work on the learning policy, momentum was fast, but then other work comes in and you start to slow down a bit. Now we know we have to continue” (251-255).

Once individuals within the community are respected and given time to absorb the changes, the signs of transformation start to show.

“... in the last two years, the language has changed, it has developed, and maybe I have become more aware of certain things, even the way that certain people speak” (248-251).

Initiating change, according to AA, requires faith in the community of practice.

“I have to let go... There has to be a leap in the personality of the person concerned, if you continue to think that everything has to pass you by and you can do everything on your own and teaching has to take place from the teacher’s side, there needs to be a shift in the mentality ” (307, 309-312).

This is yet another of the signs of a person on the path to transformation: the willingness to allow others (other teachers and/or students) to take hold of the tools and work with them for their own learning transformation.

4.3.3.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

Once individual members of a learning community are trusted and allowed to take initiative, the school starts to become what Oborn (1996 cited in Towers & Panayotidis 2012) calls ‘centres of inquiry’. Such centres make space for teachers to inquire and share practice.

“I believe a lot in communication, and I believe it is one of the school’s strengths, we are not afraid of speaking about things with each other although this is not always easy to do” (647-650).

Allowing space for inquiry strengthens interpersonal communication between members of the community of practice. The role of a leader is to encourage and, if necessary, make the required arrangements for communication to take place. AA shares a recent initiative of the school by which teachers are encouraged to visit each other’s classroom and share practice.

“...there was this interaction (between an experienced teacher and a new teacher), they teach the same subject and there was this interaction, feedback was given which was excellent but through this framework, space was given for this interaction to happen. Most probably she wouldn't have gone to visit his class, so we encouraged this, they interacted and probably he was the one who invited her to his class, because in our case the teachers can choose who to visit and who visits them, we don't pair teachers up” (358-365).

Such freedom of practice and trust heightens the experience of transformation. Members of a community of practice are encouraged and allowed space to share their practice with one another. A leader within such a community is one who has the skill to create the right environment but then allows the members to decide when and how to contribute.

AA makes reference to how in her own teaching she refers to the learning patterns to help her group students in teams that work well.

“... I was focusing on cooperative learning during a programme at school, whereby I would group students by ability, then LML came along and I started to include patterns as well in grouping” (48-50).

This intuitive deciphering of learning patterns in her practice helped her reflect on her practice and realise why certain groups were not working.

“I remember a particular instance, when I had a group who had just finished a disastrous session with me and when I checked their scores, I realised that I had three students who hadn't done the inventory and I had grouped them together... When I gave them the inventory I realised that they had the same patterns and that was an eye opener for me” (58-64).

The ability to transfer a language to the practice of teaching is a feat and can only be achieved by those who have internalised the Process and started making it their own.

4.3.3.8 Trying new roles

Internalisation of the Process would result in the individual trying to implement it in new roles. One of the responsibilities that AA carries as an assistant head of school responsible for curriculum is that of the Learning Support Assistants. These are individuals who are normally responsible for a child with a statement. Their role within the school makes it difficult for them to be released for training. Because she sees the value of the Process, AA tries to explore ways of getting these individuals trained as well.

“This thing about learning assistants would be good because they tackle things differently than the way teachers tackle the same things. If there could be (a course organised for them) we would be ready to offer our premises let’s say for a number of weeks, I would be ready to re-do the course with them because obviously I would be looking at it from a totally different perspective...” (525-529)

Her appreciation of the Process led her to value Let Me Learn as ‘a mortar that holds the bricks’ together.

“I started to value LML more even so when I linked it to cooperative learning...” (32).

“I would like LML to be put into practice together with other things” (220-221).

AA appreciates the complexity of the teaching and learning environment and sees the need to continue exploring ways of integrating different methods to truly allow learners to learn.

“I believe that we need to work with tools derived from cooperative learning, and I also believe that there are other methods which we haven’t come across yet that can be used...” (180-183)

4.3.3.9 Building competence

Once a person internalises the Process and acquires the aptitude to integrate it in one’s practice, then the feeling of competence in utilising the acquired knowledge and skill to specific situations will ensue.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the actual training, in particular in transferring ‘theory’ into practice, she found herself thinking “about ways of how to implement it (Let Me Learn) in class” (84).

The Process armed AA with a language and a means for understanding and describing herself as a learner, thus “LML has helped me understand myself better...” (176)

Through understanding herself as a learner, AA was in a “better position to help the students” (178). She can now understand why she teaches the way she does, and why she finds it hard to understand some students who due to their processing patterns tend to process learning differently. This poses the danger that unintentionally, she catches herself writing-off their efforts.

“... if you are able to understand yourself, then you are in a better position to help students. Like why are you so rigid in the teaching of mathematics? Why am I so rigid?” (177-179)

The awareness of the potential that lies in each and every student, for AA, was only possible through a self-disclosure process and the ability to reflect on alternative modes of reaching students through their potentials.

4.3.3.10 Reintegration into one's life

The reintegration of the language of the Process into the discourse of practice is a cardinal element of transformative learning. In her personal growth, AA feels that she has “become more aware of certain things, even the way that certain people speak” (251).

The community shares this awareness because:

“... the fact that we have a common language helps a lot. Even when we have a meeting, it is a common language” (148-149).

The dynamics of the language has infiltrated different venues of AA's actions; with her work at school at the level of curriculum planning.

“I think that since I work on the curriculum and support, it is always at the back of my mind. The fact that I was working on the learning policy, it's there, at the back of my mind all the time” (476-478).

At the level of curricular support and pastoral care, she states that:

“... to take a decision about a student who needs support we would be working with him using a particular pattern and not another” (478-480).

AA also transfers her knowledge and understanding of the Let Me Learn Process outside the immediate school environment, when delivering lectures to student teachers at University.

“when I give a lecture at University, I also mention them (referring to the learning patterns), so I mention cooperative learning as well as LML... because I feel they complement each other” (64-66).

So while at times, at first glance reference to the Process is not evident:

“Without any doubt LML is part of it (referring to the school’s learning policy). When you observe, you will cater for different patterns, so I think it was referred to continuously” (244-245).

Therefore, while to the uncritical eye there might be lacking the superficial ‘signs’ which one might associate with the use of the Process, a more complex investigation will tease out those signs of true transformation – where language informs action and action clarifies conceptualisation of beliefs.

4.3.4 Narrative three: SA – Assistant Head of School

SA is an assistant head of school responsible for pastoral care. She is a former teacher of history in the Secondary sector. She is a highly confluent person, always the first to come out with new ideas, often finding herself swamped with ideas, and often finding it difficult to organise these ideas to make sense to those working with her. She looks for detail and she craves for more information on whatever she is doing. She was one of the first to volunteer to participate in the Let Me Learn training.

4.3.4.1 The Trigger

The main driving force of SA's interest in the Process came from an awareness of the diversity of students' needs and abilities, and the inadequacy of response that she often experienced in her personal practice, as a teacher of history. She was also very aware of the school as a community that was seeking to address this issue of diversity in its policies and practice.

While appreciating her own efforts in trying to reach all students, she recognises the difficulties in effectively responding to all the needs that her students, year after year present.

“I used to become really frustrated when I used to get students who I just couldn't get through to. I used to ask myself, but could there be something by which I can get through, how come I am doing the same lesson which works for one but not the other?” (30-33).

The school community shared this same dilemma. While there was awareness of the diversity of needs that the student community presented, reflecting and analysing the actual practice of the school's response was very much a one size fits all strategy.

“...there was a lot of improvement in teaching and learning through this and as I was saying before, the teachers became aware that they have 25

students in class, and they could all be different as far as patterns go. I have done a lot of inventories to the present, and I have to tell you that I have never found students who had the same patterns as each other.” (280-284)

The practice of the school of grouping students together and delivering lessons as if there was homogeneity is one of the crucial dilemmas that disturbed SA and that made her explore the LML process as a tool for valuing in practice the diversity of students’ needs.

“We have a tendency of grouping students together, we prepare and give out lessons for the whole class, when we know that our students all learn differently, and in our case, since we are a small school, we believe in the individuality of the student, and that every student has different needs so something like LML is of value to our school, it fits with what we are all trying to do over here.” (2-6)

4.3.4.2 Self-examination

This awareness led to a realisation of limitations in their concerted effort in reaching out to the needs of the students. In approaching this level of self-examination, as an administrator she realises that the school community is made up of different levels of acceptance. There are those who have readily accepted with enthusiasm a process that has the potential to help understand ways of approaching diversity, while at the same time there are those who are still questioning and resisting it.

“There were people who had a lot of enthusiasm like myself, but there were others who didn’t believe and even now are still not sure, there are still people who aren’t convinced” (105-107).

This resistance weighs on the whole school and often impedes the process of change and the implementation of a learning policy which is gearing itself to a learning transformation that is believed to better serve the learning community. Different motivation and intentions could lead to such resistance. There are those who resist because they “didn’t believe and even now are still not sure, there are those who aren’t convinced.” (106-107) Others are resisting the work that such a process entails.

“Another thing is that some people are afraid that it entails (a lot of work), in the sense that LML requires an amount of work to be done.” (109-110)

Similar to other areas and professions, educators tend to settle for modes of practice that fit their comfort zone, often not realising that in doing so they are leaving out those most needing their professional support.

On the other hand, there are those who are fatigued with a long line of educational panaceas, the comings and goings of quick fixes for deep-seated educational problems. Many teachers become increasingly cynical and jaded. Thus as a practitioner, SA, like others in her school and elsewhere, has questioned this process and wanted to make sure, before investing too much time and energy, that this process is more than just a fancy, solve-it all programme.

“To tell you the truth, I was very sceptical at the beginning, and to be honest I wasn’t expecting anything really. I thought it was just another fancy programme that we encounter in everyday life” (8-10).

Such a reason leaves open the door of possibility and allows for critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions.

4.3.4.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

This led SA and other educators to ask some important questions: What makes a programme a fad? What makes this process, more than just a fad? In her

questioning the value of the Process, in particular its relevance to practice, she recognised an aspect that she valued, the focus on the individual learning process.

“However I was ready to give it a try due to the fact that it focused on individuality. I was struck by the individual learning process, ...” (10-12).

This led her to re-examine her teaching methodology. While she contends that as a teacher she was always looking for ways to reach different learners, she was doing so without really understanding what was behind the strategies and methods she was deploying.

“Sort of, I was giving the same thing to everyone, but I realised I couldn’t, you just can’t give everyone the same thing. We always tell the students, ‘no you are not equal’, in the sense, and you know what I mean! So yes I used to be really frustrated, and I used to research and try out different things. In a way I was applying LML because I used to use pictures with a particular student, something else with another and another something else with another. However it was something confusing, I didn’t know what was behind what I was doing” (33-39).

SA started questioning her practice and assessing her responsive methodology, realising that she was simply reflecting her preference rather than the learners’ needs.

“In that sense I started questioning myself, on what I was achieving in class, was I fulfilling my learning pattern or the students’? I started to notice how my learning patterns were influencing the students” (67-69).

Prior to their introduction to LML, they tended to approach observed strengths in the students in an isolated manner. LML provided them with the possibility to understand the complexity of the learning process as a combination of strengths and possibilities which, when harnessed, can allow an individual to take in the

world around him and start making sense out of it more effectively. (Johnston, 2007)

“... it was possible for us to understand different strategies and why some weren't working. For example before LML, we managed to find out that there are students who are very creative and with whom one has to use confluence, we didn't know it was called confluence, and at the same time the methods we were using with them weren't effective. We were concentrating only on his creative side and leaving out other important things. With LML we became aware that there are different patterns that one can develop, so in that way it helped the process that we had already started, in a way that we could help our students better” (308-316).

In this way the Process gave meaning to many of the initiatives that were already in place. Similar to the previous two administrators, SA perceives LML as a process, as part of the larger picture of teaching and learning and not as an aim in itself. Let Me Learn is featured as a facilitating process in the teaching and learning process that gives sense to the strategies and policies that the school adopts in its role to support learners to learn.

“... as a management team we never presented LML on its own, it was part of our SDP (school development plan), we added it to our programme. One of our strategic intents is teaching and learning, so the process of teaching and learning, other courses like the writing programme, loads of other things that we do with our teachers, LML is another thing added to these. We never presented a strategic intent in our SDP (school development plan) : LML. Teachers always saw it as part of a process” (295-300).

The process of change should be a strategic process that embeds itself in a 'dream' – intent for change that includes the whole community. SA takes on an administrative position to bring about change in the school. A person who values his personal learning transformation will try to share this experience with the

larger community. This allows for the creation of a critical mass that seeks to understand, as a community, how the transformative process manifests itself in the daily praxis of school life.

“In fact that is the reason why I wanted to become a deputy head. I wanted a change in this school, a change in pastoral care especially. I was lucky that in that time I met Simon, where we started with the dream of the year coordinators, the start of the process, where I wanted the students to feel cared for, and that they are becoming appreciated as an individual” (423-427).

Leading a transformative culture requires leaders that understand themselves and their role within the macro-transformation process. It is only when the one leading the community re-evaluates her driving forces within the new paradigm that it is possible for her to redirect her new learning to those around her.

SA reflects on her personal life and how her way of taking on the world caused those around her to question her ways and in turn make her query her ability to learn.

“... at home no one could understand how I was so organised and needed to know everything in the work sphere and I was also so ‘disorganised’... So my desk is upside down, it is not in my interest to have everything in order, and everyone used to tell me that there was something wrong with me... but if you had to take a look at my work, you’d see something which is precise, I look up every detail so my life is in contradiction all the time” (71-72,73-74,76-77).

In her own words Let Me Learn gave her the possibility to re-evaluate her understanding of herself as a learner and to make sense of the way she organises her environment. Such understanding gave her the possibility to recognise and to critically decipher specific learning requirements and then strategise to adapt to those requirements.

“So if someone had to come and tell me there is this project, let’s start working on it quickly, (I would say) no, no you can’t have a project done quickly, I need to research, I need that, then maybe a week later s/he might visit my house and see a lot of papers and confusion, but I am in the process of researching. For me, you can’t come here and ask me to finish a project by tomorrow” (80-84).

Her understanding of her learning self gave her the possibility to reflect a lot during the training period and reflect with others on this transformative power.

“I used to reflect a lot during the course itself. I am a very reflective person and I think a lot. I used to do the work that they used to assign to us, and I would always try something new, I used to love to communicate about our sessions” (94-97).

This allowed her to understand herself and her students as learners.

“The course was an opportunity for me for personal development even with the students. During the course I did a lot of research, about myself, about my students...” (99-101).

It provided her with the language to speak with students and other colleagues and act as a model for others.

“Even the way I speak to students, the way I help the teacher, the way I help the year coordinator, obviously they use the same attitude with the students. I use that a lot when it comes to personal transformation, it was strategic; I pay a lot of attention to what I do. I am their role model, not only to students but even the teachers, even the way I speak to the teachers is the way I would like them to speak to students...” (430-435).

4.3.4.4 Dialogue

Communicating with mentors and probing for clarification is a sign of 'curiosity'. Professional curiosity is an essential ingredient in the process of transformative learning. It generates questions that help clarify the process and illuminates the path that leads to transformation. The fact that the mentors are well-prepared to respond to the queries raised and to dialogue with the novice helps sustain the transformation impetus.

"I started to realise that first and foremost the LML team knew what they were doing. They were prepared and were able to answer every single question I put forward... the LML team was ready to answer our questions and they weren't answers that they had prepared beforehand" (15-17, 18-20).

True dialogue goes beyond dictating recipes but invites the novice to take part in a journey of self-discovery and growth. Mentors should make themselves accessible through the whole process of transformation and support the learners through their 'metamorphosis'.

"... they encouraged a free process, they didn't pass on any kind of recipe. I am very weary of people who try to give out recipes, who know what is going to happen, who seem to know everything, but when I realised that it was a free process, which you discover as you go along (...) then obviously my expectations started to change." (20-24)

A process with the potential of transforming an individual's practice confronts the theories-in-use and weighs them against those being espoused. When SA was asked to mention examples of individuals who, in her opinion, showed signs of change in their practice as a result of LML training she answered:

"Yes, in fact, I have two teachers in mind. Two very good teachers, they are well prepared, dedicated but who are academically minded. They

work hard so that their students pass their exams, those type of people. After attending LML, there was a change, and I used to think that LML wouldn't work with these kind of people. Not only did it work, but one of them who was a year coordinator, conducted the inventory with her form, did sessions with the LML team. They used to take the students out of the school, and it was like a must that when we get the form 1s, they do the LML activity with them. In fact LML became synonymous with these two teachers. They are still using it to date, and the students who they teach are different from the others, even the way they speak about LML" (124-133).

Such an experience helps problematise practice and develops a language of possibility. SA feels that as a community, LML helped to consolidate what they were doing. It gave them a tool for understanding better the context in which they were working.

"More than attributing to change, I think that it helped us bring together everything we believe in. Maybe before we started to do something similar but using different methods. But the LML, seemed to justify it and in that sense give it more power. In that sense, I think that without LML we wouldn't have arrived this far, as far as the process goes" (300-304).

Dialogue registered a change in the type of language used, from a language that focuses on deficiency to a language of possibility. Professional dialogue transformed from a conversation about limitations to an exchange of possibilities for supporting students in their learning.

"In our case, even when we speak about behaviour we believe in positive reinforcement a lot. So even the teachers, during a staff development, we don't look at students' abilities. That I think is the biggest change and that has come about now. First and foremost you don't see the student as a problem but you try to find out what the problem really is. So the student has a problem not the student is the problem" (333-338).

4.3.4.5 Exploration of options

Such a qualitative change in the content of communication between professionals has transformed the way learners are seen within the community.

“And there was another one, a football fanatic. He used to play football but he was troublesome. He didn’t want to study, and we gave him the opportunity to give training sessions, planning them out himself and then we had the after school programme and he started to coach six to seven-year-olds. So his reputation is that of being their coach, not of someone who is creating trouble” (401-405).

This restored the role of the teacher as an ‘archaeologist’ of learning potential.

“Now we always try to find out what students are good at...” (328-329).

“... we use what he is good at to get to the difficult situations” (341).

This role allows for the community to attend to the needs of individual learners without discarding anyone in the process.

“...we push the high achievers, but we will also help those who have fallen behind” (322-323).

Such an aim begs for an alternative pedagogical praxis that puts the learner at the centre of the learning process. Such praxis recognises what drives one to a particular mode of practice and directs it to the needs of the learner.

“I used to enter the classroom with one plan and then change plan in the middle of the lesson. I would start writing on the whiteboard starting from that side and then use arrows to indicate somewhere else, then I said but in this way I am driving students who have a high sequence crazy. Then I started, with a lot of effort on my part, using one side of the

board and then move on to the other. Then I started using sequence” (248-253).

This was also evident in other teachers’ practice.

“...there was a particular teacher who used to teach Maltese. She used to fill the board, everything in order, and then I started to see less writing on the board, a lot more handouts were given out, more tasks were given” (265-267).

“What changes, (...) lesson planning, how lessons are delivered, how teachers are perceiving their students’ performance, ...” (326-327).

This yielded a practice that is built on a respectful dialogue between the teacher and the student.

“In the beginning they used to say, ‘oh let him be. He is lazy’. But now, for example, what I am seeing, and I really like, is that I am seeing teachers speaking to students on an individual level in corridors... you can see them, what is the problem here, do you have a personal problem with me or is it... so the dialogue in that sense is on the right track” (363-367).

It is a dialogue of respect because now they can start seeing the learner and not just the student who doesn’t want to learn.

“Instead of shouting and passing judgements like ‘that student is falling a bit behind, we have lost him’. How can you speak of losing a student when he is still in form 2? This type of helplessness has been reduced a lot” (369-372).

4.3.4.6 Planning a course of action

A key role of a leader in a school community is that of recruiting new teachers. A leader's plan of action needs to include a recruitment policy based on the principles held by the school community. Thus a leader of a school who's on the path to transformation has two major roles among the plethora of other responsibilities: 1) Ensuring a recruitment of new staff who are already broadly in tune with the school principles; and 2) guiding the work with the incumbent teaching staff in their quest for transforming their practice.

“... we are very careful on who to employ, in the sense that s/he needs to be compatible. Obviously, if during an interview we have a teacher who claims s/he believes in these things, s/he would be at an advantage compared to others” (174-177).

Here SA speaks of recruitment and what she values in a candidate applying for a teaching position in her school. She believes that while knowledge of the content and teaching skills are paramount, these need to be embedded in a value system that fits the school's ethos of inclusion.

Once new teachers are recruited she needs to work with them to help them grow. Although they might not have as yet had the opportunity to experience certain aspects of training such as training in the LML process, the language is shared in context to help them see what in their practice could hinder learning.

“... with new teachers, when we are doing learning skills with Form 1s, and I asked a particular class, these students all scored high in sequence, and I asked them if there was any teacher that drove them crazy. They all mentioned their teacher of English, because he uses the board as he pleases, and I went to speak to him, and since he hadn't done the LML course, I started to explain to him. He realised it was right, and he did his best to change, and when he reverts back to his ways, the students tell me he did it again miss...” (271-277).

This positive communication with this novice teacher, led him to freely and willingly choose to participate in the LML training.

“Now he is doing LML because afterwards he came to me telling me that he was interested in doing the course. I think it is contagious” (277-278).

The policy that the school has opted for, in encouraging teaching staff to participate in the LML process, was that teachers were left free to choose even when to participate. This helped foster a positive professional practice that has as its centre the learner.

“... even those who were sceptical, the LML has helped them... we have witnessed a change in lesson delivery, a change in the homework given, homework is diverse in the sense that not everyone is given the same type of homework.” (286-289).

Such skills, which are often shared by the school community, are the result of acquisition of new knowledge and skills that support the implementation of the school’s plan.

4.3.4.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skill

SA feels that she has acquired both personal and professional knowledge and skill through her exposure to Let Me Learn. She feels that she has improved in her personal and professional interpersonal communication skills. She can now understand what drives her teaching style, who benefits and who is left out.

“... I score very low in sequence compared to others. However my precision is very high. So during my lessons, my board is always full of information. Obviously I supply a lot of notes to my students, I give them a lot. There is no sequence even in the way I present the information on the board. I realised that I was reaching my goals with students who had high

precision. I was there favourite teacher, ...however I was driving students with high sequence crazy ..." (57-63).

This awareness was crucial in her growth as an effective teacher. It allowed her to critically strategise and effectively support those who have different processing patterns. This gave her and other teachers a sense of professional fulfilment.

"As far as professional attitude goes, it is like I said before, when you see that you are getting through to the students, obviously that is the professional attitude, teachers feel they are doing their job well. That can be seen a lot, the staff are more fulfilled professionally like they know what is happening, they know what is going on in the classroom, so it is not like I am the problem or the problem is not the student, yes we use this type of language." (185-190)

Thus as a leader within the community this gave her that crucial knowledge needed to better support others.

"... as a teacher and as a leader. For me it made a world of difference, I started to understand myself better, the students and as a deputy head I understand the teachers too" (407-409).

Her improved interpersonal communication skill has helped her get a better insight into certain behaviours observed in students and interact with them more effectively.

"I started to get through to the children..." (41)

"I use LML all the time. Since I am in charge of pastoral care, ... I come in when a student is clashing with a teacher or he misbehaves. The first thing I do is to check his LML patterns. If I find out that he is high in

technical and has low sequence, and he has chosen chemistry, biology or physics, I know immediately that he has a problem” (194-198).

She shares this insight with other teachers. It helps her guide and reflects with teachers in their efforts to build an interpersonal relationship with students.

4.3.4.8 Trying new roles

Through the acquisition of this awareness and the skill to decode and encode learning situations, she explores different venues in which she can apply this acquired knowledge and skill. As we discussed above, SA employed her knowledge of the process with teachers, students and parents.

“Like I said, I use my knowledge in that way both with teachers and students, even with parents because as management team we have to deal with the parents as well.” (208-210)

As for the communication with parents, SA prefers Joyce Epstein’s (2002) first type of parental involvement, which states that schools should help families with their parenting skills by providing them with information on their child’s learning processes and offering advice on learning-friendly home environment. Parental involvement should therefore include effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about the child and his learning preferences: making sense of certain behaviours and modes of studying that would otherwise be an enigma to parents whose learning needs might differ from those of their offspring.

4.3.4.9 Building competence

The more SA engages with the Process, the more proficient she becomes in her role and the better she becomes in building relationships that foster learning. She feels that she has become more competent in motivating students to learn. The Process has given her the tools to capture the ‘good’ in the student and use it to guide him to learn. This skill is shared with other teachers. In her interview

she shares an experience with a particular student who for many was considered to be lazy, spoilt and reluctant to learn. She thus tried to go beyond the exterior, the façade he was trying to portray and “... see what he is good at.” (351)

“... we found out that he was very good at Art. So we start off from there, so when we talk to him, (we) ask him about his artwork. ‘Let me see your artwork, oh how good this is, so if you put the same effort in Maths for example how good that would be! Can I have this for my office?’ Or ‘Let me stick it to the board,’ and there we were reinforcing his good points in a way that he becomes self-confident” (351-355).

These tactics helped carve an inroad to the learning-self of this young boy.

“He started to see how teachers appreciated his work, ... with this process we started to build on his abilities.” (356, 357-358)

In this way, a pervasive mentality infiltrated the school processes. SA’s competence in integrating the acquired knowledge of students’ learning into learning roles has supported learners to feel confident in what they do. She has succeeded in making the Process an integral language of the community, which in turn, informs and sustains action.

“In a way LML has managed to infiltrate in all the school processes ... in State schools there are different students... the way we divide tasks, like if there is someone who scores high in sequence is our secretary, takes the meetings’ minutes. If another is high in confluence, we send him to discussions. If another one is technical, we leave it up to him to organise things and put up stands. In the long run, LML has become an integral part of our school, that is the process, the change that has taken place” (163-170).

This could only be possible through an understanding of herself as a learner – her ability to understand what drives her learning, why “I needed a lot of details,

I needed to know everything ..." (48). Now that she can decipher what drives her learning, she can use it to put intentionality in what she does.

"The individual part helped me a lot. After LML, I did my Masters, and now I am reading for another one. The way I study, loving the details, I calm down, the fact that I always do an essay twice, it is a problem, I lose marks because of this. It has helped me personally as well." (505-508)

4.3.4.10 Reintegration into one's life

Once the feeling of self-confidence gets ingrained in ones life, the Process becomes integrated in the different spheres and relationships. This becomes evident in the use of language with different stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and students.

"In fact this year I did learning skills, and I used LML in it as well. In the process I got parents involved..." (215-216).

The process becomes a natural language of communication within the community. Parents can learn to appreciate their sons' mode of learning and learn to accept that, though different from how they understand learning themselves, can still be successful.

" ... the parents would call to check what is going on. There I would have to explain that their son is like that, he has this pattern, that is what he needs, don't expect him to be neat. We are going to try to help him out, and in this way, we managed to get through to some parents as well." (215-218)

It pervades the life of the school where teachers are expected to integrate the Process in their practice.

“Yes I think that the mentality of those who have taken it on board like now we have entered a mind set like even with new teachers, when we are employing new teachers during the interview we ask if they are familiar with LML, because obviously they would be working in an environment in which it is being used” (153-156).

The process becomes an integral part of the ongoing process of professional development.

“... when we have a staff meeting or a PD day, we make sure that we go over this idea, so it is not like LML that we did during the course and that is that. We try to infiltrate this idea of LML in different things. We also train new staff, we give a bit of mentoring as well. We also do peer observation, we give hints to teachers, so where does LML fit in? Do you have this student’s inventory? For example if we have a teacher who clashes with his/her students, we refer to LML so in management we use it as a tool, as a tool to help us out” (177-183).

This assimilation of the Process as an integral part of one’s actions is evident in a number of projects that SA was involved in.

“For example we had the Comenius projects where the students did the students’ voice. We speak about students’ voice not only in terms of school government but also in the way they learn. Obviously this had to do a lot with LML. The students conducted a lesson in Hungary, and even in Lithuania, they started to explain how a lesson is constructed, how they helped the teacher in the production of the lesson plan, and LML patterns featured throughout” (157-163).

Here is a perfect example of how the assimilation of the Process has featured not only in the initiative that originated from the administration and the teaching community but also in the involvement of the students themselves. Yet another important issue arising from the above excerpt is that the Let Me Learn process

is not seen as a separate item in the agenda of the school but an integral part of the discourse that goes on in the school.

This has also become part of the evaluation of the teaching and learning process within the school. As an administrator it is SA's business to evaluate and appraise the teachers to ensure learning. The Process gave her a different dimension of learning. She can now appreciate methods and approaches to learning which in the past she questioned. She can now appreciate that there are different ways through which learning can take place, reflecting the learning profiles of teachers as learners:

“The first thing that I did was that I took a lot of the staff profiles, and I started to smile because I started to realise, like when you see a teacher going into a class, all files in order and then you see another teacher with charts all over the place and then you start to realise that learning is still taking place... Then you start to notice that learning is taking place as well, everyone going about it in his/her own way” (227-232).

Finally the process has given the students a sense of belonging. The school has evolved into a community where everyone is valued for what he is:

“John is not a student attending St. Albert, number 12 of class 1.1” (467).

Students are valued and supported and are:

“... trained to respect and they know that teachers understand them better, academically through LML and even as discipline goes because we know they are different so their behaviour improves” (477-480).

This respect and appreciation of individual members of the learning community is the effective outcome of the Process that members of the community have internalised and applied to their practice. SA has made numerous references throughout her interview to how the Process has helped her discover or give

meaning to her conduct. Once she understood herself as a learner, she could then start transferring her knowledge and skill and attitude to those that came into contact with her.

4.3.5 Narrative four: JSL – English Language teacher

JSL is an English language teacher in the Secondary sector. She is a graduate of the University of Malta with a B.A in English and Psychology and read for a Masters in linguistics. At the time of participation she had been teaching for nine years. JSL is very organised and meticulous in her work. She likes detail and likes to experiment with new ideas. She tends to avoid hands-on activities.

4.3.5.1 The Trigger

JSL finds herself rationalising the school's policy of support:

“... in my opinion (...) not in all activities but there are occasions where in my opinion we don't give that much importance to the student who achieves (...) and does well. Because we don't want them (...) to stand out over the others” (405-409).

This struggle with the dilemma of valuing all students while not losing sight of those who can excel, offers her a challenge of finding ways how, while supporting and valuing every student, one does not lose sight of those who can excel academically. This dilemma opens up her search for ways of accommodating her worldview in which all students' strengths are harnessed and allowed to grow to their full potential.

4.3.5.2 Self-examination

Her search brought her to explore Let Me Learn as a possible process that could help her achieve her worldview. Here a sense of 'disappointment' or better a criticism of the training as it was delivered, kicks in. She feels that the training was not grounded in practice.

“Well I must admit that initially, how can I say it, we were quite sceptical about the whole thing, especially because, there was a lot of talking going

on and no examples were given us as to how we can apply Let Me Learn in class” (14-16).

The novelty of the Process exposed the lack of expertise of the trainers at the time who were caught off guard when confronted with practical questions from classroom teachers. This led the trainers to stick to what they knew best, namely the theoretical content regarding the Process and allow space for practitioners to come up with their own application to practice.

“We had to come up with all the ideas... But as to our expectations we thought we were going to have more guidance and practical examples. We didn’t have any...” (16-20).

“Initially it was just theory, theoretical with one person or two persons telling us what to do and with no examples or practical... applications” (37-40).

This scepticism did not prevent her from rising above the situation and invest in finding ways how such a Process can translate into classroom practice.

“... I only took it on board later on, in fact I, I did a lot of things related to Let Me Learn. I will tell you later on, but initially I had to come up with all the examples and apply it in class” (32-34).

But this caused her some hesitation because there were no definite answers, she had to explore herself what works and what doesn’t work with her students.

“By trial and error, what works what doesn’t work with my students. So that’s it, I must admit that I come, came up with most of the answers later” (34-35).

This lack of security emanating from her need to know and have all the information before performing caused her to question and re-examine the value

of the Process. At the same time, her confluence – to take risks and explore new venues of possibility led her to continue the search:

“I did a lot of things related to Let Me Learn...” (32).

4.3.5.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

JSL is critical of the approach adopted at the time. She feels that the training contradicted the principles that the Process promotes.

“... I used to think, why aren't they applying Let Me Learn themselves? (Referring to the lecturers we had.) If you have to appeal to, if you need to, there is this need to appeal to everyone's learning patterns. Then, why are they talking and talking, no pictures, nothing. Do you understand? And you start thinking they are preaching this Process but are not actually applying it.” (82-87)

Notwithstanding this critical position, it did not preclude her from taking in aspects that helped her grow into a better teacher.

“Nowadays, I think I have taken a lot out of it. I used it a lot” (87-88).

In retrospect she can now value some aspects of the training such as the role of theory:

“... theory which needed to be given in hindsight, someone has to tell you the theory” (67-68).

While she is still very much critical of the way the training was delivered at the time, she can now value the changes in the way the training is being given with input from practitioners.

“...training has changed because my friends are still attending LML courses and I know that from then on things changed. I know they are giving them a lot of hints. They are being given talks, they are having seminars where teachers who have taken the LML on board are speaking with them, even I was there, I gave a presentation myself” (54-58).

Such realisation was made possible by the school’s insistence in promoting the Process. This gave her the time to reflect on the implications of the Process and see that notwithstanding the limitations of the training, the Process was effective.

While she is aware of the potential of the Process to lead learners to success and to help the learning/teaching process she is also very much aware of the challenges this Process offers to the teacher in one’s attempt to plan for responding to the needs of each learner’s profile.

“So yes I do take it into consideration when planning but it is impossible to target each and every pattern and prepare all the resources for each” (289-290).

While JSL can understand the challenges, through her re-evaluation of assumptions, she can also realise the potential of this Process to help re-evaluate her approach to teaching:

“... whereas before I had one approach, which had to apply to everyone. Nowadays I know that I had to change, I changed my own approach, trying to appeal to, to more than... to individuals” (322, 332-334).

JSL is reflecting on how she changed her approach to teaching. She realised that different learners need different ways for making sense of the content she is trying to teach. She is becoming more aware of the needs of the learners without losing time on the academic requirements. She is becoming more conscious that even at secondary level one needs to allow for learning moments, time in which

learners' personalised mode of taking in the world is respected. She has come to understand how she can manage her patterns and allow for possible methodologies that in the past she would not even have considered.

“ ... with the Form 1s when we do poetry, the first, I don't ask them to write. Again through Let Me Learn, because before that's what I used to do, (have them) write to paraphrase each stanza. (Now) I say OK try to visualise and draw what you are reading and they used to enjoy it. Now in Form 5 (final year) I don't ask them to do that. I end up drawing a pussy cat I mean I'm, its hilarious...” (346-350).

This is a challenge that not everyone in the school would be ready to take.

“... I don't believe that all the teachers who took Let Me Learn, took it on board as well... Because it involves a lot of work” (610-611,613).

What is becoming evident from the above is that transformative learning comes from within. The 'training space', the community's support and other external factors are important as far as facilitating the transformation, but it has to be the individual who notwithstanding the limitations, grows into a better, more effective educator.

Such transformation requires time. It does not happen all at once in one particular sequence. While reflecting on the process of change, JSL recognises that “(t)hese are the feelings I had back then...” (77) but with time she realised that this Process had potential and invested in it.

“I did take a lot and as I have told you. I am one of those teachers who organise seminars, take out the students, we use half a day seminars to embark on LML. I took a lot” (77-79).

Time allows for a better engagement with the Process that would allow space to re-visit one's perspectives and in turn amend one's behaviour and actions. Time

allows space for reflection, understanding and making sense of what has been shared. While a training process initiates the transformation process, true transformation will continue to take place, as the principles exposed will become clearer with time, thus becoming ingrained in their actions.

“Well it took us some time until we grasped the whole process, it took some time again (to understand) how this is going to work” (23-24).

4.3.5.4 Dialogue

Such understandings can be facilitated if a dialogic environment between members of the school community ensues. Dialogue between professionals could lead to a better understanding of the situation in which learning can occur.

“... I sat down with other teachers to see how we can, could apply this in class especially in our subject, English. We had to sit down and see how it could work in English. In the English lessons and with the students we had. So it took a lot of thinking initially, during and immediately after participation in the process” (24-28).

An effective dialogue would lead to collective reflection and a clearer understanding of the dynamics of learning. Through the exposure to this Process, learning took centre stage in the professional conversations of the school community.

“... we spend a lot of time... most of our PD days discussing the learning process. To the part the students play in the whole process. What we should be doing and questioning our teaching methods when we're not reaching particular students. A lot of focus is on the students and the learning process” (465-469).

Professional conversations are focused on the learner rather than on the logistical issues that are often an integral part of the school organisation in general.

Such discourse permeated the teaching/learning domain. JSL has opened a dialogue with students to help her better understand how best to attend to their needs:

“... together with another teacher, we gave the students the opportunity to criticise our lessons. ... they chose a lesson that they enjoyed but which I could have done in a better way, delivered in a better way. So they criticised our lesson, ‘Listen you could have used this, a PowerPoint’. You could have used... And I said ‘ OK, you plan, create resources, deliver the lesson...’” (275-281).

Allowing the students to act as critical friends has helped JSL and her colleague to dialogue with students and together explore ways of accessing the curriculum.

“So they (the students) got, they took the lesson, created resources to appeal, and in their lesson plan they said, ‘Listen this appeals to the ones who are Confluent. ... So this appeals to the ones who are not Sequential...’ So they prepared a handout and they targeted all the patterns in the class...” (281-285).

It also helped the students experience the other side of the coin, the difficulties experienced by the teacher in coming up with creative and effective teaching strategies.

“Look, it took us almost four weeks to prepare for one lesson, with all the resources. So it is impossible” (291-292).

Such discourse allowed for a language of possibility.

“they realised that, ‘Look I’m interested in the way they learn ‘so at least it’s not because I am stupid, I am not good at writing, I’m doing something about it’. I’m aware of it, and, I’m giving you the tools” (167-169).

Learners are valued participants in the learning process given different strategies to explore and supported throughout the process.

“I said I had a list of tools they could use. So you can do this, do this, to write longer sentences. You can do this to make it more interesting. And a list of ideas” (169-171).

4.3.5.5 Exploration of options

Such a culture, where all students are valued as learners and as collaborators in the process of learning, allows teachers to transform their practice into one that focuses on the learner rather than on the institutional requirements that often detracts from the focus on the learner.

JSL talks about a school culture that values all students:

“... we don’t only reward students who do well in their exams, but also students who perform in arts, have taken part in an exhibition, who have improved” (391-392)

Such a culture nurtured the role of the teacher as a motivator for learning. The school that allows the space and nurtures the conditions for everyone to shine, makes it easier for individual teachers to transform their practice into one that motivates learners to succeed.

4.3.5.6 Planning of a course of action

Once her role as a motivator of learning has been determined, JSL explores alternative pedagogical praxis through which she can initiate her students into the Process and work with them through different stages of development.

“So once we embarked, I embarked my students on the Let Me Learn process... knowing that I’ll be using it every single day for the rest of their lives here” (135-136, 138).

This brought about changes in practice and in the way she taught certain skills within her subject.

“Let’s say in English there’s a writing task, comprehension. So for a writing task you need to be Sequential and Precise. So if you’re not, what are you going to do? And we came up with a list of tools they could use to improve their writing task. (...) So each student had a list of tools, it was printed, so we came up with it. What they can do to improve their writing tasks, especially when it came to length and this helped the students a lot” (144-150).

She claims that the Let Me Learn process has permeated all the work that she, like others in this school, does with the children.

“Whatever the activity we, we keep Let Me Learn in mind” (371).

The awareness of the students’ learning patterns has become an integral component when planning a course of action.

This is facilitated by the fact that the school’s ethos and policies are very much in congruence with the principles governing the Let Me Learn process.

JSL: “How it fits, with the philosophy of the school. It does, with the ethos of the school. Catering for the different needs of the students and helping each and everyone to reach his potential. So that’s it; it fits perfectly.”

Interviewer: “So you see that there was already fertile ground?”

JSL: “Yes that’s it” (364-368).

According to JSL, Let Me Learn and the school ethos have a symbiotic relationship, each influencing the other.

JSL also values the fact that students, like adults need to go through a paced growth. In planning her course of action with the students, she allows time for growth in understanding. Students require time to go through the different stages of awareness, questioning, understanding, internalising and applying.

“Initially there’s a lot of, listen OK, you’re, you’re mainly technical... (In the first seminar) we embark the students (in the Process); the second one, which takes place, six, seven months later was about linking Let Me Learn to each and every subject and how their strengths can help in each component of the subject. So they saw how it could help them in each and every subject” (139-144).

This initialisation of the students into the Process is an important exercise because in this way students would have the required knowledge to develop their learning skills.

4.3.5.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

Apart from the theoretical knowledge and the skills pertaining directly to the Process, JSL speaks of other knowledge and skills acquired during the course of training and the years working in a school that valued and promoted the Process. JSL speaks of a language that she acquired and through which new channels of interpersonal communication were opened.

“... it helped a lot my relationship with the pupils. Definitely!” (164-165).

This has led to a sense of trust between her, as a teacher, and the students who

“... realised that, ‘look I’m interested in the way they learn’” (167-168).

Students started to feel that they had something to contribute, whatever their abilities and skills, they were important.

It also gave her a better understanding of each learner's needs and thus the required knowledge to effectively respond to their needs, respecting their pace and their mode for accessing a learning situation.

“We make sure that even the weakest students reach their potential”
(383-384).

This was possible with the diffusion of a language that one could use to communicate about and with students – a language that helps the learner communicate his needs without highlighting the weaknesses.

“... my emphasis was always on, not what your weaknesses are but what you can do, the tools you need to improve and to stretch the students.”
(190-192)

Thus, in her role as a teacher in a school that promotes this Process, she toiled to develop the skill for helping students internalise the Process. She enabled them to observe and decode the learning patterns as they present themselves. She did this by aiding students observe the patterns at work in others and in characters from literature.

“So we had done this in Form 1, and then as we went along they got used to it, and I ended up having students saying ‘ look, we were doing Macbeth, Ahh Lady Macbeth is really confluent. Can we write that in the exam?’ ‘Yes you can of course’. So they were using their patterns on the character in Macbeth. Without having been asked to do that so they were applying their knowledge of the learning patterns on characters from literature” (192-198).

This effort has registered a measure of success because,

“...by the end of the first year I compared their first writing task to their last writing task... it was impressive.” (155,157)

This gave the students a feeling of accomplishment, and they felt that this is working for them.

Interviewer: “Ok. And the pupils, did they feel that this was working for them?”

JSL: “Yes, yes, yes they did, definitely” (175-176).

As a teacher-mentor she also experienced a sense of accomplishment since she feels that she is reaching more students.

“I think I’m reaching more students than I used to, with a bit of understanding” (238-239).

This understanding helped her transform her practice and include responsive strategies to be shared with the students.

“... we came up with a list of tools they could use to improve their writing tasks” (146-147).

The generation of responsive strategies that were shared with the students themselves as self-help strategies, allowed students, in particular those students who are usually challenged, to take responsibility for their learning.

“And before handing in the essay, they had to make sure they’ve used at least five of the tools” (163-164).

4.3.5.8 Trying new roles

Once the Process has been internalised and a sense of relevance was achieved, JSL starts to explore how she can make the most of this Process.

“I embarked the LML, held seminars, workshops, presentations. So I even had a course for parents, a mini-course for parents ... with parents as well” (95-97).

She also explored links with skills and processes that she used in teaching English and explored how this added dimension could improve their effectiveness.

“Now I linked it to other skills and other like, like writing skills, in some aspects of your teaching... yes it can work” (93-94).

Thus for JSL, once she found how the Process can be translated into practice, she continued with others, to explore new avenues of implementation. This helped her to continue to experience a sense of competence.

4.3.5.9 Building competence

JSL identifies two major areas in which she feels confident. She can better understand her students' needs and employ more targeted and effective strategies that can meet these needs; and she has increased her ability to motivate learners to learn.

“... with the Form 1s whenever we do poetry (...) I say OK try to visualise and draw what you are reading (...) Now in Form 5 I don't ask them to do that, I end up drawing a pussycat, I mean it's hilarious (...) I've learnt to adapt to, adapt to the children's needs. Not just to meet their needs” (346, 348-349, 349-350, 352-353).

JSL draws an important observation in her professional attitude. While before her exposure to LML she would try to meet the students' needs, now she goes a step further and reflects on what she can do to motivate them to learn. Thus from an extrinsic effort to adapt her teaching she moves to a more intrinsic attitude where the learner once again becomes the centre of her motive.

This links to her acquired competence to motivate students intrinsically:

“I make them believe in themselves to such an extent that even though they're not in the literature group (*the literature group is considered to be the academically strongest group*)... they still try hard because I praise their efforts” (431-432, 433-434).

This has brought about a renewed change in those students who in the past would disrupt the class and perform poorly, but now:

“I'm very happy with the whole group because they performed. They still tried their best and they haven't given up” (438-440).

4.3.5.10 Reintegration into one's life

The above account spoke of a person who has positioned herself in the path of transformation. This voice is of a professional who has critically reflected upon her practice as it went through transformation.

She has integrated what she learnt into her practice, keeping:

“The whole theory... at the back of my mind. It's a framework which I use when I'm teaching...” (261-262)

giving her an alternative view of learners' struggles in their quest for learning.

“As I said with writing tasks, with being disorganised and so on and so forth. ... Now I know that it is because it is a learning pattern. That’s how they are. But then, as I said, the emphasis is on tools. What’s next, how can I stretch myself? It’s never an excuse and I bear this in mind when I’m teaching” (248-252).

It gave her a better understanding of what drives certain behaviours. She can now provide students with self-help strategies to equip them with tools to take control of their own learning.

The process has brought about a change in the way she defines learners. She experienced a shift in the language used - from a language that emphasises deficiency to a language of possibility.

“Nowadays I think I’m reaching more students than I used to, with a bit of understanding. Not just saying ‘look how careless you are’, or ‘you never learn how to write a long essay’ (...) It’s his patterns so let’s see what we can do about it. The approach is different” (238-242).

This ‘new approach’ has reintegrated into her professional interactions with students, their parents and her relationship with her own son.

“That’s what I do with my own son. ... His desk is so disorganized but he still does all his work and so on and so forth, so I don’t complain anymore that he’s disorganised. It’s his pattern” (227-229).

This reintegration of the Process in the different facets of her professional practice was facilitated by the school’s ethos that values and encourages such strives.

“In everything we do, in all the activities, we bear in mind the different Let Me Learn patterns students have.” (400-401)

The school community has become a fertile space for teachers, like JSL, to grow and transform into more effective teachers.

JSL has shown great growth - from a very critical original position, in which she experienced frustration with the training, to a position where she has woven and integrated this new perspective into her personal and professional life.

4.3.6 Narrative five: FSL – English language teacher

FSL is a secondary school English language teacher. She graduated in an Honours degree in Education nine years before participating in the Let Me Learn professional learning process (LMLpLp). FSL is a strong-willed learner, scoring 25 and above in all her Learning Connections Inventory (LCI) scores (the LCI score range is 7 to 35). As a strong-willed learner she tends to take lead in planning the scheduled work, generating ideas, executing the process and finalising the outcomes. She takes initiative and is willing to take risks. She is capable of linking disparate pieces of information into the big picture. With her sequence she is able to organise her ideas and work products in a coherent manner. She uses her technical reasoning to turn her ideas into practical, and real-world experiences. She is also quite meticulous in her work and produces well-structured, informative and creative teaching resources.

4.3.6.1 The trigger

At the time that the school was searching for meaning and understanding of the realities that form the community, FSL was trying to understand her role within these realities. The underlying reality of a diverse student population and the realisation of the limitations within the teaching community to address these needs have caused her to re-think her practice and her method of teaching.

“At the time... the school has pushed LML a lot, our headmaster saw its value for us” (6-8).

4.3.6.2 Self-examination

The awareness of her own limitations in effectively responding to the diverse needs of her students and the school's trepidation in understanding how it could bring about change to better serve the student community, moved her to re-examine her practice and her intentions in trying to understand and define her students.

“... sometimes you do say it, like, ‘why does this boy take so long when I give him a written assignment?’ and maybe we fall into the trap of labelling him as being lazy...” (233-234).

The desire to avoid labelling and simply passing over the problem without really tackling the needs has brought her to self-examine her practice.

4.3.6.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

At this juncture in her professional development, FSL started to be more aware of her limitations and the ineffectiveness of certain teaching methods she was utilising. She started to realise that while certain students were benefitting from her teaching, others were still left struggling behind. Over time she could appreciate how her involvement in the Let Me Learn Process and her active search for better ways of reaching students with their diverse needs, resulted in:

“This changed my life but this change was reflected in the way I teach...” (201-202).

Through the re-evaluation of her practice, her openness to learn from colleagues and through sharing of practice, the Process started to make sense and a visible change of practice occurred.

“I think that it started to make sense when I started using it in the classroom. I can also show you a handout which a friend of mine who was doing the course with me did” (24-26).

FSL could now develop new teaching strategies that truly address the needs of the learners and allow for learning potential to surface.

4.3.6.4 Dialogue

Collegial interaction afforded her the interpersonal space through which she could explore innovative approaches to teaching.

“She told me, I have this lesson, I am doing this. And I said what an idea! I used to do this poem but obviously that wasn’t my way of doing it. I used to do a normal lesson, read the poem and answer questions” (36-38).

The consensual validation of practice allowed her the dialogic space for reviewing her methodology and venture into methods that would better address the learning preferences of each learner.

FSL also reflected on the training and while she appreciates the opportunities that this training gave her to interact with colleagues and to re-evaluate her practice, she also problematise the limited role played by the trainer in this process.

“I felt that I needed someone who would have come and tell me, look you are doing this story, this comprehension, how could you apply the learning patterns in it, ... what type of homework should I give? How do I do classwork?” (185-190)

This need for interpersonal communication with a mentor was felt and when it happened, though late in the year, has given her the needed reassurance.

“The person needs to understand, in my case I witnessed it once and I understood” (195-196).

4.3.6.5 Exploration of options

Once she started building her confidence, in particular through the consensual reassurance of her colleagues, she could start to explore new actions and relationships within the school community. The learning community included both students and teachers.

FSL considered herself both as a teacher, an agent for facilitating learning for students and tapping into their potential, and a learner, always open to learn new approaches. In her teaching persona, FSL explored new ways through which she could attend to the range of needs of the students. She explored new methodologies for teaching content and language skills, and new ways of sensitising herself to the needs of the learners.

In her role as an English teacher she was aware that certain skills that she was requiring from her students, were beyond what certain students could handle. She realised that due to certain challenges faced by these students, and her lack of appropriate responsive strategies, these students were being left behind. Through her participation in the Let Me Learn professional development and other similar courses, she started to discover alternative pedagogical practices that allowed her to tap into these students potential that was otherwise hidden.

“Basically I changed the way I used to teach in class. For example I used the thematic approach, like Halloween, so in that week I do comprehension, they produce a presentation, they cook Halloween cookies, anything, so during the oral they brought food with them and they explained what they had done... In this way I catered for the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, and I managed to cater for the four learning patterns, the way that the lesson was presented is different” (334-337, 340-343).

She felt that by diversifying the learning access points she could nurture students' potential and facilitate their learning. FSL believes that this Process

allowed her the space to act as a catalyst for change within the teaching community.

“... I always invent things to do with my students, and I always put up their work downstairs. Other teachers see their work and sometimes they do approach me ... sometimes they do tell me what a good idea that is... One particular teacher who commented on my work last year... she is doing it this year...” (471-474, 475-476, 478).

In this dual role, FSL engages herself in a course of action that transforms her private professional practice into a public agency through which she participates in the transformative action of the school community.

4.3.6.6 Planning a course of action

FSL’s awareness of her role as an agent for change within the school community led her to plan a way forward that would help her transform her practice and, in so doing, act as a catalyst for change within the community. The theoretical underpinnings of the Process gave her a better understanding of the learner and the skill to decode and strategise for individual learners. She can now plan with intention and employ effective responsive strategies.

“You start off with visuals. You have a comprehension, but they would have done acrostics before this, so they would know what it is all about... first you have a missing word, then you have a missing space ... In this way, by using a structure, you would be helping those who I call the reluctant writers. So that a student who is very confluent, not so sequential will find this very useful, on the other hand those who are very sequential will love this” (274-275, 276-280).

This humble but effective deliberation on practice allowed her to transform her practice into praxis, where every action is negotiated in the light of the learners’ needs and the curricular demands.

4.3.6.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

During the interview FSL highlights a number of acquired skills and insights that she attributes, at least in part to her involvement with the LML process. The Process gave her the key to understand learners and the processes that they deploy in their quest for learning.

“I have the students’ scores, ... So in class you feel it, that no matter what you do, all the students seem to have learnt” (435, 436-437).

She acquired the ability to decipher the students’ learning patterns and intentionally plan strategies that fit the students’ learning needs. Through this acquired insight and knowledge she could, amongst other things, form effective teams through which learners can complement each other’s strengths.

“So you put them together, you know that they are going to complement each other, you know they will help each other, they won’t get stuck because if they do, one will help the other, so patterns really help in this way” (158-160).

Her knowledge to deploy effective and directed strategies that target individual propensities is a result of her newly acquired skill of decoding learning patterns. FSL shares her experience of teaching literature. While before she used to go through the usual process of teaching a literary piece, now she was in a position to include the main actor – the learner. While previously the student was asked to adapt to the teaching motions, now the teaching responds to the learners’ preference. This accommodation made it possible for the learners to truly experience the literary text.

“ I had Romeo and Juliet with my Form 2s, and I thought that for the December homework, instead of asking them to look up information about Shakespeare, and then do the usual project (...) Choose one of the following activities, one of them had for example, what did the wedding guests wear, build a model, cut out the outline (...) so we had those who

were going to build a model and dress him up, and literally they did dress him up with frills using lace. They had to research this. They found out that they used to cook meat with a lot of spices (...) they had to explain why they chose to insert certain things in the menu, (...) they conducted a wedding, so some were responsible for the clothes, others for the food, others for the music (...)

So who felt comfortable to write, he could write (...) who doesn't feel comfortable writing, could choose not to write, he could still do the research and present this research verbally.

(...) they needed to find what was the best task for them according to their patterns" (43-45, 62-64, 68-70, 71, 76-77, 87-88, 90-92, 98-99)

The above excerpt highlights FSL's confidence in the learners' ability to make their own choices and her confidence in guiding them through this process. This newly acquired knowledge gave her the ability to develop skills for applying differentiated strategies with intention.

This gave her a sense of fulfilment seeing students turn learners. She contends that through this they improved their language skills:

"When you see the way they write, the way they do the lesson, the way they present their work and the way they do their homework... I never look back, I enjoy it, they enjoy it, they remember more and they learn more" (121-123, 125-126).

But success went beyond the teaching and learning of English. FSL reports improvement in her interpersonal relationship with the students and between the students themselves.

"I can speak about those students who are in Form 4 now. I spent three years working with them using Let Me Learn as well as the Writing process. The relationship with them, the teacher student relationship has changed, it has improved, they enjoy the lesson more, I have already

mentioned these things, they are not embarrassed of each other, they are not afraid of making mistakes because they know they are not criticising the person but the person's work" (514-519).

This improved communication between teacher and students and students amongst themselves has initiated a critical culture that supports each other's efforts and forges new relationships.

4.3.6.8 Trying new roles

After the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that enabled her to implement a more effective teaching and learning strategy, FSL proceeded to implement it in different areas of her professional practice. Assessment is one of the activities that benefited from this acquired knowledge. Now that she has a better understanding of why certain students prefer certain modes of performing to others, she felt justified to allow for different modes of expression of knowledge.

"Learning patterns help a lot to explain why he loves to work hands-on, we know he doesn't like writing so much, so you start saying well I won't expect long writing tasks from this one etcetera. With learning patterns there's a scientific reason, so you start to understand the student instead of labelling him as being lazy or incapable of doing something." (237-241).

This approach allowed learners the space to express what they really know and to experience success that in turn fuelled their motivation to work on those areas that they needed to improve.

"In Form 1, I had the Christmas Presentation. There was a particular presentation he (one of the students who leads with technical reasoning) would have done badly in. Instead I tested him orally where he scored 90 something, and his face just lit up. He hadn't scored in the 90s range in a

long time, but I had given him the opportunity to explain it verbally.”
(241-244).

It provided her the space to explore and venture into methods, which up to a few months before, she would have not even considered valid. Yet another area of experimentation was in integrating her knowledge of the LML process with other effective tools that support language learning – namely the tools offered by the Writing Process.

“FSL: ... It (the Writing Process) involves the students, like with peer response, with editing, cut and paste... they are cutting the paper with scissors... so they give feedback to each other, like this sentence is not clear so you can add to it to make it clearer, they cut out the paper, they write down the sentence, they tape it, ...

Because you obviously have writing, it has to be done but then you have the hands on element. So when you have someone who can't sit down and write for 45 minutes, he can get up, move a bit, talk, and cut out.

Interviewer: It gave you an understanding how to respond to students, am I right?

FSL: Yes, it has to do with the patterns as well when you group them in the class, you group them according to patterns, so you know that one is going to complement the other.” (137-139, 140-142, 148-154).

Through this amalgamation of Processes, FSL evolves into a ‘diagnostic’ practitioner who deploys strategies with intention. FSL could match strategies to the learners’ learning processes thus allowing every learner to feel competent and successful.

“Students who were reluctant writers, and they would say, ‘Ms, I know it is not the best piece of writing in the world, but for me it is.’ (I see their) ownership and the fun they have in writing it, because they did it. They arranged it and they understood why they had to arrange it.” (143-146)

4.3.6.9 Building competence

This sense of accomplishment and success gave her the confidence in her ability to motivate students to start writing.

“I feel that the students started to love the language more, even me, they started to love me more, in the sense that they know that when they have a lesson with me, it will be different, where I will have activities and visuals” (309-311).

This feeling of enhanced competence in teaching her subject was the result of a better understanding of the students needs and personalised approach to learning. FSL felt that through this knowledge, she became a more accomplished teacher and as a result of her relationship with her students, was enriched.

4.3.6.10 Reintegration into one’s life

“It is wonderful, (...) and now I am trying to do the same thing with this year’s Form 1.” (519-520)

Throughout the interview, there are multiple references to the fact that this approach has become an integral part of FSL’s life, in particular in her role as a teacher of English. She feels that this Process was responsible, at least in part, for the successes she experienced in her teaching.

“Honestly I did the Let Me Learn, and I saw an improvement. It completely changed the way I teach, honestly now I will show you the website. I used to read in class, the usual thing. From then onwards, presentations, hands-on, completely different, and that is what I always do now.” (107-110)

She internalised the Process and reintegrated it into her professional practice:

“I don’t think about the learning patterns sort of I am catering for that student or the other, it became natural”. (432-433)

She also believes that this experience is shared with other members of the school community. It’s a language that they share:

“So, over here most teachers have received training in Let Me Learn. When you come and speak about patterns, everybody will understand you here”. (422-423)

This shared language is yet another confirmation of the level of reintegration of the Process at the personal and professional level. The community’s shared values and ownership of the Process has contributed to a greater, stronger feeling of belonging by all members of the community. It has given a greater focus on the teaching and learning process.

FSL has gained a sense of personal worth and empowerment through a warm positive and conducive climate, propagated through a culture of learning.

4.3.7 Narrative six: RSS – Science teacher

RSS is a general Science and Biology teacher. She participated in the LMLpLp in 2006. RSS is a very organised teacher, plans her lessons in great detail, and seeks detailed information, researches and documents facts. She often feels lost in situations that require hands-on interactions. She takes initiative and she is not afraid to make changes in her life. She is always willing to try out new avenues and approaches.

4.3.7.1 The Trigger

As often happens within organisations, the impetus for participation in staff development courses comes from the leadership who would have seen some value in a particular course and would have encouraged their members to attend. But the urge for change and the eventual transformation of individuals can only happen as a result of personal persuasion and an intentional action towards a fundamental principle.

RSS's first encounter with the LML process came when the school's head teacher asked a number of teachers to attend a professional development course which was being offered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Faculty of Education.

“I was approached by the headmaster to do it, ... I was chosen to start the training”. (3-5)

But, though the initial invitation came from the school that was seeking “to shape the visual image and educational goals based on the principles of authenticity, collegiality, student-centeredness and technologically advanced learning organisation” (Bezzina and Testa, 2005) the predisposition for change and the search for ‘tools’ “... that would help me motivate the students” (6-7) came from within. Like others within this community of practice, RSS was actively questioning her practice in light of the principles that the school was promoting.

4.3.7.2 Self-examination

In examining her practice she came to the realisation that certain methods she was using in her teaching of Science could be at best too challenging for some and at worst hindering some students' learning.

“ I think Let Me Learn gave me a reason why technical students were finding difficulties in my subject. I used to work quite smoothly with those students scoring high in sequence and precision, so I had to see what I was going to do so that the technical students achieve” (190-193).

She started to come to the realisation that her teaching was a reflection of her own learning needs. She realised that while she was quite successful with those students that image her own learning patterns, she had problems getting across to those who process using technical reasoning and confluence.

4.3.7.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

In becoming aware of

“... how my students learnt best, and the students themselves became aware of how they learnt and why they did well in certain subjects and not so well in others” (28-30),

RSS could amend her teaching strategies to support her students' learning in a more effective way. On the other hand the students were in a better position to assess their learning potential and learn to self-direct their learning process.

RSS feels that she became more competent in her role as a teacher. It gave her the possibility to “value each student as an individual” (170) and made her capable of valuing each student's contribution to the learning experience.

This sense of achievement gave her and her colleagues the required space to approach teaching in a creative manner.

“Here everyone tries to be creative, so it helped us to motivate ourselves and be more creative in class”. (263-264)

This learning environment allowed the freedom for teachers to experiment and the learner took centre stage in the school’s activity, giving students a sense of belonging and a sense of self-worth.

“I think students feel this a lot, the fact that you are not relating to them in a generic manner, the fact that you continue to motivate them”. (171-173)

Every student “feels comfortable in the classroom” (175) because as a teacher “I do everything in my power to help them learn, even a student with learning difficulties, everyone feels he can achieve.” (175-177) RSS thus feels that there was strengthening of the communication ties between the teacher and the students, creating an environment conducive to dialogue.

4.3.7.4 Dialogue

This learning environment engaged teachers in a reflective discourse “... on how we can implement it (the Process) in the classroom” (13-14). Such a continuous shared dialogue was facilitated by the school’s dedication to the Process.

“The school helped even the way it invests in the training, the fact that we have staff development, we discuss these things, in the sense the student is central to what we do and we do our best to help him out” (267-269).

The centrality of the learner became the subject of all the professional discussions within the school community.

4.3.7.5 Exploration of options

This continuous exploration for strengths, rather than the shortcomings of students led to the evolvment of the role of the teacher as an ‘archaeologist’ of

learning potential. A role, where the educator 'surveys', 'recovers' and 'excavates' learning potential in every learner.

Learning about the students' processing learning patterns gave RSS the knowledge of each student's zone of learning comfort to then deploy those tools that would help the learner move away from the 'comfort zone' and start forging paths into other possibilities for learning.

"Not staying in their comfort zone, so 'I am technical, and I am not good'. It doesn't stop there, this doesn't mean that I am not using the other patterns" (106-107).

By surveying their learning products, RSS learns "... how a student learns" (226-227) and then helps each one to extend himself, and recovers those tools that would help him stretch and achieve those skills that are needed to complete a particular task.

"I am giving them (the students who mainly process using technical reasoning) the tools so that they can stretch information, give more details and be more than just technical" (213-214).

In this role, RSS explores alternative pedagogical practice aided by reflection on the learning needs of each learner.

"I think the fact that you start to learn about certain things, you start saying so it may be that that boy is not understanding, is not doing well in my subject because of that, so it made me question why certain students were struggling in class" (233-235).

This realisation prods her as a teacher to "... see what we can do so that I can help them and make them realise, 'yes we are good, we only learn differently from others'". (196-198)

Such a predisposition allowed her as a teacher to accept students' different ways of reporting their understandings and then extends personalised feedback starting from where they are.

“Who is high in precision presents chunks of information, uses less diagrams so I comment about this by saying that the information is correct, but he needs to insert more diagrams next time round. Who is technical will have a diary full of diagrams and lacking written information, so I use his diagrams to elicit the missing information” (126-130).

This type of feedback sustained and supported by knowledge of the student's processing patterns, allows her to develop her teaching role into an effective and more efficient, data-driven instruction.

4.3.7.6 Planning a course of action

Knowledge of the students' processing patterns gives her the needed understanding to plan a course of action that would allow for a change of practice.

“... the fact that I became aware of how they learn best, I started to use more the PowerPoint, animations, internet, etcetera” (114-115).

It helped her and her collaborating colleagues to help students get initiated into the Process.

“... two colleagues of mine and myself continued to conduct Let Me Learn seminars with our students” (90-91).

RSS prefers to lead by example and allow the freedom for other teachers to decide to what level they would want to get involved in her plans.

“I know this works, but who am I to tell another teacher to do the same...”
(308).

4.3.7.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

Her involvement with the LML process and the subsequent acquisition of related knowledge and skills has helped her in the implementation of her plan, that is, of helping students become successful learners. By learning how to decode learning actions, she could better understand herself as a learning professional, understand learners’ needs more efficiently and as a result become more effective in motivating students in becoming better learners.

The acquired knowledge of the processing patterns has helped her “to understand myself and other people a lot better” (55). She became more conscious of what makes her a better learner.

“I started to realise why we work in certain ways. Why I love lists; why I write everything in my diary; and why I don’t like doing other things” (55-57).

As a consequence of this knowledge of her learning-self, she could more effectively understand her students. She could now, more than ever before, understand the source of pupils’ needs.

“It made me aware that every individual, everybody learns differently...”
(47-48).

In this pole position – knowing what drives each student’s learning has been crucial in re-vamping students’ motivation to persevere in learning.

“... if there is someone facing a difficulty on a particular task, you encourage him to continue to try and not accept it...” (173-174).

It encourages every learner to withstand the difficulties and continue on their path to learning.

4.3.7.8 Trying new roles

In her role as an 'archaeologist' of learning potential and as a 'mediator' of learning, as a science teacher, she helps students understand what drives their learning and helps them refine the learning tools to develop those skills required in learning Science. She thus fostered the role of a bridge between the written curricular requirements and the students' needs for accessing knowledge.

These professional roles were also transferred to her personal family relationships. In her interview, RSS mentions how she transferred this knowledge to understand better the dynamics of her immediate family.

"I gave my husband the LCI (Learning Connections Inventory) and our scores contrasted a lot" (68-69).

She explains that now she can better understand the source of certain tensions she experienced over the years with her husband. She started to appreciate the value of the difference, and has started to communicate her needs and to understand her partner's position on certain issues.

"... when we are doing something, and he doesn't explain well ... Then I have to remind him that I need to know exactly what I should do, 'if you tell me do this, I won't understand you'." (78-81)

4.3.7.9 Building competence

The more time passes and the more she applies the knowledge to her role as an educator, the more confident she becomes in her competence to adapt to the needs of the learners. Her knowledge of the subject coupled with her appreciation of the pupils' learning strengths makes her she feels better armed to respond to their needs.

“In my particular subject, it helped me to help the boys stretch their sequence because in most cases they had high confluence and technical reasoning, and in Science you need sequence and precision” (95-97).

She became more confident in her competence to respond effectively to the needs of the learners without losing sight of the required skills needed in successfully accomplishing the curriculum.

“So, I try to give them tools to stretch their sequence and precision. At the same time I have to keep in mind that they are very technical, so they need a lot of visuals...” (97-99).

Her success yielded a sense of accomplishment.

“You hear the students’ comments, you realise that they are understanding, and that they are enjoying the lesson” (115-117).

She feels that by applying her knowledge of the students’ learning preferences to the teaching of her subject, she could successfully motivate students to benefit from her teaching. She feels that she can now better pace the work and present it in a way that all students can better grasp the required knowledge and skills of Science.

“I use the revision diary where they start off with a diagram and then they turn that diagram into a paragraph, into information, so that would be helping them to move from their comfort zone to a situation where they need to stretch themselves” (118-121).

She feels that now she can confidently encourage learners and successfully lead them to move further away from their comfort zone to “reach their objectives and help them understand themselves as learners, but they also understand they have to do other things...” (311-313).

4.3.7.10 Reintegration into one's life

As RSS explained earlier, her way of seeing her life-world has changed. Her personal family relationships were affected as well as her professional practice. Her way of doing things has been affected by this recently acquired knowledge. Its reintegration into her life-world has helped her become a better person and professional. The Process has become an integral part of her actions both at school and in her private life.

“(LML) stayed in the background of my teaching, even the fact that we are still organising seminars for our students, because we felt it made sense, it made sense to the students and it answered a lot of questions for us teachers” (330-333).

4.2.8 Narrative seven: EP – Primary school teacher

EP is a Primary school teacher who at the time of participation was teaching a year six class. EP leads with his sequential pattern, thus enjoys organisation and needs to have a clear plan of action. His planning is thorough; all schemes of work are well organised and planned ahead of time. His lesson plans are very clear and orderly. In his teaching he tends to give very clear instructions, and expects students to follow them thoroughly. He is also quite imaginative; willing to take risks and plans some creative activities. He tends to be quite evasive of anything technical and manual.

4.3.8.1 The Trigger

As a primary school teacher, EP is confident that he has always tried his best to reach and support every student under his care. His constant effort has been to become a more effective teacher. Thus when he was asked to join a group of teachers for an in-service training course, even though it was being held at an inconvenient time, he still accepted to join "... because it was something new in which I wanted to be trained" (11-12).

His urge to become a better teacher was his main driving force to continue on a path of continuous development. The challenges that students' diversity bring to his classroom, urged him to continue enriching his professional practice with new ideas.

"I need... to have that type of update..." (300).

4.3.8.2 Self-examination

Throughout the interview, EP expressed no feelings of regret, neither for his past as a teacher, nor for the present – he seems to be a teacher in continuous evolution. He values every stage of his development, and notwithstanding the limitations, he continues to value his role as a teacher who constantly seeks to respond to students' needs. There is no anger or guilt in what he did in his

professional practice but just a realisation of limitations that in particular moments of his career might have hindered some in their learning.

“The biggest change takes place when you look at the students from a different perspective. Sort of everyone has his own system of learning, and if maybe before this fact was invisible or wasn’t seen so much, today you immediately see it in the students: why he behaves in that way or why he learns in that way...” (236-240).

4.3.8.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

His need to understand better his students and to find better means to reach all those under his care pushes him to reflect and evaluate his intents.

“When I am starting something new, I do it to improve the way I teach...” (14).

EP believes that such courses would help him re-evaluate his practice and “learn to adapt my teaching methodology so that my students benefit from it as well” (15-16). The beauty in this statement is that while others might look at training as a means for professional promotion and/or self-promotion, EP sees training as a means to enrich the students’ learning experience.

Through this awareness experience, he realised that while he started off with the intention of having yet another tool to “... know more about them ...” (23), ‘them’ being the students, he soon realised that through this Process one would “... start to learn more about yourself” (28). This realisation enriched his professional experience and changed his self-conception – from seeing himself as a teacher – thus his role of transmitting prescribed content to his students, to a learner himself – thus his role within a community of learners searching for effective means of accessing knowledge.

“You start taking on this idea of Let Me Learn, how it works, how the patterns work and you start to get to know the students better, not only that, but you start to learn more about yourself” (26-28).

This change in self-perception and the eagerness that characterises EP’s professional practice has not grown in a vacuum. It is the outcome of a culture of high expectations that the school administration sowed within the school community of teachers.

Through opportunities to discuss and share their practice teachers could learn from each other.

“... you obviously have sharing of experiences and one tells the other and fill in your learning luggage” (260-261).

They appreciate each other’s strengths “... we all learn through different patterns, and one could help the other depending on the other’s needs” (232-233). This collective strength has brought about a change “not only me who’s changed, the students that I teach have changed and even the people around me...” (261-262). One of the outcomes was that one could see how the “more varied the lessons are, the more fun it becomes.” (278-279). Both the teachers and the students were pleased with what was happening because everyone was involved “according to their patterns, where they can input most” (283-284).

4.3.8.4 Dialogue

This sense of shared interest brought about a shared intent, allowing for dialogue between stakeholders. In his interview, EP refers to the “sharing of experiences” (260) between colleagues. Here teachers, through this common exposure to the LML process, which provided a common language, came to discuss insights and experiences about their learners and the learning experience within their respective subjects, allowing for the multiplication of ideas for addressing learning situations.

The interchanging of ideas and sharing of practice was facilitated through the school's management who frequently create opportunities for the teachers to discuss the Process and how this is supporting their teaching. Through this opportunity for discussing "... between ourselves... we all learn through different patterns, and one could maybe help the other depending on the others' needs" (231-233). This allows space for a community of practice to grow and become more effective in its endeavours.

When a community of practice grows in this manner and a shared language is developed a strong sense of security is garnered. This encourages the professional community to open the circle and include within their dialogic community, others from outside the teaching staff. EP in his interview mentions how the language has been shared with parents.

"The fact that you explained to them (referring to the parents) what the puppets are and when they are being used in the classroom, what they mean, they see their pictures, they are given activities during the course, so that they learn about their own patterns, obviously this is going to help them understand their children better" (132-135).

In the above excerpt, EP is describing the school's initiative to initiate parents in the LML process. This course gave parents the opportunity to learn about themselves as learners, about their children and the tools used to facilitate metacognitive dialogue between the teacher and the pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This awareness was further strengthened during different occasions, such as parents' day and parents' meetings. Here parents had the opportunity to share a common language with teachers and discuss how best to support their son and "... start to understand more, ..., their children" (144) and how they learn best – so they will be in a better position to support them in their learning.

4.3.8.5 Exploration of options

In his search for new ways of improving his practice, EP looks for new knowledge that would help him "... make changes and learn to adapt my teaching methodology" (15-16). He yearns for learning to better support his students, expose and reveal students' potential.

"... you see the students in front of you, (...) and you start saying that one has this pattern, the other one has that one" (23-24, 25).

In unearthing the students potential, he explores a different relationship with his students, a relationship that he hopes to help motivate students and "... they start to realise that 'yes even I can do this'" (181). In this way he feels that his students are "... improving and the most important thing is that their self-esteem is increasing..." (184-185).

4.3.8.6 Planning a course of action

This feeling of success in motivating students to learn has boosted his plan to continue on a course of action that would make him a better, more effective teacher. His main aim is to become a better teacher and thus he is always ready to alter his practice because he feels that by following in-service courses, having new insights into his profession and learning new ways of teaching he could see "... that the students always improved" (31). EP also sees that in being exposed to new ideas he is improving his skill "... the way I teach, I started to write more" (33). He acknowledges that "whereas before I used to start off the lesson with a PowerPoint and diagrams on their own, today I include the technical (hands-on) part" (99-100). This reference to a change of approach to teaching as a result of exposure to a more profound a way of understanding pupils' needs allowed him to plan a course of transformed action that yielded a practice that responds to the needs and profiles of his students.

4.3.8.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

Such transformed action was only possible through an improved understanding of the learners' learning propensities.

“... you start to understand why certain students have certain attitudes during the lesson, towards homework, towards the classwork, for example, like as we have been saying, a boy for whom writing is not essential, or reading comes secondary to him, or the reverse, reading is really important for him. You start to understand these elements in the students, more than you understood them before” (213-217).

This improved understanding of the students' preferences to learning modalities, was made possible through understanding the learning patterns that drive our learning.

“when you realise that you have these four patterns, that are present in all of us, then automatically you realise that the students learn in different ways” (58-59).

This realisation made him intentionally plan to include activities in his teaching that respond to these four patterns:

“... so in your teaching you try to incorporate the four patterns of Let Me Learn. Maybe before I used to do this unconsciously (...) but once that you get to know them, and being trained (...) you start to include the four patterns even in your lesson plans” (59-62, 63-64).

EP explains that these skills were developed through practice under the mentorship of his trainers.

“... because afterwards we had to do a specific lesson, we were observed, we were given feedback” (62-63).

In this way he is experiencing a sense of fulfilment and professional accomplishment.

“... you realise how these lessons, how the patterns are helping the students, so that the lesson that was usually boring or else not relevant to everyday life, these lessons and the process help in helping the student enjoy learning something new” (95-98).

4.3.8.8 Trying new roles

This sense of accomplishment and the acknowledgement of success encouraged EP to explore different venues within his professional practice, where he can implement his acquired knowledge and skill. Apart from implementing it in his day-to-day role as a teacher, he also extended this to parents with whom he shared the knowledge of the four patterns and his renewed understanding of the pupils' learning profile.

“... so you are still fresh, you are still eager to share what you have learnt with other people. That the parents know what is happening in class, in anything going on in the school, helps a lot. (...) obviously this is going to help them understand their children more” (129-132, 134-135).

This sharing of knowledge will help improve the communication between the school and the parents and thus there is a continuation of support between the school and home.

EP, like other teachers in his school, appreciates that no one process works magic. He does mention a number of times the benefit of working “both with Let Me Learn and the Writing Programme” (30). Through the fusion of both processes he could see how the knowledge of how students' learning profile, coupled with let's say the writing tools, had the potential to enrich the teaching and learning experience of the students.

4.3.8.9 Building competence

The experimenting with new tools, and the success experienced as a result of this, has provided EP with a feeling of competence in his ability to adapt and respond to students' needs. Through his ability to decipher individual pupil's pathway to learning, he could better support each pupil in his understanding and in finding their way through their directional learning forces (Johnston, 2010).

His teaching and interventions are now better informed – while before he would still have tried different approaches without necessarily having a specific intent, now he can target specific strategies to specific pupils:

“... when you plan a lesson, where you have students who use support, automatically you have to include variations in your lessons. ...So when you look at their patterns, and you adapt your lesson to their needs, they start to realise that ‘yes even I can do this’” (176-177, 180-181).

EP realises that none of the above would have been possible without the self-competence of navigating his own ship, that is, without understanding himself and what drives his learning. Through the self-discovery of his learning self he could understand his teaching and his behaviour in both his personal and professional life.

“Your own way of teaching, you start seeing your own different patterns, even when I start writing on the board, I start to see my patterns at work” (152-154).

Teaching, like any other activity, reflects our own preferred ways of learning. We often catch ourselves organising our learning environments in ways that we can function comfortably. But this does not necessarily function for others who might not navigate comfortably in our waters.

“I try to understand the people around me, why everyone is different from me (...) you start to see these differences in other people, and you start to realise that everyone is an individual”. (159-160, 164-165)

Once one realises this, EP contends that one starts using it in whatever one does:

“You don’t see it only in the classroom, you use it in everyday life, and you see these patterns at work all the time”. (165-166)

4.3.8.10 Reintegration into one’s life

The reintegration of one’s learning-self and the transfer of the knowledge and skills acquired into the different facets of one’s life reflect the level of engagement with the perspective that guides one’s actions. Such personal engagement manifests itself in the way we approach our practice. EP fathoms that:

“... now it seems as if it has become something automatic. I realise that, for example, here we have sequence, here we have... generally, the four patterns feature in every lesson”. (191-193)

When the new perspective takes over, it pervades whatever one does and, in the words of EP, “You don’t use it only in the classroom, you use it in everyday life” (165-166). EP explains how through the acquisition of this knowledge he could understand why his wife, also a teacher, plans her teaching in a completely different way than he does, why things he values a lot, are useless to her.

“... I want everything timetabled, with a certain routine, if someone breaks that routine or the programme is slightly changed, I start to panic (...) my wife is the opposite. She is more technical; she doesn’t use schemes like me. And you start to see these differences in other people”. (160-162, 163-164)

This perspective has also become an integral part of the discourse within the school community.

“I wasn’t on my own. Other teachers did the same thing, even during the staff meetings, those teachers who attended the training had ample time to share what they had learnt with other members of staff”. (248-251)

According to EP, the school facilitated this, through making the scores of every student available with the class list.

“... at the school the Let Me Learn profile of the students is always available with the class list...”. (199-200)

This encouraged teachers to refer to these scores in their planning and delivery of their lessons. Such knowledge of the pupils’ learning profiles helped teachers to “group students up” (208) and work as a productive team.

It also allowed for the sharing of the scores with the students, enabling students to reflect on what drives their learning.

“When you fill out the inventory with the students, you start to realise how the process is influencing the students, because they start telling you, ‘yes its true, I have high precision because even when I get home after the lesson, I start to research on the internet’ for example...” (107-111)

The shared knowledge of the learning processes and the collective sharing of such knowledge facilitate a public reflection between the students when “they start discussing the patterns” (115) and referring to their patterns in the process of learning. The students become participants in a transformed community that reintegrated a new perspective that fitted nicely within the school’s ethos.

4.3.9 Narrative eight: YP – Primary school teacher

YP is a dedicated Primary school teacher. Three of his learning patterns are at a use first level in the LCI scale scores that range between 25 and 35. He feels quite comfortable to plan and make his own decisions without involving others. He likes being in control of the situation. He seeks information and his planning is thorough and quite detailed. His teaching file and resources are well organised. He feels at ease with organisation. He is also open to new ideas and initiatives. He is willing to take risks and to try out new approaches.

4.3.9.1 The Trigger

Like other colleagues, YP's main impetus was his desire to become a more effective teacher. His search for more effective tools to better serve his pupils in their diversity, pushed him to accept an invitation by the school to participate in a professional learning experience that was promising an effective means for learning about how pupils learn and strategies to respond to the pupils' diverse needs and propensities.

Interviewer: "So what were your expectations for this training? What were you expecting?"

YP: "That hopefully my knowledge of how children learn would be improved." (21-23)

This yearning for effectiveness was instigated and encouraged by the school's leadership who led by example and attended the training themselves. They shared the experience with their teachers and in turn encouraged them to attend subsequent courses.

"... I remember him (the Head of School) mentioning it, and he had started attending the training himself, and he started telling us what it is all about, its benefits and then the application came out and we were encouraged to attend..." (6-9).

This trigger had an underlying dilemma which was lingering and driving the community's search, namely its concern that as a school they are still striving to respond effectively to the realities and needs of the diverse student population. YP, at the time a newly graduate, filled with enthusiasm to teach but very much aware of his limitations in responding to the needs of those under his care, shared this concern.

4.3.9.2 Self-examination

YP's conscientious evaluation of his practice led him to a self-examination of his limitations and the systemic constraints often imposed by a standard-driven system, in attending to the needs of his students. His constant concern is that he fails to give adequate attention to those pupils who would require his engagement to resolve their difficulty.

“... there are things which teachers go through. There is a day when you might say ‘oh I feel I haven’t dedicated so much time to that particular student’ or ‘has that student spoken today?’ When you start to evaluate what happened during the day, even at the weekend, sometimes before I go to sleep, I start to think, saying ‘I haven’t given an example to that particular student’, or ‘I didn’t have time to explain to him on an individual basis’”. (301-307)

This urge “... to reach every student in class” (308-309) is often challenged by systemic constraints that often weigh on the mind of a responsible educator:

“... it is like you are running against time to check that no student leaves the class with a question mark in mind, but with an idea of what had happened in the classroom. That worries me a lot”. (309-311)

4.3.9.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

YP problematised his initial, simplistic application of acquired knowledge:

“I started seeing labels on top of their heads with their patterns written there” (199-200).

He started to realise that while it might have helped him to see certain aspects of the learners that before he would have missed, he was missing the woods for the trees and instead of working with the student “... I was relying too much on it (the label he was attributing to the learner)”. (206)

The initial oversimplification of a complex process is quite common, and it can pose a potential problem. It is therefore crucial that the individual teacher and the community continue to problematise and question the knowledge acquired and reintegrated in their reality. This reflective process and the re-evaluation of the assumptions that one makes in the process of learning is a crucial ingredient for anyone aspiring to transform his perspective.

YP’s realisation and critical engagement with his initial view for applying the acquired knowledge led him to a deeper understanding, a more global re-evaluation of the implications of the Process to his practice:

“We started to understand why certain students behave in a certain way”.
(31-32)

He also became aware of his patterns of learning and acquired a language that helped him articulate the traits that make him react to certain situations in certain particular ways. He feels that the Process made him visible to himself and thus he could understand what was driving his learning and by consequence his teaching. He could now position himself better in the realm of learning and he has a great impact on the learning of others.

“I started seeing all this (the pattern connections). I started to say ‘eee so that is why I do certain things’ so instead of tethering them, I started to link myself with certain activities”. (113-114)

Such self-understanding made him value other combinations of patterns. He could value that others had certain strengths to bring to the table:

“I also learnt that I needed to be more patient, and understand other people’s patterns, it is not like because I am in this way, I can’t change, so others have to adapt to me, we have to adapt to each other in certain things”. (114-1190)

4.3.9.4 Dialogue

This led him to collaborate with colleagues and as he puts it “... learn to share things that have worked for me with my colleagues” (384-385). This created a school culture built on collegiality where the centre of all activity is not the teacher or the school systems but the learner.

“Over here we are not in competition, we are not competing for the best teacher of the year, but the sharing of work together, if there is something that is working, I would need to say that I have developed that more”. (387-389)

YP feels that such a collaborative spirit was possible because the school leadership trusted the teachers and gave them the space to manage their talents within the community.

“The idea that the school has faith in you, made me appreciate it even more. It is like they know what you can do, what you can achieve and they give you a certain responsibility to carry out that work”. (411-413)

The sense of community that is shared has poured out to others outside the professional school community to important stakeholders, the parents. YP shared his knowledge with parents and was one of the promoters for the parents’ training course. During parent conferences and meetings, he explained

his understanding of the Process and tried to show why the school decided to invest in such a Process.

“... we started to encourage them (the parents) to attend the course... I explained, that this wasn't a test, but it was a process where we as teachers could understand their children better, so that they continue to improve and we as teachers could improve as well”. (235-236, 238-241)

4.3.9.5 Exploration of options

YP, together with others within a growing community of practice, started to become catalysts of change. His ideas and positive experiences with Let Me Learn, have put him in a role model position for others.

“Then obviously you give a good name, people started to know about it, and say if it works for her and for him, it might work for me too”. (361-362)

This important role helped in the dissemination process of the Let Me Learn process within the school community – a role encouraged and natured by the school leadership who created a number of opportunities for the teaching staff to share their practice even across sectors.

“I remember a time when even JSL, who teaches in the secondary level, had given a presentation, and I remember the benefits of Let Me Learn came out”. (259-361)

YP also continued to refine his role as a promoter of learning potential.

“... you need to find ways to involve them (the pupils) more. You don't say, 'no because that class and I can't do anything about that'. You need to experiment, step-by-step, you see what works and what doesn't”. (425-428)

He now feels that he has the tools to diagnose pupils' learning processes, decode learning strategies and match learning strategies to pupils' profiles and support learners to manage their 'directional forces' (Johnston, 2010) to their benefits.

"I have experienced a huge leap in behaviour, in their attitude towards the school and their learning, and these combined together are already a key to the success of learning". (421-423)

4.3.9.6 Planning a course of action

This change in pupil behaviour came as a result of a change in practice, which values each pupil:

"We give a lot of importance to the needs of the students, not students in general, but students on an individual basis". (345-347)

Each pupil was helped to "become aware of them (aware of the patterns)" (213-214). YP mentions a particular period during the school year "when we were doing graphs in class, so it was good because they started to learn how to read the graphs" (215-216). These graphs were used as a visual representation of the scores through which they can see what each can bring to the group. They also shared their scores with the rest of the class by writing their personal scores on a piece of paper that would then be displayed as a tent on their desk.

4.3.9.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

Professional decisions and actions need to be founded on robust knowledge that fits the perspective entertained by the school community. YP notes that through this newly acquired knowledge he could see a great improvement in "the way we deal with the students, and the way we deal with parents..." (373-374).

The knowledge acquired has given YP a deeper understanding of the pupils in his classroom:

“It makes me think and evaluate more, it is like a self-evaluation of the students I have in my class, why certain things happen”. (36-37)

He states that with a deeper understanding of each learner’s learning characteristics he can appreciate each pupil and understand where he is coming from.

“So when it comes to students you don’t say that that student is over the top, that one doesn’t want to work, there is a reason”. (253-254)

Knowledge of pupil learning characteristics and what drives their learning is crucial when one seeks to differentiate instruction. What could work for one, would not necessarily work for the other. Thus this knowledge has equipped YP and colleagues with focused strategies that could be deployed with intent.

4.3.9.8 Trying new roles

Intentionality in one’s actions gave YP a sense of security and a feeling of success in supporting students in their quest for learning.

“I started to improve, even my attitude towards the school and my colleagues”. (152-153)

The sense of security and the change in perception has encouraged him to try new roles within the different locations of practice, namely the classroom, within the school professional community and his immediate family.

“I realised that my perceptions on certain things changed (...) during the presentation (where he had to present how the LML Process has affected his personal and professional life) something clicked, I am not saying a miracle occurred, but I realised that we need to find a way of how to help the others around us, I included the family as well, because this is like something which is academic but in fact it is something which is linked

with the home environment, it is not only linked to the school life". (151, 155-160)

This led him to explore different venues of implementation "to experiment to see what happens and what doesn't" (170-171). It encouraged him to explore ways of integrating the newly acquired knowledge with other tools and strategies acquired from other venues.

YP describes how he linked Let Me Learn with the Writing Programme and observed how students' "writing changed a lot from when I started to do it in the beginning" (174). This notwithstanding the limitations of time, allowed him to try and create activities that respect the learning needs of each learner, thus:

"... we do more activities. First we start off with things linked to sequence, to precision, to confluence and even with technical reasoning because you link certain things, maybe a craft linked to the topic being discussed, for example we are speaking about space, I find a craft linked to space... At the end of the day you are looking at the final product, not only the writing but something tangible". (175-181)

Through the cross-fertilisation of different skills he has enriched his teaching experience. He developed a sense of self-competence in his role as an educator.

4.3.9.9 Building competence

By time, YP started to feel more competent in adapting to the needs of his learners. Realising that "... certain students have high technical score" (134), he started to adapt more to their needs:

"I have to see what I can do through the activities that I provide in the lessons, that I use my technical more". (135-136)

Through regular reference to the description of the patterns and the support offered by the Let Me Learn centre, he continued to develop his self-competence in applying the acquired expertise to the facilitation of learning.

The internalisation of the acquired knowledge and the competence to apply this knowledge in his actions "... didn't just affect the students, it affected me as well." (41). YP states that:

"when you start to learn more about yourself,... when you start seeing certain patterns and you start reaching to those patterns... you start to realise why certain things happen." (41-42, 43-44, 45)

This realisation and understanding of oneself allowed him to become more competent in disseminating the newly acquired perspective and effectively support others in their transformative learning.

4.3.9.10 Reintegration into one's life

While YP admits that there is still much to learn and to understand, throughout the interview there is lots of evidence that indicates that he has integrated this new perspective into his life, both at a professional level and in his personal life.

"... nowadays when I am doing something, I start saying to myself, I am doing this because I am Precise, I am doing this because of my sequence, deep down even everyday thoughts would be linked." (122-124)

The reflection on one's actions, facilitated by an acquired language has facilitated the re-integration of the new perspective into one's life. Such an understanding allowed YP to integrate the Process in major parts of his teaching:

"Most of the times I use Let Me Learn as being linked with writing tasks, the writing tasks because I feel comfortable that I can use the four

patterns; sometimes in mathematical topics, I would be able to use the four patterns". (280-283)

As he continues to explain, this perspective has become an integral part of his and the school's way of thinking and acting:

"Sometimes, even if we do not say the word Let Me Learn, deep inside, it is part of us". (374-375)

4.3.10 Narrative nine: CP – Primary school teacher

CP is a Primary school teacher who joined the B.Ed (Hons.) course as a mature student. She has worked hard and takes her profession very seriously. CP leads with sequence. She enjoys organisation and tends to give very clear instructions when guiding her students. She is also very creative and takes initiative. She is always open to new ideas and does not mind taking risks. She allows students the freedom to explore different ways of accessing knowledge.

4.3.10.1 The Trigger

CP started teaching at this school at a time when it was undergoing changes in leadership and in the school's vision. Teachers played a crucial role in the development of this vision that helped to establish a meaningful educational programme that kept the students at the centre. The community explored initiatives that could help transform the school so as to become more learner-focused. CP moved in at this important juncture of the school development. The school had referred to Let Me Learn as one of the major processes that could help it to achieve the new vision.

As a new graduate, entering in a school that was going through a process of transforming its vision, CP was seeking support that would help her assimilate the vision and give her 'practical tools' that would help her better respond to the variety of needs that the pupils exhibit.

"I wanted to understand the students more than I already was. To be given tools which were practical tools in the classroom". (17-18)

Thus, the main trigger that got her thinking was her craving to become a more effective teacher, to have tools to better understand and respond to students' diverse needs. In fact she claims that while she always varied her lesson, being aware of the pupils' variety of needs, she had the dilemma that notwithstanding her efforts some students had still experienced difficulties that she had problems

identifying. This led her to appreciate the LML process as a means for understanding her actions:

“I remember that afterwards, I started to be more careful. I was more conscious of what I was doing” (93-94).

4.3.10.2 Self-examination

This new awareness has led her to be more intentional in her actions. She examined what could be hindering her pupils in their learning and her role as a supporter of pupils' learning. Her yearning to “... get to know the students more, what they need, what are the skills they need to improve...” (234-235), kept her searching for more effective means.

CP was very much aware of a culture of labelling in education, and how she too had misused it:

“Whereas before I put certain types of behaviour down to misbehaviour and obviously unacceptable... It helped me to accept them more...” (289-299, 301)

The Process helped her to evaluate her practice and highlight those potential aspects in her professional judgement that rather than helping her to support every pupil in his learning might have hindered and emarginated the pupils from learning.

4.3.10.3 Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions

Through self-examination she could critically reflect on her practice and problematise her intents.

Interviewer: “Can I say that before the training you had an idea on what a teacher should be, the way you looked at discipline, the classroom

management, and the training made you look at things in a different way because you started to understand the difference in students?”

CP: “It was already there. As a teacher I was already that type of person, but after the training I could understand the students more”. (292-297)

CP could now appreciate that while she has always had the disposition to accept students even when they offer certain challenging behaviour, she can now better understand what could be driving this behaviour and act with more intentionality.

She could also appreciate the implications of the training on her practice. While she is critical of the structure, in particular the duration of the course:

“I remember myself saying, this is too much especially since the content that I needed could have been given to me in a shorter span of time”. (40-41)

She also appreciated that her involvement in the Process has given her:

“... the tools (by which) I could understand the students better, because they are made in this way the way that they learn, but they still need to improve to get more tools to learn more”(73-75).

It has given her an added dimension, in particular when it comes to planning her lessons:

“I was always the type of teacher who varies the lessons. I use different methods to be able to adapt to all students to make them more interesting, but I was now looking at the lessons as including the four patterns. I tried to target a particular student with a task, another student with another”. (83-87)

Her involvement has also helped her to reflect on the relationship with her Learning Support Assistant (LSA). Though her LSA has not attended the training, the Process helped her understand why her LSA was demanding certain requirements from the students. It helped her forge a professional working relationship that would benefit the students they both were trying to serve.

“I did Let Me Learn and my LSA hasn’t done it yet, (...) But I see that the decisions we make are different. The way we look at things, things that are OK with me aren’t OK with her”. (159, 160-161)

Notwithstanding the difference in perspective: “...for her it is because he is careless, for me it is because he is like that” (171-172), the two educators could still communicate and support each other. CP believes that she could bring to the table a different perspective that up to some time ago, she would also have looked at in a different way. CP believes that the Process:

“... helps you vary (your lessons) much more with the students, and I can see the differences especially when a person has attended the course and a person who hasn’t attended the course, their decisions, their character as well,...” (178-181)

4.3.10.4 Dialogue

In her interview CP shares her experience working with the LSA and with another educator with whom she collaborated on an English literacy programme. In collaborating with other educators, she can support all learners in a more effective way. Together they discuss what could be the best possible way for facilitating the learning of certain students who could be having problems with certain strategies being used in class.

“... if you notice these students in class and why they are struggling, you realise that this is the reason why, in the classroom we do not have the

necessary amount of time to provide them with the activities they need”.
(399-402)

The team evaluation brought out a decision that since in class, due to time constraints,

“They don’t have the time to work hands-on, when they go with Marisa (the support teacher) they have the time because they are only four or five students at a time”. (402-404)

This collaborative effort is the result of a healthy dialogue that goes on between collaborating professionals – each bringing different perspectives to the table.

As regards dialogue with parents, CP explains that while she never officially explained or shared the Process with them, it helped her when talking to them about their son’s progress. Parents

“... sometimes they don’t accept their children the way they are, but when I am with them and I explain the learning patterns and its his way of learning, listen to try to help him this way”. (213-215)

Obviously this does not come without a challenge; there are those parents that appreciate such an approach and others that would continue insisting that their way is the right way. Notwithstanding the challenges that such dialogue and sharing of practice accentuates, it allows space for a language of possibility to emerge and help sustain the work she and her colleagues do with these young children.

4.3.10.5 Exploration of options

Through her awareness of the diversity of ways for accessing learning potential, CP’s lessons became more varied and directed towards specific profiles. She explored options for new actions that would allow every learner within her class

to process and learn important curricular knowledge, concepts and skills in the preferred mode/s that would facilitate understanding.

“ I am trying to give a lot of information to those who want it and using points for those who need everything in order, having information without having too much, and I try to cater for those because they are like me – everything in point form, to the point.

(...)

I use songs because of repetition and memory skills that is helping out, so that they put them in the right order. And for those who are all over, for those who are imaginative, you use activities to capture their attention.”
(254-257, 260-263)

A perpetual challenge of every teacher is time – “My problem is time” (270). This often is the cause of the dilemma that teachers like CP get caught in when trying to balance their espoused beliefs with the day to day classroom practice.

“At times I say that we go overboard in the sense that we try to accommodate, to help because it is a strain on the teacher, it is a strain on everyone to try to accommodate, to help, to understand, it is a bit of a strain, and extra work, dedicating your personal free time for our students which we do willingly”. (331-335)

The above excerpt captures the dilemma in a very good way. While expressing the concern that such intense teacher involvement puts a strain on one’s time and energy, the final sentence repositions the espoused belief as a guide for professional action, guided by the conditions dictated by one’s perspective.

4.3.10.6 Planning a course of action

CP’s dedication to her new perspective led her to the belief that “if these teachers (teachers who have not yet participated in the training) had to do LML” (373) their interaction with the students will change. She observes that there is “a

difference between the teachers who have attended Let Me Learn and the others who haven't..." (361-362). Thus she believes that teachers that have not as yet participated should be encouraged to do so. Obviously this is not an easy task since in her role as a teacher, she can only "...start off and then I move away when I realise that it has taken off, I back out" (390-391). She thus positions herself as an initiator and a silent supporter within a planned course of action.

Her actions are guided by a holistic view of the learner and sensitivity for the differences amongst learners, nurturing a warm positive and conducive climate that has promoted a culture of learning for one and all. The Let Me Learn Process also shares this ethos that she shares with the school because "...it caters for the differences that are found in the students" (322). This is why she feels comfortable working in this school environment – her values co-inside with the values of the school that encourage her in her work towards the new perspective.

"I think it has made me the teacher I am today because the way the school operates, the way it thinks, it has made me who I am". (453-454)

4.3.10.7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills

This change in perspective that brought about a change in practice could only happen with the acquisition of knowledge and skills that sustain one's action.

"We have experienced change, ... the way we look at our students and to tell you the truth the way we as teachers interact with students". (357-359)

This improved personal and professional interpersonal communication has resulted through an enhanced understanding of learners' needs. The skill to interpret the scores representing the learning patterns has given her a crucial tool to "get to know the students more, what they need, what are the skills they

need to improve...” (234-235). This has been facilitated through the acquisition of a language that she could share with the students:

“I use what I’ve learnt to give it to the students using a particular language, because (though) I used to understand my students as a teacher... but I didn’t have the skill to give it to the students, now I can name it, I understand that you are more hands-on or more Precise, or that you want everything neat”. (235-237, 238-240)

This newly acquired knowledge and skill has fuelled her new perspective and has given her a new insight into the pupils’ actions. This has resulted in a feeling of success in her approach. While she realises that such an approach can challenge her classroom management and time management, she now can appreciate that:

“... once they (the students) learnt a concept, once they learn something, I don’t need to repeat as much as before... I start to revise and I find that once I start, the children take over the lesson because they start coming with their own ideas and things”. (272-276)

Her success came as a result of a better understanding of how learners learn and she now could apply this knowledge to create more targeted differentiated strategies.

“I am doing the lessons to cater for all four (patterns)”. (278-279)

4.3.10.8 Building competence

Throughout the interview CP refers to her gradual building of competence in adapting to the needs of the learners in her class. Her realisation of the strengths that she has acquired has registered positive change in the pupils:

“We are noticing a huge improvement in the way these boys are developing...” (410).

This realisation compels her to continue searching for means to reach each child in particular those who might need more focused support. The realisation of the limitations of what she can do and cannot do in the classroom is yet a crucial ingredient in her growing self-confidence in her role as a primary teacher.

“I think because I am a teacher, I get concerned, I know I can’t help them, that is where I can get with them in the classroom, I stretch to the limit but still it is not enough for these children”. (417-419)

The realisation of the limits of what she can and cannot do, grows from her competence in communicating with students and her ability to decipher the needs efficiently.

“I understand the children better, why he is giving me that type of work, then I speak with them, I explain, I give initiatives, I give a reason why, I explain”. (184-186)

Her competence in realising actions that meet students’ needs was perfected with her understanding of what drives her own learning which as a consequence, affects her mode of teaching.

“I was more convinced of certain things and started to understand why I was doing them”.(288-289)

4.3.10.9 Reintegration into one’s life

The Process has been reintegrated into her professional practice. She is now confident in what she does and in the decisions she makes. In her interview she expressed her confidence in these words:

“ If someone comes up to me asking me why I allowed a student to behave in that way, I can give them an answer”. (307-308)

The Process has become an integral aspect of her professional deliberations and practice and while when she was first introduced to the Process she would say:

“I started to be more careful, I was more conscious of what I was doing.”
(93-94)

Now the Process has become ingrained, it is assimilated in the way she thinks, plans and acts.

“It is part of learning, and I cannot tell you that I did a particular thing in class because of LML because now it is the way I am giving out my lessons.

(...)

There are so many other things ...LML is another part which makes me more conscious, more attentive to what I do.” (102-103,106-107)

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the voices of nine educators from a Church school were presented. In the first part of this chapter the voices were analysed horizontally across the themes generated under each of Mezirow’s ten phases. In the second part, nine narratives were presented. Through these narratives, the researcher sought to draw together the diverse events and actions of these participants, in their journey to transform their practice. All nine educators have shown ‘a capacity to learn’ and therefore transform their practice on the conditions dictated by the new perspective.

Senge (1990) defines learning organisation as “a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create.” What has been presented in this chapter are the voices of these educators who in their various

roles tried to change their practice as a reflection of a new understanding of the learners' path to learning. As a result of these individual transformations, a visible change in the school's 'potential behaviour' (Huber, 1991) can be seen. While learning need not necessarily result in observable changes in behaviour, this school has, through its members, experienced observable change of practice and by consequence, a change in its learning policy, where the focus was shifted from an emphasis on the academic, as an ultimate ambition, to a more holistic approach to learning.

In the next chapter we will be discussing in some detail the data generated through this chapter. This will help us tease out those factors that helped these participants undergo a transformative learning experience.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore how a group of educators from a Catholic Church school in Malta, who have attended the Let Me Learn professional Learning process (LMLpLp), experienced personal and professional transformation. This study explored those factors that influenced the participants in their transformative learning journey. It also explored the dynamics of transformative learning and whether individual transformation affects the school's transformative learning experience. More specifically this study set out to explore how teachers who participated in the Let Me Learn professional Learning process have experienced transformative learning.

This central question led to a series of subsidiary questions that helped clarify the process of analysis. The subsidiary questions were the following:

- Does participation in the LMLpLp influence teacher transformation?
- How does awareness of one's own learning processes affect personal change?
- How does awareness of one's own learning processes affect professional change?
- How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?
- How does educator's professional change affect the school's transformation?

5.2 The methodology informing the investigatory aspect of this study

A narrative research approach was taken. Through this approach the author tried to examine and understand how an educator's actions are related to the context in which such actions occur, and how this has brought about a transformative learning experience, to both the individual educator and the

school as a learning community. Through these narratives the study helped us reflect on the process of transformative learning and to underscore those factors highlighted by the participants, which helped bring about both personal and professional transformative learning. The aim was not to generalise or to come up with some universal professional development strategy but to explore in detail the experience of a group of educators who teach in a Catholic church school that up to some years ago, was struggling and “experiencing considerable management difficulties” (Bezzina & Testa, 2005, p. 143) to the extent that the school administration was considering the prospect of closing down the school.

Through this narrative approach of presenting data the study created the space for the voices of educators to be heard and to dictate the themes that they deemed important in their transformative learning experience. The research explored the contribution of a professional learning programme that the school chose as a process to assist it in the transformative learning journey.

The arguments presented in this chapter are discussed in light of the emerging themes within the transformative learning stages identified by Mezirow. As a result, the study aimed to provide a number of features that characterised the experience. An attempt was done to integrate literature in the discussion. Through an integrative discussion the identified characteristics could be analysed within a wider context, thus offering a wider perspective to the learning experience.

5.3 What factors influence teacher’s transformative learning experience?

This research was guided by Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning. Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning is a theory built on constructivist assumptions (Mezirow, 1991; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). A constructivist conceptualisation gives an educator the possibility to find meaning within oneself, locate and validate acquired personal meanings “through human interaction and experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. xiv). Thus, transformative

learning theory lays emphasis on the ways adult learners create meaning from the learning environment through a series of individual constructs. This research has identified that individual constructs are strongly determined by an individual's personal learning characteristics.

5.3.1 How does awareness of one's own learning processes affect personal change?

An underlying theme that emerged from the voices of the educators that participated in this research was that of self-knowledge. Throughout the interviews most participants, repeatedly brought the conversation back to how the LML process has given them a clearer understanding of themselves as learners and as teachers. Self-knowledge, as also underscored in the research of Silverberg (2002), McSweeney (2005) and Dunham (2006), helped them assess their practice and understand how their personal characteristics were determining their teaching and their interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues. A clearer understanding of themselves as learners helped them understand what was driving their pedagogical and methodological decisions (MH, Sue, AA, EP, YP and CP), their professional interrelationship with students (SA, JSL, FSL, RSS, YP, EP and CP) and colleagues (MH, AA, SA, JSL, FSL, YP and CP); and in certain cases within the private domain, such as, within family relationships (SA, JSL, RSS, EP).

The research emphasises the personal dimension, as an introspective experience through which "we see ourselves and the world in which we live" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). As illustrated above, one of the salient themes, emerging from the voices of the participants of this research study, was that of self-knowledge. One of the participants explains, "if you are able to understand yourself, then you are in a better position to help students" (AA 177-178). The awareness of the potential that lies in each and every student is only possible through a process of self-disclosure – the ability to allow one's knowledge of self to reflect on alternative modes of approaching the teaching and learning experience.

5.3.2 How does being a member of a learning community affect professional change?

According to Mezirow (1990, 2012), transformative learning has two dimensions, the personal dimension, which was discussed above and the social dimension. The two dimensions both influence and sustain transformative learning. This study has yielded data that support this assertion. Mezirow (1990) emphasised that through transformative learning, an individual interacts with others to identify alternative perspectives, to provide emotional support, to analyse one's own interpretation of one's situation from different points of view, to identify one's dilemma as a shared and negotiable experience and as a community to provide models for functioning within the new perspective. These experiences also emerged from the narratives of the participants of this research. In all the narratives the participants stressed the fact that this was a combined school experience with common concerns and a shared enthusiasm to transform the learning experience of the students attending this school. It was through the collective engagement of the school community that a new approach to teaching and learning was experienced and supported. As expressed by the head of school, the Process helped "to eventually interpret a sense of community that is the sense of diversity that we have among us" (MH 33-34), thus sustaining the belief that "nobody is as strong as all of us" (MH 45-46)

5.3.3 How does educator's professional change affect the school's transformation?

5.3.3.1 A shared language

A strong theme emerging from this research, which proved to be an influencing factor in both individual and community transformation, is the evolution of a language informed by the values and principles guiding the new perspective. In Habermas's expansion of Mead's argument, language is the medium that draws all participants into the communication community (Horster, 1992). Through a shared language, a learning community can create a dialogic environment to

“relate to the world around us, to other people and to our own intentions, feelings and desires” (Mezirow, 1999, p. 65).

This research accentuates the importance of language as a means of articulating a change in perspective. A change from a top-down response model in which an educator is expected to impart rational, detached knowledge to a group of students, to a perspective of teaching and learning in which a learner takes centre stage; valued as an effective learner, forming part of a community of learners seeking to connect and share an interdependent learning space. MH, as head of school, speaks of a shared language of inclusivity that informed a new praxis within the school’s community of practice.

A renewed language that permeates the structure and discourse of a community initiates a dialogue informed by the new perspective. The goal of such dialogue within the community is to, in the words of Senge et al. (2012) establish “a setting where people can become more aware of the context around their experience, and of the processes of thought and feeling that created that experience” (p. 75).

AA feels that there was a visible change in language that made it possible to talk about learning needs without recurring to negative labels (MH). For CP, a Primary teacher, such language has given her the possibility to identify the need, “name it” and share it with the learners themselves. For others, the shared language has provided them with a tool to articulate their praxis and expose the assumptions and beliefs that influence their professional behaviour (MH, YP, SA).

For Habermas, linguistic action must be built on truth between actors. Senge (2000) emphasises that for such an interaction to be possible, participants need to share a common language, with shared intentions, feelings and desires; in a safe dialogic environment in which participants feel free to participate and safe to share one’s assumptions without being judged by the other members of the community. In this study, MH speaks of the need to develop an open dialogue that allows the freedom for everyone to share:

“ what is bothering you, or what is worrying you, ... I think it is very important that the sense of dialogue is very open.” (MH 345, 348)

Such a safe environment makes it possible for everyone within the community to feel that one has a voice and thus experience true transformative learning originating from within.

5.3.3.2 Interdependent Experience

Jacqueline Grennan Wexter (1927-2012), former President of Webster University, was quoted as saying:

“Today, the mission of one institution can be accomplished only by recognising that it lives in an interdependent world with conflicts and overlapping interests.”

This research has shown that the transformative learning experience was a mutually interdependent experience. The transformative learning of individual educators and the change experienced, as a whole school community in its values and the ethos informing its practice were complementary. The shared values and interests within the community have propelled individuals within the community to seek, as individuals and in collaboration with others, practices and approaches to teaching and learning, inspired by a perspective in which teachers believed that all students can learn.

Notwithstanding the above observation, from the analysis of the voices of the participating teachers, one can see that not all participants had the same success in implementing the changes. Not all of them had the same persuasion that such change was possible. As in the study by Elmore et al. (1996 cited in Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004), while the school provided a collegial environment and teachers believed in student potential and were committed to student-centred learning and worked hard to introduce new practices in their work, not all teachers succeeded in implementing the changes into their practice. It was

evident from the narratives that while some had experienced a deep change shaping their day-to-day practice; others were still 'playing' with the idea and struggling with the change in the mental models that informed their theories of practice.

Thus while the espoused theories have been challenged and all participants went through a realisation of the need to allow all students to learn and the space to explore their learning patterns, not all have faced their theories-in-use that were directly influencing their behaviour, and account for the apparent resistance to change (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). This calls for what AA hinted to in her interview, namely the need for an ongoing mentoring support system which would help all members of the community to question their practice and examine and modify their theories-in-use that shape their behaviour (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). MH acknowledges that, at a school level, while there were improvements and individuals did change, "there are other issues that still need to (be) problematise(d)" (188-190). Transformative learning is an ongoing process of change that continuously requires a change in action accompanied by a change in underlying assumptions and beliefs (Argyris and Schon, 1974).

5.4 How has participation in the LMLpLp influenced teacher transformation?

"Sarason (1982 and 1990)... is especially critical of external reform agitators who do not take the trouble to think from the vantage point of teachers, who want the teacher to forget what she has learnt; these (external troublemakers) are primarily engaged in imparting theory to teachers" (Dalin, 1998, p. 143).

Teachers are often forced to take a reactive role (Fullan, 1991). Teachers' work has been characterised by routine and overwork (Fullan, 1991) forcing them to work on their own and limiting their knowledge to that which has direct relevance to their classroom practice. Teachers, according to Dalin (1998), make most of their decisions on their own and tend to lead an isolated professional life

(Rand Change Agent study, 1973-1978). Teachers don't have the luxury of pondering on exoteric knowledge but value that knowledge related to their teaching.

Different studies have also pointed to the limited influence that most professional development programmes have on teachers (Rand 1973-1978, Dalin 1998, McLaughlin 1990, Shanker 1990, Ostermen and Kottkamp 2004). Studies and reports on effects of professional development on teacher professional practice have been predominantly critical of professional development initiatives that fail to think from the vantage point of the teacher's position and take into consideration teachers' perspectives; offer one-size-fits-all programmes and initiatives that involve outside consultants who implement training detached from the local experience of the school (McLaughlin 1990, Rand 1973-1978, Dalin 1998) and fix-it type models which fail to bring about change in ideas and beliefs (Osterman and Kottkamp, 2004).

The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process (LMLpLp) notwithstanding the initial criticism of earlier versions of the training for putting too much emphasis on theory (AA, FSL, JSL and CP), have received positive comments on a number of aspects. According to participants of this research, the LMLpLp:

- Allowed time for self-knowledge (MH, SA, AA, EP, YP, CP);
- The trainers were seen to be knowledgeable of the process and responded confidently to questions put by the teachers participating in the training (SA);
- Gave classroom assistance and one-on-one feedback on delivered lessons (YP, EP);
- Encouraged a free process of implementation – “they didn't pass on any kind of recipe” (SA);
- The Let Me Learn team was available for support and mentoring during and after the course (SA, MH);

- The professional development process encouraged dialogue, sharing of practice, collaboration and interpersonal relationship between teachers (SA, AA, JSL, FSL, RSS and YP);
- Made reference to and developed the programme on teachers' tacit knowledge. Helped teachers make sense of "everything we believed in" (SA, AA, MH);
- Afforded a discourse that voiced the principles and goals of the school ethos (MH, SA, JSL, CP);
- Provided a language that teachers could communicate with, in their interactions with each other, with parents and with students (SA, EP, MH, JSL, CP);
- Allowed time to deconstruct their knowledge of students and to make every student 'visible' within the learning community – "The biggest change takes place when you look at the students from a different perspective" (EP 236-237) (JSL, MH);
- Allowed for teacher generated alternative praxis (SA, MH, YP, RSS, FSL, JSL);
- Allowed for the involvement of the whole school community including the direct involvement of the SMT in the training and implementation process (YP, MH, AA, SA, JSL, FSL).

These characteristics reinforce some of Rand's findings and the reconsiderations made by McLaughlin (1990) in her paper "The Rand Change Agent Study Revisited: Macro Perspectives and Micro Realities". In this paper, McLaughlin underscores the essential contribution of teacher's perspectives as informant and as a guide to policy. She highlights those strategies, which both the Rand studies and her own, deem as either ineffective or effective strategies. These studies (Rand; McLaughlin 1990) found that effective projects are characterised by mutual adaptation rather than uniform implementation, and that local factors dominated the outcomes of the projects. Effective strategies are those which address teacher-specific needs over an extended period of training, provide support in the classroom, provide opportunities for teachers to share their

practice, provide locally developed materials and in which the school's senior management, in particular the principal, participate in the training. On the other hand, the ineffective strategies were those that were incompatible with aspects of the local realities or with the dominant motivations, needs or interests of educators responsible for implementation.

5.5 The role of the Senior Management team in the transformative learning experience.

“What matters most is what the community together shares, what the community together believes in, and what the community together wants to accomplish... Principals and teachers together are followers of the dream, committed to making it real. And leadership is nothing more than a means to make things happen” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 170).

The achievement of the school in propelling a transformative learning experience does not rest on one person or on the school leadership team (SMT) but nests in the ability of the senior management team to create the right type of network between all actors and thus “offer a powerful and fast method of communication, sharing effective practice, responding to changelings, and providing insights in a way that administrative hierarchies cannot do” (Reeves, 2009, p. 51).

The study identified three main agents of change: the Let Me Learn trainers, as promoters and experts of this particular learning process, chosen as those who helped the community to “bring together everything we believe in” (SA300-301); the teachers, who internalised the process and applied it to their practice; and the school's senior management team who internalised the Process, positioned it into the larger vision of the school and created a conducive environment through which the whole school community is empowered to take responsibility to bring about change in practice.

In this section we will focus on the identified contributions of the senior management team in the transformative learning experience of this school community. What follows are a number of roles identified from the voices of the participating educators:

- Offer and promote a shared and focused vision for the school (YP, MH).
- Ensure the continuity with the ethos of the school and coherence between the strategic intents (SA, MH, EP).
- Promote and share the language of change (AA, MH).
- Facilitate the collective transformation (SA).
- Act as role models to the teaching community (SA, YP).
- Act as mentors and supporters to the teaching staff in their practice (MH, SA, RSS).
- Make the Process more visible both to those who are directly related to the school (teaching staff, students and parents), and to other schools willing to learn from the experience (MH, SA).
- Allow for the integration of the Process in the different aspects of the life of the school and the freedom to implement learnt practice (SA, YP, AA, MH).
- Create opportunities for the sharing of practice and interaction between teaching staff (RSS, AA).
- Pace the growth process for everyone to feel part of the experience (AA, MH).

Thus participating in the LMLpLp experience with the rest of the teaching staff must give the SMT the capacity to reflect and understand the changing realities and constraints facing teachers in the practice inspired by the new perspective (AA, MH). Through the understanding of the dynamics of change from the perspective of the teachers, the SMT will be in a better position to re-adjust one's expectations and respect the diversity incumbent within the community. More specifically, Ekholm et al (cited in Dalin 1998) state that training of school leaders must give the head teacher the capacity to liberate resources in one's organisation and to mobilise the school's own forces, give a theoretical

foundation as a frame of reference and to make it possible to be applied in concrete situations, give structure and sequence relative to the specific needs of the school, take responsibility for training needed by the community to perform its duties towards their learners and finally cultivate a culture of coaching which could support the learning process.

Therefore, as noted by Vormeland (1982, cited in Dalin, 1998) while the leadership of the school can act as an organiser, it cannot develop the school alone. As Sergiovanni (1994) writes “leadership is nothing more than a means to make things happen” (p. 179).

5.6 Limitations of the study

After highlighting a number of findings emerging from this research, a number of important limitations and delimitations need to be considered. This research assumes that the school under study has undergone observable and tangible changes in its practice and ethos. Over the past years, the Let Me Learn team who for the past years, worked closely with the staff as mentors, others within the educational community (Bezzina and Testa 2005) and myself as a frequent visitor to the school, have noted a qualitative leap in the teaching and learning environment of the school. The subject of this research is in fact, to try to understand what are the sources that propelled this transformation.

As explained above, the study’s theoretical and analytical perspective is delimited to Mezirow’s conceptualisation of transformative learning. While I am aware of the various critiques of this theoretical position (Kasl and York 2002, Taylor and Snyder 2012, Collard and Law 1989, Clark and Wilson 1991 and others), I feel that it affords a strong theoretical framework on which the research can analyse the transformative experience and give a coherent and systematic description of the factors leading to transformation.

Another delimitation that needs to be considered is that this research mainly focuses on the role of a particular professional learning process in the

transformative experience of these individuals and the school. During the collection of data and in particular during the analysis, a more complex picture was emerging. As discussed above, the LMLpLp was one, albeit important, factor that contributed to such change.

The findings and analysis of the data were mainly presented through the narrative approach. The reason for this choice was to allow the voices of the participants to determine the description of the themes and to come to particular meanings that voice the values, ethical, ontological and epistemological positions of the actors. I am aware that this approach has yielded a very wordy study, sometimes running the risk of being repetitive. On the other hand, these repeated occurrences serve to reinforce the themes that were deemed important by the participating educators.

A number of limitations need to be considered as well. First, the school chosen with a population of around 400 students, 45 teachers and 25 learning support assistants, is considered to be a small school. The school as a church run organisation, contrary to Public schools, has the luxury of employing directly its own teaching and support staff. Thus, the scope of the findings from this research is not to generalise or to show general trends, but to explore in detail the specific and situated experiences of the participants within this particular learning organisation.

Finally, the selection of the participants has been done with specific criteria imposed by this research study, namely that participants need to have had training in the LMLpLp, to have been mentored and to have shown improved professional practice and to have used Let Me Learn technology in their teaching for at least three years prior to collection of data. Thus, while I am aware of the bias, the research provided voices that have been noted for their positive practice.

5.7 Implications

All participants in this study have valued the training and mentoring they received during and after attending the LMLpLp because it gave them a way to interpret both their students' and their own thoughts, feelings and actions. It gave them a language that could be shared with the whole of the learning community through which they could engage effectively with the students and fellow colleagues. Thus a major implication arising from this study concerns the importance of a shared language – a language that fits the shared values and ideological position of the community. Such language frames the learning process, makes learning visible for teachers to be able to respond effectively with strategies that respect each learner's learning preference and makes learning visible to the learner himself or herself.

Another implication of this study arises from the finding that the transformative learning process of any individual educator and effectively of the whole school community, goes beyond the effectiveness and limitations of any one professional development programme. While such a programme could play an important role in developing skills and initiating actors into the transformative cycle, true, deep-seated transformation comes from within. The statement has serious repercussions on any professional development programme that aims to aid participants in their quest to transform their practice.

Any attempt at professional learning of teaching staff needs to be seated in the local experience and needs of the school community. Any attempts at developing comprehensive, nation-wide projects with pre-packaged approaches, are doomed to fail. What this research has shown is that for effective professional learning, the identified outcomes need to correspond to the local needs of the school, rather than the national guidelines, detached from the realities of the particular school. Therefore, professional learning leaders and policy leaders would do well to have frequent discussions with teachers in schools to ensure that any professional learning and support offered, respects the real needs of the teaching community being served.

Another recommendation regards the importance of the community of educators. This study sustains the findings of other research that found that interpersonal relationships between teachers are a source of learning and motivation. Most participants in this study felt that one of the indispensable factors that propelled their learning was the cultivation of interpersonal relationships and the collaborative praxis among different teachers. In this recommendation the role of the SMT is crucial, since they are the ones who need to create the space for such collaboration to occur.

Finally, any professional learning should include a period of induction with one-on-one mentoring support. Delivery of information and skills without follow-up tend to lead to the superficial application of the Process. Transformative learning presupposes a period of shared reflection on practice and collegial mediation of ideas through contact between teachers and their leaders and on-the-job support from their professional learning mentors.

5.8 Recommendations for further studies

As stated above, this study is limited in scope. What follows are suggestions for possible future studies to continue refining our understanding of the factors that lead to transformative learning of individuals and communities of practice. One of the findings of this research was the important role played by the development of a common shared language. All educators participating in this study have emphasised the importance of a shared language in their growth as a community of practice. Therefore, an in-depth study focusing on the characteristics of, and how, a common language of learning, can support teacher transformation can be studied.

This study made use of a qualitative approach (Becker, 1996) with the aim of looking at a broad range of interconnected processes leading to transformative learning. It tried to engage in a dialectic process between the research questions and the data generated. Finally, it endeavoured to get the experiences and everyday realities of teacher transformation and to study the important

questions as they are practised within the professional community of a particular school. Further quantitative research is needed to widen the picture, and to generate some universal characteristics of factors that influence teacher transformation and the features that any professional development should foster in order to support the transformative learning experience of teachers. It would be informative to investigate and describe experiences of teachers participating in different professional development programmes. Such research can then be reviewed and cross-referenced to highlight common factors leading to a transformative learning experience.

5.9 Final thought

Before concluding this research it is important to reiterate the very specific context of this study. The purpose of this research was to learn from the voices of teachers who reported a change in knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs as a result of a complex interaction of factors, experienced during and after participating in the Let Me Learn professional learning process. The efficacy of this programme was the result of a complex interaction of realities experienced by a group of educators who believed in a vision and faithfully implemented changes in their practice.

References

- Addy, L. (1967). Challenging the assumptions: The motivation and learning of children who have developmental coordination disorder. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. New York.
- Anderson, L. (1997). *Argyris and Schon's theory on congruence and learning*. Retrieved February 1, 2013 from Resource papers in Action Research: <http://www.aral.com.au/resources/argyris.html>
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Argyris, C. (1993). *Knowledge for action: A guide to overcoming barriers to organisational change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Argyris, C. (1982). *Reasoning, learning, and action: Individual and organisational*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Argyris, C. & Schon, D. (1978). *Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley.
- Argyris, C., & Schon, D. (1996). *Organisational learning II: Theory, method and practice*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley.
- Argyris, C., & Schon, D. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Armstrong, T. (2006). *The Best Schools: How Human Development Research Should Inform Educational Practice*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Attard Tonna, M., & Calleja, C. (2010, June). The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process Experience: A New Culture for Professional Learning. *Universitas Tarraconensis. Revista de Ciències de l'Educació* , 35-54.
- Bartolo, E. (2007, August 5). *Education: more questions than answers*. Retrieved February 11, 2013 from The Times of Malta.com: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20070805/opinion/education-more-questions-than-answers.9037>
- Bartolo, P. A., Janik, I., Janikova, V., Hofsass, T., Koinzer, P., Vilkiene, V., et al. (2007). *Responding to Student Diversity: A Teacher's Handbook*. Msida, Malta: P.E.G.
- Baumgartner, L. M. (2012). Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning from 1975 to Present. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 99-115). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Beabout, B. R. (2012). Turbulence, Perturbance, and Educational Change . Retrieved February 2013, 27 from E-journals University of Alberta: <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>
- Becker, H. S. (1996). The Epistemology of Qualitative Research. In R. Jessor, A. Colby, & R. A. Shweder, *Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry* (pp. 53-71). Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Bedford, T. A. (2004). *Learning styles: a review of literature*. Toowoomba: The University of Southern Queensland.
- Belzer, A. (2004). 'It's Not Like Normal School':The Role of Prior Learning Contexts in Adult Learning. *Adult Education Quarterly* , 55 (1), 41-59.
- Berman, P., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1978). *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume VIII: Implementing and Sustaining Innovation*. Rand Corporation, The U.S. office of Education - Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. S. Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Bezzina, C., & Testa, S. (2005). Establishing Schools as Professional Learning Communities: Perspectives from Malta. *European Journal of Teacher Education* , 28 (2), 141-150.
- Bloom, L. R. (1996). Stories of one's own: Nonunitary subjectivity in narrative representation. *Qualitative Inquiry* , 2 (2), 176-197.
- Bolton, R. (April, 2005). Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action and the Theory of Social Capital. Paper read at the meeting of the Association of American Geographers. Denver, Colorado.
- Borg, M. (1996). A factor analysis of primary school student responses: The test of a learning instrument's validity. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New York.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D., Eds. (1985). *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Bowers, C. (1984). *The Promise of Theory: Education and the Politics of Cultural Change*. New York: Longman.
- Boyd, R. D. (1989). Facilitating Personal Transformation in Small Groups: Part I. *Small Group Behaviour* , 20 (4), 459-474.
- Boyd, R., & Myers, J. G. (1988). Transformative Education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 7, no. 4 (1988): 261-284.
- Brookfield, S. (1987). *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. Jossey-Bass.
- Bruer, J. (1994). *Schools for thought*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Buchanan, P. (2005 November). Leadership and Learning. Annual Conference of the Society of Women Engineers . Los Angeles, CA, USA.
- Bulman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1997). Reframing Organizations. Artistry, choice and leadership . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burke, R., & VanKleef, J. (1997). Prior learning assessment in Canada: a credit to workforce development. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal* , 12 (4), 23-28.
- Calleja, C. (1998). Listening to the learner: Learner's characteristics to shape whole school reform. Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis . Msida, Malta: Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Calleja, C. (2005). Revealing the Learner's Potential: The Grundtvig Let Me Learn Project. University of Malta. Annual Report. Msida: University of Malta.
- Calleja, C., & Borg, C. (2006). Using the technical and confluent patterns first: A recipe of underachievement? In C. Borg, & C. Calleja (Eds.), *Children and Youth at Risk: Narratives of Hope*. Malta: Agenda.
- Calleja, C., & Montebello, M. (2006). Let Me Learn in-service training: A teacher's experience. *Journal of Maltese Education Research* , 4 (2), 54-66.
- Campbell, N. (2005 November). Putting learning to work. Annual Conference of the Society of Women Engineers . Los Angeles, CA, USA.
- Campbell, T. (1996). Technology, multimedia, and qualitative research in education. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education* , 30 (9), 122-133.
- Cassidy, S. (2004). Learning Styles: An overview of theories, models, and measures. *Educational Psychology* , 24 (4), 419-444.
- Caswell, R. L. (2007). Teacher Transformation achieve through participation in the National writing project's invitational summer institute. (Unpublished Doctorial dissertation). Kansas.
- Challis, M. (1996). Andragogy and the accreditation of prior learning: points on the continuum or an uneasy bedfellows? *International Journal of Lifelong Education* , 15 (1), 32-40.
- Churchill, L. R., & Churchill, S. W. (1982). Storytelling in Medical Arenas. The art of self determination. *Literature and Medicine* , 1, 73-79.
- Clark, C. M. (1993). Changing Course: Initiating the Transformational Learning Process. 34th Annual Adult Education Research Conference - Proceedings (pp. 354-361). Pennsylvania: State College: Pennsylvania State University.
- Clark, C. M. (1993). Transformational learning. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *An update on adult learning theory*. (Vol. 57, pp. 47-56). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Clark, P. B., & Wilson, J. Q. (1961). Incentive systems: A theory of organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* , 6 (2), pp. 129-166.
- Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., & Ecclestone, K. (2004a). Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: A systematic and critical review. The Learning Skills and Research Centre, London.
- Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., & Ecclestone, K. (2004b). Learning styles for post 16 learners: What do we know? (summary report). Learning and Skills Research Centre from the School of Education, Communication and Languages Sciences, University of Newcastle.
- Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., & Ecclestone, K. (2004c). Should we be using learning styles? What research has to say to practice. The Learning Skills and Research Centre, London.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th Edition). New York: Routledge.
- Collard, S., & Law, M. (1989). The limits of perspective transformation: A critique of Mezirow's theory. *Adult Education Quarterly* , 39, 99-107.
- Cranton, P., & Taylor, E. W. (2012). Transformative Learning Theory: Seeking a More Unified Theory. In P. Cranton, E. W. Taylor, & Associates, the *Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Crawford, B. A., Krajcik, J. S., & Marx, R. W. (1999). Developing Collaboration in a Middle School Project-Based Science Classroom. *Science Education* , 83 (6), 701-723.
- Curry, L. (1990). A critique of the research on learning styles. *Educational Leadership* , 48 (2), 50-53, 54-56.
- Curry, L. (2002). Individual differences in Cognitive style, Learning Style and Instructional Preference in Medical Education. In *International Handbook of Research in Medical Education* (Vol. Part 1, pp. 263-275). Kluwer academic publications.
- Curry, L. (1987). Integrating concepts of cognitive or learning styles: A review with attention to psychometric standards. Ottawa, ON: Canadian College of Health Service Executives.
- Cutajar, M. (2007). Educational Reform in the Maltese Islands. *Journal of Maltese Education Research* , 5 (1), 3-21.
- Dalin, P. (1998). *School Development: Theories and Strategies*. London, U.K: Cassell.

- Dawkins, B. U. (2008). Honouring the learner: One teacher's experience implementing the Let Me Learn Process. Unpublished doctoral dissertation . Hempstead, New York, USA: Hofstra University.
- Debono, J. (2010, January 27). Church schools fare better at O-levels. Retrieved January 11, 2013 from Maltatoday: <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2010/01/27/t11.html>
- DeMarrais, K. B., & Lapan, S. D. (2004). Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Science. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Dien, J., Franklin, M., Nicholson, C. A., Lemen, L. C., Adams, C. L., & Kiehl, K. A. (2008). fMRI characterization of the language formulation area. *Brain Research* , 1229 (10), pp. 179-192.
- Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE). (2012). Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers: Handbook. Floriana, Malta: Quality Assurance Department.
- Dunham, G. H. (2005, April). The Emancipation of the Learner. Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education . Long Island, New York: Hofstra University.
- Elias, D. (1997). Its Time to Change Our Minds: An Introduction to Transformative Learning. *ReVision* , 20 (1), pp. 2-6.
- Elmore, R. F. (2004). School Reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Elmore, R. F. (1992). Why Restructuring Alone won't Improve Teaching. *Educational Leadership* , 44-48.
- Elmore, R. F., Peterson, P. L., & McCarthy, S. (1996). Restructuring in the Classroom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Emerson, R. M. (1987). Four ways to improve the craft of fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* , 16 (1), 69-89.
- Epstein, J. (2002). Epstein's framework of six types of involvement. Retrieved February 27, 2013 from <http://www.schoolengagement.org/TruancyPreventionRegistry/Admin/Resources/Resources/32.pdf>
- Eurostat. (2012). Europe in Figures - Eurostat Yearbook. European Commission. Brussels: EU.
- Eurostat. (2005). Europe in Figures: Eurostat Yearbook. Brussels: European Commission.

- Eurydice. (2011). Eurypedia: European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems. Retrieved February 11, 2013 from <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice>
- Farrugia, C. J. (1992). Autonomy and Control in the Maltese Educational System. *International Review of Education*, 38 (2).
- Fawler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Flavell, J. (1980, Fall). A tribute to Piaget. *Society for Research in Child Development Newsletter* (1).
- Flavell, J., Green, F., & Flavell, E. (2000). Development of Children's Awareness of Their Own Thoughts. *Journal of Cognition and Development* , 1 (1), 97-113.
- Freese, S. F. (1999). *The relationship between teacher caring and student engagement in academic high school classes*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation . Hempstead, New York, USA: Hofstra University.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Education for Critical Consciousness* (Reprinted in 2007 ed.). London: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herter and Herter.
- Freire, P., & Faundez, A. (1989). *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*. Geneva: World Council of Churches.
- Friere, J. (2009, 18 February). Les persones hem de tenir identital digital? Com construir. CEJFE (15th session).
- Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M., Hill, P., & Crevola, C. (2006). *Breakthrough*. Thousand Oaks, California, USA: Corwin Press.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliabilty and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report* , 8 (4), 597-607.
- Grima, G., Grech, L., Mallia, C., Mizzi, B., Vassallo, P., & Ventura, F. (2008). *Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta: A Review*. Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Floriana.
- Habermas, J. (1989-90 Fall/Winter). Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning 'stage 6'. *The Philosophical Forum* , XXI (1-2), pp. 32-51.

- Habermas, J. (1989-90). Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning 'stage 6'. (Shierry Weber Nicholzen, Trans.) *The Philosophical Forum* , XXI (1-2), 32-51.
- Habermas, J. (1971). *Knowledge of Human Interest*. Boston: Beacon.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action - Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* . Boston: Beacon Press.
- Handley, K., Sturdy, A., Fincham, R., & Clark, T. (2006). Within and Beyond Communities of Practice: Making Sense of Learning Through Participation, Identity and Practice. *Journal of Management Studies* , 4313, 643.
- Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a Literature Review*. Thousand Oaks, CA, United States of America: SAGE publications.
- Harvey, R. (2004). Beyond learning styles: Understanding the learning processes of engineering students through the interactive learning model. Paper presented at the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition.
- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*. London, U.K: Routledge, Taylor and Francis group.
- Hayes, M. (1996 April). Finding the voice: Hearing the voice - the under-represented in the reform movement. The American Educational Research Association's Annual Meeting . New York, NY, USA.
- Henry, J. (2003). Learning to modify teaching strategies to better meet needs of student learning patterns. *Action Research* .
- Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education* , 9 , 47-63.
- Horster, D. (1992). *Habermas: An Introduction*. (H. Thompson, Trans.) Pennbridge Publication.
- Huber, G. P. (1991). Organisational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures. *Organisation Science*, 2 (2), 88-115.
- Imel, S. (1998). *Transformative Learning in Adulthood*. Digest (200).
- Jesson, J. G., & Newman, M. (2004). Radical Adult Education and Learning. In F. Griff, & F. Griff (Ed.), *Dimensions of Adult Learning: Adult Education and Training in a Global Era*. Crows Nest, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

- Johnston, C. (2009). *A Comprehensive Description of the Let Me Learn Process, an Advanced Learning System including Bibliography and Lexicon of Terms*. Pittsgrove , NJ: Let Me Learn Inc.
- Johnston, C. (1993, August). *A request for funding: Unlocking the Will to Learn. Unpublished proposal* . Glassboro: Rowan College of New Jersey.
- Johnston, C. A. (2005). *Communicating from the inside out*. Keynote presentation . Malta: National Writing Conference.
- Johnston, C. A. (2004). *Drop dead data*. Philadelphia, NJ, USA: The Seventh Annual Let Me Learn Summer Institute.
- Johnston, C. A. (2007). *Finding Your Way: Navigating Life by Understanding Your Learning Self*. Corwin Press.
- Johnston, C. A. (2002). *Implementing the Let Me Learn Process in K-12*. Turnersville, NJ: Learning Connections Resources.
- Johnston, C. A. (1996). *Many voices - one message: A cross-cultural study of student learning processes with implications for learners, teachers and reformers: Will the real learner raise a hand?* Annual Meeting. New York: American Educational Research Association.
- Johnston, C. A. (2006). *Promoting mindful learning in the mindless school*. Keynote presentation at the Let Me Learn International Conference . Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia: Sunshine Coast University.
- Johnston, C. A. (1994). *Unlocking the will to learn*. Twentieth Annual Meeting of the British Educational Research Association. Oxford, UK: Queen Anne's College.
- Johnston, C. A. (1997). Using the Learning Combination Inventory. *Educational Leadership* , 55 (4), 78-82.
- Johnston, C., & Capasso, R. (1995). *A test-retest of the LCI: Secondary school study*. Rowan College of new Jersey.
- Johnston, C. & Dainton, G. (2004a). *Cooperative learning Synergy, chaos or inertia*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans, LA.
- Johnston, C. & Dainton, G. (1994b). Death by classroom: The perpetrator and the victims. In J. Rowan (Ed.), *Occasional papers on collaboration in education*. Vineland, NJ: : Standard.
- Johnston, C., & Dainton, G. (2005). *The Learning Connections Inventory (Manual)*. Turnersville, NJ, USA: Learning Connections Resources.

- Johnston, C., & Johnston, J. (1998). Achieving staff development through understanding the learner. *British Journal of In-Service Education* , 24 (1).
- Johnston, C., & Johnston, J. (1997). Understanding and using the child's will to learn: A longitudinal study. *The European Conference on Educational Research - Proceedings*. Frankfurt, Germany.
- Johnston, J. Q. (1996). Many Voices - One Message: A cross-cultural Study of Student Learning Processes with Implications for Learners, Teachers and Reformers - Will the Real Learner Raise a Hand? *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. New York.
- Jung, C. (1923). *Psychological Types*. (H. G. Baynes, Trans.) New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Kaiser, L. M., & Erichsen, E. A. (2012). Narrative Tools for Facilitating Research and Learning for Transformation. In C. J. McGill, & S. M. Kippers (Eds.), *Pathways to Transformation: Learning in Relationship*. Charlotte, NC, USA: Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Kant, I. (1988). *The philosophy of Kant as contained in extracts from his own writings*. (J. Watson, Trans.) Glasgow, UK: Maclehose & Jackson.
- Kasl, E., & Yorks, L. Y. (2002, January 2). An Extended Epistemology for Transformative Learning Theory and Its Application Through Collaborative Inquiry. *Teacher College Records* , 1-17.
- Keefe, J. & Languis, M. (1983, October). Operational definitions. *Paper presented to NASSP Learning Styles Task Force*. Reston, VA.
- Kirk, J., & Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (Vol. 1). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publication.
- Kitchener, K., & King, P. (1990). The reflective judgment model: Transforming assumptions about knowing . In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* (pp. 157-176). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Journal of Transformative Education* , 6: 104-122.
- Knowles, M. (1998). *The adult learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resources Development*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Kottkamp, R. B. (2002). The problematic student. *Poster session presented at the Let Me Learn 5th Annual Summer Institute*. Philadelphia.
- Kottkamp, R. B. (2006). Unrecognized bias in high-stakes writing tests. *Presentation at the Let Me Learn 9th Annual Summer Institute*. Vineland, NJ.

- Kottkamp, R. B., & Silverberg, R. P. (1999). Exploring the mental models of administrative aspirants: Assumptions about students, teaching and learning. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Montreal.
- Kottkamp, R. B., & Silverberg, R. P. (2003). Leadership Preparation Reform in First Person: Making Assumptions Public. *Leadership and Policy in Schools* , 2 (4), 299-326.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research: An Integrated Approach* (2nd Edition). New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc.
- Kreber, C. (2012). Critical Reflection and Transformative Learning. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 323-341). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kruger, M. (2004). Narrative in the Time of AIDS: Confessions of an AIDS Victim (1993) and Chira (1997). *African Literatures* , 108-129.
- Kruger, M. (1998). Negotiating Gender Identity and Authority in the Plays of Penina Muhando and Ari Katini Mwachofi. *Swahili Forum* 5 , 53 – 71.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lazarsfeld, P. (1972). *Qualitative Analysis: Historical and Critical Essays*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lester, S (1999) ‘An introduction to phenomenological research,’ Taunton UK, Stan Lester Developments. Retrieved 10th January, 2013: www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf
- Ligorio, B. (1994). Community of Learners. *Transformative Dialogues (TD): Teaching and Learning Journal* , 4, 22-39.
- Lincoln , Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage publication.
- Lyytinent, K., & Hirschheims, R. (1988). Information systems as rational discourse: An application of Habermas Theory of communicative action. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* , 4 (1 - 2), 19 -30.
- MacIsaac, D. (1996). *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas*. Retrieved February 21, 2013 from Buffalo State - The State University of New York: <http://physicsed.buffalostate.edu/danowner/habcritthy.html>
- MacLean, P. (1978). A mind of three minds: Educating the triune brain. *The 77th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Maher, P. A., & Slotnick, R. (In Print). From Learning Styles to Learning Connections: Minding the Gab. *Journal of Maltese Education Research* . Faculty of Education. University of Malta.
- Malta. (1988). Education Act. *XXIV* . The House of Representatives.
- Marcellino, P. (2000). Learning to become a team: A case study of action research in a graduate business management course. *Unpublished dissertation*. New York: Hofstra University.
- Marsick, V., & Mezirow, J. (2002). New Work on Transformative Learning. *The Teachers College Record*.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- McLaughlin, J., & Angilletta, P. (1995). *A test-retest of the LCI: Elementary school study*. Rowan College of new Jersey, NJ.
- McLaughlin, J., & Hayes, D. *A predictive test of validity: The LCI and teacher Awareness*. Rowan College of New Jersey.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1990). The Rand Change Agent Study Revisited: Macro Perspectives and Micro Realities. *Educational Researcher* , 19 (9), 11-16.
- McSweeney, R. T. (2005). Merging cognitive and instructional theories into instructional practice in secondary mathematics: The impact of an advanced learning system implementation on teacher beliefs, student affect and achievement. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*. Hempstead, New York: Hofstra University.
- Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). *Learning in Adulthood* . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss.
- Mezirow, J. (1981). A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education. *Adult Education Quarterly* , 32 (3), 3 - 24.
- Mezirow, J. (1985). A critical theory of self-directed learning. In S. Brookfield (Ed.), *Self-directed learning: From theory to practice* (New Directions for Continuing Education, 25 ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1996). Beyond Freire and Habermas: Confusion a Response to Bruce Pietrykowski. *Adult Education Quarterly* , 46 (4), 237-239.
- Mezirow, J. (1978). *Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community colleges*. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University.

- Mezirow, J. (2012). Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 73-95). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective Transformation. *Adult Education* (28), 100-110.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). Transformation theory and cultural context: A reply to Clark and Wilson. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41 (3), 188-192.
- Mezirow, J. (1989). Transformation Theory and Social Action: A Response to Collard and Law. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 39 (3), 169-175.
- Mezirow, J. (1999, January 1). *Transformation theory – postmodern issues*. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from AERC :
<http://www.adulterc.org/Proceedings/1999/99mezirow.htm>
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5-12.
- Mezirow, J., & Associates. (1990). *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education. (2012). *Analysis of Feedback to the Consultation Process on the Draft National Curriculum Framework: Report*. Floriana: DQSE.
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment. (2005). *For All Children to Succeed*. MALTA: MEYE.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage.
- National Statistics Office. (2012). *Education Statistics*. Valletta: National Statistics Office.
- Nichols, J. (2002). Using the LCI to Connect Teaching Methods with Student Learning Strategies. *Action Research*.
- Osterman, K. F., & Kottkamp, R. B. (2004). *Reflective Practice for Educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA, United States of America: Corwin Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Pearl, K. M. (2001, September). *Metacognition as Vehicle for Organisational Change: How 'Thinking About Thinking' and Intentional Learning Break the Mold of 'Heroic' Teaching in Higher Education*. Submitted to the Faculty of

the Graduate School of Rowan University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education . Glassboro, NJ.

- Philip, H. (1936). *An experimental study of the frustration of will-acts and conation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. (M. Cook, Trans.) New York: International Universities Press.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1996). Exploration of Narrative Identity. *Psychological Inquiry* , 7 (4), 363-367.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity Issues in Narrative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, X (X), 471-786.
- Reeves, D. B. (2009). *Leading Change in Your School: How to Conquer Myths, Build Commitment, and Get Results*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Richards , L., & Morse, J. M. (2007). *User's Guide to Qualitative Methods* (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Richardson, V. (2003, December). Constructivist Pedagogy. *Teacher College Record*, 105 (9), pp. 1623-1640.
- Roberts, K. A. (2011). Imagine deep learning. *Michigan Sociological Review* , 25, 1-18.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research* (2nd Edition ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations* (4th Edition ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Romaniuk, K., & Fern, S. (2000). Enhancing employability: The role of prior learning assessment and portfolio. *Journal of Workplace Learning* , 12 (1), 29-34.
- Sandelowski, M. (1991). Telling Stories: Narrative Approaches in Qualitative Research. *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship* , 23 (3), 161-166.
- Schapiro, S. A., Wasserman, I. L., & Gallegos, P. V. (2012). Group Work and Dialogue: Spaces and Processes for Transformative Learning in Relationships. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 355-372). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Seale, C. (1999). Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* , 5 (4), 465-478.

- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
- Senge, P. M., Cambron-McCabe, N. H., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2012). *Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education* (First Revised Edition ed.). New York: Crown Business .
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). *Building Community in Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sewall, T. J. (1986). *The Measurement of Learning Styles: A Critique of Four Assessment tests*. Wiscconsin University, Green Bay, Assessment Centre. Wiscconsin: ERIC Document 267247.
- Shanker, A. (1990). Staff development and the restructured school. In B. Joyce, & B. Joyce (Ed.), *Changing School Culture Through Staff Development*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004, January). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* , 63-75.
- Shor, I. (1993). Education is Politics: Paolo Freire's Critical Pedagogy. In P. MacLaren, & P. Leonard, *Paolo Freire: A Critical Encounter* (pp. 23-35). New York: Routledge.
- Shulman, Lee S. 2004a. Professional development: Learning from experience. In *The wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning and learning to teach*, ed. Suzanne M. Wilson, 501-20. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shulman, Lee S. 2004b. Teaching alone, learning together: Needed agendas for the new reforms. In *The wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning and learning to teach*, ed. Suzanne M. Wilson, 310-33. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Silverberg, R. P. (2002, January). *From Marginalization to Rational Space: A Descriptive Phenomenological Study of Teachers Who Changed thier Assumptions and Beliefs About Problematic Students*. Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education. New York: Hofstra University.
- Skinner, B. (1989). The origins of cognitive thought. *American Psychologist* , 44 (1), 13-18.
- Smith, M. K. (2001, May 29). 'Chris Argyris: theories of action, double-loop learning and organisational learning', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, www.infed.org/thinkers/argyris.htm. Last update: May 29, 2012. Retrieved February 21, 2012 from Infed: <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/argyris.htm>

- Snow, R., & Jackson, D. (1992). *Assessment of conative constructs for educational research and evaluation: A catalogue*. Washington, D.C: U.S: Department of Education, Office Research and Improvement.
- Sparks-Langer, G. M., & Colton, A. B. (1994). Reflective decision making: the cornerstone of school reform. *Journal of Staff Development* , 15 (1), 2-7.
- Sparks-Langer, G. M., & Colton, A. B. (1991). Synthesis of research on teachers' reflective thinking. *Educational Leadership* , 48, 37-44.
- Squire, L., & Zola, S. (1996, November). Colloquium paper: Structure and function of declarative and non-declarative memory systems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 93, pp. 13515-13522.
- Stenbacka, C. Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own . *Management Decision* , 39 (7), 551-555.
- Sultana, R. G., & contributors. (1997). *Inside/Outside Schools: Towards a Critical Sociology of Education in Malta*. (R. G. Sultana, Ed.) Malta: PEG.
- Taylor, E. W. (2000). Analyzing Research on Transformative Learning Theory. In J. Mezirow, & Associates, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, E. W. (1997). Building Upon the Theoretical Debate: A Critical Review of the Empirical Studies of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Adult Education Quarterly* , 48 (1), 34-59.
- Taylor, E. W. (2009). Fostering Transformative Learning. In J. Mezirow, E. W. Taylor, & Associates, *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education* (pp. 3-17). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, E. W. (2000). Fostering Transformative Learning in the Adult Education Classroom. *The Canadian Journal of the Study of Adult Education* , 14, 1-28.
- Taylor, E. W., & Snyder, M. J. (2012). A Critical Review of Research on Transformative Learning Theory, 2006-2010. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 37-55). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, K., & Elias, D. (2012). Transformative Learning: A Developmental Perspective. In E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, Associates, E. W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates (Eds.), *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 147-161). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Torosyan, R. (2007, Fall). Teaching Self-Authorship and Self-Regulation: A Story of Resistance and Transformation. *The International Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* .

- Towers, J., & Panayotidis, L. E. (2012). Leading Inquiry-based learning. *Journal of Teaching and Learning* , 8 (2).
- Transformative Learning Centre. (2009 18 December). *The Transformative Learning Centre*. Retrieved 2010 2nd January from <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/tlc/About.html>
- Usher, R., & Bryant, I. (1989). *Adult Education as Theory, Practice and Research*. London: Routledge.
- Vella, M. (2013, February 11). *Betraying basic principles?* Retrieved February 11, 2013 from [timesofmalta.com: http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20130211/opinion/Betraying-basic-principles-.457117](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20130211/opinion/Betraying-basic-principles-.457117)
- Wain, K. (1991). *The National Minimum Curriculum: A Critical Evaluation*. Msida, Malta: Mireva.
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The Integrative Review: Updated Methodology. *Methodological Issues in Nursing Research* , 52 (5), 546-553.
- Wolters, A. M. (1989). On The Idea of Worldview and Its Relation to Philosophy. In P. A. Marshall, S. Griffioen, & R. J. Mouw, *Stained Glass* (pp. 14-25). Lanham: MD: University Press of America.
- York-Barr, J., Sommers, W. A., Ghere, G. S., & Montie, J. (2006). *Reflective Practice to Improve Schools: An Action Guide for Educators* (2nd Edition ed.). California: Corwin Press.
- Zammit Mangion, J. (1992). *Education in Malta*. Malta: Mansprint.
- Zultan, M. V., & Vogrinc, J. Eds. (2007). *Professional Inductions of Teachers in Europe and Elsewhere*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana.

APPENDIX 1

THE LMLpLp PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process

Goals per session

General Goal:

As a result of this process participating educators would be equipped to:

- Diagnose the learning needs of every student under their care and respond effectively to these needs;
- Deliver effective experiences through which learners (both educators and students) are empowered to take control of their own learning.

Session 1

1. Embark on a process of reflection and analysis on who we are as learners.
2. Identify and describe the Four Learning Patterns.
3. Start deconstructing and reconstructing our assumptions about learning.

Session 2

1. Consolidate pre-learnt knowledge about the LML theoretical base (i.e., the tripartite interactive learning model and the brain/mind theory)
2. Observe the learning patterns at work and explain how they affect our thoughts, feelings and actions
3. Acquire knowledge about what is needed to conduct a LML Awareness Session.
4. Prepare for, and administer LCIs, with a group of learners. (With early years teachers the observation schedule is introduced).

LML Awareness Session (1st school visit)

1. Acquire the skill of introducing the LML Characters or Learning Patterns to students.
2. Acquire the skill of preparing students for the Likert Scale and administering the LCI (Primary Junior Years/ Secondary).

Session 3

1. Learn what to observe in order to discern learning patterns in students' daily routines, leisure activities and academic work.
2. Validating the Learning Connections Inventories (Primary Junior Years/ Secondary/Administrators)
3. Preliminary steps in building a class profile: Input validated scores in Excel sheet

Seminar 1

1. Developing a class/group profile: Writing narrative reports.

2. Team Building: Explore grouping and formation of teams according to LML concepts and elements leading to effective teamwork
3. Decoding
4. Sharing of practice: Sharing of good practice by guest speakers.

Session 4

1. Deconstructing lesson plans (criteria: clarity, strategies used, decoding of tasks and use of Let Me Learn language).
2. Consolidation of teaching strategies.
3. Create a LML embedded lesson plan inclusive of activities designed for a specific profile (educators)/ Finding suitable strategies to tackle administrative day-to-day routines (administrators).

Lesson Observation 1 (2nd school visit)

1. Observe how participating educators implement basic LML concepts (clear aims, effective teaching strategies, use of LML language and primary tools)
2. Gauge educators' level of LML implementation.
3. Discuss areas for improvement (explore alternative strategies to be assessed in the second observed lesson).

Seminar 2

1. Metacognition: Exploring ways of helping learners explore their learning selves.
2. Explore the use of learning strategies as part of the metacognitive process
3. Construct a power/ strategy card as a tool which helps learners Forge, Intensify and tether (FIT) their combination of pattern.

Session 5

1. Explore different support strategies to help learners strategize to tackle learning tasks (Homework and basic study skills).
2. Critical observation of a lesson embedded with LML.
3. Draw-up a LML embedded lesson plan, this time incorporating space for learning strategies (educators)/ Compile an administrative action plan for LML implementation within the school (administrators).

Lesson Observation 2 (3rd school visit)

1. Gauge the level of implementation of LML implementation in the lesson/s observed.
2. Identify areas for mentoring support.

Session 6

1. Sharing of good practice observed during the previous in-school observation visit.
2. Discuss how educators perceive their metacognitive process along the training and what their intentions are re future LML implementation within the class/ school
3. Assessment of professional learning in relation to the targets set and any future plans.

APPENDIX 2

TEMPLATE - DATA ANALYSIS

Interview A			
Criteria	Theme	Excerpt	Comment
1. Disorienting dilemma (A 'trigger' event, an experience that challenged the participant's 'engrained professional behaviour').	1.1 Awareness of incumbent diversity		
	1.2 Social justice		
	1.3 Incongruence between espoused and prevalent values		
	1.4 School policy		
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame	2.1 Realization of Limitations		
	2.2 'Fad syndrome		
	2.3 Culture of labelling		
	2.4 Scepticism		
3. Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions about oneself and his/her professional learning.	3.1 Problemization of past intents		
	3.2 Problemization of practice		
	3.3 Global re-evaluation of the implications to one's practice		
	3.4 Reflection on the process of collective transformation		
	3.5 Reflection on inter/intrapersonal relationships		
	3.6 Reflection on non-linearity of the process of change		
4. Mention of dialogue and discourse with others within or outside the professional circle (for consensual validation or for seeking expertise)	4.1 Dialogue between mentor and teacher being mentored		
	4.2 Dialogue between teachers		
	4.3 Dialogue between SMT and practitioners		
	4.4 Dialogue between professionals and parents		
	4.5 Discourse with self and others to		

	<p>problematize alternative perspectives</p>		
	<p>4.6 Language of possibility</p>		
<p>5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions.</p>	<p>5.1 The educator as a catalyst for change</p>		
	<p>5.2 The educator as an 'archaeologist' of learning potential</p>		
	<p>5.3 The school as a model for other schools to emulate</p>		
	<p>5.4 The educator exploring alternative discourse</p>		
	<p>5.5 The educator exploring alternative pedagogical praxis</p>		
<p>6. Planning of a course of action</p>	<p>6.1 Initiating others into the process</p>		
	<p>6.2 Reflecting on school policies</p>		
	<p>6.3 Bring about change at a paced growth</p>		
	<p>6.4 Changing of practice as a result of a better understanding of learners</p>		
<p>7. References to acquisition of knowledge and skill for implementing one's plan.</p>	<p>7.1 Improved personal and professional interpersonal communication</p>		
	<p>7.2 Improved understanding of learners' needs</p>		
	<p>7.3 Intuitive deciphering of learning patterns</p>		
	<p>7.4 Reference to success</p>		
	<p>7.5 Application of differentiated strategies</p>		
<p>8. Provisional trying of new roles</p>	<p>8.1 The moment of realization – Aha moment</p>		
	<p>8.2 Exploring different venues of implementation</p>		
	<p>8.3 Attempts at integrating the LML process with other tools/methods</p>		
	<p>8.4 Attempts at applying the Process to non-formal situations</p>		
	<p>8.5 Awareness of the challenges ahead</p>		
<p>9. Building competence and self-competence in new roles and relationships</p>	<p>9.1 Feeling of competence in adapting response</p>		
	<p>9.2 Feeling of competence in motivating students</p>		
	<p>9.3 Feeling of competence in understanding oneself</p>		

	9.4 The challenge of reintegrating the process into new roles		
10. References to a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective.	10.1 Extensive use of new Language		
	10.2 Reference to recognition of competence by outsiders		
	10.3 Critical reflection as an integral aspect of professional practice		
	10.4 Assimilation of the process as an integral part of one's actions		

APPENDIX 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SPREADSHEET

Themes/Topics	Source	Pages	Location	Comment
1.0 Transformative learning (definitions)				
1.1 Influences on transformative learning theory				
1.2.1 Thomas Kuhn				
1.2.2 Paolo Freire				
1.2.3 Jurgan Habermas				
1.2.3.1 The sociolinguistic context				
1.2.3.2 Domains of leaning				
1.3 Concepts of transformative learning				
1.3.1 Disorienting dilemma				
1.3.2 Perspective transformation				

1.3.3 Critical reflection				
1.3.4 Critical self-reflection				
1.4 Reflective practice				
1.5 Professional development				
1.6 Let Me Learn Theory				
1.6.1 Validation of the LCI				
1.6.2 Lexicon of terms				
1.6.3 Empirical evidence				

APPENDIX 4

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROMPT SCHEDULE

Biographical details of interviewees

Name		
Gender		
Year of participation in the LMLpLP		
Highest degree of education		
Age at the time of participation		
Total years of teaching at the time of participation in the LMLpLP		
Primary or Secondary teaching		
Grade level/s taught at the present time		
Subject/s taught at the time of participation in the LMLpLP.		
Subject/s teaching at present		
Year or grade level taught		
Lci scores	Sequence =	Precision= technical reasoning= Confluence=

Leading Questions

Initial motivation for participation and initial expectations

1	What made you participate in the LMLpLP?
2	What were your initial expectations of the process?
3	How has these expectations changed during and immediately after participation in the process?
4	How has these expectations been fulfilled during the process?

Perceived effects at the time of participation

5	At the time of participation how did you perceive the training?
6	How were you affected by your participation the LMLpLP?
7	Identify the single most profound moment during the process and your reaction to this realization.
8	Identify a moment during the training that you found to be a strong experience of learning

Long term effects

9	Describe situations in the classroom which show how the change in practice of teaching effected the following relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * with pupils * pupils between themselves * with parents
10	What effect, if any, has the LMLpLP had on your professional growth?
11	What do you still value and refer to in your teaching practice?
12	How has your professional practice been affected by this awareness?
13	Explain how you use your knowledge of the LML process in your planning, lesson delivery and planned support.
14	Has the knowledge of the learning profile of your students helped you to give better support and personalize instruction?
15	Where there any believes or practices that the training made you question?

School Transformation

16	How do you see the philosophy of the Let Me Learn Process fitting within the ethos of the school?
17	What changes, if any, within the school have you witnessed since

		the school adopted the Let Me Learn Process and teachers attended the LMLpLP?
18		How has your personal transformation (growth) brought about changes in the school?
19		How has school transformation brought about changes in the school?
20		How has all this benefitted the students under your care?
21		What would you change in the LMLpL to better serve your professional aspirations?

APPENDIX 5

HEAD OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW PROMPT SCHEDULE

Biographical details of interviewee

Name	
Gender	
E-mail	
Mobile Telephone	
Number of years leading the school	

Leading Questions

Initial motivation for participation and initial expectations

1	What made you turn to the LML Centre for support?
2	What were your initial expectations of the process?
3	How has these expectations changed during the years you've been working with the LML team?
4	How has these expectations been fulfilled during the process?

Perceived effects at the time of participation

5	At the initial stages, when you started sending the first members of your teaching and support staff, how did you perceive the training?
6	In your view how was your staff affected by their participation in the LMLpLP?

Long term effects

7	Identify one change in your school that you can attribute to the LML process.
8	How has the relationship with the school non teaching staff changed?
9	Has the relationship between the staff and yourself as head of school changed?

10	How has the school culture / school and parents and community changed?
11	What effect, if any, has the LMLpLP had on the professional attitude of your staff?
12	What do you still value and refer to as a leader?
13	Explain how you use your knowledge of the LML process in your work as a head of this school.
14	Has the knowledge of the learning profile of your staff helped you to give better support and personalize your support to them?
15	Have you seen an improvement over the years in the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school? How much would you attribute this to the awareness gained through the LML process?

Personal Transformation and School Transformation

16	How do you see the philosophy of the Let Me Learn Process fitting within the ethos of the school?
17	What changes, if any, within the school have you witnessed since the school adopted the Let Me Learn Process and teachers attended the LMLpLP?
18	You have participated in the LMLpLP (for administrators) yourself. How has the process affected you as a leader within this school?
19	How has your personal transformation (growth) brought about changes in the school?
20	How has the school transformation brought about changes in your practice?
21	How has all this benefitted the students under your care?
22	What would you change in the LMLpL to better serve your professional aspirations?

APPENDIX 6

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW PROMPT SCHEDULE

Biographical details of interviewee

Name		
Gender		
E-mail		
Mobile Telephone		
Number of years working within the SMT		

Leading Questions

Initial motivation for participation and initial expectations

19	1		What value do you see in the school's adoption of the LML?
1	2		What were your initial expectations of the process?
18	3		How has these expectations changed during the years you've been working with the LML team?
17	4		How has these expectations been fulfilled during the process?

Perceived effects at the time of participation

16	5		At the initial stages, when the first members of your teaching and support staff started attending the training, what were your initial impressions?
15	6		In your view how was your staff affected by their participation in the LMLpLP?

Long term effects

2	7		Identify one change in your school that you can attribute to the LML process.
3	8		What effect, if any, has the LMLpLP had on the professional attitude of your staff?
4	9		What do you still value and refer to as a leader?
5	10		Explain how you use your knowledge of the LML process in your

		work as a member of the senior management team of this school.
6	11	Has the knowledge of the learning profile of your staff helped you to give better support and personalize your support to them?
7	12	Have you seen an improvement over the years in the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school? How much would you attribute this to the awareness gained through the LML process?

Personal Transformation and School Transformation

8	13	How do you see the philosophy of the Let Me Learn Process fitting within the ethos of the school?
9	14	What changes, if any, within the school have you witnessed since the school adopted the Let Me Learn Process and teachers attended the LMLpLP?
10	15	You have participated in the LMLpLP yourself. How has the process affected you as a leader within this school?
11	16	How has your personal transformation (growth) brought about changes in the school?
12	17	How has the school transformation brought about changes in your practice?
13	18	How has all this benefitted the students under your care?
14	19	What would you change in the LMLpLP to better serve your professional aspirations?

APPENDIX 7

SAMPLE: 12X15cm INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What value do you see in the school's adoption of the LML?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>What were your initial expectations of the process?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>How has these expectations changed during the years you've been working with the LML team?</p>	

APPENDIX 8

DEFINITIONS OF THEMES

Phase 1. Disorienting dilemma (A 'trigger' event, an experience that challenged the participant's 'engrained professional behaviour').

1.1 Awareness of incumbent diversity

Awareness of the challenges posed by, and lack of appreciation of, diversity within the teaching community.

1.2 Social Justice

The urge for the fair treatment of all students, irrespective of their social, academic standpoint. Refers to the idea of creating a school that is based on the realization of the principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values each student's dignity.

1.3 Incongruence between espoused and prevalent values

A set of consistent personal and political held values that is at times inconsistent with the dominant practice.

1.4 Policy decisions

An external force, namely the school agreed direction, that triggered interest and challenged the participant to participate in the Process.

Phase 2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame

2.1 Realization of limitations

An actor's realization of the limitations incumbent in one's and the institution's role in bringing about change.

2.2 'Fad' syndrome

A **fad** is the following of a novel 'system' but fade quickly once novelty wares off.

2.3 Culture of labelling

The Profession's insistence on the labelling of students and the treatment of such students reflecting the label given.

2.4 Scepticism

Doubt regarding claims that are taken for granted elsewhere.

Phase 3. Critical reflection and re-evaluation of assumptions about oneself and his/her professional learning.

3.1 Problemization of past intents

Questioning one's intentions for opting for a specific choice (e.g. choice of LML as a Process for tackling teaching and learning).

3.2 Problemization of practice

Re-evaluation of present practice as a result of new awareness

3.3 Global re-evaluation of the implications to one's practice

Reflection and evaluation of the Process on the repercussions to one's practice.

3.4 Reflection on the process of collective transformation

Reflection on the process of transformation as a collective endeavour.

3.5 Reflection on inter/intrapersonal relationships

Reflection on the self as a learner and the affects of the process on relationships with others.

3.6 Reflection on non-linearity of the process of change

Reflection on the conduct of Change as a to-and-fro movement.

Phase 4 Mention of dialogue and discourse with others within or outside the professional circle (for consensual validation or for seeking expertise)

4.1 Dialogue between mentor and teacher being mentored

Mention of dialogue between Let Me Learn mentor and teacher for seeking consensual validation and/or for seeking expertise.

4.2 Dialogue between teachers

Mention of dialogue between teachers and/or other professionals about the Process and/or its implications to their practice.

4.3 Dialogue between teachers and parents/guardians

Mention of dialogue between teachers and parents on a child's learning, encouragement and/or process of developing learning strategies.

4.4 Dialogue between SMT and practitioners.

Mention of dialogue between teachers and their SMT on school policy and teaching/learning strategies adopted.

4.5 Discourse with self and others to problematize alternative perspectives.

Mention of discourse that problematize the process of learning for its robustness and suitability or usability for the identified needs.

4.6 Language of possibility

Mention or reference to the development or change in language used in reference to a student's learning.

Phase 5 Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions.

5.1 The Educator as a Catalyst of Change

The role of an individual or institution to bring about change.

5.2 The teacher as an 'archaeologist' of learning potential

The role of an educator in recovering, surveying and excavating learning potential in every learner.

5.3 The school as an example for other schools

A school that acts as an example and is seen as a model for other schools to emulate.

5.4 The educator exploring alternative discourse

Exploration of new, shared language-of-possibility and inclusivity.

5.5 The educator exploring alternative pedagogical praxis

Exploration of alternative practice as a result of reflection leading to inclusivity.

Phase 6 Planning of a course of action

6.1 *Initiating others into the process*

Promoting the process with other professionals and supporting them in the initiation stages of the process.

6.2 *Reflecting on school policies*

Rethinking and/or attempting to modify school policies due to new understanding of learners' needs.

6.3 *Bring about change at a paced growth*

Reference to a paced change process

6.4 *Changing of practice as a result of a better understanding of learners*

Development of pedagogical practice due to, and as a result of, a renewed understanding of the learners needs.

Phase 7. References to acquisition of knowledge and skill for implementing one's plan.

7.1 *Improved personal and professional interpersonal communication*

References to improvement in interpersonal communication with others within and outside the professional community.

7.2 *Improved understanding of learners' needs*

References to improvement in identifying learners' needs.

7.3 *Intuitive deciphering of learning patterns*

References to the ability to decode and/or use knowledge of learning patterns.

7.4 *Reference to success*

References to successful implementation of strategies inspired by the LML process

7.5 *Application of differentiated strategies*

Intentional application of differentiated strategies.

Phase 8. Provisional trying of new roles

8.1 *The moment of realization - Aha moment*

There's a moment when an actor realizes the usefulness of the process

8.2 *Exploring different venues of implementation*

References to attempts and exploration of using the Process in different settings

8.3 *Attempts at integrating LML process with other tools/methods*

Integrating and assimilating the LML process with other methodologies and/or methods of teaching and learning

8.4 *Attempts at applying the process in non-formal situations*

Reference to the use of the LML process beyond the curricular purview.

8.5 *Awareness of the challenges ahead*

Awareness of challenges and difficulties in the implementation of the Process while trying new roles.

Phase 9. Building competence and self-competence in new roles and relationships

9.1 *Feeling of competence in adapting response*

Building a sense of competence in responding to the needs of the learners.

9.2 *Feeling of competence in motivating students*

Building a sense of competence in motivating students to learn.

9.3 *Feeling of competence in understanding oneself*

Actively working to try to tackle the challenge of reintegrating the process into new situations of one's life.

9.4 *The challenge of reintegrating the process into new roles*

As a result of this new awareness and acquired skills one is able to better understand how s/he learns.

Phase 10. References to a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective.

10.1 *Extensive use of new language conditioned by the new perspective*

Integration of new Let Me Learn inclusive language in professional discourse.

10.2 *Reference to recognition of competence by outsiders*

Other individuals outside the school recognize identified competences – this can be termed as external validation.

10.3 *Critical reflection as an integral aspect of professional practice*

Reflecting on one's own assumptions. Engaging effectively in discourse to validate one's beliefs through one's experiences.

10.4 *Assimilation of the process as an integral part of one's actions*

Changes in one's practice due to change in perspective.

APPENDIX 9

SAMPLE: CROSS CHECKING OF THEMES

Read carefully the excerpt. In the first column on the right write the phase number under which you would put the excerpt. In the second column write under which theme you would place each of the excerpts given. In case any of the excerpts do not fit under any one of the given Phase or Theme given write X.

Excerpts	Phase	Theme
<p>Question: Identify one change in your school that you can attribute to the LML process. Anna: When you have students claiming they cannot do something because I am not technical or I am not sequential. Or at home my son would claim I am not like Fina Colin: So language is being used Anna: Yes. For example this year we targeted our Form 1s. It did not happen only this year but now we have learning skills. No, I think language is there. Even in Form 5s sometimes they come up with something of this sort. (Lines 256-262)</p>		
<p>I think I haven't been using it for at least 2/3 years now, recently I have been teaching the older students, therefore in the last 2 years I was teaching form 5s only. At the moment I am only teaching one class, so in regards to teaching I feel I am on my own. (lines 50-53)</p>		
<p>Colin: Could I affirm that in this school, although you don't think it has reached where you would have liked to reach, but you are in the middle of a process? Anna: Definitely yes. I believe that the process started a long time ago, a lot of things still need to be done, definitely. Even in the last two years, the language has changes, it has developed, maybe I have become more aware of certain things, even the way that certain people speak. So I think it is a process, it is a process definitely. A process which has started a long time ago but obviously the drive or momentum is not always the same, so for example in the beginning of the year, when we started to work on the learning policy, momentum was fast but then other work comes in and you start to slow down a bit. Now we now we have to continue, so it is a process. (Lines 246-255)</p>		
<p>We have identified certain priorities that we have to work on as a whole school, together as teachers, I can't remember all the priorities by heart, I can look them up for you, but basically you have time, diversity and inclusion, then there is something else, and basically what the staff will do for example if we are going to take time, they came up with a number of points so that they can visit each other's classrooms, this is the point we have reached so far ok, so then a policy needs to be derived from this, we are calling it peer observation, at the moment we are calling it practice sharing. We had to change it's name. Practice sharing where the idea is that we visit each other's classrooms with a checklist if we want to call it that, which was brought forward by the staff itself, we worked on the main points, then we gave them to the staff, they went through them and gave it back to us. It was a very long process, like we are going to observe so LML is part of this checklist, where eventually a policy is going to be introduced. It is a long process to come up with a policy but a lot of work has been done in this regard, this year. (Lines 222-236)</p>		
<p>as a whole staff, we haven't found a way of using it effectively in the classroom, that is still lacking, it is not there in the case of every individual who has attended the training. Colin: Why? Anna: This happens because of different reasons, because of the syllabus, because they are afraid, because of the fact that is not easy to cater for everyone, I think I would love to see it more present in the classroom. (Lines 149-155)</p>		
<p>I too try to cope with the syllabus like everyone else especially when teaching form 5s. Colin: yes. Anna: I move away from the theory and not only that but I throw everything I believe in out of the window, and I am not happy about that. Before you asked me what I could do to bring about change. That is why I believe that you have to lead by example. That is why we teach because when you do that you show what you believe in. (Lines 340-347)</p>		
<p>Personally I had always been aware of mixed abilities, of different children, em of special needs, academically good students so I think I had always been aware of it. (Lines 18-20)</p>		
<p>I believe that when you have a group of teachers and you are lecturing a group of teachers, sceptism is always there. Like, ok now show me how this can be done, sort of now with all your big talk,</p>		

<p>come in my position and do it. From that point of view, my expectations weren't met because it was very much theory based. (lines 84-88)</p>		
<p>LML has helped me understand myself better for example. In this case if you are able to understand yourself, then you are in a better position to help the student. Like why are you so rigid in the teaching of mathematics? Why am I so rigid? (Lines 176-179)</p>		
<p>Even the idea of mentoring could be taken up with the SMT as well like in its planning and then in practice. We sometimes feel this. People are expecting a lot from you and sometimes you don't have all the answers, so if you have the team's backing who has visited other schools, seen different things. So mentoring, apart from mentoring in the class, this would help as well. Now we have come to the point where we put it into practice, in this situation of inclusion of mixed ability (Lines 588-594)</p>		
<p>I am hoping that next year I will teach form 1 students as well because I have a firm believe that I have to lead by example. I also informed Mario that next year I would like to teach form 1s instead of form 5s because it is very difficult to work with them. (lines 70-73)</p>		
<p>I remember a particular instance, when I had a group who had just finished a disastrous session with me and when I checked their scores, I realised that I had three students who hadn't done the inventory and I had grouped them together. They had been sick when I had carried out the inventory with the rest of the class. When I carried out the inventory with them I realised that they had the same patterns and that was an eye opener for me. (Lines 58-64)</p>		
<p>I started to value LML more even so when I linked it to cooperative learning, so in a way I gave it my own touch, ... (lines 31-33)</p>		
<p>I worry about those students falling behind maybe because we are not finding the best ways to tackle them, that is something that worries me apart from the outside factors which effect as well. (lines 571-573)</p>		
<p>Even in the last two years, the language has changes, it has developed, maybe I have become more aware of certain things, even the way that certain people speak. (Lines 249-251)</p>		
<p>However, what I did, I used to use it a lot when it came to the grouping of the students through LML patterns, and I used to find it very helpful. It is not always easy to group students according to patterns, to ability and to friendship because those are the 3 main things I use when grouping: LML, ability and friendship, it is not easy to carry out but when you are able to find a good mix, then it was really helpful (Lines 55-58)</p>		
<p>However, I don't know if it is something we could explore, like it could be some kind of development during the time that we have for ourselves. What I can tell you is that as a group, they are very willing to take training, they are always doing that course or another even after school hours. They do a lot of courses, maybe we can speak about this, with them and with the team. (Lines 516-520)</p>		
<p>Sometimes I get the impression, that some teachers attend the training because we send them to it. I know that we have sent the new teachers, those who are just starting their teaching career, and so they have a lot and a lot of preparation. In our case, we are carried away by our enthusiasm to send them for the training, that sometimes I get the impression, that you know, they are just out of university, you are giving them another course, and maybe they attend because we send them for it. If we are speaking about initial impressions, I do have some not about everybody, not on everybody. (Lines 120-127)</p>		
<p>I think, it is more of an initial reluctance because when I ask them How did it go? This reluctance doesn't manifest itself so much afterwards, it is more of oh we have to attend another course, we have to attend. I think that once they start the training, they see the need for the training, (Lines 133-137)</p>		

<p>I think that this year, let's speak about this year, there were so many things, even the fact that we were working on the learning policy and then at a certain point we stopped. During the scholastic year there are so many things that one has to see to, so I think we need to sit down and we discuss this, we still have a lot of work to do and maybe you as a team could come in with your mentoring. Ultimately we don't have all the answers. (Lines 576-581)</p>		
<p>I would like LML to be put into practice together with other things. At the moment, I think others have told you, we are working on a learning policy and obviously this is going to be included in it. (Lines 220-222)</p>		
<p>Colin: So let's speak from two different levels because I think that they influence each other but they can be different from each other: from the intellectual level, the way that the teachers speak, how they evaluate certain situations, then there is another level, the practical level, how to implement it in the classroom. Anna: so from the intellectual level, it is ok, I don't think that was the problem, on that level we are ok. Colin: So can we affirm that there was a progress from the intellectual level or was it already there and it remained so? Anna: No, I think that there was a lot of progress. I can't say I saw it in everyone but there was progress that obviously varies like everything but the practical level needs to be implemented more. Colin: The transfer Anna: Yes I think the transfer hasn't been made yet, and most of the times it is not because people don't want it, it is more of the fact that people are afraid that they won't finish the syllabus on time (Lines 285-299)</p>		
<p>And now that I am doing it, I am glad that I stopped for a while because I started opening up the papers from this morning, I know I will pay for stopping but finally I am glad I did it because a lot of thought are flowing in my mind, thoughts I haven't had for quiet a time now. I believe a lot in communication (lines 641-644)</p>		
<p>Two weeks ago, I was really pleased. We had a meeting with two parents, the mum and the dad of student who is in form 1. These people are using LML in their learning skills, they are facing a problem of how to study with their son, and one of the things that they asked for was the LML inventory, so that they fill it out themselves, so that they check if the way they personally learn, clashed with they way their son learns. So, yes there are these instances which show the strengths of LML. (Lines 206-211)</p>		
<p>I also think that if we are only going to focus on LML on it's own, we are not going to reach our goal, obviously this is coming from my knowledge of cooperative learning where I believe that LML needs to be backed up by other things. In that sense I don't think we have to only use LML. (lines 155-159)</p>		
<p>At the moment, I think others have told you, we are working on a learning policy and obviously this is going to be included in it. (Lines 221-222)</p>		
<p>At that time, I was focusing on cooperative learning during a program at school, whereby I would group students by ability, then LML came along and I started to include patterns as well in grouping (Lines 48 -50)</p>		
<p>I would like LML to be put into practice together with other things. (lines 220-221)</p>		
<p>Anna: There teachers have two hours in which they don't have to think about syllabus, they are free to roam and there I believe that every pattern is being targeted in the most marvellous way possible and teachers cater for it. Even teachers who are seen as being very rigid during lessons do a lot of stuff..... So as you can see since teachers are not restrained by the syllabus they are ready to roam in the most splendid of ways. If I had to think about each activity that we had during the education unplugged, every pattern was targeted in each activity. Then put back the syllabus and the restrains it brings with it, the time factor and we go back ... (Lines 332-239)</p>		
<p>When you look at the staff, do you feel that there was progression? Anna: Yes there was progress but not enough, that is it. I feel that we have progressed but not enough. Only because I always keep this thing in mind, so I look at it from that point of view. I</p>		

wish to see more progress from the perspective of inclusion, of different students. (Lines 279-284)		
When I give out a lecture at university, I also mention them, so I mention cooperative learning as well as LML, well when I work with B.Ed's secondary because I feel that they compliment each other (Lines 64-66)		
We work a lot with those students who are not able to get 9 o levels but are able to get 1 or 2. There is a lot of good work being done by LSAs with parents for these students. It is a big network. (Lines 467-469)		
Anna: I think that since I work on the curriculum and support, it is always at the back of my mind. The fact that I was working on the learning policy, it's there, at the back all the time. Then I think that it effects, it influences what you are doing. I think that when for example I am going to take a decision about a student who needs support, we would be working with him using a particular pattern and not another. A while ago we were looking into a student who we had sent to psychologist how we could work with him, we know that he is a very technical students, and that he has low sequence, and now we are even exploring the idea of using machines and manuals and other things to help him read. (Lines 476-484)		
Without any doubt LML will be part of it. When you observe, you will cater for different patterns, so I think it was referred to continuously. (Lines 244-245)		
The students are being given the opportunity to see their own value, which isn't necessarily academic and then you have a lot of work which is being done with those students who need support. These work on self esteem, different programs which cater for different students. We have students who don't take all the syllabus, they are given an adapted program, with the older ones we are also working with them for visits abroad, setting out program, there is a lot and a lot of work being done. (Lines 459-465)		
Like we were saying before, it is a process. We are working a lot on teaching and learning, however like I have already told you, I believe that a lot of work still 0needs to be done on the part of LML. In the sense that if we really wish LML to make a greater impact on our teaching and learning, then we have a lot of work to do. (Lines 501-504)		
Anna: Yes even during this meeting, where the parent mentioned LML, I was really pleased. Even last year, we carried out a workshop for the parents. The fact that you have all the stakeholders involved, so now you are speaking not only about the students but also about the parents, then I believe that, that was one of the changes that this process brought about. (Lines 235-269)		
I think the fact that we have a common language helps a lot. Even when we have a meeting like, it is a common language. (lines 148-149)		
I believe a lot in communication and I believe it is one of the school's strengths, we are not afraid of speaking about things with each other although this is not always easy to do. We have a lot of pd days and we communicate on things other than the timetable, we also speak about practical things as well. (Lines 647-651)		
And now that I am doing it, I am glad that I stopped for a while because I started opening up the papers from this morning, I know I will pay for stopping but finally I am glad I did it because a lot of thought are flowing in my mind, thoughts I haven't had for quiet a time now. I believe a lot in communication (Lines 638-641)		
Then, when we decided that we were going to implement this particular process, we were all for the training of the whole staff or at least the majority of the staff, since it wouldn't have made sense to be discussing something during a meeting, for example, during SDPs, during evaluations that we carry out from time to time if they are not trained. (Lines 6 – 10)		
Colin: What do you think has to be done for this transfer to occur?		

<p>Anna: I think one of the factors is the letting go, if you are implementing certain things, you have to let go of the rigid structure of that we call education (lines 300-302)</p> <p>Anna: But I have to let go. If I am doing groupwork, they are then divided according to the patterns, I have to let go in the sense that I have to have faith in the students, they own the process themselves now. There has to be a leap in the personality of the person concerned, if you continue to think that everything has to pass by you and you can do everything on your own and teaching has to take place from the teacher's side, there needs to be a shift in the mentality which I think has everything to do with the personality even if you need to join the students on the floor cutting things out. If you are going to remain very well dressed in this particular setting and you look down on the students .. you can't do it... (Lines 307 – 315)</p>		
<p>I think being conscientious always was at basis of my development. (Lines 21-22)</p>		
<p>Sometimes what happens to us during the year, even when reflecting what happened with the learning policy, is that you don't have the strength; you don't have the energy because you would have other things on your plate as well. (Lines 605-608)</p>		
<p>I know that we have 2 members of staff who are still resisting, I am not talking about a lot of people, I know who they are, sort of I have a lot to do, I will do it next year. I think I am only talking about just one or two people, not more. (LINES 142-145)</p>		
<p>When I take a closer look at both, I feel that LML give you the theory, something which helps you in the formation of the thoughts, whereas cooperative learning is the practical side, so one helps the other (Lines 66-68)</p>		
<p>For example we were really pleased that it worked even though not everyone was on board since we are still in the initial stages of its process (here Anna is referring to the process of 'sharing practice'). I know that this has happened with an experienced teacher and a new teacher, there was this interaction, they teach the same subject and there was this interaction, feedback was given which was excellent but through this framework, space was given for this interaction to happen. Most probably she wouldn't have gone to visit his class, so we encouraged this, they interacted and probably he was the one who invited her to his class, because in our case the teachers can choose who to visit and who visits them, we don't pair teachers up. Yes all of these things certainly helped a lot. (Lines 357-365)</p>		
<p>these are people that are on the job, and not everyone is ready to sit down and look up information, so you need to help them a bit (LINES 112-113)</p>		
<p>I would imagine that, that was exactly what I was expecting, that LML would help me in this new adventure ... In my case, before I joined this particular school, I used to teach in a Junior Lyceum. Students were mixed, but the reality of mixed ability wasn't as such as we presently have here. I would imagine that my initial expectations were how it was going to help me in my new challenge. (Lines 22-26)</p>		
<p>the practical side was lacking, sort of, I had to be the one, as is supposed to be, but I think there could have been more Colin: More input Anna: I had to be the one to think about ways of how to implement it in class (LINES 80-84)</p>		
<p>Anna: When I started in this line of work, 2 years ago, I spent sleepless night because when you have people looking at you, waiting for you to solve their problem, when it is something so complex, and when each decision you take is going to effect the lives of the students, the fact that you have the backing of the expertise, the joining of the forces. (Lines 602-606)</p>		
<p>I know that other work was carried out afterwards, even in my case, when you came and shot the video in class. I think it was lacking at that time, I was expecting like, now tell me how to go about it and how do I go about it in my particular subject, not in a general way, just help me do it in the class, in my subject. I feel that was lacking.</p>		

(LINES 88-92)		
I believe that we need to work with tools derived from cooperative learning and I also believe that there are other methods which we haven't come across yet that can also be used. It has to be a mix. (Lines 180-183)		
I believe that in actual practice we are still Whilst we work a lot on mixed ability, whilst we speak a lot about it, when it comes to teaching and learning, I believe that there is a lot that we still need to do. I think that while it is a common language, we are speaking, we understand when we speak, we understand the students, we understand where certain difficulties are concerned and then how to actually put it into practice in the classroom. (Lines 188-194)		
Since we have a mixed ability school, I think that it is part of our school ethos that we, like, try to cater for differences found in our students, so it was really important that we do something of the sort. (lines 2 -4)		

APPENDIX 10

2ND ROUND ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
1.1 Awareness of incumbent diversity									
1.2 Social justice									
1.3 Incongruence between espoused and prevalent values									
1.4 Policy decisions									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
2.1 Realization of Limitations									
2.2 'Fad' syndrome									
2.3 Culture of labelling									
2.4 Scepticism									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
3.1 Problemization of past intends									
3.2 Problemization of practice									
3.3 Global re-evaluation of the implications to one's practice									
3.4 Reflection on the process of collective transformation									
3.5 Reflection on inter/intrapersonal relationships									
3.6 Reflection on non- linearity of the process of change									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
4.1 Dialogue between mentor and teacher being mentored									
4.2 Dialogue between teachers									
4.3 Dialogue between teachers and parents									
4.4 Dialogue between SMT and practitioners									
4.5 Discourse with self and others to problematize alternative perspectives									
4.6 Language of possibility									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
5.1 Catalyst of change									
5.2 The teacher as an 'archaeologist' of learning potential									
5.3 The school as an example for other schools									
5.4 Alternative discourse									
5.5 Alternative pedagogical praxis									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
6.1 Initiating others into the process									
6.2 Reflecting on school policies									
6.3 Paced growth									
6.4 Change of practice									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
7.1 Improved personal and professional interpersonal communication									
7.2 Improved understanding of learners' needs									
7.3 Intuitive deciphering of learning patterns									
7.4 Reference to success									
7.5 Application of differentiated strategies									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
8.1 The moment of realization – Aha moment									
8.2 Exploring different venues of implementation									
8.3 Attempts at integrating the LML process with other tools/methods									
8.4 Application in non-formal situations									
8.5 Awareness of the challenges ahead									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
9.1. Feeling of competence in adapting response									
9.2 Feeling of competence in motivating students									
9.3 Feeling of competence in understanding oneself									
9.4 Reintegrating the process into new roles									

	MH	AA	SA	EP	YP	CP	FSL	JSL	RSS
10.1 Use of new Language									
10.2 Recognition of competence by outsiders									
10.3 Critical reflection as an integral aspect of professional practice									
10.4 Assimilation of the process as an integral part of one's actions									

APPENDIX 11

FREQUENCY TABLE

CRITERIA	CODE	MARIO	ANNA Z	SUE	JUANITA	FIONA	ROSELLA	ETIENNE	YASMIN	CONNIE
1: DISORIENTING DILEMMA	1.1: AWARENESS OF INCUMBENT DIVERSITY		✓<2>	✓<3>					✓<1>	✓<1>
	1.2: SOCIAL JUSTICE	✓<1>	✓<2>		✓<2>					
	1.3: INCONGRUENCE BETWEEN ESPOUSED AND PREVALENT VALUES	✓<1>	✓<2>							
	1.4: POLICY DECISION					✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>
2: SELF-EXAMINATION WITH FEELINGS OF FEAR, ANGER, GUILT OR SHAME	2.1: REALIZATION OF LIMITATIONS	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>			✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<1>	
	2.2: 'FAD' SYNDROME			✓<1>						
	2.3: CULTURE OF LABELLING	✓<2>				✓<1>				✓<1>
	2.4: SCEPTICISM		✓<1>		✓<2>					

<p>3: CRITICAL REFLECTION AND RE-EVALUATION OF ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ONESELF AND HIS/HER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</p>	<p>3.1: PROBLEMATIZATION OF PAST INTENDS</p>	<p>✓<4></p>	<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<4></p>	<p>✓<2></p>			<p>✓<1></p>		<p>✓<1></p>
	<p>3.2: PROBLEMIZATION OF PRACTICE</p>	<p>✓<1></p>		<p>✓<1></p>		<p>✓<1></p>			<p>✓<3></p>	
	<p>3.3: GLOBAL RE-EVALUATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS TO ONE'S PRACTICE</p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<2></p>		<p>✓<3></p>	<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<4></p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<1></p>
	<p>3.4: REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATION</p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<3></p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<1></p>		<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<1></p>	
	<p>3.5: REFLECTION ON INTER/INTRAPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</p>	<p>✓<2></p>		<p>✓<3></p>	<p>✓<2></p>		<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<1></p>	<p>✓<2></p>
	<p>3.6: REFLECTION ON THE NON-LINEARITY OF THE PROCESS OF CHANGE</p>	<p>✓<2></p>	<p>✓<1></p>							

4: MENTION OF DIALOGUE AND DISCOURSE WITH OTHERS WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE PROFESSIONAL CIRCLE	4.1: DIALOGUE BETWEEN MENTOR AND TEACHER BEING MENTORED	✓<1>		✓<3>						
	4.2: DIALOGUE BETWEEN TEACHERS	✓<1>			✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<2>	✓<1>
	4.3: DIALOGUE BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS	✓<2>	✓<2>					✓<3>	✓<1>	✓<1>
	4.4: DIALOGUE BETWEEN SMT AND PRACTITIONERS						✓<1>		✓<1>	
	4.5: DISCOURSE WITH SELF AND OTHERS TO PROBLEMATIZE ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES			✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<1>				✓<1>
	4.6: LANGUAGE OF POSSIBILITY	✓<1>		✓<1>	✓<1>			✓<1>		✓<2>
5: EXPLORATION OF OPTIONS FOR NEW ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS AND ACTIONS	5.1: THE EDUCATOR AS A CATALYST OF CHANGE		✓<1>	✓<1>		✓<1>			✓<1>	
	5.2: THE TEACHER AS AN 'ARCHAEOLOGIST' OF LEARNING POTENTIAL			✓<3>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<2>	✓<1>	

	5.3: THE SCHOOL AS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER SCHOOLS			✓<1>					✓<1>	
	5.4: THE EDUCATOR EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE	✓<1>					✓<2>			
	5.5: THE EDUCATOR EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS			✓<4>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<4>	✓<1>		
6: PLANNING OF A COURSE OF ACTION	6.1: INITIATING OTHERS INTO THE PROCESS	✓<1>	✓<5>	✓<2>	✓<1>		✓<2>			✓<1>
	6.2: REFLECTING ON SCHOOL POLICIES		✓<3>		✓<1>			✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<2>
	6.3: BRING ABOUT CHANGE AT A PACED GROWTH	✓<3>	✓<1>		✓<1>					
	6.4: CHANGING OF PRACTICE AS A RESULT OF A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNERS	✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<4>	✓<2>	✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<1>
7: REFERENCES TO ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL FOR IMPLEMENTING ONE'S PLAN	7.1: IMPROVED PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	✓<5>	✓<2>	✓<3>	✓<2>	✓<4>	✓<2>		✓<1>	✓<1>
	7.2: IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNERS' NEEDS			✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<3>	✓<3>

	7.3: INTUITIVE DECIPHERING OF LEARNING PATTERNS	✓<2>	✓<3>	✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<2>		✓<1>	✓<1>	
	7.4: REFERENCE TO SUCCESS	✓<1>			✓<4>	✓<3>		✓<2>		✓<1>
	7.5: APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIATED STRATEGIES	✓<1>			✓<2>	✓<2>				
8: PROVISIONAL TRYING OF NEW ROLES	8.1: THE MOMENT OF REALIZATION - AHA MOMENT	✓<1>			✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	
	8.2: EXPLORING DIFFERENT VENUES OF IMPLEMENTATION	✓<4>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<3>		✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>
	8.3: ATTEMPTS AT INTEGRATING LML PROCESS WITH OTHER TOOLS/METHODS	✓<1>	✓<5>		✓<1>	✓<1>		✓<1>	✓<1>	
	8.4: ATTEMPTS AT APPLYING THE PROCESS IN NON-FORMAL SITUATIONS		✓<1>				✓<2>			
	8.5: AWARENESS OF THE CHALLENGES AHEAD	✓<1>	✓<1>			✓<1>				
9: BUILDING COMPETENCE AND SELF-COMPETENCE IN NEW ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS	9.1: FEELING OF COMPETENCE IN ADAPTING TO RESPONSE		✓<2>		✓<1>		✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>

	9.2: FEELING OF COMPETENCE IN MOTIVATING STUDENTS			✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<3>			✓<1>
	9.4: FEELING OF COMPETENCE IN UNDERSTANDING ONESELF	✓<3>	✓<1>	✓<2>				✓<2>	✓<1>	✓<2>
	9.3: THE CHALLENGE OF REINTEGRATING THE PROCESS INTO NEW ROLES	✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>					✓<1>	
10: REFERENCES TO A REINTEGRATION INTO ONE'S LIFE ON THE BASIS OF CONDITIONS DICTATED BY ONE'S PERSPECTIVES	10.1: EXTENSIVE USE OF NEW LANGUAGE CONDITIONED BY THE NEW PERSPECTIVE	✓<8>	✓<3>	✓<3>	✓<7>	✓<1>		✓<2>	✓<1>	
	10.2: REFERENCE TO RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCE BY OUTSIDERS	✓<3>		✓<1>			✓<1>			
	10.3: CRITICAL REFLECTION AS AN INTEGRAL ASPECT OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	✓<4>			✓<2>			✓<1>	✓<1>	✓<1>
	10.4: ASSIMILATION OF THE PROCESS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ONE'S ACTION	✓<3>	✓<3>	✓<3>	✓<5>	✓<3>	✓<1>	✓<3>	✓<2>	✓<1>

APPENDIX 12

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

The full text of the transcriptions is supplied on the CD accompanying this dissertation.

Selbständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, Colin Calleja, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit mit dem Titel „The Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process for Teacher Transformation“ selbständig verfasst habe.

Des Weiteren bestätige ich, dass die vorliegende Arbeit ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt wurde und dass die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken in der Arbeit als solche kenntlich gemacht sind. Ich versichere zudem, dass die vorgelegte Arbeit weder im Inland noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde zum Zwecke einer Promotion oder eines anderen Prüfungsverfahrens vorgelegt und auch noch nicht veröffentlicht wurde.

30. März 2013

Colin Calleja
