

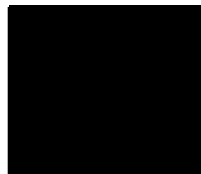
THE APPLICATION OF AN ADULT LEARNING APPROACH TO
GENETIC COUNSELLING : AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master in
Education with Honours of the University of New England.

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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



John Bryant Rae

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis was to explore the applicability of an adult learning approach to genetic counselling. This exploration commenced by reviewing the literature on genetic counselling and adult learning theory and examining the relationship between the two. Four selected transcripts of genetic counselling sessions were then analysed in two phases. The first phase included the categorisation of genetic counsellor dialogue according to the elements of a form of learning, contemplation, described by Jarvis' (1987) model of adult learning. The second phase included an examination of two aspects of the application of Jarvis' (1987) contemplation learning model which were considered to be important. One of these aspects involved searching the categorised genetic counsellor dialogue for evidence of cognitive versus affective domain material to determine if both could be accounted for. It was assumed that learners do not follow Jarvis' (1987) contemplation learning model in any sequential order. Therefore, the second phase also comprised a line by line analysis of the transcripts. This was intended to show the extent to which the genetic counsellors deviated from the sequence of the model. The review of the literature suggested there was a relationship between adult learning theory and genetic counselling, and analysis of the transcripts supported this. The analysis of the transcripts showed that Jarvis' (1987) contemplation learning model could be used to explore, discuss and understand the process genetic counsellors undergo, in both the cognitive and affective domains, but was not followed in the strict sequential order of Jarvis' (1987) model. The implications of the study for clinical practice, the education of genetic counsellors and future research are discussed.