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ic study of experiential learning within a South African MBA context

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8250162

Research thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Management (Dissertation)

Supervisors: **Professor L Whittaker**
Mr C Viedge

February 2011

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The subject of this research is ñA phenomengraphic study of experiential learning within a South African MBA contextò The specific MBA context explored in this study is the Negotiation elective of the MBA programme at the University of the Witwatersrandôs Graduate School of Business Administration (Wits Business School).

In her capacity as Career Advisor to postgraduate students at Wits Business School, the researcher encountered a number of MBA students who, subsequent to taking the MBA Negotiation elective, had gone through a period of considerable reflection, introspection and change. The changes observed ranged on a continuum, from basic behavioural adjustments to profound transformation. This led the researcher to question whether the Negotiation elective acted as a catalyst to this change.

The MBA Negotiation elective utilises various elements of experiential learning and has been widely regarded as an exemplar of experiential learning pedagogy within the University of the Witwatersrand/Wits Business School community. An evaluation of experiential learning pedagogy would thus prove useful to business school educators and career management practitioners who are primarily concerned with preparing students to manage work problems, lead subordinates and to make appropriate career and life choices in an increasingly complex and ambiguous global environment of business.

The research intent was to explore and analyse the qualitatively different experiences of students in the Negotiation elective, in order to discover the essence of what students experienced in the elective and how they experienced the phenomenon of experiential learning within the context described above. The intent provided the researcher with the rationale for the adoption of

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cifically, phenomenography for the research and

The researcher interviewed a purposive sample of eight students from the Negotiation elective at Wits Business School and gained their views on the research question. The respondentsô narratives derived from a single open ended question namely, ñTell me about your experience in the Negotiation elective, with particular reference to your learning and development.ò The narratives were subjected to a process of eidetic reduction, in accordance with the phenomenological method. From this process, the researcher was able to distil the findings into nine themes, which were then cross analysed and compared to the literature review.

The researcher was able to capture interesting insights into the similarities and variances in the studentsô conceptions of the phenomenon of experiential learning. A number of discoveries were made. Firstly, the research findings confirmed that a causal relationship exists between the level of significance attributed to an experience and the actual learning that resulted there from. Further, individual personality, learning style and behaviour impacted upon the receptivity to the experiential learning modality. The research study was able to tap into the transformative role of experiential learning, through the analysis of the themes of double loop learning and mental models that emerged from the analysis of the respondentsônarratives.

The value of reflection as a learning mechanism was confirmed and provides evidence of how learning is acquired through experiential learning pedagogy. Further, the research study was able to provide concrete examples of learning and development that resulted from the Negotiation elective and was also able to provide a critical perspective of the importance of the time dimension in development.

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sive evidence of the correlation between the arning context and the resultant learning and development. The research findings put forward a number of facilitation criteria that are essential for the provision of optimal learning within a community of learners. The possible shortcomings of this pedagogy are also highlighted through an exposure of the potential for framing and bias in the experiential learning context. Finally, the study confirms the assertion of Patel (2003) that experiential learning is phenomenological practice.

The research findings provide convincing support for the utilisation of experiential learning pedagogy as an appropriate androgogic approach for the management of ambiguity and complex change and the development of self-awareness and personal mastery. It should be adopted as modality of choice in preparing students for the leadership and management challenges of the environment of business in the 21st century.

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I declare that this Masters dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (dissertation) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before, for any other degree or examination at this, or any other, university.

Charisse Drobis
15 February 2011

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Professor Louise Whittaker and **Mr Conrad Viedge**, for their open minded guidance, support and patience;

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Grace Gole, who has taken care of my family for 24 years;

My husband **Selwyn** and children **Joshua** and **Nicole**, for their enduring love and unfailing support.

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1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenographic study is to explore and discover the essence of experiential learning within a South African MBA context, namely the Negotiations elective of the MBA programme at the University of the Witwatersrandôs Graduate School of Business Administration (Wits Business School). It is based on the experiences of a purposive sample of students chosen from participants in the MBA Negotiation elective at Wits Business School. The single pre-conceived question from which the primary research derives is ñTell me about your experience in the Negotiation elective, with particular reference to your learning and development.ò

Over a period spanning ten years, in her capacity as Career Advisor to postgraduate students at Wits Business School, the researcher has consulted with many students from the MBA programme. During career consultations with MBA students subsequent to the undertaking of the MBA Negotiation elective, it became apparent to the researcher that these students had undergone a process of immense introspection, growth in personal awareness and, in some cases, personal transformation.

As a result of their participation in the Negotiations elective the students developed new self-insights or, self-truths, pertaining to their awareness of certain personal and leadership competencies; or lack thereof. This led to an adjustment in current behaviour or adoption of entirely new behaviours in certain situations. In a number of cases, the students adopted one hundred and eighty degree shifts in their assumptions and conceptions about their behaviour, career and life choices and their view of the world, in general.

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pecific use of experiential learning pedagogy and d within a number of broad definitions of experiential learning. These include activities that ñengage the learner directly in the phenomenon being studiedò (Cantor 1995:1); ñlearning by doingò through activities such as in-class simulations and discussion leadership (Domask 2007: 2) and application of practical experience and post experience reflection described by Kolb in his definition of experiential learning as a process whereby through the transformation of experience, knowledge is created, (Kolb 1984: 38).

This pre-empted a questioning of whether this pedagogy might act as a catalyst in affecting and effecting learning and development and if so, the manner in which this is achieved. Moreover, it inspired a need to explore and understand how the students within the university context experienced the phenomenon of experiential learning.

1.2 Background to the Problem

Management educators have grappled with the choice of an appropriate pedagogic model to adopt for the preparation and development of future leaders who face the challenge of an increasingly complex, ambiguous and constantly changing environment of business.

Posner (1987) emphasises that the most commonly occurring work-related problems emerge from a combination of both technical and personal elements. However, the emphasis in many MBA courses has been purely on the technical elements. These courses focus on theory and are neglectful of the ósoft skillsô critical to solving problems that relate to the social factors of management such as resourcing, negotiation, communication, team work, conflict management, ambiguous and changing goals and management of change.

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enges and nature of work-related problems rprising that the latter part of the 20th century into the 21st century evidenced a move away by management educators from didactic instructional pedagogy, the traditional ñoutside in paradigmò (Smith 1993: 44), to an approach that builds managers from the inside out. According to Marquardt (2000) and Morrison, Rha and Helfman (2003) this paradigm is most appropriately supported by a management education model that provides for a leadership development pedagogy that incorporates both experiential learning and recognition of learning through reflective exercise. In this model the form and content of teaching are developed in parallel; where the real life scenarios (ñformò) parallel the leadership concepts and principles (ñcontentò) taught in the classroom (Morrison, Rha and Helfman 2003:12).

This view is supported and extended by Densten and Gray (2001) who write that work environments require leaders to engage, motivate and steer colleagues to act on new ideas and challenge conventional thinking, thereby effecting real organisational change. This necessitates the application of pedagogic models that allow students to learn through solving real problems, where self-knowledge acquired through feedback, external and internal reflection is evident as a consistent feature of the learning process. Further, Mintzberg (2004: 223) emphasises the need for a learning context that allows ñstudents to reflect on their experiences, uncover the assumptions brought to bear on their actions, reframe their assumptions on the basis of theory and practice and then test out new actions with their associated skills.ò

The experiential learning context is of deep interest to the researcher. The researcher concurs with the view expressed by Sternberg and Zhang (2000, 2001) that this context provides for a multi-dimensional model of learning and development which is synonymous with the manner in which people discover, grow and develop. Central to this particular learning approach is the critical role played by experience in facilitating learning.

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Career Advisory at the Wits Business School, d concern for learners on the MBA programme; more specifically, with self-awareness and development in light of experience and knowledge acquired, as it pertains to studentsô careers and personal lives. The researcherôs aim was to not only describe the students experiences in the Negotiation elective (the ñwhatò), but, also, to augment this with an understanding of the qualitative diversity of their experiences through an interpretive explication of the nature and meaning of these experiences (the ñhowò), as per Smith (1999), Kvale (1996: 53), Kvale (2006) and Giorgi and Giorgi (2008).

Of particular concern within this phenomenographic study was the variance, or multiplicity in phenomenal conceptions of experiential learning; predicated upon the assumption that individuals experience objective situations in fundamentally diverse ways. This objective provided the rationale for the utilisation of phenomenography for the study, which is a methodology that derives directly from phenomenology. For this specific research study, the researcher utilised both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology as a framework for the description and explication of meaning presented by the phenomenon of experiential learning in the Negotiations elective in the MBA programme.

The remainder of this introduction is organised into a statement of the problem and purpose of the study, followed by a discussion of the delimitations of the research, the assumptions underpinning the study and the significance of the proposed study.

Chapter 2 constitutes the literature review and informed theory upon which the research question is based. Chapter 3 follows with a discussion of the research methodology and the research method utilised for this study, acknowledging, as per Caelli (2001) that the two are distinct from each other. According to Caelli (2001), methodology pertains to the philosophical framework underpinning the research and method to the technique, procedure and process of the research

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and, more specifically, phenomenography is the esearch study. Chapter 3 includes a schematic methodology process outline. A discussion of the ethical issues arising out of a phenomenological study of this nature is discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 constitutes the data report and eidetic reduction of the respondentsô subjective lived experiences, contained in their narratives, or, the primary research. It derives from the specific requirements of phenomenological methodology and method, from which emerges a number of research themes, or initial research findings. This is followed by chapter 6 which encapsulates the in-depth cross analysis of the thematic convergence and variances, or divergence from themes, with comparisons to the literature review. The conclusion is contained in chapter 7, followed by references and appendices.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

What do students experience in the Negotiation Elective of the Wits Business School MBA programme and how do they experience the phenomenon of experiential learning within the Negotiation Elective?

1.4 Delimitations

The study undertaken extracted a purposive sample from MBA students who had completed a particular elective, namely, the Negotiations elective. It did not explore the lived experience of students completing other electives that make use of similar pedagogy.

The sample was limited to students from a single institution, namely the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits Business School). It did not attempt a comparison between the experiences of

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ith those of any other, except where students eir experiences abroad or where a comparison emerged from the primary data obtained from students. The sample was not derived from a single class; instead, the sample was selected out of five different classes of Negotiation electives that were conducted during the year.

Students completing the elective component of the MBA programme had already completed principle and core courses and had thus successfully completed the majority of the MBA. The sample was therefore one of successful students.

1.5 Limitations

The research findings will not be generalisable given the purposive sample base, as opposed to a random sample. Svensson (1997) claims that although Phenomenography is not able to claim that the results produced represent a universal truth, the results produced are none the less extremely useful in eliciting an open and deep understanding of the multiplicity and variance in apprehension, understanding and conception of lived experience.

1.6 Assumptions

The first assumption. The respondents were both prepared and able to explain the phenomenon under study. It was assumed that they would be forthright and honest in relating their experience as such and would not answer according to perceived expectation.

The second assumption. The second assumption is that, due to manner in which the programme was taught, the method of the MBA Negotiations elective was experiential. The pedagogy was used selectively during the classes. Whilst there was not direct experiential participation by each student in the class, at all

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rticipation through observation and reflection, at

1.7 Importance of the Study

A critical evaluation of pedagogic interventions will have definite implications for educators who prepare MBA students for the leadership and learning challenges of the 21st century. Of equal significance are the implications of such a study for career management practitioners and career coaches who assist learners with their career strategy, career management and professional self-management.

The findings of the study may contribute further evidence for the application of experiential pedagogy in the MBA programme.

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2.1 Overview

The literature review was conducted to highlight the critical body of literature on adult education and adult experiential learning, with a focus on business schools. It compares traditional business school pedagogy with experiential learning pedagogy, as used in the MBA Negotiations Elective at Wits Business School.

The review was effected by an examination and evaluation of the theories of adult education - an elucidation on traditional pedagogy and andragogy; followed by a review of the knowledge acquisition process through the individual dimensions of adult experiential learning. It subsequently undertakes a comparative assessment of the experiential learning models of Kolb (1984), Honey and Mumford (1992) and Revans (1982). The review concludes with a link back to the purpose of the study and the rationale for adopting phenomenography as the most appropriate methodology for this study. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the structure of this review and how it links to the purpose of the study.

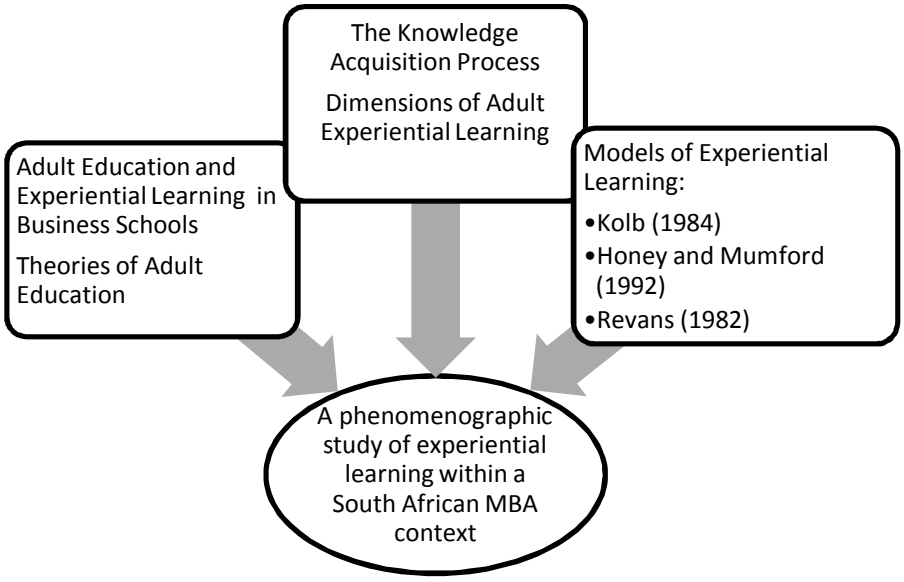


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of literature review

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Mintzberg (2004: 270) describes the academic setting ï university or business school - with its combination of ñsafety and seriousnessò, as ideal for the exploration of meaning and depth, where prevailing assumptions can be unravelled and challenged through a process of critical reflection. Mintzberg (2004) presents the classroom as the juncture between managersô natural experiences and the conceptual teaching undertaken by academics.

Franklin, Hodgkinson and Stewart (1998) suggest that business schools, as providers of management education, model themselves on the practices of open, dynamic learning organisations. They adopt Sengeôs (1990:3) definition of the learning organisation as one wherein òpeople continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn togetherò.

Dewey (1933, 1951), Hicks (1996) and Patel (2003) prescribe a context for optimal learning within a learning organisation that necessitates heightened student awareness in collaboration with a responsive educational institution. According to Dewey (1933, 1951), Hicks (1996) and Patel (2003), whilst there exists a responsibility on each individual to learn, there exists an equal responsibility on the learning organisation and those who facilitate learning therein to provide the environment and resources for deep learning.

Support for the application of experiential learning practice in management education is provided by Dilworth (1996) and Brown and Posner (2001:279) who put forward the view that institutions of higher learning need to design and implement programmes that ñreach leaders at a personal and emotional level, triggering critical self-reflection and providing support for meaning including creating learning and leadership mind sets and for experimentationò, thereby

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g and solving problems of organisational and

In drawing from McNulty and Canty (1995) and Marsick (1988), Marquardt (2000: 235) states that the experiential learning model enables the individual ñto see and understand the concomitant change that is happening inside themselves so that they can do it again with ever greater facilityò and ñenhances the capacity to dig below the surface layer of perception and examine taken-for-granted assumptions and valuesò thereby increasing effectiveness in solving complex problems. Furthermore, the shared responsibility and collaborative approach evident in the experiential learning model provides for an optimum learning environment with enhanced learning outcomes (Howard and Bray 1989 and Johnson and Johnson 1994).

Patel (2003) concurs with Brown and Posner (2001), Dilworth (1996) and Densten and Gray (2001) on the purpose of experiential learning. He equates the challenges faced by business schools with the ontological questions of what it means to be an individual in the world and how the individual relates to the world around him/her. This requires a collaborative, holistic and relational approach by both learner and teacher, where the teacher is deeply immersed in the experience of the learner, cognisant, always, of the transactional, transformational, independent and interdependent and dialectic nature of learning as postulated by Kolb (1984), Senge (1990) and Mezirow (1991). This approach is therefore described by Patel (2003) as contextual, transactional and relational.

Because experiential learning directly engages the learner in questioning, knowledge gathering and reflection it provides for ñconstructive alternativismò, a relativist approach that repudiates the concept of objective reality and absolute truth in favour of alternative ways of construing events (Patel 2003: 273). In so doing, experiential learning leads to the development of independent, proactive,

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ɔ take ownership of and manage their life-long

Revans (1982), Kolb (1984), Schon (1988), Sutton (1989), Mezirow (1991), Malinen (2000) Patel (2003) and Zuber-Skerrit (2002, 2005) all concur on the importance and effectiveness of experiential learning, where this incorporates action learning and reflection post-action. They posit that it is through experience and reflection thereon that adult learners become life learners who display a high level of self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery. For Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) and George (2003), these latter traits are critical for optimal relationship management and purposeful organisational leadership.

Gill (2006) extends the perspective of Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) and George (2003) and cites self-awareness as the most important outcome in management development programmes. For Gill, a correlation exists between levels of self-awareness and levels of reflective thinking as it pertains to strategic leadership (Gill 2006).

Hicks (1996) provides an equation of experiential learning, P+ Q+ ER = L where ñPò represents programmed or structured learning, ñQò represents the learning obtained through questioning and investigation or experimentation and ñERò represents individual experience, on which the individual has gone through a process of reflection and revision. This equation emphasises a combination of elements, or factors, in the equation of optimum learning.

The research reviewed thus highlights support for the notion of the interdependent and collaborative nature of learning in business schools, where both the learner and the facilitator share the responsibility (albeit in shifting balance) for learning (Howard and Bray 1989; Johnson and Johnson 1994; Hicks 1996 and Patel 2003); with an emphasis on experiential learning as a preferred pedagogy in business schools (Revans1982; Kolb 1984; Schon1988;

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er-Skerrit 2002, 2005; Mezirow1991; McNulty and rth1996; Marquardt 2000; Malinen 2000; Brown and Posner 2001 and Patel 2003).

2.3 Theories of Adult Education and Learning

Malinen (2000) suggests a careful examination of the theory-building attempts of a number of chief exponents in the area of adult learning and education, in order to derive a conceptual clarity and deeper understanding of this phenomenon.
Taking lead from Malinen (2000) the researcher reviews the adult education theories of Knowles (1975, 1984, 1989), Dewey (1933, 1938, 1951), Rogers (1969, 1989), Mezirow (1991) and Schon (1988). The review then moves more explicitly to theories of experiential learning, with a comparative review of the adult education theories of Revans (1982) and Kolb (1984), both of which are further expanded in section 2.3.

Underpinning the learning theories are definitions of the psychological and epistemological dimensions of perception, learning, knowing and knowledge. These definitions and dimensions appear to be inter-twined and inter-related, with the terms being used to replace one another in the theories.

Kolb (1984) refers to the first phase in the learning process as one of knowing through apprehension, a process that is directly apprehended, concrete, tangible and personally subjective; transformed by ñappreciationò, ñintentionò and ñextensionò (Kolb 1984: 42 and 111-112). However, the researcher concurs with Hamlyn (1970), Young (1988), Mezirow (1991) Scruton (1996) and Malinen (2000) who describe perception as the first phase in the learning process, where perception incorporates sensation, imagination and understanding.

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ning

Knowles is the first learning theorist to profess that the concept of adult education is disparate from that of child education. He is therefore credited with being the father of adult education (Jarvis 1987). He emphasizes the distinct difference between the learning of children and adults, based upon his identification of a differing set of assumptions about adult learners from those on which child learners had been predicated. These include assumptions about self-concept, experience, readiness, orientation and motivation to learn (Knowles 1984).

In support for his assertion, Knowles rejects the use of the word pedagogy, or child education, to describe adult education and adopts the concept of androgogy for the process of adult learning; the term ñandroò or ñmaleò, deriving from the Greek definition of ñmanò, as per Collins (1986). For Knowles (1989), an adult and his/her experiences are inextricably linked; ignoring or devaluing this experience results in a devaluing or even rejection of the adult. Knowlesô androgogy (Knowles 1989) is therefore differentiated from pedagogy by the following characteristics of adult learning:

- The learning process utilizes the experience of the learners;
- Experience is qualitatively cumulative

  and
- This cumulative quality may result in various assumptions, presumptions, biases and defective mental models that lead to defensiveness and a reduced receptivity to learning.

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the researcher reports that the term pedagogy is ners and researchers to describe all forms of education practice.

Knowlesô learning theory is an epistemological approach rooted in humanism, pragmatism and existentialism; an approach that derives its impetus from the teachings of Dewey (1933, 1938, 1951), Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1969), with the latterôs theory of self-directed learning (Rogers 1969) of primary importance. Self-directed learning focuses on facilitated learning in which the learner accepts ownership of the learning process; formulates a personalised set of objectives and learning strategy; initiates problem formulation, explores the resources necessary to solve the problem/s and then formulates of the process to be followed to solve the problem. Finally, but importantly, the learner accepts accountability for the consequences of his/her choices (Rogers 1969 and Knowles 1975).

Knowlesôself-directed learning model (1975) is depicted below:



Figure 2: Self-directed learning model

[Knowles (1975), Merriam and Caffarella (1991) adapted by Drobis (2010)]

For Knowles (1989), self-directed learning is a lifelong linear process of goal setting, inquiry, active participation and evaluation that is both problem-centred and life centred He postulates a number of outcomes for adult education that should be derived from self-directed learning, namely:

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ng, or heightened self-awareness of needs, ectives, abilities, shortcomings and opportunities for development;

- An appropriate outwardly focussed attitude of empathy and respect for others and embracing of a diversity of ideas, traditions, values, culture and experience;
- An ability to recognise and respond to opportunities for both personal and social change in a positive manner;
- An ability to understand the causal dynamics of behaviour and to respond to those causes appropriately, by creating solutions to solve problems;
- Adults should be directed to acquire skills in order to realise their innate potential.

Therefore, the implicit objective and contextual dimensions of knowledge are emphasized by Knowles (1989: 18-19), whereby an individualôs knowledge is expressed as the particular ñskills, understandings, attitudes, values and interestsòthat are acquired within the milieu of its use.

Knowlesôs theory of learning elicits much criticism. Grace (1996), Merriam (1987), Podeschi and Pearson (1986) and Tennant (1986) accuse Knowles of merely providing a method of for the management of learning, rather than explaining the process thereof. Hartree (1984), Bright (1989), Fisher and Podeshchi (1989) and Malinen (2000) are in agreement that the most appropriate epistemological framework for Knowlesô theory is that of Conventionalism, where formalized education, or teaching, provides the mechanism for the transmission of knowledge.

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, Knowlesô theory of adult learning makes a body of theory of adult education. The most significant contribution is his adoption of the term androgogy to distinguish the process of adult education from that teaching children, or pedagogy (Knowles 1984, 1989).

Another contribution is his emphasis on a set of proactive and purposeful learning outcomes, or skills, that derive from self-directed learning (Knowles 1975, 1984, 1989). Given the difference in the assumptions about adult learners versus those about child learners, the consequent outcomes of the learning process would also be different. By placing emphasis on social attitude, respect, empathy, maturity and self-awareness as necessary outcomes of self-directed learning, Knowles (1975, 1984, 1989) places responsibility on adult learners to use their learning to the benefit of their fellow beings and to the greater good of society.

2.3.2 Dewey's Developmental Theory of Learning

Continuity of experience, inquiry and reflection form the primary focus of Deweyôs theory of knowing, or learning (Dewey 1933, 1938 and Kolb 1984). According to Dewey, experience is transformed into higher-order purposeful action through a complex intellectual process of observation, an assimilation of previous knowledge and judicious choice of action plan followed by an evaluation of the significant consequences emerging from the action plan (Dewey 1933, 1938).

For Dewey, the link between experience and education is not direct. Instead, Dewey proposes the difference between mis-educative experiences which could

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rning and those that are educative, resulting in s, thereby encouraging the growth of future experiences (Dewey 1933, 1938). Furthermore, according to Dewey (1938), experiences that are pleasurable are not necessarily educative; whilst conversely; experiences that are not pleasurable might well induce responsiveness and growth.

Dewey (1933) prescribes four criteria necessary for the construction and presentation of educative experiences. Firstly, projects should be worthwhile and should generate interest in the learner (generative). Moreover, the projects should present learners with a problem or set of problems that catalyse curiosity, questioning and resourcefulness. Dewey (1933) introduces the dimension of time into the learning context whereby projects should be conducted over a period of time sufficiently lengthy in order to support the development-over-time dimension.

Dewey further emphasizes the need for all of the above to occur contiguously with the dimensions of problem proposal and inquiry and reflection and the principles of continuity and interaction which underpin his learning theory (Dewey 1933, 1938):

- Inquiry requires the introduction of a problem which catalyses the learning process (Dewey 1933). Responsibility for introducing the problem lies with the facilitator, who, according to Dewey (1933: 40) should ñprovide the materials and the conditions by which organic curiosity will be directed into investigations that have an aim and that produce results in the way of increase of knowledge, and by which social inquisitiveness will be converted into ability to find out things known to others, an ability to ask questions of books as well as of persons.ò

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mension in Deweyôs theory of learning and refers ncluding observation, which Dewey describes as reflective activities (Dewey 1933). Reflection represents the fulcrum point between the phenomenon that is experienced and how that experience is transformed into learning (Dewey 1933).

- The principal of interaction refers to the situational transactional nature of learning, with the learner and the environment as variables in the transactional equation (Dewey 1938 and Shumer 1993b).

- Continuity provides for the occurrence of all experiences along a continuum that Dewey refers to as the experiential continuum, where each experience is built upon the previous experience, necessitating the involvement of a facilitator to direct that experience towards positive growth and development (Dewey 1938).

The aspects of reflective thought described in Deweyôs model of learning (1933) are represented below:

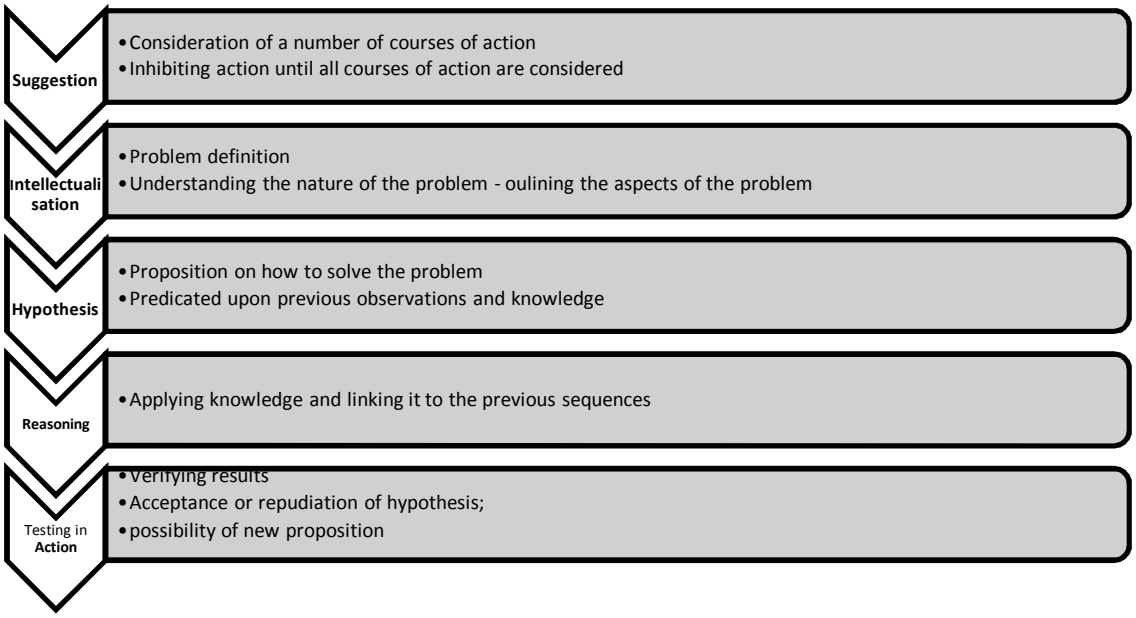


Figure 3: Aspects of reflective thought
[Described by Dewey (1933) adapted by Drobis (2010)]

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Rogers (1969) is credited with the creation of a set of criteria for the effective facilitation of learning, in the tradition of the humanistic school of clinical theorists. It is upon Rogersôtheory of self-directed learning that Knowles (1989) developed his theory of self-directed learning and therefore the model of learning described by Knowles (1989) is almost identical to that of Rogers (1969). (See Figure 2 for Knowlesôlearning model). Rogersôtheory of self-directed learning focuses on the creation of learners who are able to accept responsibility for the learning process and accountability for the consequences of their own life learning, the entire process of which is initiated through skilled facilitation.

If one were to draw a line connecting Deweyôs (1933, 1938) theory of learning to that of Rogers (1969) and Knowles (1975, 1989) one is able to ascertain a number of congruent processes in the three theories of learning. However, the principle on which Rogersôtheory is predicated digresses from that of Dewey and Knowles. Dewey (1933) places the responsibility for the selection and management of the learning experience entirely on the facilitator; whereas in Knowlesô (1975, 1989) theory of learning responsibility is directed towards the learner.

Rogers, however, emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning, where learner and facilitator accept dual responsibility for learning. He places the responsibility for the learning process on the learner, via his theory of self-directed learning (Rogers 1969). His theory also prescribes a number of criteria essential for the facilitation of the learning process contained within the definition of a community of learners. The Community of Learners refers to the holistic community and communal learning space that constitutes the classroom, facilitator and students and the inter-relationship between them, as defined by Rogers (1969, 1989), Nouwen (1986) and Christensen (1991).

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the experiential learning context and provides the experiential learning framework (Patel 2003). According to Patel (2003) whilst learning in action empowers the learner to take ownership of and manage his/her life-long learning there is specific facilitator responsibility where the facilitator is compelled to provide the learner with the necessary resources to enable him/her to access the self, the manner in which knowledge and experience are interpreted or construed and, also, the manner with which this knowledge and experience contributes to the individualôs personal development. During any learning situation the learner is engaging with both programmed and questioning knowledge, but, also, he/she is constantly engaged with learning about his or her self and thus in the process of revising or re-construing personal constructs (Patel 2003).

The role of the educator within an experiential learning setting thus requires careful assessment and critique to unlock the elements of a successful experiential intervention.

2.3.4 Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning

Knowing, according to Mezirow (1991: 42-44), occurs within personal frameworks - meaning perspectives - which provide a contextual structure for subjective (and sometimes inaccurate) assumptions, beliefs and personal views of the world. Building upon Kolbôs suggestion of an integrative superior knowledge, the goal of which is ñto make some new contribution to the data bank of social knowledgeò (Kolb 1984: 225), Mezirow postulates a superior form of knowledge, or ñEmancipatory Knowledgeò (Mezirow 1991: 87), that derives from the critical self-reflection occurring at the juncture between meaning perspectives and new, or novel, situational predicaments or experiences.

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nowing and knowledge is the central theme in theory of learning, whereby ñknowledge exists only in the learnerôs ability to construct and reconstruct the meaning of an experience in his or her own termsò (Mezirow 1991: 20). The researcher concurs with Kegan (2000) that instead of focussing on ñwhatò is known, transformational learning focuses instead on ñhowò an individual comes to know. In his theory of learning, Mezirow (1991) emphasizes the active dimension of comprehension or ñthe howò (Kegan 2000) in learning where an experience is rationalised through the application of language categories via critical reflection. He supports the dialectic, interpretative nature of the learning process, emphasizing the importance of meaning making and the ability of learning to induce change in the individual (Mezirow 1991).

Mezirow distinguishes between reflective learning and transformative learning, where reflective learning involves either elaborating or differentiating pre-existing meaning schemes to confirm or further extend their scope; this includes habitual responses or adaptations. Transformative learning is generally prompted by a second order experience, or disorienting dilemma (Mezirow 1991) that presents as a challenge or threat to an individualôs personal framework and involves critique in light of reflection; rejection of previously held meaning schemes and perspectives and subsequent reorganization of meaning.

Thus, ñtransformative learning involves reflective assessment of premises, a process predicated upon still another logic, one of movement through cognitive structures by identifying and judging presuppositionsò where one ñconstrues a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of oneôs experience in order to guide future actionò (Mezirow 1991: 5,12). Kegan (2000) supports Boyd (1988) Mezirow (1991) on the notion of comprehension as the active dimension of transformative learning via the process of self-verification of reasoning that learners undergo which occurs contiguously with the questioning of previously held assumptions and presuppositions about a phenomenon.

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given the above, Mezirowôs (1991) theory of use in understanding an individualôs response to second order experience in the experiential learning context, where experiential simulation and role play constitute the contrived second order experience or disorientating dilemma presented to the learner. Furthermore, it provides a framework for understanding how the learner actively uses comprehension to manage meaning making in light of the presenting dilemma, thereby providing a mechanism to overcome the potential for learning defensiveness.

Bearing a number of similar characteristics to Mezirowôs (1991) theory of transformative learning, Kelly (1955, 1991a, 1991b) developed the concept of Personal Construct Theory which provides a framework for understanding how individuals organise, perceive, construe and interpret events. It also provides the framework for a learning approach where the learner is encouraged to examine his/her personal constructs (knowledge, social, institutional and personal beliefs) in light of new experience and knowledge in a manner that fosters critical learning in action and meaningful interpretations of the self in the world and, ultimately, a growth in emotional intelligence. Furthermore, Personal Construct Theory allows for an understanding of the manifestation of defensive constructs, or defensive mental models, in light of the presentation of invalidating evidence; referred to by Kelly as hostility (Kelly 1955, 1991a, 1991b).

2.3.5 Schon's Theory of Learning

Central to Schonôs (1983, 1988) theory of learning is his explication of ñknowing in actionò, where ñknowing is *in* the action, tacit, spontaneously delivered without conscious deliberationò (Schon 1988: 28). According to Schon (1983, 1988), learning is characterized by reflection on our knowing in action in order to elicit an understanding of an outcome that differs from the expectations of any particular

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ss theory, techniques and technical skills are plicit and natural through dedicated and focused repetition. The researcher therefore infers from the above that in Schonôs (1983, 1988) theory of learning, past experience provides the precedent for that which is new, in a process that is conscious, critical and of personal significance.

Similarly to Mezirow (1991), Schon (1988) adopts an interpretative constructionist approach to knowledge, which assumes the acquisition of factual truths through reason, thus ñmaking explicit what one already knows how to doò in light of ñperceptions, appreciations and beliefs that are rooted in worlds of our own making that we come to accept as realityò (Schon 1988).

2.3.6 Revans Theory of Action Learning

Revans prefers to represent knowledge and knowing as a function of action. Of importance to him is the consistent replication and practice, from which egresses the ñdistilled and concentrated knowledge we describe as successful theoryò (Revans 1982: 493-494).

Building upon and re-organisation of experience through action learning is the primary tenet of Revans action learning theory (1982). For Revans (1982: 376), ñlearning is more likely to consist in a reorganization of what is already known rather than in the acquisition of fresh factual knowledge, although such fresh data may be needed to precipitate the reorganizationò Action learning, therefore, emphasizes learning via experience whereby the process of learning assists the learner ñto help him use more effectively what he already has, and to interpret the experiences of yesterday in light of tomorrowò (Revans 1982: 633).

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vans (1982) as a five stage process which is first defined in Aristotelian logic (384-322 BCE) and further described by Dewey (1933), Rogers (1969) and Knowles (1975). It also incorporates the sequential stages of observation or survey, hypothesis, experimentation, audit or analysis of results and finally, review, in order to affirm or repudiate the hypothesis, as depicted by figure 4.

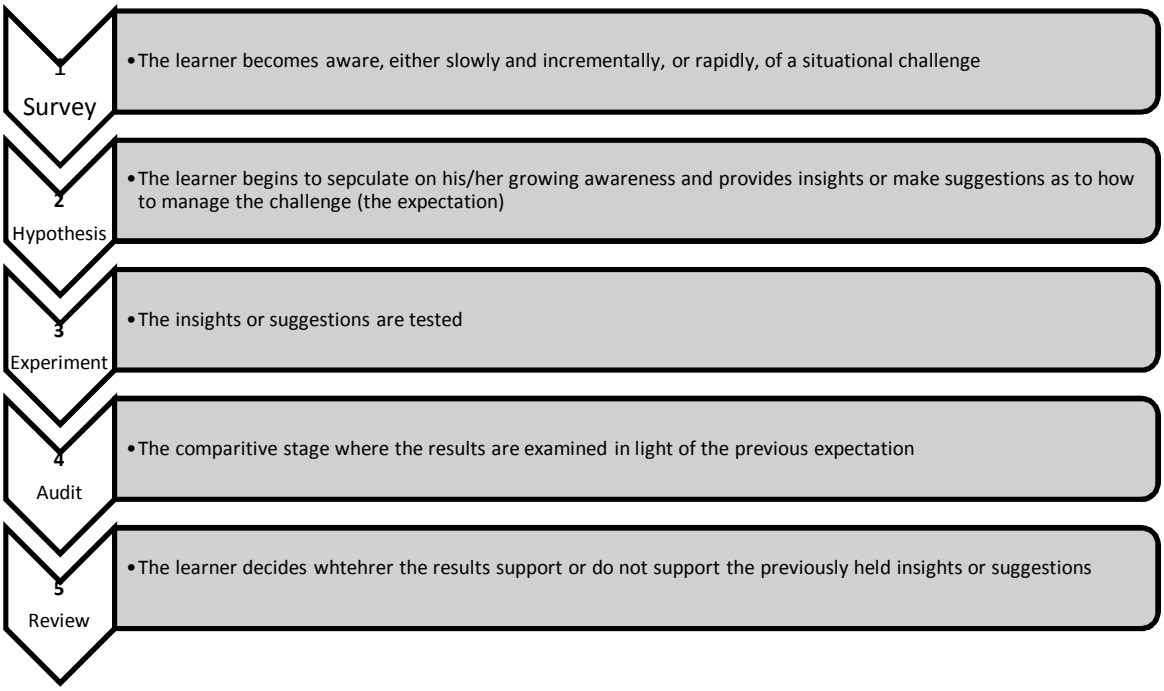


Figure 4: Revans' five stage learning process (Drobis, 2010)

Revans makes a distinction between programmed knowledge; which derives from instruction by expert technicians (didactic learning) and questioning insight; or the knowledge obtained from perceptive insightful action learning (Revans 1982, 1985 and Malinen 2000:31). In action learning the participant is presented with a problem, or set of problems, which he or she has to solve via an experiential learning process such as that described by Kolb (1984): action→observation and reflection→abstract conceptualisation→experimentation on acquired learning. Revans attributes the success of action learning practice to its ability to assist the individual to ñuse more effectively what he already has, and

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of yesterday in the light of tomorrowò (Revans

2.3.7 Kolb's Learning Cycle

In alignment with later learning theorists such as Mezirow (1991), Kolb places significant emphasis on the active and conscious component in learning, namely comprehension. For Kolb (1984: 42), ñthe simple perception of experience is not sufficient for learning; something must be done with itò His explication of comprehension is one of judgement of the relationship between cause and effect, a process of interpretation that is converted deliberately, purposely and extensionally by investigation and evaluation (Kolb 1984 and Malinen 2000).

Comprehension informs the selection of experience and results in maturational development being characterized by ñthe acquisition of a higher-level structure of consciousness than the stage preceding itò (Kolb 1984: 146). In transforming experience, through active experimentation and reflection, the learner creates knowledge, meaning and reality. For Kolb, this is the process of learning, a process that is not linear (Huber 1991), but rather cyclical and dialectic, as it involves a dialectic resolution of opposing adaptive modes, as per Lewin (1946). This process is depicted by the Kolb Learning Cycle in Figure 5 (overleaf).

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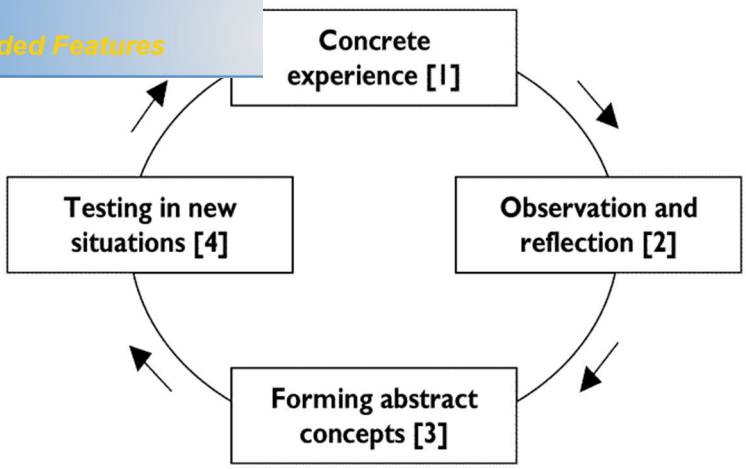


Figure 5: Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle
[Adapted from Lewin 1946 by Kolb 1984]

Kolb and Wolfe (1991) prescribe an optimal learning programme as one where the learner moves through each stage of the Kolb model and is able to utilise the abilities and learning implicit in that stage.

Kolb emphasizes the cyclical continuity of learning that is ñgrounded in experienceé derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learnerò (Kolb 1984: 27), where a transactional relationship exists between learner and the environment. From this transactional relationship emerges both objective and subjective knowledge. Objective social knowledge is accumulated from previous socio-cultural experience and personal knowledge, which is subjective, emerges from the transaction between socio-cultural knowledge and the individualôs objective experience (Kolb 1984 and Malinen 2000: 31). The aforementioned transactional process is a highly active one, described by Kolb (1984: 121) as the process whereby social knowledge ñmust be continuously recreated in the knowerôs personal experienceò (through an iterative learning cycle).

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In assessing the various adult learning theories, Malinen (2000) infers from Bohm and Peat (1989:67) that ñknowledge of reality does not lie in the individual subject, neither does it lie in the known objectò She postulates that knowledge is created through the dynamic flow between the individual subject and the known object. She argues the need for the clarification of the knowledge acquisition process by which objective knowledge is translated into individual knowledge and knowing via the individual dimensions of adult learning (Malinen 2000).

The literature review therefore highlights key research that explicates the individual dimensions of adult learning, including the link between experience, learning and reflection; an exploration of motivation to learn and an identification of the link between learning and development.

2.4.1 Individual Dimensions of Adult Learning

2.4.1.1 Experience

The major learning theories highlight the role of experience in learning. Characteristic of their explications of experience are the properties of past, or lived experience. Malinen (2000: 61) adopts the term ñfirst order experiencesò to describe these past experiences, referring to them as the individualôs ñautobiographical historyò that underpins the manner in which that individual apprehends and makes sense of his/her world.ò

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989) these first order experiences emanate from
ne individualôs day to day life. They form a necessary part of the experiential learning equation, possessing a capacity to act as a precondition for learning, but also, in certain cases to impede learning. Dewey (1930, 1933) and van Manen (1990) stress the fundamental, primordial nature of first order experiences and highlight the issue of personal defensiveness in the exploration and identification of inadequacy of self.

2.4.1.2 Orientation to Learning and Perceived Barriers to Learning

An important question emerging from the above is the all-important dimension of individual learning ï what orientates an individual to learn, or, how can an individual be motivated to learn?

Maslow (1954) provides a model of human motivation according to a hierarchy of needs, each of which needs to be satisfied in order for the individual to progress to the next level. There have been a number of adaptations to Maslowôs original 5-stage hierarchy of needs, but in the original model, Maslow places biological and physiological needs at the primary level of the hierarchy, with self-actualisation, or the need for personal growth at the pinnacle of this hierarchy (Maslow 1954), as depicted in Figure 6.

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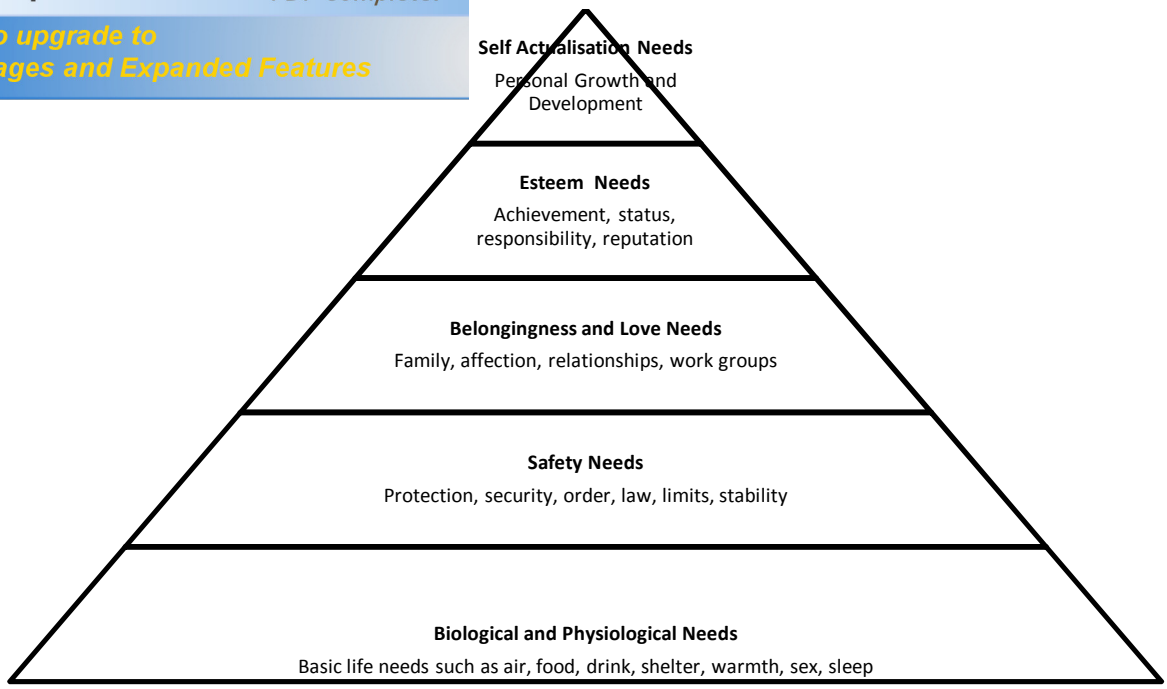


Figure 6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954)

According to the Maslowôs theory of needs (Maslow 1954) before an individual is able to progress to higher levels such as esteem and self-actualisation, which are associated with influence and development, it is necessary for that individual to satisfy lower level physical and emotional needs such as food, shelter, warmth, safety and security.

Maslowôs greatest contribution to the body of theory on human motivation is his equating of self-actualisation to self-transcendence (Daniels 2001) where the self-actualised individual possesses a number of abilities including the ability to be problem-focussed, an open minded approach to life and a concern with self-development and the preparedness to undergo further cycles of growth and development in order to remain self-fulfilled (Maslow 1954). The researcher however, cautions against a rigid application of Maslowôs theory of needs,

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on are far more complex, requiring an approach xity.

Three of the experiential learning theorists under study, Revans (1982) Knowles (1989) and Mezirow (1991) expound the pre-programmability for learning that exists in human beings; that there exists an inner compulsion or need to learn and develop. Malinen (2000) cautions against this, citing critique by Griffin (1989), Jarvis (1987) and Wilson (1992) that pre-programmability results purely from an individualôs need to remain in stasis, or equilibrium.

Malinen (2000) pronounces, instead, the transactional relationship between first and second order experiences; where commitment to learning arises directly out of that relationship and where this commitment results from the subjective value (Merriam and Clarke 1993) and personal significance that the individual attributes to that relationship (Brookfield 1988).

According to Malinen (2000) second order experience exists at the juncture of past experience and future learning and provides a critical link in the equation of learning described by the various theorists:

- Mezirowôs (1991) disorienting dilemma that presents as a major challenge to an established perspective that renders the individualôs previous frame of reference inadequate. The experience might be painful, problem posing and could result from a significant event such as death, divorce, employment transition or even from a discussion, a reading or cultural event. The individual is required to critically evaluate his/her frame of reference in light of the challenge and results in a redefining of the problem.

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cted outcome which is incongruent with an Schonian knowing in action (Schon 1988) results in what Malinen (2000:62) describes as an ñelement of surpriseò Kolb (1984) concurs with Schonian elements of surprise, but postulates further that it is in the transactional interplay between expectation and experience that learning occurs. Kolb (1984) echoes Mezirowôs theory (1991) of the transformative nature of certain life events; be they prosaic or dramatic.

- Both Revans (1982) and Knowles (1990) refer to second order experience, whether real or simulated, in light of personal recognition of ignorance, inability or inadequacy where the individual recognizes gaps in his/her knowledge which impede progress from current to future state of being. This usually presents in the form of a problem of threatening nature, to which there exists the explicit need to find a solution.

Hanson (1972), Hamlyn (1978) and Elder (1980) expound the properties of second order experience:

- Firstly, the capacity of the second order experience to unlock the first order experience and create imbalance or in-equilibrium in an individual which challenges the protective defences of existing mental models. The individual becomes uncomfortable with his or herself, a discomfort that moves from being implicit to explicit.

- Secondly, the second order experience possesses the capacity to impact on the individualôs holistic sense of being, where the explicit discomfort described above transcends to confusion, even unhappiness.

In situation described above, the individual is faced with the choice of clinging to his/her existing mental model or adapting the model through a reconstruction of

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pprehends and makes sense of the world ï that,
n 1978 and Elder 1980).

Drawing from Smith (1987), Malinen (2000: 66) concludes that the personal significance that the individual attributes to any experiential relationship is dependent on receptivity, or the individualôs ability to experience. Whilst every second order experience presents the learner with a set of learning possibilities, the actual learning is dependent on a force that is internally located within the learner, that being his/her potential to commit to the process ï receptivity. Receptivity is affected by social, cultural and personal contexts, resulting in individual discrepancies in educative and mis-educative experiences. The ideal precondition for learning would consist of a situation wherein first order experiences, second order experience and receptivity are in optimal balance (Malinen 2000).

Lawrence (1989) cites the specific choice of problem as a primary success factor in learning, more specifically as this pertains to action learning. Achieving an optimal balance between experiences that are either too congruent or too incongruent to individual meaning schemes and meaning perspectives is essential for the facilitation of appropriate significance, learning and development (Merriam 1991). The researcher draws from Malinen (2000), Knowles (1984) and Lawrence (1989) and raises the question of whether second order experiences can be arranged or manipulated in order to elicit personal significance, hence the role of the educator or facilitator in effecting experiential learning.

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elopment

Merriam (1991) equates learning and development with change, where experience acts as a catalyst for a process of meaning making from which derives the learning and development. Life is characterized by flux and this requires the individual to continuously learn and develop in order to adapt to variance between expectations and outcomes and changing responsibilities. Thus, meaning making, in both personal and professional life, is linked to learning and development (Restine 1997).

The active component of comprehension and cognition is emphasized and further extended by Restine (1997). Merely possessing experience is not a sufficient pre-condition for learning and development. Rather, it is through the process meaning making, wherein the individual makes iterative and interactive connections between experience, reflection and interpretation of experience that learning and development emerges.

Restine (1997) sites reflection as the most important androgogic methodology in learning and development. In articulating an action or experience in words via post action reflection the individual is able to tap into subconscious behavioural patterns, thereby eliciting an understanding of complex experiences of a world where ambiguity, uncertainty and unpredictability prevail. Reflection aids deep learning through the use of cognition to extrapolate meaning from experience, which then acts as a guide for future action. Caple and Martin (1994: 18) equate this with the analogy of reflection as the ñmotorò that drives the learning cycle; compelling learners to go through the comprehensive processes implicit in each stage of the Kolb learning model (1984).

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portance of meaning making in light of an that which the individual learns ñin the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with situations which follow. The process goes on as life and learning continueò(Dewey 1938: 46).

Kohlberg (1973), Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978 and 1981) and Gilligan (1982) explore the link between development and the dialectic between thought and actions, between theory in use and theory in action. Loevinger (1976) draws on this thinking, emphasising the active component in learning and development. For Loevinger, development derives from an active environmental exchange, in which individuals construct meanings and aim for competence, particularly in situations where the sets of assumptions and prevailing mental models of the individual are challenged, again emphasizing the dialectic nature of this process (Loevinger, 1976).

Kegan (1982) provides a constructivist proposal for adult development where the adult learner seeks to make meaning out of the dynamics of stability, instability and rebalance. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) refer to the impact of social roles and socialization, expectations and beliefs, the symbolic nature of the environment and cross cultural perspectives in development. They, too, emphasise the interactive, sociologically constructionist nature of development, where each experience is developmentally different, according to the socio-cultural, environmental and personal significance or insignificance that the individual constructs from that experience. Because meaning making is qualitative and thus subjective, it may also be ambiguous, as Reissman (1993: 15) emphasizes: ñMeaning is ambiguous because it arises out of a process of interaction between people: self, teller, listener, recorder, analyst and readeré our narratives and othersôarratives are our worldly creationsò

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Boud et al (1985), Hart and Bredeson (1996) and Resnick (1987) cite opportunities to participate in cycles of deliberate professional learning as a necessary precondition for adult learning and development. These cycles continue to function over time until the individual has achieved (or discarded) all of his/her goals.

2.4.1.4 Mental Models and Theory of Learning

Winch & Ingram concur with Henderson (1993) and Korth (2000) in their support for Argyris and Schonôs Theory of Action Science (1974, 1978). Argyris and Schon (1978) expound three levels of learning. These levels are single-loop learning associated with adaptive, incremental behaviour changes ï equated with efficiency. The behaviour associated with double-loop learning is a questioning of assumptions and a challenging of previously held norms. It is evaluative and thus equated with effectiveness. Deutero learning is awareness of how the individual engages in single- and double-loop learning.

Fiol and Lyles (1985: 4), further, equate the causal paradigm of the responsive adaptations of individuals as described by single-loop learning as routine or ñlow-level learningò and that of double-loop learning to ñhigh-level learningò They emphasise the importance of changing mental models within the high-level learning paradigm.

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	BEHAVIOUR
Single Loop (Low Level)	Adaptive, Incremental →efficiency
Double Loop (High level)	Questioning, challenging of norms →effectiveness
Deutero	Awareness of the type of learning

Table 1: Three levels of Learning
[Adapted from Argyris and Schon (1978) and Fiol and Lyles (1985)]

Characteristic of double loop-learning is the action of the individual; where the individual acts as an organisational agent in effecting change on that organisation. Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) define this as true organisational learning. A perspective on the barriers to double-loop learning is provided by the authors who purport that this is caused by a lack of personal awareness that results in a ñdisparity between intention and actionsò which is further exacerbated by defensiveness and patterns of behaviour reinforcement. They further propose that if one can assist ñindividuals to unfreeze and alter their theories of actionò then the individuals ñacting as agents of the organisation, will be able to unfreeze the organisational learning systemò (Argyris and Schon 1978:4).

Senge (1990: 8) provides an explanation for the above in light of the particular mental models prevailing in the individual - the often unconscious cognitive structures or ñdeeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations or images that influence the way we view the world and take actionò Organisations and the individuals within the organisations fail to take up new opportunities and reject out of date, clearly ineffective management models and practices because such action conflicts with their strongly defended mental models. Knowles (1990) explains that the more experience an individual assimilates, the greater the

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ould acquire certain ñmental habits, biases and use him to close his mind to new ideas, fresh perceptions and alternative ways of thinkingò(Knowles 1990: 59).

For Senge (1990), an organisationôs learning is critically dependent on the individual learning that takes place within that particular organisation. One can create or facilitate a form of breakthrough learning if one is able to manage mental models by exposing them, questioning and evaluating the assumptions that underpin them and then improving them. Senge (1990) relates this breakthrough learning to a development of personal mastery, described as a purposeful growth of self, where there is a continuous clarification of presenting realities, a true sense of vision and an understanding of what is needed with respect to skills, knowledge and competence in order to be able to cope effectively with change and complexity ï a management of mental models. He asserts that the most important learning emerges from direct experience, through taking action, observing the consequences of that action and then taking on different actions.

Concurring with Argyris and Schon (1978), Senge (1990) recommends the adoption of a process of reflection and inquiry to manage mental models, where reflection allows for a slowing down of thinking in order to facilitate the development of self-awareness. This process moves to an optimum level of ñreflection in actionò, or the ñability to reflect on oneôs thinking while actingò.

Implicit in Argyris and Schonôs Theory of Action Science (1978), Sengeôs (1990) management of mental models and academic research on experiential learning pedagogy (Revans 1982 and Mezirow 1991) is the concept of individual transformation that results from the experiential learning processes.

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The experiential learning models of Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1982, 1983 and 1992) are reviewed and then contrasted against that of Revans (1982), whose experiential learning model digresses from the former two, placing singular emphasis on the importance of action learning as the most appropriate model for adult learning.

2.5.1 Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Kolbôs experiential learning cycle provides for a model of adult learning that supports first hand learning experience, as opposed to the more traditional modes of learning where learning is derived from a second-hand derivation of anotherôs learning experience. In this model, effective future action is directed through a process described by Maturana and Varela (1987: 245) as one where the individual brings forth his/her world, with emphasis on the fact that the ñworld that everyone sees is not the world, but a world that we bring forth with othersò (by doing in that world).

Winch and Ingram (2004) recommend the use of the Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984) to explain the learning process, as represented previously in Figure 5. This learning cycle incorporates two dialectic modes of grasping experience, namely concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation (represented by 1 and 3 in Figure 5) and two dialectic modes of transforming experience, namely reflective observation and active experimentation (2 and 4 in Figure 5).

In any given situation, an individual chooses to adopt a particular mode of apprehending an experience: through the use of tangible, concrete reality,

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abstract or conceptual, through experimentation ï participant observation and reflection. Lewis and Margerison (1979) refer to these dimensions as those of cognitive growth and learning, reflected in the framework of cognitive psychology.

2.5.1.1 Learning Styles and Experiential Learning

It is the individualôs ingrained learning style that determines the preferred mode of choice, described by Kolb, Rubin and McKintyre (1971) as diverging, assimilating, converging or accommodating. The dominant learning modes evidenced by the four learning styles are described as:

- Divergers prefer to learn through concrete experience and reflective observation, where they are able to critically assess a given situation from a number of differing points of view. Divergers have been described as emotional, imaginative, literary or artistic. They enjoy working in groups, but prefer to receive personal feedback;

- Assimilators prefer abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation where they are required to synthesize a vast amount of information into a concise, logical format, preferably within analytical or theoretical models. Scientists and academics would be strongly representative of this style;

- Convergers are practical problem solvers, with a preference for solving technical, as opposed to personal problems. They display strong abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation styles, wherein they can make use of technology to assist them;

- The Accommodators evidence concrete experience and active experimentation as dominant learning styles. They enjoy learning from experience, where there is a focus on interpersonal relationships as a

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al solutions. They are intuitive, oriented towards priate, rather than being directed by cautious judgement. They are by nature collaborative and enjoy working in problem solving teams. Adapted from Kolb (1984, 1999a and 1999b) and Tennant (1997).

In turn, these learning styles are influenced by a number of factors which include personality type, early educational specialisation, profession, current work function and role and the individualôs adaptive competence.

Jungôs Theory of Personality (1933, 1971) largely influenced the thinking on personality type, which is evident in the MBTI or Myers Briggs Type Indicator which was developed by Myers- Briggs (1962, 1975). The MBTI is an instrument that examines a respondentôs preferred manner of interacting with the environment and classifies people accordingly ï how people relate to their external world; how they take in information; how they prefer to make decisions and their general approach to performing tasks.

An individualôs MBTI profile is made up of four letters that are chosen from the following pairs of opposite approaches to interacting with the surrounding environment:

Letter Type	**Approach to Interaction with Environment**
Extravert (**E**) vs. Introvert (**I**)	Direction of processes in an inward or outward manner
Sensing type (**S**) vs. Intuitive type (**N**)	Acquisition of information
Thinking type (**T**) vs. Feeling type (**F**)	Absorption of information
Judging type (**J**) vs. Perceiving type (**P**)	Decision making based on information acquired and absorbed

Table 2: MBTI and approach to environmental interaction

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(1975) and Lewis and Margerison (1979)]

According to Randolph and Blackburn (1989), MBTI preference is strongly correlated to learning preference, which was previously elucidated by Kolb (1976) and Lewis and Margerison (1979), who discovered a number of correlations between the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb, Rubin and McKintyre 1971) and the MBTI. Kolb (1976) found a strong link between learners who preferred learning from concrete experience and those who would use sensing as a mode of information acquisition and feeling as a preference for absorption and decision making; whereas those who preferred intuition and thinking, rather than feeling, would be characterised by the abstract conceptualiser. Active experimenters would prefer to direct their learning processes outward, or externally, whereas reflective observers would be more introverted and inclined to use intuition rather than sensing as a preferred manner of acquiring information on which to base decisions.

According to Merril (2002), whilst not the primary component of instructional strategy, learning style is nevertheless an important consideration in the selection of instructional style and appropriate contextual learning parameters. Further, Riding (1997), Kay (1997), Sadler-Smith and Riding (1999), Robotham (1999), Felder and Spurlin (2000) and Bull (2004) advise experiential learning instructors to give learners insight into their own learning preferences and learning styles and highlight their potential strengths and weaknesses.

2.5.1.2 Critique of the Kolb Model

Boud et al (1983) have reservations about the Kolb model. Although they agree with its usefulness in arranging and scheduling learning activities, they critique its neglect of the importance of reflection in learning. Jarvis (1987) and Tennant (1997) question the empirical rigour of the model, on the basis of an initial research base that was very small and, further, that there has been very little

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ennant (1997) is concerned with the contextual ferring to the contexts such as information assimilation and memorization where the Kolb model cannot be applied.

Both Anderson (1988) and Tennant (1997) are deeply critical of the modelôs cultural relevance, substantiating their criticism on what they describe as a Western modelôs inability to address the variance in both cognitive and communications styles amongst different cultures. According to Dewey (1925: 40), ñexperience is already overlaid and saturated with the products of the reflection of past generations and by-gone ages. It is filed with interpretations, classifications, due to sophisticated thought, which have become incorporated into what seems to be fresh naïve empirical material. It would take more wisdom than is possessed by the wisest historical scholar to track all of these absorbed borrowings to their original sourcesò. The researcher concurs with Anderson (1988), Tennant (1997) and Dewey (1925) and further asserts that if learning is situated in an environmental context, to ignore the cultural and environmental specifics would have a direct effect on the applicability of the model.

Miettinen (2000) is concerned by the modelôs eclecticism and epistemological inadequacy; firstly because it does not provide an epistemological concept for the phenomenon of immediate personal experience that forms the fulcrum point of the entire model upon which reflection, abstraction and experimentation are based. Further, Miettinen is critical of the modelôs inability to integrate the various phases in the cycle (Miettinen 2000). He asserts that although Kolb provides for a dialectic tension between adaptive modes (Kolb, 1984), instead of resolving the dialectic through explicating on the intertwined interrelatedness of the dialectics and emphasising the determination of one dialectic through the other, he explains this complexity by merely incorporating these dialectics as separate phases within the model.

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he Kolb model for its inability to grasp the more knowledge and learning. The essence of knowledge is not explored in particular depth; instead, it focuses more on the production of knowledge through ñgrasping experience and transforming itò (Kolb, 1984: 41). The model is therefore unable to address and explain issues such as non-response and non-learning.

However, the Kolb model of experiential learning is not without merit. Sugarman (1985) provides a rationale for the adoption of the Kolb model as a basis for career planning, workshops, skills training and development and structured or contrived group experiences whereby the inherent logic of the learning cycle provides a conceptual model for teaching and counselling. She asserts that imparting an understanding of the Kolb framework to students imbues them with a greater empathy for those who are different from them (who have different learning styles) and also provides them with a deeper insight into the learning process as a totality. It allows them to understand their own learning preferences, but also provides them with feedback on the areas to which they could apply more focus and thus improve their capacity to grow and learn. This demystifies learning and makes it more accessible to the learner. Sugarman (1985) further extends the appropriateness of the Kolb model to a counselling context, where the model provides the counsellor with a logical framework for designing suitable interventions, particularly where an element of coaching is involved.

2.5.2 Honey and Mumford's Experiential Learning Model

Honey and Mumford (1982, 1983, and 1992) also present a cyclical model of experiential learning that is based on particular learning styles, where the styles represent preferred modes of learning. According to Sugarman (1985), Honey and Mumfordôs Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ), on which their learning model is based, is more concrete and has greater credibility and face validity because it is based on statements that pertain to human behaviour as opposed

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the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) (Kolb,

Derived from and mirroring the Kolb model, the styles are defined and depicted through behaviour as:

- Activist - having an experience; thriving on the new and unknown, shying away from repetition and routine; characterised by learners who are outgoing, open minded, enthusiastic, typically not risk averse. They do not enjoy learning from reading or from a formalised lecture room, preferring to be thrown into new situations that require them to try out new behaviours;

- Reflector - reviewing the experience in a multi-perspective manner; characterised by those who are highly analytical, cautious, observant, appearing removed or distant at times, who prefer to acquire as much information as possible and then to reach a conclusion through the assimilation and analysis of a number of different perspectives. They prefer not to be rushed into a decision and might be uncomfortable in learning situations that have a tight time-line or deadline;

- Theorist - integration and deriving theories concluded from experience; characterised by those who are very logical, rational, systematic, who prefer to use a step by step or linear decision making process, where processes are clear, unambiguous. They are the model builders, model adaptors or model implementers. They prefer to remain unemotional, concerned with assimilation and integration of data, rather than with the personal components of a task. Theorists demonstrate discomfort with ambiguous unstructured environments, where they are not given the rational facts on which to base their logical, intellectual decisions.

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he next stage in the cycle; concerned with experimentation and practice of new ideas or theories in a positive manner; characterised by learners who are keen to act in the 'here and now', who are practical, 'hands-on' types, not easily intimidated by new challenges. They enjoy working where there are sufficient opportunities for them to try out new ideas or theories in situations that they view as immediate and relevant and where the benefit of experimentation is quite clearly demonstrated.

Adapted from Honey and Mumford (1992)

Honey and Mumford (1983) emphasize that in order to learn from experience an individual is required to move through a process of experience, review and conclusion and subsequent action on the conclusion/s drawn and thus maintain that effective learning derives from moving through all stages in the learning cycle. However, they remain cognisant of the fact that it is not appropriate to become sequentially bound: due to the selection of preferred learning modes, people prefer to spend more time in certain stages of the cycle, sometimes, even, to the disregard and detriment of others. This is presented as a possible obstacle to learning.

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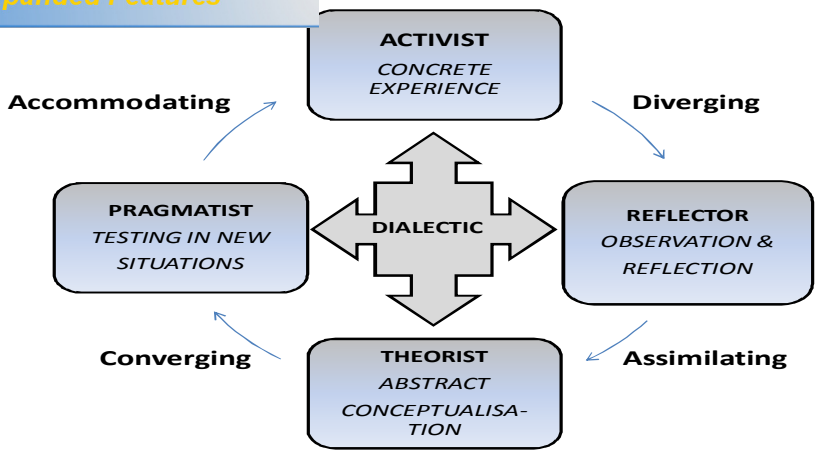


Figure 7: An integrated model of experiential learning [Incorporating Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984); Kolb, Rubin and McKintyre's Learning Styles Framework (1971) and the Honey and Mumford Model of Experiential Learning (1992). Adapted by Drobis (2010)]

2.5.2.1 Revans' Model of Action Learning

Revansô model of experiential learning extends the concept of experiential learning provided by Domask (2007:2) where experiential learning is described as ñlearning by doingò. In his model of action learning, Revans includes experiential learning as a component of the action learning process, whereby learning is a function of action (Revans 1982), where the task environment (the environment where a problem is solved) is the classroom and the task (problem) the learning vehicle. Therefore, in any action learning context, an experiential learning model will be adopted to manage a problem that is surfaced by a learner within a small group of learners, or ñsetò (Smith and OôNeil 2003).

Further, Revans provides an equation to describe the relationship between variables in the equation (Revans 1982). The relational equation is represented as L= P + Q, where L is the learning that derives from the action learning

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ning gained from authorities on a subject and Q
s from an individualôs questioning of his or her direct experience (Revans 1982 and Smith & OôNeil 2003).

L=P+Q

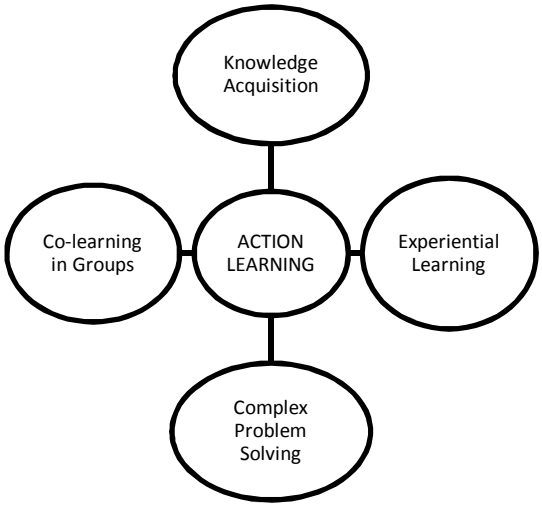


Figure 8: The components of action learning [Revans 1982 and Smith and O'Neil 2003]

Action learning incorporates a number of aspects:

- the presentation of real problems that relate to workplace problems experienced by the participants which are solved in real time;
- working together in small collaborative groups referred to as sets, who meet on an ongoing basis during the action learning project;
- the process is based on the learning model proposed by Revans that incorporates the progressive stages of:
  survey→hypothesis→experimentation→audit→review;
- in action learning, the learner builds upon his/her previous learning to ñuse more effectively what he already has, and to reinterpret the experiences of yesterday in the light of tomorrowò(Revans 1982: 633).

The value of action learning lies in its ability to encourage questioning and reflection on complex, ambiguous problems, where obvious solutions do not

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ility for the choice of appropriate solutions and and is therefore aligned to Rogers (1969) and Knowles (1975) theories of self-directed learning. It is therefore a useful model of management education for the management of complexity that is faced by 21st century managers and leaders.

The researcher asserts that due to the lack of an appropriate work context for the generation of problems, Revansô action learning model would not be an appropriate experiential approach for MBA students in full time MBA programmes. However, it would certainly have value if applied in part time or executive MBA programmes, as these learners are situated in working environments that provide the impetus for the diagnosis of suitable problems for the action learning process. The researcher asserts that this could present as the optimal experiential learning application, supporting Mintzberg (2004: 262 - 264) on the value of ñexperienced reflectionò Through experienced reflection, management students apply their learning in order to make their organisations more effective (ñaction impactò), but moreover they become teachers within their own organisations, as they coach, mentor and develop their subordinates (ñteaching impactò).

2.6 Conclusion

In an attempt to search for the essence of one of the central phenomena in adult education, namely adult experiential learning, the researcher undertook an extensive review of the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of adult experiential learning. She concurs with Boud (1990), Weil and McGill (1990b), Edwards (1994), Criticos (1996b) and Malinen (2000:15) in their view that the phenomenon of adult experiential learning is ambiguous, understood by some as a framework or paradigm of adult education; by others as a teaching technique.

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ne researcher with an extensive exposure to the of experiential learning and a set of appropriate standards for best practice in facilitating experiential learning, but was unable to provide a universally generalisable, all embracing theory of adult experiential learning.

Variance in both cognitive and communication styles; mode of preferred functioning according to learning styles and personality type; cultural diversity; the learning context; learning defensiveness and non-learning are not sufficiently addressed by theory. The major experiential learning theorists have been criticized by Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993), Nelson (1994) and Barnett (1996) for placing too much emphasis on the rational dimensions of experiential learning, to the detriment of the non-rational; resulting in a contradiction of the primary intent of experiential learning, namely that it should remain cognisant of and sensitive to the inner world of the learner.

Above all, the learning theories and models that were researched were unable to address the question of what it means to the learner when he or she participates in an experiential learning process and thus raises a significant challenge for the educators and tertiary institutions. Patel (2003) equates this challenge with the ontological questions of what it means to be an individual in the world and how the individual relates to the world around him/her. He describes experiential learning as phenomenological.

The above provided the rationale for undertaking a qualitative, instead of quantitative, study, which the vast literature review might have implied. In this case, phenomenography, which derives from phenomenology, was deemed to be the most appropriate methodology and method for researching the lived experience of the respondents, in order to explore and obtain a greater understanding of the phenomenon of experiential learning and the meaning that individuals ascribed to that phenomenon.

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This research study examines the phenomenon of experiential learning within a specific MBA context. Its intention is to discover the meaning ascribed to the individualôs lived experience within the experiential learning context of the MBA Negotiation Elective.

Research Question: What do students experience in the MBA Negotiation Elective and how do they experience the phenomenon of experiential learning within the Negotiation Elective of the Wits Business School MBA programme?

The single interview question derives from the above:

> **“Tell me about your experience in the Negotiation elective, with particular reference to your learning and development”.**

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ethod

3.1 Framework: From Phenomenology to Phenomenography

Deriving from the researcherôs acknowledgement that the open ended research question and narrative descriptions that derived from that question would contain qualitatively different understandings, apprehensions, conceptions and perceptions of lived experience referred to by Marton (1981, 1992), Tesch (1990), Marton and Booth (1997), Järvinen (1999) and Trigwell (2000), the methodology proposed for this study was phenomenography, the philosophical principles of which derive from the phenomenological framework.

In a phenomenological study the researcher investigates the essence of lived experience in an order to elicit the multiple interpretations of reality that exist amongst individuals, thereby deriving an understanding of common experience (Racher, Robinson, Caelli and Romyn 2003). Through the study of lived experience descriptions the researcher is able to discover common experiential themes and enhance an ñaction sensitive understandingò (van Manen 1990: 124).

Phenomenography, however, focuses on investigating and capturing a limited number of qualitatively different understandings, apprehensions, conceptions and perceptions of lived experience (Marton 1981 and 1992, Tesch 1990, Marton and Booth 1997, Järvinen 1999 and Trigwell, 2000).

Bowden and Marton (1998:7) emphasise the importance of variance in learning: ñTo discern an aspect is to differentiate among the various aspects and focus on the one most relevant to the situation. Without variation there is not discernment. We do not think in a conscious way about breathing until we get a virus or walk into a smoke filled room. Learning in terms of changes in or widening in our ways of seeing the world can be understood in terms of discernment, simultaneity and variation. Thanks to the variation, we experience and discern critical aspects

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we have to handle and, to the extent that these simultaneously, a pattern emerges. Thanks to having experienced a varying past we become capable of handling a varying future.ò

The philosophical principles that underpin Phenomenography are:

Firstly, that it provides the researcher with a second-order perspective, oriented towards an individualôs interaction with the world and the qualitative conceptions that arise from this interaction (Marton and Booth 1997 and Trigwell 2000). It is thus both qualitative and interpretative, involving both the identification of differing conceptions of a phenomenon and the search for the underlying meanings and relationships between the conceptions (Entwhistle 1997).

The second principle that governs this framework is that the individual conceptions arise out of a transactional interaction between the individual and the environment, or external world, and are thus contextual and relational, or, non dualist (Svensson 1997 and Trigwell 2000).

Brentano (1874, translated in 1995) provides the third principle of phenomenography, namely, intentionality, or the manner in which mental acts are directed. Marton and Booth (1997) offer a rationale for this directedness, which is to be understood in light of the actual thought object and the quality of the conception process. This brings about a value based understanding of qualitative differences - ranging from partial or comprehensive conceptions of experience.

The fourth principle underpinning Phenomenography is the need to relate the individual conceptions of experience to the collective or common conceptions of a particular phenomenon, derived from traditional phenomenological method.

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ssed in language, where language provides the action thereto associated, the fifth principle of Phenomenography provides for language as the necessary communication modality of Phenomenography (Ahonen 1994, Säljö 1994 and Isomäki 2002). Differing experiences are expressed through language. The researcher was thus able to access the experiences via this modality of expression, in light of the hierarchical categories of description which is called the outcome space of the phenomenon (Marton 1992).

Taking into account the principles of both Phenomenology and Phenomenography and the intertwined nature of the methodologies, the researcher undertook the following:

The proposed study utilised a phenomenological narrative approach informed by the traditional hermeneutic phenomenological approach, as described by van Manen (1990). However, given the pre-determined MBA context, the method and analysis was informed primarily by the American phenomenological approach, with its focus on contextual meaning, as opposed to the more traditional phenomenological approach that searches for universal meaning of lived experience (Caelli 2000, 2001). Findings were cross analysed and then contrasted to the literature.

An exploratory approach to the research methodology was deemed to be the most appropriate, given the research problem and the rationale for the research study: the meaning ascribed to the individualôs experience of experiential learning within a given MBA context.

In his research of lived experience, van Manen (1990) states the aim of phenomenological methodology as the ñtransformation of lived expression into a textual expression of its essenceò (van Manen 1990: 36). Through the use of reflective diaries, journals or logs, the individual becomes ñanimated by his or her

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ormed consciousnessò (van Manen 1990: 124). he application of reflective practice, Allan (1998) further asserts that the individual is thereby enabled to discover previously unseen relationships ï themes - and inform future action.

Concurring with the above and further supported by Wagner (2002), who highlights the effectiveness of narrative research in establishing the interconnectedness of stories where the narrative informs the entire research process the data collection consisted of a series of intensive interviews wherein the co-researchers provided a narrative description of their experience, or personal storytelling, leading directly from a single, open ended question. The qualitative narratives formed the crux of the proposed research study and took precedence over research technique or method.

Data analysis was affected by means of transcription and written construction of narratives, immersion and reflection on the narratives and subsequent patterning to elicit both the convergence and the differences, or variances, in the way that individuals experience the phenomenon under study. The study incorporated dual data analyses of multiple participant interviews and from personal reflection undertaken by the researcher. As per Marton (1992) and Entwistle (1997) the outcome space corresponding to the varying understandings and conceptions of the phenomenon and the inter-relationships between them constituted the study results.

An iterative and cumulative process was anticipated with validation of findings effected through means of feedback provided by research subjects. The findings were then reported in a qualitative narrative, as per the phenomenological approach.

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Steeneveldt (2004: 16) describes five processes outlined by Sanders (1982) and Priest (2002) that underpin the strategy of phenomenological research:

I. Intentionality: the process whereby the mind consciously analyses the meaning of the phenomenon and the mode of experiencing the phenomenon.
II. Epoché (bracketing): the process whereby the researcher suspends judgement, commonly held beliefs, pre-suppositions and assumptions, thereby maintaining an open mind to the experiences of the co-researcher. When undertaking a phenonomenological study, Racher et al (2003) concur with Merleau-Ponty (2004) on the need for inquiry where the researcher is compelled to suspend any previously held assumptions arising from a system of beliefs, habit, experience, or from any body of knowledge or theory.
III. Eidetic Reduction: process of generating information from the interview; this involves asking questions in order to explore all possible meanings of the data utilising intuition and reflection.
IV. Description: this follows Eidetic Reduction ï the phenomenon is described.
V. Essence: the final process whereby the essence of the phenomenon is uncovered through reduction and description and is an iterative process.

The researcher adopted the first four processes of the above strategy for the dual data collection and analyses of multiple participant interviews and personal reflection and journaling undertaken by the researcher. The researcher adopted the mode of *epoché* in order to uphold a reliable and valid application of the phenomenological methodology.

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d the evolving nature of phenomenological and consistent with the emerging design explicated by Cresswell (2003).

In accordance with phenomemographic research principles, the researcher did not merely describe the phenomenon, but sought to understand the convergences and variances in meaning and the inter-relationships occurring hierarchically within the outcome space of the phenomenon under study. By so doing, the researcher diverged from conventional phenomenological method.

3.3 The Role of the Researcher

Phenomenological and phenomenographic research is fundamentally interpretative and, therefore, the researcher included a section (below) explicitly stating her assumptions, biases, values and specific interest in the research area. She further addressed the fundamental ethical issues pertaining to phenomenographic research in the following section (Section 4).

3.3.1 Background, Biases and Relationship with Co-Researchers

The researcher is currently employed as the Head of Career Advisory by the Wits Business School, University of the Witwatersrand. The sample was drawn from participants in the Master of Business Administration programme at the university.

A function of the researcherôs position is to consult with students on their career strategy and career management. Through the personal insights gained during consultations, the researcher developed deep interest in the areas of self-management, including career management, and the personal transformation resulting from enhanced self-knowledge. A growing desire to study the manner

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knowledge, as well as the need to understand enomenon of learning within a particular context, directed the researcherôs rationale for this study.

In preparation for the intended study, the researcher attended the MBA Negotiations elective, as participant observer. The Negotiations elective is taught over a 9-week period consisting of one lecture per week or as a four day intensive period, as per the personal preference of the lecturer, Dr Geoffry Heald (Heald 2007). The Negotiations elective is structured to include theory, taught in the format of leadership discussion which Domask (2007) describes as an experiential learning activity. Experiential learning is incorporated into the programme via a number of experiential games, as well as three simulated negotiations, facilitated by Dr Heald. All students are required to keep a daily learning journal, detailing both external and internal reflections, as per Varner & Peck (2003). Feedback is given to the students on a daily basis, although marks are awarded for the cumulative learning journal handed in at the final lecture; this forms 50% of the marks allocated for the course.

The intent of the researcherôs participation was to observe the experiential learning and interact with students regarding any career issues arising out of their participation in and reflections on the course. The nature and purpose of attendance was made explicit to the students and permission for the researcherôs participation was obtained at the outset of the course. The interactions with students emerging from this participation mirrored the conversations held during previous career consultations, wherein students had highlighted their growing self-insight and personal transformation. This informed the researcher of the possible link between pedagogy and personal learning and provided further impetus for the study.

The researcher was aware of this bias, but mitigated this through ***epoché,*** as per Sanders (1982) and Priest (2002). Subjectivity, therefore, was not a barrier to

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e student's experience. Instead the researcher process of uncovering the essence of the phenomena through intentionality.

Hall and Callery (2001: 269) and Caelli (2001) provide support for van Manen (1990) on the transformative potential of phenomenological methodology, a result of the "symbolic interactionism" between researcher and co-researcher. Although non transformative in agenda, the phenomenological process gives rise to an increase in self-awareness and may thus induce change via increased self-awareness in both researcher and co-researcher.

The researcher made explicit the personal interaction between researcher and co-researcher and the effect that a power imbalance between the researcher and co-researcher might have on results, where institutional and professional advisory power is vested in the researcher. From the outset, the researcher established an equitable relationship in order to maintain the validity of the findings. In order to circumvent power imbalance, research subjects were chosen from a sample of students that has already completed the MBA programme. Confidentiality and research integrity were upheld throughout the process.

The researcher also made explicit the effect of ongoing interaction with a research subject, where ensuing and cumulative interaction could result in the researcher projecting feelings, beliefs or assumptions onto the research subject and vice versa. As per Hall and Callery (2001), the quality of findings could be influenced by this interaction because data produced emerges from an interactive, rather than individual, creation of meaning. In mitigation of this bias, the researcher incorporated reflexivity (Hall and Callery, 2001) into the data collection and analyses, thereby maintaining critical sensitivity to the researcher's potential effect on the research process.

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The research sample was a purposive sample of eight co-researchers, or research subjects, drawn from the MBA Negotiation elective course at Wits Business School, University of the Witwatersrand. The subjects were chosen where credibility already existed between researcher and co-researcher. In order to limit the ethical issue of either institutional or personal relationship power bias, the sample was chosen from students who had already completed their MBA and thus did not feel any sense of obligation to participate in the study.

An original sample of four respondents was recommended to be sufficient by the research supervisor, however the researcher increased this sample to eight, in order to counter against interviews that delivered insufficient data; whilst being aware that the by its very nature, the phenomenon of insufficiency of information provided by the interviewee would still generate a number of insights for the researcher.

Participation was pre-empted by a formal covering letter (on the University letterhead) that addressed the co-researchers, introduced the researcher and provided a brief outline of the intended research study, including the aims thereof and the research process. Once participation was confirmed, further contact was maintained via telephonic or email correspondence.

Participants were ensured of confidentiality throughout the entire process. Given the personal nature of the interview process and the need to maintain confidentiality of the respondents, the respondents were referred to by the first initial (and in the case of duplication, first and second) of their forenames (Ni, R, N G, K, T, D, E).

The researcher allowed the co-researchers to select an appropriate venue for the interview site, where confidentiality and silence could be maintained; in order to

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d detract from the focus and commitment of both and also to assure that the researchers felt comfortable in their interviewing environment.

3.5 Data Collection Protocol

The researcher obtained permission from the co-researchers to tape the interview, as primary method of data collection. In addition, the researcher took notes throughout the interview. This served as a contingency measure in case of equipment failure, but also served to note behavioural observations, specific emphases and insights presenting during the interview.

Phenomenology, and consequently, phenomenography, is the study of the respondentsô experience pre-reflectively (Giorgi 1985, van Manen 1990 and Caelli, 2001). Because the researcher did not want to intrude upon the participantsôpre-reflective world or clutter the process with too many questions she decided to utilize a single open ended interview question for this study (Heald 2007). The researcher was supportive, but exercised discipline in remaining silent throughout the interviews, allowing the respondents to manage the complexities inherent in answering a single open-ended question. However, in order to maintain the momentum of the narrative, the researcher maintained an open mind during the interview and applied necessary judgement in keeping the narrative focused on the research problem and the research question. At times this necessitated posing an additional question in order to clarify a respondentôs words.

The voice recordings were transcribed into a narrative, which was presented to the respondents by electronic mail for confirmation and comment.

The researcher then produced a narrative description of the experiences, or personal storytelling, leading directly from the single, open ended question.

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the subjectôs personal narrative deriving from a The interview was recorded verbatim and then transcribed, post interview, by the researcher. Following that, a process of validation was conducted. The transcription was sent to the co-researcher for verification in order to ensure that it accurately reflected the experience as described in the narrative.

To augment the process, the researcher kept notes in which issues not captured in the transcript (non-verbal cues, voice, tone, tension, emphasis and nuances) as well as an interpretation of and reflection on the events were detailed.

The researcher also obtained details of each studentôs research dissertation; title and the methodology (qualitative or quantitative) applied in the research study in order to shed light on the research findings. This was only obtained at the conclusion of all transcription and initial data analysis in order to mitigate against subjectivity which might have impacted on the interview, transcription and initial analytical process. Where reference has been made to the respondentôs research dissertation, this has been referred to in general terms only, in order to protect the participantsôanonymity.

3.5.1 Sequencing of Interviews

The interview cycle moves through the stages of interview, analysis, and thematic display, written account and culminates in the co-researcher validation. In order to apply the lessons from the prior cycle to the next interview cycle, the interviews were carried out in sequence rather than parallel, as per Steeneveldt (2004).

Because sequencing of interviews is dependent on availability of co-researchers, the researcher had to closely manage the process in order to ensure the continued participation of co-researchers and to prevent delays in data collection

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gatively impacted the study. This proved difficult were no longer on campus and the interview schedule had to be organised contiguously with busy work schedules of both the researcher and respondents.

3.6 The Interview Question

The interview process was driven by a single open ended question, that being:

> **"Tell me about your experience in the Negotiation elective, with particular reference to your learning and development".**

3.7 Data Analysis

At each stage of the process significant statements emerging from the transcribed data were analysed in order to generate meaning units from which a description of the essence of the experience was developed, as per Creswell (2003). In so doing, a number of themes emerged, described by van Manen as an ñelement, motif, formula or deviceò which occurs frequently in the narrative text (van Manen 1990: 78-79). According to van Manen (1990: 87-88), the theme captures the form of the phenomenon which the researcher is trying to understand and therefore represents ñthe experience of focus, of meaning, of pointò

Each stage during the transcription, reduction and description process was directed by the narrative properties described by Wagner (2002: 423) namely, the sequential order of events, voice, agency and intentionality, managing departures from the canonical and factual indifference, as these properties aid in eliciting the meaning ascribed to subjective experience. Dedicated attentiveness to the entire narrative was required throughout the process, accompanied by extensive

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earcher, as she tried to capture the essence of nce.

Interpretation of results was done through process of induction. Given the pre-determined MBA context, the analysis was informed primarily by the American phenomenological approach, with its focus on contextual meaning, as opposed to the more traditional phenomenological approach that searches for universal meaning of lived experience (Caelli 2000).

The research findings, in their presentation as themes, were then cross analysed and compared to the literature. Due to the open ended nature of phenomenological research, the initial literature review was not always sufficient to address the findings that emerged from the eidetic reductions of the primary data. The researcher therefore conducted additional secondary research in order to understand, explain or make meaning of the findings.

3.8 Validation of Findings

The researcher adopted the methods recommended by Priest (2002) and Hall & Callery (2001) that increase validity in a phenomenological study. The methods that were adopted were as follows:

The researcher made explicit her background, beliefs, assumptions, subjective judgements and interests in the study.

A mode of continuous reflexivity was adopted during the stages of data collection and analysis, coupled with a debriefing process whereby analysis and findings were presented to the research supervisor for peer evaluation. The researcher sought the additional advice and evaluation of a specialist in phenomenological research.

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ion was through the verification and feedback earchers during the interview, transcription and description stages of the research study. In order to increase the reliability of the data and the research procedure, the researcher kept a journal in which issues not captured in the transcript (non-verbal cues, voice, tone, tension, emphasis and nuances) as well as concerns, challenges or reflections on the events were noted; the intent of which was to augment the verbatim transcription of interviews undertaken.

A diagrammatic representation of the phenomeongraphic research process is provided in section 3. 10; figure 9 (overleaf).

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ic Methodology Process Outline

NOTES	STAGE NUMBER	STAGE	ACTIVITY		PROCESS
	1	Literature Review			
	2	Problem Definition Research questions			
	3	Interview Question	-Outline of themes -Primary question		
	4	Sampling	-Choose purposeful sample		
Process is repeated two times in a sequential manner from interview to interview. Study could be delayed if mistiming occurs.	5	Interview		*Reflection*	**Intentionality, Epoché**
	6	Analysis		*Reflection*	**Eidetic Reduction**
	7	Thematic Displays, discovery of variances		*Reflection*	**Eidetic Reduction**
	8	First Written Account		*Reflection*	**Description**
Feedback consists of findings from Co-Researchers data only.	9	Co-Researcher Validation of written account		Reflection	**Eidetic Reduction**
	10	Integration of themes and variance across interviews			
	11	Individual & multiple variances contrasted to common conceptions of experience			**Eidetic Reduction**
	12	Uncover multiple conceptions or meanings of Phenomenon through Eidetic Reduction			**Multiple Conceptions**
	13	Literature Review	-Contrast findings with literature		
	14	Qualitative Narrative			

Figure 9: Phenomenographic research process (adapted from Steeneveldt 2005)

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Issues

One of the major ethical challenges confronting phenomenological research is the possible impact that the research process might have in facilitating or pre-empting a significant life change in the research subject (Caelli 2001). The researcher acknowledged from the outset the potential for change in both researcher and co-researcher that might not have been recognised at the outset of the study. Concurring with Caelli (2001) on the non-transformative agenda of phenomenological research, the researcher nevertheless acknowledged that change could result from enhanced self-awareness deriving from the research process, but that this change would then present as an informed decision by the participant. The researcher adopted Caelliôs (2001) recommendation that the issue of transformation be addressed at the outset of the study.

The nature of work undertaken by the researcher involves extensive interaction with individuals on the issue of personal and career transformation. She consults to and provides support to them regarding important life choices and therefore believed that she was qualified to recognise and deal with the emotions accompanying such a choice, as well as being able to determine when the need for the intervention of a professional clinician would be required. The research study was supervised by a psychologist and in addition, the researcher works very closely with a highly supportive network of colleagues who teach and consult in self-management and career management and to whom she defers to for expert advice in situations where this is required. She was therefore confident of this support throughout the research process.

Hall and Callery (2001: 269) raise another ethical issue impinging on qualitative research. Arising out of the cyclical interview process is a ñsymbolic interactionismò where meaning is influenced by cumulative verbal and non-verbal interactions between researcher and co-researcher. Interactionism has particular relevance in power relationships where a polarity of power balance exists. To

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, reflexivity and an on-going critique on the ch process was adopted.

The ethical issue of possible power imbalance between researcher and co-researcher extended to the researcherôs decision to draw a purposive sample from the students who completed the MBA Negotiations course at the Wits Business School, where the researcher is currently employed. To redress any possible power imbalance the research sample was drawn from students who had already completed the MBA and would therefore not feel compelled by institutional obligations to participate in the study.

It was acknowledged, however, that these students would maintain contact with the university where they might retain relationships with faculty members. It was therefore incumbent upon the researcher to uphold the confidentiality and integrity of the entire process. The identity of the co-researchers was kept in strictest confidence by the researcher, a confidence that was upheld throughout the supervision process. Moreover, none of the research respondents were aware of the identities of any of the other respondents.

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e Transcripts

The researcher utilised phenomenographic methodology for this particular research study, the aim of which was to provide the respondentsô qualitatively different understandings, apprehensions, conceptions and perceptions of the experience, as per Marton (1981, 1992), Tesch (1990) Marton and Booth (1997), Järvinen (1999) and Trigwell (2000). Through all of the above, the researcher intended to provide a rich reflection of the experience of the phenomenon of experiential learning within the specific context.

In this section, the respondentsônarratives were analysed through a process of eidetic reduction, the outcome of which was to the present the individualsô description of their experience within the Negotiations elective of the MBA programme and through that to present their experience of their presenting reality (Sanders 1982 and Priest 2002). Through the study of these lived experience descriptions the researcherôs intention was to discover common experiential themes and enhance an ñaction sensitive understandingò (van Manen 1990: 124). Via these themes, the researcher was able to understand and make sense of the respondentsôexperiences of the phenomenon of experiential learning. Moreover, she was able to capture the qualitatively diverse apprehensions, conceptions and perceptions of the individualsô experiences of the phenomenon of experiential learning.

In this section, the research was conducted at two levels as per Giorgi (1985: 60); the first level (Level I) being, ñthe original data, comprised of naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogueò and the second level; the description of the structures of the experience based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participantôs account or storyò (Giorgi 1985: 151).

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s or motifs) emerged from the above process, second order experience; simulation; reflection; moments of truth; feedback; learning and development; the role of the facilitator and a community of learners.

Orientation to learning deals with learning receptiveness or defensiveness and contains some of the elements, both positive and negative, which orientate students or participants in the particular research context to learn.

Second order experience refers to an experience, either positive or negative, which results in a disorientation, in-equilibrium or challenge to an established frame of reference or perspective. The experience could be painful or joyful; arising out of a significant life event such as death, divorce, employment transition, home move, birth or it could present quite innocuously, such as reading a particular piece of literature, a cultural event or a conversation (Mezirow, 1991).

In light of the particular learning context, the *simulations* undertaken in the Negotiations elective represent contrived second order experiences designed and implemented by the programme facilitator. These simulations were made up of active listening role plays and negotiation simulations that derived from case studies utilised by the facilitator, Dr Heald.

Reflection and the Learning Journal deals with the reflective processes that formed the necessary learning component of the Negotiations elective. Reflection occurred on an on-going basis; during leadership discussion, immediately post role play or simulation and then, via the compulsory reflective journaling process that each student had to undertake on a daily basis. Once the course was completed, participants undertook further experimentation with the learning concepts and continued to internalise and reflect on their observations in the time leading up to the interview. Also, as per van Manen (1990), the

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ntinued that reflective process as the narratives ooking back on the experience in order to bring it to light). Because it constituted the electiveôs written assignment and therefore, was usually given separate emphasis as a separate entity, as such the reflective learning journal was described within the broader theme of reflection, but also as a separate sub theme.

Moments of truth were the particular ñahaò moments that emerged during the Negotiations elective. These ñahaò moments often derived from the simulations and post simulation reflective process. They represent the point of turnaround of assumption, presumption, attitude or behaviour and as such, might be pinpointed as the commencement of change.

Feedback refers to the on-going process of student-student and student-facilitator feedback that occurred both in the public and private domain. Within the public domain, the facilitator provided feedback on classroom input, role plays and simulations and also on the journaling undertaken on the programme. Similarly, students provided one another with feedback on the engagements and also on the personal anecdotes and classroom inputs that they cited as learning examples during the programme. One of the major case study simulations was filmed and the students were offered that feedback as objective feedback, in combination with class and facilitator input. Further, the facilitator provided students with private feedback in personal one-on-one meetings and in their learning journal assignments.

Learning and Development is a broad theme that includes different types of learning - single-loop, double-loop and deutero learning; change, personal mastery and development of personal effectiveness. Single loop learning, by definition, is adaptive, incremental learning (Argyris and Schon, 1974, 1978); double loop learning is a higher level of learning in which previously held assumptions or presumptions are challenged; where the individual acts as an

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g a new set of norms ï mental model ï to guide
n 1974, 1978 and Senge 2000). This learning is strongly associated with the development of personal effectiveness and personal mastery - a deep and tacit understanding of how individuals impact one another and the environment - and is also associated with organisational learning (Fiol and Lyles 1985 and Senge 2000). Deutero learning is evident in individuals who are aware of when and how they engage in single or double-loop learning (Argyris 1978).

The *Role of the Facilitator* refers to the role of the lecturer, Dr Heald and the impact that his role had on the learning and change that derived from the programme.

The *Community of Learners* refers to the holistic community and communal learning space that constitutes the classroom, facilitator and students and the inter-relationship between them, as defined by Nouwen (1986), Rogers (1969, 1989) and Christensen (1991).

The sequential presentation of the themes, as they appear in the respondentsô narratives, was deemed to be of value in the eidetic reduction of the transcripts; where sequencing could be attributed to the prominence or importance given to a particular theme by a respondent. Therefore, the themes were described as they appeared in the respondentsônarratives and were not presented according to a regulated or specific sequential format.

The themes are presented as they appear in the narrative descriptions of the eight respondents, NI, R, N, G, T, K, D and E.

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5.1.1 Background

Ni received an undergraduate degree in information technology, an environment in which he had worked for a number of years. Prior to undertaking the MBA, Ni completed a certificate programme in management at the Wits Business School and at the time of the interview had just changed his employment from information technology to strategic business development analytics. Ni presented as friendly, polite and respectful, mildly mannered and somewhat to the introverted side. The interview was conducted at the site of his new employer, within a large, fairly open plan work arrangement.

5.1.2 Reflection

Ni came from a very strong technical base, where his experience was focussed on his interaction with the computer screen. He had been content for a long time, partly because he did not expect too much from this work. However, he had become increasingly more aware of the fact that in his day to day interactions with people he had become increasingly reserved; something that he did not fully understand at the time. He wanted to become involved in more work that offered a higher level of client interaction, but had been unsuccessful in his attempts. Ni: ñI found that I was often overlooked for promotions, overlooked for positions that I had applied for and I couldnôt understand why. Not having experience of it, not having understanding of the business environment puts you on the back foot in essence. And I never understood what the fundamentals were, but I always expected everything to come to me.ò

Until his participation in the Negotiations elective, he had not interrogated this, however: ñSome of the key learning that came out of the Negotiations elective

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as that there was some sort of logic behind the ss, the way we present ourselves, the way we communicate with others is all taken into consideration. From the first negotiation lesson he was able to tap into some fundamental mistakes that he had been making during the last ten/eleven years of working: ñI was immediately able to recognise a lot of mistakes I had been making in the first day and I decided at that point, that I needed to change in myself in order to progress. Recognising where you went wrong was an immediate change.ò

Ni refers cites the critical learning emerging from writing up his daily learning journal ñI really enjoyed that ï I think that was one of the most critical aspects for me because when you have to sit down and critically evaluate yourself, it gets really important and its where the fundamental learning comes about. It allows you to reflect, to introspect and to ask what have you done that could change ï how could you change yourself.ò

5.1.3 Orientation to Learning

A growing self-awareness of his inadequacies, particularly his inability to articulate his thoughts successfully within the working arena, had led Ni on a journey, first to complete a certificate programme in Management and then to apply for the MBA. He was hoping to get a better self-understanding about where he was going wrong and how he could improve on his performance. Ni relates that he was ñlooking for that moment when I could reflect on myself, take what I learnt and put it together; because I wanted to change. This was something that I was personally ready forò

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Ni was looking for change, wanted change in his life. At the time of undertaking the course, he and his wife were planning the birth of their first child and he related with great excitement, that he and his wife were expecting their first baby, later on in the year. He felt that he was ñpersonally readyòfor the elective.

5.1.5 Simulation

Ni admitted to the fact that he was initially terrified of the case simulations, partly because he did not know what to expect. Moreover, he felt that he did not have the ability to perform well ï or rather, he believed that he did not possess this ability. He found, to his surprise, that in the selection of teams for the simulations he was always chosen first: ñI could not understand why, because, to me, I was probably the worst negotiator or presenter that there was in my class. You look at everyone else as being so good at presenting or discussing or negotiating; so thatôs why the confusion had come about.ò

However, reflecting on the success of the simulations, thereafter, he came to the realisation that he possessed the ability, but had neither understood nor appreciated it: ñBut, having gone through the process instils that confidence in making yourself much more aware of what your abilities actually are. That, to me, was key. Also, the simulation process gives you the confidence in terms of having experience, albeit in a closed environment. What the key fundamentals and subsequent learnings of the negotiation process are and putting that into practice in that closed environment brings out the confidence in you and makes you understand the process a lot more, which I think was a brilliant feature of it.ò

Prior to undertaking the elective, Ni had no knowledge of the vast body of knowledge underpinning the area of Negotiations ñI did not know that the science behind negotiations existed in the first place.òFor Ni, the way that the course was

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ess was key to his learning ñthe process that we wed me to go through some of those processes and critically evaluate myself more than anything else.ò The fundamental structure of the programme which focussed firstly on self-understanding and then the understanding of the surrounding environment ï incorporating the negotiation counterparts ï enabled him to develop a better understanding of himself and become more comfortable about presenting his argument: ñIt@s about understanding what you are doing, what the core reason is.ò

5.1.6 The Role of the Facilitator

Ni felt that the facilitator, Dr Heald, had brought out his self-confidence, by making him aware of what his abilities were and how he could advantage himself through a skilful deployment of these abilities. He relates how, after having an in-depth discussion with the Dr Heald and reflecting on some of the particularly valid and perceptive comments that he had made, he returned in the afternoon and was deeply aware of the fact that ñI could feel myself change and its one of the reasons why I felt this course to be of benefit to meò

5.1.7 Feedback

Ni was very surprised by the feedback received from both the facilitator and his negotiating counterparts. He attributes this to the fact that he had largely underestimated his abilities and had come to a point in his life where he was very reserved: ñI was the one who would shy away from confrontations or discussions ï rather than take it in, take it back and get back to my work and get it doneò Seeing himself on video, seeing actual evidence of a successful performer, receiving positive, constructive feedback from the facilitator and his colleagues ñwas a lot more than I expected. It definitely helped me develop the confidence that I needed in the business environment.ò

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Ni experienced what he describes as a ólight switch momentô, something that was for him an astonishing eye opener: ñI could see myself grow from the first day of coming there, sitting and not talking at all, to a point where I wanted to talk a lot, to give my ideas. And even beyond that, going into the business environment, I took a lot of that skill and you can see a shocking difference in terms of peoplesô attitudes towards you, knowing now that you always had the ability, but now you can bring that across.ò

5.1.9 Learning and Development

Undertaking the negotiation elective provided Ni an opportunity to undertake a number of processes and critically evaluate himself. Realising who he was and what he was capable of empowered him to apply his new learning and imbued him with a new confidence in meetings and general presentations. ñWhat weôve been through in the process, understanding it and internalising it and just knowing that there is that confidence in terms of what youôve been through, to be able to do it a lot better. Actually, this week, I was involved in a discussion. I brought out a lot of those clues that we had learnt in the process, going through who the people were around that table, trying to understand who they were and what they were about and what they were trying to get out of it and what we were there for, and it made the process a lot easier. I could feel that I was a lot more comfortable about taking control of that meeting, putting it out there, whereas, prior to the Negotiations elective I would never have done that. ò

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5.2.1 Background

R is a mature student whose education was formalised in her early forties, with an MBA, having previously completed a higher diploma in management, during her late thirties. At the time of the interview, she was working as a business consultant, but was seeking something an alternate career opportunity that she would find more fulfilling. R chose to be interviewed at the Business School.

5.2.2 Orientation to learning

R was initially apprehensive about undertaking an experiential learning elective and from the outset, was concerned about the level of difficulty, which was further exacerbated on learning that she would have to complete a learning journal. Soon after the introduction, her level of receptiveness grew as she reflected on the statement by the facilitator that õour lives are a methodology of negotiation because we start negotiating as soon as we start to speak, day we start walking and are able to ask for a bottleö

R found herself captivated by the transferability of the learning context into the context of everyday life, fascinated by the reflection that negotiation formed a part of oneôs life, oneôs everyday existence: õwe negotiate every single day whether it is about asking someone to make you a cup of coffee or buying lunch; itôs a question of what is it that Iôm going to have, that Iôm going to put on.ö

5.2.3 Simulation

R relates the devastating experience of learning through failure during a case simulation, where she had completed underestimated her negotiation

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ontext, thinking that because it was a simulation, sly: ñThere was a simulation that we did, where we were divided into groups and had to negotiate and I got caught with my pants down! I think that I did not take it too seriously because the MBA guys were always fooling around and I thought that I was negotiating with the jokers and that they were going to treat me as they had always done. This was not going to be about winning, but rather about a mutual even playing field, like oletôs get this over and done withô and was I ever mistaken! When these guys came on that front they turned guns blazing ï they were ready to take us out and that they certainly did. Thatôs when I realised that negotiation at any point is not about considering the friendship, itôs about considering that I am on this side of the line (demonstrates this) and you are there and we are going to do battle to the end. Ja, in a playful simulation it became very clear to me that when it comes to this, even if it is a class simulation or whatever, you battle to the end and make sure that you achieve the desired outcome. Donôt ever expect that you are going to get a freebieé

It (the simulation) became so real.ò

5.2.4 Reflection and the Learning Journal

R reflects on her participation in a failed group negotiation and how difficult it was for her to lose. She reflects upon the reasons for the groupôs loss: ñin the group there was one guy who was so pig headed and he felt that only one person should be driving the negotiation and we (the team) thought ñOkay, of you feel so strongly about it that there should not be too much engagement from everyone, then fine, weôll put it to you, you will field ité .and it all just bombed in our faces. I mean, the comeback was vicious. That was such a rude awakening for me. I was likeé AAAH, I wish that I could do this over again.ò

R was very angry with herself, shocked that she had allowed that to happen to her. It had been so out of character as she was ñusually the kind of person who

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I gave my power to someone else in the group mbastic, who wanted to dominate. But, losing was a totally different story. It was infuriating, because we should never have lost.ò

R was at first resistant to journaling the reflections of her experiences: ñI thought that this could be quite difficultò but began to enjoy this as it took her into a ñstorytelling dimensionòwhere ñI realised that for me it brought together so many things that I had learnt throughout the MBA. The more she delved into it, the more exciting it became for her and she felt that from the negotiations that she had participated in throughout her life, she could collate an entire story, once more emphasising the story-telling dimension. She felt encouraged to conduct further research and to complete her Masters research on the various negotiation cases in her life: ñIt was like really going back and relying on things that have happened ï it was like writing my own biography. I could relate to every case that was used in class.ò

5.2.5 Second Order Experience

A reoccurring theme was the role of second order experience, from a personal dimension as well as the introduction of second order experiences during the programme. R had emerged from a painful work situation wherein she was impelled to resign from a position, well aware of the fact that she had done nothing wrong. R was strongly aware of her rightness in that particular situation, but was deeply cognisant of the scorched earth left behind from a protracted labour dispute. R relates ñBringing up the Schwabe case, I thought Wow, Iôve been Schwabed! It became very real for me and it made realize, Charisse, that in our lifetimes, we will get Schwabed and we should not take it personally. Because, at that time in my life I was really suffering because I was being Schwabed and Schwabe was such a nice man. Although I felt victorious, in a way; in another, I asked myself why I was no longer in that role. So, umm, it was

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with when we did that case ï why you can't be ugh you know that you have gone through all of the procedures and had really given these guys stick; you would not be able to stay because you are an ultimate threat. Before Schwabe (the Schwabe case) I thought, hell no, someone like me should be respected because (respondent laughs heartily)é but the world does not work like that. We all don't have integrity and principles and work around it'ò

Working through the case had provided R with a very necessary closure on that matter, as it had shed light on the learning derived from such an experience, but moreover, the respondent came to realise that despite what had transpired, she still had so much to offer and "that part of the year, that semester, became a really enjoyable part for me. Before that I was miserable, I promise you. I did not know why I was doing the MBA, I don't knowé But doing the negotiations elective gave me a reason ï it validated why I was doing the MBA.ò

R ñI've learnt to be discerning also because sometimes you tell the wrong people about an experience that you have had because you want to explain to them the pitfall that they are about to walk into and they take it the wrong way.ò

5.2.6 Single and Double Loop Learning

Two very embarrassing failures during the team simulations, led R to a deep introspection and reflection upon the reasons for the failure. After analysing the reasons for her losses, as well as that of her group, during the various negotiation simulations, R's single loop learning becomes apparent ñfrom there on, I made sure that when I was sitting on the other side of a negotiation that I had all my bases covered. So, if you said A, I said Z, and I absolutely took you apart on why you said what you did. This was key learning for me ï the fact that negotiation is not about dividing up between the team, who will do this and who will do that; it is about knowing everything, having the attack and knowing how to do it with subtlety, without being too aggressive ñ

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ed since completing the elective, a time during
et her guard down ñYou know, sometimes I used to say that it was not worth it and I would brush it offò however, the issue of consequence is now always at the forefront of her mind ñI come back to that day when I had that simulation in class and we left it to someone else and were so badly beaten.ò

Post Negotiations elective, Rôs reflections evidence a move from single loop learning to a double loop learning phase: ñIôve started to say ñhow can I change the situation around? Itôs given me that alertness that, you know what, when I see that the bottom is falling out, I have to think on my feet, even if I have to postpone it for a while. Itôs like a court case ï let me ask for an adjournment. I donôt leave a part of a situation in someoneôs hands because I think that they might have the answer. No, I say this is the assessment of it, these are the risk areas and try and do a total evaluation of all the ways that this could affect me and what questions I need to ask to get to the bottom of it. I know that I could still run into trouble, but I now know that this will come, because you are almost straining your mind ï you stretch your mind. Like a piece of elastic.ò

5.2.7 Feedback

For R, the facilitatorôs feedback post-simulation exercise was most useful in enabling her to discern between effective and ineffective communication. Her previous pattern had been to slip into a mode of vulnerable victimhood, to whine when she could not get her own way. She reflects upon the tendency of women who fail themselves in negotiation situations by resorting to feminine whiles ñeyelid batting, asserting oneôs femininity, whining, because youôre hoping that the student doesnôt get too rough with youò Feedback from the facilitator made her realise how inappropriate it had been to project herself as overly vulnerable and to make use of tactics that denigrated her negotiation credibility: ñWith Geoff leading us, I realised that there was no way, that there was no time to act

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to stand your ground, whether those people are they are a stronger force; you stand your ground, because you believe that what you believe in what you are passionate about. If you stand your ground, it will bring you the results that you desireò

In the case of R, feedback and affirmation from the facilitator led to a heightened level of self-belief and self-validation. For a long time, R had been in a rut; she had been struggling to secure employment and was feeling despondent: ñI had had it with South Africa. I couldnôt leave this country soon enough. I donôt know where their ideas are about people that have skills when it comes to employment. You look at people who are in positions and you think how the hell is it possible that someone like myself who can communicate and who is skilled and is educated, is struggling in an environment that is supposing having a skills shortage. You go for interviews where people donôt even know the meaning of what you do and these are the people that interview youò

R points to a specific incident the feedback from which had a particularly profound effect on her self-belief. It relates to the compilation of the first dayôs reflective learning journal which she had initially written merely to get the task over and done with. In her journal, R wrote about her first negotiation experience, when, as a teenage part time assistant in a retail store, she had successfully leveraged her employer to assist her in tackling a situation where she and her ailing mother were about to lose their home to unscrupulous money lenders. To her awe, Dr Heald came into class the next day and asked R if he could share her journal with the class. ñI thought to myself, Oh my G-d, I actually did something successful and the affirmation of the values and that feedback - that feedback about that which was valued in me, but that I had not valued, because the world had been discounting me; and here someone had come and said ólisten to what this person didô It made me realise that if I could do it then with the little resources that I had, then what could I do now? I could probably move

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The respondent laughs continuously throughout

The victorious story behind R's journal spread amongst the business school and R became something of a university celebrity. "Everyone was coming up to me and asking "Are you R? And they came to me with this sense of purpose, like even if it wasn't for me that I had to regain that confidence and that value, it was that I was giving other people a tremendous amount of hope because in the doldrums of adversity, people were just amazed. They could not believe that it was possible but they realised that if I had lived through it, then obviously it was! I had always thought that I did these things to survive and never thought about how significant it was. I never thought that it could mean anything to anybody. And that recognition from Geoff - I mean, he could have told it to a friend, but this came from a really experienced person that saw and recognized that something really incredible happened in my life."

The validation resulted in R feeling a renewed sense of hope. R also felt empowered to explore alternative career paths: "When you get into this type of rut (relating to her lack of success in securing employment), I think that your focus becomes so narrow, but in negotiations, you know what, I can look at the world differently and maybe this is the work that I should be pursuing. Maybe I should become a negotiator."

I looked at simple little books, for example "Hope for the Flowers" and to be honest, it's just simple little books (*sic*) – 5 or 6 things on a page, like a book for a grade 3 student, but pitched at an adult level and I thought to myself that if this book can sell, then if I put my mind to writing up these cases then maybe there will be a case study booklet for negotiations. Then I could make money. These were the things that went through my mind. You know, it does not even have to manifest, or happen, but just that hope. Do you know what? All is not lost" this could be your niche."

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er the above experience had impacted on Rôs ver R negated this. For R, the feedback impacted on her affirmation and empowerment. Developing a sense of her individual value; but also, how she could manage herself more effectively, where her shortcomings existed, but also, where she excelled, made the learning experience worthwhile: ñFor the first time, I was the best in the class (laughs heartily). I always said that Iôm in the shadows. I donôt like to be ôMe! Me! Me! Me! Me!ô, because I feel that I am confident enough not to let everyone know who I am and see me. I havenôt got that type of insecurities that I feel that Iôve got to be noticedé but, Charisse, this was really amazingé now, with my thesisé I think that Iôm only one of three people in the class who is now finished and I am graduating. Iôm one of those people that was regarded as óha, she probably will never finish, she probably wonôt ever get her thesis doneôand now, I am so done and those people are not.ò

5.2.8 A Community of Learners

R found that observing others in the experiential context, reflecting on feedback received from the facilitator and internalising her class colleaguesô particular strengths and weaknesses was helpful in developing a framework for her own negotiation effectiveness. R relates her observations of a display of particularly poor conduct: ñWhen the whole process came undone he absolutely freaked out ï I mean he was callous. If this was a real situation then we would have been dead, because now he started off negotiating by being very defensive and attacking people. And, he did not let it rest there. He came back the next day and (respondent laughed heartily) I had to say to him ñyou just donôt get it. You are wrong. You did not handle the situation correctly and you cannot come back and attack Geoff because he annihilated us with his feedback. We were totally hopeless in the situation and deserved the feedback that we got.ò He just wouldnôt back down in the situation and I couldnôt believe that he had gone

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and yet his method of communication was way

5.2.9 Learning and Development

R moved from being the ósilent typeôwho never participated in class interaction, because, with so many assertive people in the class, she had felt unsure of her ability to challenge the status quo. Through her participation in the experiential learning elective, R realised that in entering a domain in which one belonged; in playing to her strengths and passions, she could find her niche. Moreover, the realisation that she could not be everywhere simultaneously, but rather, should focus on where she fitted in and what she wanted was of significant value to her.

R took the course very personally and proceeded to apply it to all domains in her life: ñI negotiate everything, everywhere and with everyone!ò Whenever she feels inclined to complacency, she now finds that the mere reflection on her previous failure jolts her into dealing with the issue at hand, immediately and responsibly. Her previous inclination to brush off a potential failure as being ñnot really worth itò had been transformed into an alertness to ñthink on my feeté not to let it goé no, not meòand to tackle the issue head on, if necessary to step over perceived barriers: ñI was more confident about the details and I realised that nothing would happen to me if I did overstep this person because they are not doing what they were supposed to. Previously, it would have been ó better not step on the personôs toesôé but, we live in a very competitive world and if you are not getting gout of somebody what you need then you are going to have to overstep it. Itôs not about being disrespectful. Itôs about getting what you need out of a situation so that you can go forward.ò

Rôs self-mastery had considerably uplifted: ñI learnt so much about how I could manage my expectations and life better. It was, you know, when I walk away from this, if I have steam for the next six months, then that is good enough. But

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e, because I have had the opportunity to do this
else has. You know what, when the bottom falls out, they will have to come to individuals like us, so that is how I felté I had hope.ò

5.3 Respondent N

5.3.1 Background

N, a successful young entrepreneur of 35, was working in investment and private equity, having formerly worked in consulting and banking. Nôs interview was conducted at his offices, in a very large, formal and somewhat imposing boardroom.

5.3.2 Reflection and the Learning Journal

N describes himself as a very private person who was at first most uncomfortable with the atmosphere of feedback and personal reflection and revelation. He describes his public discomfort and then, his reflection on the truths reflected upon and admitted to in private. N: ñOn the first day, I thought ówhatôs wrong with this guy? I felt like I was at a shrinkôs office! Sharing uncomfortable things about myself ï no go zones ï wife, brother ï things Iôm not comfortable with talking abouté But, I had deregistered from Finance because I felt that I had already learnt so much in that sphere. I was looking for a deeper experience. Itôs made me more rounded.

Although we joked about it, remarks that are not complimentary. But, when I was alone I was forced to challenge myself, to be true to myself.

It turned out great.ò

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behaviour and his manner of communication had
hip: ñI reflected on my wifeôs conversation about the time that I spent at work; what she actually meant was that she needed me to spend quality time with her when I returned home. When you get an understanding of the real message you reach an understanding that makes the other person feel considered.ò

ñIf we are honest with ourselves, a lot of problems that we have with other people are actually not about fundamental differences about issues but usually about misunderstandings or perceptions that the other poison wants to impose their will on you. Sometimes, that comes from being not open to understanding their point of view because, once you do, you might have a disagreement, but if you go away and think about it in a calmer mode; had you spoken about this in a manner that did not seem to play down the feelings of the other or how the other seemed to see the situation you could have actually gotten to the point that was the source of disagreement.ò

Nôs learning experiences enabled him to appreciate that people are different; that people communicate differently and also made him aware of how he communicated.

For N, the learning journal provided a structured mental framework. ñThe learning journal forces you to think about what you are learning. You think about your life and how you can apply your learning to that. Active learning was critical ï to try and understand the other people. Negotiation is a game where you need to understand the rules of the game and the rules change constantly. This (journal) gives you a mental framework where the differing levels are tapped into. I became aware and it forced me to think back to when I communicated or collaborated with others, to reflect on the appropriateness of my attitude.ò

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erience

N reflects on second order experience congruent with the elective that heightened his self-awareness and acted as a catalyst for change: ñI think back to situations that are applicable. At the time that I was doing the Negotiations elective, there was a change of management at work. The previous guy I worked for had hired me, he was well known to me, there was an historical background and a bond ï I had certain expectations. But my expectations were not being met and this made me angry ï that I was not getting the opportunities. But I did not try to find out the reasons behind the actions. I called a meeting and said that I was very unhappy about the prevailing situation. During the meeting, my bosses told me that they had thought that I was on my way out in order to follow my previous boss with whom I had enjoyed such a positive relationship and that is why they had placed me onto peripheral, not critical projects that mitigated their risks if I left.

The conversation had moved from ñthey hate meò to ñwe hear youò

It was emotionally very tough ï it really saps your energy level. How you experience work affects everything else. When I look back, I realise how negative I had become, where you canôt even see an opportunity even if it is obvious. You go out of your way to look for the negative.ò

5.3.4 A Community of Learners

N describes himself as a highly competitive person, always setting out to óplay hardôand to win, but realises that in personal relationships, winning cannot be the only important issue. Rather, for N: ñyou need to appreciate where the other is coming from in order to reach an accommodative result. It is not a zero sum game ï Itôs not about win loose but win win. How you get to the number is important ï the process. I realised that whenever I started engaging to achieve something I was very fixated about my position. I wanted to achieve X and if I could not achieve it, I had lost. But going through the programme, I realised that

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luence you ï you have to factor that into your t you might modify your position. Conversations are not necessarily adversarial if you try to listen and understand.

5.3.5 Role of the Facilitator

N felt that the facilitator had a direct impact on the class throughout their negotiation learning: The facilitator had sensitised them through the exercises that were completed and through this medium the class began to develop a different notion of what winning was. Previously, they had viewed winning as a ñwinner takes all scenarioò, but through the progression of various class simulations, N could see that previously held class assumption change: ñYou could see even how people contributed in class over the years. There is always one person who wants their view to be the dominant one or accepted view and again, in that course, they held back, because it made them think first before they spoke.ò

5.3.6 Double and triple-loop learning

N displays the transition from single and double-loop learning to triple-loop learning: ñI always knew that you had to prepare for an interview, get the sort of answers to the questions that they were likely to ask you, but it was more data. For example if someone asks you what your strong points are, you just have to mention five things. I never thought at the level of ñwhat is this guy looking for? What would be a deal breaker for him? What would be the deal breaker for me? How would I manage myself in the situation to arrive at these answers?ò
On the basis of that you might modify your position. I reflected back to situations that are applicable. Think back now in my new experiences. After the negotiation course I became aware of myself negotiating and ódoing itô I try to understand the deeper thing/the deeper meanings.ò

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N is a deeply private person, who used to battle with social functions. However, he was always deeply aware of how important it was in both his work and his personal life. He commented that he had been able to see a marked difference in his personal effectiveness; tackling things with which he was previously uncomfortable and overcoming them in order to achieve the heightened effectiveness. For N, active listening had been a particularly useful experiential technique in effecting this effectiveness: ñI think that the active listening thing always come backò

ñIôve made an effort to get better at it. You stop agonizing about what you are going to say. Genuine interest is so important. To build a rapport, because, then, you are no longer strangers. Itôs about that person you donôt know thatôs the challenge ï about getting to understand them. I found that an easy way of doing it because I am not a very social person is to quote the person ñyou were saying earlier thaté would you please talk to thaté I just need to understandé ò It allows people to give you information in a very non-threatening environment. You canôt believe how much you can learn from people. They need not be people in high positions, or sophisticated, but when they share their stories with you, you learn so much. You get rid of the idea of lesser or superior mortals. Differences or distinctions donôt make one better. This has allowed me to interact with so many people and learn from them.ò

5.4 Respondent G

5.4.1 Background

G is a highly experience management consultant who at the time of the interview was working in business strategy for one of the worldôs leading professional services organisations. The interview was conducted at his place of work, in his

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and around which there was quite a high level of

5.4.2 Orientation to learning

G chose to take the course because he was involved in extensive client negotiations, in terms of agreement on mandate, scope and in the actual discussion of client needs. Because management consultants charge substantial fees, he was deeply aware of a critical need to equip himself with the necessary negotiation skills to handle the subtlety of their situations and scenarios. He felt that he could improve on the way that he articulated various reflections and viewpoints and needed to be able to present his viewpoint ñin a way that is clear and compelling in order to achieve what you are setting out to do.ò

G had observed certain students for whom having to go through the simulations was ñan excruciating experience.ò ñCertainly it does happen in that kind of situation and there were people who were very nervous. There are people who stammer when they have to get up and make a presentation in front of other people, especially considering that the whole class was behind and watching and evaluating how you negotiate.ò G expressed the opinion that, to a large extent, people who enjoyed speaking in public would show a higher level of receptiveness to the programme and would enjoy the simulations as they would not easily become nervous or cowered.

5.4.3 Simulation

What G had enjoyed most about the course was the practical case studies of various big deals and contracts that had been negotiated between different parties, particularly multi-party negotiations, which he had felt equipped him with the techniques to deal with the challenges in various negotiations. ñIt was

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ed and what did not work going through the valuable is that when going into a deal there are certain hidden factors that you don't necessarily see that influence the outcome of the negotiation. When people are negotiating they tend to focus on what's being said as opposed to what is not being said and the underlying currents that could influence the ability of the other party in to coming to a consensus. That was my biggest takeout.ò

G commented on the congruence between case study simulations and the various strategies that he had been contemplating for a number of his own negotiations. It had been useful to him that: ñyou have your party on your side and their party on that side and you have to get by and use what you learnt on the course to reach some sort of agreement and that is what I found most useful about the course ï the ability to get involved and interact in a negotiation and emerge with an outcome.ò

In terms of the actual simulations, G commented that ñIt's a game, a game and you know it's a game because it's not a real life situation.ò However, he thoroughly enjoyed the simulation, which he, in a somewhat contradictory manner, referred to as ñthe actual negotiation.ò G attributed his enjoyment to his particular work style preference where interaction with people formed the crux of his daily work ï ñpart of a very natural flow.ò He had gone through extensive in-house case studies and role plays which were assessed to determine whether an employee would receive a promotion.

5.4.4 Feedback

Filming of the simulations and post filming feedback, where the candidates received objective feedback on how they were presenting, what they were doing right, or wrong, was particularly useful to G: ñthe way you use your hands, your facial expressions, that kind of thing. When you are viewing the video afterwards

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could have done that differently. Was that me, or

en you get to a certain age, you tend to have certain traits and things in your personality and the way that you do things that you cannot easily change, which at times tend to be very adversarial and it tends to rub people up the way. Saying that, you might well have a lot of value to add from a professional or technical competence perspective, but you have to know how to work with people and how your behaviour impacts on others. For some people you can look at yourself and see how you come across and it can be quite satisfying.ò G felt that having worked in a professional environment in which they were often filmed during presentations and also from extensive public speaking experience, he felt no anxiety or personal discomfort going into the filmed simulation which had contributed to it being a beneficial learning situation.

ñDr Heald would come in and say ñWell, this is what you could have done differently, what you could have achieved, what worked and what did not work ï the kind of things you were or were not considering. When you said this or did this, these were the implications for you; this is how it worked to your advantage or this is what you did that worked to the otherôs advantage.ò G found that this provided a very practical dimension to the course, allowing participants to take out what they needed and apply it to their real life situations.

He did comment, though, that this learning application might not have applied to everyone. He felt that it could also have been worthless for other individuals who did not come from an environment where they interacted and negotiated on a regular basis: ñIf you come from an operational type environment, Iôm not quite sure whether you would have been able to get a lot out of it. You need to have the kind of environment where you can take out those practical learnings and then go and apply them to your day to day activities. In that case, it becomes useful knowledge, but if you canôt apply it quite quickly then you very easily forget about some of the techniques.ò

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G did not enjoy the fact that he had to hand in his journal, expressing that it had put pressure on him to ñwrite a lot of stuffò, but acknowledged its usefulness in keeping track of all of the key learning throughout the course. He commented that he would continue to re-visit the journal, to explore some the things that he had written which were highly applicable to some of the things that he was going through at that particular time: "If you have something written down then it is far easier to keep track of your learning and also be able to come back to it in the future should you be required to utilize the stuff that you have learnt.ò

The Negotiations elective was the second course in which students were required to keep a learning journal and in both courses, G felt that it contributed to a deeper learning: ñKeeping that learning journal, distilling those key learning and making sure that you can come back to ité in essence, at the end of the day, that is the key take out from the course.ò

He acknowledges the variance between the perception and learning of participants in the programme: ñEach person takes out different things. It is amazing ï absolutely amazing ï what people record as key learning from a course ï all from different perspectives. So, if you wanted to go through someoneôs learning journal to see what the course is about, you would be very surprised as you would come up with so many different documents depending on the significance and what it is that you would want to apply in your daily life, because people come from so many different environments.ò

G noted with some concern that some students did not write their journals as per the instructions given by the lecturer, which was to write them daily, after class. Instead, they had written them up sometimes three or four days after the events. For G, that was a wasted learning opportunity: ñBy then you could have forgotten some of the key messages. Worse even, you could actually get the wrong

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t, especially if you are dealing with complicated

5.4.6 Learning and Development

Over the course G had reflected and internalised a number of key learnings that had then become part of his subconscious. What he had found was that those key learnings would strike a chord with him in certain circumstances wherein he would find himself applying the learning "quite naturallyò ñWhat generally happens is that you are sitting at a meeting and you are discussing a certain subject or about to strike a deal and just sitting at the table and you find that you are able to read certain messages and key into certain signs that are quite critical to the other party and then you are able to draw from the course. And itôs like óOk, this is what Geoff Heald was talking aboutô It is a challenge to internalise everything. But, there are certain messages and certain tactics that strike a chord in you and you apply them, based on the different circumstances that you come across. So, if you are in a situation where your negotiating counterpart is quite difficult then you want to try and understand why they are having such an objection and you start to try and look at the bigger picture; the next step and the rules of the game.ò

G felt that continuous application of the learning in different situations was very important ñits all about practiceò so that students could become more skilled at understanding which principles were most appropriate in any given situation. Not all situations provided the opportunity to apply all of oneôs learning however, the learning provided by the Negotiations elective was a very good foundation, as he had derived some real tools and techniques which he could apply.

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G commented humorously at the outset of the interview ñThat Geoff ï he was an interesting guyò and he went on to expand his experience of the facilitator, Dr Heald: ñHe knows his subject, has lots of experience; has obviously read and constructed the cases really well and his lessons are very practical.ò What had impressed G particularly was that the facilitator was very passionate and ñwhen you see him standing there in front of the class you can see that he is giving his whole. I remember that when he was closing there were some remarks that he made ï a quotation from a famous book (Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man) and that really resonated with me. He ended by telling us ñto go forth into your wonderful futureòwhich was such a positive note on which to end.

5.5 Respondent T

5.5.1 Background

A career publisher, T, in his middle thirties, presents a tall and rather imposing presence. During his time in the MBA, the researcher recalls that he was quiet and independent, even aloof; however, during the interview, which took place at his bright, airy and somewhat utilitarian offices, T was very warm, friendly, engaged and forthcoming. Shortly before the interview, he had been promoted to a senior strategic business executive role within online publishing.

5.5.2 Single and Double Loop Learning

Prior to having undertaken the Negotiations elective, T had not given much thought to negotiation in any particular context: He had always associated negotiations with board room tables, joint ventures and contractual issues, but had never given any thought to the extent to which negotiations play a part in

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sumption ñchanged within the first fifteen minutes denly confronted with things about which he had not expected to think about during the course: ñI found that I had been contextualising the content to spaces to which I did not expect the course to go.ò

He cites the concepts of reciprocity as an example. In terms of the former, he had thought of reciprocity in terms of personal relationships - returning of phone calls and present giving rituals or ceremonials - but found that the concept was transferable into the business context. Upon completion of his MBA, instead of accepting a tempting offer, he returned to the company who sponsored his studies and instead, used the techniques that he had learned during the Negotiations course to leverage a move into a strategic business area that interested him.

5.5.3 Learning and Development

T comments: ñItôs interesting how small words and hints and subtexts of e-mail all played a part (in securing the position to which he aspired), although it was not always a conscious application of what I had learned in this particular course; but I have no doubt that those experiences and that learning played a part in helping me to get where I wanted to be.ò Further, T found that the learning was not a óonce offô phenomenon. Instead, he had continued to experience, daily, in all aspects of his professional career in mergers and acquisitions and further, his realisation has grown that negotiations commence ñfrom the word goò ñItôs not about sitting down to talk about the deal terms or the contract; itôs about how you approach somebody the very first time that you speak to them. If youôre interested in a company, or if youôre interested in an alliance or a licensing agreement, the power dynamic is set very early on, I suppose depending on who needs the deal more than the other.ò

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course, T commented that he is now doing a lot to meetings, thinking about what he would like to achieve from the meeting. He has also begun to think more about his counterparts in the negotiation, trying to introspect upon what they might be wanting to achieve from the negotiation and how he could align objectives in order to reach consensus.

The importance of personal brand in a negotiation is critical for T: ñEveryone realises that their user base has an assumption of a particular type of brand value and therefore do not want someone who is a lesser player, who hasnôt ópaid their school feesò or done enough for another party to derive any benefit from their years of work. T refers to his predecessor, a person who made a lot of promises about what he could deliver. Although he had worked very hard (and competently) to develop the sort of climate for delivery; everything had been done behind the scenes and was not patently evident to the business. He had not done enough to manage the businessôs expectations of him and as a consequence, his personal brand had become irrevocably damaged.

T expresses how important it is for him to manage the expectations created by his predecessor. Business expects him to deliver on the predecessorôs remit and he is deeply cognisant of managing his own brand as he renegotiates the expectations. Prior to having done the course he had not given consideration to the fact that this was all a part of negotiation.

5.5.4 Simulation

T cites the effectiveness of a number of experiential engagements: ñIt was a very good way of putting the concepts that we had learned the previous day into a tangible example. When you deal with these rarefied concepts, it is often very difficult to recall the nub of what is being taught, the essence of that context, but if you have a specific example, it is a very good way of triggering that broader

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to the issue of personal brand and cites the character in the film, The Negotiator, which the students view and then participate in a post viewing critique: ñThe one thing that it comes down to is the very first concept that we were taught, that it is essential to define and manage the way that you are perceived. Even if itôs the first few words in a phone call leading up to a six month negotiation, those few words are of great importance. What stuck with me was the first guy that comes on (in the film), the first negotiator. He was very nervous and chain smoking and the Samuel L Jackson character made absolute mincemeat out of him. And that was necessary ï it wasnôt personal ï it was just about establishing his own credentials, his own mastery of the situation. Also, he made it perfectly clear that he knew and understood everything that was going on in the room. That behaviour automatically made everyone feel that they had to take this guy very seriously. Your expertise, I suppose, is so important.ò

An experiential technique made use of during the elective is an Active Listening exercise, of which T felt, he should be making more use of. The interview sparked a mental note that he had made at the time to use active listening extensively and on reflection, he realised that he had not. T commented on his tendency to dwell within his own thoughts whilst others were speaking, to an extent where he did not listen when people were speaking. He had not come upon active listening prior to his undertaking of the MBA elective and felt that it was a really useful exercise. T was therefore pleased to have had the discussion which re-ignited his interest in that particular experiential mode.

During a particular negotiation, involving a theatrical agent and his client, T performed particularly well, securing a beneficial outcome for his client. His feeling on his achievement was somewhat contradictory: ñI got a good settlement ï good money and a five year contract, but was not so happy, when it turned out that my settlement was only the median of the class!ò In addition, I felt guilty; felt that I had been a bit disingenuous ï that in a few years ómy chickens

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espite the fact that the simulation was precisely
ng of guilt did not leave him, as he thought of situations where his achievement had been at the detriment of his counterpart.

T observed that people became very emotional, even though the simulation situations were contrived: ñit became very real when you are dealing with issues of pride, integrity and these are things that people take very seriously indeed. He reflects on another simulated game where ñThe group had reached an agreement and the one guy broke the agreement and his counterparts were personally offended by this. It resulted in them not speaking for the rest of the course. They saw it as a personal betrayal. If you give your word and then break it ï even if it is in the context of a game ï it is akin to cheating. It is something very serious and one cannot turn around and say that ótôs only a gameôbecause one has broken the rules of that game.ò T provides a deeper explanation of his reflection wherein the above could be projected to a situation in which one might assume that oneôs negotiation skills do not matter too much, only to find out later that they matter a great deal. ñCertain actions that you might think are trivial, that you just dismiss, might not seem very trivial to the other parties involved.ò

5.5.5 Role of the Facilitator

T had also undertaken a Negotiation Elective at another business school, namely HEC, in France and asked if it would be in order for him to compare the Wits Business School course with that of HEC. The interviewer agreed.

ñThere was the whole thing about the synthetic, integrative and distributive approach which I found quite interesting, where the whole ógetting to yesôthing is more of an integrative approach. What I found interesting was that Geoffôs approach (the facilitator) was much more of an integrative approach to negotiations, whereas the guy from HEC was much more distributive in his

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sive, although both are successful negotiators in

The facilitatorôs use of anecdotal experience was something that T found most interesting. He felt that it was a useful manner to get concepts "to stickò If you can tell an anecdote that will help a concept to stick in someoneôs mind then that would be very powerfulò For this reason, T endorsed the case method as a powerful learning tool. However, this would be dependent on how well the case was written, how well it was taught and on what aspects of the case the lecturer focused. T does not dismiss the learning power of imagery: ñIn one case that I remember particularly well, the one thing that sparked the whole memory was a particular picture that that I was able to create in my mind which brought the case together. Although I think that I have always felt that I tend to think more in words than in pictures, I realise that a picture is often more powerful.ò

5.5.6 Feedback

Tôs group was filmed during the simulation of the ñFoggyò case. T remember being filmed and remembers watching and debriefing the filmed case thereafter, but did not remember the actual negotiation that was simulated. He recalls his feelings on viewing his performance: ñLooking at myself on the video, I felt that I was quite hesitant; I wasnôt very sure of myself. I was waffling a little bit, not necessarily getting to the point, too many pauses in my presentation. I did not feel that it had gone off too well at all.ò T was therefore pleasantly surprised at the feedback received from both Geoff and the rest of the class who felt that he had done really well, had a very empathic approach that immediately put his counterparts at ease. He then reminded himself that he had in fact prepared well, laid out his position very clearly. His team task was to summarise his teamôs contribution, which he had done very well. On reflection of the feedback, T, realised that he had been too hard on himself: ñI was being too judgemental on my style and I kind of underrated myself and realising that made me feel quite

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feeling pretty bad about myself to feeling pretty

5.5.7 Reflection and the Learning Journal

T reflected at length on a particular incident wherein he had failed. It pertained to an exhaustive communication with an irate customer: ñI was the publisher of a financial magazine and one of my areas of responsibility was subscriber management. I was dealing with a particular subscriber on the phone ï a very angry subscriber ï who had escalated the matter to the extent where he was speaking to me and not the call centre. I just remember the first thing that came out of his mouth when I said that I was the publisher of the magazine. He said ó*all you guys are uselessô* My immediate reaction was to just get rid of this guy, to have his call over and done with. I did not like him and while I certainly did not put the phone down on him, I did not leave him feeling ay better about the service that was being offered to him at the time. He said that he did not care about our excuses for the poor service that he had been receiving. It was our business; we were selling him a service and we had to sort it out. On reflection, to a large extent he was right. What I should have done, was to take an entirely different stance, an active listening stance, apologise and ask him to explain what had happened that had so angered him. I should have let him speak and speak and speak, as long as he needed to.ò

T reflected that this was a particular negotiation which he had handled particularly badly. On participating in the Active Listening exercise, that particular incident had come to mind. T felt that this was indicative of a lot of situations; however this was a particularly extreme example.

Another case study that induced much introspection and reflection was the ó*Schwabe caseò* (a case about career ambush). ñI remember quite well how this guy had been set up in a very methodical way and basically in the course of a

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ectors of the company had been broken down, ery interesting study, not only in terms of how to defend yourself from an attack such as this, but also how to prevent such an attack. Something that I thought a lot about through this course was the need to ensure that you have created the right impression and the right alliances. This was something that before the course I would have seen as being a bit petty. The whole notion of networking to me seemed a bit sordid. Iôve now realised it is noté really (laughs)é it is necessary.ò

The value of networking had become re-stated when T realised that it was not a disingenuous tactic, but rather about having a cordial relationship that could be used to oneôs own gain as some point, provided that both parties were aware of the rules of engagement. Tôs shift in mental model extended to a perspective on networking where òto hold yourself aloof and above that sore of interaction or engagement, is actually quite arrogant and could get you into trouble.ò

For T, the journaling evoked high levels of emotive reflection which are related to as ña vivid memoryò ñI do remember that first entry, for me, was the most interesting. The first day because I think that the course sparked a lot of very emotive reflection; the way that I put it here was painful introspection, that shone a light on a lot of the unconscious aspects of my behaviour and my experience that I think I had been quite happy to keep un-illuminated. But it was very useful to look at that stuff and try and understand why I had behaved in a particular way where I hadnôt behaved all that well. The one thing that came to mind was the very poor ï and that is what I wrote about in this diary ï was the very poor. I bore some responsibility for the way that it actually turned out.ò

5.5.8 Moments of Truth

Ti: ñIt turned out to be a very bad experience, and not an experience that Iôd really thought about. It was one that I had dismissed as óh, the guy is a bit of an

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ctive and let me just go and move onô But, this y ówell, maybe he was (an arsehole) but maybe that wasnôt the whole picture. There was much more to it and regardless of the circumstances, I could have done a far better job than I did.ô So that really interested me. I met the guy again. I had never got on well with the guy subsequent to that presentation. But I met with the guy again a few weeks ago ï a completely different session and the meeting actually went really really well. I would say that going in knowing what had gone wrong in that first session was very useful and I approached it with a completely different mind-setò

5.6 Respondent K

5.6.1 Background

K trained as a midwife and after many years of working within one of South Africaôs largest hospitals, she joined her present company, which is the leading provider of innovative healthcare management solutions to approximately 3 million South Africans. K currently heads up Research and Development for their rewards programme. In her early forties, K constantly juggled the roles of MBA student, professional executive and mother to two pre-school children. K was interviewed in her office, a semi-enclosed glass hub.

5.6.2 A Community of Learners

Due to an oversubscription on the elective, an extra Negotiation class was presented. Kôs group of negotiation elective participants was an unusually small group of 12 participants who had been encouraged to sign up for the class, partly due to the positive feedback that other participants had given about the course. Their general level of receptiveness going into the class was high and this was given further impetus by the fact that the small group had a particularly good mix

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nts, for the most, had been through two years of another well and were mutually trustful and respectful. All of the above contributed to an increase in the levels of class participation and collegial interaction, with ñeveryone giving their bit on the course to make it successful.ò

K reflects on the success of her negotiation counterparts during one of the negotiation simulations: ñOn the other side was J and even though she admitted to me that we were quite scary, she was brave enough to come back and question our position and why we were discussing it the way we were and rather pushing back at us all the time which I thought was really good.ò

K further reflects on the characteristics that make up a successful negotiator: ñThe other person who impressed me was A, the lawyer. He was very calm, did not raise his voice; had the facts at his fingertips. He was there to negotiate, was not drawn into the aggression or the politics or the blaming. He was there so that we could find a solution and he kept on reminding us of that. He was very calm, not confrontational at all; not arrogant at all; just very nice to speak to.ò

K was most impressed with her colleagues on the course. Observing them on video enabled her to see some of the things that they did really well: ñIt's like that: it is said that you learn from other people on the course and certainly, with this course, it was true. I learnt from them and I learnt from the lecturer.ò

During this Negotiation elective, the class were joined in one particular session, by a group of visiting MBA students from Georgetown University. During that session, three protagonists of the South African Constitutional negotiations joined in a focussed conversation led by the Geoff, who facilitated the session. K felt this to be particularly enjoyable, because firstly, they shared their personal experiences of that difficult time with the group, but she also found it deeply moving to experience the learning of, and through, the Georgetown students. ñIt

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st of the real negotiations did not take place in the second channel. This allows the ótherô to change position without losing face. What was so remarkable was the positive relationship between the negotiators of that time and the necessity for negotiators to have and show mutual respect for one another.ò

Observation of this respect sparked a reflection on a previously mistrustful business relationship: ñIt reminds me of a negotiation that I did at work with a third party supplier. At the start, we were kind of forced into the negotiation. I did not like the company and the people and I think that they felt the same way about me. I had kept away from them and avoided the possibility of ever using them. They were mistrustful of me and I am not entirely sure, but I think that they did not like me. They felt that I was the main barrier to them getting work at the company where I was employed. It was decided by the powers that be that we would go into business with them and I had to negotiate the terms of that agreement. We were forced into the negotiation and, surprise, surprise; we actually ended up developing a liking for each other. And they and I began ï we began to trust one another and we developed a lot of respect for one another with continues to this day ï two years later ï such, that if there is any issue between our companies, it always comes back to me to sort it out, even if it is outside my direct area. The trust was created incrementally and then cemented over time.

The one negotiator, Theuns Eloff, commented that miracles happen to those who work hard and that reminded me that preparation, organisation and proper thinking could lead to great things in a negotiation.ò

5.6.3 Simulation

K found the simulations to be most worthwhile, from both the interaction between participants and the facilitator and amongst the participants on the programme.

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woné for me was that we were both (negotiating partners) given briefs of what we were negotiating and in the end; if we achieved our brief I think that it would have been a successful negotiation. A learning for me was that although there was huge competition about who could negotiate the best rate for her (the character in the negotiation), the fact that everyone could come out happy, feeling as if they had won and had achieved something really great was indicative of the fact that the different parties were not necessarily competing on the same playing fields ï they might well have been looking for completely different things.

There were so many different interests and positions, that what it required was not to just achieve what you thought was best when you set out, but rather, to look in as much detail into the entire situation around the negotiation.ò

5.6.4 Second Order Experience

K had just returned from an overseas business trip to China when she embarked on the programme: ñGeoff also stressed the importance of personal relationships and he related the example of Guanchi which is the Chinese term for a network of relationships. This was very interesting for us because quite a lot of us had just been to China and it was really interesting to hear about that being spoken about as a negotiating concept. That really increased our interest in learning more. He also challenged us to have a look at where we were going in our lives and what our next step was ï referred to ó*The Alchemist'* which was a book that I had thoroughly enjoyed but not given enough deep thought to until he challenged us in this way ï pushed us out of our comfort zone.ò

Contiguous with the negotiation programme was the resale of Kôs home. Having been taught the negotiation scenario BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) K found her learning very useful in her personal negotiations: ñI think

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really useful to me because, although Iôm really t of a poker face. I was prepared to walk away from the sale because I knew what my BATNA was. But, I think that I also recognised when there was a fair offer on the table without being too greedy, which is also a temptation.ò

5.6.5 Reflection and the Learning Journal

Previous to completing the Negotiation elective, K had been unsuccessful in selling her home. She offers some reflections on why she had been unsuccessful: ñI was offered more (than what was offered to her in the resale referred to earlier on) but I declined it, because I thought that maybe I could have gotten more and Iôve accepted less now than I would have then. I turned down the previous offer because of greed; because the agent had promised that he would get me twice that offer.ò

Reflection on her performance in the simulations revealed some serious misgivings which pertained to her level of preparation for negotiation, both in the context of the Negotiation elective and in her personal life and career. This had resulted in a couple of setbacks: ñOften, when working at a corporate, I would run into meetings without adequately preparing, thinking that I could ówing itô The truth is that if we would come up against people who are well prepared then they would win hands down.ò K laughed at her previous disingenuous approach: ñwe are all so busy running around with our own stuff, that we fly around, so busyé and then we fly into a meeting, into our seat and think that we can start the meeting or whatever it is and generally ï people in general ï and myself in particular are not well prepared. Too busyé but itôs the stuff that can really up seat youé the more haste less speed sort of thingé Or, it often means that you get much less than you could have.ò

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ulation where her lack of preparation resulted in ons much earlier on that what was necessary: ñI did not prepare well and because I did not know all of the details I accepted too quickly when I could so easily have pushed for more, for longer.ò

For K, it was most interesting to understand the relationship between power and negotiation which emerged during the simulations: ñI really enjoyed the fact that mediocrity imbued with institutional power trumps a brilliant negotiator every time. You need to learn to recognise where the true power lies in a negotiation and then you can use the judo tactics to your advantage.ò

It also proved useful to her to learn the concession maxim: ñIt was interesting for me that sometimes in a negotiation people are tough and forceful but you don't get much further if you allow your opponent or negotiating partner to save face in some way by allowing them to get some concessions and in that way they don't feel as if they have lost all their ground.ò

K demonstrates her increasing self-awareness, as she reflects on previous behavioural inappropriateness: ñI think that I jumped into an authority role and I think that I was a little too blaming and judgemental with them ï not letting them get away with it and not moving on. I think that I wanted them to feel some pain first. Clearly it was the wrong thing to do.ò

5.6.6 Feedback

ñThen, there was a thing that I was dreading ï dreaded! The video! The fact that they videoed us and that we got to see the video.òClearly, for K, the video taping of a particular case simulation was something about which she had been deeply concerned, particularly because the day after taping, the video would be played back to the class; feedback would be given by the facilitator, but also, each member of the class would receive feedback from their class colleagues.

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rised at the outcome of the sessions and further, video and feedback session was a particularly useful learning experience. She found the facilitator to be ñhonest about our negotiating styles ï what we did correctly and what needed improving upon ï but he was gentle and affirming, too. In any case, it was quite evident when you saw yourself on the video feedback and he pointed it out to you. It was not something that you could deny or hide from. As soon as you watch it, for a start, you can see where the issues are, however, when he points it out it becomes that much clearer, because it is very objective feedback. It is there, right in front of you on a massive screen!ò

K also felt that it had been most valuable to her to see herself in a way that reflected ñwhat you actually look like to the world. When I first saw myself on screen I thought ñcringe! Jees ï Iôve got to get highlights!ò Itôs a tough one and people would tend to avoid it if possible, but I think that the MBA should give us more opportunities to video ourselves and view that and get feedback, objective feedback, where you can see what you are doing, how you interact, where you get heated and how things were actually working. It would be useful, also, to get some real play versus role play, taking the real issues from work and explaining them to some of your negotiating partners, and then you might be able to get some more valuable feedback from that as well.ò

5.6.7 Learning and Development

K had just emerged from the sale of a property: I found all of these things have been really useful for me because Iôve just been negotiating the sale of a property. Although Iôm really quite keen to sell, Iôve had a bit of a poker face. I was prepared to walk away because I knew what my BATNA was. But I think that I also recognized when there was a fair offer on the table without being too greedy, which is always the temptation. I do think that this course has helped me to successfully negotiate that sale and I am not sure that I would have been as

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offered more last year, but I declined it, because ve gotten more. And now Iôve accepted less now than I would have then (laughs). And I turned it down because of greed ï because the agent said that he would get twice that offer.ò

5.7 Respondent E

5.7.1 Background

A young management consultant, E completed the MBA on the back of the foundation business management diploma, where he had excelled as both class president and as academic student. Born in Zimbabwe, educated in the United States of America, E had chosen to make South Africa his home and had just secured a full time position at a leading transformation consultancy at the time of his interview. Confident, warm and particularly articulate, E was interviewed in a meeting room at the offices of his current employer.

5.7.2 Orientation to Learning

E had selected the Negotiations elective, because of its reputation as an excellent MBA course: ôNaturally, I was drawn to the Negotiations elective because I had heard so many positive things about it. Itôs a very useful course and it has a lot of relevance to you as an individual and you can apply some of the skills that you learn in both your professional and personal life. He had gone in ñwith eyes wide openò receptive to the thought that ñit should be fun; this should be a good experience.ò

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The personality and teaching approach of the facilitator, Dr Heald, contributed significantly to the learning process in the elective, according to E: ñGeoff himself is a very interesting professor and going through the process of certain techniques ï and just the learning, wow! I recall very early on that I used to look at a negotiation as a debate where there is a very clear winner and a clear loser. I guess it was greatly informed by my experience in America whereby you look at a negotiation and there is always a winner and a loser. And it was weird to have him say ñNo, no, no ï you are not opponents. You should rather say ómy counterparts from the other sideô That little subtle shift can change the dynamics of an entire negotiation.ò

E commented on Dr Healdôs composure during a particularly poor class dynamic, wherein certain North American exchange students had polarised the class with their antagonistic comments. ñIôm sure that Geoff must have been quite upset at certain stages with some of the comments that were made. But he remained very calm, kind of saying, óok, ok, thatôs fineé I hear where youôre coming from. I have been to the US and have interacted with negotiation professors from the US, but you also need to be aware of a different perspective and not hold on too steadfast to one style of negotiationò

5.7.4 Simulation

Eôs class participated in a number of experiential simulations, the first of which was a game designed to determine the individualôs negotiating style.

"During the elective we played a game and at the end of that game the number of points that you obtained was going to reveal the type of negotiator that you were. And I think that for me it came out that I go in with a very level headed mind-set of saying, ólisten, let this negotiation be a win winô When it came to the

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ng my group and encouraging them to all play would all get equal points. They were all in agreement ó yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeahô and for the first three or four rounds everyone did the same thing. And at the end of the day, thatôs not the position that most people go into ï they go in and say ó I want to win as much as I canô and so by the fifth round, everything just went crazy. E laughed resolutely: "You know, people looked after self and I remember being so upset. I was so upset by my team members and actually looked on it as a betrayal.ò However, after completing the exercise, E re-visited the instructions for the exercise, where it had been made clear that each participant had to look after his/her interests. He had completely missed the point. In his flawed thinking that the group needed to work to together, he had totally committed to doing what was best for the group, when he should have been looking after himself.

The largest simulation consisted of a multi-party negotiation on the Privatisation of the Port of Maputo. The simulation was divided into three phases, namely stalemate, the solution and the stakeholder relationships (the inter-agency governmental party) with two parties negotiating each phase. E wanted to be in the last team, the governmental party as he believed that they would hold the most power in the negotiation: ñIf Iôm in government, I could shout at you, condemn you and thereôs very little that you can do about it. Having a father who was in politics and who was a former governor, I remember going to some of those meetings and thereôs just no power in the other guy, so itôs much better to be at this side of the table rather than the other.ò He felt that he was an obvious choice and was thus surprised that he was placed into the first team which had to negotiate the stalemate.

His group had decided that their counterparts, who were very intelligent ñformidableò, logical and focussed, would choose a particular person as their lead negotiator. To them, the choice was obvious, that it would be Cameron, a particularly intelligent, strong student who had consistently achieved at the top of

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catch the other group off guard they should not tead opting for another student who was highly literate and articulate, but measured, ósofterô in approach. He had found to his surprise that although their counterparts had been taken by surprise and had to amend their entire strategy, the situation did not spiral into something acrimonious or vicious. Instead the teams were extremely cordial to each other.

E found this somewhat peculiar, that it did not reflect the reality of a real negotiation between two very different counterparts: ñI said, ok, weôre having a mock negotiation, but at the end of the day, if this was a real negotiation, where you are having a substantial negotiation about something that has huge financial implications, between a company and a country, I donôt think that it would be like this. Youôve got cultural differences, with Mozambicans with Portuguese influences and then you have a group of Englishmen. They (the Mozambicans) do things differently ï itôs not about, hey, we just sign on the paper. From a culture perspective, the Mozambicans would find the English offensive and would not trust them. There would be a lot of anger, animosity and that type of stuff. We, weôre very similar, our cultures are similar; like youôre doing an MBA and therefore thereôs a lot of common ground between us.ò Although E describes the simulation as a very good learning exercise, he felt that it was not quite ñthe real thing.ò

5.7.5 Double loop learning

A particularly significant learning was taken out of the simulation by E. In the deconstruction of the case, wherein E had expressed his concern about the element of órealnessô, given the acrimony surrounding the stalemate between the two opposing country counterparts, Dr Heald, in response explained to the group that Eôs point was valid, that there had been extreme acrimony between the negotiating parties and that the way that they had moved the negotiation forward was to change the teams, getting rid of the lead negotiators in each team. E had

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g so wrong, you could do something quite radical move things forward. It takes a lot of guts and a lot of commitment to try and reach a solution.ò

5.7.6 Reflection and the Learning Journal

Reflecting on the realisation that his team members had stayed true to the essence of the negotiation game, whereas he had missed the ñlittle partò ï the essence of the game, initiated substantial introspection within E. He reflected that he was the kind of person who had always looked at the settlement that was satisfactory to both, or all, parties, but that in life that was not always the case. A behaviour pattern had emerged that mirrored so many of his previous experiences where he had been ñdupedò because he had been ñso quick to lay my cards on the table and act in good faith, whereas the fact of the matter is that people will not always reciprocate. People will always try and get what they want out of a deal.ò

E addressed a specific incident from his past, which he had written up in his learning journal, namely the purchase of his first car, as an example of this losing pattern. ñI remember that I went up to the salesman and said, look, this is the car that I want to buy. I told him how much money I had in hand and what my budget was and this salesman must have thought óOh my goodness Christmas must have come early this year!ô And it cost me a lot of money; within two weeks I had to take the car in because there was so much wrong with it. Any you try to go back and say óyou sold me a dudô, but guess what, itôs too lateé the guy just said óyou bought the car, you signed for it and now itôs yours. You never sought greater clarity, so now, thatôs a life lesson for you.ôò E remembers being profoundly bitter, but mitigated the behaviour of both the salesman and himself with the reasoning that because the incident had happened in America, a capitalist society where people had been given the licence to look out for themselves, it was in order for him to have been duped.

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E had just secured a full time position as a he reflected extensively on the negotiations surrounding this position. Mirroring other past experiences, E, realised that he had not leveraged sufficient from his negotiation and had taken the reflection on this experience into his learning journal: ñYou talk about anchoring your position and how, when you do into a negotiation you have to have a goal. Your single sentence test. And when I went in there it was about ó just want to get something and literally sold myself short. And in response, they give you their lowest; not the fairest shake. When they said: ólhis is what we are prepared to give youô, I just said ok, thatôs fine, did not even try to enter into a negotiation. It made me reflect that I had conceded much too early. And I remember saying to myself ólôm sure Iôm not the first person who has done this. I am sure that there are a whole lot of people out there who have done the same, who do not actively negotiate and it comes down to not knowing your worth in the market.ò

5.7.7 Moments of Truth

Eôs moment of truth emerged when he found out a little later on that the employer had been prepared to pay him much more than the amount settled upon. They had merely begun their negotiation at a lower level and the negotiation ended early because E had accepted that first and lowest offer. E realised how critical it was to know the value in oneself, ñeven if it might seem to be a bit unrealistic to othersò and undertook to conduct a self-audit to understand his value prior to negotiating another job offer, using the principles of stakeholder analysis and negotiation scenarios: ñExamine the best case scenario and the worst case scenario and my BATNA; something that I had never done before. Before it was always ñokò Everything had been decided on ñokò based on the flawed premise that the counterpart was dealing in good faith and therefore, the contract was a fair one. But itôs not the case. If they are an entrepreneur and they are trying to make as much as they can and if it involves hiring people then they are not going

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nk you might deserve. Instead they will pay you happy with that, as in my case, they could!ò

E reflected on one of the principles that he had acquired from the course which often came as a surprise to the class, namely that in negotiations where negotiations appear to favour one person more than the other, both parties come out of the negotiation feeling good about the outcome, with the óweakerôparty as committed to the outcome as the favoured party. This had been true in Eôs case where he had been offered a salary double the amount of what he had been earning before the MBA and so he had considered this to be acceptable, but on reflection realised that he had accepted a salary far below his market worth as an MBA graduate. It was only on speaking to others within the industry that he had realised the extent to which he had been short changed, or rather, short changed himself: ñI am being shafted here.ò The realisation of his personal compromise had led to some work demotivation, but, since doing the course, he had realised that he had to accept responsibility for the outcome and instead of not working as hard, to instead stay true to himself and keep up his work standards.

E reflected further about the principles of liking and commitment which derive from Cialdiniôs Sources of Influence (Cialdini 1984) and which had resonated with him. Because he had always considered himself to be a peopleôs person, who placed a lot of emphasis on developing harmonious relationships; it was very interesting for E to learn that liking was the considered to be the least effective source of influence as it creates a superficial commitment. The link between likeability and effectiveness was extremely tenuous and often, ñeven as much as we might not like certain types of people, they are often the most effective.ò

As a student of History, E had always drawn on the examples of great leaders of the past, who had been authoritative, but had also got on so well with their colleagues and subordinates and were therefore able to arouse commitment, because of the relationships that they had built with people. Dr Heald had

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eyond that simplistic thinking about liking, but s that worked in conjunction with liking to arouse support.

For E, commitment and consistency had a strongly logical dimension: ñIôve always thought that if you have all your ducks in a row and your logic is flawless, then you can argue a point and will always be able to convince people, in anything that you do. But, if you try to be like a ósmarty-pantsôthen people will oppose you, just because of that. They might think that youôre onto something, but just because you are putting in a condescending manner, or if youôre just trying to show your intellectual superiority then they will try and cut you down to size. E points out the importance of linking logic in commitment and consistency to flexibility of approach: ñwhen you meet with senior people who want stuff, who want logic, who want to see your train of thought, then they might appreciate an intellectual approach, but if youôre dealing with someone much lower down and you come out and try and impress them with your supposed intellect, then you will not get very far,ò On reflection E realised how often he had been guilty of these errors ñIôve been guilty of this and Iôve been guilty of that. You see a lot of your past mistakes.ò

E recalled Dr Healdôs advice at the outset of the course to focus on elements in each lecture that had resonated within them and for E, the principles that had resonated more than others were Cialdiniôs Sources of Influence, interests and positions and the importance of anchoring oneôs position within a negotiation, negotiating styles and scenarios. He had found it a very useful learning exercise to sit down at the end of the day and note down the key learning from each day that really stood out. Whilst he was cognisant of the fact that they had to ñput stuff down because it was for marks, but still there are certain things that stick with you as you move forward, for example, from here on now, I know for a fact that I will never go into a negotiation and lay all my cards on the table. Never. Ever. Dot!ò

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During the first dayôs session, Dr Heald had chosen E as his counterpart in an Active Listening exercise. Dr Heald adopted the role of a foreign journalist and E, the role of foreign observer on Thabo Mbekiôs policy of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe. During the exercise, Dr Heald had used deliberate provocation to try and unsettle E. E commented that Dr Healdôs impression of him prior to that engagement was that he was quiet, unassuming, perhaps not a formidable debating or negotiating counterpart. However, E had excelled in both junior and senior debating at school and university and was therefore able to hold his ground and keep his composure even though Dr Heald was deliberately trying to rile him. As part of his strategy, Dr Heald called E ñan apologist for a fascist stateòwhich had the class literally gasping in shock.

Instead of responding with equal vehemence and emotion, E had brought his previous debating experience into the class, during which they learnt that the person who becomes emotional loses the debate ñthey have got you.ò He had called for calm, and to move away from the personal, placing emphasis instead on the matter at hand which was quiet diplomacy. He had received extremely positive feedback from the class, further endorsed by the lecturer who had commented: ñI thought that you would be so shocked because I kept throwing grenades at you and that you would go out on a tangent, but you kept your composureò

It was from that particular incident, where E did not lose his cool, that he became framed as óa very impressive young man.ô E felt that this positive framing extended to the feedback he received after the filmed simulation of the Privatisation of the Port of Maputo case: ñWell, I think by then, Geoff had really made his mind up concerning me and had decided that E is a very impressive man. Full stop.ò

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ys been his harshest critic and had focussed on many vocal fillers between sentences during the simulation, instead of being comfortable with the silence. ñSilence is a really powerful tool when you are talking and I remember criticising myself. And Geoff was looking at me with this really peculiar expression of ówOk, criticise yourself if you really want to!ô He commented that I had been focussing too much on tiny issues instead of affirming all of the areas in which I had done so well, such as posture and body language and tone which were all perfect; but there I was, nit picking, which I think comes from my toastmasters training.ò

E had found the feedback useful and that it had reinforced, once again, that he was his own harshest critic and would always be and that he should not criticise himself too much, just for the sake of criticism. Instead, he should celebrate his success and give himself credit for that which had been done well. Focus on the positive instead of only the negative.

5.7.9 A Community of Learners

Amongst the students on that particular negotiation elective, was a number of international students who were participating in an exchange programme between their school and the WBS. They included students from Chicago Booth, Cornellôs Johnson School of Management, Fuqua at Duke, HEC, UNC at Chapel Hillôs Kenan Flagler School of Business and the University of Indianaôs Kelley Business School. E related a particularly interesting dynamic that emerged in the class: ñWe had a lot of American students in the class who came from Ivy League schools and it was natural that they would have a different take on things. They believed that they were coming from superior institutions and that they had been exposed to much more and that they had been taught by their professors who were world leaders and so they kept on throwing in comments such as ódonôt agree with this, or thatôand óthis is what weôve been taught and what notô And it was a case of us saying to them, look, youôve come from

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erience and learn something new and you are
ne experience that you have had all along in your schools in the US.ò

E remembers one particular student who fought against everything in the class: ñits funny, you always remember the people who are way off!ò She had completely dismissed the dimension of learning from one another which was the African approach. E relates how one of the students from the part time class went to speak to her as he had found her behaviour deeply polarising for the entire class. ñHe told her that she was so hostile, never listened to anything or anyone, always thought she knew best. ÓWhen people give you constructive criticism you take it in such a bad lightô And I took my hat off to him for confronting her as no-one was sure of how she would react to being approached and given that feedback. But he was trying to tell her that we were all in the class to learn from one another and not to try and have a competition to prove who was more intellectually superior to the other.ò

E, in expounding upon the class dynamic between the Northern American students and the class commented upon the inability amongst the American students in the class to make a mental shift and embrace a new learning. Instead of observing and listening before commenting, many of them ñjust shot from the hip, saying that the lecturerôs approach was wrong.ò The lecturer had made a comparison between the negotiation styles of North American and African negotiators which the American students had dismissed as ñutter nonsenseò Only one student concurred with the lecturer, saying that his characterisation of the North American negotiation style was ñspot on ï a win-lose rather than a win-win approachò E refers to his love of sports, particularly those in the US which are characterised by professional agents who typically negotiate contracts for their clients, where ñitôs never about win-win. Itôs all about how I can get as much money as possible; itôs never about whatôs best for a

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uld be the after effects of getting a deal that is so .ò

E drew on his experience living in the US as further evidence of this apparent fixed mental model: ñIn the US you meet many people who are outgoing, who always want to get their point across, to get in the last word, no matter what. Even when there is no truth to what you are saying, they wonôt even listen; instead they will just fire away and say ñno, no, no, no, Iôm right.ò E attributed this to certain cultural differences between continents and was interested in this dynamic which had not surfaced during any of the other courses that he had undertaken on the MBA where, ñwe all came from similar backgrounds and whilst we certainly did not agree on everything, it was never acrimonious or polarising.ò

E commented on the facilitatorôs emphasis on the awareness of a number of different perspectives and the danger of holding on too tightly to one particular perspective, only one style of negotiating; the danger of having a fixed defensive mental model: ñWe should not only talk about African or North American negotiating styles but the negotiating styles from different parts of the world. You need to be aware of this. You canôt go in and say that my approach is spot on ï this is how it is done and this is how I will always do it.ò

E reflected again on his experiences as a student in the US: ñI remember my Finance professor telling me that youôve got to do whatever you need to do to put the Mercedes in the garage at Christmas. Itôs all about winning. Itôs not about counterparts, where you should be sitting down and talking and expressing what it is that you are needing to derive from the negotiation.ò

The narrative then extended to an exploration of life experiences and the importance of decisions made by multinational companies such as Coca Cola; who send their managers to Africa to receive training that is globally relevant and applicable and thereby doing create a dynamic shift in mental models. ñItôs that

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I that these corporate have recognised that you n America. Go and get new experiences. Learn. Force yourself to change. Because if you get entrenched in your ways and go for years and years like that, then it becomes much harder to change later on in life. But when youõre still relatively young, have finished your MBA and are under thirty then you can go to a foreign country for two years and learn and come back with a new perspective.ò

5.7.10 Learning and Development

For E, the major learning taken from the programme was that he would never go into a negotiation without first doing research and consulting with experts if necessary. He would not naively enter into a negotiation and openly state his entire negotiation case. Instead, ñI shall keep stuff to myself and will use the negotiation period to do precisely that ï to negotiate. I will use the time and not rush to make decisions because if you do that you sell yourself short.ò Having understood the principle that a once off negotiation always favoured the more experienced negotiator was a key learning for E: ñYouõre coming in and you have no experience and so you say óyesôand thatõs how it works. They know exactly what is going to happen, but you donõt ï I cite my car example. They get what they can and you lose out and are left mumblingé angry, hurt.ò

A fixed mental model was an extremely detrimental state of mind. During the course, it became evident to the students that by defining yourself and etching that in stone, you can handicap yourself. It was necessary to be flexible and receptive to learning, because learning should never be a finite experience. Instead, on approaching every new situation, E commented on how essential it was to ask oneself ñthe way that I know myself and based on the situation that I am facing, is this really the right approach.ò

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isation of the importance of consulting others for sulting with colleagues during the negotiation simulations he had amended his way of working: ñI think of the negotiations that I had previously been involved in. I never consulted anyone. I never did. Itôs funny, even in the simulations, when you get to a stalemate, you stop, go for a breather, discuss, contact your colleagues to discuss what you have on the table. What do you think we should do? But I never did that. I went in solely by myself and I said this is what I am going to do. Just realising that it is ok to consult. Itôs ok to say that you donôt know, instead of putting forward a macho attitude of ó can; I canôwhen you are faced with a problem that you are battling to solve. No sense in busting your head against a wall and end up with a situation where you are questioned on your deliverables but have not been able to deliver on the outcomes, because of your reluctance to consult, to bring in another perspective, new information which could have a significant impact on the outcome of what it is that you are facing.ò

5.8 Respondent D

5.8.1 Background

An experienced marketing manager within the FMCG sector, D described herself as an intelligent, focussed career person, often impatient, tough minded and forthright. D was interviewed, after hours, at the Wits Business School, in the office of the researcher.

5.8.2 Orientation to Learning

D did not enjoy the experience in the Negotiation elective, finding it ñquite dry and academicò She attributed this to a number of factors which included a very low energy level, because the elective was the last that she completed over a two

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g the course a tension had emerged between r her attention: ñYou try to juggle work, taking off work to go to óvarsity and work does not really understand; so they keep piling on the work and you are literally sitting in the class for eight hours, then going home and typing up your one-pager and then sitting down to do three hours of office work thereafter. So, your energy is quite low.ò

Dôs choice of the elective was based on her selecting a subject that was related neither to marketing nor to finance. Although her marks for finance had not been bad at all, she would have had to do ñliterally double the amount of work in order to achieve a B symbolò and so she chose the Negotiations elective from a fairly narrow choice of courses that sounded interesting and which included a fairly strong component of self-awareness ï Executive Coaching, Personal Mastery, Negotiationsé

D commented that she had a very short concentration span and often disengaged even at work. She used a laptop computer to ñcombat boredomò and allow herself to manage her disengagement. She was aware that her partial engagement was annoying, or irritating, to others, however, in instances where she had been unable to use the laptop, she would disengage completely. She found that using the laptop in that manner allowed her to multi-task and thereby doing, remain engaged, even partially. During class, she would type up everything that she noted as relevant during the class and then translate that into a learning journal.

The class dynamic was noted as another contributing factor to Dôs learning defensiveness (elective classes are constituted of students from a number of the full time and part time MBA classes). She found the class to be ñDead boring; so uninteresting; nobody was animated ï there was not even an attention seeker. Everyone was so quiet and boring and that was part of the problem as there was no vibe between us. Poor Geoff, he must have hated teaching our class. There

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onsible person, no loud mouth ï no dynamic lenge me. That was such a battle for me as I could not see myself engaging with them as they did not energise me. They were the worst class that I had ever been in, particularly at that late stage when I was so tired and de-energised and de-aspirated and needed to feed off some energy. It was not that I did not like or respect the people for who they were. Itôs just that they were so boring. There was far too high a ratio of introverts to extroverts which really tipped the balance against us.ò

5.8.3 Role of the Facilitator

The respect that D held for the facilitator, Dr Heald, had gone a long way to her ñsticking it outò ñGeoff is a clever guy, not ôla-la-landô clever and someone of credible authority and if I had to choose somebody to negotiate for me on a big project, then Geoff would be the guy. Heôs got a very approachable, flexible manner and people were able to interact well with him. So, part of the course was respecting Geoff and seeing him as an authority figure, giving the content that he gave us ï and boy, was it a lot of content! (laughs).ò

Learning and Development

What so surprised D, was that despite her learning defensiveness and disengagement, the course had impacted so much on the way that she went about her work: ñDuring the course, I did not rate it highly, but afterwards, a lot of people were feeding back to me that they had noticed how much my negotiation style had changed ï and for the better.ò She attributed this change to a combination of the learning journal and class interaction style where ñone had to go through rounds of negotiations which had a huge impact on me.ò

Another factor was the take home examination ï an individual assignment , wherein she had to interview an expert negotiator, reflect and comment on how

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ve success and what she could learn from their ard to their stakeholder engagement, rules of engagement, negotiating style, strategy and how they went about building a winning case. ñI found myself afterwards, trying to identify the stakeholders and even now I do that, asking myself ówho are the stakeholders, what is the commitment to the process?ò

She referred back to a particular example from work where, due to her increased level of awareness and understanding of the principles of negotiation, her attitude had undergone a change: ñEven something stupid at work ï my boss, who could not manage his way out of a paper bag ï heôs a clever guy, but as a leader and someone who has to apply practical skills, he has zero ability which leads to a lot of frustration, not just from my part, but from other colleagues who report to him. But, negotiations gave me a chance to say ñyou know what, the company has made a commitment; they have hired the person and they have to back hi up because they are now committed to that process. All that you are going to do by not helping him is to make the entire division look badò and so, D felt that the negotiations elective had impacted significantly on the way that she interacted with her boss; assisting him to improve his time management skills and to project himself as a leader.

Her perspective had altered in terms of her understanding of how people commit to processes and in thereby doing would be reluctant to admit to mistakes. She felt that this change in her perspective had started filtering through more and more since completing the course and therefore, unlike some of the classes where she had derived a lot of value through the work undertaken in syndicate assignments during the course, the value of this particular course was derived, afterwards, where ñyou decide what you wish to take on from the course and how you will go about applying it.ò

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learning and development was also dependent er it back into your work ï how you can apply it in different situations; for example, if you had a desk job with few opportunities to negotiate and youôre not driving projects, then it would probably be very difficult to incorporate the learning into your work.ò

5.8.4 Simulation

D had been most interested in observing the different ways that each student approached the negotiation simulations, particularly with regards to their choice of negotiation teams, the styles of the different negotiators and the different negotiation approaches. She was able to learn from the success (or failure) of the particular negotiation trances: ñThere were various stakeholders and various rounds of negotiations and it was interesting to me how different stakeholder groups were so chaotic and others quite structured. There were some in which only one person was appointed to speak and other groups where each person was given space to come forward. And, with some groups, Geoff almost had to force some to come forward as part of their evaluation was based on the necessity for each person to come forward and speak.ò

In their particular group, there had been quite a significant amount of pre-planning, information gathering and then scenario planning as part of their strategy. Because she had such a strong personality it was decided that she would speak last ï a deliberate strategy, although, mid-way through the negotiation, the facilitator thought that she had chosen to disappear and had queried her non-engagement. However, her group found that their approach had been particularly helpful given the rapidly changing scenarios. They had tried to mimic the way that the negotiation would actually happen in business where each person would be expected to make a contribution to the negotiation process and the subsequent decisions. Their process had been commended during the

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arning had been both affirmed and validated as

5.8.5 Reflection and the Learning Journal

D was chosen by the facilitator to be lead negotiator for her team, which had been mandated, as a powerful inter-governmental grouping, to ñ*hire and fire as they chose*". Because she was aware of the fact that she could come across as quite hard and unapproachable, as a technique to compensate for her personality, D deliberately chose two people from the class grouping who possessed a stronger sense of ceremony, with one having ñquite a touchy-feely way about her.ò Each group was given a time limit of seven minutes to put their case across to their negotiation counterparts.

The negotiation went ñback and forth; back and forthò between the parties and by five and a half minutes, D started to take a very hard line, basically forcing the issues at hand. The parties came to a very quick settlement. On reflection, D was concerned because she had been so hard in the final round of the negotiation. She went on to reflect on that in her learning journal ï the fact that she had reverted to a part of her personality type that she had tried hard to ñmanage out of the negotiationò She realised that it had occurred because of the situation, particularly, the stressful time constraints but was nevertheless deeply disappointed by her performance: ñI remember saying to myself afterwards: ó*I can't believe that I did that!*ôò

For D, the learning journals were an important part of the reflection and learning process, ñas much as they were a pain to manageò Their value emanated from the reflection on what it is from the course that one would take forward into the future. In Dôs case, she completed a daily learning journal, but her final amalgamated journal submission was completely different. She had discarded much of her previous journals, opting instead to read through the notes that she

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de, jotting down key content that resonated with into an order and wrote a life story about those key points.

5.8.6 Feedback

D had addressed her reversion ñto my aggressive, hard selfò in her learning journal. Geoff (the professor and facilitator) in feedback to her, had said that she had been too hard on herself and that her actions were as a result of the fact that people had been going back and forth without reaching consensus, thereby ñforcing her handò in pushing for a decision. However, D felt strongly that she could have been far more approachable and therefore was not happy with her performance at all. She had received negative feedback from one of her class colleagues: ñOne of the guys sitting opposite to me reacted very negatively to me and I was aware of that. He said that I had been rolling my eyes which I actually had not. However, in terms of negotiations you have to be less transparent than I am which is probably why I have been no good at it.ò

D also commented on the objective nature of video feedback: ñBecause it was such an interactive process and because there were numerous rounds of negotiations, in camera, then you got to see yourself afterwards and you could see how you came across to other people, in stark, glaring colour. I think that because of that you really got to reflect on who you were and how you approached situations and for me it was a big thing to learn that if my back was cornered, I would revert to type. Iôd hoped that I had evolved slightly more than that, which I hadnôt.ò Because the programme was interactive and that over the four days she had interacted extensively with her class colleagues and had built up a relationship with them, she was more willing to internalise the feedback.

D had also received negative feedback from her lecturer after the first dayôs learning journal submission. ñGeoff commented that my learning diary was very

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And Iôd rather get feedback like that ï honest

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Triangulation of Findings

In this chapter the experiences of the sample group are cross analysed and comparisons are made to the literature review. The researcher is cautious about applying any generalisation derived from the group to the general population. Instead, generalisations are made about the sample group whilst remaining focussed on the individual narrative. In keeping with phenomenographic research, this study is concerned equally with the similarities and the variances in the experiences of the sample group.

6.1 Graphical Representation of Findings

DISPLAYED THEME	RESEARCH RESPONDENT							
	1 Ni	2 R	3 N	4 G	5 T	6 K	7 E	8 D
Orientation to Learning	■	■	■	■		■	■	■
Second Order Experience	■	■	■			■	■	
Simulation	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
Reflection + Learning Journal	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Moments of Truth	■	■	■		■		■	
Feedback	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Learning & Development **Single loop, Double loop + Deutero Learning**	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Role of the Facilitator	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A Community of Learners		■	■			■	■	

Table 3: Graphical representation of results

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6.2.1 Orientation to Learning

In general the research sample showed a high level of receptiveness to learning, with N, D and R being the particular exceptions.

Ni had hoped to develop his ability to articulate his thoughts in a more cohesive, impactful manner and improve on his general work performance and opportunities for promotion. He was therefore ñlooking for that moment when I could reflect on myself, take what I learnt and put it together; because I wanted to change. This was something that I was personally ready for.ò

Similarly G enrolled for the course because he was deeply aware of the need for negotiation skills in his professional career as a management consultant. He was seeking an improvement in his ability to articulate and present his viewpoint in order to come across as more ñcompelling.ò E had selected the course because of its reputation as an excellent MBA programme, but demonstrates a high level of receptiveness to what he assumed at the outset would be a useful application in both his personal and professional life: ñit should be fun; this should be a good experience.ò

The above provides support for Malinen (2000), Smith (1987) and Mezirow (1991) who opine that a direct causal relationship exists between the level of significance that a learner attributes to any experience and the learning that they will derive from that experience.

Although Nôs orientation to learning was positive at the outset, he developed a distinct defensiveness during the early part of the programme as he became uncomfortable with the deeply reflective nature of the discourse, expressed in the statement: ñOn the first day, I thought ñWhatôs wrong with this guy? I felt I was at a shrinkôs office.ò Kolb, Rubin and McIntyreôs (1971) Learning Styles Framework

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9b) could provide some insight into Nôs reaction: as an ñassimilator-convergerò and ñabstract conceptualiserò whose learning preference is for practical technical problem solving, where intuition and thinking are the preferred mode of problem solving; as opposed to personal problem solving that requires a strong feeling mode. Nôs choice of research dissertation corroborates the above. He undertook a study that examined Black Economic Empowerment transactions which required the application of various analytical models to elucidate results.

However, N did not shy away entirely. He had chosen the elective because he wanted a ñdeeper experienceò and his learning emerged in the private domain where he could reflect more privately on the dayôs experiences. The Honey & Mumford model of experiential learning, which recognises and therefore incorporates human behaviour into a Learning Styles Questionnaire (Honey and Mumford, 1982, 1983 and 1992), provides another insight into Nôs earlier defensive stance in the public domain, versus the change in the private domain.

As an analytical, cautious and observant ñreflector-theoristò according to the learning modes that characterise Honey and Mumfordôs experiential learning model (Honey and Mumford 1982, 1983 and 1992), N would naturally prefer processes that are clear, unambiguous unemotional and structured; concerned with the assimilation and integration of data, rather than the personal components of any task. The Negotiations elective presents students with situations that are often ambiguous and, at first, unstructured and hence Nôs discomfort. However, in the comfort and privacy of his own home, N could create the structure for his thoughts and action; internalise his class experience and reflect on his learning.

Dôs lack of receptiveness towards the programme had little to do with her academic or professional confidence. Instead, her defensiveness was as a combined result of learning fatigue at the end of her MBA; a class dynamic that

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no vibe between usé no dynamic to energise or ular tension between professional and academic priorities: ñYou try to juggle work, taking off work to go to ó varsity and work does not really understand; so they keep piling on the work and you are literally sitting in the class for eight hours, then going home and typing up your one pager and then sitting down to do three hours of office work thereafter. So, your energy is quite low.ò

The relationship between MBTI preference and learning preference, as per Myers-Briggs (1975), Lewis and Margerison (1979) and Kolb (1984) provide insights into Dôs behaviour: given her highly extroverted personality, D naturally gains her energy from interaction with others and where this was non existent, she became de-aspirated and demotivated. Further, Dôs expedience in her choice of elective subjects (she chose from a fairly narrow band of subjects that remained after her exclusion of all modules that were marketing or finance related; instead of choosing those that would have a particular learning significance) might also have influenced her level of receptiveness. The above corroborates the assertions by Smith (1987) Mezirow (1991) and Malinen (2000) that significance is a necessary precondition to learning.

Kolb would describe D as an ñAccommodatorò (Kolb 1984) with a natural inclination towards concrete experience and active experimentation, where collaboration with others in an intuitive manner is the dominant mode of learning. The Honey & Mumford model (1982, 1983 and 1992) provides for an accurate insightful classification of D as an outgoing, open minded ñPragmatist-Activistò, one who thrives on the new and the unknown - situations free of repetition and routine, wherein she would be able to try out new behaviours. This might describe why, although defensive in her orientation to learning, D embraced the opportunity for experiential simulation with enthusiasm.

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the Negotiations elective, concerned that the to be ñdifficultò She did not expound upon what she meant by ñdifficultôbut the researcher opines that this might have been due to the reputation of the course as being one that involved extensive qualitative analysis and application, introspection and reflection. This might have been daunting to R, given her lack of undergraduate qualifications. R might have felt more at risk in a highly academic context, having mentioned in her narrative that she was a student whom everyone thought would never make it through the MBA, thereby corroborating Rogersô (1969, 1989) emphasis on self-protection and the need for discernment regarding the safety of the community of learners in which a student could experience trust and safety.

It appears that once her initial apprehensions were overcome, R moved into the ñPragmatistò mode of learning explicated by Honey and Mumford (1982, 1982 and 1992). She became very excited about the possibility of experimenting with new ideas or theories, however preferring to behave instinctually, as opposed to being directed by cautious judgement. Rôs behaviour is typical of ñAccommodatorsò (Kolb 1984, 1999a and 1999b); whose orientation is towards concrete experience and active experimentation learning mode, where the focus is on collaborative interpersonal relationships, as opposed to a technical solutions orientation

The researcher explored Rôs change in her orientation to learning viz a viz the positive lecturer feedback that R had obtained from her first journal submission. R repudiated the inference that her heightened receptiveness might have been due to the praise received, saying that her receptiveness increased as a result of personal affirmation and a feeling of empowerment. However, the researcher asserts that this feeling of empowerment could well have arisen from the lecturerôs feedback, thus raising questions about the role of subjectivity in experiential learning. This subjectivity is expressed in Patelôs characterisation of the pedagogic approach in experiential learning as phenomenological practice

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ounded upon by van Manen (1990), Caelli (2001) ho highlight the potential for phenomenological research to induce transformation via interactionism and the power imbalance that exists between a respected authority figure and a subordinate, namely researcher and respondent.

The researcher asserts that, similarly to the relationship between researcher and respondent in phenomenological research, within experiential learning there exists a transformative potential (van Manen 1990 and Caelli 2001) arising out of the ñsymbolic interactionismò (Hall and Callery 2001: 269) between the facilitator and participants in the Negotiation elective. Phenomenological research also takes cognisance of the power imbalance that exists between researcher and co-researcher, a function of interactionism, as per Hall and Callery (2001).

The researcher asserts that similarly, a power imbalance exists between facilitator and participant, based on the institutional power of that facilitator, particularly if he/she is regarded as a credible authority in their field of expertise. Because meaning making is a subjective experience (Reissman 1993), influenced by interaction between facilitator and learner and between co-learners, it is important to acknowledge that this could impact on the beliefs and assumptions of the participants (Hall and Callery 2001). Therefore Rôs increase in receptivity to learning might well have been induced by the significance that she attached to the feedback from a person of authority, namely the facilitator.

Dôs narrative pertaining to her orientation to learning versus her actual learning might also provide support for the researcherôs latter assertion. Despite her negative orientation to the elective, she still participated actively in the experiential exercises and worked consistently on her homework assignment. D attributes the decision to ñstick it outò to her opinion of Dr Heald as ña clever guyé someone of credible authorityé So, part of the course was respecting Geoff and seeing him as an authority figure, giving the content that he gave us.ò

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the convergence and variance in the theme of ear that a causal relationship exists between the significance of the learning experience and the participantsô orientation to learning. Further, this causal relationship is strongly influenced by learning styles and preferred learning mode, which are impacted by personality and behaviour. In analysing the theme pertaining to the role of the facilitator in experiential learning (section 6.2.8), it became evident that the facilitatorôs thinking, learning and behavioural modes also impact on the learning context. Consequently, the preferred learning styles or modes of learning, as well as personality and behaviour of both facilitator and participants in any experiential learning situation need to be considered.

Riding (1997), Kay (1997), Robotham (1999) Sadler-Smith and Riding (1999), Felder and Spurlin (2000) and Bull (2004) advise experiential learning instructors to give learners insight into their own learning preferences and learning styles and highlight their potential strengths and weaknesses. The researcher asserts that this would have proved invaluable to D, who whilst being naturally self aware of her strengths and weaknesses, did not have a specific framework of understanding for improved self-awareness and personal mastery. The researcher further asserts that in order to create an optimal experiential learning engagement, accompanied by higher levels of introspection and reflection, participants should first undergo a learning style and work style assessment; thereby ensuring a higher level of awareness and consequent responsiveness in the learning process.

6.2.2 Second Order Experience

Second order experience and the reflection on the significance of that experience presenting at the juncture between past experience and future learning is a persistent theme in the narratives of Ni, R, N, K and E.

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ezirow 1991) that challenged the established
ned birth of his first child, an event about which both he and his wife were most excited. According to Finnbogadottir, Crang, Svalenius and Persson (2003) it is quite common for expectant fathers to experience a surge in feelings of responsibility; a heightened desire to become a ôbetter personô- to seek knowledge and become more effective, more successful, particularly in the financial arena. The significance of this second order experience would have required Ni to critically evaluate his frame of reference in light of the challenge and recognise the gaps in his knowledge and skills that were impeding his progress to his idealised state of being (Mezirow 1991, Revans 1985 and Knowles1990) thereby providing support for Kolbôs explication of the transformational nature of certain life events (Kolb 1984).

For K, too, the second order experience was a positive event ï an international business trip to China. ñGeoff stressed the importance of personal relationships and he related the example of *'Guanchi'* which is the Chinese term for a network of relationships. We had just been to China and it was really interesting to hear about that being spoken of as a negotiation concept. That really increased our interest in learning more.ò

Contiguous to the above, was the sale of Kôs home. The significance of the learning experience obtained in the Negotiations elective was enhanced by the application of negotiation scenarios into the simulations, particularly BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). K developed a heightened awareness of the point at which she would be prepared to exit the negotiation, balanced against a perspective of what constituted a fair offer versus the danger of greed. This provides further evidence of the causal relationship between experiential significance and learning as per Smith (1987), Mezirow (1991) and Malinen (2000).

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could also be a negative event (Mezirow 1991), nal. For both R and N, the second order experience pertained to difficult employment transitions. R had been pressed to resign from a position, even though she had not been at fault. Deeply aware of her ñrightnessò, but not wanting to enter into a protracted labour dispute, R identified strongly with one of the cases in the Negotiations case, ñThe Sorry Case of Mr Schwabeò, which pertains to a painful career ambush.

The capacity of second order experience to impact on the individualôs holistic sense of being (Hanson 1972, Hamlyn 1978 and Elder 1980) is reflected in Rôs words: ñI was miserable, I promise you. I did not know why I was doing the MBA.ò Working through the Schwabe case and reflecting on the learning derived from that experience gave R much needed closure on the event and allowed her to reposition her value in light of what she still had to offer (ñso muchò). R was able to surface and challenge the assumptions that she held regarding her personal worth and adapt her previous mental model, as per the deep learning, or breakthrough learning, explicated by Argyris and Schon (1978) and Senge (1990). On internalising the second order experience, reflecting on that, challenging and then reconstructing her personal framework, R was able to make sense of the world and work around the fact that although ñsomeone like me should be respectedé the world does not work like that. We all donôt have integrity and principles.ò

From that time onwards, R positivity surged and the MBA semester became ñreally enjoyable for me. Doing the Negotiations elective game me a reason ï it validated why I was doing the MBA.ò Rôs experience and response to the Schwabe case provides support for Deweyôs (1951) assertion that certain experiences may act as learning impediments; as expressed in Rôs initial learning defensiveness; whereas the appropriate application, followed by introspection and reflection on second order experience within the learning milieu, can act as a catalyst for learning.

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nson (1972), Hamlyn (1978), and Elder (1980) on erience. A change of management at work that occurred concurrently with the Negotiations elective challenged Nôs previously held mental model and created an unsettling break in his defensive protection of that model. Providing support for the assertions that it is through reflection and critical evaluation of a particular frame of reference and challenging of mental models (Argyris and Schon 1978) and (Senge 1990); a redefinition of a problem (Mezirow 1991) and transactional interplay between expectation and experience that learning occurs (Kolb 1984); N realised that a redefinition of his expectations, and a rigorous challenging of the negative manner in which he had framed his new bosses resulted in his moving from ñthey hate meò to ñwe hear youò He was able to acknowledge how a negative attitude had led to his inability to identify the opportunities that a management change brought to the company.

For E, the second order experience described in his narrative was one of mixed emotion ï positive at securing a full time work opportunity and then, negative when he reflected on the- less- than- optimal package that he had negotiated (or rather, failed to negotiate) for himself: ñWhen I went in there I sold myself short.ò Reflecting upon the manner in which this experience mirrored so many others in his life, E was forced to challenge his mental model (Mezirow 1991 and Senge 1990), critically evaluate the manner in which he had been responding to situations and recognise the steps that he would need to take to redefine an optimal outcome, as per Revans (1985). For E: ñWhen you go into a negotiation you have to have a goal. Your single sentence test.ò

In support of the major experiential learning theorists, the research findings affirm the transformational potential of second order experience in experiential learning. Further, the findings provide support for Dewey (1951) on the importance of educative experiences which act as learning catalysts such as those applied in the Negotiations elective.

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The simulations constitute the contrived second order experiences that are applied in the experiential learning milieu in order to optimise educative potential.

Ni approached the simulations with a sense of trepidation. His trepidation derived from not knowing what to expect in the simulation compounded by a lack of self belief in his ability to perform: ñI was probably the worst negotiator or presenter that was in my class.ò R completely underestimated the negotiation simulation, resulting in the devastating failure of her teamôs negotiation case: ñthere was a simulation we did, where we were divided into groups and had to negotiate and I got caught with my pants down!ò

G, on the other hand, was most comfortable with the simulations, which he attributes to the nature of his professional role. As a senior management consultant, engagements with clients form the daily focus of his work. Further, he had previously undergone extensive in-house training, which made use of experiential learning techniques, particularly simulations, and he was therefore sensitised to the experiential learning mode.

Rôs underestimation of the negotiation simulation arose out of a flawed assumption that it was just a ñplayful simulationò and that no-one in the class would take it too seriously: ñI think that I did not take it too seriously because the MBA guys were always fooling around and I thought that I was negotiating with the jokers and that they were going to treat me as they had always doneé and was I ever mistaken!ò Evidenced in Rôs reframing of assumptions is the transactional interplay between expectation and experience presented by the experiential learning exercise (Kolb 1984) and a recognition by the individual of ignorance, inability or inadequacy ï gaps in knowledge or skill ï which are impeding progress to an ideal state of being (Revans 1985 and Knowles1990).

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arding whether the simulation was ñrealò or not ents. . For R: ñIn a playful simulation it became very clear to me that when it comes to this, even if it is a class simulation or whatever, you battle to the end and make sure that you achieve the desired outcomeé It became so real.ò G had commented: ñIt's a game, a game and you know it's a game because it's not a real life situation,ò however, he contradictorily referred to the simulation as ñthe actual simulationò T referred to the simulations as ñcontrivedò but that ñit became very real when you are dealing with issues of pride and integrityé these are things that people take very seriously indeed.ò He cited another example of a negotiation game where a particular student had broken ranks with the group, resulting in that group not communicating with the student for an entire day because they felt so betrayed ñEven if it is in the context of a game, it is akin to cheating. It is something very serious and one cannot turn around and say that it's only a game because on has broken the rules of that game.ò

E reflected in his narrative: ñOk, we're having a mock negotiation,ò a view which he remained committed to; although he could not dispute the learning value of the exercise, commenting that it was a very good learning experience even though it was not quite ñthe real thing.ò All of the other respondents endorsed the learning value of the negotiation simulation.

The researcher however purports that, despite the respondents' reservations about whether the simulations were real or not, the narratives provide evidence that, in the simulations, all of the respondents demonstrated behaviours that were aligned to their previously held assumptions and conceptions about people and situations. On reflection post simulation the respondents were able to identify the flaws in their thinking and behaviour that emerged during the simulations, providing proof that these simulations had elicited real behaviour. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges that whilst the simulations are contrived, during the process of enacting their roles in the simulations, the participants lost their self-

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mersed in the activity in a such a manner as to and the behaviours emerging as true to the behaviours that would normally be evidenced by respondents in similar situations.

The researcher further asserts that the manner in which the students surfaced their confusion about whether the simulations were real, or not, endorses the subtle power inherent in contrived second order experience. It also provides researchers with an understanding of how the process of breakthrough learning is induced by experiential learning activities such as case study simulations, as per Marquardt (2000) and Mintzberg (2004). Marquardt refers to the ability of experiential learning to ñsee and understand the concomitant change that is happening inside themselvesò and ñenhances the capacity to dig below the surface layer of perception and examine taken-for-granted assumptions and valuesò (Marquardt 2000:235), whilst Mintzberg (2004: 223) credits the experiential learning milieu with the ability to ñallow students to reflect on their experiences, uncover the assumptions brought to bear on their actions, reframe their assumptions on the basis of theory and practice and then test out new actions with their associated skills.ò

Ni and G were most pleased with their performance in the simulations. Given his previous reservations, Ni was particularly surprised at his accomplished performance in the simulation and was able to acknowledge that he did possess ability; but had neither understood nor appreciated it: ñHaving gone through the process instils that confidence in making yourself much more aware of what your abilities actually are. What the key fundamentals and subsequent learning of the negotiation process are and putting that into practice in that closed environment brings out the confidence in you and makes you understand the process a lot more.ò

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e what worked and what did not work going le is that when going into a deal there are certain hidden factors that you don't necessarily see the at influence the outcome of the negotiation.ò The congruence between case study simulation and various strategies that G had been planning to implement, endorse Knowles (1984), Lawrence (1989), Merriam (1991) and Malinen (2000) in their questioning of whether and how second order experience can be used and balanced in order to elicit personal significance, learning and development.

For T, the value of the simulations was in their ability to transfer ñrarefiedò concepts into a tangible example that generated a broader understanding. The use of the active listening engagement challenged T to reflect once again on a pattern of self-limiting behaviour that he had exhibited, that being the tendency to drift off and not listen when people were speaking. This endorses the capacity of second order experience in the process of unlocking previously defensive mental models as purported by Hanson (1972), Hamlyn (1978) and Elder (1980). Furthermore the above supports Argyris and Schon (1978), Senge (1990) and Restine (1997) on the value of the ability to reflect on thinking both during and post learning in action.

T's feelings of guilt arising out of a negotiation settlement where he had secured a beneficial outcome for his client, to the detriment of the negotiation counterpart: ñI felt guilty; felt that I had been a bit disingenuousò demonstrates the ability of experiential learning to facilitate the development of self-awareness supports Argyris and Schon (1978), Senge (1990), Marquardt (2000) and Mintzberg (2004) on the importance of utilising experience and consequent reflection as a tool to surface and challenge previously held assumptions, thereby resulting in the construction of a more appropriate behavioural framework.

For D and K, the value of the simulation derived from the interaction between the community of learners as defined by Rogers (1989) and between the facilitator

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. D was most interested in observing others and ccess or failure of particular negotiation teams: ñIt was interesting to me how different stakeholder groups were chaotic and others quite structured.ò D, as team leader, had chosen a particular strategy a particular strategy that proved to be successful; an affirmation of their expectation of the outcome (Kolb 1984). However, as mentioned elsewhere, D had been most disappointed at her reversion to a harsh and uncompromising approach, thereby endorsing the value of the simulation or applied second order experience; where the second order experience presents as a problem of threatening nature which requires an appropriate solution (Revans 1985 and Knowles 1990) in the development of self-awareness and personal mastery (Senge 1990).

K was surprised at the competitiveness that developed within the class negotiation, but was even more surprised at the fact that everyone appeared to be happy with the outcome of the negotiation. The latter she attributed to the difference in values and expectations of the players within the negotiation ï their mental models: ñThere were so many interests and positions, that what it required was not to just achieve what you thought was best when you set out, but rather, to look in as much detail into the entire situation around that negotiationò K was also fascinated by the relationship between power and negotiations that emerged during the simulations ñI really enjoyed the fact that mediocrity imbued with institutional power trumps a brilliant negotiator every time. You need to learn where true power lies in a negotiation and then you can use the judo tactics to your advantage.ò

From T, D and Kôs observations and comments, the researcher is able to infer the value of the simulation in breakthrough learning and the development of personal mastery, where the assumptions, biases and presuppositions that underpin various mental models are questioned and evaluated (Knowles, 1990 and Senge 1990).

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lation catalysed breakthrough learning for E who ith an assumption about the negotiating teamôs cohesiveness, harmony and interest. The outcome for E was one of deep disappointment on witnessing his groupôs pursuance of self-interest: ñI remember being so upset. I was so upset by my team members and looked on it as a betrayal.ò However, on revisiting the remit, E had to clarify his presenting reality and interrogate the gaps in this understanding of what was needed with regard to his skills, competence or knowledge in order to cope with change and complexity.

The value of experiential learning pedagogy in catalysing deep learning becomes evident in the manner that E takes action within the simulation and then reflects on the consequence of that action in his narrative. In Eôs case, he realises that his assumptions were based on his incorrect understanding of the caseôs remit and therefore, as a consequence of this error, his actions were inappropriate in achieving a successful outcome. In so doing, E endorses the explanation given by Argyris and Schon (1978) and Senge (1990) on the process by which breakthrough or transformational deep learning is created via reflection and challenging of previously held assumptions. Further, in Eôs re-organisation and re-interpretation of experience; breakthrough learning and growth in self-awareness and personal mastery; management of mental models and individual transformation arising from the experiential simulation, the researcher finds support for the value of applied second order experience as expounded by Argyris and Schon (1978), Revans (1982, 1985), Kolb (1984), Senge (1990), Knowles (1990) and Mezirow (1991).

6.2.4 Reflection and the Learning Journal

The eight co-researchers all engaged in the active dimension of experiential learning, namely reflection; elaborating on and differentiating previous meaning schemes in order to either build upon or affirm them as per Mezirow (1991). Within their narratives Ni, R, N, G, T, K, E and D reflected on their previous

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eriences, the successes and shortcomings of e Negotiation programme.

Ni had been continuously overlooked for work promotions, but had not been able to understand why he had not been considered, He had realised that he was continuously on ñback footò but prior to undertaking the course did not have a sense of the fundamental skills in business that he was lacking. As per Caple and Martin (1994) and Restine (1997), through post experiential reflection and journaling during the Negotiation programme, Ni had been forced to interrogate his deficiencies. He reflected on the underlying logic behind transactions; trying to place himself in those negotiations to objectify his performance and recognised a number of mistakes that he had been making, which immediately spurred him on to change ñWhen you have to sit down and critically evaluate yourself, it getôs really important. It allows you to reflect, to introspect and to ask what have you done that could change ï how you could change yourself.ò

R, N and G displayed an initial resistance to the reflective component of the course whilst the other respondents displayed a keen reflexivity. The researcher suggests that this might be attributable to differences in personality; where R, N and G are introverted and K, E and D extroverted. Although T is also an introvert, he is a highly intellectual person with extensive media experience therefore he would display a greater ease with ñemotive and painful introspectionò that could present in social or qualitative engagement. Honey and Mumfordôs model (1982, 1983 and 1992) would ascribe the preferred learning mode of strongly assimilative Reflector/Theorist to T. T, K, E and D reflected on their experiences in detailed, expressive and expansive language, drawing on specific examples to illustrate their reflections.

R described feelings of insecurity about personal revelation and had displayed a certain resistance to the reflection component of the elective ï fearing ñthat it would be quite difficult.ò In the notion of self-protection and the need for

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ty of the community of learners, as defined by finds an answer to Rôs initial reticence. Going into the Negotiations elective, she felt unsafe in a class of students whom she assumed to be highly intelligent and competent, particularly in comparison with her. In her narrative she refers to herself as the person whom everyone assumed would never get through the MBA and she was therefore anxious about surfacing possible inadequacies relating to her academic ability or performance in class.

However R found the reflective component to be ultimately satisfying as it had drawn together so many things that she had learnt on the MBA. She expressed the desire to conduct further research into the various ñnegotiation casesò of her own life: ñIt was like writing m.
y own biography. I could relate to every case that was used in class

Similarly to R, N, a deeply private person, was at first extremely uncomfortable with the reflective component of the course. He felt as if he was in a psychologistôs consulting rooms, revealing information about areas in his life that had always been ñno go zonesò He discovered, however, in his private moments of reflection, that there were truths that he needed to face and admit to, to challenge these, to challenge himself and ultimately ñto be true to himself.ò Concurring with Rogers (1969), as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson (1989: 303), he admits the need to ñstate my own uncertainties, to try to clarify my puzzlements, and thus to get closer to the meaning that my experience actually seems to have.ò The learning journal had provided him with a structured mental framework for his reflection, into which ñdifferent levels of experience could be tapped into.ò

Whilst G did not mind writing the journal, he resented having to hand it in for marks, as he was then required to ñwrite a whole lot of stuff.ò Nevertheless, he found it useful to reflect at the end of each day about the issues that he was

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w he could apply his classroom learning to those eater meaning from his work and thereby doing become more effective, He endorses Mintzbergôs (2004) view that the classroom represents the juncture between the managerôs natural experiences and the conceptual teaching undertaken.

G acknowledged the variance between the perceptions and learning of the participants in the programme: ñEach person takes out different things. It is amazing ï absolutely amazing ï what people record as key learning from a course ï all from different perspectives. If you wanted to go through someoneôs learning journalé you would come up with so many different documents depending on the significanceé ò In saying this, G endorses Reissmanôs (1993) view that the meaning that individuals derive from experiential learning is subjective, by virtue of the qualitative nature of the researched phenomenon.

Tôs reflection on a specific example of previous patterns of behaviour, during which he acknowledges the inappropriateness of his tone and demeanour during a particular altercation, supports the assertions by Senge (1990) and Mezirow (1991) that the most important learning derives from direct experience, through taking action, observing the consequences and reconstructing oneôs interpretation of experience in order to guide oneôs future action. T: ñOn reflection, what I should have done was to take an entirely different stance, an active listening stance, apologise and ask him to explain what had happened that had so angered him. I should have let him speak and speak as long as he needed to.ò

Tôs narrative provides support for Restine (1997) on the value of the active dimensions of comprehension and cognition in learning, namely reflection, interpretation and meaning making. For Restine (1997), reflection on experience is the most important androgogic tool, as it presents the cognitive process of interpretation and meaning making from which learning and development

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Further, it provides the researcher with insight research problem, namely ñhow do students experience the phenomenon of experiential learning within the Negotiation Elective?ò This ñhowò therefore refers to the process of knowledge acquisition in the experiential learning milieu.

K, similarly to T, reflected on previous failures, more specifically related to the negotiations surrounding the sale of her home. Through reflection she was able to conclude that this was due to an unrealistic expectation of the market value of her home which led to an inappropriate ñgreedò. This had been fed by an avaricious estate agent, who had inflated the value of Kôs home in order to secure the sales mandate. K also reflected on previously inappropriate behaviour in the context of her employment: ñI think that I jumped into an authority role and I was a little too blaming and judgmental with them ï not letting them get away with it and not moving on. I think that I wanted them to feel some pain first. Clearly, it was the wrong thing to do.ò

For E, reflection on various life experiences induced by the painful betrayal of his team members during the negotiation game highlighted his previous inability to pick up on the nuanced or hidden ñlittle partsò. As with T and K, he reflected on the repetitive pattern of his ñdupingò citing the examples of his first car purchase, as well his securing of a full time position after completing his MBA. E further extended his reflection on this pattern of behaviour to his unwavering commitment to the weakest principle of influence - liking (Cialdini 1984) - and how his natural warmth and desire to maintain harmonious relationships resulted in him being an easy target for manipulation.

D, being aware of her tendency to come across as ñhard and unapproachableò, had deliberately chosen a negotiating team whose soft skills were quite pronounced. However, timing constraints resulted in her reverting to a pattern of behaviour that she had thought was under control. She reflected about her utter

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nce. Although displaying a greater awareness of ss her own negative behaviour pattern that the negotiation simulation had been able to wrest.

T, K and E and Dôs re-construction of meaningful interpretation and growth in self-awareness and emotional maturity corroborates Kellyôs Personal Construct Theory (1955, 1991a & 1991b), which proposes that people organise their experiences through the development of personal constructs or opposing dimensions of meaning, from which people anticipate and predict patterns of behaviour and world events. This Construct theory provides for a reconstruction of alternative possibilities for experience, where existing constructs have proved to be illogical, distorted, un-useful or unsatisfying. Their growth of self-awareness and emotional maturity provides support for the ability of experiential learning to catalyse change through reflection on action and reassertion of new mental models, as per Argyris and Schon (1978) Senge (1990) and Restine (1997).

The questioning and subsequent re-positioning of Tôs ingrained assumptions about networking which he had previously dismissed as a disingenuous activity supports the researcherôs comment about his shift in mental model, as per Argyris and Schon (1978) and Senge (1990).

Journaling was an emotive and often ñpainfulò introspective process for T, echoing the deep and private introspection of N, who had previously avoided, or evaded, an objective presentation of his reality, preferring to keep it ñun-illuminated.ò

The above highlights the power of the critical reflective component of ñsurfacing and criticizing tacit understandingò (Schon 1983: 61), as a necessary function of the developing person (Brookfield 1987). Its ability to engage and empower participants in managing their life longer learning in approach of ñconstructive

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is further evidenced. The personal experiences demonstrated by the respondents concurs with Revans (1982), Kolb (1984) Schon (1987) Sutton (1989) and Zuber-Skerrit (2002, 2005) on the link between the incorporation of a reflective component into experiential learning and the growth of self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery.

6.2.5 Moments of Truth

Ni described a ñlight switch momentò on day one of the four day elective as he immediately confronted his inadequacies: ñI could see myself grow from the first day of coming there; sitting and not talking at all, to a point where I wanted to talk a lot, to give my ideas.ò This could be attributed to a high level of receptiveness to learning based on the significance the Ni had attached to the learning that he expected from the Negotiation elective (Brookfield 1988) and (Mezirow 1991). Moreover, supporting Malinen (2000), Niôs internal locus of control which had been affected by his particular personal circumstances, enhanced his commitment to the learning process.

Rôs moment of truth emerged from learning through deeply difficult failure and her determination to never repeat that failure. Her group had given over control to the emotional immaturity of a particular team member and ñit all just bombed in our faces. The comeback was vicious. That was a rude awakening for me. I was likeé .AAAAAAH; I wish that I could do that over again!ò What was so unforgivable for R was that she had behaved so out of her usual tenacious character because she had failingly presumed that the simulation was a game that no-one would take too seriously and in so doing gave away her power. Losing the negotiation in such a painful way forced R to confront and challenge her inadequacy. In this instance experiential learning provided R with a holistic framework in which she could examine her personal constructs in light of new

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promote effective learning in action (Kelly 1955,

Nôs moment of truth was a deeply private experience. N was deeply uncomfortable with the órevelationaryôatmosphere in the classroom: ñOn the first day, I thought óWhatôs wrong with this guy? óI felt like I was in a shrinkôs office! Sharing uncomfortable things with myself ï no go zones ï wife, brother ï things Iôm not comfortable talking about.ò However, in internal reflection facilitated by reflective journaling, as per the recommendations of Varner and Peck (2003), he was forced to challenge himself and be true to himself about ñremarks that were not complimentaryò

The emotive reflection accompanying reflective journaling elucidated a painful moment of truth for T ï ña vivid memoryò ï that ñshone a light on a lot of the unconscious aspects of my behaviour and my experience that I think that I had been quite happy to keep un-illuminated.ò T grappled with the reasons why he had behaved so inappropriately during a particular altercation. Through a process described by Maturana and Varela (1987: 245) as one ñwhere the individual brings forth his/her world, with emphasis on the fact that the world that everyone sees is not the world, but a world that we bring forth with others,ò T discovered that the world that he saw was not necessarily the world, but rather the world that he brought forth when interacting with others and by so doing, he was able to take responsibility for his actions: ñThis caused me to look at it and sayé maybe that wasnôt the whole picture. There was much more to it and regardless of the circumstances, I could have done a far better job than I didé I met with the guy again a few weeks ago ï and the meeting actually went really well.ò

This process endorses Kolbôs view on the continuity of transactional learning, whereby that learning is ñgrounded in experienceò (Kolb 1984: 27) and provides further support for Argyris and Schon (1978) and Sengeôs (1990) recommendation of the use of reflection for the management of mental models.

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reconstruction of his presenting reality and the ension of relational meaning endorses the constructivist nature of experiential learning where that learning is contextually viable, linguistically generated and socially negotiated, as postulated by Kelly (1955/1991a, 1955/1991b) and Chiari and Nuzzo (1996b). Kelly (1955/1991a, 1955/1991b) and Chiari and Nuzzo (1996b) would therefore support the researcherôs assertion that Tôs correction of previously erroneous thinking that was illogical or distorted represents the constructivist approach that they describe as ñlimited realismò (Chiari and Nuzzo: 1996b).

Similarly to T, Kôs reflection on her performance in the simulations revealed some serious misgivings about her level of preparation for negotiations that resulted in failures in both her personal life and professional career. A career mother, often caught between the conflicting priorities of him and work, she was always ñrunning around with her own stuffò and had often gone into meetings thinking that she could ñwing itò, resulting in negative outcomes for her team, a the very least, making greater concessions than would have derived from a prepared negotiation. The moment of truth was reflected in the words: ñMore haste less speed, or it often means that you get much less than you could have.ò

A revelation of the actual figure that his employer had been prepared to pay provided a rather painful moment of truth for E, who had merely accepted their first offer without auditing his value as an employee with an MBA. On reflection he endeavoured to never recommit that error; instead promising to undertake a self-audit before negotiating another job offer: ñExamine the best case scenario and the worst case scenario and my BATNA; something that I had never done before.ò He also reflected extensively on the personal truth discovered during the negotiation simulations that in negotiations where negotiations appear to favour one party above another, both parties emerge content with the outcome, with the weaker party equally committed to the outcome as the stronger party.

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ue for him, as although he had accepted a much ve, it was still double that which he had been earning prior to the MBA. The realisation that he had been ñshaftedò had led to de-aspiration and demotivation towards his work, but post Negotiation elective, he realised the necessity to take responsibility for his actions and use his learning to leverage the next move in his career echoing the process that T had gone through, as per Maturana and Varela (2003) and Kelly (1955, 1991a and 1991b).

6.2.6 Feedback

All of the respondents found that feedback contributed to their learning from the experiential simulations. N, in keeping with his deeply private, introverted personality, was distinctly uncomfortable with atmosphere of revelation and feedback in the negotiations class: ñI felt like I was at a shrinkôs officeé sharing uncomfortable things about myself.ò Initially, K, too, was apprehensive about the prospect of feedback, particularly the lecture and class feedback after the filming of the negotiations simulation: ñThen, there was a thing that I was dreading ï dreaded! The Video. The fact that they videoed us and that we all got to see the video.ò Although the other respondents did not overtly express apprehension about receiving feedback, most were expecting to receive negative comments about their performance. Niôs expectations derived from an underestimation of his own value: ñI was probably the worst negotiator or presenter in my classé the one who would shy away from confrontations or discussions.ò

Both T and E are deeply self-critical and focussed on elements of their performance about which they were unhappy. T: ñLooking at myself on the video, I felt that I was quite hesitant, I wasnôt very sure of myself. I was wafflingé too many pauses in my presentation.ò E was self-deprecating; deeply critical of his use of vocal fillers, instead of ñbeing comfortable with the silenceò; this, despite having performed particularly well in a previous simulation (active listening). R, having completely underestimated the simulation was expecting ñto

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who had been deeply disappointed by her

G appeared to be completely comfortable with the prospect of receiving feedback, attributable to his experiences at his employer where he had undergone extensive experiential training. For G, the feedback would provide a beneficial learning experience, a practical dimension which he could apply to real life situation. G derived benefit from both the video playback and the facilitator feedback: ñViewing the video afterwards you can see yourself and say ñI could have done that differently. You have to know how to work with people and how your behaviour impacts on others. You can look at yourself and see how you come across,ò and ñDr Heald would come in and say ñWell, this is what you could have done differently, what you could have achieved, what worked and what did not work; the kind of things you were not considering. This is how it worked to your advantage or this is what you did that worked to the others advantage.ò

R had also found the feedback most useful in distinguishing between appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour: ñEyelid batting, asserting oneôs femininity, whining, because youôre hoping that the student doesnôt get too rough with you. Feedback allowed her to reflect on her use of feminine whiles and the projection of self as overly vulnerable and how this had denigrated her negotiation credibility; ñWith Geoff leading us, I realised that there was no way; that there was no time to act vulnerable.ò

However, G expressed reservation on the applicability of the feedback, which he felt were dependant on the time dimension ñif you canôt apply it quite quickly then you very easily forget about some of the techniques,ò and the type of work function undertaken by the participants: ñyou need to have the kind of environment where you can take out those practical learnings and apply them to your day to day activities.ò D concurs with G on this issue of variance; however, she did not doubt the value of feedback in reconstruing her self perception, which

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e simulation. One of her class colleagues had r aggression during the simulation, however, Dr Heald ameliorated this feedback in her journal commenting that she had been too hard on herself and that the particular situation which had arisen in the simulation had called for her to ñforce her hand.ò He did, though, provide D with very direct feedback on her first journal submission (ñGeoff commented that my learning journal was very superficialò), an approach which D appreciated: ñI'd rather get feedback like that ï honest, objective feedback.ò Dôs comfort with the lecturerôs directness might well derive from her own forthright demeanour and the fact that she came into the programme with a heightened level of self-awareness that pertained to her competence, personality and behaviour.

In agreement with G and K: ñIt was not something that you could deny or hide from. As soon as you watch it, you can see where the issues are, because it is very objective feedback. It is there, right in front of you, on a massive screen,ò D concurs with the value of objectivity provided by the video feedback: ñyou got to see yourself afterwards and you could see how you came across to other people in stark, glaring colour.ò K surfaced the ability of objective feedback to catalyse self-awareness: When I first saw myself on screen I thought ñcringe! Iôve got to get highlights. ! Itôs a tough one and people would tend to avoid it if possible, but the MBA should give us more opportunities to video ourselves and view that and get feedback.ò Perhaps N would have been one of those MBA students who might have avoided situations of feedback ï ñremarks that are not complimentaryòï however, in his private moments of reflection, he acknowledges the inescapability of objective truth and the value of surfacing those truths and challenging himself ñto be true to myself.ò

For Ni, feedback provided a particularly satisfying experience. On viewing his performance, he was able to see that he was a highly competent, successful performer .This objective feedback, supported by positive feedback obtained both the lecturer and the class ñdefinitely helped me develop the confidence that I

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ıment.ò T, K, E and D extend the value of the ir self-esteem in a situation that could become personally destructive. For K, this assisted in bringing to light the objectivity of the video feedback: ñHe was honest about our negotiating styles ï what we did correctly and what needed improving upon ï but he was gentle and affirming, too. In any case it was quite evident when you saw yourself on video and he pointed it out to you.ò

This was particularly true for T and E, whose performance in a particular simulation had impressed everyone ï except themselves! Feedback had forced them to revisit their own self-perception. For T, the acceptance of the fact that he had prepared well, laid out his negotiation case competently and summated very well and that ñI was being too judgemental on my style and I kind of underrated myself,ò enabled him to reaffirm his own value and to move from ñfeeling pretty bad about myself to feeling pretty good in a short space of time.ò Similarly, in Eôs case, feedback enabled him to reflect on his detrimental self-criticism: ñGeoff was looking at me with this peculiar expression of ówOk, criticize yourself if you really want to!ôHe commented that I had been focussing too much on tiny issues instead of affirming all of the areas in which I had done so wellé but there I was, nit picking.ò The lecturer had encouraged him to focus on the positive and give himself credit for his accomplishments, something that E found useful.

An interesting dynamic emerged from the feedback theme, that being framing, or the manner in which a person is perceived by facilitator, co-learners and self, evidenced particularly in the cases of E and R. E had performed particularly well in an active listening simulation during which the lecturer had deliberately done everything possible to provoke and unsettle him ï to the extent that the class had ñgasped in shockò Instead, E had held his ground, kept his composure and articulated his clear and logical rebuttal without any emotion. This response generated a deep respect from his co-learners and also the lecturer who called E ña very impressive young man.ò

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d to this positive framing: ñGeoff had really made d had decided that E is a very impressive man. Full stop.ò The researcher asserts that in the experiential learning milieu, there exists the potential for cognitive bias - the Halo Effect, described by Thorndike (1920) and Kellyôs implicit personality theory (Kelly 1955, 1992) - as evidenced by the lecturerôs subsequent approach to E. In this case, it was most beneficial to E, as he had always been so uncompromising on himself.

R, displays a particularly interesting reaction to framing ï initially highly positive, but generating into a negative spiral of self-delusion. Rôs first journal submission pertained to her first negotiation experience wherein, as a teenager, she had successfully leveraged the assistance of an employer in a life threatening situation.ò Dr Heald requested to share Rôs excellent journal with the class, something that filled the previously insecure R with awe and gave her an incredible surge in esteem and confidence, a sense of purpose and meaning and hope: ñI thought to myself, Oh my God, I actually did something successful and the affirmation of the values and that feedback ï that feedback about that which was valued in me, but that I had not valued, because the world had been discounting me; and here someone had come and said ñlisten to what this person did.ò

R became an MBA celebrity: ñeveryone was coming up to me and asking ñare you R?ô And they came to me with this sense of purposeé People were just amazed. They could not believe that it was possible, but they realised that if I had lived through it, then obviously it was. I had never thought about how significant it was. I never thought that it could mean anything to anybody. The feedback was all the more significant to R, because it had come from a really experienced person. It encouraged R to revisit her innate potential: ñFor the first time I was the best in the class. ñ and inspired her to complete her thesis and at the time of the interview, she was one of only three people in a class of more than fifty who had completed all of the requirements for the MBA: ñIôm one of

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as ña, she probably will never finishòand now, I e not.ò

R other statements reflect, however, the reverse side of such positive feedback ï R became overconfident and began to presume levels of competence way beyond the lecturerôs intimation that had been based on one excellent submission: ñI was a star. Maybe I should become a negotiatoré If I put my mind to writing up these cases then maybe there will be a case study booklet for negotiations. I could make money. What could I do nowé I could probably move mountains?ò

Rôs experiences therefore present both the positive and negative transformative potential (van Manen 1990 and Caelli 2001) arising out of ñsymbolic interactionismò (Hall and Callery 2001: 269) between the facilitator and participants in the Negotiation elective.

Finally, K also put forwards the case for more action learning (Revans 1982) in the MBA: ñIt would be useful also to get some real play versus role play, taking the real issues from worké then you might be able to get some more valuable feedback from that, as well.ò

6.2.7 Learning and Development

Providing support for the researcherôs rationale in undertaking this study, all respondents indicated an improvement in their learning and development, with respect to change in behaviour, personal mastery and personal development.

For Ni and R; having discovered a context for reflection and surfacing of previously underestimated performance was most empowering. In terms of Niôs receptiveness in general, receiving objective positive feedback was a catalyst for new learning. Although R felt that there was no correlation between her

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e researcher asserts differently. In both Ni and idence and re-instated esteem encouraged them to apply their learning to new situations, including meetings, presentations and negotiations - to experiment (ñI negotiate everything, everywhere and with everyoneò ï R); endorsing Loevingerôs (1976) assertion that development emerges from active environmental exchange: ñJust knowing that there is that confidence in terms of what youôve been through, to be able to do it a lot betterò (Ni) and ñPreviously, it would have been I better not step on this personôs toesé but..Itôs not about being disrespectful. Itôs about getting what you need out of a situation so that you can go forwardò(R).

Ni and R evidence a classical movement through a cyclical experiential learning model as per Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1982, 1983, 1992), the dialectical dimensions of which are first explicated by Lewin (1946). This movement can be expressed by the following: concrete experience →observation and reflection →abstract conceptualisation →experimentation. More importantly, the experiential learning engagements heightened both R and Niôs self awareness and their ability to influence and impact others ï therefore , the researcher asserts that they demonstrated personal mastery as per Senge (1990), Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) George (2003) and Gill (2006).

The examples of Ni and R provide further support for Deweyôs experiential continuum (Dewey 1938). Ni: ñThis week I was involved in a discussion. I brought out a lot of those clues that we had learnt in the process ï trying to understand who they were and what they were about and what they were trying to get out of it and what we were there for and it made the process a lot easier. I was a lot more comfortable about taking control of that meeting, putting it out there, whereas, prior to the Negotiations elective, I would never have done that,ò and R: ñI was more confident about the detailsé ò learnt so much about how I could manage my expectations and life betteré there is also hope for the futureé when the bottom falls out, they will have to come to individuals like us.ò

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evidenced by Ni and R differs. Niôs learning is aviour or response to behaviour), related to his efficiency - or single loop; whereas Rôs learning displays many of the characteristics of high-level learning (Fiol and Lyles 1985) or double-loop learning (Argyris and Schon 1978) which is questioning, challenging and evaluative and therefore associated with effectiveness and results in an entire change in the framework that underpins oneôs actions or assumptions.

Nôs learning constitutes double loop and deutero learning. Double loop learning is displayed in the manner with which he tackles his previously held mental model with respect to networking and managing his relationships with colleagues, superiors and even his wife (Argyris and Schon 1978 and Senge 1990). Through the adoption of active listening, with itôs methodology of reflection in action, N was able to manage, challenge and overcome communication difficulties in his marriage, as well as his social anxiety: ñI think that active listening always comes back. You stop agonizing about what you are going to say. Genuine interest is so important. Itôs about that personé about getting to understand them. A lot of the problems that we have with other people are actually not about fundamental differences about issues but usually about misunderstandings or perceptionsé ò

From Nôs narrative, the researcher infers that his social awkwardness might have derived from a superior mien, an attitude that N challenges and overcomes through the use of active listening: ñYou get rid of the idea of lesser or superior mortals. Differences or distinctions donôt make one better.ò The dialectic nature of experiential learning and development is given support by Nôs challenging of his assumptions and prevailing mental model, (Kohlberg 1973, Argyris and Schon 1974, 1978, 1981 and Gilligan 1982); whilst the constructivist definition of adult learning (Kegan 1982 and Merriam and Caffarella 1991) emerges from Nôs search for meaning out of the dynamics of his instability, according to the

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onmental and personal significance that he

The successful sale of her home is emblematic of Kôs learning and development. Previous to undertaking the Negotiation elective K had turned down a really good offer on her home, because she was operating under the flawed assumption that its market worth was much higher than what was realistically attainable. The elective surfaced these flawed assumption and challenged Kôs own personal greed; instead empowering her with the ability to recognize a fair deal when it was presented to her, therefore ñI do think that this course has helped me to successfully negotiate that sale and I am not sure that I would have been as effective had I not done it.ò Challenging assumptions and redirecting her actions to respond effectively to a situation indicate Kôs double loop learning.

Analysis of Nôs narrative reveals a movement from double-loop to deutero learning (Argyris and Schon 1978 and Fiol and Lyles 1985) which is displayed in his ability to place himself into the negotiation and try to understand what type of learning he should apply: ñPreviously, I never thought at the level of ñwhat is this guy looking for? What would be the deal breaker for him? What would be the deal breaker for me? How would I manage myself in the situation to arrive at these answers? On the basis of that you might modify your positioné I became aware of myself negotiating. I try to understand the deeper thing/ the deeper meaning.ò Furthermore, N brings to light the notion by Restine (1997) that it is through an iterative and interactive connection between experience, reflection and interpretation of experience that learning and development emerges.

Tôs learning and development embraces all three types of learning ï single-loop, double-loop and deutero learning. Single loop learning is evidenced in a adaptation in his preparation for meetings; whereas, in his learned approach to negotiations, T utilises introspection and challenges his own assumptions and mental models, now compelling him to focus on his counterparts and the manner

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alignment, supporting the researcherôs assertion cess of double loop learning (Argyris and Schon 1978).

The Negotiation elective had compelled him to reassess the assumptions that he had held about personal brand value and as a result, the programme compelled him to re-design and proactively manage his personal brand, in order to better manage the expectations of his managers. His presumption about the context of negotiation had ñchanged within the first fifteen minutesòé whereby he ñfound that I had been contextualising the content to spaces to which I did not expect the course to goòï to issues of reciprocity and job search.

Undertaking the Negotiations elective had enabled a significant step in Tôs development; promotion into his present role: ñI have no doubt that those experiences and that learning played a part in helping me get where I wanted to beé small words and hints and subtexts of e-mail all played a part.ò Indicative of deutero learning, Tôs displays mastery in his awareness and congruent choice of learning response in contexts of uncertainty, unpredictability, ambiguity and complexity, as per Restine (1997): ñthe approachéé interest in allianceé power dynamicsé aligning of objectivesé ò

One of Eôs greatest take outs from the Negotiation elective was that when things are going wrong, merely responding to a situation in an incrementally adaptive manner was incorrect. Instead a double-loop learning approach was necessary: ñyou could do something quite radical and change the (negotiating) teams to try and move things forwardò (Argyris and Schon 1978). An understanding of the fact that once-off negotiations always favoured the more experienced negotiator challenged Eôs previous approach to negotiating. Previously, he had been naïve, but despite that naiveté and inexperience, he had not sought expert assistance.

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dismissal of this approach in favour of a highly s time at hand to uncover all of the facts, the prevailing assumptions surrounding the case in order to place himself in a more advantageous position: ñIt's OK to say you don't know. No sense in busting your head against a wall and end up with a situation where you are questioned on your deliverables but have not been able to deliver on the outcomes, because of your reluctance to consult, to bring in another perspective, new information which could have a significant impact on the outcome of what it is that you are facing.ò The necessity for double loop and deutero learning , in combination with skills of generalisation, selection and interpretation, as per Cell (1984) was critical for E's future success where he needed to approach each new situation as unique, to analyse the scenario and to select the appropriate approach.

In an otherwise fairly bland and general single-loop description of his learning and development, G endorses the assertions of both Cell (1984) and Restine (1997) that ñthere are certain messages and certain tactics that strike a chord in you and you apply them, based on the different circumstances that you come across.ò The researcher asserts that in G's case, his narrative revealed no distinctive change. Any change that he alluded to was merely an increased awareness and heightened adaptiveness. This may be attributed to G's positive orientation to learning, his confident presentation and the fact that he had already undergone a number of similar initiatives at work and therefore, had already made improvements on his personal presentations and negotiations.

Although G remained aware of the need to constantly benchmark his performance, there was not the same significant disparity between his aspirational self and his presenting self, as existed in the case of Ni where he was deeply aware of his need for change. Both G and D argue the necessity of environmental applicability as a precondition for learning and development: ñIt's

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refer it back into your work ï how you can apply up research on each of the respondents could be useful in assessing the changes evident after a year of experimentation with the learning derived from the Negotiations elective.

Dôs learning was particularly interesting for the researcher. D had displayed a high level of learning defensiveness from the outset of the programme, but had found that she had learnt ï and changed; despite herself: ñDuring the course, I did not rate it highly, but afterwards a lot of people were feeding back to me that they had noticed how much my negotiation style had changed ï and for the better.ò D would concur with Restine (1997) on the importance of the reflective component in experiential learning, whereby through the use of cognition, reflection provided her with a meaning making mechanism that enhanced her understanding of stakeholder engagement, which guided her future action: ñI found myself afterwards, trying to identify the stakeholders and even now I do that, asking myself ñwho are the stakeholders; what is the commitment to the process?ò

Through her heightened awareness of stakeholder relationships and the issue of commitment, D was able to change her attitude to her boss. Instead of being obstructive, she had developed into an enabler, assisting her boss to improve his time management skills and to project himself as a leader. This change in her perspective had filtered through more and more since completing the course, highlighting the iterative cyclical nature of adult learning and development (Boud et al 1985, Resnick 1987, Hart and Bredeson 1996 and Restine 1997).

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In experiential learning, the educator takes on a role that would be viewed as facilitatory (Di Conti 2005: 177). Instead of performing the role of sole educator and motivator, the facilitatorôs tasks evolves into a sharing or partnering between students and educator, where the facilitator assists students with the modalities that they apply to make sense of their experiential educational experience.

The facilitator of the Negotiations elective, Dr Heald, impacted the programme in a number of ways. For Ni, the affirming feedback that he received heightened his awareness of his abilities and how best to deploy them, supporting the proposal by Domask (2007) that the most impactful component of experiential learning is that of engaging and empowering participants. For Ni, the learning and consequent increase in self-awareness and confidence derived not only from the public domain of the experiential engagement; but also from his reflections on the valid and perceptive comments made by the lecturer in the private domain.

Niôs reaction to the facilitator supports the assertion that debriefing by a skilled facilitator, combined with reflection, can assist the students in replacing their sense of apathy and powerlessness with an empowering sense that they are able to make a difference, to act as agents of change (Senge 1990, Wals and de Jong 1997, Hempel 2002 and Maniates 2002) . From that discussion onwards, Ni says that he ñcould actually feel myself change.ò In this intersection, the facilitator fulfilled Rogersô objective for education, that being, the ñfacilitation of learningé the way in which we might develop the learner, the way in which we can learn to live as individuals in processò (Rogers 1969 as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989: 305).

G, T K, E and D found that the feedback given to them by the facilitator throughout the programme and particularly after the simulations, was extremely

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limension that made rarefied concepts that much T, E and D the facilitator had been useful in re-framing their overly self-critical pattern of behaviour. Debriefing by the skilled facilitator, in combination with reflection replaced their previous defensiveness with a sense of empowerment, catalysing them to act as agents of change in their own lives and careers (Senge 1990, Wals and de Jong 1997, Hempel 2002, and Maniates 2002).

The role of the facilitator in the transformation of the learner, their ability to õfree curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directors dictated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to questioning and explorationö (Rogers 1969 as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989: 304) is evident in Rôs transformation during the programme. At the outset, she was insecure, self-doubting, de-aspirated and demotivated and generally, quite depressed. R was experiencing serious misgivings about the MBA, her career, her professional skills and academic abilities: õBefore that, I was miserable, I promise you. I did not know why I was doing the MBAé I had had it with South Africa. I couldnôt leave this country soon enoughé You think how the hell is it possible that someone like myself who can communicate and who is skilled and educated, is struggling.ö

Despite a couple of spectacular team failures in the negotiation simulations, R transformed into feeling excited, empowered and competent: õBut, doing the Negotiations elective gave me a reason ï it validated why I was doing the MBA.ö Her transformation derived from the affirming recognition that she had received from an expert: õThat recognition from Geoff ï this came from a really experienced person that saw and recognized something really incredible happened in my life.ö She began to feel that she was capable of anything: õI could probably move mountains and I was a star.ö

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upport for experiential learning as a change nd creativity emerges, as per Rogers (1969) as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson (1989). Further, it corroborates Rogersô contention, which is further supported by Christensen (1991), that the personal relationship between facilitator and learner correlates directly to the facilitation of significant learning; with attitudinal quality being the variable in that equation. In the case of both R and Ni, the lecturer, Dr Heald, fulfils the attitudinal qualities of prizing, acceptance, trust and empathic understanding and defining him as a ñcatalyserò in terms of his ability to create a ñfreeing climateò that stimulates self-initiated learning and growth (Rogers 1969 as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989: 321).

N, T and Eôs narratives provide further support for the transformative potential held by the facilitator and speak to the importance of the facilitator in challenging the studentsôself-limiting assumptions, presumptions and mental models (Rogers 1969, Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989 and Senge 1990). Due to his adoption of an integrative negotiating stance (win-win) rather than a distributive one (win-lose or ówinner takes allô), as per Lewicki, Saunders and Minton (2001), the facilitator had sensitised the group to new ways of viewing the negotiation process via the various negotiation simulations. Eôs narrative refers: ñI recall very early on that I used to look at a negotiation as a debate where there is a very clear winner and a clear loser. And it was weird to have him say ñNo, no, no ï you are not opponents. You should rather say my counterparts from the other sideò. That little subtle shift can change the dynamics of an entire negotiationò. T extended this to a comparison between the lecturer, Dr Heald and his Negotiations lecturer at HEC, Paris. The professor at HEC had been distributive in his approach and by Tôs description ñmuch more aggressiveò which perhaps explained the negotiating style of the group at HEC, which was much more aggressive than that of the South African class.

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e lecturer also constituted a significant variable in e, in general, and to receiving feedback. For G: ñThat Geoff ï he was an interesting guy. He knows his subject, has lots of experience; has obviously read and constructed the cases really well and his lessons are very practical.ò For R and D, Dr Healdôs experience and proven expertise was important, but for different reasons. For D, it counteracted her learning defensiveness; whereas for R, it created enormous significance for her feedback and transformative learning.

G, T and E commented on the lecturerôs personality, energy, passion and personal involvement in the programme (G: ñwhen you see him standing there in front of the class you can see that he is giving his wholeò) thereby giving credence to the significance of the attitudinal variable in the experiential learning equation expounded by Rogers (1969) and Christensen (1991). T alludes to the lecturerôs use of personal anecdotes (ñif you can tell an anecdote that will help a concept to stick in someoneôs mind then that would be very powerfulé I remember particularly well, the one thing that sparked the whole memory was a particular picture that I was able to create in my mindò) as well as the learning impact of the lecturerôs attitudinal quality of a willingness to be real and reveal his own vulnerability, to share with the students in their experiences (Di Conti 2005,Christensen 1991 and Kirschenbaum and Henderson1989).

The context of the Negotiations Elective was the University of the Witwatersrand, Wits Business School. Domask (2007) states that the most impactful component in experiential learning is that of engaging and empowering students. Because experiential learning engages the student directly in and with the phenomenon to be studied, it has a direct impact on classroom engagement and involvement and consequently, performance. The facilitatorôs role becomes highly significant in this context. All too often, through their increased engagement and involvement, students can become overwhelmed by the complexity of the situations with which they are faced.

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ator, combined with reflection, can assist the ense of apathy and powerlessness with an empowering sense that they are able to make a difference, to act as agents of change (Senge 1990, Wals and de Jong 1997, Hempel 2002 and Maniates 2002). As a consequence of the skilled facilitation, the classroom becomes, as per Mintzberg (2004: 270) a ñsafe and serious placeò, the ideal juncture between natural experience and conceptual teaching in which students are empowered to explore meaning and depth through the unravelling and challenging of their previously held assumptions.

Ni, N, T, K, E and D described their lived experience of the phenomenon of experiential learning within the context of the MBA Negotiation elective at Wits Business School. They cite examples where they reflected on previous behaviours or performance, reconstructed their learning frameworks and then applied or ñexperimentedò with their learning and as a consequence, made their organisations more effective.

In the case of Ni, this evidenced in the presentation of turnaround strategies in order to secure more projects for his department. For N, it is evidenced in enhanced communication and shared purpose between himself and his colleagues. Tôs reconstruction of his personal brand and management of his brand behaviours in order to reconstruct the expectations on his departmentôs strategy implementation provides another example; while in Kôs case, the re-alignment of a soured business relationship and as team leader, the realignment of her department towards that project presents as another significant shift in behaviour, reconstruction of personal frameworks and successful experimentation with new more appropriate behaviours. In Eôs case, acceptance of responsibility for his own negotiating naïveté, reconstruction of his presenting reality and recommitment to delivering work of the highest standard and lastly, in Dôs case, the change in her own bossôs effectiveness through her upward

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mples of the constructivist nature of experiential

The above are concrete examples of the way that the university, in its capacity as management education provider and learning organisation, extended learning and development into an organisational context through the process of ñexperienced reflectionò (Mintzberg 2004). From this, the researcher infers the importance of the relationship between the university, as educator and learning organisation, and the development of external organisations into learning organisations; and the consequent necessity of the facilitator to provide a responsive environment for the ontological questions posed by 21st Century students (Patel 2003).

6.2.9 A Community of Learners

An appreciation of the concept of ôthe otherô emerged as one of the significant differences between the South African experiential learning context and those from other contexts; perhaps as a function of the facilitator; perhaps as a function of the impact of social roles and socialisation and the impact of cross cultural perspectives within the learning milieu (Merriam and Caffarella 1991). In the South African MBA classroom the concept of winning was modified to consider the inclusion of collaborative and co-operative negotiating styles (Gharajedaghi 1999), encouraged by the facilitator.

Nôs realisation that it was very important to allow others to influence oneôs perceptions, instead of viewing them in a negative oppositional manner, ñto appreciate where the other is coming from in order to reach an accommodative result. Itôs not a zero sum game ï itôs not about win-lose but win-win,ò resulted in a significant breakthrough in his professional and personal relationships. Previously, his manner of communicating had been adversarial: ñwhenever I started engaging to achieve something, I was very fixated about my positioné but

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conversations are not necessarily adversarial if dé I reflected on my wifeôs conversationé what she actually meanté you reach an understanding that makes the other person feel considered.ò The shared learning space had enabled N to appreciate the differences in others, to value differences in communicating styles, to affirm their expectations, beliefs and feelings, in a manner that Rogers characterises as one of the best, yet difficult, ways to learn (Rogers 1969 as cited in Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989).

The class grouping in Kôs particular Negotiation elective enhanced both individual and shared learning. Kôs positive orientation to learning in the elective derived initially from the positive relationship that she shared with a small group of twelve who were well known to one another after having spent the better part of two and a half years together in the MBA class. A high level of mutual trust and respect existed between the group, resulting in higher levels of group participation and support for one another with respect to feedback ï an ideal learning space, as defined by Nouwen (1986: 85) as space where both ñstudents and teacher can enter into a fearless communication with each other and allow their respective life experiences to be their primary and most valuable source of growth and maturation.ò

Kôs positive experience was further enhanced by the extension of the learning community to include a group of MBA students from Georgetown University who participated in a session of shared learning between a number of protagonists from the constitutional negotiations conducted during South Africaôs transition to a peaceful democracy, namely Professor Charles Villa Vicencio, Professor Theuns Eloff and Dr Roelf Meyer. The session, facilitated by Dr Heald, was entitled ñLearning Amongst Enemiesò and was based on the unique set of negotiation dynamics that predicated South Africaôs transition (Heald 2007). K found it deeply moving to participate in this shared experience with the

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ough observing the learning of the international
e experience.

The greatest learning for K was the concept of ñthe otherôthat emerged from the session and that ñwhat was so remarkable was the positive relationship between the negotiators of that time and the necessity for negotiators to have and show mutual respect for one another.ò Heald (2007) quotes Professor Villa Vicencio (Heald 2007: 208): ñLearning amongst enemies means understanding what other people feared and other people experienced,ò the profoundness of which precipitated Kôs reflection on a previously mistrustful business relationship: ñI did not like the company and the peopleé They were mistrustful of me and I am not entirely sure, but I think that they did not like me. They felt that I was the main barrier to them getting work at my company. The powers that be decided that we would go into business with themé We were forced into the negotiation and, surprise, surprise; we actually ended up developing a liking for each other. We began to trust one another and developed a lot of respect for one another which continues to this day. The trust was created incrementally and then cemented over time.ò

Kôs experience replicates the breakthrough learning that derived from the management of mental models that occurred during the constitutional negotiations, where trust was also created incrementally and cemented over time, until the present day; and provides further evidence of the value of reflection in experiential learning pedagogy, where prevailing assumptions can be unravelled, challenged and meaning extrapolated from experience; thereby acting as a guide for future action (Senge 1990, Restine 1997and Mintzberg 2004).

Heald (2007) rejects Waldmeirôs (1997) view that the South African transition was a miracle and through a parallel reflection on Professor Eloffôs contribution in the shared learning space, K was also able to re-frame her notion of miracles as

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ñhard work, preparation, organisation and proper that particular learning space, the facilitator was able to offer the participants a process framework for managing the complexity, ambiguity and changeability that perplex the 21st century (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1989) and presented an exemplar of management education proposed by Marquardt (2000) Brown and Posner (2001) and Morrison, Rha and Helfman (2003).

Observing her colleagues performance allowed K to learn through seeing what others did well: ñYou learn from other people on the course. I learnt from them and I learnt from the lecturer.ò Similarly, R was able to learn from observing others, although her learning derived from the observation of inappropriate behaviour: ñWhen the whole process came undone he absolutely freaked out ï I mean, he was callous. If this was a real situation we would have been dead, because now he started off negotiating by being very defensive and attacking people.ò Congruent with her bravery as a young negotiator, R challenged the particular student on his behaviour, indicating her growth in self confidence and esteem that occurred during the programme.

With respect to the group dynamic, Dôs experience presented quite the opposite from K or R. She felt de-aspirated by a group of ñboring, uninteresting, unanimated introvertsò from whom she could not derive any energy. Instead of challenging that dynamic, D disengaged. Through comparison of K and Dôs narrative, the researcher is able to assert that it is not only the attitudinal quality of the facilitator that impacts on the orientation to learning (Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989); but also the attitudinal quality of the entire community of learners that impacts the phenomenon of experiential learning. Further, the researcher asserts that there exists the opportunity for the facilitator to arrange groups in such as way as to enhance educative experiences and control for those that might become mis-educative.

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ning space presented an interesting dynamic. In rnational exchange students from the worldôs top rated business schools. The South African contingent was receptive to the group, expecting to share a different perspective on matters. However, E had been surprised that a number of the students ñbelieved that they were coming from superior institutions and that they had been exposed to much more and that they had been taught by professors who were world leaders.ò Adhering defensively to their mental models, they ñdismissed the dimension of learning from one another, which was the African approach,ò instead ñshooting straight from the hipò, competitively refuting or repudiating everything that was said by the lecturer.

This communal inequillibrium could be attributed to variance in social roles and socialisation; the nature of highly competitive versus collaborative environments (ñItôs never about win-win. Itôs all about how I can get as much as possible; itôs never about whatôs best for a teamò); as well as the culture variance between the American and African students (Merriam and Caffarella 1991), supported by Eôs reflection that the polarising dynamic had occurred for the first time during his MBA because of the introduction of the American students, whereas previously, ñwhilst we certainly did not agree on everything, it was never acrimonious or polarising.ò

The researcher asserts that another possibility for the polarising dynamic was the exacerbating tension that arose from the North American students feeling threatened by the exposure of their defensive mental model (Hanson 1972, Hanson 1972 and Elder 1980); the possibility that their own second order experience of studying in South Africa had caused them to recognise gaps in their knowledge which impeded their progress in another global context (Revans 1982 and Knowles 1990). In the case of this specific group of American students, there was a generalised refusal to ómake the mental shiftô, whereas the South Africans, in general, had become accustomed to continuous cycles of

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which rendered them more receptive to learning ò(ó am because you areô).

E supports both Rogers (1989) and Christensen (1991) in their citing of the importance of facilitatorõs attitudinal quality in the establishment and maintenance of an enabling community of learners. In an environment that had become increasingly polarised, even hostile, the lecturer did not react defensively, despite the fact that his insights into the comparative styles of North American and South African negotiating styles were dismissed as ñutter nonseneò by a particularly hostile student. Instead, the lecturer remained calm and open; thereby encouraging a trusting learning space where the students could use their ñprimary experiences as a source of growth and maturation" in order to moderate competitive attitudes and to allow for an embracing of enriching differences that emerged from their differing cultures, as per the recommendations of Nouwen (1986: 85) and Christensen (1991).

Dr Heald introduced a case simulation designed to sensitise participants to complex multi-party negotiations; challenging their previously held assumptions and perceptions on negotiating and transacting in Africa and by so doing, create breakthrough learning (Argyris & Schon 1978; Knowles 1990 and Senge 1990). Through this simulation he was able to sensitise the group to multi-cultural negotiations through which he was able to advocate an inclusive awareness of ñnot only about African or North American styles, but negotiating styles from different parts of the world.ò

E extended his reflection on this event to include breakthrough learning within the contextual learning space in South Africa where a number of multinational companies have chosen to send their managers to Africa to receive training, specifically because, through the experiences that they undergo in South Africa, the employees undergo a major shift in their mental models. The personal mastery, growth of self and reconstruing of presenting reality offered by a

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oping economy provides an platform for global
osed by Brown and Posner (2001): ñIt's that learning that one would get and these corporate have recognised that you would not get by simply staying in America. Go and get new experiences. Learn. Force yourself to change. Because if you get entrenched in your ways and go for years and years like that, then it becomes much harder to change later on in life. But when you're still relatively young, have finished your MBA and are under thirty then you can go to a foreign country for two years and learn and come back with a new perspective.ò

In this reflection, E supports Knowles (1990) on the correlation between years of experience and the entrenchment of defensive modes of thinking and need for companies to encourage double loop learning and consequent organisational learning by introducing second order experiences that cause individuals to expose, question and evaluate their deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations or images that influence the way that they view the world and take action (Senge 1990:8).

Further, identified through the analysis of E's discourse is the corroboration of the ability of experiential learning to challenge personal frameworks, or meaning perspectives (Mezirow 1991); to catalyse transformation, breakthrough learning and a restating of mental models because of the transactional nature of the learning space (Hanson 1972, Hamlyn 1978, Schon 1988, Elder 1980, Kolb 1984 and Senge 1990).

6.3 Experiential Learning and Phenomenology?

Given that Phenomenology is concerned with study of lived experience in a order to elicit the multiple interpretations that derive from the individuals experience of a phenomenon (van Manen 1990) and experiential learning directly engages the participant with the phenomenon of their lived experience; and that further, for the

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omenological study, the research phenomenon question emerges whether experiential learning is phenomenological practice?

Corroborating assertions made by Howard and Bray (1989), Johnson and Johnson (1994), Hicks (1996), Dilworth (1996), Brown and Posner (2001), Densten and Gray (2001) and Mintzberg (2004), Patel (2003) urges the university and the experiential learning facilitator, as change agent of leadership and development in that learning organisation; to adopt a collaborative, holistic, relational approach that acknowledges the transactional, transformational, independent and interdependent dialectic nature of learning described by Kolb (1984), Senge (1990) and Mezirow (1990) that characterises learning organisations from which an optimal experiential learning experiences derive.

In the Negotiations elective, the studentsô understandings, apprehensions, assumptions, perceptions, evaluations and re-evaluations were given life and meaning, such that they were able to develop a second-order perspective resulting from their qualitative interpretative interaction with the phenomenon (Marton and Booth 1997, Entwhistle 1997 and Trigwell 2000). Further, this second order perspective derived from the transactional interaction between the individuals in the elective and the environment of their learning experiences, as per Svensson (1997) and Trigwell (2000), through their engagement in active listening, case study simulations and leadership discussion groups.

Through the leadership discussion and feedback processes, individual conceptions of the studentsôexperiences were related to common conceptions of the phenomenon (Prosser and Trigwell 1998); with a particular example of this being the divergence between the conceptions of some of the North American students from that of the common conceptions of South African students and the consequential classroom debate and discussion. As per van Manen (1990) Ahonen (1994); Säljö (1994) and Isomäki (2002) language is the communication

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The researcher captured the essence of the expression of the respondentsô narratives and similarly, the experiential learning course requirement for the Negotiations elective was the textual transformation of the lived experience into a reflective learning journal through which all of the individualsô different lived experiences became animated.

Based on a triangulation of the thematic reductions of the phenomenon of experiential learning in the Negotiations Elective and all of the above, the researcher asserts that in the optimal manner in which the MBA Negotiations elective was presented, facilitated and examined, the experiential learning became phenomenological practice. She was able to identify similarities between the experiential learning experiences of the respondents and the process of phenomenological research which became evident during the data collection process.

In terms of the richness and substantive quality of the data collected, participants who had a positive orientation towards a qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, approach provided the researcher with expansive, richly textured narratives (R, T, K, E and D), contrasted with the short, fairly contained narratives of Ni and N. In Nôs case, however, the data obtained was substantive; indicating that the Negotiation electiveôs learning structure conflicted with his preferred learning mode, whereas, during the interview, he was more comfortable, given that it was a private one-on-one discussion in an environment pre-determined and structured by himself.

Although he presented with a positive orientation to the Negotiations elective, G presented the researcher with an unusual contradiction. Whilst qualitatively oriented (corroborated by the nature of his work and his choice of qualitative research methodology for his research dissertation), he remained strongly self-contained, even guarded. The researcher asserts that this might have been due

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was interviewed ï at his office, during which time, ptions, which could well have distracted him, or made him more self-conscious, causing him to revert to an introverted sensor type, as opposed to his natural preference for intuitive thinking.

A number of the participants felt compelled to provide a positive evaluation of the Negotiations elective and the facilitator, even though the researcher stated specifically that she was not seeking an evaluation. Because the participants were emotionally attached to the facilitator, expressing both a positive appreciation of his person and the course, the researcher asserts that they might well have tried to protect his reputation.

Only one student admitted to the fact that, despite her respect for his academic credentials, she did not enjoy the Negotiations elective. One other student, N, communicated a deep disquiet about the extent of personal feedback and revelation in the Negotiation programme, revealed by his reference to the negative, colloquial, framing of psychologists and psychiatrists: ñI felt that I was in a shrinkôs officeò The researcher therefore professes that liking might have impacted the research in terms of the findings derived with respect to the role of the facilitator. This potential for bias would need to be mitigated in any future research undertaking of this nature.

Further, the researcher asserts that participants appeared to be protective towards her, not wanting to make her feel in any way uncomfortable about a subject towards which she was positively oriented. Despite having mitigated the potential effects of an ongoing interaction with her research subjects, particularly pertaining to the power dynamics arising from her position at the Wits Business School, by selecting respondents who had already finished the course and also; by explaining the purpose of the research, the researcher remains unsure of the students need to ñgive her the good news.ò

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ondents to select the interview venue was not ted might well have impacted on the quality of interview in the case of G, who was interrupted a number of times during the interview. Because passers-by could see him in his office, they automatically assumed that they could consult with him, which appeared to affect the flow of his narrative, constraining it. Conversely, the choice to be interviewed in his office might well have been deliberate: this could have been an attempt by G to ring fence his participation, whilst still maintaining his professional and academic courtesy.

In the case of N, the selection of a large, imposing boardroom might well have been an attempt to redress the possible power imbalance between respondent and researcher, to provide a structure with which he was comfortable, in contrast to his discomfort in the complex, ambiguous environment of the Negotiations class. Had D been interviewed in an entirely neutral venue, the potential for a deeper exploration of the relationship between student and facilitator might have emerged. D did not enjoy the class, but qualified her lack of enjoyment with praise for the facilitator. This might have been caused by her feelings of loyalty towards the business school, given that she was interviewed in the office of the researcher.

In conducting phenomenological research of this nature, all of the aforementioned issues should be taken into account. The researcher recommends that in order to mitigate these; a second round of interviews should be conducted during which the above reservations could be surfaced.

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In order to understand the qualitatively diverse experiences of MBA students in an experiential learning context, the researcher conducted a phenomenographic research study utilising a purposive sample of eight respondents from the Negotiation elective at Wits University's Graduate School of Business Administration, Wits Business School. The research aim was to provide insights, knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of experiential learning pedagogy that would be of relevance to the on-going discussion regarding the most appropriate instructional pedagogy for MBA students within the complex and often ambiguous working world of the 21st Century.

The researcher hopes that through the process of interviews, transcription, eidetic reduction and cross analysis, the respondents were able to gain a greater insight into and understanding of their experience within the Negotiations elective. Moreover, the researcher hopes that the findings of this research study will provide universities with a greater understanding of the way in which participants experience experiential learning and how they, as learning organisations, can provide optimally structured and facilitated learning environments for students, that enhance introspection, reflection, the development of self-awareness, personal mastery and effectiveness; thereby preparing students more adequately for a changing working milieu.

In addition, the researcher hopes that she was able to clearly demonstrate both qualitative convergence and divergence, or variance, in the thematic displays, as per the requirements of phenomenographic research.

The open ended interview process allowed respondents to concentrate on the areas that were of importance, or of specific relevance, to them, as most respondents steered the conversation towards the issues of most pertinence to them. As interesting to the researcher, was the omission of information, where a

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ess an issue provided the researcher with a new to reflect and meditate. In these cases, the respondents spoke through their silence.

For the most, the respondents were able to reflect at length on their experience in the Negotiation elective. Because attendance of the course was by their own choice (the course is an elective and therefore outside of the compulsory core curriculum), they were, for the most positively oriented to the class at the outset. Ni, G, K and E had all selected the course on the basis of its reputational success; moreover because they had all identified the need to improve their personal and career negotiation skills. In the case of N, D and R, orientation to learning switched to a defensive mode during the first lecture. N, an intensely private individual, commenced with a positive orientation, but found the intensely personal, reflective nature of the experiential milieu invasive; whilst R became increasingly defensive when faced with the highly academic nature of reflective learning journal submissions, as well as participation in the simulations. Dôs learning defensiveness arose as a result of her own expedience, coupled to the class dynamic of her particular group, which she found to be de-energising and de-aspirational.

7.1 Orientation to Learning and the Construction of Optimal Learning Engagements

From the triangulation of primary research with secondary research data, it was discovered that a causal relationship exists between the level of significance attributed to any experience and the actual learning derived. Moreover, learning style, or mode of learning, and human behaviour impacts further on the learnerôs ability to embrace the type of learning modalities presented in an experiential learning engagement. Personal risk, self-exposure and self-protection are additional criteria that influence orientation to learning, particularly in a group situation. The individualôs discernment regarding the safety of the community of

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tance in the experimental mode of any learning
tors thinking, learning and behavioural modes emerged as significant in either positive or defensive orientations to learning.

The researcher therefore asserts that in the construction of an optimal experiential learning engagement all of the above should be taken into consideration. Ideally, participants should undergo thinking, learning and work-style pre-assessments in order to imbue them a higher level of self-awareness going into the programme; thereby mitigating the possibility of the development of learning defensiveness. These pre-assessments should be made available to the facilitator and co-facilitators, and clearly understood, in order to pre-empt their responsiveness to the participants and also, to provide a greater understanding of how the mutual interactionism between facilitator and participants could affect their orientation to learning.

7.2 Second Order Experience, Simulations and the Transformative Potential of Experiential Learning

Linked to the theme of orientation to learning, is the theme of second order experience, which has a significant ability to impact on an individual's equilibrium, rendering them either responsive or highly defensive to experiential learning. The role of experiential learning pedagogy in challenging defensive mental models by exposing them via simulation and/or reflection and then creating the structures through which participants can critically re-evaluate and re-define outcomes emerged as significant to a number of respondents in the research study. Through careful analysis of the findings of the study, the researcher is able to conclude that experiential learning can, and does, have a transformative potential and, as per Dewey (1951), the researcher asserts the responsibility incumbent upon the facilitator to select second order experiences that catalyse deeper learning.

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y, the researcher ascertained that the second ne facilitator impacted the participants in diverse ways. These second order experiences consisted of experiential games, role plays and simulations, which are all included under the broader theme of ñsimulationò. Despite the fact that many students were positively oriented to the experiential engagements, most expressed some reservation, ranging from a humorously expressed personal self-vanity (K) through to absolute trepidation in the case of Ni, who seriously doubted his ability to perform at all the levels required on commencement of the programme. There was also a degree of confusion amongst participants as to what could be defined as ñrealò or ñnot realò in the simulation, although all commented favourably on the learning value of the simulations. The ability of the contrived second order experience to catalyse self-awareness was described as ñenlighteningò, whilst their ability to transfer ñrarefiedò concepts into tangible realities enhanced a broader understanding of academic concepts.

The researcher concludes that despite their misgivings about reality, when immersed in the negotiation simulation, the studentsô behaviour provided an accurate reflection of the behaviour that would be mirrored by reality. She further concludes that through their ability to think during learning in action, as postulated by Argyris and Schon (1978), Hanson (1972), Hamlyn (1978), Elder (1980) and Senge (1990), the students were able to challenge previously held defensive mental models and develop a much higher level of self-awareness and personal mastery. Experiential learning pedagogy therefore provides an optimal context for breakthrough learning and personal transformation.

7.3 Reflection and Change

If one were to regard the simulations as the ñActivistò, or concrete experience dimension within Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumfordôs (1992) experiential learning models, often, but not exclusively, referred to as stage one of the

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urally occurring stage would be the ñReflectoròor
nsion of the cycle. This second stage provides the ñhowò mechanism for catalysing mere experience into learning; through reflections derived from observation of others, co-participant and-facilitator feedback and formal reflection on performance via the experiential learning journal. This was explored through the themes of reflection and feedback which align with the cyclical model of experiential learning.

The research findings revealed that comfort with the reflective mode of the learning cycle correlated strongly to the particular learning and work style preference of individuals, influenced strongly by the personalities of the participants in the Negotiation elective. It was found that students with a tendency to extraversion reflected on their experiences in a highly expressive and expansive language, whereas those who were introverted displayed some resistance to reflexivity. T, an introvert, was the exception to this assertion; however his introversion was mitigated by a highly intellectual, social and qualitative approach that had been honed by years of working within media and publishing.

The researcher discovered that a strong link existed between the need for self-protection ï risk aversion ï and the levels of resistance to reflection within a community of learners. She therefore concludes that the optimal experiential engagement requires a sincere and committed learning covenant adhered to by both participants and facilitator. At the very least, at the outset of any experiential learning engagement, the facilitator should take participants through the experiential learning models, making them aware of the different dimensions and stages therein contained and how different personalities and learning modes could be affected during the cyclical process. This enhanced self-understanding could lessen the reflective defensiveness of introverted personalities and ensure that extraverted personalities do not crowd out introverted individuals.

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T, K, E and Dôs narratives and the subsequent research, the researcher obtained extensive corroboration for the ability of experiential learning to catalyse change through reflection on action and the development of effective mental models, or alternative personal constructs, as per Kellyôs Personal Construct Theory (1955, 1991a and 1991b). T, K, E and D were able to effectively reconstruct their prevailing mental models in such a way as to derive meaningful interpretation, growth of self awareness and emotional maturity.

7.4 Bias and Framing

The research study was able to shed light on some of the possible shortcomings of the experiential learning milieu, particularly highlighted in the analysis of R and Eôs narratives. The potential for bias, or framing, whether positive or negative, can occur early on in the process and this can impact on the learning engagement in either a positive or negative manner, or in the case of R ï both.

The Halo Effect (Thorndike 1920 and Kelly 1955, 1991a and 1991b) impacted E in a beneficial manner. In the case of R, the facilitatorôs positive framing had a beneficial effect at the outset, as it affirmed her ability and esteem and validated her right to be in the MBA programme. However, unmanaged, the effect spiralled into a delusion as R assumed levels of competence and expertise way beyond the complimentary feedback offered to her by the facilitator on the second day.

The researcher asserts that it is critical for any facilitator to manage their own objectivity, to bracket their subjectivity, in much the same manner as would be required of the researcher in a phenomenological study. Moreover, it is essential that any experiential learning facilitator remains acutely aware of the transformative potential of the interactions between facilitator and participants, particularly the possible effect of feedback. The role of a participant observer or co-facilitator in the experiential learning context would be most useful in

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rly with particular relevance to the provision of ould provide a continuously objective counter-balance to manage the facilitatorôs personality, behaviour, thinking and learning style and mental models, through the provision of feedback on both facilitator and participants and the dynamic inter-relationship between them.

7.5 Role of the Facilitator in Creating a Community of Learners

Despite the above highlighted issue of the potential for bias in the experiential learning milieu, the research study was able to reveal that the respondentsô acknowledged that they had been enabled by a professional, highly experienced academic whose credibility, knowledge and ability to deal with the complexity and ambiguity of the emergent classroom and personal dynamics had impacted the programme in a diverse and positive manner. This ranged from the change in Dôs defensiveness to learning; the growth in Ni and Rôs personal confidence which derived from the facilitatorôs affirmation of their personal worth and self-esteem; to the manner in which facilitator feedback acted as a change catalyst in the lives and careers of T, K, G, D and E, thereby enabling them to challenge previously held erroneous assumptions, presumptions or conceptions and to reframe overly critical patterns of behaviour, replacing them with appropriate modes of behaviour and self-management.

Through the analysis of the examples cited by the respondents, the researcher is able to conclude that the facilitation by Dr Heald was directly aligned to the findings of Senge (1990)Wals and de Jong (1997), Hempel (2002) and Maniates (2002) that pertain to the challenging and reframing of mental models and further; that the facilitation was congruent with the expostulations of Christensen (1991) and Rogers (1989) on the causal relationship of the facilitators attitudinal quality in the experiential learning equation.

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e facilitatorôs role as a transformative figure in eash his or her sense of enquiry, to invite experimentation and promote a sense of empowerment and self-validation is conclusive evidence of the role of the lecturer as a catalyser who created a climate of self-initiated learning and growth, as per Rogers (1989). In the context of this research study, the facilitator was able to respond to Domaskôs primary criteria for impactful experiential learning, that being to engage and empower students (Domask 2007).

Further, the analysis of Eôs narrative provides conclusive evidence of an experienced, self-assured facilitator who was able to manage his own subjectivity and insecurity during a hostile attack by some foreign students on the programme. Instead of being baited by insulting comments, Dr Heald chose, instead, to allow the experiential learning process to unseat the students, challenge and reframe their erroneous mental models. In this way the students could learn through their bringing forth their own experience into the world, as per Maturana and Varela (1987).

Dr Heald presented a human face throughout the elective, displaying a personal involvement and often cited his own anecdotal experiences (and failures). However, this portrayal of self was skilfully counterbalanced by the facilitatorôs proven experience and expertise which ensured that his credibility was never eclipsed by emotionality. This presentation of self as vulnerable and human allowed for the creation of a sharing space within the community of learners, as per Rogers (1969, 1989) and Christensen (1991) and impacted on the orientation of students in the Negotiations elective in a positive manner. Through his skilled facilitation, Dr Heald was able to evolve the university classroom into a ñsafe and serious spaceò (Mintzberg 2004:270) appropriate for the surfacing of ontological questions and thereby extends the responsibility of the university, as a responsive learning organisation, to propel the organisational readiness of its students.

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ared learning space, in which participants were arlessly, but, at the same time, to embrace the concept of ñthe otherò and to acculturate to new ideas enabled the participants to appreciate the differences in others and to affirm these different beliefs, expectations and feelings. This contributed to a sense of community ï a community of learners, as per Rogers (1969, 1989), wherein mental models could safely be challenged and revised. This affirms the assertions by both Rogers (1969, 1989) and Christensen (1991) on the relationship between the facilitatorôs attitudinal quality and an enabling learning community and provides the guidelines for the construction of the optimally enabling learning contexts.

The researcher concludes that a joint responsibility exists between the university as learning organisation and the facilitator as change agent within that organisation to create and maintain an optimally functioning community of learners within the experiential learning context and that the findings of this study provide guiding points for the facilitation of this learning space.

7.6 Learning and Development

An optimally constructed experiential learning engagement should ideally encompass all of the dimension and stages represented in the cyclical models of learning proposed by Kolb (1984) or Honey and Mumford (1992), although not all participants would move sequentially through the cycle. Ni and R evidenced a classical movement through all of the stages, from first to fourth; however, the characteristics of their learning differed. Niôs learning was largely adaptive or single-loop learning, whereas, in Rôs learning, the researcher was able to identify high-level learning (Fiol and Lyles 1985), or double-loop learning, as per Argyris and Schon (1978).

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ngle-loop, N displayed an interesting movement eutero learning. This was achieved via reflection on (and post) action - ñthe howò, as per Smith and Dillon (1999), Kvale (1996, 2006), and Giorgi and Giorgi (2008). Through the analysis and subsequent comparison of Tôs learning and development with secondary research on adult learning, the researcher was able to identify learning at all levels ï single-loop, double-loop and deutero learning; thereby representing perhaps the deepest and most complete cycle of learning emerging from the experiential learning milieu.

7.7 The Time Dimension in Learning and Development

In analysing the findings obtained from G and Dôs narrative descriptions, the researcher was able to provide an additional caution for the design, implementation and subsequent qualitative analysis of an optimal experiential learning engagement; that being applicability. Both G and D had reservations about the applicability of the Negotiations elective and more particularly, the time frame of that applicability; the inference being that experiential learning was dependent on the opportunities for experimentation and moreover, that it has a ñdate of expiryò. Both G and D were part time students; applicability did not present as an issue for full time students in the Negotiations elective. The researcher, however, contests that assertion as both G and D were interviewed some months after completing the elective and both were able to express their experiences with clarity. Furthermore, in the case of D, the narrative was rich and expansive. Both expressed a distinctive improvement in their performance at work and general negotiation effectiveness in the months following the elective, although Dôs citation was specific and Gôs more general.

The researcher supposes that their assertions derived from the fact that they were able to immediately apply the learning into their working environments on completion of the elective (because they were part time students who worked full time) and erroneously assumed that the full time students were lacking in

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ing. However, the research study indicates that me was in fact a convergent theme amongst all respondents; where months after completing the Negotiations elective, all respondents were all able to site many examples of the applicability of their learning to their current professional or personal circumstances. Moreover, their narratives described reflections on both personal and professional situations, that could be placed on a continuum of past, present and future experiences viz a viz the Negotiations elective.

It can be concluded, however, that the issue of applicability remains relevant, with the suggestion that the most effective experiential learning engagement occurs where there are opportunities to experiment with distilled learning, as represented by stage four of Kolbôs Experiential Learning Model (1984). Certainly, action learning, as proposed by Revans (1982) presents the ideal opportunity to experiment in the workplace.

7.8 Phenomenology and Experiential Learning

Lastly, through a comparison between the characteristics of phenomenology, the methodological process and the findings of the research study, the researcher was able to conclude that experiential learning is phenomenological practice. The research process and findings revealed that because experiential learning is phenomenological, it is subject to the similar orientations, defensiveness, advantages and disadvantaging biases that define phenomenological methodology.

7.9 Conclusion

Whilst all of the respondents indicated positive changes in their self-awareness, personal mastery, learning and development, the researcher acknowledges that

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e, is almost impossible to measure, as there are measures for this change (Gosen and Washbush 2004, Wingfield and Black 2005 and Lowenthal and Sosland 2007).

This does not render the change invalid, as the research was able to capture interesting insights into the qualitatively diverse nature of the respondentsô learning which provides conclusive evidence that experiential learning pedagogy provides a sound approach for the management of change, complexity and ambiguity and development of personal mastery. It is therefore able to answer to the increasing requirement for change responsiveness and heightened self and environmental awareness that challenge 21st Century management and leadership students.

7.10 Suggestion for Further Research

The researcher suggests that it would be useful to assess the learning and development-over-time dimension in a future research study; where data is collected immediately post the Negotiations elective, at a period three to six months thereafter and then again, after a year. This would provide a more in-depth qualitative assessment of the experiential learning engagement.

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9.1 Annexure 1

Covering Letter for Interview Process

Dear Respondent

I am a Master of Management student at the University of the Witwatersrand. You present as a leading candidate as a co-researcher in a phenomenographic study that will investigate the effects of experiential learning pedagogy within a specific MBA context, namely the Negotiation Elective.

The research process will consist of a series of interviews, the purpose of which is to understand your experience and valued insights that will be compared to those of other respondents. The ultimate aim of the research is to distil from the lived experience of a number of respondents the common themes and variance from common conceptions emerging from the phenomenon of experiential learning pedagogy applied within the Negotiation elective.

By signing the attached sheet you make yourself available for such an interview at a time and place that suits your schedule.

Your identity will remain unknown to all others during the entire stage of the study and the information disclosed during our discussion will be analysed by me in the strictest of confidence.

I attach my contact details should you wish to clarify any details.

Yours sincerely

Charisse Drobis
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dent at Wits Business School and is conducting research

Yours sincerely

Conrad Viedge
Senior Lecturer, Wits Business School
Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management
University of the Witwatersrand

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l to be recited verbatim prior to each

Thank you for your preparedness to participate in this study.

I would like to firstly outline, once again, the purpose of this study which is to explore the phenomenon of experiential learning within a specific MBA context. Its intention is to discover the meaning ascribed to the individualôs lived experience within the experiential learning context of the MBA Negotiation Elective.

Through a series of parallel interviews and analyses thereof, it is intended to elicit the common themes and variance from common conceptions of the experiential learning context of the Negotiation elective.

It is hoped that through your participation the study will derive a full and comprehensive body of information on which to base its discoveries.

This interview, the transcription and analysis thereof will be dealt with in strictest confidence, constantly maintaining your integrity, as respondent, and the integrity of the entire research process. Your identity will be kept completely confidential.

You have already provided the WBS with an evaluation of the Negotiations elective and therefore I need to re-enforce the fact that I am not seeking another course evaluation. It is the intention of this research study that your lived experience, whether negative, positive, indifferent (or at various phases, all of these) is described as fully and as openly as possible.

Phenomenological and Phenomenographic method requires that, as researcher, I should not impose in any way on the methodological process. You are

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e, to request me to clarify anything of which you

In line with the above I shall not pose a number of research questions to you, but, instead, shall lead this process from one single open ended question, namely:

"Tell me about your experience in the Negotiation elective, with particular reference to your learning and development?"