Exploring how the experience of tutors and the use of visual images and web-based technology enhance critical reflection in adult learners.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my thesis to all the amazing friends in my life who have been there

for me.

Thank you for all the support and help especially this year when I needed it the most.

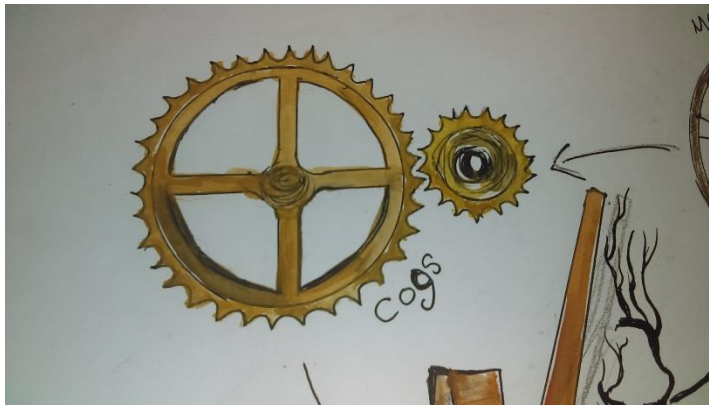A big thank you to my family for always being there for me

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to inquire into the experience of how tutors use visual images and web-based technology in the classroom to get students to critically reflect on their learning. In this qualitative study, I interviewed 4 tutors based at the same Further Education centre working in different disciplines to gain an insight into their pedagogical approaches and uses of visuals and web-based technology with their students. Most of the participants found that it had a positive effect on how students critically reflect on their learning. Within this research, I have applied a Freirean approach which promotes critical reflection on learning for students.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The cogs are turning

In an ever changing society, the advancements of technology and the role of the tutor is changing towards the needs of its adult learners. It is, therefore, the responsibility of teachers to provide students with the knowledge and skills to be active citizens who can critically think about their place in the world today and in the future. Technology or web-based learning will continue to advance and be of ever more importance within the education of adult learners through more student-centred pedagogy. Why discuss the use of visual images and web-based technology to critically reflect on adult learning? Initially based on my own experiences as a learner and educator I am interested in the transformation and the ways of providing alternative ways of seeing the world through a different lens.

Images are loaded with codes that we oversee and take for granted without questioning what it is really saying to us. Critical thinking or problem posing awakens the consciousness and leads one to question their life, education, culture and the environment. If we are critical conscious human beings perhaps then we can be a fair and just society. The purpose of this research is to inquire into the benefits and challenges for tutors using web-based technology and visual images in their own fields of education to get students to critically think and how it enhances the learning of the adult learner (Redecker, Ala-Mutka, & Punie, 2010)

Freirean theory will be used to analyse the opinions of the participants who took part in the interviews. It must be noted that very little attention has been given to Freires philosophy on technology (kahn and Kellner)

In Chapter Two: Methodology I will discuss the methodology that I used to conduct my research. Chapter Three: Literature Review I will putting forward the different theorist that I have used to back up my arguments for my research. In Chapter Four: Findings the findings will be highlighted and give a voice to the tutors who got involved in my research. Chapter Five: Analysis I will analyse my findings and bring in my original theorists to highlight their relevance in my research. In Chapter Six: Conclusion I will sum up my journey throughout the research.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to a 'perspective' or broad theoretically informed approach to research, which stems from the researcher's epistemological stance or philosophical/political position. Methodology is how researchers make their epistemology and theoretical stance work for them in their research (Ryan, 2015, p. 70)

Why I chose my research topic.

I chose the quote above because it sums up perfectly the exploration that I have taken on. Initially, I chose my research topic because of my own experiences as a learner, facilitator and educator in using images and technology as a tool to enhance critical thinking in adult learning. I was especially intrigued by the way images transformed and built confidence in myself and those I have worked with. From my own ontological stance, the importance of education is to work towards enhancing adult learning through the use of images to get learners to critically reflect on their community and society as a whole. Also then from this how does web-based technology affect us culturally and socially through the use of images and web-based technology? I have used a focus group to conduct my research.   My own position is one in a sense as a spectator who is inquiring into the impact of visual images and the use of web-based technology for adults to enhance their learning in respect to developing critical thinking.

Why do I consider it important?

Carrying out research is a personal discovery to back up ones own beliefs to find out if they are relevant or not. It is a journey into what initially begins as a curiosity. The research that I am carrying out is to inquire into the relevance of incorporating images and critical reflection on learning.   Is it relevant and what are the implications for both the tutor and the learner?

My aim was to initially explore the experience of the learner, but as time has evolved I realised that educators play an important role in my research and it is hard to gauge the impact on the learners alone. From my own experience, visual images and web-based technology have had an impact on my own learning through critical reflection.

What issues does my topic encompass and why are they important?

From my own ontological stance, I want to be engaged in a form of education that challenges and evokes critical thinking for both the learner and tutor. Bryman (Bryman, 2001, p. 16), refers to social ontology from two points of view one as objectivism (organisation) and the second constructionism (cultural). From my own ontological point of view, I am taking a constructivist stance and trying to understand the what and why of the way education is constructed for learning. The impact of learning through the use of images and web-based technology may not always be immediately apparent but if it creates reflection and change then it becomes more transformative. Then the purpose of education as a community can develop better social structures in which to live.

In respect of this, I feel that a Critical Theory Paradigm is best suited to my research. From a subjective analysis according to Kincheloe and McLaren (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 303)**,** they define Critical Theory as one which questions the assumptions in societies of what it means to live in what is termed a democracy. Critical research should question the subjugation of individuals not realising that they exist within an oppressive society to one that empowers and transforms lives. This was also a crucial part of Freires (Freire, 1996) work in critical research to get individuals to awaken their critical consciousness. Through questioning their own lives and becoming active participants in society. A Freirean approach

to learning is focussed on an emancipatory pedagogy, in which there is equality between the teacher and the learner.

In this research, it was evident that tutors recognised the wealth of knowledge that adult learners brought to the class. It is the transformation there on that tutors are involved in through reverse mentorship and open dialogue and shared experiences. This in itself is a liberating experience and with the use of visual images and web-based technology enhances critically reflection for both learners and tutors. Freire was well aware that technology has the power to liberate individuals but also it can be used to manipulate and oppress ones thoughts unless we question what is been portrayed to us (Freire P. , 1998). As Freire states 'The answer does not lie in the rejection of the machine but in the humanization of man' (Freire P. , Education For Critical Consciouness, 1973, p. 35). Visual images and web-based technology need to enlighten students so open dialogue can take place and to aid embodying critical pedagogy but Freire pointed out that there is also latent powers at work so critical reflection is needed to emancipate learning. Using Critical Theory to approach my research provided me with the tools to examine the impact of images and web-based technology from the perspective of adult educators and the effect it has had on learners. What does an image mean are we subjugated by imagery today?

Ethical Issues

In my choice for the focus group, I chose a purposive sampling approach choosing specific people in adult education. (Brooks, Riele, & Maguire, 2000) Things that had to be considered in the area of ethics was first to contact the director of the college to request permission to interview staff members and send an outlay of the aim of my research. After gaining permission to carry out my research I made contact with 6 members of staff by email

to see if they would be interested in partaking in a focus group. If they were willing to participate an informed consent form would be sent to them along with the questions that would guide the focus group with the discussion. From the 6 people, I contacted 5 responded accepting to take part in the focus group. On the particular day of the interview, 4 were able to attend the fifth member was unable to come because of work commitments. Once participants had consented to an interview, they were made aware that they were free to withdraw their consent at any time. I also informed them that the interview would be recorded and their identity would not appear in the thesis. Transcripts would be available for review and could be amended if the participant was not happy.

Identifying my Epistemology

In using Critical Theory one has to accept that the meanings that are constructed are valid knowledge but it is taking it one step further in questioning who constructs knowledge and for what purpose. Choosing participants are important and as Sarantakos points out (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 104), carrying out an interview with a focus group should be one in which it can enrich both the researcher and the individuals concerned. In using a qualitative approach to my research it provided me with the tools to design my research for discovering the topic under investigation. The tutors I interviewed as part of my research are experts in their own particular field of education and I was interested in exploring their experience of the use of images and web-based technology, and their interpretations of the effects these had on learners to critical reflect. From my own epistemology and conducting this research, I wanted to find how knowledge was captured by students and how this informed tutors of transformation taking place. The knowledge gained from these tutors are there own lived experience within the community and further adult education over the last 20 years. Within

the findings which will be discussed later I must point out that this research is not making any claims outside the remit of my research question.

I initially spoke to some members of staff about my research and from this, I felt that their enthusiasm in my topic would generate insightful knowledge. As I have worked with these tutors before I was able to approach them as I felt they were appropriate to the question I was posing in my research. Questions and consent forms were emailed previously to conducting the interview to allow the participants time to reflect on their own position as adult educators and what they could bring to the group. The tutors were well acquainted with each other and worked with each other through their different disciplines. Previously I also had a professional relationship with the participants. Within the structure of the interview, I wanted to create an atmosphere where we all felt comfortable in having a conversation. I would say the interview, therefore was leaning on a semi-structured interview as I did not want to break the flow of conversation as we progressed through the questions.

In relation to the interview, some of the themes that came up were in regards to time allocated towards developing more interesting techniques within the period allocated for delivering particular aspects of a module. The use of colour to encourage game players to move onto another level in which the students discovered they were being manipulated and ceased or changed the games they played. The importance of giving time out to tutors to upskill or be more involved with industry to develop more relevant skills to advance their course in a progressive way for themselves and therefore benefitting students. The effects of the use of images on students emotionally in regards of introducing images that helped contextualise written text. I have added in this quote of how images were used in the past to reinforce the power of visual images and that this still is true in our contemporary age.

Its importance lies in the overall assumption of the effectiveness of images to the extent that they have the potential to affect even (or perhaps especially) the younger of viewers, and affect them not just emotionally, but in ways that have long-term behavioural consequences. (Freedberg, 1991, p. 5)

I found that this was fascinating the enthusiasm they had in their own particular fields of education and the importance for them to continue learning. I have to say that I am glad in respect of my own judgement in selecting the group and their willingness to participate as they if it does not sound biased carry a similar philosophy of education to mine. The learner or student is important and they want the best for them. The Questions I proposed initially were in some respects in areas repeating themselves and due to the interview being in the space of an hour needed to be condensed.

Adopting a Qualitative Approach

In the planning, conducting, and analysing this qualitative study, I used a constructivist approach to research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), which endorses that knowledge is socially constructed and changeable depending on circumstances. Constructivist philosophy also states that both meaning and reality are co-constructed by the participant own perceptions and experiences and also by the researchers interpretations of these perceptions and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). With regard to the sample size, Creswell (Creswell, 2007) indicated that, typically, qualitative research involves a limited number of individuals ranging from 1-40. It is viewed that even with a small sample size the researcher can collect much detail from each individual. For this research information gathered was rich and informed for this study. With the preliminary interview lasting an hour and each individual interview ranging from an hour to an hour and a half with the initial discussion being focussed on how

students critically reflect with the use of visual images and web-based technology. For qualitative research, Merriam, (Merriam, 2009) also states that the number of participants depends on the questions asked, the data gathered, and the resources available and there is no right number of participants. In respect to this research, the participants all incorporated various forms of visual images and web-based technology to enhance critical reflection on their adult learners. Another important aspect of this research relates to details about the data collection, analysis, and presentation. Data was collected over several months through an initial preliminary focus group interview and then semi-structured individual interviews were carried out (Barbour & Schostak, 2011). All interviews were conducted at the participant's workplace and were audio recorded.

Identifying My Research Participants

I was interested in interviewing tutors who were creating opportunities for the learner to develop a capacity for critical thinking through the use of visual images and web-based technology. As mentioned earlier I had previously known the tutors and had worked with three of them. My curiosity also was the tutors' backgrounds and how they came to be where they are now. For this, I used a narrative enquiry. The qualitative approach I used gave space for the tutors to critically reflect on their own lived experiences as adult educators on their use of visual images and web-based technology. A preliminary focus group was set up and four tutors attended. This was followed up with one-to-one interviews to gain more insight from the tutors and their own individual experiences.

In narrative research as stated by Josselson (Josselson & Clandin, 2007, pp. 4-6), the researcher should always keep in mind that they are intruding on someone else's life and on their time. Connelly and Clandinin (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), point out that it is

important also that there is a rapport between the researcher and the participant as the richness of the information may reflect the trust between interviewer and interviewee. The participant is important and their lived experiences are beneficial and contribute to a body of knowledge in which we can learn from. Therefore there must be trust and respect for what is being related throughout the interview. Greene states, "I want to see through as many eyes and angles as possible" (Greene, 1991, p. 112), and as a researcher, this is vital in conducting research on how the world is viewed through the lens of others and their experiences.

Mapping my learning journey

Reflexivity is a core feature of critical methodology (Hammersley, 2011) in which I have attempted to use throughout my research. While this was a study of the uses of visual images and web-based technology to enhance adult learners to critically reflect on their learning as a researcher it is important to critically reflect on my own journey through this research. As I went on this journey I realised that there is a lot of dedication and passion from the tutors that I interviewed in the areas that they teach and that they are constantly reflecting on what works best for their students.

Conclusion

In this chapter on the methodology, I have outlined the process in which I carried out my research. This has included my own ontological and epistemological stance in alignment with Critical Theory. I have adopted a qualitative approach in an attempt to document the experiences of learners to critically think through the lived experiences of tutors in adult and further education. Finally, as reflexivity is such a key part of critical enquiry, I have briefly outlined my own reflective journey of learning throughout this research. In the next chapter, I will review the concepts which provide the theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think —rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men. (Beattie, 1779, p. 475)
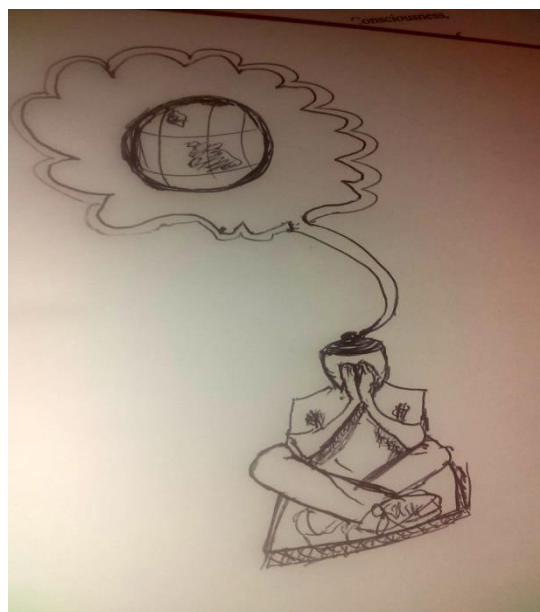
how to think

Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore the use of visual images and web-based technology and how it impacts on adult learners to critically reflect on their learning from the perspective of adult educators. The quote above by Beattie from 1779 and is still very appropriate today in a world that is saturated with the opinions of others through different forms of information. The illustration is one of my own inspired by the quote entitled *how to think*! With this saturation of information through various forms of technology do we give much time to critically reflect on our everyday lives and the knowledge that we are provided with?

When I started out on my own journey as a mature student I was introduced to many theorists in adult education, Freire and Dewey were the two main theorists I was drawn to; why? My initial reaction when reading their work was that it reflected my own philosophy on how

education should be and what life and community mean to me. With this in mind, my objective within this thesis is to look at pedagogical approaches on how visual images and web-based technology are used to enhance adult learners to critically reflect on their learning. The main theorists that I will be using to back up my work are Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Maxine Greene and John Dewey.

I will be coming from a Freirean pedagogic stance that promotes critical thinking and active learning through visual images and web-based technology. A Freirean (Freire, Pedagogy of The Oppressed, 1996) approach to learning is focussed on an emancipatory pedagogy through critical thinking and 'consciousness-raising'. In which there is equality between the teacher and the learner to explore and develop skills and to analyse the world we live in. Illich points out that technology is important but it is the use and control of what we have that needs to be understood and critically questioned. (Illich, Deschooloing Society, 2006) Additionally, Dewey was concerned with experiences of life and what comes after the experience of learning how education is part of that thinking process. A common theme that runs throughout for Greene, Dewey but especially for Freire is the importance of community and democracy. Education in all its shapes and forms are important but it's the experience of sharing that can lead to change.

Greene points out that dialogue leads to the need for more discovery which leads to 'wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility' (Greene, 1995, p. 43). Dewey's (Dewey, 2015, p. 2) philosophy of education had two main aims, in the first to question what are the existing objectives and virtues of education. Secondly, how are those aims interpreted in future experiences? The ideals of sharing and being part of a society are all elements of creating a better society but the experience and what comes after learning is critical as not all experiences educate. It is important therefore that there must be

a rationale behind the practice as an educator in which visual mediums or appropriate technologies create permanent substance to the learning experience.

Education should be creative and imaginative to learners, the most beautiful thing in the world from the moment we are born is the journey of exploration and education. As adults, we should be able to continue on this journey, every success and failure should be viewed as learning regardless. It is with new knowledge that we go forward to become better people and improve our community and the society we live in. If as individuals we take those first steps into questioning why and who we are and what is the purpose of our existence, then we can be part of a bigger picture in improving upon what already exists in our lives.

> As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. (Dewey, 1998, p. 42)

Freire also argued that education should be a practice that liberates and transforms the way we think rather than being one that oppresses and marginalises individuals.

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Freire, Pedagogy of The Oppressed, 2000, p. 34).

Critical thinking or problem posing awakens the consciousness and leads one to question their life, education, culture or the environment as opposed to a 'banking system' in

education (Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 1974, p. 125). According to Freire (Freire, Society In Transition, 2014, p. 4), it is only with intervention in the real world can change come about. This is true to an extent, but it is how people react to the world around them and crucially, the use of critical thoughts and actions that create change. We are bombarded daily by visual images through various forms of media and web-based technology. How do they impact on our education?

Freire (Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 1974) discusses technology and computers in education but not at great length; this may be due to its infancy at the time. Yet, Freire was conscious of the effect and the potential technology had as a tool for liberation, he was also cautious of its oppression (p. 34-35). Freire, (p.113), uses the term invader and in this context, one can consider how images, semiotics and technology can be manipulated to develop various viewpoints that can be useful and also damage. It is, therefore crucial that within education and the various mediums used in web-based technology to be critical and reflect on the information being transferred into our learning. Kellner, (Kellner, 2003) uses the term infotainment culture and the different forms of multimedia as tools for education; it is easy just to see the surface message and take for granted all information as fact based.

Kellner mentions a quote from Debord 'When the real world changes into simple images, simple images become real beings and effective motivations of a hypnotic behaviour' (Kellner, 2003, p. 2). I think this is an important point as a reflection on how we as active participants take for granted the elements of how semiotics are used by mass media to influence our thoughts. Freire (Freire, 1973, p. 35) stated, 'The answer does not lie in the rejection of the machine but in the humanization of man' he was cautious of the potential of technology to be a tool for oppression but hopeful that it could also be used to liberate people. Kahn and Kellner (Kahn & Kellner, 2007) held a similar view when they explained that

society's impulse towards technology is creating a culture of techno-capitalism, where technology is influenced by the priorities of capitalism. Again technology can be in one respect liberating with easy access to web-based technology for information but also can be oppressive and make us slaves to capitalism in a consumer world. As Illich highlights, technology should be of value to the individual but it is being aware of who controls it and their influence over it, where the critical process should be engaged. Again, Freire (Freire P. , Pedagogy of The Oppressed, 1996, p. 136) reminded readers, ''It is not the media themselves which I criticise, but the way they are used''

> We need research on the possible use of technology to create institutions which serve personal, creative, and autonomous interaction and the emergence of values which cannot be substantially controlled by technocrats (Illich, Deschooloing Society, 2006, p. 121).

Illich but especially Freire shared a similar view of the nature of man, emphasising the way in which it is humanistic and optimistic. It is the individual that can act as the agent for change through conscious meaning. This is through an interactive process of purposeful reflection and agency in life situations. For Freire, education should increase political consciousness and in doing so should aid the liberation of thoughts through organised collectives. He argues that the oppression of peasants is partly maintained because of their acceptance of situations and existence as an unchangeable fact. Freire saw that dialogical education was a key to transformation through mutual exchanges to improve the interests of learners (Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 1974, pp. 48,105) This is similar to Illichs beliefs about open debates rather than one of unilateral communication. Illich put forward many arguments on what is valid learning:

(1) in contemporary society institutions create a place that lacks critical thinking and as a result, it diminishes creativity;

(2) achievement in learning is becoming disproportionate between classes creating inequalities in society;

(3) what is legitimate learning in respect to formal and informal education certified or not;

(4) education on completion has a sole purpose for entering industry (Smith).

If we look at further education today and the strategies put in place there is a strong emphasis on a knowledge-based economy to adapt to industry and employment. In 2013 the Further Education and Training Act was signed into law and with that the dissolution of FÁS and the formation of SOLAS. A five-year strategy was put in place by SOLAS, who work under the auspices of Department of Education and Skills, to provide further education and training (FET). The main aim of the strategy is providing training and up-skilling for an evolving knowledge-based economy. The strategy also includes lifelong learning and developing a more effective FET pedagogy in which it is learner centred and participative in its approach. It also puts a strong emphasis on 'job ready' skills or employer-led apprenticeships in FET specific for the needs of industry.

Additionally, it appears that SOLAS are making efforts in relation to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for adult educators. The intention is to keep up to date with their own training needs and pedagogical approaches in the delivery of courses, but staff input is vital to develop this further; this is also seen within the education sector for tutors (SOLAS, 2013). Below are diagrams as illustrated by SOLAS of the typical FET learner and the various
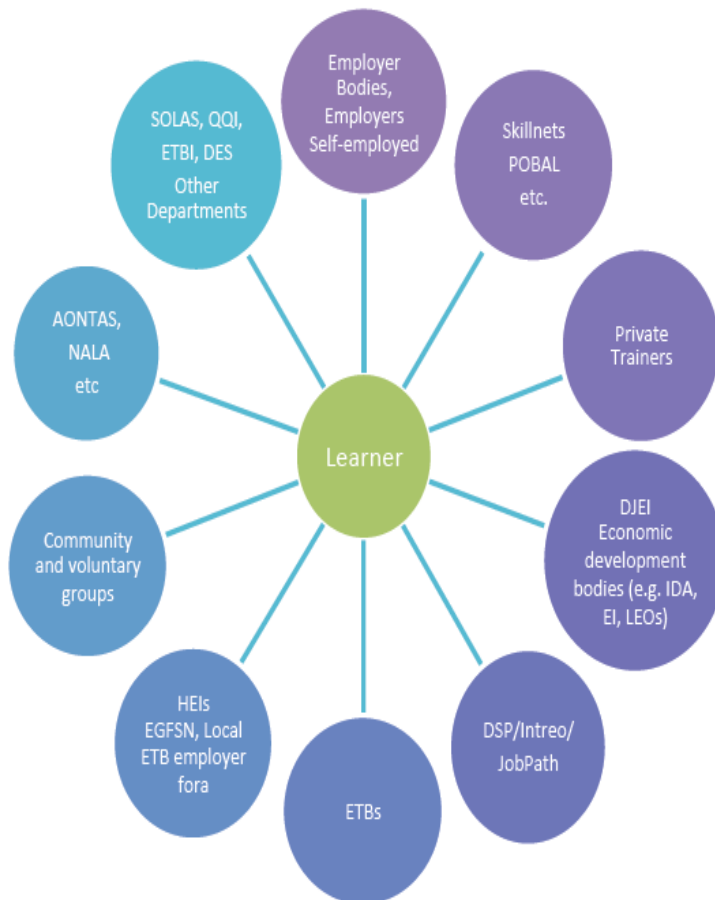
networks associated with the FET sector that the learner can access for education and training.

Figure 1: **Profile of typical FET learners**

(SOLAS, 2013, p. 42)

Figure 2: FET Partner Network

(SOLAS, 2013, p. 43)

 With a strong influence of training needs for industry, Grummell (2014) points out that the principal objective of neoliberal ideology in education is an emphasis upon the end result of moving into an area of employment or higher education. The important point that Grummell goes on to make is with respect to the learner and what they actually learn from this process of education. It is also highlighted that within further and adult education, restraints are placed on institutions and the focus is on results to meet certain markets (Grummell, 2014, p. 122). Limond (Limond, 2007, pp. 169-170) points out that it is in accordance with a Neoliberal ideology that our nature is to consume and education is in place as a preparation for the labour force. This only reinforces Illichs arguments put forward above, that this type

of education can lead to social division and a lack of critical thinking, therefore this type of education is successful in only creating a productive labour force.

Mooney (Mooney, 2014), points out that the FET strategy is not as straightforward in its delivery. The main focus of the FET strategy is to develop a flexible labour force for industry and growth within the economy. Mooney also highlights the fact with the advancements in technology; teachers will need more than a few days of CPD up-skill training to meet the needs of learners. It is necessary that teachers need much more inclusion on this journey of lifelong learning as well if they are to be the keystone that bridges the learner and industry together. Appropriate training and time need to be allocated for tutors to continually up-skill.

Fullan points out that as a student progresses through education, their initial eagerness in the learning process begins to develop into boredom. This, as he states, is currently organised and experienced, it is psychologically and literally "pushing" students and teachers out of school (Fullan, 2013, p. 23). Fullan proposes a new pedagogy, as in line with Freire's stance, that the student is an active participant in the learning process. Fullan uses the term disruptive innovations, in which new processes of learning occur and highlights the use of critical thought and reflection, whereby the learning cycle is improved. The learner becomes an active member in the process in which information is shared between students and teacher, each learning from one another and sharing that experience (p26). The important factor is how these changes are implemented, so as a corollory, this process works and is successful.

Education has the power to develop both worlds, dependent upon how we see the world and our desire to educate within this. Freire (Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 1974, pp. 113-114) uses the terms 'invader and invaded' and the particular perception in which we see the world through a domesticated lens. Consciousness-raising within education should develop skills to critically reflect our society and question the ways we internalise oppressions. What is the distinction between adult education and learning? Education is one in which it is planned and is a structured activity, learning, on the other hand, can occur at any time because of a requirement or pleasure to learn (Dewey, Education as Direction, 1944, pp. 37-39). The learner brings their own abundance of knowledge and experience into the classroom; learning is improved when it is relevant to the adult. This can be achieved through dialogue and reflection of one's own views transforming through sharing one's learning experiences, which in turn should lead to the adults need for achieving their goals. Accordingly, then the role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator providing the appropriate conditions for adult learning to occur (Henry, 2011, pp. 25-26).

Additionally, as Fullan and Donnelly point out, a 'New Pedagogy' has to take place between teacher and student to embrace and enhance learning. This comes from both shared experiences and alliances that impact positively on learning outcomes for students (Fullan & Donnelly, Alive in the Swamp Assessing Digital Innovations in Education, 2013, pp. 11-12). From their assessment in the ways of complementing and developing a new strategy, it appears that a strong Freirean ethos plays a definitive role in future approaches to learning and that both educators and learners benefit from learning, in a social context. Greene, (Greene, Discovering a Pedagogy, 1995, pp. 50-51) points out that change within education can meet with resistance because of the social constructs already in place. It is through

discourse that progress can be achieved but also it aids in creating awareness of social justice and transformation in society.

Adler (Adler, 2011) highlights the importance of having a voice to become more wholesome in society. Talking about experiences help make sense of the world and how we perceive it and how we react to worldviews accordingly.

> Speech is enormously important in the development of the human spirit. Logical
>
> thinking is possible only through the use of language, which gives us the means to
>
> build concepts and to identify differences in values. Our very thoughts and emotions
>
> are understandable only when we accept that they are not unique to ourselves; our joy
>
> in beautiful things is based in the knowledge that recognition, understanding and
>
> feeling for beauty are universal (Adler, 2011, p. 37)

In contemporary society and education, one of the main focuses is now in a knowledge-based economy. What are the consequences for society if this remains the predominant ideology for adult learners? With the increase in the ideology based on the concepts of Neoliberalism since the 1980s, the shift in education has come to the fore and is dominant in our present day education. This is relevant especially in today's world of globalisation and its ideal of producing a more predominant knowledge-based economy. The important question is therefore who really benefits in society in the end? Governments have taken on the mantle to encourage institutions to develop and work with industry to further the knowledge-based economy (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 313).

This is not the only area though that is affected by the ideology of Neoliberalism, it also impacts on our political structure and the within educational institutions. Olssen and Peters (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 325) further highlight how the structures within academia come under the scrutiny and influence of industry in the method and delivery of education. Funding, therefore, is influenced more predominantly within departments which are deemed more relevant in this form of the knowledge-based economy. This can now be seen within departments whose focus on the arts and humanities and areas that deal with cultural studies. As they erode and become less valuable to a knowledge-based economy in the eyes of the political powers and Neoliberals. Under what is was termed classical liberalism in present day terms, the political spheres have changed and with the rise of support for Neoliberal politics, autonomy has shifted. The power structures are more rigid with respect to delegation of the latter to one of regulative modality. Olssen and Peters point out that this shift in control of power will impact on the academic role (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 324).

Skinner (Skinner, 1958, p. 971) discussed the advancement of technology in the late 1950's in which material is composed and presented to students. This helped to shape the students behaviour, not unlike today and the advancement in technology, but it was relevant to how education is manipulated towards an end product. The consequences of economic globalisation are to homogenise individualism into one entity yet deluding society that the individual is important in this role. Performance is now the key to research and what is being taught within further and higher education, thus reflecting how industry influences and controls institutions. The consequence, as Grummell points out, will be a lack of social legitimacy in which culture will become void of any meaning. Grummell uses the Teaching Council ethos for example in relation to 'requirements for teaching, learning and assessment

outcomes focus on a decontextualised notion of pedagogy and learning' (Grummell, 2014, p. 122).

Transformation and learning are narrow and in a sense may not be of benefit to all learners or the community in which they live. Without the flexibility to address the needs of the learner, it may leave them even more marginalised than before. If the aim of education is now predominately focussed on economics and producing people simply for a particular market, then education is losing its true value for a wholesome inclusive society. Wenger (Wenger, 1998, p. 263) makes an important point that education should in its essence be a transformative experience for the learner. It is, therefore, important that it is meaningful to the learner

I will conclude by offering the argument that each of the theorists mentioned above has been very insightful into my own research. Furthermore that they contribute a deeper theoretical understanding of what critical thinking can achieve within the scope of my research. In a society that is ever progressive, especially in technology, an unknown future lies ahead for both educators and learners. Education needs to develop an approach in which participants live in a society that is democratic and has equal respect for its citizens. Creativity in innovation and critical thinking can only lead to an improved way of sharing information. From my own point of view, it is an exciting new era in a journey into the unknown if we are permitted to develop our critical thoughts; it can lead to a wholesome learning experience for both educators and learners. If we are critical conscious human beings perhaps then we can be a fair and just society. In next chapter, I will be sharing my findings from the interviews carried out for my research.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be discussing the findings from my preliminary research from the focus group. The main focus of my research was to look at the experience of tutors and the use of visual images and web-based technology to enhance critical reflection on their adult learners. The focus group consisted of four staff members from the same institute but and who taught in different disciplines. As the interview progressed with the focus group it became clear that the stories I heard from the participants experience of using visual images and web-based technology needed more probing and individual interviews followed on from this.

Choosing my Participants

I chose the particular individuals because initially, I believed that they would bring a wealth of information to my research. All tutors have worked within community and adult education over varied disciplines in the same centre ranging from 7 to twenty years. I was particularly interested in their experiences of the use of visual images and web-based technology as an aid to enhance the learning of adults to critically reflect. The tutors have a wide variety of experiences that were of particular interest to me for my research. While my cohort worked within the same institute they came from different backgrounds and yet carry a similar Freirean pedagogical stance towards education. That is an education according to Freire should be legitimate and liberating and one that leads to humanization through dialogue which in turn develops a coexistence of critical thought. (Freire P. , The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1972, p. 56). In the same way, Freire placed great importance on respect between the relationship of the teacher and student this is achieved through the dialogue and cooperation in which 'they become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow'

(Freire P. , The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1972, p. 53). Within Freires work, he also explored the concept of praxis, in which he defines it as a cycle of "action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 52). I use the quotes from Freire above because I believe through my own experience as a student and as a tutor in this particular institution that the cohort I chose carry this ethos within their teaching practice.

Findings and themes that arose throughout the interview with the focus group where:

1. **The Use of web-based technology**

Technology was the first section of the discussion within the focus group and I use this term because I wanted to find out what web-based technology they incorporated into their teaching. YouTube came up many times as a resource used both within the class and for further exploration of topics for students to look at in their own time for research purposes.

> I would definitely find that with YouTube it is a great resource especially for the likes of history subjects There is so much there but then......when you are talking about that mm generational divide I sometimes find if I put on something to view in class the older students will engage and the younger students will want to take out their phones...(Mary)

From the focus groups own experience it was how students differ in age from mature students to younger adults on how to get them immersed in a particular topic when using YouTube clips and from their experience and observations of how the learners react in the classroom when using clips from YouTube.

> Emma is right in terms of immersion.....getting them immersed in the subject the older ones will want to analyse it and want to look at it in a more evaluative way. Whereas the younger learners kinda they want you to point out to them exactly what it is, that is relevant and why do we need to know this so they are looking at you know specific instruction from it in they might be more familiar with it but it doesn't necessarily mean that it actually has more impact on them.....Yeah, they don't immerse themselves

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anymore in it you know like in terms of even if it wasn't just visual images but even in terms of audio. They don't actually listen to what's being played to them anymore. It's going past the front of their eyes but that's all it is (George).

It was further highlighted with respect to younger students coming from post-primary education that this was an issue in relation to the method of teaching and the students own experience previously. The tutors are very aware of the fact that this is quite a dramatic change in teaching styles for the younger students whom before where given the appropriate information to learn for their exams. The transition is therefore not as straightforward moving into further education for younger students compared to mature students.

> It could also be the education that they have come from you know because the changes in education. You know the teachers are teaching them towards the leaving cert and thats it like. It is tunnel vision there you know so their attitude is what do I need to know and tell me what I need to know, give it to me and that's it (George).

> Absolutely it's a drastic change for them when they come into FE then and they are expected to think for themselves (Mary).

> Where the mature learners like would be coming in with experience of the world and they are coming back in and they are allowing themselves to learn. Giving themselves time to learn and they are not feeling as much pressure to learn so they actually are taking the time to evaluate what's being put in front of them (George).

This is not always the case in regards younger students and how they view web-based learning as Emma pointed out from the course that she teaches in art. It depends on the students and what they have learned previously. Emma highlights one particular case of a younger student who was equipped and engaged better with the use of YouTube as a form of web-based learning.

> It depends on the tools that the young younger students have come in with.....She came in from school she was given the tools in her art history exam to analyse you know critically analyse and come up with a conclusion. She had the tools herself to cognitively to immerse herself in YouTube and she is completely technology savvy. She is very good, it can work it depends on the individual (Emma).

From this, I wanted to know more about their own experiences in blending the use of web-based technology in the classroom. In particular, Mary and Nora's modules are text heavy and I wanted to find out if there are benefits for them in incorporating different forms of technology in their teaching methods.

> I think it breaks it up you need to break it up for no matter what type of learning style you have or preference or teaching style. I think you need to break your lessons up that it's not all like.....mine is quite theory heavy so.....if I'm explaining theory on how children learn and develop I can find a YouTube clip or a video clip that shows that demonstrates that and makes it. It just letting them kinda keep revisiting the theory. Does that make sense? (Nora)

> .....I think going back to what you said about breaking up the class we have 2-hour blocks of teaching time. Two hours is a long time to listen to one person just talk on and on about something, so if you can break it up with images or a clip or something like that (Mary).

Within Information Technology (IT) subjects taught word processing and spreadsheet data modules and hardware for gaming students. In the area of the use of web-based technology again age plays an important factor as mature students tend to immerse themselves and analyse what they are learning. Younger students want what is relevant for them and expect that the technology to be in place and provided instantly. Younger adults engage more readily with technology but need to be more stimulated in comparison to technology phobia for mature students. Yet mature students can connect better in the use of applying the theory and applications within computing technology.

> .....if I wasn't using technology I don't think I would have any engagement with them at all just because of the subject IT. Having said that in teaching in the other modules for other courses mmm if you do use the technology like Moodle or virtual learning straight away they will go and print it out and they want it on paper beside them. So I kinda have both ends of it I've the word processing, spreadsheet, database modules which are IT modules but the people learning them or office admin people they want it printed on paper in the folder nice and clearly organised and can work of it that way but then the IT

students they want to look at it on the screen and even to have two screens if possible. One on one screen and data on the other screen but mmm the use of technology I think could be a lot better. It could facilitate a lot more the only problem is time and constraints in that regards so you know It's not really being used to the full potential you know so there is probably a lot more they could do (George).

Tutors also found that their own skills using web-based technology have developed over the years by their own trial and error the term expressed by them was 'fumbling around'.

I would backup what Nora said coming from a non-technology background sometimes it's very daunting you know I thought I was really cool when I managed to figure out YouTube clips to play and never mind embed them into a power point you know. So sometimes for some of us like I have never taken a computer class in my life. But you know it wasn't it wasn't part of when I was learning so anything I have learned is self-taught and you were basically fumbling around and trying to figure out what works and what doesn't (Mary).

That's the point because you fumbled around and you figured out what works and you used it you know so that's how the whole system needs to be (George).

In my case I would have fumbled around and pick up things to facilitate and I suppose I am lucky because the art doesn't require the subjects that I teach doesn't always require some of them do and I try and do a little (Emma)

Just to come in and say on Mary point and Emmas point there is no course nothing that you could go on that will give you everything that you need to be able to teach. So....fumbling around is identified as what needs to be done but it's just you know the support (George).

As Emma says we drown in paperwork and every year we drown a little bit more in paper work so even though we are in this technical or technology advanced age we still have more more and more paper work to do but you just happen to match it with digital files (Mary).

Another limitation then as well staying in contact with the outside world you know the students are coming in it would be ideal if the students were able to come in and say I would like this in this format and that format because I don't know what is trendy out there now for them and what they actually will engage with. So a limitation is you don't get the opportunity to go out and see enough....You're in your class room.....in your space your doing the best you can......you might have facilities and tools.....available to you but you don't know if you are doing it right or not (George).

PowerPoint is used to some extent but is getting less and less of a priority as an aid for teaching and the focus group have more or less virtually moved away from using it in class.

I would have never used PowerPoint when I started 7 years ago and I remember the absolute panic when I realised that everyone seemed to deliver by PowerPoint and how was I going to create all these PowerPoints and then realising that actually, it is not necessary. You don't have to teach that way you know there are other ways you can teach (Mary).

In the last few years, I have moved away completely from PowerPoints.....it is more discussions and giving it back to them and everything to go off and do the research and come back and present (Nora).

Music from YouTube was also used as a background distraction when students were broken up for group discussions to encourage them to interact and to break the silence in the room.

This year I found the group I had were really shy about large group discussions so I put them in small groups you wouldn't hear a thing. So what I have done now is that I have put on music in the background and then they chat away (Nora).

From Emma's experiences, web-based technology plays a lesser role in teaching but is still used to some extent but it can be distractive for the students in regards the images they are looking at.

I know just from the point of view of the art students for them the visual the whole area of visual images, digital technology is unless its digital art and its streaming fine art online or something that is live online it's all second-hand material. So their learning is very much about experiential process and they develop those critical skills by working their way through something......it opens up the area of a huge resource of information mm however sometimes they less are inclined to look at what you're guiding them towards and they are more inclined to look at Pinterest you know.....their kinda looking at a broad range of things which could change the face of the art world in the future anyway it's hard to know. It is superficial yeah that's the thing you get a lot of things on Pinterest that are thrown in with famous art with art.....So that critical awareness probably won't come till they have more experience themselves in art and design you know they can work their way through.

Virtual learning environments (VLE) and the use of Moodle and teleconferencing was used as a resource for long distance learning. This was insightful from the perspective of Nora's own experience in using teleconferencing and how she incorporates techniques of engagement for the students. George also added to this conversation on how advancements have taken place with technology to make it more accessible for both the learner and the tutor.

I think what you need to think about when you are using technology along those lines you need to think of other senses cause they are not engaged .....you need to think of movement or something else to engage the learner in it. I don't think it works quite as well as people think it does because if you're just sitting there watching somebody speaking on a conference call there is no engagement it's very hard to get the discussion going.....there is no facility there for a two-way discussion. A group discussion if that was there that would be good! I think it needs to built on (Nora)

The new teleconference technology hardware is been motion detection so that the person delivering if they move around the camera it will move with them and it also goes two ways. So that somebody at the receiving end speaks the camera will zoom in on them so that the broadcaster can....it's trying to enhance it (George).

I find them very stilted and I find those virtual learning environments you need to be thinking of if a student is there on their own that you are building in some sensory thing like a like a guided meditation or you have got an image you know what can you break this down or what you think. So I would say images and mm guided meditative visual

images and stuff like that have more a part to play in that kinda technology rather than just notes or whatever you're taking down. Does that make sense? (Nora).

Just to say that the department of education.....now is supplying the technology. So within the learning environment, it's taken for granted that the technology is going to be....up to the standard that they need it to be. As Mary says the module descriptor there even states that the technology needs to be capable of x,y,z. So you have no choice but to deliver the course you have to have the technology there to do that.....outside the learning environment it makes the student more tactical and more aware of the facilities that they have and then they begin to appreciate it a bit more and can say.....I need to get this if I want to be able to work on it. Our library is a prime example it's full all the time......cause you know students realise that the facilities are so good....technology wise (George).

Online discussion forums where also used

I just think that is so interesting and I think definitely from a teachers point of view it makes for something different and its fresh and its creative.........for this year, for example, I decided they had to do a discussion piece. What usually happens they sit around in a group been videoed and this year we decided we are not going to do that we are actually going to use an online discussion forum and you had to go up and post your comments and it was difficult because it is almost as if they didn't they didn't get they needed to know what they were meant to write up Instead of going on and engaging with each other what I have to think of this on my own and is there, not a book that I can reference it to (Mary).

......the online discussion the digital learning there mm you find that there is nowhere to hide you know so everybody has to get involved. Whereas if you are doing your in class discussion if they choose to stay quiet you can't go down and force that the only thing that we did it we had to offer a percentage you would only engage in it if you knew there was 5 or 10 percent of your next assignment.......so there was nowhere to hide but then you got common trends through that as well. You got your instigator and then you got

your provocateur who just like to come in under the instigator and say that's all rubbish and try and start another argument and you started to notice the trend after about twelve weeks you start noticing he just goes in and says the opposite of what everyone else says that's his opinion at the end but this is my opinion so you wonder..........can you grade the two of them evenly. You know one has actually as Mary has said has thought about it their opinion and placed an opinion in there and the others just come in and throwing it out there and saying no to it or whatever. So that's the only other problem that the assessment criteria assessment objectives or so pacific that you have to find the grade and match the grades for everybody evenly (George).

......here the only thing I can say here briefly is distraction and diversion and sometimes when you're looking at a video and you're immersing yourself in all this information online you can sometimes believe it rather than making the critical judgement Cause it is new media and its invading (Emma).

It is produced in such a way that it is believable. So somebody has put the effort into actually making it believable looking even though the content might not be there to substantiate it (George).

2. The Use of Visual Images

Visual images aid in stimulating the students on critically reflecting on their learning

I would agree with you but it is almost as if the younger students need more stimulation within lessons. They are used to having constant streams of technology and constantly be looking and their brain being stimulated that sometimes it is very hard to get them to focus on a written text. Which for humanities subjects can be quite difficult because a lot of what we look at is written novels and texts. So using visual images definitely helped with the younger students......(Mary)

Mary went on to elaborate on her experience of using visual images and the impact it had on a particular student who some years later requested a link to previous work to use in her own studies at university. It had also been mentioned from George as well that images aid as a tool for the recall of information.

> And I think adult learners as well mm the idea of using visuals mm quite often is very different from their previous experience and especially if they are returning in their fifties to education. School wasn't like that when they were in school, so they appreciate that it is different and it was and it is not you know the traditional chalkboard, desks, seats everyone sit down and listen to what I'm going to say and they do like that and engage in that. Funny I would have used some as Nora has said video clips to demonstrate types of projects that were been done and I had a student and the adult learners come back and has gone on now to do her degree and actually request from three years ago a clip that we had seen and she is doing something at university and said we watched a clip on such and such could you send me the link to it because it would be really good for this project I'm doing. So obviously does have an impact (Mary).

George also highlighted that visuals do work to an extent from his experiences teaching but the maturity and experience of the students vary on their use of visual images and various forms of web-based technology.

> Yeah well from my experience any of the mature students who have come back have been in industry somewhere in industry and you know industry required them to evolve cause it wasn't the same thing every day. They were doing something different every day. Their skills set was then transferred over to the subjects that we were teaching so then they began to appreciate oh this is kinda what I have done before except I have never done it on computing. In the younger learners then the value for them using the visuals is straight onto the smartphone. You know they want it straight out on the smartphone but the problem for them is that they don't have the confidence to know themselves how to weave all the information together to get the full picture you know. Whereas the more mature learners they have the confidence to turn around and say okay right that's relevant to this and that's relevant to this so they can build the bridges and get the complete picture of the entire subject area....(George)

The use of images creates emotions these have been both on a positive and negative impact both Mary and Nora related stories of visual images they used and how they impacted on their students.

> I'm going to tell you a good story about that, so I had a picture it's mmm its actually from Slieve Gullion it's an ability swing it's called instead of a disability swing and one of my students I used it for one of my students she has come back and said that that image really changed her mindset in the way she looks at disabilities because now she is looking at abilities. So it was a very powerful! .... it is on it that it is an ability swing and it is in a play park. The play park had to put in a huge effort. The funds went into the swing that how many children are going to use. Obviously, they thought it very important for an inclusive environment and that image just struck her (Nora).

Images given by kind permission from the tutor.

Another aspect that came up for George in relation to visual images is a module that Emma works on with him around the use of colours and images used in gaming. George has seen a difference from when the students initially began the module and at the end of the module. The student's reactions and perceptions of games had changed with the realisation of how colours are used to enhance certain moods for the players. The students become more aware of how they were being manipulated into playing certain games without realising it but once they become aware their attitudes changed.

> Well I know in terms of what Emma is after saying the games students whenever Emma comes in and talks about art in games they go home and can think differently about all their games and some of them have actually some of them have actually stopped playing some games because they have realised that the colours been used are intentional. Once it was pointed out to them they realised them colours are put in there to make me want to go to the next level or to make me feel this way (George).

> I think they become more critically aware I think with something like that your investing emotionally in the picture. There is an emotional response because you know you make an association with mmm I suppose somebody who has difficulties and you can put yourself in their shoes so in that sense you will have images and it will help you visualise very strongly...........(Emma).

On an emotional level also visual images can have different impacts on students Mary related a story about her experience of using images from the Holocaust as a tool to enhance the classes learning. As she explains in her own words it had quite an emotional impact on the students and one that she did not expect.

> .... some of the topics as well like the holocaust or that where that you have students coming straight from secondary school they have read about it in textbooks but so few of them have seen any type of visual imaging that goes with it. So you put on, I naively made the assumption mmm that students would all have had experience of viewing concentration camp footage and one day in class I told them they were going to watch some footage on one of the concentration camps. I did not anticipate that over half my class had never seen any film footage from concentration camps and I had a number of students very upset and had to leave because they had no idea they understood the facts

and read about it. They got the figures, and they got the death toll, they got the dates but none of them had actually seen any of those pictures of the crematoria or the pits with the bodies. They never seen any of that so it brought almost like Emma was saying there it brought an emotion to something that otherwise was very dry.....you know things like that even the just I suppose I was so shocked by it. I hadn't realised that younger students would not have any exposure to having seen that kind of footage..... no child coming out of high school not knowing that happened and yet they don't really have a full image of what that was it is just words! (Mary).

It was also remarked that even in todays media we can be bombarded with images of pain and suffering from events occurring throughout the world but it can be trivialised. The difference in Mary's case was that the images used were visual aids to help deliver a particular event. Mary had covered the events of the Holocaust extensively and incorporating images had quite an emotional impact on some of her students.

3. Time

Time is a major factor in relation to the tutors contact time in class and incorporating alternative ways of learning and redesigning lesson plans to suit the needs of their learners. Not enough time to experiment with different formats of delivery to enhance and aid students with special educational needs.

Yeah a strategy of an e-development officer, an e-development librarian is what I would ideally like.....The problem is not enough time in the day and then not enough time to experiment with it either you know. So I would like to be able to go to the library and get someone who is capable and qualified and enthusiastic to work with it and say can I try this out and we will try this and see how it works. You know and then take a sort of an approach were by if it works we will implement it further for next year and sort of evolve things you know. Mm, I know a lot of the universities are leaning towards that and they are doing things were videoing lessons and having the tutor shown on one side and the board showing on the other side......So I have created my powerpoint, I embed my

YouTube video and everything else, but one of my students travels by bus he would just like to listen to it you know and actual hear the presentation another student doesn't like he is colour blind or something and you are talking about game design and stuff like that so he doesn't really grasp all the colour stuff that you are talking about. So he would like to be able to read through the lesson as opposed to actually watching the lesson because showing this video colour in games doesn't work. So I would like to be able to go into the library and say can I have this and this format and that format and even for the different platforms and things that would be a good vision to have for it. The learning experiences then to see come back then to see what worked for you and what didn't work for you Mm working with students with special educational needs is sort of where that idea come out.....to adapt to suit because perhaps the video played to fast They weren't able to pick up on it so quick and they had to keep watching it over and over again. So then I.....broke the video down into specific sections. Label those sections they could watch that bit and take the break they needed to take and watch where as the more able-bodied students would just fly through the whole lot of it So the experiences was different for both. That would be one vision and not enough time to keep going (George).

Not enough time given to tutors to develop and critically reflect on their modules due to contact hours and increasing paperwork.

I'm never going to have enough technology based skills to develop a program. It's just not gonna happen so I need then.....have ideas that I would like to try out and I need somebody to come in then and support me creating those ideas and they and then I think a lot of the programmes that we use.....here Moodle and stuff....you need very strong technical support but also I think what will happen in the future is virtual learning environments (VLE) will become more developed (Nora).

There needs to be a sort of an acceptance that not every solution might work so you need to accept that you can learn from trying....even as an educational sort of development process Michael Fullan would suggest that not every process that fails is a failure you have to accept okay it didn't work..........but it might work for something else (George).

We have to much contact time in class considering the level of content....It's something I just after twenty years with....increasing the assessment transparency you have to get everything right the paperwork......you have to deliver the course, do all your assessments, disseminate concepts, explain them as they are not easy it is something that (Emma).

That's very interesting so in your experience, Emma in twenty years are you still have the same amount of contact time as you had twenty years ago (George).

4. Limitations

QQI module descriptors within PLC courses could be more flexible for students on how they can present their work.

I wonder if mm you know the way it says at the bottom of a lot of the modules descriptors students may deliver this through video through internet I wonder if the learning outcomes would if how they would be affected if somebody was approached saying a project through medium of video to the medium of the written word (Emma).

I wondered about that in the past actually because the module descriptors I'll take history, for example, will say this can be delivered in a number of ways. However, they need to present you an academically researched and referenced paper. So how do they present you an academically researched paper by video......So yes definitely the module descriptor says it but sometimes it's a catch all (Mary).

I know other providers which are outside of FE and they are not QQI they are presenting say like for example in two weeks now they are going to be present their assessment I will video it and that's it.....No written word.....I have had a number of assessment like that (Nora).

Is that at PLC level or higher level (George).

No, it's at degree level (Nora).

They are getting more aware of industry as well for industry you know you don't have to present a written document for everything you produce in industry (George).

But also it's giving students those skills of presenting and standing up in front of people their peers and presenting a piece of work I think you have to help diversify assessment. For example, they have to develop a box that promotes children's creativity so it can be a suitcase a box with material inside it and they are going to present the rational and of why they have chosen (Nora).

I have done it before and they just accept it (George).

But then it depends on who you get and different things like.....externs for universities and that they will give advice......what you could do next year. Where here I think we are afraid that whole students marks are going to be pulled completely out. There seems to be.......a fear and that could just be us in ourselves in the group that we are in. It might not be through all of FE (Nora).

Tutors are providers and supporters of lifelong learning but this does not apply to their own lifelong learning as tutors. Up-skilling and providing time out for tutors to go back into the industry relevant to their profession to keep up to date with new developments within their own area of education.

I think every seven years a teacher should have to spend a year in industry (Mary).
A sabbatical a year of (George).
Where you go off and you actually work in an area of what you teach (Mary).
Or even one of the ways they do it you know the thirty-three hours we have to do for Croke Park.....in England....they have to do thirty-three hours but part of their thirty-three hours they can do Five hours on reading new publications relevant to their subject area.....also do I think up to thirteen hours visiting somebody else in their profession to see how they work.....then that person can come back and see them So monitoring or ghosting the stuff you did when you were learning to be a teacher......they have to do that every year do thirty-three hours and then they have to do so much online discussion as well So the breakdown of their thirty-three hours of productivity as opposed to the 33 hours that we're using which is let's sit in a room together and wish none of us where here. (George).

I think as well in both in the area that we both work in we are providers and meant to be providers and supporters of lifelong learning except for teachers (Mary).

And then we're sending students out into the world for us that haven't set foot in last10 years and we are saying go out there and do. Where we need to go out and experience what they are experiences too but the problem and the limitations of it is the top umbrella don't want to allow us to do that and they can't keep the control of it. They can't keep administrative duty on it. They can't put a finger down on it you are meant to be there and you are meant to be there exactly It is also that they need to advance their views you know so what they're doing is taking this fresh modern way of thinking about education they are filtering through and then splattering it out around us you know So it is not we're not getting there it is a buffer zone area that needs to open up a bit more (George).

5. Experience and Age

Experience to the age of students from young adults and mature adults and their experiences coming into or returning to further education. Younger adults are coming from school as opposed to mature students who have worked in industry and seen a bit more of the world and generally have more lived experiences.

Mature students tend to be more engaged in the learning process and tend to critically reflect on their learning. Critical reflection comes with maturity and time but this is not always the case.

Tutors own journey in adult education and their perspective on critical pedagogy in learning.

The second part of my findings involved me returning to each individual tutor to inquire more into their narrative of education and the groups of adults that they have worked with. My first interview was with George and was very insightful to where he came from and why he teaches in the Freirean style of critical reflection and working in a student centred learning

to enhance student's experience of education. This was a similar story for Mary, Emma and Nora even though their educational backgrounds may be varied they have all arrived at the same place in their philosophy of what education should be and what it means to them.

Georges Story 'non-traditional route'

What influenced George to be a tutor? Initially, George went to a grammar school but had no interest in going on to college. He was more interested in becoming a plasterer but taking his mothers advice 'as long as my backside pointed towards the ground I hadn't what it took to be a plasterer'. Having a brief moment in that particular industry he realised it was not for him. George applied to university in Northern Ireland studying electronics and computing and completed his degree in 2003. After this Georges employment varied from building sites to working in the electronic industry. While he was working in the area of electronics he realised that it was soul destroying and that he wanted to work with people. He attended a part-time course through Maynooth University to gain a teaching qualification in adult education. The tutor he found was fascinating and it was the delivery of the course and provided a different perspective on teaching. During this period he worked in the community through cross-border initiatives and FÁS up to 2007. He found that the people he worked with were very interesting as they coming from diverse backgrounds. As George puts it in his own words 'from someone who comes from an education in books to actually see people who need and who benefit from education have no roots to bind them to their community so they saw it as very hard and the relevance of education'. To try and motivate them was initially hard and he mentioned that it was when he went out that the practice was so different to the theory and you were constantly developing skills to enhance the learning. He found that the theory behind teaching and actually teaching did not prepare him for the social aspects and community aspects he found that he was more annoyed by the fact that the students had to plode through a system that was working against the students. After working

in the community George moved into further education as he wanted to continue working with adults and has been there for the last 7 years. He also mentioned that the whole pedagogy changed around computing and in PLC the requirement and skills were much higher and he enjoyed the challenge. Since then George has completed his Masters degree in education. He felt that as he had not come from an educational background that it was something that would enhance his own learning of theories. He found it exciting learning himself, again and again the delivery of the course was similar to his own philosophy. The theory only partly fed it he found it was the lecturers delivery and their life stories and the experiences that made it made it. A common trend throughout the theorist and an enthusiasm for education to become something better but in terms of being constructive information, there was nothing really there that you could say I might actually be interested in trying something like that. George found that the key value was in the class discussions. Since completing his Masters he has found that he engages in more dialogue with the students and discussing life stories to engage critical thought. He has also noticed that the change in his style of teaching the numbers in his class have remained the same from the start to the end of the academic year because the students are more engaged with their learning. The group young males ranging from 18-25 year olds feel more socially cohesive. Now for him, he wishes to continue his lifelong learning and to go back into industry to gain more knowledge and experience that can be useful then.

Teaching practice has changed George says he cringes when he looks back there was a fear of not knowing and trying to make sure that everything was done by the book. An experience George shared of a student who had a similar background to himself. The student worked on a building site but George had gone to university he realised how similar his story and the student was only thing was when they both reached the crossroads they went in different directions and life evolved in different ways. George realised that this student could have so

easily been him. After that George opened up more with the group and found that students engaged and related better to him and also he found vast improvement with the work the students were doing. He also mentioned that he learned more in those couple of months teaching than the 4 years he spent at college. Motivation and invigorating it just happened a turning point I don't need everything it is the students own exploration and discovery. Collaborative learning between student and teacher is fundamental for development.

Marys experiences and her narrative

Lived in Canada and returned to Ireland to do her degree in English history and Theatre studies and never had any intention of going on to do teaching. After that, she went to London to seek her fortune and returned to Ireland in 2001 and found work as a key worker for adults with learning difficulties. Taking night classes in drama, communications classes and through that linked up with the VEC in Dublin who allocated hours for her. Mary was later approached to teach leaving cert English to adult learners who had left school early over two years. As Mary had spent most of her life in Canada she felt initially that this was daunting and the way school is structured there. Soft skills were considered very important aspect of learning compared to here where they are not for younger adults. Mary also highlighted that she found that the Irish post-primary system of education was unfair for students and teachers alike. There is no benefit to students and if different methods were used it would enhance their learning. Mary also worked with adults with learning disabilities and introducing communications to students that were not literate at all and continually thinking of other ways around providing evidence of learning. The leaving cert English she found that it was a massive thing for the learners that they had not completed their leaving cert and that it had been an obstacle that had been in there way and they were stressed even before they got there and there were two years to go before an exam. It was a learning curve for all of us and through that, I realised that I really enjoyed teaching. Facilities were basic

but a big part of the learning was at tea time having tea and biscuits and talking and I was told that this was a very important part of this process and I liked that. For the students who had families, it was very difficult for them to get the time to come to class so I wanted to make it fun and enjoyable. Mary said that working with adults and especially those who have had negative experiences it is building confidence in them and reassuring them that they can do this. Even within class, I would never ask anyone directly to answer a question or read out in class it has to be on a volunteer basis simply because it could be their worst nightmare and I don't want anyone leaving the class feeling that was the worst class ever. In 2010 Mary started as a new course in liberal arts from scratch and felt that her naivety was her saving grace. Mary also taught for awhile at post-primary level but did not enjoy it and found that she enjoyed the challenges of adults and encouraging them to develop their skills. Mary speaks very passionate about her course and how she has worked over the years to develop it to suit the needs of the learners. Feedback from students encouraged her to keep going and especially what they got out of the course.

Failure it has such a negative connotation and students are so obsessed with passing. In Canada, there appears to be a system to diversify and a broad range of subjects to learn based on the needs of the learners. The downside for Mary is still the stigma that PLC courses are still stigmatised as a place to go because a student has not done well in leaving cert. The workload is massive for students and has increased since she began. After 3 years teaching, the course was redesigned but led to more course work for students. The support and help are there for students to develop their skills and learning. In comparison to younger and mature students, she found that confidence building was needed more for mature learners compared to younger learners. Mature students have an interest in certain subjects and Mary felt at the beginning she had an imposter's syndrome do I know enough then the students. Now she is comfortable with the fact now that this is normal.

Mary related a story about one day writing on the whiteboard and one of the students asked if she had spelt the word correctly. At the end of class, a mature student approached her and said I can't believe a student questioned you on something you wrote on the board and you were perfectly fine with it. Marys response was it could have been wrong. Mary has the view that if she has to talk to students about their work why it shouldn't be ok then for them to question her if they weren't sure of something. Mary feels that she is a facilitator and the term teacher does not sit well with her as she feels that the students take ownership of their work and she facilitates that learning. Even talking about externals coming in there has never been an expert on her modules but she finds that they are engrossed in reading the subject matter. History has been quite an emotive topic and Mary has been conscious of what she delivers each year in the class depending on her group because she wants her class to be comfortable to discuss topics in the class. Young people are used to doing more things at the one time that is why it is important to use technology and images to keep the class focused. One suggestion that she wishes to try out next year is to get each of the students to pick an Irish artist and then create a Facebook page and build up the profile of that artist and they will interact with the rest of the students in the class.

Nora, 'I have added to their tool belt of analyses'

Finished secondary school in the 1990s and had no interest going on to higher education. Instead went travelling and worked in Africa for a couple of years in community development and early year services. Then realised that I had huge opportunities in Ireland that I didn't take. I worked in Thailand teaching English to preschool children I really like that whole area of development and working with children. Came back to Celtic Tiger Ireland preschools had evolved and community childcare services. So I started working in an after school care. While I was working there was a FETAC level 2-3 now equivalent to QQI

level 5 and 6 in the local PLC college so I started that. After completing the level 6 childcare course Queens University offered an outreach degree program in early childcare studies to this area which was funded by the peace and reconciliation funds. So I followed that on for 4 years once a week. From that, I started getting more work. As my role developed I found that I was working mentoring adults and enjoyed it. I realised then even though I have my degree I needed more skills so I did the post grad in adult and community education in Maynooth and that married the two things together for me as I liked the community development aspect and the adult education part.

When I was applying for the post grad another job came up in a mentoring role with a voluntary childcare network. The job was to go out to settings and mentor adults in their practice. I loved this work and knew that adult education was for me. Then the recession happened and the job was funded by FÁS and there was no more money for this so I just got a phone call to cover sick leave at the local college so that's where it all really started. It looked like a very viable career option and because I loved it and then I went on to do the masters in Maynooth. I started in 2004 in the local college and gained a full-time position at work on completion of the masters. Along with that, I got other work in universities the good thing about the Masters was it let me take early years and adult education and look at the two together. I was looking at gender and leadership within early years and the impact it has on children and on the adult and what is the implication then for education. So from that, I got to write a module for NUIG in leadership in early years so I wrote that for the third year of their degree programme. So I started working with them at the end of my masters in 2011.

Since then I have written a module for their Masters program on a pedagogic play and early learning. What heavily influenced me was the post grad and the masters because we looked at different theoretical perspectives that you don't usually come across in an early years

degree. For example, we looked at Foucault, Freire and Bell Hooks and they are not theorist that would come into an early years degree. The Masters programme is the way I wanted to lead it and I was very lucky to have a co-ordinator and editor that supported me even though they didn't know what I was doing. It has worked out really well and because those students have now gone off now to work in their practice and services. They have taken observations of children and practice and were able to analyse them from a poststructuralist perspective, feminist perspective. I have added to their tool belt of analyses. Working in early years you are always analysing from a theory point of view, for example, you will take an observation of child playing at a sand tray and analyse that from a child development perspective and you would use theories. So we are always using marrying theory and to build on practice. Early years theory is important for critical reflection and the more theory you have the broader your perspective can be. Then it can be very narrow if you only have one theorist to link it to. Different places to hang your hat.

Being in Africa made me more aware of equalities and inequalities and that is why I am more interested in poststructural feminism and that is what led me to this place. I am doing my PHD now in childrens identity within education from a poststructuralist perspective. I like to try a lot of different methodologies as I've progressed. Compared to when I started teaching I was very nervous and what if I didn't know something but now I'm very confident in teaching. There have been times where I have not been confident and groups have pulled me a part that was my early teaching experience and then I have met some really good groups of people in terms of classes. Something you cannot underestimate the dynamic of the group and if they want to kill you they will try I know very dramatic but now because I know all this if I have a difficult group I can manage them. Yet you can meet fantastic groups and try out new things with them. You might do a role play or games Social policy is one that students find heavy going and now I have a game called marketplace so I teach it through that

and it is fun. So basically they get a social policy and they have to make a poster of it using six words only and then they have to use pictures then. So they make the poster and I put on some Benny Hill music and they have to run around and then stop and wherever they find themselves one person from that group has to explain the poster they are beside. It's good as it takes social policies which are very tedious to read and then you have to think of pictures and images and they represent the words instead of just using words and then what they have to do is explain it back. So there are three processes in there for them to engage with. It consolidates and they can revisit the learning and then they get it. Once you have a group you can test things out on and it works for that then a group that is more reluctant you are more confident to go ahead with it and then if you have tried something that hasn't work and you're with a group dynamic that allows that its fine you can work with it. It's helped my teaching working in both situations with open and closed dynamics. You start off and you don't need to be that expert and that mantle of being an expert. But you do need to be confident

I would really like to do Sabbatical because you lose touch with practice now I have a lot of networks, people I did my degree with who are in the same field of work and I can tap into their knowledge. What I would really like is a couple weeks in the year to go out and be physically working with children again and then have that to bring back to the class.

Emma Critical Reflection

My own critical reflection yes at the end of the day, if I pay particular attention to what went on over the day I can often identify some way of looking at the work or options for development that would be of benefit to discuss with the student the next day. When you just leave work and don't do this you miss many opportunities to encourage students to see possibilities for moving forward and the whole project becomes less meaningful. I have seen

in the past where if I have not been fully attentive to the goings on in the day or week this opportunity will have been lost. In certain periods I have been distracted for a certain period for some reason or other in past years, maybe with other college work or personal stuff and I can see less student engagement with their work. Maybe it's because they rely on my feedback.

Being involved with other people's creative development takes a fair bit of reflection. The same could go for all critical reflection. As a facilitator, you probably find that things come to you on critical reflection of a class, etc and acting on it or sharing the ideas can only enhance learner's awareness when you share your insights with them.

My background, I was always interested in teaching as I suppose I wanted to share what I was discovering about and I had a real enthusiasm for it. I have been lucky over the years to have had a good role, despite the responsibilities entailed, of having autonomy in my work. However, I have been a bit over conscientious too, which takes the pleasure out of it, sometimes for me and possibly for others who can read this worry off me. I felt in college there wasn't a great interest in us on the part of the tutors, to be honest. There was very little structure in our studio practice after the first year. Tutors were nice enough but maybe I myself didn't have the confidence to strike up any kind friendly relationship with them. Even in college, it seems it's all about networking. I found the lack of response to work on the part of tutors quite discouraging, to say the least, and that void almost spurred me on to do the opposite so I always actively encourage. When you do creative work there is always a part of your soul you expose and you become vulnerable as a result. So I encourage. Sometimes I do forget and other times I'm too direct with the truth which some younger students positively resent.

I don't know what the next while will bring as I will be dealing with a different learning clientele. I am looking forward to a change, as in FE you are always swimming uphill

against the league tables, schools only want their pupils to graduate to a higher level and very few consider FE as a viable option. It is ridiculous as even the Dept of Ed is acknowledging something has to bridge the gap between school and college as many kids aren't ready for degree level study. This is partly due to cutbacks in Guidance counselling tuition in schools. It had been partly increased for the coming year but has not been fully restored by a long shot.

It would be unavoidable now for us not to have to use both images and web-based images given the subject. It would be used more to broaden student awareness of art and design visual culture and the options of what can be done. However, the real critical reflection happens when they out all this knowledge to practical use and see where it leads, which would involve on the ground practical experimentation. It is always good to have images around at the creative stage though as it keeps all ideas/ possibilities to the fore when developing a design or direction for artwork.

In this chapter, I have let the voice of the tutor express their stories on the use of images and web-based technology and how based on their experience it had different learning experience for the adult learner. I felt that the tutors own narrative on their journey through education was important because it provided a lens to understand their pedagogy in education. In the next chapter, I will be discussing the analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

through the looking glass

Introduction

In the last chapter, I tried to leave an open space to the tutors' voices and to allow their story to be told. In this chapter, I will analyse what they have said through the looking glass of the theories of Freire, Illich, Dewey and Greene. I use the term looking glass as a metaphor of my journey to this point as weird and wonderful. The illustration depicts my eye looking out in search of information. The main focus of my research was to look at the experience of tutors and the use of visual images and web-based technology to enhance critical reflection on their adult learners.

Technology

A Freirean approach to learning is focussed on an emancipatory pedagogy, in which there is equality between in this case the teacher and the learner. In this research, it was evident that tutors carried this philosophy true their teaching practice. It is through reverse mentorship and open dialogue and shared experiences that transformation occurs.

This in itself is a liberating experience and with the use of visual images and web-based technology enhances critically reflection for both learners and tutors. Freire was conscious that technology had the power to liberate individuals but also it can be used to manipulate and oppress ones views unless we question what is been portrayed to us (Freire P. , The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1972). The stories that were related from the tutors in regards the use of technology and to critically reflect echo Freires words above. Examples of the change in the mindset of the adult learners where students stopped playing games when they got home they did not switch on their computers this is due to their learning and devaluing the impact that this system has on their lives. Colour in games as an example mentioned before and they become engaged and they begin to understand and to question what is going on.

> It is produced in such a way that it is believable. So somebody has put the effort into actually making it believable looking even though the content might not be there to substantiate it (George).

The web-based technology was the first part of the discussion within the focus group. Tutors found that their own skills using web-based technology have developed over the years by their own trial and error the term expressed by them was 'fumbling around'. YouTube came up many times as a resource used both within the class and for further exploration of topics for students to look at in their own time for research purposes. Younger adults engage more readily with technology but need to be more stimulated in comparison to technology phobia for mature students. Yet mature students can connect better in the use of applying the theory and applications within computing technology. In the area of the use of web-based technology again age plays an important factor as mature students tend to immerse

themselves and analyse what they are learning. Younger students want what is relevant for them and expect that the technology to be in place and provided instantly. Virtual learning environments (VLE) and the use of Moodle and teleconferencing was used as a resource for long distance learning. This was insightful from the perspective of Nora's own experience in using teleconferencing and how she incorporates techniques of engagement for the students. George also added to this conversation on how advancements have taken place with technology to make it more accessible for both the learner and the tutor. From Emma's experiences, web-based technology plays a lesser role in teaching but is still used to some extent but it can be distractive for the students in regards the images they are looking at.

Life Long Learning

An interesting point arose in the area of up-skilling and the tutors were all keen to go back out into the industry relevant to their profession to familiarise themselves and keep up to date with current trends. They felt it would benefit both themselves but especially for the adult learners. It was suggested that a sabbatical every seven years would be good. It was highlighted that SOLAS (SOLAS, 2013) and the five-year strategy for the FET sector were not adequate when it came to the focus on life-long learning for the tutors. Tutors are providers and supporters of lifelong learning but this does not apply to their own lifelong learning. For George, he finds that within the FET sector that it is easy to get very comfortable with the system and getting out and being part of the wider community in teaching will broaden his own views. For him it's frustrating that from the managers above him are only interested in quantitative rather than qualitative evaluation and are not supported for example CPD is provided but as far as George was concerned it was waffle and was not directive to meet individual needs to suit individual courses. Every teacher should go back into industry to keep it real and being humble its like being in a bubble in here.

PowerPoint is used to some extent but is getting less and less of a priority as an aid for teaching and the focus group have more or less virtually moved away from using it in class.

Music from YouTube was also used as a background distraction when students were broken up for group discussions to encourage them to interact and to break the silence in the room.

Visual Images

Visual images aid in stimulating the students on critically reflecting on their learning From this, I wanted to know more about their own experiences in blending the use of web-based technology in the classroom. In particular, Mary and Nora's modules are text heavy and I wanted to find out if there are benefits for them in incorporating different forms of technology in their teaching methods. Mary went on to elaborate on her experience of using visual images and the impact it had on a particular student who some years later requested a link to previous work to use in her own studies at university. It had also been mentioned from George as well that images aid as a tool for the recall of information. George also highlighted that visuals do work to an extent from his experiences teaching but the maturity and experience of the students vary on their use of visual images and various forms of web-based technology. ...... Nora had an interesting story on an image of an ability swing she used to promote inclusivity It had a positive effect to engage students to view the word disability through another lens and critical reflect on their own views previous to this.

The use of images creates emotions these have been both on a positive and negative impact both Mary and Nora related stories of visual images they used and how they impacted on their students. George also highlighted that visuals do work to an extent from his experiences

teaching but the maturity and experience of the students varies on their use of visual images and various forms of web-based technology.

Another aspect that came up for George in relation to visual images is a module that Emma works on with him around the use of colours and images used in gaming. George has seen a difference from when the students initially began the module and at the end of the module. The student's reactions and perceptions of games had changed with the realisation of how colours are used to enhance certain moods for the players. The students became more aware of how they were being manipulated into playing certain games without realising it but once they become aware their attitudes changed. This is a point that both Freire and Illich made about technology and the purpose of it and its creator (Freire P. , Education for Critical Consciousness, 1974) (Illich, 2006). It is important for the tutors to get their students to critically reflect and become aware of how they are being manipulated in certain ways. It also highlighted to the students that there games had an emotional effect as well. With the Knowledge they had gained it enabled the students to think about what they were playing and effects colours play on our moods. This was achieved by providing relevant information and giving time to the students to reflect on it. Dewey (Dewey, Experience and Education The 60th Anniversary Edition, 1998) was also concerned about experience and the learning from it to change this is similar to Freire and conscious raising to become better citizens and being aware of elements of oppression. As mentioned earlier Freire was aware that technology can either liberate or oppress us and it is in questioning and being aware that creates change.

On an emotional level also visual images can have different impacts on students Mary related a story about her experience of using images from the Holocaust as a tool to enhance the classes learning. As she explains in her own words it had quite an emotional impact on the students and one that she did not expect. It was also remarked that even in today's media we can be bombarded with images of pain and suffering from events occurring throughout the

world but it can be trivialised. The difference in Mary's case was that the images used were visual aids to help deliver a particular event. Mary had covered the events of the Holocaust extensively and incorporating images had quite an emotional impact on some of her students. Greene (Greene M. , 1995, p. 28) suggests that, 'the role of imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, unexpected'. In this way of exposure it opens the mind as Mary had mentioned the group she was teaching had all the information including images provided a new lens for her class to view the Holocaust. So visual images can act as an aid in contextualising text and breaking up lessons to make them more interesting.

Time

Time is a major factor in relation to the tutors contact time in class and incorporating alternative ways of learning and redesigning lesson plans to suit the needs of their learners. There is not enough time given to tutors to develop and critically reflect on their modules due to contact hours and increasing paperwork. Not enough time to experiment with different formats of delivery to enhance and aid students with special educational needs.

Limitations

QQI module descriptors within PLC courses could be more flexible for students on how they can present their work. It was suggested through visuals, performances or presentations that this could be achieved to facilitate the learner through alternative ways of learning.

Experience and Age

Age of students from young adults to mature adults experiences coming into further education differently. Younger adults are coming from school as opposed to mature students

who have worked in industry and seen a bit more of the world and generally have more lived experiences. This is also positive as all experiences are valid and through shared experiences students learn from each other. George spoke about his own life and experience and sharing that with a fellow student. After this he found that the more open he was with his students the more engaged they were in class. Since completing his Masters he has found that he engages in more dialogue with the students and discussing life stories to engage critical thought. He has also noticed that the change in his style of teaching the numbers in his class have remained the same from the start to the end of the academic year because the students are more engaged with their learning. The group young males ranging from 18-25 year olds feel more socially cohesive. Mature students tend to be more engaged in the learning process and tend to critically reflect on their learning. Critical reflection comes with maturity and time but this is not always the case.Again this reflects on the theorist that dialogue is important to open up debates and sharing experiences and critically reflecting on our lives can only lead to improving our experience as tutors.

Since George completed his master's degree in education. He found it exciting learning himself, again and again, the delivery of the course was similar to his own philosophy. The theory only partly fed it he found it was the lecturers delivery and their life stories and the experiences that made it. A common trend throughout the theorist and an enthusiasm for education to become something better but in terms of being constructive information, there was nothing really there that you could say I might actually be interested in trying something like that. George found that the key value was in the class discussions. . It is only when you see their heads popping over the screen when he has their attention. He went on to mention in some other institutes that the computers are put in a circle yet he feels this is a management style preparing them for industry You're in a circle be creative think for yourself you're in a circle you're been watched. Illich was also concerned about the fact that education was

simply preparing students for the labour market. In the way George described the circle and what it symbilised for him I thought what is the difference from the Victorian layout of a classroom. If in the end it produces the same result again questioning the aesthetics of education and the psychology behind design. That is why it is important to take time out to reflect on the world around us.

Mary feels that she is a facilitator and the term teacher does not sit well with her as she feels that the students take ownership of their work and she facilitates that learning. Mary concluded that she hoped that students leaving the course had learned something. Most importantly learned something about themselves. In relation to evaluation, it is the process, not the product that is important if we lose sight of this we lose what is important to us.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

To conclude at the end of this research my picture above reflects on many things on my journey to the end. Like a snail it was slow to start, there were quite a few late nights and a few light bulb moments and now at the end letting go. Within the scope of this research I wanted to find out if images and web-based technology aid in critical reflection for the learner. My research yielded a lot more in respect to the tutors that I interviewed. I know now on completion the importance of finding and linking theorist to research. As I interviewed the tutors certain aspects from the four main theorists I used resonated as I listened to their stories.

The idea of community and inclusive caring enviroment was one that sensed from the tutors in their care of the students. Tutors disliked to the word teacher and viewed themselves more as facilitators who were there to guide and enlighten their students.

Dialogue around life experiences opened up debates, just the same way that images captured the imagination to rethink about what our society represents through words and mention again the ability swing. Images can bring life to topics that might otherwise be dry in content. It is giving students an alternative way of expressing themselves.

Web-based technology has become so advanced and that is why I chose to include it in my research. I think Freire and Illich were far sighted in their questioning technologies capabilities for one to liberate and on the other to oppress us. It is through critical thought that we begin to see all of these hidden elements around.

Education is key to creating critical thought but also the educators that I interviewed also strove for more time to reflect on their own teaching practice. I was amazed at the effort and thought that each tutor put into their classes to make them interesting to make them fun and at the same time students are learning. They are developing through web-based tecnology and visual images. Even if the learning is not always immediately apparent it surfaces in time. As was mentioned in the findings images aid as a way of recall.

The clock is ticking and time is a major factor for tutors whom if they could would do a lot more for their students in developing and enhancing their courses. One an important thing I noticed as well about the tutors was they dissussed issues around their teaching but immediately had solution on how things could be improved. They have the solutions but the resources need to be put in place to consider their needs. If tutors are the building blocks between higher education or in dustry then they need to be able to progress in lifelong learning as well.

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