



Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

**THE USE OF FILM LITERACY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL
SELF-AWARENESS AND TRANSPERSONAL GROWTH AMONGST A GROUP
OF POST-SCHOOL YOUTH**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Wendy Smidt, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

12 June 2023

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

In a developing country like South Africa, young adults in particular, in their attempts to establish a sustainable livelihood, are challenged by issues such as having to figure out their positionality within a phygital world, and becoming critically aware that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime. Various authors have explored the importance of multi-literacy (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Kapur, 2019) and multimodal literacy in school and post-school curricula (Jewitt, 2009; O'Halloran & Smith, 2011; Mills & Unsworth, 2018). Each of these literacies has been shown to encompass the essential communication skills people require in terms of career readiness and function in society. In the 21st century, film as a multimodal form of expression is a widely recognised communication medium linked to the ability to make powerful statements about the world (Ruby, 1976; Barrett, 2015; Eco, 2016; Glotov, 2018). However, in educational practices, considerable confusion exists regarding the potential and scope of film as a multimodal form of literacy, particularly as a boundary-crossing competence (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Walker & Nocon, 2007; Fox, 2011), a competence which can be used to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines and culturally defined boundaries. The strengths of spaciousness and in-between boundary positions provided by the spider's thread metaphor (Holyoak, 2019) served as a useful methodological tool. Located in the question of how film literacy actuates critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a group of post-school youth, this inquiry explored a post-qualitative approach. Transformative theories and concepts, rather than pre-determined methodology, guided this inquiry and made possible an assemblage of relevant methods with transformative potential. Moving beyond the limitations of traditional discourse and content analysis, multimodal discourse analysis in combination with a modified, six-category measuring instrument was used to explore (analyse) the evidence (data), created as products of active participant engagement in a shortfilm-making project, over a 10-month period in 2020. Findings revealed that, for the participants, it was by moving from physical self-centred understandings of reality to experiential creations of authentic reality (shortfilm-productions) and involving an expanded awareness of those alternative possibilities which nurtured their potential transpersonal growth. In this process, film literacy-competencies became part of the altered or expanded selves of both the participants and their audiences. Significant knowledge contributions were made. Firstly, to knowledge about film literacy as a boundary-crossing competence to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines, and culturally defined boundaries; secondly, to the application of a research strategy rarely used in educational research, namely developmental phenomenography. Finally, the implementation of an arts-based educational research-approach was considered to have responded to the dearth of practical research on the arts-based doctorate as an emerging genre within academic research.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the individuals who made this study possible through their unique creative contributions, personal interest, willingness to participate, and ongoing enthusiasm.

To my family for allowing me to be who I am.

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GLOSSARY

Terms, acronyms and abbreviations used in this research	Definition/Explanation
AERA	American Educational Research Association Press
Assemblage	Assemblage focuses on the act of assembly, involving processes that bring together diverse elements, separate them, and actively re-establish connections elsewhere (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 73).
Becoming	A concept which constitutes “passage towards a new assemblage” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:257–258; Hillier & Abrahams, 2013:40). In this sense, ‘becoming’ functions as both a process and a noun, implying “the pathways along which an assemblage may be transformed whilst retaining some resemblance to its former self” (Hillier & Abrahams, 2013:40). Barad expands this idea by commenting that the ‘becoming of the world’ is a “deeply ethical matter” (Barad, 2007:185), and that “being/becoming is an indeterminate matter” (Barad, 2010:251).
BFI	British Film Institute
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011)
CEM	Creative Europe Media(2014)
Country town	A small town which forms the centre of a rural district, and primarily serves the immediate surrounding area, as distinguished from a densely populated urban city.
Critical citizenship	A theoretical framework for finding strategies to develop conscious, enquiring, interpretative, responsible citizens; critical reflection on our actions in order to understand our role as citizens could engender the knowledge to free ourselves from our historical conditioning and imagine a better future.
Critical self-awareness	Critical self-awareness through the encouragement of critical reflection on what and how learners learn, as well as how they act upon and ‘live’ their new perspectives, I see as potentially leading to personal transformation.
Deconstruction	The term refers to a critical analysis; a theory by Derrida, belonging to Postmodern Culture.
DeleuzoGuattarian ontology	The philosophical framework and ontological ideas associated with the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, often discussed together due to their collaborative work. Their ontology: (a) represents a departure from traditional philosophies and language which they consider limited in capturing the complexity and multiplicity of the world; (b) focuses on the dynamic and ever-changing nature of reality; (c) challenges traditional, linear, and hierarchical ways of thinking by introducing their rhizome-

concept, which represents a network-like structure of interconnected ideas; (d) stresses the idea that reality is composed by multiple, diverse, and contingent elements and connections; (e) introduce the concept of desire as a driving force that propels individuals and societies to move, change, and challenge established norms; (f) suggests that the process of moving away from established territories or boundaries allows for the creation of new possibilities and connections (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987[1980] and *ibid.*, 1994[1991]; St. Pierre, 2014:10).

DoE	Department of Education
Emergence	Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "continual process of emergence" refers to their philosophical idea that reality is in a constant state of becoming and transformation. They argue that the world is not static but is continually evolving and producing new forms, connections, and possibilities. This dynamic view emphasizes the ongoing, unpredictable nature of existence and challenges traditional notions of fixed identities and structures. In their philosophy, reality is a complex and ever-changing process of emergence, where new realities and connections are constantly unfolding.
EJED	Electronic Journal of Education
Entanglement	Aligned with the idea of intra-action, and in contrast to the taken-for-granted idea that human beings are self-contained individuals, Barad discussed the idea of "entanglement." According to Barad, "[e]ntanglements are not a name for the interconnectedness of all being as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world" (Barad, 2010:265). Barad (2007:ix) comments: "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating.
Ethics Barad 2010:265	Ethics is an integral part of the diffraction (ongoing differentiating) patterns of worlding, not a superimposing of human values onto the ontology of the world (Barad, 2010:265).
FET	The Further Education and Training phase
Figured worlds	Individuals' interpretations and perceptions of their daily life-world; socially constructed and defined by individuals' cultural beliefs, figured worlds provide different social contexts in which people participate.
Film literacy	'Film literacy' in this study encompasses different dimensions of human communication, transcending language barriers through multimodal media to identify, analyse, interpret, create, and impart information in a clear and powerfully expressive way. Additionally, as a boundary-crossing

competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178) within the particular South African context, in this study, film literacy in a non-formal, post-school context is understood to facilitate communication and cooperation across disciplines, culturally defined boundaries, and between communities of practice-members (Wenger, 1998; Fox, 2011:70).

Habitus	The inherent qualities of a person's mind and character; assumptions, interests and ways people experience their physical and social world through family-life, culture and educational background; habitus is measured by the amount of economic, social and cultural capital a person has, that provides the individual with a certain position of status and influence within society.
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
Interdisciplinary	An approach to research, involving the collaboration and integration of knowledge, methods, and perspectives from diverse disciplines or fields to address a specific problem or question. In interdisciplinary work, the collaboration occurs through a multidisciplinary team or project with experts maintaining their disciplinary identities to collectively address complex problems, bridge gaps and facilitate communication between disciplines (Klein & Newell, 1998; Barad, 2007:409; Jewitt, 2009:30; Klein, 2009:4).
Intra-action	According to Barad (2007:33), "intra-action" refers to the idea that entangled entities mutually shape each other. To illustrate, unlike the traditional view of research interviews where separate individuals are assumed to interact, the concept of "intra-action" acknowledges that distinct entities don't exist independently beforehand but instead come into being through their interactions.
Learning resources	In a South African context, it refers to texts, digital media and practical activities that educators employ to assist learners to meet the learning expectations defined by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS 2011).
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIL	Media and information literacy
MILCLICKS	Media and Information Literacy: Critical-thinking, Creativity, Literacy, Intercultural, Citizenship, Knowledge and Sustainability
MMDA	Multimodal discourse analysis
NCS	National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (2012)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Onto-epistemology /ethico-onto-epistemology	A new materialist term of criticism within the context of an interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Barad, 2007:409), relating to the inseparability of ethics, ontology, and epistemology in

scientific knowledge production and the life phenomenon which encompasses both the human and non-human irrespective of their ontological or epistemological position.

Palimpsest

“(P)alimpsest landscapes... are not only the material expressions of physical and human processes at work over different spatial and temporal scales; they also capture aspects of the nonmaterial expressions of cultural identity and sense-of-place that enable different landscapes to be distinguished from one another. From this it can be inferred that palimpsest landscapes are multidimensional expressions of physical and human processes, which is one reason why they are so interesting to study” (Knight, 2016, <https://serc.carleton.edu/68942>).

Phigital GENERATION

Phigital generation: a term which is used parallel to Generation Z or Gen Z. These terms describe the upcoming generation of students who have never known life without the internet, social media, or smart phones. They are apparently comfortable with rapidly changing technology (Stillman & Stillman, 2017).

Phigital WORLD

The "phygital" world acknowledges that digital technologies have become an integral part of our daily lives and are deeply intertwined with physical experiences. It's a reflection of how the physical and digital realms coexist and complement each other, offering new opportunities for innovation, convenience, and engagement across various domains (Soloviov, Danilov & Prasad, 2020).

Postmodern Culture

A 21st century thought; emphasising effective communication skills, critical thinking, innovation, lifelong learning, collaboration, diversity, multiple identities, and global citizenship.

Postdigital (learning space)

A liminal learning space where the individual engage in possible opportunities to move away from a familiar, taken-for-granted position to interact with new information driven by curiosity, a desire or need to learn, while being confronted with feelings of uncertainty and confusion until new understandings have been acquired (Ball & Savin-Baden, 2022: 756).

SDG

Sustainable Development Goal

Social fields

Closely parallel to the concept of figured worlds; sub-spaces in society, such as institutions, social groups and workplaces, each with their own doxa (rules) by which an individual's actions and behaviour are evaluated.

Transdisciplinarity

An inquiry-based approach to research, relating to the exploration of a relevant concept, issue or problem that integrates the perspectives of multiple disciplines to connect new knowledge and holistic understanding to real life experiences.

Transpersonal pedagogy

Pertaining to this research, transpersonal pedagogy is defined as a distinctive approach to education theory and praxis, one which relates to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WCED

Western Cape Education Department

WEF

World economic forum

CHAPTER ONE

RE-ORIENTATION TO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Learning is more than the acquisition of the ability to think; it is the acquisition of many specialised abilities for thinking about a variety of things.

Lev Vygotsky, 1978:83

In education ways of defining human learning and development have become as diverse and contested as the wealth of research approaches. Although Vygotsky's viewpoints have endured far beyond his time, the extent to which social interaction could or should become imperative to human livelihood and well-being is likely to remain in question within a constantly changing society. Currently, education systems worldwide are in a transitional state, from long-established designs and practices to new teaching and learning environments, influenced by the combination of tremendous social and technological changes since the late 20th century (Cardoso & Mendes, 2018:18). The significance and potential of developing transformative competencies for young people to navigate the digital world and access potential livelihood opportunities, has been emphasised by initiatives such as the annual Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week (Bokova, 2017: <https://milunesco.unaoc.org/mil-resources/global-media-and-information-literacy-week-2017-message-from-ms-irina-bokova/>), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2019) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) Future of Jobs Report (2020). Irena Bokova, Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) asserted that critical thinking plays a vital role in the process of reimagining learning practices and information environments in critical times (Bokova, 2017). Becoming critically and reflexively self-aware of potential learning opportunities might enable young people to benefit from their inevitable exposure to multimodal texts, involving a combination of visual images, soundscapes, interactive technologies, and textual elements in both real life and virtual world situations (Jarvis, Holford & Griffin, 2004; Mezirow, 1990). In South Africa the introduction of a Community Education and Training system is yet another response to the challenge of skills shortages along a continuum of lifelong learning (OECD, 2019). Key to the acknowledgement of the importance of this life-long learning process is a multiliteracy approach (Holloway & Gouthro, 2020): a strategy aimed at personal empowerment, and a means of social and human development. Correspondingly, the WEF (World Economic Forum) Future

of Jobs Report (2020:8) highlighted the development and enhancement of human skills and competencies through education, learning, and meaningful work as key drivers of economic prosperity, individual well-being, and societal cohesion. Despite these notable findings, the coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis revealed the fragility and interconnected nature of the world, also exposing the critical consequences of inequality (Giannini, 2020:149). The extent to which the entire learning ecosystem has been disrupted, provided valuable learning opportunities for students, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers as they face the global crisis. In the context of these crises for both the planet and humankind, I consider the exploration of the use of film literacy, particularly as a boundary-crossing competence (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Walker & Nocon, 2007; Fox, 2011) during the extended period of lock-down regulations and social distancing, to have added significant value to my inquiry in various ways. In a critical way the unforeseen circumstances required from the participants to assess the situation and figure out new possibilities of both “intra-action” (Barad, 2007:33) and interaction with the world around them. In a creative way, the layering of meaning and matter provided by on-line social platforms provided communication possibilities in the forms of text messages, visual images, audio clips, and video clips to support the participants’ continuum of learning (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:52). As a form of art, film had relevance to the participants’ involvement in the Arts, thus motivating the arts-based approach to my inquiry. In a cultural way, exploring of the use of film literacy, particularly as a boundary-crossing competence, was considered valuable to facilitate communication and collaboration across culturally defined boundaries, as well as across disciplines, involving the participants, researcher and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Recent research has revealed that those pandemic pedagogies which focus on “relationships, social and emotional learning, student and teacher well-being, authentic assessments, direct instructions and creative play are now more important than ever” (Sahlberg, 2020; Hollweck & Doucet, 2020:297). Given that there are as yet no clear-cut answers to the remedying of the persistent lack of such pedagogies, I would argue that the first step towards imagining transformative pedagogies would be to acknowledge that the human condition in terms of education and learning is at a turning point. Despite considerable research being done into transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991/2003; Mezirow & Taylor, 2008; Taylor & Cranton; Maseko, 2018), the field of transformative pedagogy still contains spaces that may be used to explore new forms of knowledge production. New knowledge is required to support our decision-making about the kind of education and learning strategies needed to strengthen “inclusion, resilience and peace” (Giannini, 2020:149). According to German philosopher, Hanna

Arendt, learning does not correspond with education, since "... one can go on learning to the end of one's days without for that reason becoming educated" (Arendt, 2006:192 [1958]). Furthermore, the desire to function successfully and to act responsibly in the adult world involves more than simply learning information about this world. An ongoing balance needs to be maintained between existing knowledge which belongs to an old world, and the creation of new learning spaces/opportunities where the original and fresh ideas of the youth are employed in combination with artificial intelligence to revitalise, improve and advance the world. For knowledge-production to become a transformative experience, an engagement with modes of learning outside confined, formal school learning spaces would be required to "inform, educate and shape identities in non-formal contexts" (Giroux, 2011; Head & Jaap, 2016:12). When implemented in the contemporary learning environment, this more informal engagement suggests an engagement in a multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996; Kalantzis & Cope, 2006). In the course of this process, multimodal forms of communication add value to the complexity of online learning, expanding the possible ways to acquire information and to make meaning of concepts (Kress, 2003/2010; Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013). To be able to do this, young people need to configure their position within a "phigital" world (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76), one that is without borderline between the physical and the digital world, to become critically aware of the fact that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime.

Given the prominence of multimodal texts, the composition of which is equivalent to filmic text, I argue that film literacy, due to its multimodal nature that incorporates visual, auditory, and narrative elements, can be perceived as a boundary object within a 21st century-pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). A boundary object is a concept or artefact that has different meanings or uses within different communities but serves as a common reference point for collaboration and communication. In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, which emphasizes the development of various literacies to navigate a complex, interconnected world, film literacy serves as a versatile and accessible medium. Film literacy can bridge diverse forms of literacy, including visual literacy, media literacy, narrative literacy, and cultural literacy. As a boundary object, it facilitates interdisciplinary learning and collaboration by providing a shared space where students and educators can explore and develop multiple literacies simultaneously. It can be a point of convergence that brings together different modes of communication and expression. Over the past two decades, various authors have increased their focus on the affordances of film literacy in teaching and learning to advance academics' understandings (Ansel, 2002; Blell & Lütge, 2004; Minghella, 2005; Bazalgette, 2009; Borgdorff, 2012; Reia-Baptista, 2014; Spronk, 2016; Glotov,

2018; Walker, 2018; Reid, 2019). Yet, in educational practices, considerable confusion still exists about the scope of film as a multimodal form of literacy, particularly as a boundary-crossing competence (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Walker & Nocon, 2007; Fox, 2011) to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines, and across culturally defined boundaries. Evidence is therefore needed to help to establish film literacy as a distinctive learning field, one that could make an essential and unique contribution to human learning. Operating outside the formal curriculum (Deardorff, 2009; Benavot, 2015; Head & Jaap, 2016; Kapur, 2018), this inquiry aimed to redefine film literacy as a distinctive learning field. I explored the potential of film literacy as a boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178), involving a continuum of learning (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:52) to enable a select post-school group between the ages of 18 and 24, to develop new understandings about critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth, ultimately to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of their communities and wider society. The complex nature of this inquiry demanded experimentation to gradually eliminate pre-existing methods-driven approaches. This represented an attempt to allow new insights to emerge, with participants learning new vocabulary along the way to articulate the outcomes of the inquiry to an expanding audience in the field of education and beyond. The strengths of spaciousness and in-between boundary positions, provided by the spider's thread metaphor (Holyoak, 2019) served as a useful methodological tool to progressively create structure. Like an establishing shot in cinematographic terms, this introduction embodies the opening scene to my inquiry. What follows this 'establishing shot' is a detailed discussion of the essential contextual factors introduced in this section, including a brief review of relevant educational research studies in film literacy as an under-explored field of academic interest.

In operating outside the formal curriculum, this research aimed to redefine film literacy as a distinctive learning field. Currently, film literacy, together with digital literacy, is seen as a subcategory of media literacy. Media literacy is a crucial skill in the modern information age, and it empowers individuals to navigate the complex and often overwhelming world of media. With the rise of digital technology and the internet, multimedia literacy, as an extension of media literacy, including a combination of text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements, has become an increasingly dominant form of communication. In the contemporary digital and visually-driven world of work, multimodal literacy is essential for effectively navigating diverse contexts, such as online media, advertising, and education platforms, by proficiently using multiple communication modes to connect with and be understood by diverse audiences. An additional aim of the research was to establish how active engagement in a shortfilm-

making project might contribute to participants becoming critically self-aware of possible learning opportunities within their communities. By viewing their surroundings with fresh eyes (Kaomea, 2014:15; Shklovskij, 1965), the possibility was envisioned of participants transforming themselves, through a process of learning, by performing new roles as cinematographers and directors of their own stories (Fenwick 2001:3). Granting them a high degree of voice and ownership in their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) was seen as able to engender in them a high degree of comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds, and also help them towards finding "different ways of seeing" (Nash, Kent & Reid, 2014:33), thinking, feeling, and acting (Jarvis, 2006:14). Finally, within the learning space, created by the practical shortfilm-making component, the participants and their audience faced an entanglement within the shared "encounter with the data artefact through an ever-becoming present/past/future" (MacLure, 2013:660; Wolfe, 2016:429). Becoming film literate required the deep learning, development of, and espousal of a set of specific beliefs or values, including commitment, respect, collaboration, social responsibility, democratic rights, and personal dignity, among other beliefs/values. I consider this inquiry to have the potential to contribute to the extension of developmental phenomenographic methodology by exploring how the findings may be implemented in various ways, in a diverse community, and within a specific learning field.

The contemporary world of work is a fast-changing scene in terms of the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed by a person to not only support themselves but also to competently and usefully contribute to society. Many young South African adults exhibit the creative potential and ability to improve the quality not only of their own lives, but also their local communities, and ultimately global communities. Yet, their multi-disciplinary talents and efforts to act as change agents most often remain untapped beyond their immediate communities. Particularly troubling are the realities of mass job displacement, unsustainable skills shortages, and now of artificial intelligence (AI) challenging the unique nature of human intelligence (WEF, 2020; OECD, 2019). Responding from a visual arts and design teaching and learning background, I add to this list: critical self-awareness (Krishnamurti, 1998; Kumar, 2008); intercultural relations (Blell & Lütge, 2004; Glotov & Kotilainen, 2021); critical thinking (Bokova, 2017); unstructured problem solving and reasoning (Turnbull & Hoppe, 2018); and abilities to access and employ multiple modes of perception and communication (Blell and Lütge, 2004; Bazalgette, 2009; Barrett, 2015; Glotov, 2018) to facilitate collaboration across language barriers and culturally defined boundaries.

During the past two decades research have shown an increasing focus on the development of academics' conceptual understanding of the nature and value of film literacy in teaching and learning (Ansel, 2002; Blell & Lütge, 2004; Minghella, 2005; Bazalgette, 2009; Borgdorff, 2012; Reia-Baptista, 2014; Spronk, 2016; Glotov, 2018; Walker, 2018; Reid, 2019). However, there continues to be confusion regarding the scope of film as a form of literacy, and in particular as the kind of boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178; Glotov & Kotilainen, 2021:4) which has the potential to facilitate communication and cooperation across disciplines and culturally defined boundaries, and between members of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Fox, 2011:70) in a non-formal (Petranová, Hossová & Velicky, 2017:58) post-school context. What follows is a detailed discussion of the contextual factors introduced in this section, including a brief review of relevant educational research studies in film literacy as an under-explored field of academic interest.

1.2 Background and contextualisation

1.2.1 The contemporary world of work

The 21st century-workspace is a fast-changing scene as seen through a post-modern lens due to the kinds of skills, knowledge, personal qualities, and competency required for a person to both contribute to society and acquire self-sufficiency. Job requirements for employees include, among other personal characteristics, an openness to change and variety in the workplace, a focus on competencies and such personal qualities as human resilience, stress tolerance, flexibility, and adaptability (WEF, 2020:154). The World Economic Forum (WEF) Future of Jobs Report 2020 describes the 21st century-workspace as “remote and hybrid” (2020:18). The report provides detailed information for 15 industry sectors across 26 developed and emergent countries (WEF, 2020:5), including South Africa, using unique data supplied by LinkedIn, Coursera, ADP and FutureFit.AI (2020:4). Among the notable findings regarding job requirements are the development and enhancement of human qualities, skills and competencies through education, learning and meaningful work, all of which are highlighted as key drivers of economic prosperity, individual well-being, and societal cohesion (WEF, 2020:8).

1.2.2 South African youth

To empower the South African youth to navigate their way through a world where the foundational knowledge (frames of reference, including worldviews and embedded habits of mind) and competencies are constantly shifting, current education urgently

needs systemic change (M'Rithaa, 2017; Stassen, 2017; WEF, 2018; Karsten, Van der Merwe & Steenekamp, 2020) informed by research and innovation in both formal and informal education (Petranová, Hossová, & Velicky, 2017; Adams, Farrelly & Holland, 2021). Until this is actioned, the significantly high learner dropout rate and low employment opportunities for semi and unskilled workers is likely to remain two significant educational concerns in the semi-rural Langeberg Municipal District in the Western Cape in South Africa (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury (2015:31/2017), the site of my study. Although the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) specifies that knowledge and skills should be acquired and applied in ways that are meaningful to young citizens' lives (Department of Education [DoE], 2011/2021), research tells a different story, pointing to the shortcomings in contemporary South African education. The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2018/2020) reports that in South Africa, fundamental skills deficits will not be abolished by technological advancement only, but rather by an innovative education system aligned to the economic and societal needs of the country.

1.2.3 21st century-realities

Living in a technologically advanced, interconnected world, our human understandings of reality are constantly challenged by a virtual reality due to a continuous reshaping of the boundaries between science, technology, and art. As a result, our multimodal environment comprised of devices that impact every aspect of our lives, demands of us the expansion of the idea of literacy, one which can provide us with the knowledge and competences to understand different ways of working and knowing. As the global community entered the last decade of the Sustainable Development Goals, to be realized by 2030, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disrupted a previously taken-for-granted human existence world-wide. The ensuing crisis revealed the fragility and interconnected nature of the world, exposing the many critical consequences of inequality: digital inequalities, which encumbered learning opportunities, gender inequalities which exposed girls to increased violence, social inequalities that hit the poorest communities the hardest, and “geographical inequalities between rural and urban areas” (Giannini, 2020:149). It has become clear that, while the education crisis has deepened, so too have the opportunities to re-think the purpose of 21st century education. Since there are presently no clear-cut answers, the likely first step could be the acknowledgment that education and learning are at a turning point. More than ever, current realities directly impact the lives of post-school youth in general, including the lives of the research participants in terms of human development and livelihood.

From a critical pedagogical perspective (Johnson & Morris, 2010:83) the reflections of the participants in the current study “should not simply be a superficial evaluation of ‘what they have learnt . . . [and] the skills that they have developed” (Lawson 2005:14), but should involve recognition of the “causes of reality” (Freire 1972:101). Since the work of Freire (1970) on praxis, extensive research has been done, and from various perspectives, on the concept of praxis, including ongoing praxis (Gramsci, 1971), transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003; Maseko, 2018), transpersonal praxis (Saiter, 2008), shared praxis (Fishman & McLaren, 2005; Walker, 2008b; Costandius, 2012), and intuitive praxis (Acevedo, 2015; Baildon, 2015). However, according to Fishman and McLaren (2005:425-426), “it is not enough to understand any given educational reality; there is a pedagogical mandate to transform it with the goal of radically democratizing educational sites and societies through a shared praxis”. A fundamental requirement for both educators and students has been seen by some scholars as the cultivation of a willingness (Da Vinci, n.d.; Dewey, 1910:13; McIlrath & MacLabhrainn, 2007:84-85), as a sense of “willing participation” (Gramsci, 1971; Brosio,1994:49), as educators and students being “willing to learn with others” (Johnson & Morris, 2010:90) to adapt to change through “pedagogies of engagement” (Costandius, 2012:20), and essentially to embrace new perspectives held by people other than themselves. Therefore, to develop new insights about the multiple possible ways through which young citizens can enhance their abilities transpersonally to become change agents, requires critical self-awareness of ‘one’s own self’ (Kumar, 2008), a constant, self-reflexive awareness of own thoughts, emotions and actions (Krishnamurti, 1998). Foucault (1988:154) saw this as a process which serves to identify the kinds of assumptions, and familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought on which our accepted practices rest. Foucault emphasised that “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, [and] transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (Foucault,1988:155; St. Pierre, 2014:4). Only by “living in the new perspective” (Baumgartner, 2001:17), and opening up our modes of perception (Barad, 2010; Wolfe, 2017; Dängeli, 2019) can the empowering conditions of awareness be accessed and employed to conceptualise meaningful new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming (Holland, et al,1998). Despite considerable research having been done into transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991/2003/2009; Taylor, 2008; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Mertens, 2010; Rowe & Netzer, 2012; Taylor & Cranton, 2012; Romm, 2015; Pappas, 2016; Maseko, 2018), the field of transformative pedagogy continues to contain spaces that may be used to explore new forms of knowledge production. According to Greene (1995:50), it is crucial that “...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation”.

1.2.4 The need for an innovative educational approach

New knowledge is required to support our decision-making about the kind of education and learning strategies needed at the present time to strengthen “inclusion, resilience and peace” (Giannini, 2020:149). From our African continent comes an age-old Senegalese proverb that there can be no peace without understanding, similar to Albert Einstein’s “peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” Counter to this, Nassim Taleb (2014; 2020), trader turned academic researcher in probability theory, asserts that dealing with the unknown often requires us to act without understanding everything beyond the present moment, and to do those things well. In his book, *Anti-fragile* (2012), he presents a revolutionary argument: some phenomena may in fact benefit by being in conditions of chaos and disorder, a thought that has gained relevance in our current uncertain situation. Karthik Krishnan, Global CEO, Britannica Group (2020) points to the loss of relevance of the global education system and the needs for an upgrade regarding career-readiness, competitiveness with artificial intelligence (AI), and the creation of long-term economic value awareness. Some of the titles of contemporary global educational research evidence a focus on future scenario topics in a global crisis: “A call to re-imagine the purpose of education in the post-covid world” (Bhat & Talreja, 2020); “Education leadership in times of uncertainty: rising to the challenge” (Pont, 2020); “Educating for Well-being” (Cardero, 2020); and “Building the future of education in a post-pandemic world” (Yiannouka, 2020). The year 2020 has such labels as, “year one in a new era of education” (Rosen, 2020:1), ‘lost time’ (Bhat & Talreja, 2020); and ‘a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever’ (Li & Lalani, 2020). The extent to which the entire learning ecosystem has been disrupted, has at the same time provided valuable learning opportunities for students, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers as they face the global crisis. All of this points to the urgent need for a transformation of an education system that has long been losing relevance (Krishnan, 2020), as well as discussion and debate about innovative visions and paradigms (Newman & Benussi, 2020), re-imaginings that focus first on “humanity in education, from a position of seeking to understand and accommodate for the complex circumstances of those in our communities” (Netolicky, 2020:69). Sahlberg (2020), and Hollweck and Doucet (2020:297) note that pandemic pedagogies which focus on “relationships, social and emotional learning, student and teacher well-being, authentic assessments, direct instructions and creative play are now more important than ever”. An extract from German philosopher Hanna Arendt’s essay, “The Crisis of Education” (1954), written nearly 70 years ago, demonstrates its continued relevance to current debates about education:

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it, and by the same token save it from that ruin which except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable (Arendt, 1954:193).

Similarly, progressive educator John Dewey (1916) acknowledged East-West philosophies from Confucius to Aristotle which conceptualised education as fundamental to the human condition emphasising that “education is not preparation for life; education is life itself” (1916:239). According to Arendt, learning does not correspond with education since “one can go on learning to the end of one’s days without for that reason becoming educated” (Arendt, 2006:192 [1958]). Arendt argued that progressive educational leaders who think that the ultimate goal of education is the acquisition of knowledge, and that knowledge equals information, are missing the point. She saw the desire to function successfully and to act responsibly in the adult world as involving more than simply acquiring information about it. Arendt problematised the purpose of education in the modern world by advocating for a holistic approach to advance the world, while also advancing the development of the individual who participates in that world. An enduring balance should thus be maintained between existing knowledge, belonging to an old world and the creation of new learning spaces/opportunities. From these philosophies, and for purposes of the current study, it can be assumed that the fresh and original ideas of the youth, in addition to their personal qualities, should be developed and applied in collaboration with artificial intelligence, to revitalise, improve and advance, not only them, but society.

The growing demand for innovative pedagogical approaches is also a result of people’s rapidly changing economic, social, and cultural circumstances in response to technological innovations (Herodotou, Sharples, Gaved, Kukulsa-Hulme, Rienties, Scanlon & Whitelock, 2019). This broadened conceptualisation and scope of literacy has created the need for a different approach to all levels of education, one that transcends both language and cultural barriers, as well as the limitations of linear time and confined three-dimensional space, and which supports the unpredictable nature of 21st century project-orientated employment opportunities. In a post-Covid context these aspects directly impact those young adults who are finding themselves frictionally unemployed and/or in non-formal education situations (Devika, 2021:19).

The ways in which we both create and consume information have changed significantly over the past decade. Currently, more than 50% of the world population, including more than 70% of all the youth globally, are online. Increased access to digital communications and content in our daily lives, particularly to artificial intelligence (AI),

exercises increasing pressure on the workspace. Essential career skills likely to be required of the youth would be in the fields where the required capabilities are unique to humans, not to AI. Such as cognitive flexibility (Cañas, Quesada, Antoli & Fajardo, 2003), digital literacy (Paul, Spires & Kerkhoff, 2017), computational thinking (Wing, 2006), judgement and decision-making (Mellers, Schwartz & Cooke, 1998), emotional and social intelligence (Mercer & Gkonou, 2017), and a creative and innovative mindset (Vygotsky, 1930/1967; Simolucha, 1992). What can be done to ensure that 21st century-citizens who are growing up with the ease of technology and unlimited digital access develop a mindset and the kind of behaviour that differ from the previous generation? Expanding the scope of contemporary educational research in a post-digital world, where knowledge and competencies informing this inquiry are constantly changing, is imperative. The importance of becoming media and information literate citizens to meet the challenges of accelerating scientific and technological change is confirmed by global initiatives. The urgency of the development and accessibility of media literacy by all, and the transformation of educational activity, is the focus of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners (2011/2021) and the World Economic Forum's Education 4.0 initiative (2020). Parallel to the second edition of the UNESCO Curriculum (2021), an Online Multimedia MIL Teaching Resource Platform is being developed to enhance media and information literacy globally. The rapid flow of ever-changing information necessitates the development of the kind of competencies and human qualities which can promote a critical-creative mindset and viewpoint that has an impact on social and cultural life, and which is safe and conducive. Young people becoming multimedia literate is crucial to enabling the general public, educators and stakeholders to navigate the contemporary knowledge environment and to develop informed decisions and opinions. On a micro level, multimedia literacy education has the potential to empower citizens to become more discerning consumers of media as well as responsible producers of their own media. It is my view that, in a macro context multimedia literacy education has the potential to encourage respectful discourse and to build those critical citizenship skills and values which can help people to work together productively.

1.2.5 Multiliteracies and multimodality

The introduction of a Community Education and Training system is a further response to the challenges of skills shortages and lifelong learning (OECD, 2019). Assumptions about literacy education are currently directed by two contrasting influences in contemporary society: global connectedness and local diversity (Engelbrecht & Genis, 2019).

Fisch, McLeod, and Brenman (2008) argue that, instead of immersing themselves in the attempt to prepare 21st century students for an unknown future, educators and society should focus on the uncertainties of the current moment. To efficiently mediate and interpret the meaning of the multimodal texts they engage with, post-school youth in particular need to become critically self-aware of their established beliefs and assumptions about literacy and learning (Jarvis, Holford and Griffin, 2003; Mezirow, 1990). More than 30 years ago, 'functional literacy' was fined as the ability to "participate in the actual life conditions of particular groups or communities" (Scribner, 1984:19). In the contemporary learning environment, 'functional literacy' would suggest engagement in multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996; Kalantzis & Cope, 2006).

In my opinion, the human quest for understanding reached a turning point in 2020, not only because that date marked the end of an era and imminent new beginnings, but because it marked the beginning of the challenge to the global human condition/human knowledge process of the present moment, on the one hand by a particular outdated view of human education, and on the other, the idea that phenomena need chaos and disorder to develop in positive ways. In this context progress requires us to live within a new perspective, to develop a sense of critical self-awareness (Kumar, 2008; Krishnamurti, 1998), and to move forward in the process of dealing with the unknown. In practice, this relates to a situation in which one is not trying to understand everything at once (Taleb, 2014; 2020), while also embracing aspects of risk-taking and social responsibility.

With this context, and these ideas in mind, I designed a post-qualitative educational inquiry, and situated it in a particular semi-rural South African context. The main aim was to establish specific ways in which participation in a devised shortfilm-making project could develop the qualities and abilities of a sampled group of nine post school youths to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of their communities, as well as in the wider society. This doctoral research in education was building on specialisation from my Master's degree and its components. These include an intentional awareness of gaps in research literature focussing on the transformative potential of non-formal education at both local and global levels (Giroux, 2011), the interconnectedness of social and global changes, as well as cultural specificity, the idea that critical self-awareness is a self-constructed process, influenced by socio-cultural, political and organisational contexts in the daily lives of people; and the belief that our presence in this world and our distinctive interactions with other human beings in both real-life as well as virtual worlds are part of our journey towards the actualisation

of our potential. For knowledge-production to become a transformative experience, an engagement with modes of learning outside confined, formal school learning spaces is required to “inform, educate and shape identities in non-formal contexts” (Giroux, 2011; Head & Jaap, 2016:12). The term ‘inquiry’ was used to distinguish my doctoral research in education from mainstream tradition, although my intention was never to define my alternative approach in opposition to more traditional research conceptions. Rather, the literary, performing, and visual arts pertaining to this inquiry, offered unconventional pathways to expand researcher competencies for creativity and knowing. Also, by devising a thoroughly considered synthesis of approaches, namely, post-qualitative, developmental phenomenography, and arts-based, to create, explore, and communicate evidence in ways that present a holistic picture of varied efforts (alternative pathways). It was in the light of the above that the topic for this doctoral research in education was chosen.

Operating outside the formal curriculum (Deardorf, 2009; Benavot, 2015; Head & Jaap, 2016; Kapur, 2018), this inquiry aimed to redefine film literacy as a distinctive learning field. In its current sharing of a subcategory position with cinema literacy within the Media and Information Literacy-field (MIL), (UNESCO, 2011/2021; Higham, 2016; Glotov, 2018; Schedin, 2019; Gulshan, 2020), film literacy is closely related to the concept of multimodality (Jewitt, 2009:3). According to Kress (2003; 2010) and to Pilgrim and Martinez (2013), media shifts from printed matter to digital screen has enabled the use of a variety of communication modes. Multimodal forms of communication have added value to the complexity of online learning, expanding possible ways to acquire information and make meaning of concepts. The implications of this expanding interest in multimodal literacy for educational practices stretch across an increasing range of practical domains, including research, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment (O’Halloran & Smith, 2011; Mills & Unsworth, 2018). Operating outside the formal curriculum, further required the search for relevant literature to advise on ways to navigate challenges in non-formal post-school education, namely to “create possibilities for participation and collaboration across a diversity of sites” (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:132).

1.2.6 Film literacy as boundary concept

My decision to redefine the term, ‘film literacy’, had been determined by the multiple definitions found in contemporary research which situate film literacy in a boundary-crossing position (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Fox, 2011). References to ‘film literacy’ are found in the following numerous diverse

fields of academic interest: literacy, language and learning (Cole & Keyssar, 1985), moving image education (Bazalgette, 2009), learning with media and media literacy education (Tulodziecki & Grafe, 2012), communication studies (Sheng, Ying & Kitnasamy, 2012/2013), communication, arts and design (Reia-Baptista, 2012/2014), citizenship, social and economic education (Head & Jaap, 2016), education, pedagogy and literacies (Cardoso & Mendes, 2018), tourism studies (Ayikoru & Park, 2019), media and information literacy (MIL) (Carlson, 2019), communications and society (Moya Jorge, 2019), media literacy skills for visually impaired people (Gulshan, 2020), film literacy, visual culture and film language (Gürses, 2020), social and political sciences (Parahita & Leksono, 2020), and cultural policy research (Galloway, n.d). Encompassing a diversity of study fields, both within and across disciplines, Cole and Keyssar (1985:68) more than three decades ago specified film literacy's "potential for creating shared meaning and the sociocultural circumstances that make certain orders of meaning valuable". This increased interest in film literacy education over several decades and "across many disciplines... against the backdrop of considerable social change" (Jewitt, 2009:3) signals the advent of a distinct, interdisciplinary (Klein & Newell, 1998; Barad, 2007; Klein, 2009) field of academic interest. This new study field addresses both the design of a domain of inquiry and sees it as the site of potential theory-development and includes descriptions and methodologies relevant to the study of film literacy. A semester course at Merrimack High School, North Hampshire, describe 'film literacy' as a "convergence of the interdisciplinary practices of literary and media studies, which both concentrate on the analysis of both visual and written texts" (2020).

To attribute a 'boundary-crossing' quality to film literacy required careful consideration. Relevant literature on "boundary-crossing competence" (Walker & Nocon, 2007:181; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:140), which is the "ability to manage and integrate multiple, divergent discourses and practices across social boundaries", motivated my decision. Further references to boundary concepts as "entities that enhance the capacity of an idea, theory or practice to translate across culturally-defined boundaries, for instance between communities of knowledge or practice" (Brown and Duguid, 1991, Wenger 1998; Fox, 2011:71) confirmed the relevance of the 'boundary-crossing' quality. Similarly, the 2013 European Commission on Film Education defines film literacy:

[T]he level of understanding of a film; the ability to be conscious and curious in the choice of films; the competence to critically watch a film and to analyse its content, cinematography, and technical aspects; the ability to manipulate its language and technical resources in creating moving image production (European Commission on Film Education, 2012:3).

Therefore, to ensure global relevance, 'film literacy' in this study encompasses different dimensions of human communication, transcending language barriers through multimodal media to identify, analyse, interpret, create, and impart information in a clear and powerfully expressive way. Additionally, as a boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178) within the particular South African context, in this study, film literacy in a non-formal, post-school context is understood to facilitate communication and cooperation across disciplines, culturally defined boundaries, and between communities of practice-members (Wenger, 1998; Fox, 2011:70).

Akkerman and Bakker (2011:152), when referring to the use of shared dialogue to explore the meaning of something, posit that "dialogical engagement at the boundary" does not indicate a "fusion of the intersecting social worlds or a dissolving of the boundary". They add that the boundary crossing should not be understood as a "process of moving from initial diversity and multiplicity to homogeneity" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:52). The boundary crossing process should instead involve a continuum of learning, be a process of always becoming, of "establishing a continuity in a situation of sociocultural difference" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:52). The same kind of process would apply to transformative learning, one which would involve innovation in the process of "interchange of existing practices, precisely by virtue of their differences." The question is whether, over time, these existing practices develop a new focal practice. Markova (2003:97) captures the paradoxical and dialogical nature of the maintenance of diversity succinctly: "[D]ialogical antinomies both unite and divide, both estrange and appropriate, both orientate the self towards ideas and meaning of others as well as towards the self's own ideas". Edwards and Fuller (2007:108) eloquently summarise these thoughts : "[T]here is a sense in which these concepts have been as much subject to the boundary-making of conceptualizing practices, as they have challenged the boundaries themselves". Akkerman and Bakker (2011:152) problematise the boundary concept as one that "completely resides in the existence of sociocultural differences". In the course of our everyday livelihoods we navigate between and across practices all the time, often in a state of unawareness. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) advise researchers to move beyond the limitations of a systemic or macro perspective by also espousing a situated or micro perspective. This involves describing who is experiencing a particular discontinuity and within which specific activities or interactions. They argue that only then can researchers begin to study the specific ways in which "sociocultural differences play out in, and are being shaped by, knowledge processes, personal and professional relations, and meditations, but also in feelings of belonging and identities" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:153). Furthermore, a set of methodological markers or indicators could be identified for purposes of

empirically detecting diversity as well as consequent discontinuities. Akkerman and Bakker (2011:153) conclude their description of this process by emphasising the main value(s) of the boundary crossing concept with relevance to educational research: recognising increasing diversity in and between entities such as educational institutions, work and everyday life; focusing particularly on marginalised spaces in educational research; and perceiving boundaries as potential learning-resources. A potential problem emerging from the afore-mentioned body of literature on film literacy is the dispersion of researchers across diverse study-domains. However, all of these researchers and studies embrace a shared academic interest in film literacy which gives impetus to the need for further extensive research on film literacy from a multidisciplinary perspective (Heracleous, 2004; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:153).

Several researchers see film literacy competency as an integral part of the transpersonal developmental process (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Anderson, 1998; Ferrer, 2011; Rowe & Braud, 2013). Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and transpersonal human experiences are integrated by structurally transcending the limitations of linear time and confined three-dimensional space. For this research, I defined transpersonal pedagogy as a distinctive approach to education theory and praxis, one which relates to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self. In this sense, film literacy includes more than digital- and media literacy by extending experiences of a personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment. It is my view that film literacy competencies as an integral part of transpersonal pedagogy have the potential to provide the essential skills and mind-set required by the 21st century workspace, skills and mindset necessary for success at all levels of employment and education. Evidence is needed to support the concept of film literacy as a distinctive learning field that could make a unique contribution to learning in the 21st century. Herodoto et al. (2019:4) emphasise the importance of the gathering of evidence to support the value of introducing innovative pedagogies and to assist educational practitioners in distinguishing between their beliefs about learning style and effective educational practices. This is in contrast with research data that emerged from a particular systematically assessed teaching methodology. This approach to researching the effectiveness of innovative pedagogies recognises the early stages of transforming educational practices, in particular “developing a shared evidence-based mindset across researchers and practitioners” (Heracleous, 2004; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:153; Herodotou et al., 2019:4). The process of cultivating students’ competencies in the field of film literacy raises fundamental questions about the nature of film literacy, its relevance to education and the nature of the process involved in the student’s interaction with the medium (Cole & Keyssar, 1985). These fundamental questions

enacted the metaphorical threads (Holyoak, 2019) that served to progressively create the structural design of my domain of inquiry. These questions pertaining to the site of potential theory-development within a non-formal education context also guided the formulation of the methodologies relevant to the study of film literacy. The following section provides a summary of the study-principles which led to the formulation of the problem statement, together with the aims and objectives of my research study.

1.3 Rationale summary for the study

1.3.1 Introduction

This doctoral research in Education was concerned with how the developmental outcomes of the inquiry could positively affect the lives of the post-school participants in the study. In essence, the study aimed to create spaces for ideas. I studied the potential of film literacy as a boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178), one which involved a continuum of learning to enable a sampled group of seven post-school youths to develop new understandings about critical self-awareness and the kind of transpersonal growth which would potentially enable them to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of their communities and in wider society. At the time of this study, these post-school youths were not involved in any form of full-time employment or formal education, known to me. Underpinned by Gilles Deleuze's theory of ideas and his distinction between the virtual and the actual (Deleuze, 1968/1994:146, 192), the ontology of this study developed through several stages of "beginning and beginning again" (Deleuze, 1968/1994:136; St Pierre, 2014:6) to construct the 'new' through "practical and experimental engagement with the world" (O'Sullivan & Zepke, 2008:2; St. Pierre, 2014:6). A review of literature which explored the place of theory in traditional qualitative research revealed an emphasis on the relationship of theories, primarily to understandings of methodology and epistemological dispositions (Wolcott, 1995:189; Anfara & Mertz, 2015:11; Collins & Stockton, 2018:5). The literature review also revealed "theory in qualitative research has a pervasive role that affects all aspects of the research process" (Given, 2008:869). To justify my post-qualitative inquiry approach I needed to gain a thorough understanding of the "DeleuzoGuattarian" ontology (St. Pierre, 2014:10), as well as of a well-defined alignment between the appropriate conceptual practices for this particular study, and the researcher's onto-epistemology. I thus suggest an ontological frame which I believe could be particularly appropriate to this inquiry.

1.3.2 What is the nature of the problem to which this study responded?

In a developing country like South Africa, young adults are currently encountering many challenges in their attempts to establish sustainable livelihoods. They are also having to figure out their positionality within a “phigital” world (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76) with no borderline between the physical and the digital world, and needing to become critically/self-reflexively aware of the fact that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime. Due to negative bias, and particularly in a time of crisis, there is a tendency to focus on what is wrong and to overlook the resources we have to work with. Opportunities for post-school youth to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society, are now inevitably linked to the potential power of technology to change the world at scale, the ability to work from home and to study online, and to meet virtually. However, these are all possibilities which require a fast, stable and well-priced internet connection. Unfortunately, the digital divide remains an unsolved reality for many young South African citizens. Such challenges cannot be solved by the government alone, nor by the current private sector. Problems need to be addressed by young inventive people who think creatively about the challenges they are facing within their ordinary daily lives. Where and how to start, were some of the questions that preceded the design of the shortfilm-making project, from which the evidence (data) of this research were created. This devised shortfilm-making project provided a multimodal space on and within which the above-mentioned issues were focussed.

1.3.3 Why is this problem actual and relevant?

Education systems worldwide are currently transitioning from traditional designs and practices to new teaching and learning environments, influenced by tremendous social and technological changes. Educational researchers, planners, policymakers, and practitioners are coming to embrace an expanded definition for literacy, one which extends beyond the traditional emphasis on textual literacy (Benavot, 2015; Kalantzis & Cope, 2015; Hanemann 2015b; Bokova, 2017; Kapur, 2019; Reid, 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020). A number of education scholars have presented their various response approaches to this new multi-dimensional and complex literacy. Benavot (2015) problematises the relationship between literacy and social connectedness and identifies a knowledge-gap relating to non-formal education. Hanemann (2015b) examines the application of the life-long learning theory to the literacy goal of the United Nations (UN) fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4). Bokova (2017) emphasises the necessity of media and information literacy (MIL) for the transformation

of the learning experience both on-line and off-line, and in both formal and non-formal learning contexts. While Kapur (2019) addresses the awareness and understanding of multiple literacies, Reid (2019) argues for film language to be integral to education. Key to all of these advocated transformative approaches is the role of multi-literacy education. This recognises literacy as a basic human right, a tool of personal empowerment, and a means for sustainable social and human development (Nordquist, 2019). What emerges from all of this is the question: how does a person, in particular a young person, become multi-literate in an “increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world”? (UNESCO, 2017).

1.3.4 What is intended to be achieved with this research?

This doctoral research extends and deepens the specialisation and focus of my Master’s degree and components thereof. These components include an intentional awareness of further research required into the transformative potential of non-formal education on both local and global levels (Petranová, Hossová, & Velicky, 2017; Kapur, 2018; Moya Jorge, 2019; Mayombe, 2020), the interconnectedness of social and global changes, together with cultural specificity (Holland, et al. 1998; Urrietta, 2007; Deardorf, 2009; Moletsane, 2012; Dängeli, 2019), the idea that critical self-awareness is a self-constructed process, influenced by socio-cultural, political and organisational contexts in the daily lives of people (Gramsci, 1971; Freire, 1972; Giroux, 2003; Walker, 2018). Lastly the research is informed by a sensitive awareness of our presence in this world and our distinctive interactions with other human beings in both real-life and virtual worlds as part of our journey towards the actualisation of our potential (Anderson, 1991; 1998; 2011; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Rowe & Netzer, 2012; Walker, 2018; Dängeli, 2019).

The purpose of the current study’s distinctive focus-shift from methodology to onto-epistemology in the current study is for the researcher to be able to address a particular outdated view of human education on both local and global levels. Operating outside the formal curriculum, this inquiry aimed to redefine film literacy as a distinctive learning field which, together with digital literacy, is currently seen as including subcategories of media literacy. I use the term ‘film literacy’ to differentiate this particular literacy from the conventional ethnographic methodology usually employed in educational research. ‘Film literacy’ as a boundary concept in educational practices (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Fox, 2011) offers the promise of a different dimension of human communication, transcending barriers, to facilitate transpersonal growth. More particularly, it responds to a group of post-school youths’ quest to overcome community challenges in a non-

formal semi-rural South African environment through their active participation in a shortfilm-making project. I see interpersonal, intrapersonal, and transpersonal human experiences to be integrated by structurally transcending the limitations of linear time and confined three-dimensional space. For this research, I defined transpersonal pedagogy as a distinctive approach to education theory and praxis, and as relating to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self. In this sense, film literacy involves more than the development of digital and media literacy: it is developed by extending the experiences of a personal/individual mind to other minds as part of a larger learning environment. As already mentioned, film literacy competencies being seen and accepted as integral to transpersonal pedagogy could be the means of providing those essential skills and mind-set required in the 21st century workplace for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education. I argue for the need for evidence to support the concept of film literacy as a distinctive learning field, one that could make an essential and unique contribution to human learning. I see stakeholders in educational decision-making processes as being able to benefit from their engagement in a new form of education, one which enables them to explore and critically reflect on real-life situations, and through this, strengthen inclusivity, resilience, and peacebuilding.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the developing South African context, the plight of young adults attempting to forge sustainable livelihoods in the phygital world is a significant concern. These difficulties derive mainly from their inability to locate themselves within the hybrid virtual-physical environment and their inability to recognise the diverse learning and employment opportunities that are ubiquitously available. This struggle can be attributed to the evolving nature of online interactions, where social media profiles, avatars, and digital personas may differ from one's real-world identity. This disparity can sometimes lead to a sense of disconnection or confusion about where one truly "fits" within the hybrid virtual-physical environment. The 'hybrid virtual-physical environment' relates to the terms, 'phigital' (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76) and 'phygital' (Soloviov, Danilov & Prasad, 2020:1). Both these terms reflect the increasing convergence of the physical and digital worlds, highlighting the interconnectedness of our everyday lives with digital technologies. Existing consensus recognises the importance of multi- and multimodal literacy for ensuring career readiness and social functionality. In educational systems, the potential function of film, a multimodal form of literacy, in fostering inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural communication remains insufficiently understood.

Main research question

My inquiry aimed to respond to the following research question:

- How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth?

Sub-questions

- What do these post-school youths experience as a result of their acquiring understandings of film literacy competencies?
- In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in shortfilm-making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youth?
- How, and to what extent, does the critical self-awareness the participants gain through the shortfilm-experience contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This post-qualitative inquiry aimed to explore the use of film literacy in the context of non-formal South African education through the intra-active participation of a sampled group of post-school youth in a shortfilm-making project which was geared at productive change within a specific post-school community of practice.

The study objectives:

- to establish what the participants' responses reveal about their experience of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement;
- to establish how active engagement in a short-film making project contributes to becoming critically self-aware of possible learning opportunities within their communities;
- to establish how the participants' newly gained critical self-awareness contributes to their ability to develop transpersonally.
- to establish how a re-orientation to research in education contributes to exploring alternative ways of knowledge-production through collaboration and communication across disciplines and culturally defined boundaries;
- to establish how an open methodology allows the researcher to devise a thoroughly considered synthesis of approaches (post-qualitative, developmental phenomenographic, and arts-based to create, explore, and communicate evidence in ways that present a holistic picture of a variety of efforts to produce knowledge through alternative pathways.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Studying the attributes related to film literacy, and the contribution of these attributes to advance the transformative competencies young adults need to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society, required a dynamic research approach firmly rooted in a post-qualitative onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007; Wolfe, 2017; Le Grange, 2018). Post-qualitative onto-epistemology" is a complex concept

In addition to a process of reviewing the kind of traditional inquiry which depends on objective methods to test predictable hypotheses, linked to causative effects, I critically examined my own discipline for spaces where alternative knowledge production should be considered to establish innovative ways of knowing. Rather than attempting to engage with describing a broad field of experience, I chose a Constructive research paradigm (Dewey, 1933/1998; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990), as well as a Pragmatic paradigm (Dewey, 1948; Adeleye, 2017; Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018) and a Critical/Transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2007/2010; Bawden, 2011; Romm, 2015). The particular focus was on film literacy in a non-formal education context. The relevance to my inquiry of this interconnected, multiperspective worldview is its pursuit of praxis as the all-encompassing goal, and the view of Bawden (2011:4) that social realities are "brought forth via the languaging between humans", rather than merely being found or captured via the research-process. This perspective further involves a process of becoming receptive to the connections between oneself and others, and to the environment (Dängeli, 2019:11, 22), together with the process of communicating reflective knowledge being able to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels" (Kaplan, 2005).

As an educational researcher I support Eisner's (2008/2019) belief about multiple ways of knowing, particularly the idea that knowledge is created, not simply discovered or collected (St. Pierre, 2019). I see a research study being deepened by increasing the variety of different methods used to explore, explicate and understand the world. In light of these facts, accepting a post-qualitative ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007:409), relating to the inseparability of ethics, ontology, and epistemology in scientific knowledge production (Wolfe, 2017; Le Grange, 2018), was a natural choice for this particular research. Translated to my inquiry praxis, it implied the creation or production process of evidence, rather than routine data-collection, involving the design of a space (or spaces) for ideas to be developed into inquiry-evidence. Through this arts-based education research, I have acquired awareness and willingness to accept not only new, unexpected knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production,

and new ways of knowing. Researcher awareness about the benefits of employing a combined philosophical underpinning guided my decisions about particular suitable methods of data production, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2014:3). The nature of the research problem, the researcher's personal experiences, and the target audiences for the study further determined the selection of a research approach. Recent critiques of post-qualitative work express concerns about relations between past and present research and reporting on what is important during and after research (Mayers, 2019). I see the detailed, descriptive style of post-qualitative inquiry (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011) as being of particular benefit to the practitioner who prefers to examine new forms of knowledge, rather than conducting a traditional scientific inquiry.

Transformative theories and concepts rather than pre-determined methodology guided this inquiry, making possible an assemblage of relevant methods with transformative potential. Decisions about the selection of research site, participants, evidence (data) production, analysis, and assessment strategies, are discussed in the following section.

1.6.1 Site selection

The Langeberg municipal area (Western Cape, South Africa) was selected as the geographical context. The reason for this choice was my involvement as an educator in this particular area since 2008. Distinctive characteristics of this semi-rural area are the greater distances between the communities (Ashton, Bonnievale, McGregor, Montagu, and Robertson), together with the relatively lower population per square kilometre than that of the metropole (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:8). 'Semi-rural' in this case means "outside metropolitan areas" (White & Corbett, 2014:1), with agriculture and manufacturing as the two largest sectors (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:20). Seasonal flooding and ongoing poor internet connectivity continuously challenge the living and working conditions of the residents in this area (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:28, 30).

1.6.2 Participant selection

My involvement as an educator in the Langeberg area, the '*Myturn*' Initiative, comprising opportunities for post-school youths to engage in shortfilm-making projects, was the means of introducing this project to a group of seventeen post-school youths. Initially, seven youths responded, submitting their expressions of interest to participate. Two additional post-school youths expressed their interest to join the group shortly after

the lockdown period had been announced. The participants thus constituted the select group of nine post-school youths who shared a passion for being involved in the arts and their gratification to see growth and development in the lives of other young citizens. They live in different communities within the Langeberg municipal area. The fact that the characteristics of such communities of practice vary should not be seen as a weakness in the sampling process and for the study, but rather as a benefit in terms of significant variation in the participants' likely responses. Although developmental phenomenographic methodology does not prescribe a particular sample size, Bruce (1997:104) maintains that it needs to be sufficient to provide "suitably rich descriptions of people's varying perceptions about the phenomenon of interest" (Yates, Partridge & Bruce, 2012: 103). My research intention was not to explore or address the 'deficiencies' of rural communities (Budge, 2005) nor to present a comparison between the semi-rural Langeberg and urban contexts. Although significant, these sorts of issues and comparisons did not relate to my research focus.

1.6.3 Evidence (data) production

The multimodal construction-space provided by the devised shortfilm-making project offered a multitude of creative possibilities for evidence production. Where and how to start, and the envisioned nature of the evidence, were some of the concerns that preceded this research study. I found the work of Green and Bowden (2009) and Herodoto, Sharples, Gaved, Kukulsa-Hulme, Rienties, Scanlon and Whitelock (2019) particularly valuable in guiding my decision-making process. Green and Bowden (2009:66) describe the pilot phase as an essential principle of developmental phenomenography to refine the outline of an intended research, and to review whether or not the created evidence relates to the research question. Herodoto et al. (2019:4) highlight the relevance of evidence-production related to innovative pedagogies to assisting educational practitioners in distinguishing between their beliefs in learning style myths and effective educational practices. This is in contrast with research data that emerge from a particular systematically assessed teaching methodology. In light of the above, a pilot study was performed in 2018 during the developmental phase of this research study to explore:

- the feasibility of the evidence (data) production instruments;
- innovative ways of describing and presenting the research findings; and
- assessment strategies for evaluating reflexive practice in the form of artistic expressions.

The findings of this pilot study revealed that the application of an arts-based

enhancement to data production and analysis combined well with developmental phenomenography. The use of multiple sources and techniques in the data production process was found to enhance the credibility of the outcomes. However, including different art forms, such as drawing, mosaic art, and shortfilm-making as units of analysis increased the complexity and amount of data to be produced and analysed. Employing open-ended and semi-structured questionnaires to evaluate pre- and post-knowledge, and levels of participant reflection, encouraged a deeper learning experience (Edwards, 2004:112). The four-category scheme for assessing reflection-levels in written work (Kember, McKay, Sinclair, and Wong, 2008), a scheme which was adapted for this pilot study, required further consideration. I found doing this pilot study, while critically reflecting on my research approach during the study was a “reasoned decision” (Bowden & Green, 2005:91) to make. The process provided me with insight into how to reconceptualise my formal research proposal, and ways of streamlining the evidence production process of my main research study.

Given the discoveries made and reflections on the first steps in the research, a devised shortfilm-making project was employed over a period of ten months during 2020, as the mode through which the post-school youths explored and expressed their perceptions about everyday life in their communities. As a multimodal form of expression, shortfilm provided “an unfolding and expanding orientation” (Knowles & Cole, 2008:xi), to becoming critically self-aware and to growing transpersonally. The participants actively engaged in a series of workshops covering all three phases of film-making: pre-production, production, and post-production. I explained the outline and purpose of the workshop-series, namely, to share knowledge and understanding about the skill of shortfilm-making, with the aim to explore and express their own life experiences of their contexts through their individually-created shortfilm productions. Because film literacy is not reducible to a particular skill of the user (filmmaker or viewer), it is better understood as a form of co-production, achieved by an interactive engagement involving the user, the film-making technology, and the audience.

The evidence of this project was created, firstly through a baseline assessment in the form of an open-ended, pre-project questionnaire to establish participants’ prior knowledge about the shortfilm-making process, and to provide insight into the nature and extent of their film literacy. During the lockdown months of 2020, the participants submitted their experimental shortfilm-productions online on two occasions, to celebrate Youth Day and Heritage Day respectively. Viewing was offered through online Watch Party, thus creating virtual spaces of contact. These Watch Party events were followed-up with open-ended questions, similar to those in the post-project

questionnaire, to encourage reflective practice. Eventually, after the lockdown restrictions had been lifted, a short film screening event was arranged at which the final cuts of the participants' short films were viewed by a live audience which had been invited by the participants. The opportunity to have a shared showcase, physical as well as virtual, had the potential to allow valuable comments. The feedback formed part of an iterative process of constructing new skills and knowledge. Key to this process was the implementation of the participants' newly acquired skills, knowledge, and understandings to develop, question and refine their shortfilm presentations in collaboration with their peers. An open-ended post-project questionnaire concluded the shortfilm-making process. This was to assist in uncovering the potential impact of the project on the participants' critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth. Responding from a second-order perspective (Yates et al., 2012:100), rather than from the researcher's viewpoint, the participants were allowed plenty of freedom to express their views and ideas (Van Rossum & Hamer, 2010:2). Granting them a high degree of voice and ownership in their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) was seen to have the potential to engender comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds, in addition to finding "different ways of seeing" (Nash, Kent & Reid, 2014:33), thinking, feeling and acting (Jarvis, 2006:14).

Participants were introduced to a kind of transpersonal experience when capturing their daily life-worlds through the lenses of their smart device cameras. 'Transpersonal' in this sense involves a shift in awareness that goes beyond individual concerns and often includes a feeling of interconnectedness with others, nature, the universe, or a higher spiritual reality. Transpersonal experiences are found across diverse cultures and spiritual traditions. For the purpose of this research, understandings about transpersonal experiences were not limited to any specific religious or cultural context but could manifest in various forms depending on the participants' personal beliefs, practices, and worldview. Transpersonal experiences, often profound and transformative, can be challenging to integrate into daily life, as individuals may struggle to articulate and make sense of these encounters, resulting in diverse interpretations. Furthermore, the post-school youths were challenged to compensate for "tunnel awareness" (Dängeli, 2019:12-13) that had become ingrained in their consciousness through the excessive use of smart devices and 'selfies'. Dängeli explains "tunnel awareness" as a condition, involving a "particular mode of perception" (2019:9):

"With our attention locked in by the gadgets (predominantly smartphones) that we have become accustomed to use in order to operate in this world, we may find ourselves unable or less able to release our attention, when appropriate, in order to interact with each other and our environment in an ethical and

effective manner” (Dängeli, 2019:12-13).

By viewing their surroundings with fresh eyes (Kaomea, 2014:15; Shklovskij, 1965), participants were offered the opportunity to transform themselves through a process of learning by performing new roles as cinematographers and directors of their own stories (Fenwick 2001:3). The aim was to raise awareness of the possibilities which existed to find the meaning and purpose of their existence through artistic expressions (Greene, 1995a) by viewing the world they share from different perspectives. The completed short films were exported to a folder on my laptop for safekeeping. Copies of these short films were stored on a back-up hard drive.

1.6.4 Analysis of evidence (data)

Drawing on the scholarship of St. Pierre (2011/2019), Lather (2013), (Ulmer, 2017), and Perold-Bull and Costandius (2019), the pre- and post-project questionnaires and the creative imagery have not been content analysed to generate themes and categories as intended. Parallel to Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012) viewpoint, also acknowledged by Perold-Bull and Costandius (2019:48), a range of ‘analytical questions’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012: 7) were developed from the concepts that have been explored. Moving beyond the limitations of traditional discourse and content analysis, multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) (Kress, 1996/2011; Gee, 2011), combined with a modified version of Kember, McKay, Sinclair, and Wong’s (2008) four-category scheme was used to explore (analyse) the evidence (data) which comprised individual shortfilms, as well as pre- and post-project reflections on the shortfilm productions which had been created over a ten-month period in 2020. The intended use of a four-category scheme, originally developed for assessing reflection levels in written work (Kember et al., 2008) had to be expanded by adding two additional categories to make it applicable to the evaluation of reflection levels in multimodal evidence (data). Differences in the participants’ reflection levels afforded an indication of the nature of self-awareness and transpersonal growth that the participants might have acquired through their active engagement in the learning opportunities provided by the shortfilm-making project.

1.6.5 The criteria for appraisal

Qualitative data is often criticised for a lack of objectivity and therefore not regarded as trustworthy, whereas traditional scientific research is seen to require a variety of criteria such as validity, reliability and statistical significance. However, in arts-based

educational research (ABER) these criteria are replaced by credibility (Eisner, 1980; 1981). The four foundational criteria of trustworthiness listed 40 years ago by Lincoln and Guba (1985:294–301), were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were applied to promote trustworthiness in this research. The persuasiveness of a personal vision, as represented by the participants' views as filmmakers, was essential to informing their audience. The authenticity of this vision was determined by the audience's view of its credibility concerning the way this vision could be seen by them to shape their worldview or some aspect thereof.

1.6.6 The researcher's positionality

I entered the field of academic research from within a Visual Arts and Design education-context. As co-creator of new understandings I learned that the focus for the arts-based researcher (Müller, 2020:47) is not on the shortfilm-making project, nor on the meanings behind each shortfilm-production but is, rather, on what possibilities emerge through the shortfilm-project. I found myself in an awkward, disoriented position, realising, on the one hand, that philosophical assumptions and researcher positionality were crucial to the approach, design and methodological decision-making pertaining to this research. Conversely, while aiming to establish the potential of film literacy to actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst post-school youth, I became aware that established methodologies lack the flexibility, openness, and unfolding connections to maintain an ongoing relevance. To ensure that the participants in this complex, situated study were not denied their critical reflections on the phenomena being studied, while the neutrality of the entire research initiative was guaranteed, a dynamic focus on asking how their reflections could be applied, instead of what these meant, had to be maintained. Therefore, I drew on the scholarship of Lather and St. Pierre (2013), when re-positioning my study within a post-qualitative onto-epistemology. A post-qualitative approach allowed transformative theories and concepts to guide this inquiry, rather than pre-determined methodology, making possible an assemblage of relevant methods with transformative potential. I became aware of a need and an opportunity for scholarship to make visible not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge production and new ways of communicating these insights.

Traditional academic studies have positioned the researcher to reflect on the nature of scientific practice as spectator, and not as participant. A post-qualitative researcher challenges the boundaries of traditional qualitative research methodologies, seeking to move beyond established frameworks. Scholars engaging in post-qualitative research

may experiment with a variety of methods, including arts-based approaches, digital methods, or collaborative practices that extend beyond traditional interview and observation techniques. The emphasis is on finding methods that best suit the research questions rather than adhering to predetermined conventions. This approach encourages a more flexible and experimental stance toward research design and methods, emphasizing creativity and innovation. As co-creator of meaning, my role as designer, instructor, facilitator, and evaluator challenged the opposing claim (Bowden, 2000; Turner & Noble, 2015) that the researcher cannot be a participant as well. As an educational researcher whose interests are located outside metropolitan areas in places that are generally considered to be semi-rural, this research represents a study in non-formal community-based education, and one which involved post-school youth. Researcher participation further raised the issue of potential bias. The post-qualitative perspective encourages researchers to be reflexive, acknowledging their own subjectivity and the influence of broader sociocultural contexts on the research. An attempt to maintain an unbiased approach towards participants' viewpoints was made, together with an attempt to avoid overpowering or distorting the outcomes with the way the questions were framed. Bias was acknowledged in two ways. Firstly, by means of researcher awareness that "bias is an unavoidable part of the process of coming to know something" (Elliott & Timulak, 2005:148). Secondly, by eliciting second-order responses from a demographically diverse group, using open-ended questions, and keeping detailed notes and electronic recordings.

1.6.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). To protect the identities of the participants, their names were not revealed; a numbering system was used instead. To protect both parties (the researcher and the participants), a consent form was signed by all participants (refer to Appendix A). The transcribed data are stored on a hard drive to ensure safety and a research trail.

The wealth of opportunities created by engaging the arts in performing and reporting research brings consequent challenges. Focusing on shortfilm as an "accessible, vernacular, and aesthetic" (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008:9) image-language enabled the researcher to explicitly reach out to larger, more diverse audiences and to engage in "truly dialogical conversation[s] about educational possibilities" (Barone, 2001:44). However, challenging the more traditional approaches to inquiry brings about important concerns for arts-based researchers in education. In line with the aims of

post-qualitative research (Perold-Bull & Costandius, 2019:45), Barad (2007) asserts that:

...ethics is not simply about the subsequent consequences of our ways of intersecting with the world... ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materialisations of which, we are a part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities (Barad, 2007:384).

Throughout our entangled encounters a crucial question to ask was how to make the process and products of this research valid and useful to other researchers and educators. More particularly, our task was to attempt to positively impact the lives of the participants, and others wishing to benefit from the outcomes.

1.7 Desired and potential knowledge contribution

Within the context of multimodal literacy-education, this inquiry attempted to establish the potential of film literacy to actuate critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth for a group of post-school participants towards an “expanded sense of self” (Dängeli, 2019:9). An additional aim was to describe the possible future applications of those potentialities. The term ‘inquiry’ was used to distinguish my doctoral research in education from mainstream tradition, although my intention was never to define my alternative approach in opposition to more traditional research conceptions. Rather, the literary, performing, and visual arts pertaining to this inquiry, offered unconventional pathways to expand researcher competencies for creativity and knowing. Also, by devising a thoroughly considered synthesis of approaches to create, explore, and communicate evidence in ways that present a holistic picture of varied efforts (alternative pathways). In a wider sense the research sought to improve education. I see the detailed, descriptive style of (post)qualitative inquiry (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011) as particularly benefitting the practitioner who prefers to explore new forms of knowledge, and forms of research other than traditional scientific research. This inquiry focused on a fundamental understanding of researcher awareness through the synthesis of transdisciplinary (Klein, 2014; Wang et al, 2017; Rigolot, 2020) and traditional research practices. Based on this understanding, the 21st century-researcher therefore needs to go beyond a metaphorical standing on the shoulders of giants (Newton, 1675; Gleick, 2003:98) to make intellectual progress in an increasingly globalised social and economic context. The uncertain nature of current-day academic life which has been deeply impacted by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis, further problematised research in South Africa as a developing country. Therefore, I view this inquiry as a valuable document reporting on the complexity of performing research and engaging in creating evidence during a year

of lockdown and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During times of crisis, the findings of post-qualitative inquiry might challenge traditional research approaches by emphasising the entanglement (Barad, 2007) of human and non-human actors: within the Postdigital learning space provided by the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making project, the participants and their (watch party/cinema) audiences faced an entanglement within the shared "encounter with the data artefact" (MacLure, 2013:660; Wolfe, 2016:429). Here, 'data artefact' relates to the participants' original shortfilm-productions. In times of crisis, a post-qualitative perspective becomes crucial as it allows researchers to explore and understand the fragility and interconnected nature of the world, also exposing various factors contributing to the crisis. Valuable learning opportunities are provided for students, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers as they face global crises. A post-qualitative approach to this inquiry extended beyond the development of career and workplace competencies to explore an engagement in experiential learning opportunities in South Africa. By embracing transdisciplinary (Klein, 2014; Wang, et al, 2017; Rigolot, 2020) ways of thinking and open methodologies (Kerasovitis, 2020:60), researchers can capture the complex and dynamic nature of the crisis and its effects on individuals and communities. This enables a more comprehensive understanding of the crisis, leading to research practices that are better equipped to address its complexities and inform more holistic and effective crisis response strategies. For the participants, for example, newly acquired understandings about how staying effectively connected during social and physical distancing in 2020 could affect their future world of life and work.

The ultimate contribution of the inquiry resides in expanding the boundaries of developmental phenomenography, a strategy rarely used in education research. The distinctive second-order perspective (Yates, Partridge & Bruce, 2012:99), "maximum variation sampling" (Patton, 2002:234), the fact that the outcomes were not an end in themselves (Green & Bowden, 2009:52, 53), as well as the transformative potential of developmental phenomenography (Bowden, 1995:146) suited my inquiry: firstly, to explore and describe a select group of participants who would enable a multiperspective view related to the main topic of inquiry through their interactive participation in a shortfilm-making project within a particular time-frame in 2020. Secondly, since the research outcomes were not an end in themselves (Green & Bowden, 2009: 52, 53), the transformative potential of developmental phenomenography relates to a developmental process whereby the participants' actions, in response to "a raised perception of reality" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980) could lead to a new quality of life experience. Becoming critically aware of their positionality

within a liminal, Postdigital learning space, enabled them or others to change the way their world operates” (Bowden, 1995:146; 2000:3).

Finally, I argue that the implementation of an arts-based approach to educational research-methodology responded to the dearth of practical research on the arts-based doctorate as an emerging genre within academic research. An arts-based approach to research holds significant importance in exploring and understanding phenomena from a creative and aesthetic perspective. This approach recognises that traditional scholarly methods may not capture the full depth and complexity of certain phenomena or experiences. An arts-based approach to this inquiry was found “sufficiently fluid and flexible to serve... as a methodological enhancement to other research approaches...” (Knowles and Coles, 2008:60). The arts provide alternative modes of expression and communication, allowing for nuanced interpretations and eliciting rich and diverse insights. Moreover, an arts-based approach encourages both interdisciplinary (Klein & Newell, 1998; Barad, 2007:409; Jewitt, 2009:30; Klein, 2009:4). and transdisciplinary collaboration (Klein, 2014; Wang, et al, 2017; Rigolot, 2020) and encourages researchers to think outside traditional disciplinary boundaries. It promotes innovative and imaginative ways of knowing, creating knowledge, and presenting research findings that resonate with diverse audiences. In a similar way that different viewers respond in different ways to film screened in different contexts, the artistic/ arts-based researcher deals with different audiences during the research process. Hence, there is the responsibility of the artistic researcher needing to be able to communicate in a number of “languages” – including the languages of imagery, music, dance (Greene, 1995b:57), and with diverse audiences comprising the art world, academia and the public. In my view, there exists the need to explore how arts-based projects can acquire a position in research contexts beyond simply being artistic projects; that these projects need to be approached and understood from more than one viewpoint and by diverse communities. Hence, the significance of an arts-based approach to research lies in its ability to evoke empathy, challenge assumptions, promote critical thinking, and foster a deeper understanding of complex human experiences and social issues.

1.8 Structure of this dissertation

Chapter One focused on three concerns/phenomena: what I believe to be a turning point in global education and learning, on a post-qualitative approach to educational research, and on the character of the 21st century-workspace. I have provided background information about the shortcomings in contemporary South African education at national and local levels. I have briefly introduced the concept of film

literacy in a global context and outlined the connection between film literacy and transpersonal pedagogy. I have succinctly indicated my aims, objectives and approach to methodology, as well as the desired and potential contribution of the study. An open-methodological approach will be described and discussed in detail in Chapter Three. A brief reference to the theoretical perspectives that underpin my study, concludes the first chapter.

The remaining chapters are structured as follows:

Chapter Two contextualises the inquiry in the relevant literature. Existing theories which explore enhanced learning opportunities, comprising critical citizenship, figured worlds, transpersonal theory, transformative learning theory, and arts-based perspectives, are reviewed. A summary and conceptual framework for this study concludes Chapter Two. The relevance of key concepts generated from the explored literature, namely film literacy, critical self-awareness, transpersonal growth, and post-school youth are clarified.

Chapter Three discusses the strategies which have made possible an assemblage of relevant methods with transformative potential to explore the research problem formulated in Chapter One. These include further details about selecting the core setting and relevant resources, developing an appropriate research strategy, evidence (data) production procedures, and a range of analytical questions to support the analysis of evidence, used as an alternative to following traditional data analysis conventions, and finally, devising a triad evidence-presentation format to communicate the findings across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

Chapter Four is designed to impart the evidence created around the first sub-question, *'What do the participating post-school youths experience as a result of their acquiring understandings of film literacy?'* The accompanying study objective was to establish what the participants' responses revealed about their experience of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement. A discussion of the findings concludes Chapter Four.

Chapter Five is designed to impart evidence created around the second sub-question, namely *'In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in short film making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youth?'* The accompanying study objective was to establish how active engagement in a short-film making project contributes to the sampled group becoming

critically self-aware of possible learning opportunities within their communities. A discussion of the findings concludes Chapter Five.

Chapter Six is designed to impart evidence, created around the third sub-question, namely *'How, and to what extent, does the participants' critical self-awareness, as gained through the shortfilm-experience, contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally?* The accompanying study objective was to establish how the participants' newly gained critical self-awareness contributed to their ability to develop transpersonally. A discussion of the findings concludes Chapter 6.

Chapter Seven comprises a conversation to communicate the factual and conceptual implications, research boundaries and limitations, and provides recommendations for future research from an inquiry which, due to its post-qualitative approach, is always in-becoming.

CHAPTER TWO

THINKING WITH THEORIES

Theory “is exactly like a tool box... A theory has to be used, it has to work”
(Deleuze, 2004b:206)

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced a post-qualitative approach as a re-orientation to conventional research in education, focusing on a turning point by questioning the purpose of global education and learning. The twenty-first century workspace-demands illuminated shortcomings in contemporary South African education at national and community levels, in this way providing spaces for research and innovation. A brief introduction of the concept of film literacy in a global context was followed by an outlining of the intra-connection between film literacy, critical self-awareness and transpersonal pedagogy. Research aims, objectives and developmental methodology, as well as the desired and potential contribution of the study were succinctly indicated. A brief reference to the theoretical perspectives that underpin my study, concluded the first chapter.

Chapter Two contextualises this inquiry in the relevant literature, starting with the notion of a post-qualitative approach. Theories which explore enhanced learning opportunities comprise critical citizenship, figured worlds, transpersonal theory, transformative learning theory, and arts-based perspectives. The researcher gives particular focus to modes of thought in contemporary educational research, and theories on film literacy in education contexts. The relevance of film literacy to the development of both critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth, both essential capacities particularly to post-school youth living in an age of uncertainty, is discussed. A synthesis of the relevant reviewed literature and conceptual focus for this study conclude Chapter Two.

2.1.1 Post-qualitative inquiry: exploring theoretical perspectives

In response to our contemporary world’s ‘ongoing becoming’ (Higgins, 2016; Nordstrom & Ulmer, 2017:12), this chapter is concerned with the lenses through which the researcher views the world. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), as well as Jackson and Mazzei (2013:261), I employed the ‘plugging in’-concept to explore researcher-assumptions about a “primary, originary reality” (St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018:7) that informed both the research question and the outcomes, while also conveying the deepest values of the researcher. Knowing through deliberate

imprecision, involved rethinking the concept of film literacy and the possible languages to accurately express and represent such a reality (Law, 2004:3; St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018:11). It represents a reflection on metatheory: “the nature and structure of scientific theories; the nature of scientific growth and progress; the meaning of truth, explanation and objectivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:20; Henning, 2004/2011:14). My own current worldview is deeply impacted by an awareness of the challenging, uncertain transitional situation of contemporary education, as well as that of educational research-practices. This uncertainty has been further emphasised by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis. Although the research study started before the pandemic, the data collection process was disrupted by the lockdown and social distancing regulations. All those involved in the research responded in different ways to the unexpected, additional challenges brought about by lockdown regulations and social distancing, a factor whose influence on the research process cannot be ignored. My belief that all humans, in the case of my inquiry, specifically, post-school youth, have inherent capabilities to develop according to their unique potential, has a parallel with the ideas of Goldstein (1939) and Frankl (1946). In his book "*The Organism*," (1939), Goldstein introduced the concept of self-actualization. He argued that individuals have an inherent drive to fulfil their unique potential and that the mind and body are interconnected in the pursuit of holistic well-being. In his seminal work "*Man's Search for Meaning*," (1946), Frankl argued that even in the most challenging and dehumanizing circumstances, individuals can find purpose and meaning, and this sense of meaning is crucial for psychological well-being. 'Potential' in my reference to the post-school youths' unique potential, might be directed towards an individual's creativity (arts-based theory; figured worlds); spiritual enlightenment (transpersonal theory); pursuit of knowledge (transformative learning); and the desire to contribute to society (critical citizenship).

An exploration of the relevant literature on the use of film literacy in education revealed that the “shock” of working “within a materialist ontology has not yet been fully felt” (MacLure, 2013:663). I realised that if this inquiry were to produce new insights it had to be re-positioned within a research space which does not yet contain the “...given [structures] that govern what we can think” (Rajchman, 2008:89; St. Pierre, 2019:6). Finding ways of working across and beyond conventional ways of knowing, and developing a new language, or forms of language whose aim was to communicate new insights, proved problematic. ‘Thinking without’ (Ulmer, 2017) pre-existing qualitative methodologies, while simultaneously ‘thinking with’ the ‘different’ and ‘the new’, and not knowing exactly “how different” the study has to be to qualify as “new”, while extremely difficult, at the same time proved to be exceptionally dynamic. How does one ‘think

with' a research problem, the imbrication of an agentic assemblage of diverse elements that are constantly intra-acting, never stable, never the same? (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013:630; Le Grange, 2018:7).

By taking the (post)human condition as the catalyst for post-qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2011), certain insights from the emerging body of post-qualitative literature enabled me to address the following research question: How can film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst post-school youth? Firstly, as a "methodology-to-come" (Lather, 2013:635; Le Grange, 2018:6), post-qualitative research cannot be clearly described, since no methodological guide exists. Secondly, this kind of research does not qualify as a new paradigm, but instead represents a "thousand tiny methodologies" (Lather, 2013:635; Le Grange, 2018:6), when thinking with Deleuze and Guattari (1987; St. Pierre, 2019). Thirdly, it decentres knowledge by questioning the "privileging of knowledge in research". According to St. Pierre (2013:648), post-qualitative research finds researchers "questioning why knowledge should be the point of departure in inquiry". The decentring of knowledge embraces the inseparability of ethics, ontology and knowledge within the notion of "ethico-onto-epistemology" formulated by Karen Barad (2007:409). Fourthly, post-qualitative research involves "critiquing representational logic" (Le Grange, 2018:7). St. Pierre (2013:650) points out that representational schema assumes the existence of a primary, originary reality, and the potential ability of language to accurately represent the mentioned reality. However, Le Grange (2018b:45) emphasises the instability of language by reminding us that "systems of thought and language... are always changing". Likewise, Ingold (2015:vii) defines non-representational research as a "correspondence", thus referring to intra-action between entities, emphasising original responses. In line with these thoughts, and fifthly, post-qualitative research subjectivity becomes both imperceptible (Le Grange, 2016:34; 2018:7), and reconfigured, while raising critical questions aimed at post-qualitative inquiries. Lather and St. Pierre (2013:630) articulate these questions meaningfully, referring to the problematics implicit in the notion of 'entanglement':

[E]ntanglement makes all the categories of humanist qualitative research problematic. For example, how do we determine the 'object of our knowledge' – the 'problem' we want to study in assemblage? Can we disconnect ourselves from the mangle somehow (Self) and then carefully disconnect some other small piece of the mangle (Other) long enough to study it? ... How do we think 'a research problem' in the imbrication of an agentic assemblage of diverse elements that are constantly intra-acting, never stable, never the same?

(Lather & St. Pierre, 2013:630)

Sixthly, post-qualitative research encourages different ways of ‘thinking with data and data analysis’. “Data are not something out there that we gather or collect, and it is not isolated from self (Le Grange, 2018:8). The significance of the self for this research, draws on a transpersonal understanding. In my opinion, becoming critically (self)aware of an expanded sense of self relates also to an expanded awareness of the fact that, because the self is integrally entangled with the data, the data would accompany the sense of self in the expanded state of this sense. Lather (2013:639) describes this as “(e)scaping binaries into continuums and multiplicities”, a process which explicates the significance of employing multiple theoretical perspectives in this study. Seventhly, post-qualitative research recognises the transformative nature of method. Researchers have the option to choose those performative methods with the potential to unfold through intra-actions with the world, thus making possible the transformation of the world (Le Grange, 2018:8). Finally, and of specific relevance to this chapter, Le Grange (2017:102; 2018:8) directs our attention to the immanent nature of ethics in post-qualitative research. Other than the pre-ordinate ethical clearance regime, externally imposed by universities as part of their code of conduct, an “immanent ethics opens up pathways for all those involved in research to increase their powers of acting” (Le Grange, 2018:9). Instead of asking the question of morality, namely ‘what *must* one do?’ Le Grange (2018) suggests that, instead, one asks what one *can* do in the process questioning ones capabilities and capacities, and also inviting researchers to “think, feel and act differently” (Le Grange, 2018:9).

What follows is a theoretical contextualisation of the particular notions: arts-based theory, figured worlds, transpersonal theory in education, transformative learning, and critical citizenship.

2.1.2 Arts-based theory

From an arts-based perspective, this educational research study provided an opportunity to collaboratively create spaces for inquiry by engaging a group of post-school youths, and by raising critical questions about multi-layered modes of expression in the field of non-formal education. The growing body of arts-based education research (ABER) offers possibilities, challenges, and interpretations that problematise accepted structures of qualitative research (Sinner, Leggio, Irwin, Gouzouasis & Grauer, 2006). According to Heidegger (1926/1996), arts-based educational inquiry requires a particular artful state of mind, accompanied by an “ever-present meditative, imaginative, creative process of meaning making, and interpretive activities rooted in perception and language” (Sinner et al., 2006:1255). Sullivan

(2005:188) sees the rapidly advancing digital world as providing a particularly rich setting for the exploration of newer conceptions of theory and practice within the field of arts-based education. In addition, arts-based dissertations have been found to be process-orientated and often crossing boundaries (Fox & Geichman, 2001:40) by “constructing alternative forms of (re)imagining, (re)presentations and critical reflections” (Sanders, 1999:555,559). Given this context and drawing from the work of Canadian and American scholars such as Barone (1997), Eisner (1976), Finley (2003), and Greene (1975), arts-based inquiry can be assumed to be a rapidly developing field in education. According to Sinner et al. (2006:1227), a number of arts-based researchers in education (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Smithbell, 2010; Onsès & Hernández-Hernández, 2017; Pentassuglia, 2017; Macdonald & Hunter, 2020) “contend that the creative arts are a mode of inquiry and representation that provides significant perspectives for making decisions regarding pedagogical theory, policy, and practice” .

2.1.3 Art as a problem for post-qualitative research; critiques

Drawing primarily on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, David Rousell (2019:4) critiques art as a problem for post-qualitative research, referring to art as the so-called ‘inhuman forms of life’. Rousell (2019) asserts that:

(a) art is real and not a representation; (b) art is a composition of sensations (affects and percepts); (c) art is an expression of the relation between animal and territory; (d) art is a problem, rather than a solution; and (e) art creates new forms and potentials of life within ecologies of relation. (Rousell (2019:31)

Rousell develops his argument, addressing researchers’ abilities to provide a clear definition of a work of art, to ascertain what a work of art can do, and most important, their ability to question the functionality of art in a study. According to Rousell, the “problem of art in post-qualitative research” should be recognised and acted upon, rather than researchers treating art as a “solution to the post-qualitative crisis of methodology” (Rousell, 2019:34). In line with the perspectives of Deleuze and Guattari (1994:217), emphasising multiplicity, connectivity, and openness in the artistic process, Rousell (2019:34) reminds that the boundaries between art, philosophy, and social science need to remain flexible. Experiential, intellectual, and /or social transformational are key characteristics of these inherently complex studies, requiring alternative strategies to those of traditional research. (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, & Gouzouasis, 2006:1252). One alternative strategy has been developed by Holland,

Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) who draw on sociocultural perspectives of learning in particular.

2.1.4 Figured worlds

In developing their theory of 'figured worlds' within educational contexts, Holland, Lachicotte et al. (1998) based their work on different, sometimes contrasting, schools of thought, including "culturalists, constructivists, and universalists, and from the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin" (Urrieta, 2007:107). Their understanding of 'figured worlds', constitutes "socially produced, culturally constituted activities" (Holland et al., 1998:40-41). In these activities people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understandings (identities). It is this kind of activity which underpins this inquiry. Its usefulness for social research lies in the "collective imaginings" (Urrieta, 2007:209) of people, and to be able to study those collective identities and their abilities to influence the physical world. Using a figured world lens involves examining the social construction of meaning within specific contexts, recognizing the shared understandings, norms, and expectations that shape individuals' perceptions and behaviors in various social realms. In the process of this inquiry the various ways different worlds and identities are produced in a non-formal educational context are emphasised. Similarly, the imagining of alternative realities and identities (Holland et al., 1998) recalls transpersonal perspectives, in the sense of becoming receptive to the links between oneself and others, and with the environment (Dängeli, 2019:11, 22). These insights relate to the post-qualitative approach by recalling Guattari's (2001) three ecologies, namely "mental, social and environmental" ecologies (Le Grange, 2018:9). As an emerging methodology, there can be no closure to what post-qualitative research could become. Le Grange (2018:9) argues that it is possible to find a different future within a "life of experimentation in intra-action with the real". The relevance of post-qualitative research draws on its ability to engage with the challenges of a contemporary world by opening up "possibilities for new ways of doing research in South Africa (and elsewhere)" (Le Grange, 2018:12). References to "intra-action" (Barad, 2007:33), signifying the mutual constitution of entangled agencies (Perold-Bull & Costandius, 2019:45), and "disappearance of the individual self" (Le Grange, 2018:8), relate to notions of "interconnectedness" and a transpersonal-constituted identity in a context where the sense of self can extend to allow for "boundless identity with all of nature".

2.1.5 Transpersonal theory in education

As an alternative way of thinking and living, the transpersonal vision manifests itself diversely in wider areas as transpersonal states, or as merely another academic principle (Ferrer, 2001:7). The various different ways of developing an enhanced awareness and consciousness are central themes in a transpersonal theory of human development. Although education has been seen as “one of the most significant areas of future inquiry and exploration in the transpersonal field” (Rothberg, 2005:89; Cunningham, 2006; Buckler, 2013), there has been a paucity of research in this area. The few noteworthy case studies represent attempts to define transpersonal education as “a holistic, expansive, growthful, transformative process” (Rowe & Braud, 2013:671). However, their findings focus on formal postgraduate programmes. Likewise, discussions about frameworks for educational development through integrating various domains of being, (Hart, 2009; Ferrer, 2018) adopt a more holistic approach compared to mainstream education. However, what is needed is an interpretation of this approach which is accessible to those educators who confuse understandings of transformative education, spiritual education, and transpersonal education. Transpersonal psychologist Dr Jorge Ferrer is well respected in the field for his understanding of spirituality. He contends that spirituality emerges from our co-creative participation in life, and in the form of three interrelated dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal (Ferrer, 2011:2-3).

Likewise, education theorist Maxine Greene (1995), and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle (2005), both advocate for cognitive transcendence, specifically in a spiritual way - an approach to transformation of self, and one which is receiving limited attention in educational curricula. “Spiritual way” (Smidt, 2015:73) in this sense refers to “the essence of human nature; the awareness of our presence in this world and the different ways we interact with other human beings in a real-life world as part of our journey towards the actualisation of our potential” (Smidt, 2015:73). Such references to ‘awareness’, ‘presence’, and ‘interact with other’ paved the way for further exploration into the transpersonal “space-in-between” (Dängeli, 2015/2019:77), and a “natural widening of one’s perception of reality” (Dängeli, 2019:82). Viktor Frankl (1992:109/110), founder of the logotherapy school (Frankl, 2008:104) which is based on the idea of purposeful and meaningful human existence, describes the in-between space as a “gap between what one is and what one should become” (Frankl, 1992:109-110). Dängeli (2019:78) uses the term, ‘liminal’, to define an in-between space which is “open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing”. In the sense Dängeli (2019) uses it, ‘liminal space’ relates to a transitional process, one which

holds the potential for transformation. Expressive arts therapist Lisa Herman uses the term, 'liminal', as referring to a parallel meaning construct for transpersonal space/time (Herman, 2015:111). Herman quotes Eigen (1993) to assist her in describing her being in a transpersonal space/time. Eigen (1993) saw this defining process as taking place "both in material and immaterial dimensions of experienced reality" (Eigen, 1993:74). This definition recalls an understanding of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) as imagined worlds. Herman further refers to the transpersonal space/time realm as "moving presence" (Herman, 2015:112). The in-between transpersonal space/time can thus be defined as a meeting between the "world that is known to be" and the "world that is becoming" (Herman, 2015:112). Herman posits that the best way to communicate this being in-between worlds, is through the arts. The fact that she does not specify the particular language required to communicate this experience, indicates a knowledge gap, one that my inquiry into the language (use) involved in film literacy sought to address.

I find these perspectives useful for my inquiry, which is concerned with transpersonal growth, focusing on "experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos" (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125), in the process connecting individual transformation with social change.

2.1.6 Transformative learning

Alongside continued progress in defining transpersonal psychology, Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007) postulate that a key assumption in this process relates to the transformation of the individual who assists in transforming others. While such transformation relates to different forms of counselling, psychotherapy and coaching, the transformative potential of the transpersonal education process, a review of existing literature shows this transformative process to have received a limited focus. Transformative learning can take a variety of forms involving reframing in either objective or subjective ways. The Transformative Learning Theory comprises three essential mechanisms that facilitate the learning and transformation of young adults growing up in contemporary societies: critical reflection, centrality of experience, and rational discourse. Transformative learning is ongoing, cyclically linked and wherever a person enters this cycle, the moment of connection is always preceded by a time of 'not knowing' or 'believing that one knows' until one's understanding is challenged or questioned. It firstly involves recognising an area for potential improvement. How? In real-life practice, it relates to the participants' ability to critically reflect on their own and

others' assumptions, knowledge, belief-systems, behaviours, frames of mind, and the ways in which issues and events are perceived. As such, the group post-school youths who participated in the current study needed to recognise their own frames of reference when responding to the invitation to participate in the shortfilm-making project. This included a submission of their expressions of interest in this project, and their willingness to learn from other people, to illustrate praxis, and/or to act on their reflections. The participants' envisioned messages to other youths in their communities indicated their recognition, or admission, of an area for potential improvement. Surrounded by fields of potential knowledge production, the participants' positionality – personal values, perspectives, and location in time and space - influenced their understandings of the world as well as their decisions about how to respond (act/ behave). Then by using their knowledge, imagination, and shortfilm-expressions, they have been able to redefine and address the issues at stake from a different viewpoint. Finally, the participants needed to be assisted through pre- and post-project questions on how to participate effectively in (multimodal) discourse to enable them to validate their newly acquired understandings. In turn, we acknowledged that these insights would be valid only until a new condition or situation required reflective practice. This process (knowing) relates to the words of Da Vinci who claimed that “Being willing is not enough; we must do” (Kinsman, 1998:223). According to Mezirow (1997:10) “learning is a social process, and discourse becomes central to making meaning”. Based on this argument, it is thus important to understand that, as long as what we learn remains atrophied, in other words, continues to match our existing frames of reference, no transformative changes will occur. When we are confronted by rapid changes, “thinking as an autonomous and responsible agent is essential for full citizenship in democracy and for moral decision making” (Mezirow, 1997a:7). The relevance of Mezirow's 1997 argument for post-school youths growing up in contemporary societies resides in the need for them to learn how to make their own interpretations by using their personal frames of reference, “rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others” (Mezirow, 1997:5). This capability is closely linked to critical citizenship in terms of one's development towards becoming an educated citizen in a democratic society, a citizen who consciously/reflectively attempts to understand the worldviews, experiences, and lives of others.

2.1.7 Critical Citizenship

Opportunities to become participating, self-directed, responsible, reflective, and productive citizens, could be essential – in the case of my current inquiry - for post-school youth's sustainable development. Dewey's contribution to critical citizenship

education (Saltmarsh, 1996:13), while recognising the merging of pragmatism and an epistemological orientation, distinguishes five particular areas of relevance: “linking education to experience”; “democratic community”; “social service”; “reflective inquiry”, and “education for transformation”. These contributions were for him pragmatic in nature and focused on the development of democratic values and critical citizenship. Dewey’s “theory of method of knowing” is pragmatic and has instrumental educational value; “topics studied because of some end beyond themselves” (Dewey, 1916: 342, 249, 353, 251). The objectives of the shortfilm-making project, which was devised for the purpose of this inquiry, can be said to align with the five areas identified by Dewey (1916) as contributing to critical citizenship education. The reference to “some end beyond themselves” (Dewey, 1916: 342, 249, 353, 251) found relevance in this inquiry with reference to the outcomes of developmental phenomenography which “are no end in themselves” (Green & Bowden, 2009:52).

Conducting educational research from a multi-perspectives viewpoint resonates with an integral or progressive approach. The previous sections focused on ‘thinking with’ a post-qualitative approach to research, and ‘thinking with’ perspectives on arts-based theory, figured worlds, transpersonal theory in education, transformative learning, and including critical citizenship. This post-qualitative assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; De Landa, 2006; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) of multiple integrated perspectives inform the development of a (meta-) model for interpreting the world. This involves a methodology for inquiring about the world, a community of learners, and a developmental stage of capacity building that points past post-modern cultural perspectives, and past formal educational modes of thinking (Murray, 2009:44). ‘Meta-model’ in this sense signifies an entangled developmental process of ‘thinking with’ (analysing) theoretical perspectives to produce new insights into ways to ‘think differently’ about existing educational research practices, about film literacy education, and about various possibilities to address my research questions. Following, a focus on modes of thought in contemporary educational research, with special reference to (a) what is already known about contemporary research practices in education; (b) different ways of knowing: embracing an expanded definition for literacy; and (c) multiple modes of perception and communication.

2.2 Modes of thought in contemporary educational research

My literature review encountered educational research as a hybrid form of inquiry which cannot be conducted in an isolated domain. By adopting a wide-angle view in my search, I studied literature about different ways of working and knowing in

contemporary educational research in the process of attempting to identify a niche to be occupied by my inquiry, and to explicate the nature of the selected literature.

An exploration of the literature on the place of theory in qualitative research provided three different understandings:

- (1) “theory has little relationship to qualitative research”;
- (2) “theory in qualitative research relates to the methodology the researcher chooses to use and the epistemologies underlying that methodology,
- and (3) theory in qualitative research has a pervasive role that affects all aspects of the research process” (Given, 2008:869).

Further in-depth reading of post-structural theories (St. Pierre, 2011; Gerrard, Rudolph, and Sriprakash, 2016; Fullagar, 2017; Le Grange, 2018; Iared, 2019; Matthew & Thomas, 2020) assisted me to choose those methods which have transformative potential. This reading also helped me realize that my doctoral research requires a different methodological approach to that of conventional humanistic methodology. This approach needed to be one which focuses on developmental stages beyond the adult-self, and which involved an expanded sense of shared reality on the part of both researcher and participants. In both my Master’s studies and this doctoral study, my research practices have been enabled by specific modes of thought about interconnectedness, multiperspective, and understandings inspired by three leading thinkers from the past, namely, Da Vinci (n.d), Valéry (1943:42) and Berger (1972:7). For me, the modes of thought of these thinkers together represent a close link between the arts, science and technology which would be necessary in an attempt to promote transformative (life-long) learning in a particular post-school context. In this inquiry, ‘multiperspective’ relates to finding oneself in a situation, a ‘figured world’ (Holland, et al, 1998; Urrietta, 2007) of ‘not knowing what to do next’. Reasons for this lack of knowledge would, on the one hand, be due to an inability to realise, or conceptualise the availability of alternative options, and on the other, finding oneself in a state of confusion because of the multitude of perspectives available, together with the uncertainty involved in decision-making. Interconnectedness is self-explanatory: it refers to the interconnected nature of our contemporary world on all levels – human and environmental - and across study-fields. Understanding in the context of this inquiry relates to the fact that, in as much as our knowledge will always be in-becoming, our learning-practices will be ongoing.

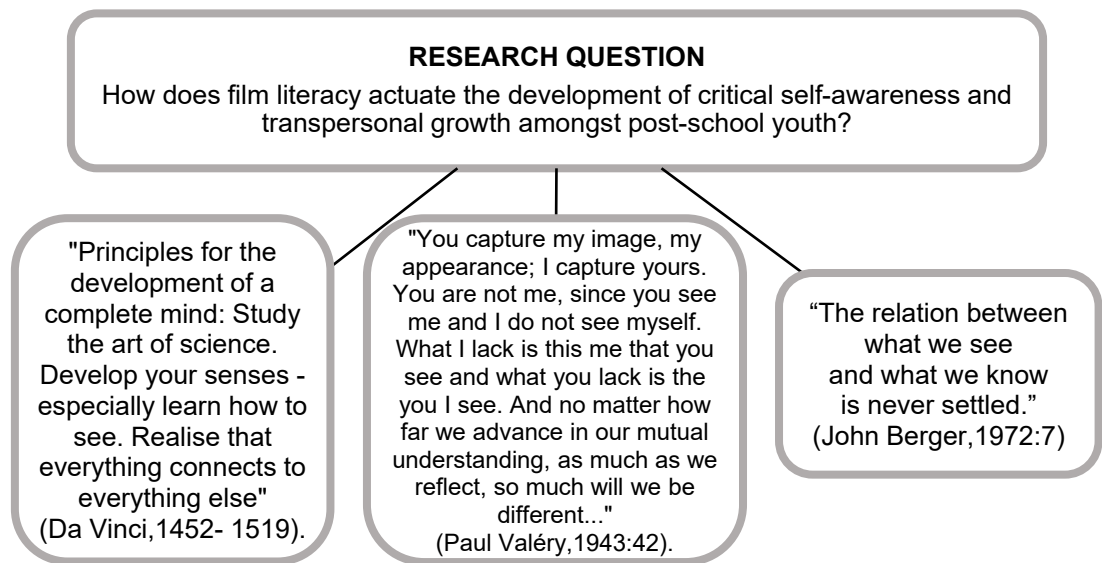


Figure 2.1: Interconnectedness, multiperspective and understanding: perspectives that played a significant role throughout this research study

2.2.1 What is already known about contemporary research practices in education?

Success has a different meaning for twenty-first century-student than it had in the past. Growing up in a screen-orientated world, Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2009) and Generation Alpha (born since 2010) "are able to teach themselves about any topic they are interested in without even leaving their bedroom" (Driscoll, 2020:4). In South Africa and elsewhere, the recent closing down of schools in favour of online education in response to COVID-19 regulations clearly showed that it is not the physical presence in school, but rather the development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that have the potential to contribute to individual and social well-being. In my opinion, the current situation presents as many opportunities as it does challenges. Contemporary education systems appear to be failing to teach students how to respond to rapid change (Driscoll, 2020: 2) and how to deal with new information in informed and useful ways, and in this way learning to become global citizens (Driscoll, 2020:5). I would argue that, in a world where technological advancement is blurring boundaries, contemporary education is in urgent need of transformation, particularly as a tertiary qualification has been shown to fail to guarantee employment. Education in the twenty-first century needs to empower students with transferable competencies that will be adaptable in a rapidly advancing world. While previously, people simply needed to be creative to meet the challenges of an increasing complex world (Robinson, 2011), the current focused approach involves a critical awareness of the "energetic and relational

links between oneself and others and the environment” (Dängeli, 2019:81). A broad definition of an arts-based approach to research and a general understanding of the qualitative approach has shown these definitions to be useful for my inquiry.

The opportunity and challenge emerging from a review of existing knowledge, is to locate arts-based approach to educational research within the context of this literature, with the proviso that you, the researcher, are entering a contested zone. In addition, existing literature leaves many questions unanswered. First, the planning and implementation strategies of alternative education programmes (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:36) are problematised. Second, what has not been thoroughly investigated are the reasons for the high level of effectiveness of the learning of students who have been participating in alternative education programmes (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:37). Thirdly, what has not been thoroughly researched are the specific ways in which some educators have managed to implement radically alternative forms of pedagogy successfully within a limited time frame (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:37). As noted by Farrell and Hartwell (2008:8), for many years it has been assumed that literacy as a basic human right is attained through traditional educational forms and pedagogic strategies. New perspectives, established by the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand has since cultivated an increasing awareness amongst educators and policy makers of the essential meaning of human education for all. As already mentioned, COVID-19 regulations and school closures showed that it is not the physical presence in school, but rather the development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will contribute to individual and social well-being. To acquire an understanding of the multiple possible ways young citizens can enhance their abilities to become change agents, can essentially be transformative in terms of their habitual frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997; Rowe & Netzer, 2012; Pappas, 2016). A fundamental requirement for both educators and students in undertaking this process is the cultivation of a willingness to adapt to change and to be open to new perspectives from people other than themselves in an educational approach relating to multi-dimensional perspectives of reality beyond the boundaries of the self.

Moletsane (2012:5), in his study on rural education in South Africa, asks how the strengths and resources available in rural communities can be identified and employed by residents to help them overcome the complexities of everyday life. He refers to two strength-based approaches, as offering the opportunity to engage in educational intervention in rural contexts: resilience theory and participatory visual methodologies. These approaches are discussed in detail in Chapters Two and Three, respectively. Resilience can be defined as “the capacity to remain competent in the midst of major

adversity” (Kaplan, Turner, Norman & Stillson (1996, in van Breda, 2001:2); “the skills, abilities, knowledge, and insight that accumulate over time as people struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges” (Garmezy, 1994, in van Breda, 2001:2), and “the ability to ‘bounce back’ from adversity” (Theron & Theron (2010:6). These authors make a clear distinction between individual and community resilience, and in so doing, in their review of research on youth resilience in South Africa, offer a possible answer to Moletsane’s (2012) question. They posit that resilience “is nurtured by everyday resources, common to individuals, families, communities and culture” (Theron & Theron, 2010:6). Thus, what is needed is “a stronger focus on the cultural and contextual sources of resilience that are common to all communities, including rural contexts” (Theron & Theron, 2010; Moletsane, 2012:5). Similarly, Simonet White and Michael Corbett (2014) argue that “many studies that use sophisticated quantitative methodologies treat rurality simply as a geographic demarcation rather than as a complex cultural marker” (2014:10). I return to “participatory visual methodologies” (Moletsane, 2012:5) and “cultural and contextual sources of resilience” (Theron & Theron, 2010; Moletsane, 2012:5) in my description of the characteristics of the selected site(s) in Chapter Three.

2.2.2 Knowing differently: embracing an expanded literacy definition

Currently, education systems worldwide are in a transitional state from traditional designs and practices to new teaching and learning environments, influenced by tremendous social and technological changes. Educational researchers, planners, policymakers, and practitioners are gradually coming to embrace an expanded definition of literacy, one that extends beyond the primary emphasis traditionally placed upon textual/functional literacy (Kapur, 2019; Reid, 2019; Bokova, 2017; Benavot, 2015; Hanemann 2015b). In response to the increasing acceptance of the multi-dimensionality and complexity of literacy, Kapur (2019) addresses the awareness and understanding of multiple literacies, while Reid (2019) argues that film language should be integral to the contemporary education scene and to any extended/comprehensive definition of literacy. Bokova (2017) emphasises the importance of media and information literacy (MIL) to the transformation of the learning experience both on- and off-line, and in both formal and non-formal learning contexts. Benavot (2015) problematises the relationship between literacy and social connectedness and identifies a knowledge-gap relating to non-formal education. Hanemann (2015b) examines the application of the life-long learning theory to the literacy goal of the United Nations (UN) fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4, 2015). Key to these arguments is the role of multi-literacy education, and the recognition of literacy as a

human right, as a tool of personal empowerment, and as a means of sustainable social and human development (Nordquist, 2019). Apart from answering an urgent demand for innovative life-long learning strategies, new competencies are required to navigate the digital world and to acquire access to potential livelihood opportunities (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Kapur, 2019). A contemporary question in this context is how young people are to become multi-literate in an “increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world”? (UNESCO, 2017). Drawing on the work of Hillier and Abrahams (2013), this inquiry aimed to introduce new ways of performing research in education, while also bringing new insights to the relevance of film literacy into being. In this inquiry, film literacy, in similar ways to critical-awareness, transformative learning, transpersonal growth, and post-school youth, was turned into a number of concepts with specific functions. Instead of studying, or delving into, the meaning of these concepts, the focus was on answering the question concerning the function and cyclical nature of film literacy, “what it does, what it might do, how it might affect what other things do and how it might be affected by them” (Hillier & Abrahams, 2013:4)

2.2.3 Multiple modes of perception and communication

The growing demand for a broadened scope of literacy has created an ongoing need for a different approach to all levels of education, in particular, one that transcends language barriers. This section focuses on multiliteracies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2015, which include varying aspects of media literacy (Potter, 1998; Buckingham, 2003; Livingstone, 2004; Higham, 2016), moving image literacy (Bazalgette, 2009), literacy in film (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966), as well as film literacy (Blell & Lütge, 2004; Glotov, 2018).

Developing multiliteracies according to Kalantzis and Cope (2015), is an approach originally devised by The New London Group in 1996 to explore the changing social environment faced by students and teachers. Kalantzis and Cope (2015) expand the scope of literacy pedagogy by extending the original term to describe two key aspects of contemporary language use. The first relates to the diversity in “meaning making in different cultural, social or domain-specific contexts” (2015:3). These differences are becoming increasingly significant in our contemporary communications environment, indicating that standard forms of language no longer suffice. What is significant in going beyond standard forms of language, is the ability to “figure out differences in patterns of meaning” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2015:5) across different contexts. These emerging variations are attributed to factors such as “culture, gender, life experience, subject

matter, or social or subject domain” (ibid.). Moreover, Kalantzis and Cope (2015) argue that every meaning exchange could potentially be cross-cultural. Likewise, Deardorff (2009) maintains that conversations between people who do not share similar cultural values, beliefs and constructions of meaning are potentially intercultural. In exploring film literacy, I expand these understandings by referring to John Berger (1972) who, fifty years ago, claimed that this diversity of meaning making can include politically or historically constructed processes. According to Berger, by situating the viewer’s gaze in the context of “political otherness” (Doraiswamy, 2015), the understanding of what the viewer sees will be affected by where and when the viewing takes place. The second application of language, according to Kalantzis and Cope (2015), results partially from the properties of the new media and information communication systems. Traditional forms of written or printed linguistic modes now interface with increasingly multimodal patterns of meaning. These include oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial patterns, extending the range of literacy pedagogy to knowledge processes of transformative pedagogies. These knowledge-‘making’ processes

Potter (1998:5) refers to media literacy simply as a “perspective from which we expose ourselves to the media and interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter”, while Bazalgette (2009) perceives the moving image as the most powerful and complex art form and medium of expression ever invented by humans. Thus, full participation in twenty-first century media-culture requires a developing knowledge of the moving image, a knowledge gap that can be addressed by employing multiple modes of perception and communication. Bazalgette’s 2009 argument that the moving image-medium is the first one that we learn on our own parallels the statements of Forsdale and Forsdale (1966) and Berger (1972) about human perception. Long before Blell and Lütge (2004) coined the term ‘film literacy’, Forsdale and Forsdale (1966:9) described “literacy in film” as the ability to “recognise familiar objects, people, places, and action when they are shown directly and without contrivance on the screen”. Blell and Lütge (2004) extended Forsdale and Forsdale’s proposal (1966), describing film literacy as “the capability to deal appropriately, critically, and social-responsibly, but also in a self-determined and creative way with films within a foreign-language and intercultural context” (Blell & Lütge, 2004:404). By analysing the original German title, “*Sehen, Hören, Verstehen und Handeln: Filme im Fremdsprachenunterricht*” (2004), I find that it comprises the components of which frames of reference are composed. Frames of reference are the “structures of assumptions” (Mezirow, 1997:5) through which we make meaning of our experiences. More than 50 years ago Forsdale and Forsdale compared the inability to “recognise familiar objects, people, places, and action when they are shown directly and without contrivance on the screen” to the inability of an

illiterate person to read: they stare at “print on a page” without understanding what it says (1966:9). My immediate response to this is, firstly, ‘moving image text’ has been compared to ‘printed text’, secondly, Forsdale and Forsdale (1966) had not, at the time they were writing, considered the possibility that the print on the page may be in a foreign language. However, in the same way, that Forsdale and Forsdale (1966) compared words and images with the aim of finding new understanding, the Surrealist painter, Rene Magritte, introduced words into his artworks to enhance the expression and effect of the visual image. Six years later Berger (1972:7) addressed the “always-present gap between words and seeing” by referring to *The Key of Dreams* (Magritte, 1927). According to Forsdale and Forsdale (1966:9), the “unlettered” illiterate’s inability to understand the message may be ascribed to the fact that “he has no key to the code.” Forsdale and Forsdale (1966) referred to the assumption that all humans have access to the key that unlocks the meaning of visual expressions. Evidence exists (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966) that some primitive peoples have recurrently shown their inability to recognise both still and moving images on first exposure to these. To strengthen his argument, I refer to Reid (2019) who quotes the late Anthony Minghella: “It is vital and obvious that understanding, manipulating, and appreciating the film sentence should be an accepted part of the education system’ (Minghella, 2005).

Becoming media literate implies an improved ability to exercise control over one’s own beliefs and behaviours, given, as Potter (1998) and Glotov (2018:9) argue, humans are “mindful during exposure of information”. In my view and experience, film literacy is integral to media literacy. Therefore, becoming film literate means acquiring competencies in understanding the potential of filmic language and how to use(apply) the multimodality of filmic language to enact those potentialities. It is, however, difficult to engage the media in developmental processes to enhance critical awareness (Dewey, 1909) without an appropriate toolset. Bourdieu (1993:223) reminds us that online activity can establish differences between users. He illustrates his point by referring to “art perception”: “individuals have difficulty imagining differences other than those available in the system of classification which allow them to imagine”. Bourdieu further questions the possibility of the person who is listening (for that matter, also the viewer) having the tools, or not, to decode what he is saying. Therefore, tools/skills and raw material/knowledge from the media are identified as prerequisites for interpreting media (Potter, 1998; Buckingham, 2003). Buckingham defines media literacy as more than “simply functional literacy” (Buckingham, 2003:37; Glotov, 2018). It is “a form of critical literacy” involving “analysis, evaluation and critical reflection” (Dewey, 1909; Buckingham, 2003:38; Glotov, 2018). Glotov (2018) notes that film as a part of media (Higham, 2016) can transfer information which is then analysed,

evaluated, and interpreted by the audience. Glotov (2018) continues: the results of these processes may vary according to the audience's level of media literacy, which in this sense can be described as accounts of film literacy (Glotov, 2018:9). These meaning making processes recall Kalantzis and Cope's (2015) multiliteracy model. They propose multimodal forms of expression to reveal differences in human understanding. It is necessary to note that film literacy involves human expression on three socio-cultural levels, namely, the participant/filmmaker, the short-film audience (online and live), and the academic audience of this research in education. However, the development of film literacy as a unique form of multimodal communication and arts-based inquiry, implementing ('thinking with') arts-based theories, remains contested. In essence, the contested nature of implementing arts-based theories in the exploration of film literacy stems from the plurality of theoretical approaches and methodologies. The challenge lies in navigating these diverse perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes film literacy.

Returning to Buckingham's opinion of analysis and evaluation (2003:380), Livingstone (2004) in her article "*Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies*" expands the understanding of the processes involved in media literacy by adding "access" and "content creation" (Glotov, 2018:9). Although 'access' does not provide sufficient evidence about media use, 'analysis' focuses on context decoding, while 'evaluation' implies the development of a critical understanding, and 'content creation' refers to the implementation of the knowledge generated from the preceding steps. Glotov (2018) argues that these four key aspects, when studied in relation to film, may lead to an expanded awareness of film characteristics, in this way stimulating the development of film literacy. Here I need to recall Wegner's assertion that "(t)he use of film is not the study of film" (Wegner, 1977:36). Likewise, Bazalgette (2009) problematises Scottish Screen's published definition of "moving image media literacy" (Bazalgette, 2009:6) which, among other components, includes film. References to the 'reading' and 'writing' of moving images lead to assumptions that film does not require dedicated interpretative skills, thus causing misinterpretation in terms of the use of moving image media (film) as pedagogical support to other subjects (2009:6). Bazalgette (2009) also acknowledges the use of 'film' in organisation titles, such as the British Film Institute (BFI), UK Film Council (UKFC), and film education strategies such as "*Film: A 21st Century Literacy*" (Bazalgette, 2009:6). Yet, considerable confusion continues to reign in terms of the scope of film as a form of literacy. Recommendations to alleviate the confusion involve the integration and promotion of cultural, critical, and creative skills in Scottish Screen's developmental initiatives (Bazalgette, 2009:7). However, in contexts outside education,

the misperception continues. Policymakers and the corporate sector assume that moving image-related skills development, due to its technology-dependency, belongs to the 'digital revolution'. Furthermore, cultural assumptions assign film a lower status in the hierarchy of the 'high arts', such as fine art, literature, and theatre, supporting the misperception that moving image media (film) is unworthy of receiving time allocation within school curricula. Other issues that Bazalgette (2009) emphasises are on the perceptions and claims of the potential harm these media sources may cause to children (Petranova, Hossova & Velický, 2017) in terms of an unhealthy curiosity in "celebrity, consumerism, sexuality and violence" (2009:7). Education contexts that allow the inclusion of moving image media have done so on limited terms, and welcome film once again as "relevant stimulus or motivation to other subject learning" (Bazalgette, 2009:7). In this sense, film aesthetics and the potential development of film literacy as a distinctive learning field, have been overlooked. The previous sections aimed to establish understandings about current developments in educational research. Following, 'thinking with' theories about film literacy in education, focusing on: (a) film as expressive artform, as suggested by Dewey, Freire, Giroux, and Greene, (b) recent film literacy-studies in education contexts, (c) key debates about film education, focusing on 21st century-literacy, and (d) developmental pathways of film literacy.

2.3 Theories of the place of film literacy in education

I define film literacy as a distinctive learning field, which firstly represents a different dimension of human communication. Secondly, I see it as transcending language barriers, through multimodal media, to identify, analyse, interpret, create, and impart information in a clear, immediate, and powerfully expressive way.

2.3.1 Film as expressive artform: Dewey, Freire, Giroux, and Greene

Before examining the literature in the field of film literacy, I need to acknowledge the perspectives of alternative pedagogists on the use of film as an expressive artform. Dewey (1966) was of the view that alternative pedagogies enable students to employ their own knowledge and situations/life experience in a consumerist society to become aware of their own conditions. Dewey viewed alternative pedagogies as border-crossers between academic life contexts and real life personal and social contexts (ibid.) Dewey's apparent indifference to film and other popular art forms, despite developing an encompassing aesthetic theory (Pope, 2011:27), can possibly be ascribed to the fact that film had not yet established itself as an art form during his time.

His scepticism relates to the assumption that popular art forms are created to amuse and entertain lower class, or relatively poorly educated consumers, while creating an income for the producers (Seng, 2007:31). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), there is only one reference to the use of film in teaching and learning (Freire, 1970:121), and only as part of a collection of didactic material which includes photographs, posters, reading of texts, and slides. Yet, Freire acknowledged the value of these visual objects in enabling students to “acquire objective and scientific knowledge of their own context and objectively see what things need to change in the objectified reality” (Freire, 2000). Likewise, Giroux’s border pedagogy aims to firstly recognise the “epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins” that structure students’ daily lives. Secondly his pedagogical approach expresses the need to create “pedagogical conditions” in which students become border crossers in order for them to understand otherness in its own terms, and thirdly, border pedagogy illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of those inherited locations and boundaries that “frame our discourses and social relations” (Giroux, 1992:28). In *Breaking into the Movies: Pedagogy and the Politics of Film* (2001), Giroux recognises film as a pedagogical tool with the capacity to offer students alternative perspectives of the world, and enable students to critically reflect on popular attitudes of society, and engage and develop in them in qualities of empathy and critical analysis. The film-medium provides unique ways to look into ideologies, stereotypes and identity-issues contained within the film text (Giroux, 2001). He references the use of “images, sounds, gestures, dialogue, and spectacle” that help “structure everyday issues around particular assumptions, values, and social relations” (Giroux, 2001a: 591-592), references that could possibly have been of more value to my study if they referred to original student productions instead of to Hollywood films. Sharing the understandings of aesthetic experience of both Freire (1970) and Dewey (1934), Maxine Greene asserts that students’ visual experiences serve to take them “out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1995:123). Furthermore, “...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). Clearly, these progressive educators, in their search for effective approaches to guide the youth towards becoming global citizens, have long integrated the arts into their work. Despite their influences, this field of transformative pedagogy still contains spaces that may be used to explore new forms of knowledge production and to communicate what represents an applicable multi-literacy pedagogy for our times.

2.3.2 Recent film literacy-studies in education contexts

A review of existing literature in the field of film literacy reveals that the particular process, material and particular context I am working with in my research, has not been studied in similar ways across existing research projects on film literacy. However, all of the recent studies by filmmakers, about filmmakers, through filmmakers in which I have immersed myself represent inspiring experiences through which more questions about the nature of film literacy as a distinctive learning field have emerged. One example is Belgian theatre- and film-maker Jan Geers who believes that “the artistic world is too much focused on itself” (Spronk, 2016:24). His PhD involves social artistic work in which he creates a documentary about engaging psychiatric patients in group work or bringing neighbourhoods together through social film and theatre projects. Geers argues that “art and its potential social impact are not often enough brought together” (Spronk, 2016:24). Similarly, Paula Albuquerque (2016) explores the aesthetic potential of video surveillance as a form of filmmaking to provide a solution by means of which she can unite artistic and academic cultures, and also make relevant contributions to academic debates. The performances of visual artist, Jeremiah Day (2016), addresses issues of site, historical and political contexts of the public spaces – physical, on the stage, and virtual, by means of Vimeo, both of which together form his special surroundings. By using concrete objects and movements, Day (2016) questions the new field of research in the arts. He asks whether it can be used as a “renewal of the content of visual arts”, or whether it will function as a tool to guide action. Multimodal artworks, such as the work of Geers (2106) and Albuquerque (2016), become epistemic objects because, “in reaching out for the unknown, they become tools of research” (Borgdorff, 2012:193–194; Spronk, 2016:15).

At this point, ‘reaching out’ equals taking a brief detour from the education context and ‘tossing out’ exploratory threads (Holyoak, 2019:13) to four concepts: *Gesamtkunstwerk*, total cinema, embodied experience, and multimodal forms of artistic expression. *Gesamtkunstwerk*, is a German term, coined by the theologian K.F.E. Trahndorff in 1827, and conceptually popularized by the composer Richard Wagner in his essays from 1849 onwards. *Gesamtkunstwerk* translates to “total work of art” or “complete artwork”, referring to an immersive art experience in which various forms of art and/or design made by different artists come together to form a single, holistic experience. For André Bazin, a French film critic and theorist, “total cinema” (Bazin, 1967:17) was not about incorporating all art forms into cinema but rather about the unique capacity of film, as a medium, to present reality in a way that closely resembled human perception. Quiroga (2017:229) describes perception as “an embodied process,

as the human body allows sensuous perception to be anchored in a subjective position even if it confronts changing spatial surroundings”. The nature of perception addressed here shares a connection with transpersonal experience since both involve a holistic understanding of human consciousness beyond the narrow confines of individual identity. Detailed attention is given to human consciousness in Section 2.3.4 relating to the context of film literacy. Quiroga (2017:254) further explores in what ways ‘embodied experience’ might be translated to ‘cinematic language’. Multimodal forms of artistic expression involve the integration of various modes such as visual, auditory, linguistic, spatial, and gestural elements within a single work of art. Drawing on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* concept, the use of multiple modes allows artists, educators, and academic researchers to convey complex meanings, engage diverse senses, and explore the intersections between different forms of expression. It offers viewers a more holistic and interactive engagement with the artistic expression.

In the 21st century, film as a multimodal form of expression is a widely recognised communication medium linked to the ability to make powerful statements about the world (Ruby, 1976; Barrett, 2015; Eco, 2016; Glotov, 2018). However, in educational practices, considerable confusion exists regarding the potential and scope of film as a multimodal form of literacy, particularly as a boundary-crossing competence (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Walker & Nocon, 2007; Fox, 2011), a competence which can be used to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines and culturally defined boundaries. In a filmmaking context, I argue that film literacy can be perceived as a boundary object within a twenty-first century-pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

2.3.3 Key debates about film education, focusing on 21st century-literacy

More evidence is needed to support an argument for the recognition of film literacy as a distinctive learning field, either in its own right, or one that could make an essential and unique contribution to human learning on a broad scale.

Key debates in research about film/film education (Film 21st Century Literacy, 2012) focus on the following aspects:

- a relative inability to find a distinctive definition of film education that would hint at “a collection of possibilities” rather than be confined to a limited approach;
- the question of whether film education should position itself as part of literacy, as part of culture, or whether it could encompass both of these (2012:17);
- “technical skills, knowledge of film theory and language, access to equipment and

an interest in film in its own right, rather than as a tool” (2012:5) all need to be addressed in both formal and informal education sectors;

- and film education strategy “should be a life-long element” (2012:17)

A persistent challenge for those attempting to engage with contemporary studies on film literacy is the wide variety of definitions and interpretations of the term. As an independent study field, ‘literacy’ is said to be key to sustainable development in terms of economic, social, and educational development (Annan, 2005). ‘Literacy’ therefore used to describe the ability to fully participate in cultural activities (Reid, 2019) involving traditions, norms and beliefs of a particular group of people. On the other hand, ‘film literacy’ as a subcategory of media and information literacy (MIL), (Higham, 2016), has the adaptable ability to translate across different national locations, while maintaining the key values and concerns that are, for example, recognised as being European (Reid, 2019). Figure 2.2, adapted from the original model (Higham, 2016), illustrates the interconnected, overlapping nature of various literacies, as positioned within the scope of MIL.

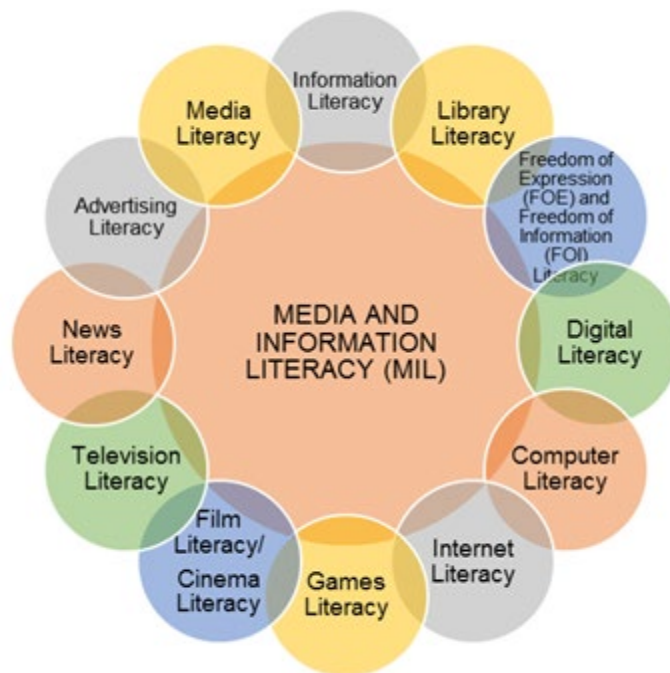


Figure 2.2: Currently, film literacy and cinema literacy share a subcategory position within the field of Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

2.3.4 Developmental pathways of film literacy

This section reviews the evolvement of film literacy-studies since the invention of the term, ‘film literacy’, by Blell and Lütge in 2004 to describe certain competencies in

foreign language classrooms. I trace the developmental pathways leading up to current study-reports about the use of shortfilms, made by tribal youth in India to educate remote communities about the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and lockdown (Gupta, 2020). An adapted form of Blell and Lütge's (2004) four competencies, namely perception and differentiation; film aesthetics and criticism; intercultural understanding; and communication and practical application, are employed to organise the body of literature I have found relevant to my research.

2.3.4.1 Perception and differentiation

The first competency, as described by Blell and Lütge (2004), 'perception' and 'differentiation', has been purposefully rephrased as 'awareness' and 'diversity' to establish a closer connection to my inquiry. The kind of awareness addressed here denotes the acquisition of knowledge and developing an understanding of a particular multimodal form of perception (New London Group, 2009 [1996]; Kress, 2009) to create a message for a purpose and audience. (Figure 2.3).

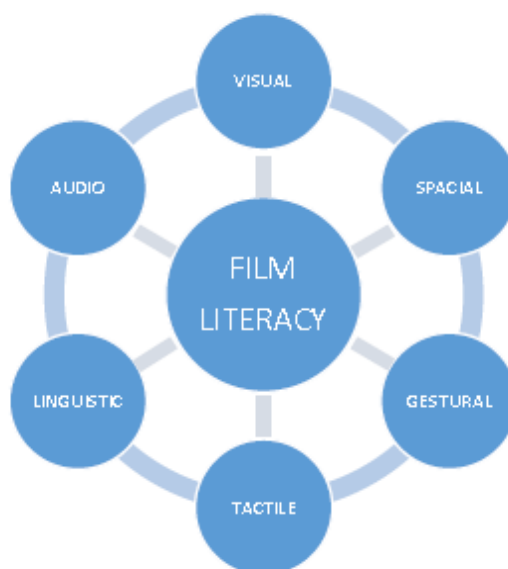


Figure 2.3: Diverse interconnected modes of perception relating to the context of film literacy

From a Visual Arts and Design-context, I argue that film literacy can provide an answer to identify, analyse, understand, interpret, create and communicate information in a clear, immediate and powerfully expressive way. Drawing on the school of thought on moving image education (Bazalgette, 2009), I acknowledge three approaches to learning, namely critical, cultural and creative approaches.

Research shows that film literacy-education and practical filmmaking skills have been widely developed in European Union (EU) countries (Petranova, Hossova & Velický, 2017). In his work at the British Film Institute (BFI), Reid attempts to establish a 'participatory definition' that includes 'film sentence' (Minghella, 2005; Reid, 2019). Based on thirty international 'film literacy' projects launched between 2013 and 2017, by Creative Europe MEDIA (European Commission, 2017), the European Commission (EC) (2017) has formulated the following encompassing definition of 'film literacy':

- the level of understanding of a film;
- the ability to be conscious and curious in the choice of films;
- the competence to critically watch a film and to analyse the content, cinematography, and technical aspects of the film;
- and the ability to manipulate a film's language and technical resources in creative moving image production.

This definition encompasses diverse aspects of film literacy activities and issues, such as "the establishment of a catalogue of children films, film heritage, documentaries, film literacy methodologies, film club methodologies, framework rules for film literacy, and animation films" (EC, 2017). Particularly noteworthy is the reference to 'technical aspects', 'technical resources' and 'creative moving image production', which, according to my understanding, are essential to the knowledge process of cultivating a multimodal literacy. Research findings (EC, 2013; 2015) show that, despite the amount of field activities in Europe, film literacy remains unexplored as a distinctive learning field (European Commission, 2017). Recommendations by the EC (2017) for remedying this situation include closer interaction between the film industry and educational institutions. I have personally experienced a similar interaction in a South African context in the form of a professional filmmaking course for educators, a collaborative effort between AFDA (the School for the Creative Economy - registered as The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in 2017. AFDA has developed a film-making course specifically for the subject Dramatic Arts, with outcomes based on the topics for filmmaking in the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grades 10 to 12 for that subject. Educators from a much wider arts-based spectrum than drama attended the workshops, which indicates a great need for the kind of professional development which involves skill-building opportunities in the film industry across arts disciplines. A similar film literacy course for international educators, presented in Finland in 2017, recognised the need for film literacy education among young adults (Glotov, 2018:52). This course introduced an original approach to film literacy education by linking media literacy education (Livingstone, 2004) and the

neoformalist film theory (Bordwell & Thompson, 2016; Glotov, 2018:29). Neoformalism has a dualistic approach to film style in the sense that it recognises film as integral to modern media, and as an independent form of art with its own historical context and principles (Chapman, 2013:34), thus the reference to unique film language and artistic expression. Yet, contemporary film literacy initiatives mainly focus on student development in the field of film literacy education within formal education contexts. These include, but are not limited to, international film literacy programs for primary level education (Barrett, 2015), programs in secondary schools across five EU countries (Soto-Sanfiel, Villegas-Simón, & Angulo-Brunet, 2018), programs in the further education and training (FET) phase of education (South Africa, 2017), or at higher education institutions (Glotov, 2018). Informal and non-formal education sectors beyond urban contexts are not included in these initiatives. Thus, I am advocating for further research to address these knowledge gaps, and gaps in film literacy programs are offered to deserving young people.

A research study by Barrett (2015), in collaboration with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), problematises the role and workings of film in literacy learning. The findings reveal film studies and film literacy to have different goals, although some overlaps were identified. Barrett (2015) sees the focus of film literacy being on the filmmaking process as such, and how film is understood and interpreted by the audience, rather than on the content of films. Barrett (2015) continues to emphasise the distinctive construct of film and unique ways by which meaning is derived from film through normal human cognitive processes. He claims that if one knows how to understand what one sees, then one will know how to understand what one sees on film (Barrett, 2015: https://www.teachermagazine.com/au_en/articles/film-literacy-the-power-of-images). In my opinion, this is a contested statement, since “(t)he relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger, 1972:7). Berger emphasises that our ability to see precedes our ability to speak, and that it is ‘seeing’ (which I further translate to ‘our worldview’), which establishes our habitus (Bourdieu, 1984:170) in the surrounding world. I acknowledge Higham’s (2016) statement concerning definition, that film literacy currently can be contextualised as a subcategory of media and information literacy, further sharing the position with cinema literacy (MIL) (Higham, 2016). However, I do not agree that film literacy maintains its subcategory-status; I advocate for the development of film literacy as an independent category. My argument, that film literacy in non-formal education contexts encompasses more than using film as a scaffold to other subject fields, links closely to the understanding that film literacy comprises elements belonging to both “film theory and media literacy

education” (Glotov, 2018:7). Developing knowledge about the technical aspects, technical resources, the ability to manipulate film-language, and the opportunities to construct creative productions, are additional aspects of such an understanding. If the existence of a film language as part of film culture can be acknowledged in the field of film aesthetics and criticism, then the question that needs to be asked is, why does film literacy still have a shared subcategory status?

2.3.4.2 Film aesthetics and criticism

The second competency, one that is integral to the implementation of film literacy in foreign language classrooms, is film aesthetics and criticism (Blell & Lütge, 2004). Aesthetic perception, according to Dewey (2005:48), involves “doing and undergoing” in an encounter. Dewey had no intention to define aesthetic perception due to the ongoing ever-changing nature of the environments we experience through the senses. In essence, when a person reads a book, listens to music, or watches a film – similar ones and more than once, for example, every new experience would differ from the previous one because the human mind builds on the knowledge and understanding that were acquired previously. Similarly, Wolfe (2017:435) describes aesthetics as “an ontologically based encounter of being in the world”; an intra-active encounter. We need to open our awareness to allow affective aspects, experienced through the senses to enter our frames of reference. Aesthetic intra-actions are “multiple movements of affection and sympathies” (Seyfert, 2012:37), producing “new diffraction patterns” (Barad, 2014:168), norms and sociability as “differences-in-the-(re)making” (Barad, 2014:175; Wolfe, 2017:435).

This form of affection and sympathy responds to a “powerful affirmation of difference within self that not only materializes but also can open up what may come to matter” (Wolfe, 2017: 435). The term ‘film aesthetics’ refers to the innovative manner in which the subject of the film is shown to affect, move, challenge, and incite the audience, while criticism entails the analysis and evaluation of film and film medium (Buckingham, 2003:38; Glotov, 2018:9). In the Film Aesthetics MSt. Course at Oxford University, references to film as medium includes matters such as “value and evaluation, appreciation, ontology, intention, expression, meaning/interpretation, creativity, metaphor, symbolism, fiction, storytelling, convention, stylistic groupings and histories, emotion and the relation between ethics, morality and aesthetics” (Oxford University, 2020). Film as art form comprises “narrative structure, use of camera, colour, performance, sound, music, editing and composition” (Oxford University, 2020).

According to Oxford University (2020), film aesthetics and criticism involve human engagement on four levels: the analytical, critical, mindful, and imaginative. This perspective recognises a neo-formalist focus (Bordwell & Thompson, 2016; Glotov, 2018) on the cognitive effect of film on the viewer, more particularly the potential of film to direct the viewer's attention to essential narrative information. Correspondingly, Neoformalism acknowledges two integral parts of film, namely film form and film style (Glotov, 2018:27). Critically, it is the interaction between subject and style which provide the means for an informed analysis of film aesthetics. These understandings contribute to the development of a Neoformalist model for film-analysis. Film-form/film-subject analysis provides insights into film narrative, which in the context of my research, refers to film as a medium for human expression. Film style-analysis refers to the art of cinematography, and addresses artistic expression. New understandings about the creative decisions made by the director, cinematographer, and editor, can be derived through the analysis of film style.

At this point it is necessary to note that the analytical, critical, mindful, and imaginative levels of human engagement can, due to their interrelated nature, not be discussed in an isolated manner. Since the development of critical self-awareness is one of my research objectives, it is essential to acknowledge different theoretical descriptions of 'mindfulness' all of which have relevance to an individual becoming film literate. For various theorists in the fields of psychology and education, 'mindful engagement' denotes 'the highest level of consciousness' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964), a 'reflection in action' (Schön, 1987), a 'wide-awakeness into action' (Greene, 1995b), 'conscientisation', (Freire, 2005) and 'open awareness' (Dängeli, 2019). The development of mindfulness skills is essential to being able to connect the filmmaking experience with the inner world of the cinematographer. Both Mezirow (1998) and Fenwick (2001) suggest that meaningful personal and social transformation may develop from critical reflection to benefit ethical and moral education (Johnson & Morris, 2010; Costandius, Rosochacki & Le Roux, 2014). Likewise, Giroux (1994) problematised the absence of a moral focus in most theories of critical thinking at the time. Nussbaum (1997:245) asserts that one "cultivates humanity" by developing three competencies. First, if one relates these cognitive, and moral developmental to film aesthetics and criticism, both the filmmaker and audience benefit from developing their skills for "critical self-examination and critical thinking about one's own culture and traditions" (Nussbaum, 1997:245). Secondly, the ability to "see oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern" (Nussbaum, 1997:245), is relevant to the young participants in this research in terms of becoming responsible creators of film-material. Thirdly, narrative imagination, denotes the ability to imagine

oneself in the situation of another person, involving morality and emotion. In terms of our complex global context, Nussbaum (1997) asserts that acquiring these competencies may potentially benefit our development as global citizens. Both Dewey (1938) and Greene (1995a) address the topic of aesthetic experience and the possibilities contained within experiences of art, which in the context of my research, include filmmaking. For Greene (1995a) and Dewey (1938), a debate about art and its meaning goes beyond the idea of art for art's sake, and instead considers how art is a component of human experience, essentially knowable and accessible (Livingstone, 2004; Glotov, 2018).

By defining aesthetic experience in ways that suggest it can be transformative, Greene (1995b) and Dewey (1938) inspired further inquiry into how we may eventually take social action through the arts. Greene (1995b:5) argued that “(social) imagination, intention: Neither is sufficient. There must be a transmutation of good will, of what I call wide-awakeness into action”. The emotional experience of the audience, when watching a film can be related to Kolb's (1984) belief that meaning is constructed by integrating emotional experience with reflection. I believe that it is a combination of “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1995b:5), “narrative imagination” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), and emotional experience (Kolb, 1994) that has the potential to sensitise the audience into action. My review of the literature revealed that the actual process that takes place in a person's mind when ‘reflecting in action’ and ‘reflecting on action’ (Schön, 1987) remains under-explored in the field of film literacy. A prevalent focus of film aesthetic disputes is the discord between “art and industry, between culture and commerce” and between the understanding of “film-maker as a creative artist” and the “nature of the film-making process” (Chapman, 2013:31–32). Early 20th century developments in classical film aesthetics acknowledge two major schools of thought, namely the “formative” and “realist” (Andrew, 1976: Chapman, 2013:32). The formative approach contends that “film becomes art” only when it transcends the “photographic reproduction of external reality and uses the formal properties of the medium for expressive effect” (Chapman, 2013:32). This viewpoint is illustrated by Arnheim's (1932) expression, “Art begins where mechanical reproduction leaves off, where the conditions of representation serve in some way to mould the object”. The underlying principle of Soviet montage, during the 1910s, 20s and into the early 30s, serving as a paradigm for formative aesthetics, indicated that it did not matter how the individual shots were taken: it was how they were arranged into a sequence, and how the motion picture was assembled, that mattered (Kuleshov, in Chapman, 2013:34). In contrast, the realist approach (Bazin, 1967; 1971) supports the unique ability of film to “reproduce life-like images of people, places and objects”. Thus, according to the realist approach,

the art of film relies upon its power to create a “close representation of external physical reality” (Chapman, 2013:32). This focus on objective reality, on the fact that a film should reflect the director’s personal visualisation and that the interpretation of a film-scene should be left to the viewer, placed Bazin (1967:1971) in opposition to theorists who focused on the manipulative potential of film. The realist perspective considers the viewer’s cognitive processes in action. It further acknowledges the aspect of ‘defamiliarisation’ (Shklovsky, 1917; Waghid & Hibbert, 2018), drawing on the role of the film in terms of renewing the viewer’s perception, and encouraging the viewer to derive new meaning from the familiar. Similarly, Dewey (1938) and Greene (1995b) dealt with the topic of film aesthetics and criticism, asserting that the arts have the potential to move the youth to see what they have never seen, and to view unexpected possibilities. Both Dewey and Greene, despite their sceptical approach towards film as an art form, defined the aesthetic experience in ways that could potentially be transformative.

In practice, both the formative and the realist approaches significantly impact the cultural awareness and artistic evaluation of film. The process of an individual, or individuals becoming critically aware of this close connection between artistic and cultural expression (Reia-Baptista, 2012) underpins the practical filmmaking component of this research. Although the film-editing process can be, and has been, described as the art, technique, and practice of carefully selecting, cutting and arranging film shots into a coherent sequence, I do not fully agree with Arnheim’s (1932) and Kuleshov’s (1970) viewpoints. In my opinion, and from my experience, the essence of filmmaking is embodied within the entire process, including the individual shots. What is important to my study is the development in the individual(s) of a critical awareness of the interconnected nature /relationship between the figured image as seen by the “mind’s eye” (Cartier-Bresson, 1997:76), and that what can be seen on the camera screen, after the cinematographer pressed the control to capture an image.

Film criticism involving the analysis and evaluation of film media comprises of two categories: journalistic criticism and academic criticism. The former is directed at the public society and uses popular mass media to communicate opinions, while the latter involves scholars whose opinions, informed by film theory, are published in academic journals. Analysis, as an essential aspect of film culture, looks into the different ways films communicate with the audience in the form of inspiration, persuasion, propaganda, and sensitisation about various socio-political issues. Cultural film analysis supports the development of an understanding of our cultural and national identities, as shaped by historical experiences. Film analysis with a focus on cultural

issues, aims to enable audiences to understand times, cultures, ideas, and values that are situated in contexts which are different from theirs. Evaluation of film involves the aspect of taste, meaning that no two people are likely to appreciate or enjoy the same film. Individuals have different moral codes which include personal values and moral beliefs, values and beliefs which may be more important to them than they would be to other individuals. 'Taste', in this sense, is based on personal interests, experiences and moral principles – aspects that determine people's worldviews. Apart from the audience's level of understanding of a film, the critical judging of a film involves the audience's ability to choose films consciously and curiously. According to the European Commission (EC), an educated, film literate audience will possess the skills and knowledge to "critically watch a film and to analyse its content, cinematography and technical aspects" (EC, 2017). German filmmaker, Wim Wenders (2017), claims that taste can be taught. He comments on 'Film Literacy' projects introduced by Creative Europe Media (2017) to develop a sustainable audience for European films in the short, medium and long term:

An audience with even a vague knowledge of the history and the richness of European cinema would and will be able to choose differently, would and will make other decisions about what it wants to feed on. Taste can be taught!.(Wenders, 2017).

A contrasting view is that of Vronsky (1925), who, almost a century ago, emphasised the role of intuition in film aesthetics and criticism, arguing that criticism denotes the translation of a work from the 'language of intuition' into the 'language of logic'. This statement reveals Vronsky's interest in the psychological aspects of the creative process, a recurring theme in the transpersonal theories of film artworks (Kaplan, 2005). This reference to the transpersonal dimensions of film (cinema), together with Vronsky's (1925) remark about the artist being the first critic of his work, evokes the question about who the artist is in filmmaking. This question is particularly relevant to large film sets, where an extended production team take collective responsibility for the creation of the final product. Traditionally, art is created as original work by one artist, and first presented to a group of carefully selected viewers. The invention of the camera changed this understanding: firstly, in the sense that the photographer acquires the artist's ability to capture reality. Secondly, further technological developments have involved, and continue to involve, reproducible films that are created for commercial purposes and mass public viewing. A second question that comes to my mind, is how filmmaking can be defined as an artform if it is reproducible? Literature on the work of art critic John Berger provides a possible answer, although Berger claims that the purpose of his publications has been to start a process of questioning (Berger, 1972:7).

Berger contends that “(t)he relation between what we see and what we know” – in other words, our understanding - “is never settled” (Berger, 1972:7). Apart from his profound influence on the popular understanding of art – in particular the visual image/moving visual image, Berger uses his position as public intellectual to speak out against social injustices. His approach to art is shared with the public eye through *Ways of Seeing*, a four-part BBC TV series which preceded his 1972 book with a similar title. The idea that “where and when we see something” affects our understanding of what we see, situates the act of seeing in a space-time context. According to Doraiswamy (2015), Berger and Bakhtin share the idea of dialogism, which can be explained as the use of images in a text of different viewpoints whose interactions or contradictions influence an individual’s interpretation of the text. The main difference is that Berger’s text comprises mostly visual images. Berger says that we only ‘see’ what we look at, and that our ‘looking’ is an act of choice which brings what we see within our reach, but this process is, however, not always physical (1972:8). Furthermore, “we are always looking at the relationship between things and ourselves” (Berger, 1972:9). These are significant aspects of the process of ‘seeing’ or in terms of the viewer or audience who is viewing a film exercising a choice, bringing what they see within their reach, although not in a physical way. These perspectives correspond with that of Valéry (1943), widely regarded for his concern with human consciousness, artistic form and the creative process. (Fig. 2.2). His explanation of the complex mutual understanding between the photographer and the person who is being photographed corresponds with that of Berger (1972), in particular his critical perspective on the gap between what we see and what we know.

Thus, based on the above views and aesthetic theories, I argue that the film image can be seen as a recreation or reproduction of reality, detached from its original space and time, and as able to be transferred to different socio-cultural, political or geographical contexts in digital format. Jay Ruby (1976) regards film as a medium of communication which contains a culturally specific symbol system that can be employed in diverse ways to make statements about the world. Likewise, Berger (1972:26) was of the view that the ways in which the successive images in a film follow one another together create an argument which cannot be undone. He argued that, if the new language of images were used differently, this language would, through its use, derive a new kind of power (1972:33). Glotov.2018:4 notes that Ruby (1976) presented film as a “false mirror to contemporary society” that had the ability to expose society’s complexity. The phrase implies that films, while depicting aspects of the society they were created in, were not necessarily accurate or truthful representations. They were seen as distorted or Ruby (1976) saw the potential for film to be used in teaching within the field

of social science to study sociology, to generate data on human behaviour, and to present social science research findings and theoretical statements. (Glotov, 2018:4). Mirrors usually reawaken the reflective practice: Bakhtin could be said to share an interest in mirror images with Berger, although in contrasting ways. Bakhtin was interested in the process of looking at oneself, which he claims is always interrupted by the critique of others and the response of oneself to those criticisms. He claimed this mediated look in the mirror differs from the way we view the world and the world returning our gaze. Berger (1973) differed from Bakhtin in his comments about the way artists look at their work in a mirror to see it anew. In so doing, often the mirror does not show only the hitherto unseen side of an item, but also oneself in relation to the item. It is important to understand that the main objectives of the aesthetic culture-oriented concept were not to deal with the 'film as a work of art', but to thoroughly understand its 'language'. In this process Tulodziecki and Silke (2012:48) emphasise "optical literacy" and "visual literacy" as the main objectives, focusing on the critical reflection of "both its contents and realisation".

2.3.4.3 The role of film literacy in intercultural understanding

The third competency, integral to the implementation of film literacy in foreign language classrooms (Blell & Lütge, 2004), is intercultural understanding. The importance of intercultural understanding is emphasised through initiatives such as the UNESCO Framework for Intercultural Competencies (2013) and the UNESCO project, "Developing e-learning resources for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding (2016), which forms an integral part of the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (2017). These initiatives correspond with the Action Plan and Roadmap for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). Prior to this, Kymlicka (2003) emphasised the urgency regarding current global developments which demand a thoughtful and systematic approach to intercultural citizenship education (Wagner & Byram, 2017). This approach involves a deep understanding of more than a collective set of shared cultural values, beliefs and behaviors. However, according to Kymlicka (2003), intercultural citizens must not only understand intercultural differences globally; they need to be able to engage with people in their local contexts who hold different constructs of meaning (. Different forms of culture are classified to clarify the meaning of culture in different contexts, such as formal, informal, and non-formal education. As an integral part of, and consequently shaped by a mediated world, 21st century-culture and contemporary media share a complex relationship. From a film literacy-perspective, it is possible to speak about film culture as comprising film theory, aesthetics, and criticism, together with film festivals

and award ceremonies, film schools, and museums that screen art-films to an elite group whose members share an interest in the artistic genre (Hagener, 2014:283–305). Film festivals and film archives are both key to justifying cinema (film) as the art of the future (Anderson, 2014), and as a dynamic cultural force. Descriptive definitions, such as European, French and Italian film culture, Hollywood, Soviet Cinema (Ryabchikova, 2014:118–140), Bollywood, and film societies (de Cuir Jr., 2014:162–179), among other definitions, provide a social, historical and geographical context to film culture. Within the film industry, specific intercultural relations exist between the producer, director, production team, actors, and audience. Prescriptive stereotypes and role-bound actors within particular film genres are part of film culture. However, in a real-world context, stereotyping and othering – viewing the world in terms of categories and ascribing fixed identities to other people different from oneself - should be avoided. Thus, issues of voice and power form part of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009).

Our 21st century life-worlds are becoming increasingly interconnected. People from widely diverse contexts and backgrounds now link up via social media platforms regularly, whether to attend work-related meetings, webinars, study portals, or everyday social interactions. Particularly during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, due to lock-down regulations and social distancing, and even now in its aftermath, people have been forced to expose themselves to the media and to interpretations of the messages they encounter and receive. The ability to access, critically evaluate, create, and share information clearly and effectively across cultural and language barriers has become essential. These competencies are the key 21st century-skills required to understand the interconnected character of the world and to maintain complex human relationships. Unfortunately, assumptions about these human interactions limit the intercultural situations to encounters between members of different national cultures (Holliday, 2011). One needs to understand that every situation in which we interact with a person who does not share our cultural values, beliefs, and constructions of meaning, is potentially intercultural. Deardorff (2009:20) defines intercultural competence as the “ability to mobilise and deploy relevant attitudes, skills and knowledge in order to interact effectively and appropriately in different intercultural situations”. A sensitivity towards cultural diversity and understanding through listening, is recognised by UNESCO (2013; Deardorff, 2020) as key to the development of an understanding across differences.

Skills, such as empathy (Higman, 2016), listening for understanding, effective communication, critical thinking, adaptability, conflict resolution, and tolerance of

ambiguity are essential to preparing individuals to cope with those unexpected online situations which form part of their everyday connected world. Edick (2017:9) sees these skills as closely related to civic mindedness, and to democratic values and human rights. Furthermore, these skills align with the description of critical citizenship offered by Johnson and Morris (2010:77), and by Costandius (2012:12) as “the promotion of a common set of shared values such as tolerance, diversity, human rights and democracy” (Johnson & Morris, 2010:88; Costandius, 2012:12). “(I)ntercultural communication” forms part of Osler and Starkey’s checklist for effective citizen projects (1999:213), a list which includes “cooperative practice”, “independent reasoning” and “critical awareness” (Johnson & Morris, 2010:86). Similarly, DeJaeghere (2009) argues for an intercultural approach to experiential learning that transcends the traditional intercultural understanding, and which includes learning about and respecting the “other” (DeJaeghere, 2009:230). Intercultural interaction, in my opinion, does not verify any form of understanding, neither does that exposure to the media (Potter, 1998) and interaction with people of diverse cultural contexts imply or guarantee intercultural learning (Amir, 1969; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Learning happens all the time, and in diverse contexts, often unconsciously, particularly in times of knowledge work in which life-long learning is integral to an interconnected economy (Bennett, 2012; Deardorff, 2020). Emerging technologies offer access to an abundance of new knowledge communities, while simultaneously creating a need for individuals to keep up with a fast-changing society. The acquisition of an intercultural approach in this context requires a conscious, structured, and continuous process (Bennett, 2012; Deardorff, 2020), facilitated by experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). The development of intercultural understanding implies a willingness to deal with diversity through perceiving human values and behaviour from wider angles, rather than imagining the self to be normal or superior (Deardorff, 2009; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Such an attitude requires a sense of “inherent mindfulness” (Dängeli, 2019:84), which forms part of Open Awareness and nurtures the ability to adapt and regulate one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions according to the situation.

Research findings by Deardorff (2009) indicate that the non-formal education sector shows the strongest experience in facilitating those skills-development initiatives which enable individuals to acquire intercultural competencies. Based on my experience in both formal and non-formal education in a South African context, I take issue with Deardorff’s (2009) statement. Apart from and in addition to developing intercultural understanding, I found that their active engagement in the filmmaking project introduced the participants in my research to opportunities to develop critical thinking and reflective practice-skills. This active engagement was found to promote creative

learning, a cognitive ability which, in my view, has become vital to those fostering life-long skills of originality, endurance, and adaptability in the process of managing ever-changing situations. Central to my research is the question, what role does film literacy play in this process? As has been mentioned, an increased awareness of, and empathy towards, different cultures on the part of individual(s) has the potential to cultivate their willingness to understand the cultural differences that exist between organisations, such as the film industry, educational institutions, and differences between the youth's cultural identities. Barrett (2015:3) refers to the power of film as a technologically evolving art form when he contends that "it is a language that, a few cultural considerations aside, all of your students can employ to interpret and create meaning, regardless of their decoding abilities". Bazalgette (2009:4) however, contended that, in times of technological transformation, public discourse has tended to become preoccupied with the technologies themselves to the extent that the "textual, social and cultural practices which are being affected, and in some cases generated, by these technologies" have been misplaced. Bazalgette (2009) developed this argument: in this context moving image media, and even traditional reading and writing skills, have lost their significance in debates about cultural and technological change.

2.3.4.4 Communication and the development of film literacy

The fourth competency, described by Blell and Lütge (2004) as integral to the development of film literacy in foreign language classrooms, is purposeful communication between people. It is a given that communication is integral to human interaction to make meaning of the world we inhabit. Thus, our worldviews denote and influence the ways in which we understand the world, embodied in our values, beliefs, behaviour, and expressions in multiple forms. In this context, both language and literacy are key elements of effective communication, particularly on an intercultural level (Matveev, 2002; Deardorff, 2009; Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). Due to technological innovations that constantly change our modes of communication, our understanding of literacy is an evolving construct. While the nature of knowledge has changed, so has the meaning of success. The more complex the world becomes, the more creative we need to be in the strategic use of technology to realise our aspirations. A range of opposing views regarding the use of media and technology is communicated by influential people on the World Wide Web (www). Deepak Chopra (2019) believes that technology is an aspect of human evolution to be employed to create a more just and peaceful world, while nearly 60 years ago, Malcolm X (1965) warned against the power of the media "to make the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent" through "controlling the minds of the masses". For young adults living in a technologically

mediated world, literacy encompasses a range of abilities: to “identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts” (UNESCO, 2004; 2017; Montoya, 2018). Acquiring these abilities, involves an ongoing learning process, enabling individuals to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential across multiple areas. The kind of flexible attitude required for this enables individuals to participate fully in their communities and in the 21st century global society. If they wish to keep up with the changing needs of young adults, educators need to embrace the assumption that “all social practices should be respected as vehicles of learning” (Lee, 2011:262; Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). These include, but are not limited to, “online affinity spaces” (Gee, 2005; Curwood, 2013:425), spaces which are “physical, virtual, or blended spaces” (Curwood, 2013:425) of interactive learning around a common interest or activity to facilitate different thought processes. Extensive research in the fields of literacy across various disciplines acknowledges the significance of multi-literacy (New London Group, 1996; 2014; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Kapur, 2019), and the use by educators of non-traditional ways of learning (Lee, 2011:258). This inquiry emphasise literacy as a term that “describes all the skills people need, to do their jobs and to function in society” (Ellingson, 1998:52). This expanded definition of literacy suggests a new kind of multimodal literacy (Kress, 2009) to access the wide variety of visual information that surrounds us every day, as a result of new communication technologies. Film as a multimodal form of expression is now widely recognised as a communication medium with the ability to make powerful statements about the world (Ruby, 1976; Barrett, 2015; Eco, 2016; Glotov, 2018:4). However, there continues to be a clear explanation of what constitutes film literacy skills (Wegner, 1977; Glotov, 2018:4), although people, including young people, are constantly exposed to moving images and the effects of moving images in their daily lives. In this context, Glotov (2018:32), in his study involving international educators, identifies the lack of critical analysis tools and skills amongst young adults. In addition, in my view, there exists the need to explore how arts-based projects can acquire a position in research contexts beyond simply being artistic projects; that these projects need to be approached and understood from more than one viewpoint and by diverse communities.

Video artist, Paula Albuquerque (2016), explores the aesthetic potential of video surveillance as a form of filmmaking, and the “consequent impact on processes of subjectification in urban spaces” (Spronk, 2016:85). In her research, as a ‘maker’ of filmic material, Albuquerque (2016) manifests the ability to construct a problem informed by the process of filmmaking. In turn, this enables her to provide a solution to

uniting artistic and academic cultures, in addition, making relevant contributions to academic debates. Spronk (2016:36) emphasises the fact that “artistic researchers’ practice is materially engaged”, thus opening up “new perspectives on problems that are not usually handled ‘artistically’ by academics” (Spronk, 2016:36). In Albuquerque’s research practice the relationship between the maker (a technically skilled filmmaker) and the material (footage produced by open access webcams) is clear. How she uses the tools (a computer and editing software), and applies her technical skills, determines the outcomes. For Albuquerque the application of technical skills comprises a structured, rational method of “slicing and putting things together, and then analysing and finally creating a certain result” (2016: 17–19).

Theatre and filmmaker Jan Geers’ (2016) dissertation, instead of being on the value and impact that artistic projects can have in social situations, is in the form of how a documentary can be a tool that serves a dual function: formulating a problem and working with this problem in specific cultures (Baxandall, 1985:39; Spronk, 2016). American visual and performance artist, Jeremiah Day’s (2016) performances are captured and published on Vimeo. Challenging the boundaries of conventional performances, where the artist on the stage is viewed by the audience from their space, Day’s audience become participants in his performances, both on and off the stage. Issues of the physical and abstract understanding of space are addressed by using concrete objects and physical movements. Apart from existing as artworks, Day’s performances aim to encourage discourse on social and political questions. These artistic practices thus become tools that allow both Geers (2016) and Albuquerque (2016) to combine their “inward-directed action” (thinking) and “outward-directed action” (doing), to conduct research (Ingold, 1993:432). Spronk (2016:46) posits that art and research are “inextricable parts of the same correspondence and thus mutually shape each other”. Furthermore, these artistic researchers start their investigations without any predetermined outcomes in mind. Instead, their ideas are shaped and emerge within the correspondence. Albuquerque underlines the ‘autonomy’ of artistic practice in the process of ‘translating’ the artwork to different communities comprising artists, academia, as well as public audiences (Spronk, 2016:64). For Borgdorff (2012:193–194), the artworks in artistic research are the epistemic objects because “as long as artworks and their concepts remain vague, they generate a productive tension: in reaching out for the unknown, they become tools of research” (Spronk, 2016:15).

The value of film as an evolving communication medium is determined by its internal “culturally specific symbol system” (Ruby, 1976; Glotov, 2018:4) which can be applied in various ways to address world issues. Ruby further suggests that this unique quality

of film strengthens its use in education within the field of social sciences. Film enables researchers to study social behaviour, society, patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture that surrounds everyday life in real-life contexts. Accordingly, through critical analysis of data derived from footage, captured during fieldwork, researchers can develop a body of knowledge about social order and social change. Despite these understandings, academic research outcomes are still presented as mainly theoretical statements. I argue that the use of film-material as multimodal presentation strategy in combination with visual maps for the dissemination of research, can improve the clarity of research findings. Artworks, poetry, performance-art and filmmaking are not mere outcomes of the making process. Filmmaking, in the context of my research, serves as a 'productive situation' (Spronk, 2016:69) through which the research is conducted and thought processes developed, in the course of which critical reflection is facilitated. This application finds itself in the position of artistic research or arts-based research practice and is discussed in Chapter Four. Evaluating these hybrid outcomes (Star & Griesemer, 1989:388-389; Spronk, 2016:70) turns out to be a complex endeavour, one involving the questioning of academic communities' film-literacy competencies. In a similar way that different viewers respond in different ways to film screened in different contexts, the artistic/ arts-based researcher deals with different audiences during the research process. Hence, there is the responsibility of the artistic researcher needing to be able to communicate in a number of "languages" – including the languages of imagery, music, dance (Greene, 1995b:57), and with diverse audiences comprising the art world, academia and the public.

The idea that everyday technology transforms the ways in which we see and are seen by others, is by no means new. Ongoing research is required to explore how, for example, technology is shaping the way we see the world around us. Follow-up studies on this inquiry can provide valuable insights into participants' research-experiences in their personal, as well as social contexts. Students reflecting on a 2017 film literacy course in Finland described the benefits of becoming film literate: they saw it as having improved their critical thinking skills, as promoting their understanding of film, and that it had developed their abilities to analyse films and produce their own (Glotov, 2018:29-37). Since this is an international course aimed at students from various countries, the expanding of cultural knowledge and establishing of intercultural perspectives would be valuable outcomes (Glotov, 2018:33). For these students, becoming aware of the differences and similarities in film culture, and being able to present their newly created understandings at a closing seminar, showed the positive impact of their having gained film literacy skills (Glotov, 2018:34). Similarly, the potential of film to provide a depth of expression far greater than through spoken language (Umberto Eco, 2016) has been

and is widely recognised in international film literacy programs (March & Bearne, 2008; Bazalgette, 2009; Brooks, Cooper & Penke, 2012; Barrett, 2015). International research initiatives, such as the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), now use the term 'film literacy' in relation to the power of images to describe an extremely rich form of communication that transcends language barriers (Barrett, 2015). Results of a survey by ACER (Barrett, 2015) found that the application of film at the time remained confined to the primary level literacy classroom. A further emerging question addresses the relevance of film literacy skills for individuals who do not consider embarking on a career as filmmaker. Reports on measurable improvements in critical and creative thinking skills (Marsh & Bearne, 2008; Bazalgette, 2009; Brooks, Cooper & Penke, 2012) provide a temporary answer. However, these findings relating to film literacy as a field of academic interest continue to be based on studies done in literacy classrooms. In response to these findings, Barrett (2015) suggests that the relevance of the film medium itself in pedagogy requires further research. Likewise, Oxford University (2020) upholds their claim that their course in film and media studies is particularly suitable as a basis for further academic research into film. They claim that the analytical skills development offered by their film and media course is relevant to wide-ranging career opportunities concerned with "film and visual media, for example film programming, film reviewing, film production, design and teaching". (Oxford University, 2020: <https://www.universityguru.com/c/university-of-oxford-oxford/film-aesthetics-mst>).

Arguments for the significance of 21st century media education redirect the attention from film and television as instructional (Bazalgette, 2009:4; Glotov, 2018:5) and illustrative (Champoux, 1999; Glotov, 2018) audio-visual tools to a renewed focus on new media, digital technologies and web 5.0. Apart from the basic functional and operational skills, new skillsets and knowledge are required to decode and access both old and new media. Likewise, Livingstone (2004) points out 'accessibility' as one of four key components in understanding media literacy. Although the significance and distinctiveness of the moving image as both mode of expression and communication are recognised (Bazalgette, 2009:4), public access to the production and distribution of films has been limited to film corporations. However, the revolution in access to moving image media, including videos, news footage, commercials, training films, home movies and shortfilm, among other examples of moving image media, has only entered the media literacy field during the past decade. The recent widespread accessibility of moving image production and distribution to the public has accelerated with the development of the digital world, a world comprising of devices that impact every part of our lives. With innovation and advancement having implications for society, the

immediate public concern focuses on issues such as 'mobile phone bullying' and the online accessibility to the youth of sexually explicit material. On the macro level, media corporations are challenged by issues such as copyright violation, commercial misuse of extensive moving image records, as well as the "changing economics of production and distribution" (Bazalgette, 2009:5). In the longer term, however, "this revolution promises enormous opportunities, as well as challenges, for education" (ibid.).

Having discussed four competencies, namely awareness and diversity, film aesthetics and criticism, intercultural understanding, and purposeful communication as valuable contributions of film literacy in foreign language classrooms (Blell & Lütge, 2004), the next section I focus on the value of film as educational resource.

2.4.1 The relevance of film literacy to the development of critical self-awareness

For purposes of this research, 'film literacy' denotes a distinctive dimension of human communication, transcending language barriers through multimodal media to identify, analyse, interpret, create, and impart knowledge in a clear and powerful expressive way. The relevance of film literacy as a different approach from that of mainstream pedagogy towards the development of critical self-awareness, is discussed with reference to critical pedagogy according to Gramsci (1971; 1977), Freire (1972), Giroux (2003), and Walker (2018). The sustainability of emerging models of alternative pedagogy (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008; Bazalgette, 2009) concerning post-school contexts beyond classroom settings (Head & Jaap, 2016), and non-formal education is questioned.

With increasing criticism of contemporary South African education regarding the deficit of fundamental 21st century-skills (WEF, 2018), together with the need for urgent systemic change (M'Rithaa, 2017; Stassen, 2017; WEF, 2018) and a dearth of research and innovation across both formal and informal platforms (Nzimande, 2019), alternative strategies to formal education are attracting notice and rising in popularity (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:8). Noteworthy in this criticism and this leaning towards alternative pedagogical strategies is the absence of any reference to non-formal education. From a global perspective, the problem is partially a question of lack of adequate resources, or a case of available resources being poorly utilised (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:12). Similarly, Moulton, Mundy, Walmond and Williams (2002) review the difficulties inherent in the educational reform experience in Africa:

... there are serious difficulties inherent in implementing the comprehensive, multifaceted educational policy reforms being proposed by the international community ... Even if the time, funds, and other resources had been adequate [which they never were] however, it is unlikely the reforms would have been implemented as planned. (Moulton, Mundy, Walmond and Williams. 2002: 2, 210).

However, the triggering argument here is the fundamental problem regarding the 'traditional model' of education. This model, encompassing 'universal forms of formal schooling', does not correspond with what is now understood as best human learning practices (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Olson, 2003; Abadzi, 2006; Farrell & Hartwell, 2008), and the model does not match the learning requirements of vast numbers of youth, particularly those in non-formal contexts. Too little attention is given to the individual's needs regarding continuous learning. Traditional forms of curriculum rarely signify possibility for youth concerned with making sense of their own lives (Greene, 1971:253). Furthermore, arguments from a critical pedagogical perspective claim that traditional forms of schooling are being reproduced, that they "remain in place because they were designed, and continue, to serve the interests of those who already hold positions of power in society – to change them significantly would be to threaten those relations of power and influence" (Gramsci, 1977; Davies, 1996; Giddens, 1997:583; Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:15). In spite of these arguments, international research programmes, although apparently unable to significantly engender large-scale changes, are found to be achieving remarkable results in even some of the poorest communities by following "a radically alternative form of pedagogy" (Pitt, 2004; Haiplik, 2004; Chabbot, 2006; Farrell, 2004b; and Hartwell, 2006). In spite of these initiatives, a knowledge gap remains, as some of the pending key questions indicate, the first and most fundamental question being the "institutionalization question" (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:36). This implies that, if those responsible for the planning and implementation of these radical alternative programmes have not been able to meet this challenge, then the following questions would have been of little relevance. Evidence from standard literature on educational change suggests that neither change nor education is supposed to occur 'outside' the traditional model of education. However, in "all of these cases (Pitt, 2004; Haiplik, 2004; Chabbot, 2006; Farrell, 2004b; and Hartwell, 2006) people have managed, within or alongside the bureaucratic systems that have long enshrined the forms of formal schooling, to design and implement successfully ..." (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:19) some form of the emergent model of alternative pedagogy. Such educational alternative groups are emphasised as being relatively small, and within them a close relationship between learners and teachers, and a sense of a community of inquiry is evidenced (Garrison,

2007; Waghid, 2016). Noteworthy is the fact that, although the planning and implementation-design are subject to local patterns and traditions, which differ in each case, they have all succeeded in working. Further research in the form of detailed case studies on the particulars of their success is required (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008:36).

The second question, the pedagogical one, is, how exactly do these youths manage to learn as well as they actually do? Despite existing evidence from research, and from a learning theory perspective, it remains unclear why these afore-mentioned programmes have worked so well, particularly given that none of the pedagogical concepts employed is particularly new. According to Farrell and Hartwell (2008:37) the problem lies in the practical implementation of pedagogical concepts in formal education contexts on a large scale. This in turn highlights the planning question, and an important fact that some people have actually considered ways in which to combine international research findings with their own local traditional and cultural knowledge.

Thirdly, Farrell and Hartwell problematise teacher education in their questioning of the specific ways in which these adults have managed to master the implementation of “a radically alternative form of pedagogy” (2008:37) so successfully and so short a time. They speculate that these teacher development practices are good reflections of ‘andragogy’ (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1989) within these alternative programmes. Unfortunately, existing literature on these alternative programmes is extremely laudatory and uncritical and misses the point that the work done is experimental with varying results among and within the programmes. A critical literature is thus required to reflect on these continuous learning developments. As many of these successful pedagogical methods of non-formal education are brought into formal schools, the original distinction between formal and non-formal education is challenged (Rogers, 2004; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008:37). A further issue is the fact that academic terms used in traditional formal schooling contexts are now inadequate to describe new pedagogical developments. A valuable understanding might be that there is no single solution to the problem, and that many different people in different contexts are learning from their own experience. To further explore the questions outlined above, a more extensive international and comparative research effort across different cultures is required.

In my opinion, the current model of education in South Africa is one far removed from the everyday-life realities of young citizens. The reason for this, I would argue, is because the stakeholders, policy makers, and curriculum planners are not actively involved in teaching and learning processes. Accordingly, critical pedagogy needs to

be concerned with rethinking the signification of power and authority and critically evaluating the role of continuous learning (non-formal education) in a 21st century-context. Critical pedagogy has widely been researched within different educational contexts, its primary aim being to remove hegemony (Gramsci, 1977) by challenging dominant ideologies and practices of hierarchy and control. This research considers, the emerging role of learning as a significant agent for social change and transformation. In focussing on management learning and education, critical pedagogy considers “wider discursive structures and power relations into the learning process” (Cunliffe, 2002; Ayikoru & Park, 2019:6). It draws attention to critical and reflective practice as an essential education focus (Cunliffe, 2004), acts as a “mechanism for problematizing values and learning” (Dehler, 2009: 33), and argues that student engagement in moral reflective practice (Hibbert & Cunliffe, 2015) could offer a way of assisting students in their process of becoming responsible managers and leaders.

Links between film/filmmaking and critical pedagogy can be found throughout literature on life-long and experiential learning (Ellsworth, 1989; Gibson, 1999; Lund, 2005; Giroux, 2011; Head & Jaap, 2016; Ayikoru and Park, 2019). Ayikoru and Park (2019:8) refer to the “socially constructed, power-laden and ideological nature of films”, a characteristic which has the potential to be of critically relevant to kindling students’ interests in critical and complex issues considered to be of importance to their learning processes. Through *Real to Reel*, a moving image education project undertaken in Scotland, Head and Jaap (2016) aim to provide support to post-school youths who are not involved in any form of further education, training or employment. With reference to such initiatives, Head and Jaap (2016:13) cite Giroux (2011) who asserts that contexts presented, depicted and explored by film and other moving images, enable young people to develop “more critical and expansive views on topics that they consider meaningful”. Critical pedagogy is widely criticised and problematised by various authors (Ellsworth, 1989; Gibson, 1999; Lund, 2005; Ayikoru & Park, 2019:7) for “being a form of elitist Marxism, simplistic binarism (e.g., the oppressed vs the oppressors), or as being impractical beyond the classroom setting”. Lund (2005:333) specifically recalls that “critical pedagogy is characterised by some as a patronising and even hypocritical model in which a teacher dispenses power to those students whose political viewpoints are deemed acceptable”. Furthermore, Ayikoru and Park (2019:7) posit that it is the task of practising critical pedagogy is a challenging one due to disparities that “often exist in teachers’ intentions for introducing different or critical approaches to teaching and students’ expectations, beliefs or values (e.g., Hagen et al., 2003; Fenwick, 2005). Walker (2008b:156) argues that we cannot guarantee that transformation or change will take place in an educational setting, while she also states that “[w]e ought to provide

the conditions – ‘educate in such a way’ – that educational development that supports human flourishing is enabled”. Much has been written/said about classroom situations, but very little about what happens beyond high school tuition, particularly during the in-between time-space prior to further education/ higher education? This question can be extended to the period after tertiary study, to lifelong learning. In this case the question becomes, which curriculum is followed? During the recent lockdown situation in response to the COVID19 pandemic, it became clear that individuals were and are able to continue their learning programmes at home. Physical presence in a classroom is no longer a prerequisite for quality learning, and a range of online support was and is provided by various teaching and learning institutions. Once again, the question is raised: what about post-school youth? To address their “sometimes difficult and multifarious needs” (Head & Jaap, 2016:2), provision is often undertaken by organisations following a more informal model and emphasising the youths’ particular, context related agenda, rather than attending to the demands of a formal curriculum or examination system (McGregor & Mills, 2012; Nind, Boorman and Clarke, 2012; Vadeboncoeur, 2006). In this context, Bazalgette, (2009:23) describes moving image education (MIE) as “ongoing training and developmental work”; “‘all about’ making films”; and “essentially a method rather than a curriculum area in its own right”. Bazalgette continues to say that it is even more important to establish a balanced teacher-approach to MIE in the longer term, including the input and advisory services from education professionals. The continued existence of projects undertaken outside the formal curriculum often depends on the willingness of the trainers (teachers/educators) to accept a collaborative approach in which leadership of the project is an effort shared between the participating youths and adults. Although the *Real to Reel* study report (Head & Jaap, 2016:15) acknowledges the value of the project-experience for the participants, the sustainability of such a project, situated in a non-formal education context, is questionable. The sustainability aspect had been one of my personal concerns about the development potential of this study, a concern shared by the participants in their post-project reflections. They expressed a general feeling of the unlikelihood of sustainability of the project being in its present form. This indicated a possible waning of enthusiasm on their part. According to Head and Jaap (2016:15), enthusiasm and curiosity are essential drivers for supporting the sustainability of arts-based education projects beyond main-stream education.

2.4.2 The relevance of film literacy in the development of transpersonal growth

The term, ‘transpersonal’ is defined as “experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of

humankind, life, psyche and cosmos” (Anderson, 1998; Grof, 1972; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). Anderson’s (1991:6) concept of ‘imagined communities’ recalls Dewey’s (1927) seeing imagination as key to “break through the crust of conventionalised and routine consciousness” (Kaomea, 2014:15; Shklovskij, 1965:2; Waghid & Hibbert, 2018:63). Similarly, in my research project, I see consider that it has not been the participants’ short films in themselves representing a new concept, but the awakening in them of a new concept of “emotion, perception and appreciation” (Dewey, 1927:184; Nussbaum, 2011). For understanding to reach a transpersonal level, people should become the subject of a life-long learning process, indicating active engagement (Greene, 1971).

Transpersonal growth implies a whole-person approach, an individual, or individuals collaboratively, focusing on the importance of questioning concepts such as value, meaning and purpose, a process which, by implication, may lead to social applications towards a more sustainable world (Anderson, 1991; 1998; 2011; Dängeli, 2019; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). Transpersonal values (Rowe & Netzer, 2012) characterised by a purpose to establish a safe and inclusive environment, while at the same time being sensitive towards people from all walks of life, correspond with the common set of shared values in Johnson and Morris’s framework for critical citizenship education (2010:77). For the post-school participants in their new roles as cinematographers of their individual short films, a transpersonal emphasis, addressing the emotional and spiritual aspects of human development, is believed to be essentially transformational (Rowe & Netzer, 2012).

For purposes of my inquiry, I defined transpersonal pedagogy as a distinctive approach to education theory and praxis, relating to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self. In this sense, I see film literacy as involving more than digital- and media literacy by extending experiences of a personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment. Film literacy competencies seen as integral to transpersonal pedagogy could provide the essential skills required by the 21st century workplace, those skills seen as necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education. In ways similar to the MIE-study of Head and Jaap (2016), this current study aimed to create a space for developing ideas towards ongoing learning opportunities for those youths who have completed compulsory education or are left with limited or no qualifications and for whom traditional routes to improved situations are unavailable.

2.4.3 The potential impact of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth on post-school youth

I intended my current argument about the post-school youth's role as change agents in their societies to be realised through transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003), informed by their critical self-awareness of their positionality. Freire, (1970:36) explains praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it". This research was intended to go beyond the limited scope of Freire's notion of critical consciousness – to "read the world through the word" (1970:34). Participants' reflections in 'and on this research focused on the relationship between critical consciousness and transformative praxis. Dewey (1910:2) noted that "reflective thought involves not simply a sequence of ideas but a consequence". Dewey's (1933) views about the practical application of education are echoed in the process of "open awareness" (Dängeli, 2019:4), reframing the individual's interconnectedness with others and his or her environment as a means to "expand one's way of knowing" (Dängeli, 2019:11). Open awareness (OA) promotes a perceptive capability, "characterized by the integration of the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of a human being" (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004:248). Dängeli (2019:19) relates open awareness to transpersonal growth, while Moss (in Dängeli, 2019:145) asserts that "Open Awareness is a state of BEING not DOING." Moss further describes OA as a "life skill that can benefit everyone". Contrariwise, the participants in the current research brought their short-films into existence by rather by doing through the creative process. I would argue that the bringing-forth process does not belong to the film in itself, but to the artist (cinematographer) (Heidegger, 2008:56; 1977:5). Hence the focus in this research is on the interconnectedness between being and doing. Similar to Anderson's (1991) discussion of the creation of "imagined communities", Appadurai's "mediascapes" (1996:3) refer to information that is transferred digitally across interconnected networks, embedded within cultural, social, political and historical 'codes' that influence how individuals figure their life-worlds.

Both critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth have become essential capacities particularly for post-school youth, living in an age of uncertainty where the ways they live, learn, work and interact are continually changing (Belshaw, 2012; Dängeli, 2019; Smidt, 2015). Critical self-awareness through the encouragement of critical reflection on what and how learners learn, as well as how they act upon and 'live' their new perspectives, I see as potentially leading to personal transformation. A study by Devika Naidoo (2021:19–32), responds to the fact that "three million youth in South Africa are not in education, employment or training (NEETS)". This study,

situated in a youth development and organisation centre in a Black township of Johannesburg, explored post-school youths' formal schooling experiences and aspirations for the future (Devika, 2021:19). It was found that "the issue of post school youth requires not only alternative post school programmes but also attention to schooling practices within formal secondary school education" (Devika, 2021:19). 'Post-school youth' in my inquiry refers to individuals between the ages of 18 and 24, at the time of their engagement in the shortfilm-making project, unemployed and not involved in any form of formal education known to me. Although the unemployment rate reported by the municipality, which was the study's site, shows a decline from 12.2 per cent in 2001 to 11.3 per cent in 2011 (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2014:10), the Further Education and Training (FET) dropout rate of 40.3 per cent in 2013 was the highest compared to other municipalities within the region (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2014:5). Considering that semi- and unskilled labour comprises 41 per cent of the total workforce in the Langeberg area, the 4.3 per cent decline in employment within the skills sector poses a significant concern (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:22) within Langeberg communities. My argument was that, instead of blaming advancing technological development, amongst other factors, for the recurring job losses, the focus should be placed on inventing new learning opportunities. Alternatively, I considered that post-school youth should empower themselves by engaging in skill-building opportunities to become innovators, creators and entrepreneurs, exploring own adaptability to professions that have not yet been invented. I see post-school youth as needing to become aware of the fact that learning does not only depend on the creation of new knowledge, but also on "adopting some course of action" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:108) or agency. I see it as essential for the post-school App Generation (Gardner & Davis, 2013) or Gen Zers (Finch, 2015; Stillman & Stillman, 2017), living in a "phigital" world (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76) with no borderline between the physical and the digital world, to become critically aware of the fact that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime. Post-school participants in this study were intended to form a community of inquiry (Garrison, 2007; Waghid, 2016) based on their shared interest in short filmmaking. Within this "affinity space" (Gee, 2004) potential learning opportunities have been enhanced by acknowledging the diverse skills and talents of each participant, as well as their potential within this "metagogical learning community" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012:5; Netzer, 2013). Their shortfilms were not produced in an "empty space" (Efland, 2002:39), but became a reflection of something held deeply within themselves. This 'something' might even imply the ability to engage in a mentorship initiative to share newly acquired knowledge within a broader context.

2.5 Spaces for further research

Based on its currency in the global education context, the use of the term ‘film literacy’ has become varied and widespread. Media and film literacy (Andriopoulou, 2016; Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966), “Moving image education”, (Bazalgette, 2009:3; Marsh & Bearne, 2008:4), “media literacy” (Harshman, 2017:70), digital literacy (Bourdieu, 2016), and even “mediascapes” (Appadurai, 1996:3) refer to the worldwide movement of media, due to globalisation, and how global media provides a sense of connectedness when distant cultures ‘meet’ each other through digital media. In sub-Saharan Africa, film literacy, as a field of academic interest, is still emerging. Research evidence of the use of feature films in teaching about Africa remains limited (Ansell, 2002). This limited evidence includes the use of a South African film to engage secondary school youth to gender and HIV-issues (Ngcobo, 2012), the production of a feature length drama about everyday health risks of the HIV/AIDS disease in Tanzania (Harman, 2016), and filmmaking as art therapy (Taylor, 2017). In rural South Africa, examples include cellphilm projects with learners and teachers exploring issues of gender-based violence and HIV education (Dockney, 2009; MacEntee, Burkholder and Schwab-Cartas, 2016). The term, “cellphilm” has been coined by Dockney and Tomaselli (2009) to define a video filmed on a mobile phone. However, Dockney and Tomaselli (2009) still find it problematic to formulate a fixed definition of the term, due to the diverse ways in which individuals and communities have produced films on their mobile devices. In general, these cellphilms show personal reflections using participatory video and community-based research (Mitchell & De Lange, 2011; Schwab-Cartas, 2012; Schwab-Cartas and Mitchell, 2014; MacEntee, et al., 2016). MacEntee reports on her presentations of cellphilms produced by South African girls about South African contexts that evoke issues of “race, intersectionality, and deficit assumptions about African girlhood” (2016:11) at academic conferences in the Global North. Although earlier research refers to southern African youth as knowledge producers, these studies are limited to critical language and literature within a new literacy of HIV and AIDS (Mitchell, Stuart, De Lange, Moletsane, Buthelezi, Larkin, & Flicker, 2009). MacEntee et al. (2016:113) further discuss their use of Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), a framework which refers to “[a]n understanding of how teaching and learning can change when particular technologies are used in particular ways” (Koehler & Mishra, 2009:65). As an example, MacEntee et al. (2016:113) describe the research results of a cellphilm production workshop, in the course of which a particular group of teachers developed “a level of awareness about the need to engage responsibly – professionally and personally – with visual media”. In a culturally diverse country, such as South Africa, economic inequality creates for its citizens

different worlds, life experiences, and outlooks. An economic impact study was commissioned by the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), which aimed to quantify the economic impact of the South African film and television industry between January 2013 and March 2017. Findings of the economic impact study (2017) show an increase in job creation from 5 000 South African film industry jobs per annum in 2013 to 21 000 jobs in 2017. Yet, despite the quantity of research evidence, there remains a dearth of research in the field of film literacy as a distinctive learning field to provide post-school youth with an opportunity to become aware of their potentialities and gain ownership of their learning processes. It is my view that such an approach has the potential to advance the capabilities necessary for students to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society.

In the light of these insights, four spaces for further exploration are identified by the researcher which relate to: thinking differently about educational research practices; methodology-in-becoming, alternative ways of knowing, and population.

2.5.1 Thinking differently about educational research practice

I have found there to be a practical-knowledge gap (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014; Miles, 2017:4) in prior research on different ways of working and knowing in contemporary research practices, together with a lack of rigorous research in prior literature. Some of these unexplored forms of knowledge production appear to be lacking in “recording creative production in a way that captures moments of reflection-in-action and -practice” and this has direct implications on the design of the research project and the method of presenting the outcomes (Schön, 1983; Scrivener, 2002). The field of education methodology is ripe for an investigation of practical focus research on the “dual nature of critical and experiential knowledges” (Gibson, 2015:4; Gough-Brady, 2019:181). Many prior studies focus on the theoretical aspects of the field of art-science interactions (Elkins, 2017), labelling “filmic research” as “problematic and “unpredictable” (Wolfe, 2017:430). However, there are also very few practical studies in the field of (post) qualitative inquiry. I consider my study to represent an important and valuable investigation in the context of transdisciplinary arts-science-technology collaborative practice. Such an investigation of these issues is important because previous artistic modes of inquiry have taken a subordinate position to academic theory, and have often not been accepted as legitimate, academic forms of research (Burgin, 2006:101). Furthermore, previous theoretical research has focused primarily on the distinction “between fact and artefact as given, while missing the process...” (Latour & Woolgar, 1986:236), on the application of concepts and theories to explicate

the knowledge practices of artistic research (Spronk, 2016:14), and on the application of artistic skills to visually communicate complex scientific artefacts (Roughley, Smith & Wilkinson, 2019:226), Very little practical research has been done on the arts-based doctorate as an emerging genre within academic research (Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2011:252/2018).

2.5.2 Methodology-in-becoming

The researcher also identified a methodological gap in prior research. This relates to the position arts-based methods hold within academic research. There exists a lack of developmental arts-based methodologies within the general boundaries of the phenomenographic approach. As a critique, I find the traditional use of interviews to collect all data in a single phase (Green & Bowden, 2009:61; Bahn & Barratt-Pugh, 2011) too restrictive, and I therefore incorporated a multimodal arts-based project to capture the data (Sullivan, 2005) in three phases. Adopting the developmental principles, designed by Pam Green and John Bowden (2009), this research methodology replaces the typical in-depth interviews and analyses of transcripts with individual short-films, created by the participants within a semi-rural South African context. In this inquiry I seek to establish a new inquiry on research designs with an arts-based approach. I seek to extend the understandings of the cyclic interactive process between the research practice and communication of research outcomes by addressing the gaps with a variation in the research methodologies by combining both experiential and analytical knowledge. I see the use of filmmaking as an audio-visual process as expanding the way research outcomes can be communicated; it further opens the possibility for implicit knowledge to gain meaning and make the knowledge produced through the arts-based project more accessible, both to the researcher and to the communities to whom the project is communicated.

2.5.3 Alternative ways of knowing

A case study conducted by Adams, Farrelly and Holland (2017) in the Zambezi Region to determine the response of a non-formal program to the UNESCO (2005) Education for sustainable development (ESD) characteristics, provided useful information regarding the non-formal education sector and ESD. Jackson, (2016:64) defines non-formal education as “education that takes place outside of formal schooling”. According to Brennan (1997); Buckler & Creech (2014); Kieu & Singer (2015); Sultana & Haque (2019), it is a widely accepted fact that non-formal education has become a “critical component of the education sector”. This observation was made particularly in

developing countries where “where a lack of financial resources often leads to the inability of the formal sector to provide quality education” (Kieu & Singer, 2015; Sultana & Haque, 2019). The distinction, made between the terms ‘non-formal’ and ‘informal’. Eaton (2010), describes non-formal education as an organised and structured program, not acknowledged by the government; while informal education accepts a more spontaneous approach. A review of these literature helped to confirm the context of my inquiry as non-formal.

In addition, prior research has not addressed questions about “what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge counts” (St. Pierre, 2014:648), whether one can acquire new, objective knowledge through ABR-practices (Dewey, 1934; Scrivener, 2002; Michelkevičius, 2016), and how ABR-methodologies can be applied to communicate new forms of knowing in doctoral studies (Partridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2011; Spronk, 2016; Gough-Brady, 2019). This encompasses several unexplored dimensions that have recently attracted research attention in terms of “multifaceted knowledge” (Van der Vaart et al., 2018:2), “approaching art and science as complementary knowledge systems” (Roughley et al., 2019:228), and “using the evolution of intelligences as a guide” (Knights, Grant & Young, 2020:14). I consider that the boundary position of arts-based research, particularly that of film literacy, should be explored further in the form of sites of new types of knowledge production.

2.5.4 Population

Based on a review of prior research, I have found there to be a population gap (Robinson, Saldanha & McKoy, 2011; Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014; Miles, 2017:7). Given that some sub-populations have been unexplored and under-researched, the development of the film literacy skills of post-school youth appears to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of non-formal education (NFE). I see an investigation of this group as important because NFE is considered to be more focused on meeting students’ individual requirements (Kapur, 2018). Due to the flexible nature of the initially implemented aims, processes and materials, it is essential to reflect upon the expression of transformations that may affect further needs of both the students and the community/communities within which they reside (Petranova, Hossova & Velický, 2017). Furthermore, previous research has focused primarily on formal higher education contexts/populations (Spronk, 2016; Wang, et al., 2017; Van der Vaart, et al., 2018). Very little research has been done on post-school youths outside the reach of formal education (Simukumba, 2020).

In my opinion, the aim of the shortfilm initiative would firstly be to raise critical awareness of participants about possible learning opportunities for them, and secondly, to translate that awareness into action. This kind of action relates to “learning that transforms problematic frames of reference” (Mezirow, 2003:58-59), “raising awareness of new possibilities and multiple perspectives” (Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 200:22) through a “process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of meaning of one’s experience” (Brown & Posner, 2001:274). Opportunities to become participating, self-directed, responsible, reflective, and productive citizens, could be essential for post-school youth’s sustainable development. In this sense, film literacy competencies, as explored in this inquiry, aimed to enact new understandings about experiential learning in a fluid and emerging way by opening up a different and possibly new dimension of human communication.

2.6 Synthesis and conceptual focus

The relevant reviewed literature is synthesised in this section, in such a way as to draw attention to key concepts and to theories related to film literacy and to this research study, as derived from the explored literature. The topic for this Doctoral research in education was chosen because I came to realise the importance and urgency of transformation within contemporary South African education. This transformation particularly, concerns the present-day communications environment, non-formal education, and a post-school community whose members are frequently in limbo. An encompassing post-qualitative approach enabled an assemblage of relevant methods with transformative potential. Existing literature of post-qualitative inquiry invites researchers to ‘think without’ “representation, method, proper names, labels, and perhaps even methodology” (Ulmer, 2017:841). They are invited to ‘think with’ theories and concepts instead of methodology (St. Pierre, 2019:7), and to ‘think differently’ (Law, 2004:3; Le Grange, 2018:11). Theories relevant and appropriate to this particular kind of inquiry were selected, based on their potential to enhance developmental and experiential learning for the participants in terms of creativity, spiritual enlightenment, pursuit of knowledge, and a desire to contribute to society. These potentialities were explored through the conceptual focus employed in the formulation of the sub-questions and related objectives. Please refer to Fig. 2.4.

The contextualisation of this inquiry in the field of non-formal, post-school education in a semi-rural South African environment was crucial. Firstly, to accommodate my inquiry within ongoing debates about the position of arts-based inquiry within academic research praxis, and secondly, to accommodate my inquiry within a wider field of art-

science-technology interactions. The literature I consulted revealed that the field of education methodology is ripe for an investigation of practical focus research about the “dual nature of critical and experiential knowledges” (Gibson, 2015:4; Gough-Brady, 2019:181. Many prior studies focus on the theoretical aspects of the field of art-science interactions (Elkins, 2017). Others serve as criticism, describing “filmic research” as “problematic and unpredictable” (Wolfe, 2017:430), and labelling art as “inhuman forms of life”, “problematic”, and “incompatible” with post-qualitative research. In addition, prior research did not address questions about “what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge counts” (St. Pierre, 2014:648), or whether one can acquire new, objective knowledge through ABR-practices (Dewey, 1934; Scrivener, 2002; Michelkevičius, 2016), and how ABR-methodologies can be applied to communicate new forms of knowing in doctoral studies (Partridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2011; Spronk, 2016; Gough-Brady, 2019). This body of literature encompasses several unexplored dimensions that have recently attracted research attention in terms of “multifaceted knowledge” (Van de Vaart et al., 2018:2), “approaching art and science as complementary knowledge systems” (Roughley et al., 2019:228), and “using the evolution of intelligences as a guide” (Knights, Grant & Young, 2020:14). Thus, the term, ‘evidence’ rather than ‘data’ is used to collectively refer to pre- and post-project reflections on individual short films, as well as shortfilm-productions, and audio responses that were created over a ten-month period in 2020. Moving beyond the limitations of traditional discourse- and content analysis, a range of ‘analytical questions’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012: 7) were developed from the concepts explored in this inquiry. The evidence was ‘enacted’ rather than ‘represented’, and this was done by pointing out the leitmotifs (signs) that transpired throughout this inquiry. Multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA), (Kress, 2011[1996]; Gee, 2011), combined with a modified version of Kember, McKay, Sinclair, and Wong’s (2008) four-category scheme, was used to explore (analyse) the evidence in terms of the participants’ critical reflection-levels. Increased reflection levels afforded an indication of the nature of self-awareness and transpersonal growth that the participants might have obtained through their active engagement in the learning opportunities provided to them by the shortfilm-making project. The boundary position of arts-based inquiry, particularly film literacy, should be further explored as sites of new types of knowledge production within the field of education research. Concerning academic research, the nature of reality/realities created through the knowledge production, is likely to be always contested. While contemplating key insights, emerging from this inquiry, new questions emerged:

Post-Inquiry Question (PIQ) 1: How could the participants’ enhanced human capabilities be utilised to improve their personal quality of being?

PIQ 2: How could the participants' new knowledge be applied to broader social contexts?

PIQ 3: Do the realities, communicated through the written component of this dissertation, have equal value to those realities enacted by the practical component?

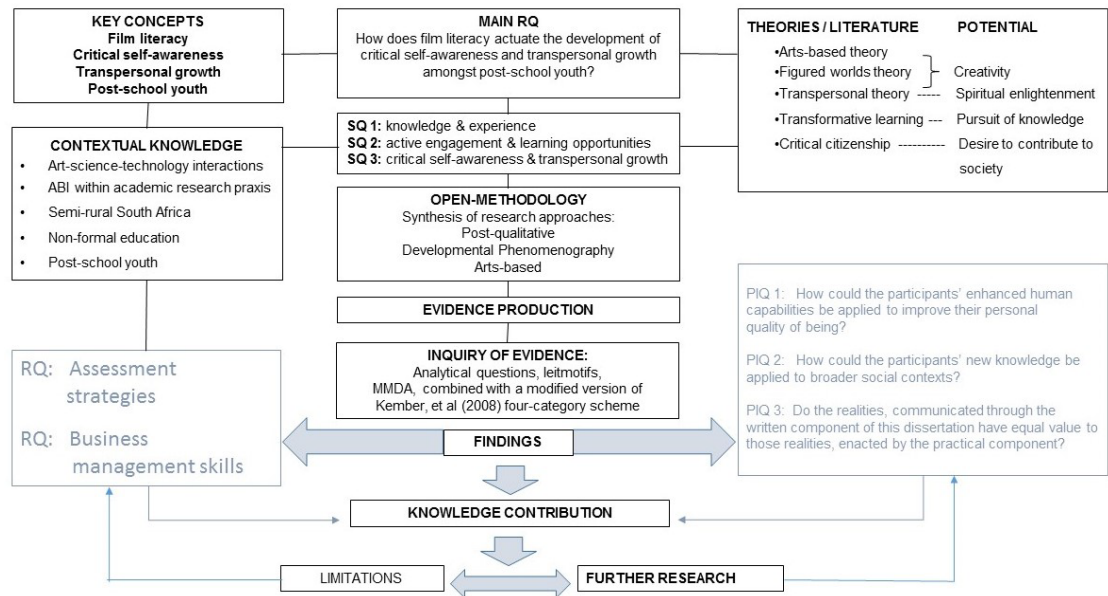


Figure 2.4: The conceptual focus, demonstrating the position of my research within the existing field of knowledge.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter contextualised and positioned my post-qualitative inquiry within the literature relating to the academic field of research in education from an interdisciplinary perspective. My decision to redefine the term, 'film literacy', had been determined by the multiple definitions found in contemporary research which situate film literacy in a boundary-crossing position (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Fox, 2011). An additional aim of the inquiry was to establish how active engagement in a shortfilm-making project might contribute to participants becoming critically self-aware of possible learning opportunities within their communities. The contextualisation of this inquiry in the field of non-formal, post-school education in a semi-rural South African environment was crucial. Firstly, to accommodate my inquiry within ongoing debates about the position of arts-based inquiry within academic research praxis. Secondly, to accommodate my inquiry within a wider field of art-science-technology interactions. In the light of these insights, I have identified four spaces for further exploration in existing literature:

(a) A practical knowledge-gap (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014; Miles, 2017:4), relating to

different ways of working and knowing in contemporary research practices. I argue that the development of film literacy competencies has the potential to expand the way research outcomes can be communicated; it further opens the possibility for implicit knowledge to gain meaning and make the knowledge produced through the arts-based project more accessible, both to the researcher and to the communities to whom the project is communicated.

(b) A methodological gap, relating to the position that developmental arts-based methodologies hold within academic research. I seek to establish a new inquiry on research designs with an arts-based approach. I seek to extend the understandings of the cyclic interactive process between the research practice and communication of research outcomes by addressing the gaps with a variation in the research methodologies by combining both experiential and analytical knowledge.

(c) A gap relating to alternative ways of knowing. Because I believe that it is no longer possible to address the complexities of our fast-changing world in a singular and one-dimensional way, a multitude of exploratory threads have been tossed out (Holyoak, 2019:13) with the hope of providing new insights into the positionality of my arts-based inquiry within academic research and across disciplines. I managed to narrow down theories which explore enhanced learning opportunities to critical citizenship, figured worlds, transpersonal theory, transformative learning theory, and arts-based perspectives. Film literacy, in similar ways to critical-awareness, transformative learning, transpersonal growth, and post-school youth, was turned into a number of concepts with specific functions. I consider that the boundary position of arts-based research, particularly that of film literacy, should be explored further in the form of sites of new types of knowledge production.

(d) Previous research about the development of film literacy skills of post-school youth revealed a population gap (Robinson, Saldanha & McKoy, 2011; Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014; Miles, 2017:7). I consider that the boundary position of arts-based research, particularly that of film literacy, should be explored further in the form of sites of new types of knowledge production. Due to the flexible nature of the initially implemented aims, processes and materials, it is essential to reflect upon the expression of transformations that may affect further needs of both the students and the community/communities within which they reside (Petranova, Hossova & Velický, 2017). The following Chapter Three is concerned with the re-thinking of conventional research approach, design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RE-THINKING RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do.”

Da Vinci (1452-1519), Randall (1953), Kinsman (1989:223)

“Placing itself as an open methodology, post qualitative finds itself in a contested position towards academia. There are no boxes to be ticked, no step by step process, no hypothesis, sometimes even no findings. One does not arrive at an accurate universal reality.”

Konstantinos Kerasovitis (2020:60)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion about one of the keystones of academia: research methodology. More particularly, about a researcher attempt to refuse following conventional humanist qualitative methodology, in favour of exploring a post-qualitative approach (St. Pierre, 2014:10; St. Pierre, 2019b). After becoming stuck in numerous attempts to deconstruct such pre-existing methodological order-words as ‘systematically’, ‘representational’, and ‘categorise, among others, I realised that if my intention was to create new ways of seeing, doing, and being through my inquiry, I had to deliberately unlearn what I knew about methods-driven research. This ‘unlearning’ relates to refusing a repetition of what is recognizable, what is already known; it also relates to taking risks when working “at the edge of incompetence” (Eisner, 1996:412) and to “inventing inquiry in the doing” (St. Pierre, 2019:4). Why then would words such as ‘research approach, design and methodology’ still be used to label this chapter’s headings and subheadings? The idea is to merge discovery and communication, the two constituents of academic praxis (Kerasovitis, 2020), into a multimodal medium, encompassing both written and audio-visual text, so as to reach diverse audiences.

My target reader-audiences are those who have lived and breathed post-humanism (Ulmer, 2017:833; Le Grange, 2018:12) as well as those who, like me, are engaging with post-qualitative inquiry for the first time. In response to an invitation posed by post-qualitative inquiry, the researcher attempted to think without “representation, method, proper names, labels, and perhaps even methodology” (Ulmer, 2017:841). In line with “post” ontologies (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013:631), Jackson and Mazzei’s concept of ‘plugging-in’ (2012) provided a valuable way “us[ing] theory to think with ... data (and

us[ing] data to think with theory) in order to accomplish a reading of data that is both within and against interpretivism” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013: 261). In the previous two chapters I described some of the emerging characteristics of the post-qualitative approach. These raised an awareness of a different way of thinking about space, place, time, and the situatedness of knowledge. As a critique on “having correct information and scientific knowledge” (Arendt, 2005:307-308), post-qualitative inquiry decentres knowledge from its ‘situated’ position in conventional academic research. As such, this critique urges the contemporary researcher to think differently (Ulmer, 2017:842) about the “inseparability of ethics, ontology and knowledge” (Le Grange, 2018:6), as suggested by Barad (2007:409). Among the four alternative ways of knowing, as identified by Law (2017:842), “knowing as situated enquiry” (Le Grange, 2018:11) reconsiders the relevance of understandings across geographical boundaries, and further questions its sense-making abilities”. Pertaining to this dissertation, allusions to a ‘semi-rural South African context’, ‘township’, and ‘cinema-space’, among other definitions of, or words pertaining to, ‘spacetimemattering’ (Barad, 2007:234), were made from the participants’ perspectives, “tied to that space, not from an external position” (Deleuze,1994:26). In this sense, educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1995b) encourages citizens to be well informed, to examine their social and cultural life-worlds by developing critical capabilities, and to “actively insert” their conceptions into their “lived” worlds (Greene, 1995b:74), thereby creating new understandings. After giving up the terms, ‘data’, ‘data collection’, and ‘representation’, I was “working in a very different image of thought now with no established rules and practices” (St. Pierre, 2019:10). The notion of “plugging-in” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013:261), with the purpose of thinking differently with data, provided a valuable tool to accomplish an understanding of the evidence (data) from second-order participants’ perspective, one that is both “within and against interpretivism” (Perold-Bull & Costandius, 2019:4). Greene’s theories about social imagination, and more particularly about the “difference between ‘knowing’ and ‘knowing about’”; the significance and “power of the arts” to awaken the potential of “social imagination: the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society” (Greene, 1995b:5) were plugged into the concepts and conceptual practices of this inquiry. Consequently the intention for participants, in becoming part of this conceptual and theoretical assemblage, was to encourage participants to wonder about how their capacities to invent visions could affect what they make of their lives.

Chapter Three thus provides the space to communicate the exploration of a “methodology-to-come” (Lather, 2013: 635), aiming to open up new possibilities for responding to the question: How does film literacy actuate the development of critical

self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a group of post-school youth? Thus, instead of pre-determined methodology, a “methodology-in-becoming” (Le Grange, 2018:9), transformative learning-theories, and derived concepts brought this inquiry into being, making possible the selection of methods with transformative potential; an assemblage of methods that make possible the envisioning of a transformed world through intra-action with that world.

The following three sub-questions provided a conceptual focus on film literacy, critical self-awareness, post-school youth, and transpersonal growth:

- What do these post-school youths experience as a result of their acquiring understandings of film literacy competencies?
- In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in shortfilm-making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths?
- How, and to what extent, does the critical self-awareness the participants gain through the shortfilm experience, contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally?

Studying the attributes related to film literacy, together with the contribution of these attributes to a process which advances the transformative competencies young adults, need for them to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society, required a dynamic research approach firmly rooted in a post-qualitative onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007; Wolfe, 2017; Le Grange, 2018). This focus on these film literacy-related attributes was essential to ensure that the participants in this complex, situated study were not denied their critical reflections on the phenomena being studied, while at the same time the neutrality of the entire research initiative was guaranteed. Parallel to this understanding, this inquiry was performed through an arts-based methodology as an enhancement to developmental phenomenography. Researcher awareness about the responsible and innovative selection of concepts, perspectives, together with the integration of reflexive knowledge into the inquiry and into innovative practices, acted as a key aspect of the research approach. Researcher awareness involved anticipation and reflection concerning (a) the ethical implications of this inquiry; (b) direct engagement with the participants (internal stakeholders) and their cinema-audience (external stakeholders); and (c) alternative ways of formally communicating the knowledge that was acquired through this study, including the integration of the feedback into the communities of practice by means of newsletters and whatsapp messages.

Following the introduction to this chapter, Section 3.2 presents a discussion of the approach I adopted to develop a relevant and appropriate methodology. Section 3.3 includes the details of the process of selecting the core setting and the relevant evidence (data) resources; developing an appropriate inquiry strategy; evidence (data) production procedures; and structuring the reading/viewing of the evidence (data analysis). Section 3.4 comprises a description of the development of ways to describe the evidence. Section 3.5 describes the designing of a system for the evidence-presentation across Chapters Four, Five, and Six. In this inquiry, the formal/traditional terms and concepts of validity and reliability were replaced by credibility and discussed in Section 3.6. In Section 3.7 the way in which this inquiry dealt with generalisation is discussed. The ethical considerations are discussed in Section 3.8 and the delineation and limitations of the inquiry discussed in Section 3.9 to shed light on what this inquiry could or should not achieve, and where it was restricted. A summary in Section 3.10 concludes Chapter Three.

3.2 Alternative worldviews and a relevant methodological approach

This section comprises a description of my attempt to promote amongst the participants a particular set of shared values and beliefs (interconnectedness, multiperspective and understanding) which, through film literacy education in a non-formal education context, I considered to have the potential to advance the capabilities necessary for post-school students to develop for them to excel in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of society. Why does this matter? Paradigms lead to approaches, designs and methodology in research. According to Creswell (2014:35), the philosophical underpinning of research is often hidden, and researchers should be more explicit in revealing and affirming their position. Also noteworthy are the different ways in which researchers explain and label paradigms. Kumar (2014:14) uses “rationalism versus empiricism” as a distinction, while employing value-laden terms such as “structured” and “unstructured” when describing the qualitative approach. Using the term “worldviews” rather than ‘paradigms’ (Mertens, 2010; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011), or ‘epistemologies’ and ‘ontologies’ (Crotty, 1998), Creswell (2014:36) identifies four distinctive worldviews: post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism. Merriam (1998) differentiates between positivist, interpretive, and critical research, which could further be deductive, inductive or participatory. In a recent publication dealing with the field of data visualisation, Catherine D’Ingazio (2020) emphasises the importance of alternative worldviews and orientations to advance discipline. To illustrate her argument, D’Ingazio, (2020) outlines how, for example, a critical orientation would offer a different perspective on the kind of data visualisation

artefacts that currently develop from more positivist paradigms. Based on this range of research approaches, I found it important, for the particular kind of inquiry I was embarking upon, to critically examine my own discipline for spaces where alternative knowledge production could or should be considered to establish appropriate ways of knowing. Despite recent critiques on its entangled, performative manner (Mayes, 2019; Rousell, 2019; Shields, 2020), the assemblage concept of post-qualitative inquiry (Barad, 2007; Lather & St. Pierre, 2011/2013; Wolfe, 2017; Le Grange, 2018) has particularly benefited the educator/researcher who prefers analysis beyond interpretation (Lather, 2013:639) and an immanent ethics (Le Grange, 2018:8). 'Analysis beyond interpretation' suggests that post-qualitative researchers, as creative thinkers, work differently with data in a non-hierarchical manner (Lather, 2013:639). 'An immanent ethics' is a philosophical concept that emphasizes ethical principles and values emerging from within the context of human experience and existence, rather than being imposed externally by religious, cultural, or institutional frameworks (Le Grange, 2018:9).

3.2.1 Educational research is not a unique occurrence

According to Kapur (2018:11), the main purpose of educational research ought to be "to liberate, and encourage equality, egalitarianism and equality of opportunity" (, while according to St. Pierre (2013:650) and Le Grange (2018:7), as an authoritative aspect, mainly implemented in higher educational institutions, academic research involves institutional systems, organised structures, and "representational logic". As a critique of the "hierarchical logic of representation" (MacLure, 2013:658), post-qualitative inquiry navigates to more "relational means of identification" (Kunz, 2015:51; Perold-Bull & Costandius, 2019:44). The ability to understand something or someone encompasses "the social scientist's attempt to comprehend the intention and the context of human action" (Elwell 1996; Costandius, 2012:97), together with the power of abstract thought, an individual's perception or reasoning of a situation, as well as empathetic awareness or tolerance (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77; Trivers & Starkey, 2012:141). However, the kind of understanding Arendt (2005:307–308) distinguishes from "having correct information and scientific knowledge" resonates with post qualitative inquiry which "does not do away with qualitative research, but works differently with data and opens up new perspectives of what counts as data" (Arendt, 2005:307–308). Dealing with the unknown often requires the post-qualitative researcher to act without understanding everything beyond the present moment (Taleb, 2014/ 2020).

Philosophical underpinnings of research comprise, among other “orientations to research” (Merriam, 1998:3), a “mode of enquiry perspective” (Kumar, 2014:14), or “philosophical worldview” (Creswell, 2014:35). My inquiry concept was determined by researcher-beliefs concerning ontology, epistemology and methodology. The ontological position problematises the nature of reality: it questions whether there is only one single truth, presented by statistics, an individual subjective truth, or whether there are multiple realities. Epistemology asks how the researcher establishes this reality as acceptable knowledge: whether it is measurable (Merriam, 1998:4), something to be interpreted, or something that has the potential to change, such as perceptions and ideas. Methodology comprises researcher-decisions about suitable methods to find this reality. Post-positivism is usually quantitatively oriented, reducing phenomena and modelling to test a theory, while observing and measuring things to verify a Post-positivist assumption of the world. In contrast to a positivist approach, my inquiry concept encompasses Constructivism, Pragmatism and the Transformative in terms educational research practice. The relevance of a constructivist worldview resides in its use by the researcher for her or him to construct distinct and composite understandings of the complexity and multiplicity of twenty-first century phenomena. This applies particularly in current educational research, where there is a demand to develop certain transferable competencies that will be adaptable in a rapidly advancing world. In the present inquiry, constructivism underpinned the creation of unique, collaborative learning spaces where the participants were interactively involved in the construction of new knowledge. Pre-existing conceptions and understandings of the participants were captured through pre-project questionnaires, designed and facilitated by the researcher. The aim of the ‘knowers’ (participants) was to develop constructed objects (shortfilm-productions) which would be useful to them in improving/strengthening their actions and agency on personal, social and global levels. The constructivist learning environments, created by a series of shortfilm-making workshops, depended on four core ideas to be successful: both knowledge and authority were shared between the researcher and participants, the researcher acted as facilitator, often assisted by a participant(s) who had a particular knowledge contribution to make, and workshop groups consisted of small numbers of participants which made discussion and negotiation easier. However, constructivist perspectives have been criticised for their lack of structure and their use of casual methods to help create a positive environment for engaging in experiential learning. It has been accepted by educators and education researchers that some students require highly organised and structured learning environments to thrive, and that visible progress carries more weight than grading. I believe that, in the absence of a single reality, each participant constructed their own ‘figured world’ (Holland et al., 1998) in the form of a

shortfilm, and that the participants' perceptions of that reality determined their worldviews within the context of this inquiry. Thus, each person's reality had to be contemplated, or reflected on, to enable an understanding of both individual and collective behaviour and perceptions in the course of the research.

Pragmatism involves the belief that either or both observable phenomena and subjective meanings can potentially provide acceptable knowledge, based on the research question. Sharma, Devi and Kumari (2018) advocate the following four principles of pragmatism in education: utility, interest, experience, and integration. As implemented in this inquiry, 'utility' refers to the relevance of the devised practical component to the real-life situations of the participants. The principle of 'interest' is further elaborated by key pragmatist John Dewey (1948), as including conversation, investigation, construction, and creative expression. The participants were given the opportunity to explore through experimentation, and creative expression while working on their shortfilm-productions, and editing their work. Online conversation was vital during the long months of COVID-19 lockdown to keep the inquiry-group creatively connected. For the participants, learning from and through experience was valuable to them for understanding and navigating abstract concepts. My focus on practical implemented inquiry integrated diverse perspectives to assist me with interpretation of evidence (data). Newly constructed understandings could be negotiated, agreed upon, or debated to address practical issues in everyday life. Furthermore, it was understood that these realities are socially constructed, in flux, and subject to change (Adeley, 2017:3-4; Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018). Through a process of social interaction people could be empowered and their situations changed as a result. I found pragmatic education acted as a valuable critique of traditional education (Dewey, 1916; Gardner & Davis, 2013; Mason, 2017; Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018: 1551) and relevant to this inquiry, in which "truth is formed by its results" (Adeley, 2017), and working on the assumption that the participating young adults continually needed to improve their ways of thinking to adapt to fast changing real-life situations. For the benefit of the participating youths, transformation of perspectives could be the result of a more adaptive and reflective attitude towards life, while being open to the interconnectedness of thought and action. Noteworthy as a critique of Pragmatism I refer to the idea that thoughts could also have an intrinsic value, one that is not necessarily relevant or practical for that particular moment in time. However, deep-seated thoughts might be valuable in the making of future decisions.

Within the inquiry context the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 1999:5/2010) was based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that differ from

those underpinning the post-positivist, interpretive/constructivist views. The researcher attempted to maintain an unbiased approach towards participants' viewpoints, and to avoid overpowering the outcomes with the way the questions were framed. Furthermore, I found that the participants became involved to some degree in the methodological decisions, such as determining the most effective ways to proceed with the making of individual shortfilms and staying creatively connected during the COVID-19 lockdown. Participants' responses towards social and physical distancing, as well as to the impact of available social media (or lack thereof), were crucial to considering continued productivity during lockdown. In this sense, knowledge can be said to be socially and historically located within a complex cultural context (Mertens, 2007a:216). Thus, to come to know realities, an interactive link between the researcher and participants in this study was essential. Similarly, the researcher had to use appropriate ways to make use of available resources in such a way to ensure that reality was captured in an ethical manner (Mertens, 2010b:472). What Mertens (2010) omits to mention is that, according to the constructivist argument, social realities are "brought forth via the languaging between humans (Bawden, 2011:4), rather than merely being found or captured via the research-process. The bringing-forth process which played a significant role in this inquiry is summarised by critical systemic thinker, Bawden (2011) as follows:

"If we are to bring forth ... different worlds as a function of a quest to transform the way we live our collective lives ... we will need to modify the epistemes [ways of knowing and living] that come to dominate the modernist culture. If our interconnectivities and inter-relationships with those in other [less modernist-oriented] cultures as well as with the rest of nature are to be developed in a manner that is sustainable, defensible, responsible and inclusive, we will need to establish epistemes that are appropriate to the task". (Bawden (2011:4–5)

The 'different worlds' mentioned in the above quote by Bawden (2011) recall transpersonal perspectives, in the sense of becoming receptive to the connections between oneself and others, and with the environment (Dängeli, 2019:11, 22). Secondly, these 'different worlds' relate to 'figured worlds' (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) a concept based on a collective visioning and the imagining of alternative realities and identities. Bawden (2011) emphasises 'appropriate' ways of knowing as a matter of becoming aware of how human languaging "constructs and creates worlds which are in processes of becoming" (Romm, 2015:417). Also, according to this concept, we take responsibility to carefully consider the values that become visible when bringing forth different worlds with others. This, I would argue, is key to the critical thinking and praxis involved in the film literacy project, which is the

focus of the present inquiry, a project which was realised within a developmental phenomenographic methodology, complemented by arts-based research. Despite critiques of such “methodological bricolage” (Mertens, 2009:266), I believe that it is no longer possible to address the complexities of our world in a singular and one-dimensional way. Hence, the relevance of the transformative worldview to communicate local knowledge resourced by a variety of participant understandings.

3.2.2 Research approach

A research approach denotes the stages of the research process, from researcher awareness of broad assumptions to the researcher taking specific decisions about the most appropriate methodological practices. These decisions are informed by the researcher’s philosophical worldviews concerning the inquiry process (research design), and particular research methods. The nature of the research problem, the researcher’s personal experiences, and the target audiences for the study further determine the selection of a research approach.

The constructivist/interpretivist (Dewey, 1933/1998; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990), the pragmatist (Dewey, 1948; Adeleye, 2017; Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018), and critical/transformational worldviews (Mertens, 2007/2010; Bawden, 2011; Romm, 2015) link with the post-qualitative approach (St. Pierre, 2011; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018) due to the personal interaction with participants in their natural settings to create evidence (data), the outcomes of which are usually presented in text form. My inquiry approach focused on establishing a variety of different understandings about film literacy in a post-school non-formal education context, and with the awareness that multiple truths are socially constructed with the potential to generate theory that is real-world oriented, all in an attempt to collectively understand the world better. The relevance of a transformative worldview to learning opportunities concerning this research is two-fold: first, to bring about change in student perceptions of the capabilities required to excel in socio-cultural, economic, and political spheres of society. Second, expanding a new educational research perspective, one which has the potential to answer the problems and the challenges of education in the post-modern era. Key to this alternative education perspective is its pursuit of praxis as the all-encompassing goal. Praxis in this inquiry is defined as the integration of theory and practice, a significant strength of the critical/transformational worldview. Rather than merely attempting to understand power structures (Mertens, 1999, 2007a; Romm, 2015), a critical/transformational worldview interactively seeks to change situations in positive ways. A potential weakness of this worldview is that, while empirically

orientated worldviews seek objective reality, critical/transformational theories rely on subjective social values. Below, Figure 3.1 illustrates how philosophical worldviews lead to the approach, strategy, and methodology-in-flux in this inquiry.

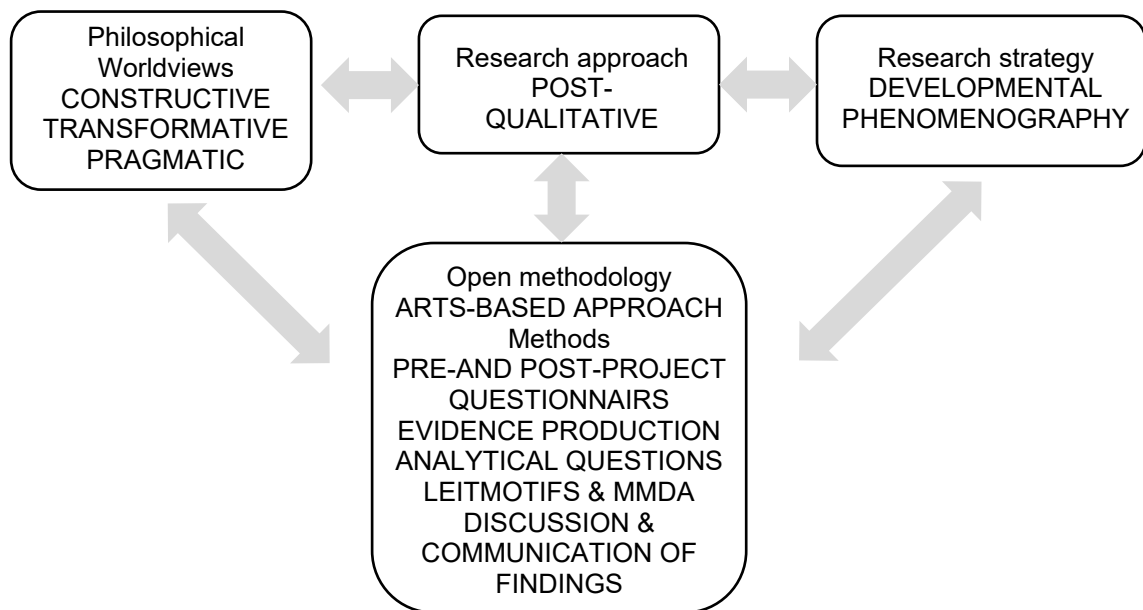


Figure 3.1: Philosophical assumptions and researcher positionality was crucial to methodological decision-making pertaining to this research.

Post-modern thinking, with its origins in Paris and Foucault (1976; 1992), has a critical approach towards research. The approach is critical in the sense that it sees research as hidden interpretations, as limiting democracy by presenting research results (Mertens, 1999:4-5; Romm, 2015:412-413) as information and not as informed opinions for debate. Foucault (1976; 1992) posits that society and civilization can improve beyond individual and professional development through a process of critical self-reflection, defined as “to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, rather than legitimating what is already known ... a test of the limits that we may go beyond” (Foucault, 1992:8-9).

Critics believe that researchers should not just observe people and their actions, but instead become part of their “world of meaning” (Macionis & Gerber, 2011:33, Gingrich, 2012) and “come to appreciate why they act as they do”. One of the philosophies that guided my evolving interest in creating understanding through a form of education which employs the senses in a multi-dimensional way, is interpretivism. The interpretative approach was historically developed as a critique of the limitations of positivism (Dilthey, 1883; Corbetta, 2003). Concerning this inquiry, experiential interpretivism links to constructivism, pragmatism, and the critical/transformational

paradigms. First, because this inquiry explored social phenomena in natural settings, experientially. Second, this inquiry investigated those current thought (worldviews) and social structures which are attempting to foster positive social change. According to Pickard (2013; 2018:11), interpretivism also includes anthropology as a research approach. Although 'visual anthropology' is strongly linked to my inquiry by its connection through "bridging practice and theory", "exploring new ways of seeing the world", and an interest in "culture, media, representation of the Self and of others" (Burnand, 2019), its ethnographic focus did not fall within the scope of my inquiry. As a relatively undeveloped discipline it offers "creative methods that can cross the borders and limitations of traditional anthropology in order to question representations and to rethink our and other's roles, values, norms, rituals, mythologies, and media practices in the age of digital modernities" (Burnand, 2019: <http://www.ci-las.org/visual-anthropology-film-as-a-tool-for-research.html>). These could be a topic for further research.

The original "qualitative wave" (Henning, 2004; 2011:19) of mostly descriptive research studies focused on capturing the lives of the participants to make meaning and present an understanding of reality from the participants' perspective(s). During the last four decades the researcher's role as "co-creator of meaning" (Henning, 2004; 2011:19) became increasingly important. 'Co-creator' does not necessarily imply that the researcher becomes part of the creation/generation of data, or takes an instructor-position. On the contrary, the researcher in this inquiry, for example, acted as facilitator of the process whereby the evidence (data) was created by the participants over a ten-month period. Individual understanding co-emerged with collective understandings (Fenwick, 2001:49; Costandius, 2012:55). According to Henning (2004; 2011:20), new understandings are composed not only by recognisable phenomena, but also by describing "people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding".

An Interpretivist research lens requires that a multi-dimensional, communal process be employed "to understand perceive, know, and comprehend the nature and significance of an occurrence" (Elwell, 1996; Costandius, 2012:97). Max Weber used the German term, "Verstehen", in his theory to describe the "social scientist's attempt to comprehend the intention and the context of human action" (Elwell 1996; Costandius, 2012:97). The ability to profoundly understand something or someone includes the power of abstract thought, an individual's perception or reasoning of a situation, and empathetic awareness or tolerance (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77; Trivers & Starkey, 2012:141). On our own African continent there is an age-old Senegalese proverb which

says that there can be no peace without understanding. Likewise, Albert Einstein postulates that “peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding” (Einstein & Shaw, 2009:67). Thus, the interpretive researcher goes beyond identifying new meaning(s) that has (have) been made, or the nature of the meaning. Instead, they problematise the way(s) in which people make meaning in their lives. Contrariwise, Nassim Taleb (2020; 2014), formerly a trader who now conducts academic research in probability theory, asserts that dealing with the unknown often requires us to act without understanding everything beyond the present moment, and to do those things well. In his book, *Anti-fragile* (2012) he presents a revolutionary argument that some phenomena may in fact benefit by being in conditions of chaos and disorder, a thought that has gained relevance in our current post-COVID situation. Unexpected external interferences often disrupt our reliance on imperfect frames of reference. Rather than shutting out alternative possibilities by focusing on planned strategies only, attending to randomness often propels one’s thinking to new perspectives (De Bono, 1996). In contrast to the positivist goal in scientific research to reveal the nature of reality, “uncertainty” has become the key principle in the interpretivist paradigm (Henning, 2004; 2011). Therefore, in this research I encouraged the development of a variety of different perspectives about reality from the participants’ various viewpoints.

Shortfilm as mode of visual expression in the practical component of this arts-based educational research is not merely a reflection of reality. Instead, it becomes the “reality of a reflection” (Goddard, 1967). Henning (2004; 2011:20) notes that “different viewpoints of the world” do not necessarily change the paradigm to a relativist one. Instead, different processes of observation result in different knowledge-constructions of the world. The reasons for these varying knowledge constructions are speculated upon by the interpretive researcher (Henning, 2004; 2011:20) particularly regarding the sensitivity to context which is a feature of qualitative research. With specific reference to this inquiry, the focus is on the variety of different understandings developed by the participants during a process of conceptualising, capturing, assembling, and presenting their day-to-day doings in a post-school environment, and from the perspective(s) of their unique social contexts. According to Trauth (2001:219) and Henning (2004; 2011:21), the fundamental assumption of interpretivists is that most of our knowledge is socially constructed through “language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artefacts”. Pertaining to this inquiry, ‘other artefacts’ refers to the shortfilm-productions created by the participants. New understandings have been developed through the meanings that both the filmmakers and audience assigned to them. A critical insight here is the fact that the shortfilm-productions per se do not have

the ability to transform the issues that were the origin of this inquiry study. Rather, newly acquired insights should be implemented in the participants' personal and social situations/contexts to reflect on these issues. The participants' technical knowledge, evident from this inquiry, however, had to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Only then could this inquiry, in its effort to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels" become meaningful (Kaplan, 2005). While an interpretive lens requires researchers to reflect on how data have been socially constructed, and in this reflection process carefully consider contradictions, interpretations, distortions and biases of the accounts created, can post-qualitative researchers problematise knowledge as the point of departure in an inquiry. Post-qualitative research decentres knowledge by questioning the privileging of knowledge in research (St. Pierre, 2013:648), while embracing the inseparability of ethics, ontology and knowledge. Therefore, 'non-human' has agential capacity; the human is embedded in/connected to a complex web of life; all modes of life are always in-becoming/unfolding" (Barad, 2007:409; Wolfe, 2017:428; Le Grange, 2018:9).

Pertaining to this inquiry, the researcher, participants, their shortfilm-productions, the participants' communities, as well as the audience all "intra-acted" as part of the inquiry process. According to Barad (2007:141; Wolfe, 2017:428; Le Grange, 2018:7), "intra-action understands agency as not an inherent property of an individual or human to be exercised, but as a dynamism of forces in which all designated 'things' are constantly exchanging and diffracting, influencing and working inseparably". The post-qualitative approach involves "critiquing representational logic" (Le Grange, 2018:9), and assumes the existence of a "primary reality" (St. Pierre, 2013:650; Le Grange, 2018:7) and also assumes that an always changing language as the "product of material flows" (Le Grange, 2018:7) and has the ability to "accurately represent such a reality" (St. Pierre, 2013:650; Le Grange, 2018:7). These and other references to "filmic dialogue" (Wolfe, 2017:428), add relevance to the adoption of a post-qualitative approach for my film literacy study. A further point of relevance is the "reconfigured sense of subjectivity" (Le Grange, 2018:7), which encourages researchers conducting post-qualitative inquiries to engage in critical questioning, a process which constantly questions the stability of 'objectivity' (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013:630).

Correspondingly, due to communication modes continuously changing as a result of ongoing technological innovation, understanding film literacy remains an evolving construct. Hence, the need for innovative, flexible pedagogical approaches. Transformation relating to academic inquiry has reached a point of urgency which, although extremely complex, is quite feasible.

3.2.3 Re-thinking research evidence through a post-qualitative lens

Post-qualitative research theory defines data as not being “something out there that we gather or collect and is not isolated from self” (Le Grange, 2018:8). Additionally, MacLure (2013:660) and St. Pierre (2013b:652) critique epistemological projects which call into question what counts as data and a researchers relationship to those data, while Wolfe (2017:431) posits that in her filmic research, “all the data were and continue to be co-created” by the researcher, participants and virtual audience “through engaging ontoepistemological relations in the present” (Wolfe, 2017:431). The relevance of these thoughts to my inquiry resides in her idea that “(t)he subjective, descriptive data produced are “linguistic, aesthetic, and affective, and are differentially digested through a diegesis by/with the virtual viewer who intra-acts with the filmic interview (Wolfe, 2017:431). Similarly, Åkerlind, Bowden and Green (2011:75) suggest that “each researcher also needs to make a reasoned decision on areas of variation in practice”. In the following section the relevance of a post-qualitative research positionality within a South African context is discussed.

3.2.4 The relevance of post-qualitative research to a South African context

Parallel to the reasons offered by Le Grange (2018:9), I would like to extend the motivation for the significance/applicability of post-qualitative research to the South African context. The people of South Africa are popularly known as the rainbow nation based on their cultural diversity which, when misunderstood or misrepresented by these or other people, can lead to feelings of disrespect and intolerance towards one another. A possible way to address these issues could be to create spaces for differences to be negotiated creatively in educational contexts. Both Freire and Greene contend that the process of ‘perspective-transformation’ requires “an engagement with and an objective distance from our culture” (Allsup 2003:158). Jasmine Ulmer and Susan Nordstrom (2017:1) compare the many different ways of approaching post-qualitative inquiry to Ernest Hemingway’s observation that there are different ways of walking down to the river Seine in *A Moveable Feast* (1964/1996). As researchers “(w)e may take different paths as we approach the river, and we also may enter and exit at different locations at different points in time. But we are, in these ways, walking together” (Ulmer & Nordstrom, 2017:1). This process implies attempting at the same time to watch our participants “in their natural settings as they really were” (St. Pierre, 2014:7). Like Ulmer and Nordstrom, I do not yet claim to understand the far-reaching possibilities post-qualitative research might offer, for I am still trying to think things through. So far, unlike Hemmingway, I am not an ex-pat who has chosen to leave my

country for another. Although I have relocated my career from Visual Arts educator in the FET phase of education to non-formal post-school education, I have not yet been recognised for making a scholarly impact as researcher. Therefore, I view this post-qualitative inquiry as a first step towards creating a space for that which is currently still unknown. In Elizabeth St. Pierre's words, I am attempting "to find concepts that reorient thinking", and the "creation of the *not yet* instead of the repetition of what *is*" (St. Pierre, 2019:1). Transformation is of no value if it is not enthused by the belief that the history of all peoples has meaning (Smidt, 2015:19). This transformation of perceptions and attitudes has the potential to lead to the attainment of a true critical pedagogy (Johnson & Morris 2010:92), one which proposes the emancipation and transformation of education in South Africa leading to the creation of a better society. However, transformative learning implies a continuous process of reflecting on action, as well as acting on reflection.

3.2.5 Research strategy

Creswell (2014:41) defines research designs as "types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design". In the previous section I discussed the relevance of a post-qualitative approach which invites us to think, feel and act differently from the thinking required by traditional qualitative research, and to experiment in intra-action with an always changing reality, and with its transformative potential making it relevant to engage the contemporary global education challenges. These characteristics, I argue, were the key determinants of my decision to employ the transformative qualities of developmental phenomenography as strategy-guide to my inquiry. Limited definitions exist for this kind of applied research design, a design normally situated within a particular educational context.

During the past two decades in spite of their having been an increasing focus on the conceptual development in academics' understanding of the nature of film literacy in teaching and learning (Ansel, 2002; Blell & Lütge, 2004; Minghella, 2005; Bazalgette, 2009; Borgdorff, 2012; Reia-Baptista, 2014; Spronk, 2016; Glotov, 2018; Walker, 2018; Reid, 2019) considerable confusion continues to exist about the scope of film as a form of literacy, particularly in a non-formal, post-school context. Since my inquiry aimed to explore different understandings of the transformative potential of creative experiences, and the application of reflexive skills in meaningful ways, I needed a research methodology which would allow the evidence (data) production and evidence reading/viewing (data analysis) to develop in an unrestrained way, and which would

correspond to the needs of the research participants. By acknowledging, as mentioned above, that data is not something “out there that we gather or collect and is not isolated from self” (Lather, 2013:639), the post-qualitative approach already provided a different perspective on methodology. My inquiry further required “performative” (Le Grange, 2018:8) methods that “unfold through intra-actions with the world” (Le Grange, 2018:8), to enable the transformation of the world. A pilot study was conducted in 2018 to explore the feasibility of developmental phenomenography as my research strategy. The findings confirmed those of similar studies using this strategy: due to its transformative potential (Bowden, 1995:146), developmental phenomenography's distinctive second-order perspective (Yates, Partridge & Bruce, 2012:99), and the fact that the outcomes were not an end in themselves (Green & Bowden, 2009:52, 53), developmental phenomenography has been effectively used to inform research design decisions. Originally, Marton and Booth (1997:110) defined phenomenography as a “research specialisation”, relevant to studying inquiries about learning and understanding in education. Marton (1986) described the original methodology:

Phenomenography is a research method adapted for mapping the qualitative different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them.
Marton (1986:31)

Qualitatively different understandings result in the description of phenomenography as an empirically based research tradition (Svensson, 1997; Marton, 2000), but none describe it as a research method nor as a theory of experience (Marton & Booth, 1997). Developmental phenomenography differs from pure phenomenography designed by Marton (1986:38). Bowden (1995; 2000) emphasises the transformative potential of developmental phenomenography. This transformative potential relates to exploring “how people experience some aspect of their world, and then to enable them or others to change the way their world operates” (1995:146; 2000:3). Transformative potential refers to a developmental process whereby the participants' actions, in response to “a raised perception of reality” (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980) could lead to a new quality of life experience. This strategy (design) is suited to this inquiry, firstly, to explore and describe the participants' reflections on their creative experiences through the short-film making within the participants' natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3). Secondly, since the research outcomes were not intended to be an end in themselves (Greene & Bowden, 2009:52, 53), they were subsequently employed to inform how the participants' newly acquired understandings and skills could affect the world in which they live and work. This application of the research outcomes further explicates the developmental nature of Bowden's approach to phenomenography (1995, 2000).

3.3 Research methodology

Despite the appositeness of developmental phenomenography as a research strategy, the interview process of this qualitative approach has been criticised for its failure to reveal deep understandings of the lived experience (Francis, 1993:7, as quoted by Walsh, 2000:19). In response to this criticism, Turner and Noble (2015:4) have devised a methodological elaboration. An arts-based enquiry technique and a two-stage interview process allowed them to include a “leading prompt” (Walsh, 2000), so as to maintain a coherent focus throughout the interview session. Similarly, Ireland, Tambyah, Neofa and Harding (2009:6) alleviate practical interview issues by adopting “gentle enthusiasm” to maintain a balance between personal expression and “bracketing” (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Bowden, 2005). Correspondingly, I found the traditional use of interviews to collect all data in a single phase (Green & Bowden, 2009:61; Bahn & Barratt-Pugh, 2011) too restrictive, and thus incorporated a multimodal arts-based project to accommodate evidence (data) production and capturing (Sullivan, 2005). My decision was strengthened by the fact that, according to Leavy (2009:12), at a methodological level, “arts-based practices have been developed for all research phases: data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation” . Moreover, because of its ability to assist in the expression of the lived experience, Finley and Knowles (1995), and McNiff (2007) view the arts as a valuable means for communicating complex social phenomena. In this inquiry ‘lived experience’ refers to the participants’ direct, active engagement in art-making experiences. Dewey (1938), Fenwick (2001) and Kolb (1984) claimed that people do not learn from experiences but from reflecting on life-experiences. Arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Smithbell, 2010; Turner & Noble, 2015) further provides the space for critical reflection on action, thus connecting with the concept of praxis (Freire, 1972:40; Giroux, 2003:38).

Initially, qualitative arts-based methodologies developed out of creative arts therapy practice in the fields of psychiatry and psychology as “ways of expressing what cannot be conveyed in conventional language” (McNiff, 2008:11). While drawing attention from other fields, creative arts therapists such as Shawn McNiff (2008) considered the use of artistic inquiry as a unique method to shape a new research-vision. This new vision of research was adopted by Eliot Eisner and his student Tom Barone in the first decade of the 21st century. Eisner, apart from introducing the term ‘arts-based education research’ (ABER) in 1975, expanded the concept of 'arts-based educational research' (ABER) in collaboration with Barone in a chapter in their book *Complementary methods for research in education*, in 1997. My epistemological stance as researcher supports

Eisner's belief about multiple ways of knowing, particularly the fact that knowledge is created and not simply discovered. In addition, I see a research study as being more complete by my increasing the variety of different methods used to explore, explicate and understand the world. By focusing on the visual, spatial, and aural arts as knowledge interpretation strategies, Pinar (2000:570) quotes Broudy (1988), who saw "the capacity to decode aesthetic clues – the elements of an image – is central to the capacity to think". Similarly, Booth (1985:85) referred to the "imaginary theatre of the mind" which requires aesthetic education to assist humans in finding "essential meanings in life, through intellectual development and through processes that imply feelings, conscience, and inspiration". The concept of 'imaginary theatre of the mind' (Booth, 1985:85) recalls the figured worlds-theory (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Urrieta, 2007) which is not an isolated concept, but forms part of the larger theory of self and identity. With its focus on different social contexts of education, this theory emphasises how the 'figured worlds', formed within these contexts have helped shape the ways in which people have come to make sense of themselves in these worlds and in society. For John Dewey (1938), who understood the need for imagination in educational experience, it was the quality of experience that matters. Students may often lose interest in learning because of the way in which they experience learning. Within the context of this inquiry, film literacy education has the potential to create internal images within an individual's imagination as a means of learning. According to Greene (1995) it is this ability to reconstruct those internal images and ideas (for example, through participants' shortfilm-productions) that allows us to take on the perspectives of others, to expand our understanding of others' being and doing in order to nurture harmonious relationships.

3.3.1 Different ways of working and knowing the nature of reality in contemporary research practices

The process of a researcher becoming perceptive to new viewpoints and innovative ideas, and for her or him to practically apply relevant theoretical perspectives, has the potential to promote in him or her a positive researcher-mindset. However, as an experiential interpretivist, using an inductive (Creswell, 2005:238) methodological approach, I find it extremely difficult to relate this original inquiry to a single suitable theoretical framework. Also, this arts-based doctoral study situates itself in a "contested zone" (Pas, 2007; Barone & Eisner, 2012:45) in-between the arts and academia (Spronk, 2016:4). In this section, drawing from multiple perspectives, I clarify my decision to reorient my thinking about bringing into being an open-methodology rather than repeating existing formulae. In my view, rejecting the application of pre-existing

research methodology should not be considered a weakness. Rather, a (post) qualitative inquiry enables an expanded researcher awareness across disciplines to re-orient my ways of thinking and doing research (St. Pierre, 2011; Le Grange, 2018; St. Pierre, 2019). In a Deweyan sense, engaging the arts in research-experience “throws off the covers that hide the expressiveness of experienced things” (Dewey, 1934/1958: 109–110) to inspire the creation of the ‘not yet’, instead of repeating ‘what is’ (St. Pierre, 2019). In my experience, ABER, and particularly “filmic research”, should be perceived as unfinished due to its “problematic and unpredictable” process: the changing nature of filmic data which are “virtually co-created with the viewer” (Wolfe, 2017:431). Foucault (1988) emphasised that “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, [and] transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (Foucault, 1988:155; St. Pierre (2014:4). Foucault continues with this line to thinking, explaining that his role was to make people aware that they are “much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes that have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed” (Foucault, 1982/1988:10; St. Pierre, 2014:4). In this sense, the ability to question reality represents the practice of freedom for Foucault (1982/88). I find Foucault’s clarification of critique informative, particularly relating to the modes of thought (epistemological) and practices enabled by particular modes of thought (ontology). He argues that:

(c)ritique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest. Foucault (1988:154).

Parallel to these understandings, leadership specialist Robin Sharma (2016), to support his argument that knowledge equals potential and freeing-up power, sees an engagement in life-long learning and implementation of that acquired knowledge, as able to enhance understanding and free the mind. These thoughts recall Da Vinci’s perspective on the implementation of knowledge: “I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do” (Randall, 1953; Kinsman, 1989:223). Greene (1995b:5) calls this way of thinking a “wide-awakeness into action” by saying “imagination, intention: neither is sufficient”. The transformation process can never reach a state of completeness, since “(t)he relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger, 1972:7). Similarly, Bourdieu (1973) asserted that, through a deep engagement in re-imagining how things are, by forming new conceptions, one may perceive reality differently. I believe each person is a potential change agent who, through developing

one's hidden potential, can be "competent in integral ways of being and relating" (Netzer, 2013a:2).

Noting that the practice of doing research, is one of several ways to acquire new understanding, researchers often employ different knowledge sources. Intuitive (transpersonal) researchers, Anderson (1998; 2011), Lattuada, (2010), and Ollagnier-Beldame (2020) base their research ideas on affective, cognitive and sensory dimensions rather than on facts. Lattuada (2010:9) explains intuitive thought as a "circular mode of knowledge that is immediate and direct", based on a "reality without boundaries"(2010:9). Opposed to intuitive thought, is rational knowledge with its logical-linear mode of thought and based on reasoning and analysis. The strength of authoritative (evidence-based) research depends on the truthfulness/verifiability of its information, which is received from multiple sources, such as people, books, and the internet, among other sources. Logical research practices follow a linear systematic process of reasoning from generally accepted findings to conclusions (new knowledge). Research reports testing hypothesis use an empirical approach, based on tangible, 'objective' facts relating to "the world of practical experience – out of which human judgements are formed" (Barone & Eisner, 2012:19). It is, however, important to remind oneself that in practice – particularly in contemporary research – the boundaries between the different knowledge sources are not always clearly defined. Likewise, when describing the power of images, Voronsky (1925:7) asserted that "intuition is present both in the artist and in the scientist", although, the "distinguishing feature of art is the image (Voronsky, 1925:7) created predominantly through intuition."

Diversity of knowledge, representing different ways to process information (Gardner, 1983, 2004; Eisner, 2004; Forrest, 2007) is essential in the development of a new kind of transpersonal leadership education to meet the needs of our 21st century world of work (Knights, Grant, & Young, 2020). Da Vinci's legacy comprises two groundbreaking thoughts in terms of human knowledge-development. He asserted, first, when he proposed the "Principles for the Development of a Complete Mind: Study the science of art. Study the art of science", that both science and art represent efforts made by humans in their attempts to understand and describe the world (Kinsman, 1989:223). Second, Da Vinci clearly established his awareness of a "holistic system of interrelated states, perspectives and dimensions – that provides a theory of how the body, mind and spirit are connected" (Dängeli, 2019:37). He urged humans to develop their senses – "especially learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else" (Kinsman, 1998:223). This expanded awareness denotes the acquisition of knowledge which can alter or transform our frames of reference (Mezirow, 1991), including even

the meaning structures we create in our lives (Frankl, 2008; Pappas, 2016). According to Mezirow (1997:7), this form of knowledge is revealed through an individual's critical reflection on acquired information, a process which leads to her or him acting upon the newly created meaning structures by "living in the new perspective" (Baumgartner, 2001:17). Only then can empowering conditions of awareness be accessed and employed in meaningful and productive ways.

The processes of both learning and scientific research in the social sciences (including education) and humanities, are inseparable from life (Dewey, 1934, 1980; Forrest, 2007). In his theoretical article, 'On Art' (1925), written almost a century ago, Voronsky described art as the "cognition of life in the form of sensual, imaginative contemplation" (Voronsky, 1925:30). He compared science and art, saying: "Like science, art gives objective truths; genuine art demands precision because it deals with the object, it is empirical". In the present inquiry, I saw the proposed integration of practice into theoretical research as involving the creation of artefacts, the presentation of these objects through images, particularly 'moving images, and the interpretation of these presentations or objects to create new understandings. These understandings are general beliefs that find expression across many practical applications. According to Kant, in his theory of human perception (1952), objects have to be experienced to develop into a form of knowledge. Similarly, Booth, thirty years later (1985:85), suggested an aesthetic education in the course of which people could find "essential meanings in life, through intellectual development and through processes that imply feelings, conscience, and inspiration". In this sense, there are certain phenomena that people have to experience to be able to construct knowledge about them. These experiences are further ordered by our minds through a knowledge processing system, a system which differs from one person to another (Philipse, 2004). In line with Kant's 1925 theory of perception, Lowenfeld, (1975:5) and Bateson, (1987:143) believed that those understandings which are constructed through the senses "can become knowledge in the mind." Gadamer (1975) greatly valued the transformative potential of authentic experiences induced by art works:

In the experience of art, we see a genuine experience... induced by the work which does not leave him who has it unchanged... so we hope to better understand what kind of truth it is that encounters us there.
Gadamer (1975/2003:100).

It is clear that an uncertainty about the kind of truth or knowledge this transformative experience will bring forth, continues to exist. Although he claims that art is research, Eisner (1991) also argues that the outcomes of arts-related activities are limiting if not

“intentionally used to raise academic achievement” (Eisner, 1999:149). Thus, the intended relevance of the arts-based component in this inquiry will be determined by its educational value to the participants. It is crucial to keep in mind that, although I refer to the participants’ shortfilm-productions as artistic expressions, these productions should not be misunderstood as outcomes of this inquiry, but rather the humble beginnings, and a part, of an ongoing multimodal discourse. Therefore, in order to clarify this aim, it was necessary to explore how arts-based projects can acquire a position in research contexts beyond being simply artistic and come to be understood from more than one viewpoint by different communities. The practice turn in contemporary theory (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina & Von Savigny, 2001) recognises a wide-ranging move to embrace a practice approach across diverse disciplines, including “philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and science and technology studies” (Cox, 2012:176). Though these authors deny the existence of an integrated practice approach, they in fact claim that phenomena such as “knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation” (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina & Von Savigny, 2001:11) occur within the wider field of practices in the form of interrelated components. Ongoing debates about the changing relationship between science and the arts are mainly driven by scepticism, misunderstandings and uncertainty. The likely reason could be that attempts to demarcate artistic research as a new field are entwined with the desire to singularise it, both from art practice and scientific research-approaches. Henk Borgdorff (2010), a key figure in the debate on artistic research, argues:

The controversies surrounding artistic research often turn on the problem of demarcation. What exactly distinguishes artistic research from art practice? And what distinguishes it from scientific or academic research? Underlying such demarcation problems is a question of legitimacy.
Borgdorff (2010b:17).

In an occasionally antagonistic academic environment, art practice as research (PAR) is legitimised through the kind of statement that art makes accessible a unique kind of knowledge which is inaccessible in other domains and to conventional modes of inquiry (Pakes, 2004; Klein, 2009). In his opposing the aspect of ‘othering’, Klein asserts that “(a)rt and science are not separate domains, but rather two dimensions in the common cultural space”(2009:3), living on the “balance between tradition and innovation” (2009:2). In similar vein, both Dewey (1930) and Forrest (2007:13) note that both schools and academic institutions, regarding their ‘quest for certainty’, require the “arts to balance the sciences.” Nowotny (2011) and Spronk (2016) both ask whether is it even possible to compare artistic and scientific research. Though he posits that the

“outcomes of artistic research can have different aims and thus invite “unfinished thinking” (2012:197), Borgdorff, instead of drawing a comparison between art and science, seeks out a shared position between the two (Spronk, 2016:15). In *Experimental Systems: Future Knowledge in Artistic Research* (2013), Schwab first claims that art and science should not be compared. Thereafter, working on a comparison between the artist’s studio and the scientist’s laboratory to invent a “conceptual neighbourhood of research practice”, Schwab (2013:7) decided to develop a shared position for art and science:

Thus, the question to be asked is not whether the artist is also a scientist or vice versa, but what material and practical ground can be suggested for experimental research of any kind and how this research is conditioned by and develops into the various epistemic contexts within which it is situated (Schwab, 2013:6; Spronk, 2016:14).

Although ‘future knowledge’ indicates a state of ‘not yet known’, due to ‘not yet have experienced being there’, Schwab (2013) nonetheless maintains his focus on finding a shared position for art and science to legitimise artistic research and not to provide a “constructivist account of artistic research as emerging knowledge practice” (Spronk, 2016:15). In addition to Schwab (2013), Borgdorff proceeds to “clarify the epistemological status of art in the research process” (2012:88) by emphasising the essential role of the artistic practice itself in both the research process and outcomes (Borgdorff, 2012:38; Spronk, 2016:11). However, despite more than two decades of debate about the nature of artistic research, there is “still lacking a perspective on its everyday practices and their outcomes” (Borgdorff, 2012:78). Since Snow (1959), more than 60 years ago, saw artistic research to position itself within the intersection of the “two cultures”, art and science (Snow, 1959; Roughley, Smith & Wilkinson, 2019: 226), between the “cultures of art, science and technology” (Spronk, 2016: IV); and between two forms of knowledge, “industry and academic” (Gibson, 2015; Gough-Brady, 2019:181), further research is required to explore how this shared location may contribute to new ways of knowledge creation. In turn, such an expansion potentially enables the development of hybrid findings. Hybridity implies inconsistency, ambivalence, and the resultant emergence of multiple perspectives. These aspects, at first sight, do not appear to meet the criteria of academic research that require “consistent” methods with outcomes that “demand singularity” (Law, 2004:98; Spronk, 2016:71). Establishing a more open and inclusive approach may potentially enable the development of outcomes relevant and valuable to both artistic and academic research practices (Law, 2004:153; Spronk, 2016:71).

Academic research practices, also referred to as scientific research by many authors, reveal, from a constructivist perspective, that both facts and artefacts can be constructed through scientific practice (Latour & Woolgar, 1986). To understand artistic practices, a focus on human activities should be developed as, according to Becker (1982:1), “all artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of people”. The appearance of terms and expressions, such as ‘art’ and ‘artistic’ in academic research is not unfamiliar. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung suggested “art imagery as inquiry” in early 20th century-research (Leavy, 2014:403–422; Pentassuglia, 2017). The term, “artistic inquiry” was used by American philosopher Theodore M. Green (1940) more than 80 years ago to announce artists’ involvement in the research process (Pentassuglia, 2017). Eisner, apart from introducing the term ‘arts-based education research’ (ABER) in 1975, awakened the potential to employ different forms of representation within educational research at the 1993/1997 American Educational Research Conference (AERA). The Practice Turn in 2001 (Schatzki, Knorr & Von Savigny; Stern, 2003) paved the way for developments of what is now considered to be acceptable practice within academic research. Initially works of ABER focused on the “use and analysis of literary art forms in the human sciences with nods to music and the visual arts” (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008:6). Arts-based methods (ABM) have developed out of creative arts therapies in the fields of psychiatry and psychology as ways of expressing what cannot be conveyed in the conventional language” (McNiff, 2008:11). Similarly, in educational research, Barone and Eisner (2012) assert that “[arts] based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable” (2012:1). Progressive access to technology allows for more forms of experiential and innovative methodologies to be available in qualitative research (Knowles & Cole, 2008), in education practice (Cahnmann & Taylor, 2008), and to address the question of aesthetics in arts-based practices (Leavy, 2009). Greenwood (2012) in her article, ‘Arts-based research: Weaving magic and meaning’, argues that the artistic discipline awakens the “value of the less definable and often holistic kinds of knowing that may result through the use of art tools and aesthetic analysis” (Greenwood, 2012:18). Accordingly, the creation of new terms by such authors and researchers help to describe the nature of the research practice that is recognised as a research continuum (Chilton, 2013). Progress in this field can be traced from Eisner’s arts-based educational research (ABER) in the 1970s to arts-based research (ABR), adapted by Barone and Eisner (1997; 2012) and McNiff (2008; 2013), who proposed a critical focus on arts-based research practices. ABR encompasses further related and diverse developments, such as arts-informed methodology (CAIR, 2000; Knowles & Cole, 2008), *A/r*tography (Springgay & Irvin, 2008), Arts-based methodology (McNiff, 1981;

1992; 2008; Leavy, 2009), and Intrinsic ABR (Gerber, Bryl, Potvin, & Blank, 2018). The diversity of relationships between creative practice and exegesis in contemporary academic research shows a renewed interest in the function of art within the doctoral research process, and the increasing blending between the two disciplines of art and academia (Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli & Nicholson, 2011; Spronk, 2016; Van der Vaart & Huigen, 2018; Gough-Brady, 2019).

3.3.2 Arts-based inquiry: its position within academic research

When had the first ‘filaments of language’ (Holyoak, 2019:13) been drawn and tossed out with the hope of connecting my subjective visual arts-world to the shared world of the group of post-school youth, and how might communication have been possible? Understanding the possibilities (scope) offered by integrating arts-based and academic research methodologies, and in particular the positionality of this doctoral study within academic research, is a complex process. In an attempt to work beyond “representational logic and the language/material binary” (St. Pierre, 2013:650; Le Grange, 2018:7), a multitude of exploratory threads have been tossed out (Holyoak, 2019:13) with the hope of providing new insights into the positionality of my inquiry within academic research and across disciplines. Drawing from multi-perspectives to clarify my decision to engage an arts-based approach to inquiry, my discussion focuses on the literature that can answer the following questions with relevance to my research: 1) What is the nature of arts-based methods in education research? 2) Who are those who choose to engage in arts-based forms of inquiry? 3) What is the function and purpose of doing ABER? 4) Can one acquire new and wholly objective knowledge through incorporating an arts-based component in academic research? These questions have been adapted from *Blurring the Boundaries: The Case for Artistic Research* (Michelkevičius, 2017). I have added a fifth question, relating to my inquiry: 5) How can arts-based methodologies be implemented to communicate new forms of knowing in this doctoral research in education, for them to be understood from more than one viewpoint by different communities?

3.3.2.1 What is the nature of arts-based methods in education research?

Some authors, such as Leavy (2005; 2009; 2015), argue that ABR is a separate research paradigm. In the *Handbook of qualitative research* (2005:682) Leavy posits that “(a)rts-based inquiry is one methodological and theoretical genre among many new forms of qualitative inquiry”. Conversely, in the 21st century quantitative methodologies also reach out beyond the confines of conventional research to include creative work

(Rolling, 2010; Kara, 2015). 'Arts-based' indicates the presence of a creative artefact as the basis of the contribution to knowledge, in this way distinguishing ABR from practice-led research, which is concerned with the development of knowledge within or about practice (Candy, 2006). Underpinned by practice theories of Wittgenstein, Bourdieu and Giddens (Reckwitz, 2002; Postill, 2010; Cox, 2012:177), ABR signifies "any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology" (Jones & Leavy, 2004:1–2), particularly but not limited to, applied fields such as health (Simons & McCormac, 2007; Felt, Miller & Smith-Doer, 2016), business (Eaves, 2014), and education (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Smithbell, 2010; Pentassuglia, 2016). In their *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research* (2008:XI), Knowles and Cole argue that ABR represents "an unfolding and expanding orientation to qualitative social science that draws inspiration, concepts, processes, and representation from the arts, broadly defined" (2008:xi). McNiff (2008:29) makes this more specific by proposing that ABR involves "the systemic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts". These perspectives contribute to the discussion on the value of artistic processes to "bring to research ... very different ways of seeing, imagining, understanding, articulating, and inquiring, which leads to better questioning and more robust inquiry practices" (O'Donoghue, 2011:649). These processes further challenge academia to reaffirm, on reliable philosophical bases, that "(t)he art object does not embody a form of knowledge" (Scrivener, 2002:1), while opposing perspectives value the significance of the artwork itself as the embodiment of knowledge (Pakes, 2004). Barbour, on the other hand, in *Dancing across the page* (2011), suggests a research process centred on embedded ways of knowing.

In the 1970s and '80s, guided by the experiential learning theory, Kolb and Fry (1975), as well as Schön (1983) positioned the artistic practice/creative production as physical experience within a continuous reflection cycle. This process emphasises the impact of a reflection process on experience, followed by an evaluation thereof, and identifies a further development of a new practice. Although Scrivener (2002:8) does not share Schön's perception of the creative process, he argues that Schön nevertheless provides the researcher with useful concepts to recognise what should be the focus of the creative process, its design and presentation. Whatever the approach to, or form of, the art object, issues of aesthetics and audience are always central in arts-based research methodologies (Leavy, 2009:17). Educational theorist Christopher Frayling (1993) attempted to clarify the role of the artefact in artistic research by discerning three categories: First, a theoretical inquiry into disciplines such as art history and musicology, can be "historical, aesthetic, or perceptual" (1993:5); second, research

through art involves “materials research, research into technologies or action research” (ibid.), whereby the results of practical experiments are communicated through art forms; and third, research for the arts, which Frayling (1993) argued, is the most complex one, as the thinking process is “embodied in the artefact” (ibid.). A closer look at the second category reveals an inconsistency, as research ‘into technologies’ also matches the first category. While new knowledge is created, new and more intricate questions about the nature of artistic research emerge. Similarly to Frayling (1993), Smithbell (2010) tries to determine the nature of the work by questioning the difference between research that applies art, research about art, and research through art. According to Smithbell (2010), there are no fixed answers to essential questions about the character of ABR, whether ABR is a medium or a method, and how the research is applied and evaluated. Another author who participates in the debate on artistic research is Henk Borgdorff. He paraphrase Frayling’s 1993 categories to research “on, for and in the arts” (Borgdorff, 2012:37). He perceives research in the arts as a “mode of research”, and further explains that the artistic practice of the individual artist forms an integral part of both the research process and its outcomes. How precisely it does this remains uncertain. A more encompassing definition, based on an inclusive conceptual underpinning, describes ABR as “research that uses the arts, in the broadest sense, to explore, understand, represent and even challenge human action and experience” (Slavin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014:1). In their development of a classification framework to “potentially address the need for understanding some of the boundaries of what ABR is, and what it is not”, Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, and Hannes (2017:8) illuminate aspects such as the “application of arts-based approaches in research”, and “with the purpose of widening audience participation” (2017:7, 22). Although their reference to ‘application’ is in conflict with my understanding of ‘implementing’ ABR methodology in social sciences, I find their focus on initiating a dialogue about their project with the audience particularly useful. Using Frayling’s 1993 categories as a basis, Wang et al. identify three major categories for classifying ABR: “research about art, art as research, and art in research (2017:6). They also classify the forms identified in ABR into “1) visual art; 2) sound art; 3) literary art; 4) performing art; 5) new media (Wang et al., 2017:16). Although filmmaking has long been recognised as a ‘total’ artform (Bazin, 1967–71), with its own film language (Reid, 2019), as encompassing visual images, sound, and performance, created in real time, and presented through digital technology, ‘film’ is sub-categorised as a time-based visual art form (Wang et al., 2017:24).

Existing proposals for evaluating ABR place a strong focus on “how the method relates to broader pedagogical, societal, or philosophical objectives” (Norris, 2011, Wang, 2017:12). These authors acknowledge the need for different assessment criteria. They

see the value of a particular project being determined by the insight and competence of the researcher, and if an ABR text is targeted at an “expanded audience” those involved become part of the “expanded critical community” (Barone & Eisner, 2012:102–103). Other focus areas defined by various authors include “critique as a process to achieve change through ABR” (Chávez & Soep, 2005; Wang et al., 2017:13), and “how to judge the effort of students engaged in high-stakes ABR projects such as dissertations or theses” (Piirto, 2002). Lafrenière and Cox’s (2013) encompassing meta-framework, Guiding Arts-Based Research Assessment (GABRA) incorporates “normative, substantive and performative aspects of arts-based methods of representing research findings” (2013:318). Yet, in spite of these definitions, I still find a space for developing assessment strategies that provide essential guidelines to prevent purely subjective assessments of an inquiry based on the Arts. I further argue that these strategies should not be regarded as a template for future inquiry, but instead be developed as a motivation to find the most relevant strategies that would add value and significance to the contexts within which the inquiry is performed.

ABR distinguishes itself from the more conventional forms and approaches to qualitative research by avoiding measurement and causality (Lafrenière & Cox, 2013; Wang, et al., 2017:13), while leaving the certainty of interpretation largely to the reader/audience. In effect, it challenges what counts amongst traditional academia as research. However, a process of combining the academic context with the context of the artistic practice (Spronk, 2016:35; Wendel, 2016) as an essential component of both the research process and the research results (Borgdorff, 2012:38; Spronk, 2016:11) appears to be problematic. In the Netherlands and Belgium, for example, artistic research involves collaboration with both art educational institutions and universities (Dibosa & Ophuysen, 2013; Spronk, 2016:3). Consequently, third cycle artistic research (involving coursework, self-study, and thesis writing) are expected to meet the requirements of both communities-of-learning (Borgdorff, 2010a:46, 47; Slager, 2012:30).

3.3.2.2 Who are those who choose to engage in arts-based forms of inquiry?

A broad view across the social sciences shows that ‘those’ engaging in arts-based inquiries include researchers who challenge the traditional separation between art and science (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Gergen & Gergen, 2014; Felt et al., 2016) by transcending disciplinary boundaries. Helen Kara, in her book, *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, provides a more particular answer regarding these researchers:

Researchers who “view their work as value laden, symbiotically linked with society”; those that reach out beyond the bounds of conventional research to the arts, other research methods and technology, to find more useful ways to explore the world around us” (Kara, 2015:34).

Furthermore, although Kara (2015) observes that there are creative approaches emerging in quantitative methodologies, “(r)esearchers using creative and arts-based research methods are often situated within the qualitative research tradition” (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Coemans & Hannes, 2017). In this context Van der Vaart, Van Hoven, and Huigen (2018:1) focus their contribution on “researchers interested in community resilience”. In their study, Lopez, Wickson, and Hausner (2018) apply what they describe as an integrative arts-based method, “Creative Voice”, through a participatory process in the context of community-based conservation of agricultural biodiversity to explore interconnections between nature and culture in Mexico. Finley (2005:682) notes that arts-based inquiry (ABI) is “practiced by academics doing human social research”, a process which includes both “artists and social researchers”. Likewise, Spronk (2016) reports on doctoral research in the Netherlands and Belgium across a variety of artistic disciplines, including architecture, film, installation art, music, theatre, and visual art performance (2016:24). Vytautas Michelkevičius, author of *Blurring the boundaries: The case for artistic research* (2016), adds to the list by asserting that “artistic research brings together lines, concepts, forms, and ideas in diagrams, and their creators and researchers in collaborative platforms” (Michelkevičius, 2016). In support of his argument, he quotes internationally recognised American contemporary artist, George Smith, who argues that “all prominent artists were philosophers and vice versa, as they aestheticized ideas from the times of Plato” (2016:102). As innovator and founder of the first and only Institute for doctoral studies in the world (IDSVA), Smith has a leading position in Northern American Education. Contrastingly, Michelkevičius argues that the Enlightenment and Kant are responsible for the disruption of the initial accord between art and science, and therefore, it is time to re-establish historical and disciplinary justice about the distinctive nature of art and that of science. Visual historian James Elkins (2017: online) presented eight different models of art-science interaction as a lecture at the CUE Art Foundation (Manhattan, USA) in 2017. He saw these observed interactions as comprising:

... artists who use science in their practice; collaborate with scientists; or who deploy principles of art in science; those who undertake museum residencies; or accompany expeditions; and scientists working as artists, presenting science as art; explaining science in terms of ‘beauty’ or claiming that art exemplifies

scientific principles (Elkins, 2017; Roughley, Smith & Wilkinson, 2019:229).

Elkins's art-science interaction models offer valuable guidelines for the MA Art in Science programme (MAAS) at Liverpool John Moores University. This postgraduate programme responds to the increasing demand for interactive art-science-programmes at higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK, where subject-specific career opportunities for graduates, particularly within Art and Design subjects, are not guaranteed (Roughley, Smith & Wilkinson, 2019:227). The MAAS programme operates internationally across a number of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Maths (S.T.E.A.M) disciplines to address challenges within the changing world of work (Chen & Xiaoting, 2016).

A recent publication by editors Ward and Short, *Using Arts-based research methods* (2020) further extends the scope to include business management, organisation, and the humanities. Themes such as "Drawing out emotion in organisational life" (Ward, 2020:15), "Designing dance into qualitative research" (Springborg in Ward & Short, 2020:41), "Film-Making: Researching and Learning Through Pocket Film-Making" (McMurray, *ibid*:75), and "Food as an Arts-Based Research Method in Business and Management Studies" (Weston, *ibid*:109) provide new insights into creative research approaches. It is clear that the impact of ABR methodologies within academic research is a diverse and widespread one. From the multitude of perspectives of this research methodology I have consulted regarding the methodological implications of an Arts-based Doctorate, I have selected the definition offered by Batty and Berry, as the most relevant to my inquiry: According to Batty and Berry (2015), the creative practice PhD is "a space of constellations and connections where practices, methods and understandings meet and shape new methodologies" (2015:182). Current developments include audio-visual research works in the form of "digital papers", using the documentary's aesthetic components as a form of communication to express academic significance (Gough-Brady, 2019:182). Yet, a broad debate continues to frame the legitimacy and recognition of arts-based doctorates. This is due to the variation in institutional guidelines regarding the structure of practice-based doctorates, the relation between written work and creative practices, form of representation, and evaluation of a doctoral thesis (Paltridge et al., 2011; Spronk, 2016; Gough-Brady, 2019).

3.3.2.3 What is the function and purpose of doing ABER?

During all phases of this inquiry I kept asking myself the question, “Why arts-based education research”? In addition to acting from within a Visual Arts education-context, I wondered what more could be achieved in terms acquiring/creating depth of knowledge and insight, individually and collectively, by ‘plugging-in’ arts-based methods, while still being ethically accepted in the field of academic research. Leavy (2009:12), from a methodological perspective, began to provide part of an answer: “...arts-based practices have been developed for all research phases: data production, analysis, interpretation, and representation” (2009:12). While new terms are being created to describe the nature of the wide variety of arts-related methods in use, arts-based researchers are hesitant to prescribe methods. While some arts-based researchers, such as *a/r/tographer* Rita Irwin (2008), have argued that ABR should establish its own research paradigm separate from quantitative and qualitative methodologies (*A/r/tography*, 2008; Leavy, 2009), many of the applications of ABR serve an instrumental purpose to acquire awareness and willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production/creation, and new ways of knowing. Barone and Eisner (2012:13) propose three possible reasons for this: if an ABR project “effectively employs aesthetic dimensions in both its inquiry and representational phases”; if the project-work provides an “important public service that may be otherwise unavailable”; and if the work of ABR is “useful in unique ways”. According to Barone and Eisner (2012:15), the ‘usefulness’ of any ABR-project is best understood in reference to its epistemological underpinning. Dängeli (2019:19) sees this kind of inquiry as based on the idea of an extended and inclusive epistemology. Knowledge created in this way can lead to experiences of collective consciousness, and of common understanding, discovery and insight. Due to the presence of an artwork or arts practice within ABR, this research positions itself within the intersection between the worlds of art, science and technology (Spronk, 2016; Roughley, Smith & Wilkinson, 2019). Michael Schwab (2013) questions the role of practices in studying “artistic modes of investigation”. Schwab (2013:5) perceives a work of art as “a manufactured piece of knowledge that exists in its own account” and appears “self-determined and just there”, as if it is a natural object. For Yvonne Dröge Wendel, an installation artist doing her doctoral study (Spronk, 2016:3), the artwork goes beyond being ‘just there’: it produces an evolving situation. For Wendel, her installation artwork is more than an outcome of artistic practice. It is used to create a productive situation through which the researcher can interact with the audience, observe what happens, and be part of the process of conducting her research. The “embedding of material surroundings and role of objects in knowledge practices” (Spronk, 2016:14) is

something that will “appeal to [researchers in the arts] intuitively”, according to Nowotny (2010: xxii). She problematises the space for “artistic research in this changing epistemological, institutional, and normative landscape in the bewildering zones of uncertainties” (2010: xxii). The work of Borgdorff (2012) and Schwab (2013) provides a positive answer to Nowotny’s question. In his doctoral study, Borgdorff (2012) seeks to “clarify the epistemological status of art in the research process” (2012:188). However, Borgdorff (2012) goes beyond Schwab (2013) in stating his belief that artistic research outcomes have the potential to have different aims and therefore invite “unfinished thinking” (2012:197). Creative and arts-based methods in academic research appear to have been successfully adopted as part of the toolkits of these researchers across various disciplines (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Woodgate, Zurba & Tennent, 2017). Yet, Coemans and Hannes (2017) have noted a lack of methodological reflection on arts-based methods (Van der Vaart et al., 2018:2). They suggest that more arts-based researchers should report on their experiences in the field. Just when I thought I had acquired sufficient motivation to underpin my methodological decisions, a new question emerged: How would a researcher report/communicate their findings, derived from an arts-based inquiry? Should I have two separate components, a formal written dissertation and a practical portfolio? Or would an integrated report, involving both elements in the same document, be academically more acceptable?

3.3.2.4 How would a researcher acquire new, objective knowledge through incorporating an arts-based component in academic research?

Before attempting to answer the question about the ‘new’ and ‘objective’ nature of knowledge, one should take a moment to review the meaning of ‘scientific’ and ‘artistic’ knowledge in relationship to ‘research’. More than 40 years ago Eisner (1980; 1981) intended to clarify the important distinctions between what is studied in a scientific mode and what is studied “artistically” (1981:5), by identifying ten differentiating dimensions. He reminds us that the distinction in question is not the one between qualitative and quantitative forms of research, given that qualities are essential to all empirical research. Table 3.1 below shows a summary of Eisner’s findings.

Table 3.1 The differences between scientific ways of knowing and artistic ways of knowing as explicated by Eisner (1980; 1981)

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH	ARTISTIC RESEARCH

1. The Forms of Representation Employed	
Formal statements, expressing either empirically referenced quantitative relationships, or discursive propositions, using literal language and codification, such as the <i>micro-analytic schemes</i> Birdwhistle (1970) uses to capture and record human behaviour.	Contrastingly, no comparable codifications. Meanings are expressed in literal and figurative ways and in visual, auditory and discursive forms. In <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> , verbal, visual and musical forms are brilliantly combined to create an evocative expression of embodied meaning.
2. The Criteria for Appraisal	
Validity is key and requires a variety of criteria to be applied to the sampling procedures, instrument reliability, data collection, interpretation, and conclusions.	Validity, reliability and statistical significance do not apply, and are replaced by credibility. The persuasiveness of a personal vision is essential, i.e. the filmmaker's view to inform her/his audience. The authenticity of this vision is to be determined by the audience's view of its credibility, concerning the way it shapes their world-view or some aspect thereof.
3. Points of Focus	
The manifest/measurable behaviour of the individual or the studied group provides the primary research data in social science research.	ABR focuses less on behaviour and more on the possible meanings that can be derived by and from an audience viewing human experience.
4. The Nature of Generalisation	
Social science research focuses on a random selection process, seeking particulars only insofar as they meet the generalising requirements. Statistical "outliers" (Eisner, 1981:7) are often regarded as part of the error variances.	The general is located within the particular, by emphasising the unique qualities of individual cases, such as Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> . Common human attributes that carry significance in a particular time and space, can thus be applied to other situations, providing humans with meaningful ways to cope with their life- world.
5. The Role of Form	
Standardised traditions follow a strict objective approach in terms of data-representation, publishing-style of journal articles, including specified authors' guidelines. However, the question "who discovered what first" (Eisner, 1981:8) is important editors of social science journals and thus	ABR regards standardisation as counterproductive in favour of artistically expressive forms of data presentation. These apply to the specific words chosen, the situated position of particular ideas within the report, and the awareness of a particular voice,

acknowledged by publishing the acceptance-date of the manuscript.	tone and tempo. These are significant factors concerning the communication skills of the artistically oriented researcher.
6. Degree of License Allowed	
“(W)hat is said in the name of science is to be more factual” (Eisner, 1981:9), objective, and rejects traces of the imaginative.	Rather than presenting a front of objectivity, ABR acknowledges existing facts and embraces new genres, such as “faction” (Eisner, 1981:9) to select and emphasise essential aspects to describe the researcher’s viewpoint.
7. Interest in Prediction and Control	
Strong emphasis on prediction and potential control through the use of algorithms. The rigour of physics enables both prediction and control; also the subsequent technological achievements. As emphasis progresses from control to explication, the affinity between scientifically orientated research (academic research) and artistically oriented research is strengthened.	No intention to create or control formal predictive statements; in favour of explication; there is a resemblance to hermeneutic activity rather than to a technological one. Its best contribution is the ineffable forms of understanding that are only possible through the figurative or non-discursive character of the artistic expression. These understandings promote cognitive differentiation and increase people’s ability to deal with similar situations.
8. Sources of Data	
Employ a hermetically sealed test, marginally administered according to standardised procedure.	Major source of data: researcher’s experiences, emanating from how this is interpreted by the researcher. What and in which ways the researcher communicates the findings depends upon whom the reader-audience is (Eisner, 1981:10).
9. The basis of Knowing	
‘Knowing’ is unidimensional; seeks emotional neutrality. Employs methodological monism.	Knowing is varied; emotion plays a central role. Representational forms can influence responses. When the content requires participation from the reader/viewer, the author/filmmaker creates a form that enables participation. Rejects positive view, claiming that only formal propositions can provide knowledge. Employs methodological pluralism. “Interested in helping people experience the fragrance.” (Eisner, 1981:10).

10. Ultimate Aims	
<p>One of the traditional aims: discovery of truth (episteme); making ‘true’ statements about the world. In social sciences the <i>correspondence theory of truth</i> is still relevant. <i>Truth</i> relates to consistency and logic and implies consistency and logic.</p>	<p>ABR is less concerned with the discovery of truth; instead it is in favour of creating meaningful images that have the potential to secure or alter people’s world-views. Artistic meaning relates to relativism, diverse interpretation, and coherence. ABR values unique perspectives.</p>

For the purpose of this discussion I employ Eisner’s 2003 description of ‘scientific research’: a series of “inquiries that use formal instruments as the primary basis for data collection, that transform the data collected into numerical indices of one kind or another, and that attempt to generalize in a formal way to some universe beyond themselves” (Eisner, 2003:5). ‘Artistic’ knowledge, however, has no clarified description, as illustrated by the following examples taken from a range of philosophers over centuries. For Plato, knowledge, created through artistic practice is equivalent to “harmonious form whose mathematical relationships participated in the true, the good, and the beautiful”; “mimesis” for Aristotle; “significant form” for English art critic, Clive Bell (1914); “a nondiscursive symbol expressive of human feeling” for Suzanne Langer; and “coherent and emotionally moving experience” for John Dewey (1934) (Weitz, 1959; Eisner, 2003:5). Eisner (2003) argues that there are multiple ways of knowing, and that knowledge is constructed, not merely discovered. He suggests that inquiry will be more comprehensive if researchers expand their scope of investigation to, describe and interpret the world. Responding to these understandings, this inquiry focused on exploring those possibilities which could enable arts-based projects to acquire a position in research contexts beyond simply being ‘artistic’. An additional and primary rationale, as has been mentioned, was for the inquiry to be understood from more than one viewpoint by different communities.

Beginning with Eisner’s (2002:1) broad understanding of this kind of research, “the very idea of research, [which] is generally understood as an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding” , I focused on ‘new’ and ‘objective’ forms of arts-based knowledge production within education research. Furthermore, I interrogated the “form of knowledge” artist and art-based researcher, Stephen Scrivener refers to when he argues that “(t)he art object does not embody a form of knowledge” (Scrivener, 2002:1). I believe Maxine Greene, is referring to a knowledge gap and to the process of creating knowledge in her essay, “Releasing the imagination” (1995:74), when she writes that “(i)ncompleteness – the open question –

summons us to the task of knowledge and action... we actively insert our own perception into the lived world. It is a process of meaning making." In response to this view, I relate the 'meaning making'-process to praxis and poiesis, whereby knowledge is brought into existence through a transformative experience (Agamben, 1999:72; Heidegger, 1977:5; 2008:56). However, for Heidegger, the presentation of an image, whether in a work of art or in a filmic form, originates not from the conceptual thinking-process of the creator, but rather from the artefact's ability to present "createdness" (Heidegger, 2002:39).

The creation of new knowledge has the potential to lead to the development of new questions about, and understandings of, the impact an artistic approach to research may have. An example of this is the question of "aesthetic taste" (Spronk, 2016:26) which, due to researcher involvement, complicates the making of objective decisions. In *Blurring the boundaries: The case for artistic research* Michelkevičius (2016) posits that artistic research changes both the attitude towards the art practice and scientific research by questioning the claimed status of the latter as the only legitimate way of knowledge production. Klein (2009), on the other hand, describes the artistic experience as an "active, constructive and aesthetic process, in which mode and substance are fused inseparably" (Klein, 2009:4). Several authors describe knowledge produced through artistic experience as differing from other implicit knowledge, which can mostly be measured and described independently from its understanding (Dewey, 1934; Polanyi, 1966; Piccini & Kershaw, 2003). One of the most distinctive features of artistic knowledge is its multimodal form, a form which offers a "significant advantage in that some goals are better accomplished with different representations" (Skains, 2018:87). Yet, the process whereby this abstract, artistic knowledge is translated into written text, is a challenging one for arts-based researchers. As Barone and Eisner (2012: 1–2) note, "the knowledge we gain is inevitably shaped by the tools we use". Although ABR offers potential for alternative representation, the more visible forms of knowledge production, such as film, video, theatre, and music, would necessarily be absent due to constrictive journal requirements (Barone & Eisner, 2012:4). Likewise, Foster (2012), for example, notes that ABR produces "less tangible knowledge than the more traditional forms of social inquiry that produce familiar, 'robust' data that can be tested for objectivity, reliability and validity" (Klein, 2009:4). In arts-based research (ABR), Leavy (2009), Barone and Eisner (2012), and Romiger (2015) consider validity and reliability to be inappropriate measures of good ABR. They suggest a focus on credibility instead. A shared sentiment can be recognised among arts-based researchers who believe that, by using arts-based methodologies and methods that approve creative expression, they "can obtain knowledge that may otherwise remain

obscured or covert, gain better access to the emotional, affective, and embodied realms of life, cultivate empathy, and challenge and provoke audiences to engage with complex and difficult social issues” (Chamberlain, McGuigan, Anstiss, & Marshall, 2018:134). The impact of this recognition has revealed that knowledge can be deemed, not only a matter of mind, but something embedded and incorporated (Barbour, 2011). In *Dancing across the page* (2011:86), Barbour asserts that “(a)rtists have the potential to significantly contribute to the generation of new understanding, not only of artistic practice, but also to knowledge and to society in general”. These understandings have added value to working with participants who are personally and socially involved in visual and performing arts-practices. The question still remains for me: How to implement new ways of creating evidence (data) in a conversation about knowledge contribution in academic research?

3.3.2.5 How to implement arts-based methodologies to communicate new forms of knowing in this doctoral research in education?

Current developments in the crossing the boundary between the “creative” and the “theoretical” venture reveal challenges regarding precise borders and evaluation criteria (Spronk, 2016; Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005:909; Gough-Brady, 2019). Although positionality between art and academia reveals new possible ways for “both artists to engage with their practice, and for academia to rethink routinized ways of working and thinking” (Spronk, 2016:4), “artistic researchers” are still expected to meet the requirements of both communities-of-learning (Borgdorff, 2010a:46, 47). Despite this expectation, as threads of theory, practice, and poesis interweave (Irwin, 2004), deeper understandings emerge. O’Donoghue (2011:649) explained that artists’ freedom and ability “to work on an edge and between borders of the familiar and the emergent create new possibilities for knowing and working together differently”. These insights recall Eisner’s 1995 allusion to a process of defamiliarisation whereby “the artist recontextualizes the familiar so that it takes on a new significance” (Eisner, 1995:1-2). Once again, the ‘familiar’/‘unfamiliar’ binary is in flux between the ‘known’ and the ‘unknown. Different ways of knowing, which implies a multiplicity of perceptions, and therefore multiliterate readers/audience, is situated in a position “within the midst and on the edges” (Springgay et al., 2005:905). In my opinion, arts-based research practices become a kind of border pedagogy, the function of which is to “challenge, transgress and redefine borders so that they are more inclusive and more just (Lauzon, 1999:269). In an attempt to extend his border pedagogy theory from a formal education context to the broader public domain, Giroux (2006b) describes the process whereby:

... citizens need to be multi-literate in ways that not only allow them access to new information and media-based technologies, but also enable them to be border-crossers capable of engaging, learning from, understanding, and being tolerant of and responsible to matters of difference and otherness (Giroux, 2006b:183).

After a process of reflection, and in response to these understandings, I recalled the UN fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4, 2015) while problematising the relevance of film literacy towards becoming multi-literate. Key to this life-long learning process is the recognition of multi-literacy as a human right, as a strategy towards personal empowerment, and a means of social and human development. Film being recognised as a 'total' (Bazin, 1967-71) and multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis, 2020:4) artform thus encompasses and manipulates a combination of various individual modes, namely linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial, all of which modes, used in various combinations, create a meaningful message for a purpose and audience. These modes comprise characteristics unique to film that could be particularly usefully and appropriately employed to accommodate the expansion in meaning-making, communicating, and presentation of knowledge and ideas, brought about by rapidly advancing communication technologies.

In an attempt to strengthen my argument, I refer to Dewey (1966) who saw alternative pedagogies as enabling students to employ their own knowledge and situations in a consumerist society to become aware of their own conditions. Dewey (1966) viewed alternative pedagogies as border-crossers between academic life contexts and real life personal and social contexts (ibid.). Dewey's apparent indifference to film and other popular art forms, despite developing an encompassing aesthetic theory (Pope, 2011:27), can possibly be ascribed to the fact that film had not yet established itself as an artform during Dewey's time. His scepticism relates to the assumption that popular art forms are created to amuse and entertain lower class consumers, while creating an income for the producers (Seng, 2007:31). *In Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), there is only one reference to the use of film (Freire, 1970:121) and only as didactic material which incidentally included photographs, posters, reading of texts, and slides. Yet Freire at a later date acknowledged the value of these visual objects to enable students to "acquire objective and scientific knowledge of their own context and objectively see what things need to change in the objectified reality" (Freire, 2000). Likewise, Giroux's border pedagogy aims to firstly recognise the "epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins" that structure students' daily lives. Second, his pedagogy expresses the need to create "pedagogical conditions" in which students become border crossers

in order to understand otherness in its own terms; and thirdly, border pedagogy illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of those inherited locations and boundaries that “frame our discourses and social relations” (Giroux, 1992:28). In *Breaking into the Movies: Pedagogy and the Politics of Film* (2001), Giroux recognises film as a pedagogical tool, with the capacity to offer students alternative perspectives of the world, to encourage them to critically reflect on popular, unexamined attitudes of society, and to engage students in qualities of empathy and critical analysis. He sees the film-medium as providing students with unique ways to look into ideologies, stereotypes and identity-issues contained within the film text (Giroux, 2001). References to the use of “images, sounds, gestures, dialogue, and spectacle” that help “structure everyday issues around particular assumptions, values, and social relations” (Giroux, 2001a: 591-592), could have been of more direct value to my study if they referred to original student productions instead of to Hollywood films. Sharing the understandings of aesthetic experience of both Freire (1970) and Dewey (1934), Maxine Greene asserts that students’ visual experiences serve to take them “out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1995:123). She goes on to say “...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). Clearly, these progressive educators, in their search for effective approaches to guide the youth in becoming global citizens, have long integrated the arts into their work. Despite their influences, this field of transformative pedagogy still contains spaces that may be used to explore new forms of knowledge production and communicate the kinds of characterises applicable to multi-literacy pedagogy for our current times.

3.3.3 Selecting the core setting

The physical, social and cultural site where my inquiry was performed played a significant role in the process of determining the study topic, participants, and thus the research setting. In this section the aspects discussed (described) include the understanding of ‘setting’ within the context of (post) qualitative filmic research in education (Wolfe, 2017:427); the characteristics of the selected site(s) with reference to local and global counterparts; and my motivation for investigating the use of film literacy in specific semi-rural settings.

In (post) qualitative research, knowing as situated inquiry (Le Grange, 2018:11) “is about how far knowledge is able to travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations”. Similarly, as previously mentioned, Ulmer and Nordstrom (2017:1) compare

the many different ways we may enter and exit different locations at different points in time to Ernest Hemingway's observation that there are different ways of walking down to the river Seine in *A Moveable Feast* (1964/1996). As researchers "we also may enter and exit at different locations at different points in time. But we are, in these ways, walking together" (Ulmer & Nordstrom, 2017:1). In her 'Post-Qualitative Filmic Research in Education' article, Wolfe (2017) mentions certain 'hidden' aspects within research settings:

The photographs above reveal a detailed image of the location that includes the setting outside of the frame shown in the interviews, although this is still exclusive, that is, we cannot hear the squeal of car tires on the road only meters away or see the chains and huge lock on the high fence that surrounds the property and so on. These do conflict with the serene environment constructed in "interview of Anna" and are excluded. (Wolfe, 2017:432).

It is clear that certain details relating to the research setting will remain hidden to the reader until these are revealed by the researcher. The unveiling of hidden details in this inquiry thus relates to the significance of the filmic material used to capture sound, weather conditions, facial expressions, and body language, among other details seldom represented accurately in textual descriptions. As part of a critique of the limitations of conventional humanist qualitative methodology (St. Pierre, 2014:7), and in view of the fact that empirical research in South African higher education is dominated by traditional quantitative and qualitative studies (Le Grange, 2018:12), St. Pierre (2014) encourages researchers to follow Foucault's (1971/1972) argument and "consider other possible modes of being, different ontologies" (St. Pierre, 2014:13). Equally, Massey (2005), together with Nordstrom and Ulmer (2017), describes the Post-Qualitative understanding of 'setting': "Place is always different. Each is unique, and constantly productive of the new" (Massey, 2005:162); and "Each new geographic location shapes a different new" (Nordstrom & Ulmer, 2017:7).

As an educational researcher whose interests are located outside metropolitan areas, in places that are generally considered to be rural, this dissertation presents an inquiry within community-based education and a community/collective point of view. Although some might say that research methodologies are the same no matter where the study is situated, I strongly argue that location and context make a difference, particularly pertaining to educational research where a form of education that differs from the mainstream tradition underpins the study. A distinctive characteristic of the site of the present study, which was originally classified as rural, but now re-classified as a semi-rural area, is the much greater length of the distances between communities (Ashton,

Bonnievale, McGregor, Montagu and Robertson), as well as a relatively lower population per square kilometre than that of the metropole (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:8). 'Semi-rural' in this case means "outside metropolitan areas" (White & Corbett, 2014:1), with agriculture and manufacturing as the two largest sectors (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:20). Seasonal flooding and continual poor internet connectivity make the living conditions of the inhabitants challenging (Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, 2015:28, 30). These characteristics are particular to these communities which have developed in the valleys along the Breede, Keisie-, and Kingna rivers, and on farmland surrounded by mountains. Yet they are not unique in terms of climatic conditions. Other regions here and abroad with comparable Mediterranean rainfall patterns, may experience similar conditions. Rurality and the rural/semi-rural context in which this research is situated, was awkward to describe. A variety of different understandings concerning rurality and rural education exist in current media. Two questions that are not part of my focus, namely how underdeveloped an area should be to be classified as 'rural', and the kinds of developments which should be in place for it to be called 'urban', emerged. Howley and Howley (in White & Corbett, 2014:5) use the French term, *terroir*, to remind us that 'a sense of place' includes the "products of that place", and the way of life of the people living there. In this current study, a 'sense of place' relates to the shortfilm-productions as 'products of that place' and the way of life of the people living there – particularly, referring to the lives of the participating youths.

I see my inquiry as a critique on the limitations of the traditional understanding of 'setting' in the sense of location or site within which the traditional interview or observation is done (St. Pierre, 2014:7., I developed this expanded meaning of site which, in itself, could be a topic for further research. Apart from the South African land and the semi-rural Langeberg countryside which forms the geographical context of my research, new settings were recognised, namely, the locations where the participants' short-film footage have been shot, different editing software 'environments' on the participants' smartphones, and the cinema where the short-films were screened. The difference from traditionally defined research settings resides in the rural/semi-rural setting providing the space within which the educational engagement occurred, where new understandings came into being with the potential of being implemented in similar and/or different situations. During the evidence-production process further 'settings' emerged. These comprise the worlds created within the participants' film productions, the "figured worlds" to which Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) refer, and which exist within the (participant) filmmakers' minds, as well as the "figured worlds" within the minds of the viewers who have interpreted the shortfilm-productions

according to their unique frames of reference. The virtual environments were created during the lockdown-months in 2020, with the purpose of keeping all those involved creatively connected. To complete the full circle of the creative process, the space of the boutique cinema provided the final-stage setting for the participants' shortfilm-productions. The audience, which included the participants, their families and close friends, as well as a few individuals who were attending the art movie nights on a regular basis. It is at this point that I recall Le Grange's 2018 remark about "knowing as situated inquiry", and particularly, "how far knowledge is able to travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations" (Le Grange, 2018:11). The expanded sense of 'setting', 'location,' or 'site' therefore unveils the "right of multiple forms of knowledge to co-exist. This plurality recognises the diversity of knowledges not only as methods, but as ways of life" (Visvanathan, 2009), a statement to which I want to add, '...as (new) ways to perform academic research'. A further question crossed my mind: what about the 'mind settings', the 'location' or imaginative 'sites' where the ideas for the shortfilm-productions, and which are in the minds of the participants, originated? The relatively new ideas and concepts discussed in this section suggest that 'setting', in terms of sites where audiences engage 'film literacy' competencies, will always be in-becoming.

3.3.4 Relevant data sources

My previous experience in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase of education in metropolitan centres helped me to identify the unique qualities of the people who live, learn and work in the semi-rural communities situated within my geographical research area. Young adults, wherever, and in what socio-economic circumstances, they live, have the creative potential and ability to improve the quality of their own lives, their own communities, and even global communities. Yet, their multi-disciplinary talents and efforts to act as change agents most often remain untapped beyond their immediate communities. In the course of my involvement as both educator and researcher in the Langeberg area, the '*Myturn*' Initiative, comprising opportunities for post-school youths to engage in shortfilm-making projects, was introduced to a group of post-school youths. Seven youths responded to the invitation to become involved in my research project by submitting their expressions of interest to participate. This select group of seven post-school youths between the ages eighteen and twenty-four, share a passion for being involved in the arts, and the gratification of seeing growth and development in the lives of other young citizens. These youths live in different communities within the Langeberg municipal area. The fact that the characteristics of such communities of practice vary should not be seen as a weakness in the research design/process, but rather as a benefit in terms of a significant variation

in the participants' responses. One of the strengths found in developmental phenomenography is the use of a strategy termed "maximum variation sampling" (Patton, 2002:234). This sampling method involves the use of a select group of participants who would enable a multiperspective view related to the main topic of inquiry.

Although the developmental phenomenographic research strategy does not prescribe a particular sample size, Bruce (1997:104) maintains that it needs to be sufficient to provide "suitably rich descriptions of people's varying perceptions about the phenomenon of interest" (Yates, Partridge & Bruce, 2012:103).

With a small number of exceptions, contemporary scholarly observations in rural areas focus on "poverty, disease, neglect, backwardness, marginalization, depopulation, conservatism, tribalism, racism, resettlement, corruption, entropy, and exclusion" – contexts, highlighted by Balfour et al. (2008:101) for evaluating "under-performance in some aspect of development" (Moletsane, 2012:3). The intention of my inquiry was not to address the 'deficiencies' of rural communities (Budge, 2005) or to do a comparison between the semi-rural Langeberg and urban contexts. Although significant, these concepts do not relate to my research focus. Rather, in my research, attention is drawn to the seldom focused upon "dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities", and the variety of different ways they "engage with and shape their lives in their environments" (Moletsane, 2012:3). Odora-Hoppers (2004) remarks that the theoretical constructs used in studies on rurality, focus on the homogenous space rather than on the particularities and the similarities of the people. A further tendency of traditional research is to compare rurality with urbanity in a contextual way, overlooking the dynamic character, powerful integral values, and agencies within rural communities, seeing them standing independent of urban contexts (Balfour et al., 2008; Moletsane, 2012:3). According to Sternhouse, (1975:42), at the time he was writing, curriculum research and development, with a few exceptions, showed that educators traditionally had limited knowledge of early school-leavers' worlds, and at the time understood very little of the further education sector and the challenges post-school youth experience in their attempts to make a living. A recent study by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA, 2020) revealed a widening global literacy skills gap, despite good progress in terms of access to education in developing countries like Africa and South Asia. Lutz (2020:<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2015826118>), IIASA Senior Program Advisor, describes the implications as follows:

“The widening global gap in the literacy skills of the working-age population will have significant implications for disparities among countries in their economic development, health, and overall wellbeing in light of the current transition to knowledge societies and the digital revolution. Improving measures of human capital, as we have endeavoured to do in this study, will help societies better monitor progress and advance policies that help to improve the skills that empower people around the world to improve their lives and help to advance their societies”. (Lutz, 2020: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2015826118>)

3.3.5 Developing an appropriate research strategy

In her study on rural education in South Africa, Moletsane (2012:2) asks how the strengths and resources available in rural communities can be identified and employed to face and overcome the complexities of everyday life. She refers to two strength-based approaches, namely resilience theory (which was discussed in Chapter Two) and participatory visual methodologies (PVM) which together offer the opportunity to the researcher to engage in educational intervention in rural contexts. Although PVM are widely used in ethnographic research contexts, I found the application of “writing, drawing, visual mapping, participatory video and photography” (Moletsane, 2012:5) exceptionally relevant to my inquiry.

According to Schratz and Walker (1995), these methodologies offer a built-in orientation of research as social change (Schratz & Walker, 1995). Further opportunities for research informed by strength paradigms are provided by their intention to engage participants as active agents of change in their own lives. In this context, the benefits of using participatory visual methodologies include the following: people are engaged and mobilised at a very basic level during the research process (de Lange, Mitchell, Moletsane, Balfour, Wedekind, Pillay & Buthelezi, 2010); the research process is democratised, particularly for marginalised participants (Mitchell, 2008); these methods are potentially transformative due to the integral approach of research as social change (Schratz & Walker, 1995); and, on an individual level, they not only help participants to understand their own situation, but in addition support the development of strategies to address community challenges (Moletsane, 2012:6). Examples of these research methodologies in practice can be found in both global (Wang, Burris & Xiang, 1996; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:15) and local contexts (Sonke, 2006; Moletsane et al., 2009). Wang used photovoice as a research and development methodology with a group of Chinese peasant women. They took pictures of issues and areas that negatively impacted their livelihood. Thereafter, these photos were shared with policymakers, among other groups and institutions which possessed

the ability and power to address these issues in the participants' communities. A South African study (Moletsane et al., 2009), reports on the use of "video-making as participatory (and collaborative) research and intervention" (Moletsane, 2012:6) with limited technical assistance from the research team. Earlier, in their book on participatory research, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:15) asserted that the "politically sensitive research [style] and fieldwork relationships" involved in participatory video-making, provide researchers with the means to report research findings from the participants' viewpoints. Active on both local and global levels, Sonke (2006), a non-profit organisation (NPO) plays a transformative role in the lives of men, women and children, helping them to create equitable, healthy and happy relationships that have the potential to contribute to the development of just and democratic societies.

Pertaining to my inquiry, strategies such as involvement, engagement, participation, collaboration, dialogue, and reflection were employed with the participants. Involvement in the Arts for some participants was an important steppingstone for further development because it implied an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate. Further development refers to the potential development of becoming critically self-aware and growing transpersonally. For the participants it entailed perspective transformation and included cognitive, emotional, and social development, moving from what the participants consider familiar to something which did not yet exist. Becoming involved in the inquiry process as an "equal partner" (Henning, 2004/2011:24) revealed and emphasised the significance of effective collaboration between the researcher and participants. Key to the experiential transformative learning process, is a focus on bringing about positive change to people's lives, and in the world, through a continuous cyclical and reciprocal process of reflecting on action, as well as acting on reflection. As people transform into knowledge societies, advanced comprehension and literacy skills become essential for them to be able to communicate critically and effectively in an increasingly multimodal world. The complexity of finding a form of literacy which would be suitable for participants to accurately convey messages and meaning was clearly notable in the production of evidence (data).

3.3.6 Evidence (data) production procedures

Post-qualitative research defines data in terms of what it should not be: it should not be not be seen as "something out there that we gather or collect and is not isolated from self" (Le Grange, 2018:8). Therefore, to include the element of subjectivity, and to distinguish the evidence of my inquiry from conventional qualitative research, I use

the term, 'evidence' instead of 'data' throughout this dissertation. MacLure (2013:660) and St. Pierre (2013b:652) both emphasise critiques of epistemological projects which call into question what counts as data and a researcher's relationship to those data, while Wolfe (2017:431) posits that in her filmic research, "all the data were and continue to be co-created" by the researcher, participants and virtual audience "through engaging ontoepistemological relations in the present" (Wolfe, 2017:431). The relevance of this data co-creation process to my inquiry is that the "(t)he subjective, descriptive data produced are linguistic, aesthetic, and affective, and are differentially digested through a diegesis by/with the virtual viewer who intra-acts with the filmic interview" (Wolfe, 2017:431). Ironically, in my post-qualitative inquiry, references to "what counts as data" (Arendt, 2005:307–308), as well as "what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge counts" (St. Pierre, 2013:648) relates to the introduction of new perspectives on methodology. Correspondingly, Åkerlind, Bowden and Green (2011:75) suggest that "each researcher also needs to make a reasoned decision on areas of variation in practice". Ethics, knowing, and being can therefore be productively entwined, as Barad suggests, in an "ethico-onto-epistemology" which recognizes that as being we are "becoming with the world" and that "the becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter" (Barad 2007, 185).

A practical component, devised for the purpose of this study, explored the transformative potential of shortfilm-making to actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth. A critical self-awareness in-becoming enabled the participating youths to open their awareness to perspectives of others and a willingness to learn from others. The shortfilm-making project aimed to strengthen beliefs in possible learning experiences to be meaningful and potentially personally rewarding. Additionally, it aimed to boost the participants' self-confidence in own learning abilities, encouraging young citizens to become dedicated, independent, life-long learners, regardless of economic circumstances, health pandemics, environmental challenges, or family history. The '*Myturn*' Shortfilm Project, which developed out of the original '*Myturn*' Initiative (mentioned in my reference to the pilot study), addressed post-school youth arts development. Key to the '*Myturn*' initiative is the sense of eclectic inter-connectedness between the Arts, Sciences and Technologies. The shared mission of the research team in my inquiry (participants and researcher) was to create skill-building opportunities by combining a mutual passion for the Arts with a developing ability to adapt to change. This project sought to provide a space to explore new possibilities of creative expression, while experimenting with new shortfilm-making techniques.

By submitting their expressions of interest (EOI), potential participants accepted ownership of the project. According to Carl Rogers (1959), one of the founders of person-centered psychology and psychotherapy, significant learning is possible only when the individual has self-confidence in her or his own ability to learn and feels that the experience of learning will be personally rewarding and meaningful. Applicants needed to have access to the following equipment: smartphone, USB cable, memory card, laptop/PC (optional), editing software, and anti-virus security. Successful applicants participated in learning opportunities which covered the basic principles of short-film filmmaking. These opportunities included scheduled workshops at a conveniently situated venue, online support during the filmmaking process, and short-film editing-tutorials shared during the contact sessions. After the final short-film screening, copies of the productions were stored for future educational purposes. 'Myturn' participation enabled young adults to develop life-skills and confidence in shortfilm-making. This also generated previously seemingly remote personal possibilities, such as how to action ideas in the workplace and in wider society.

Strategic plans were designed with the entire inquiry in mind and began with the main aim, namely, to establish the specific ways in which film literacy can actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst post-school youth. Essentially, strategic planning envisioned where the participants wanted to find themselves at the end of this project. 'Myturn' provided these young adults with a learning space, and spaces for imagining, to help them improve the quality of their own lives, communities and global communities by exploring new possibilities of creative expression. Tactical planning involved breaking down the bigger picture into smaller achievable goals, which acted as steppingstones towards the long-term goal. Operational plans involved two aspects, namely, single-use plans, which were intended to be used only once. These included the shortfilms, produced for particular events, such as Youth Day or Heritage Day celebrations. Ongoing plans referred to those intended to address further development beyond the final screening event.

Initially, the filmmaking process was intended to unfold in three phases. Three workshop-series, each comprising five two-hour contact sessions, were designed to encourage the participants to work towards specific goals:

1. The first workshop series were planned to address short term goals, including the successful completion of individual short-films around the tagline 'Unity in Artistic and Cultural Expression' with a particular focus on Youth Day celebrations;
2. The second workshop series were planned to address medium term goals, including further holistic coaching/leadership and presentation opportunities for participants

interested in sharing their newly acquired skills and knowledge with others – individually or in a group. Both ‘Youth Day’ and ‘Heritage Day’s’ celebrations suggested presentation opportunities and ideas to the participants for their short-film productions.

3. The third workshop-series concluded the long-term goals of the project. This third phase offered interested participants an opportunity to become part of an adjudicator’s panel. They were asked to select ten short films, in no particular order, which they considered best represented originality, creativity, creative/skilled cinematography, and message effectiveness. The filmmaking activities culminated in a ‘*Myturn*’ shortfilm screening event to highlight independent short-film talent, as well as to reveal the potential for an annual event. Ongoing goals included the facilitation and creation in participants of personal development, competitiveness, employability, a foundation for their further study, and potential economic benefits from the uploading of future short-film productions for public viewing on social media platforms. Certificates were awarded to participants who completed the filmmaking project to acknowledge their participation in the project.

Participant reflections, which they produced in text, image and audio-format, provided the primary multimodal evidence for this inquiry. Secondary evidence in text and digital format includes, but is not limited to, regional profiles, publications, journal articles, documentary films, and digital film editing tutorials. Employing open-ended and semi-structured questionnaires to evaluate pre- and post-knowledge, together with levels of participant reflection, encouraged a deeper learning experience for both participants and researcher (Edwards, 2004:112). While arts-based and science-based research share “a clearly defined method that can be used by others” (McNiff, 2007:34), the endless possibilities offered by arts-based research initially complicated my attempt to find a research methodology that was suited to my inquiry. As mentioned above, the findings of a pilot phase, implemented in 2018, provided valuable insight into the process of making a “reasoned decision” (Bowden & Green, 2005:91/2009:66) about how to reconceptualise my initial inquiry. Consequently, I decided to use an arts-based method for evidence production and for reading/viewing, a method which combined well with developmental phenomenography. According to Knowles and Coles (2008:60), arts-based inquiry is “sufficiently fluid and flexible to serve... as a methodological enhancement to other research approaches...”

The different units for reading/viewing (analysis) were found to enhance the credibility of the outcomes, These units comprised pre-and post-project questionnaires and short-film, which, although they increased the complexity and amount of evidence to be transcribed and read/viewed the use of multiple sources and techniques in the

evidence production process were found to substantiate the outcomes.,. However, the evidence production process for my main inquiry, undertaken with post-school participants, was disrupted and challenged by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis. In response to COVID-19, I was forced to cancel the weekly short-film making workshop-meetings which had been a primary source of my evidence production. Up to this point, focusing on shortfilm-making had, from a practical viewpoint, been potentially achievable to all participants in this inquiry. Restricted access to current/up-to-date digital information and communication technologies in South Africa posed further practical challenges to my inquiry process (Schoeman, 2020; Duncan-Williams, 2020). A conscious effort to re-activate my imagination and creativity to continue my inquiry despite these challenges and uncertainty, motivated me to devise a strategic intervention. Immediate realities, such as adjourned evidence production, and intermittent internet connectivity, provided the rationale for the intervention, aptly named by the researcher *21 Days Connected by Creativity: working together in response to the pandemic*. At that stage the full impact of the continued lockdown situation had not been revealed, and we did not know that our next contact session would only be in six months' time. Continuity was extremely valuable and important for the progress of my longitudinal doctoral inquiry, contextually situated in the time before COVID-19. Thus, the following leading question underpinned the intervention: How does a research team stay effectively connected during COVID-19 lockdown? Two further sub-questions emerged. Firstly, how do individuals respond to social and physical distancing? Secondly, what is the impact of social media (internet and WhatsApp) on the promotion of continued productivity during COVID-19 lockdown? The main aim of this study of twenty-one days duration was to establish how a research team could stay effectively connected during COVID-19 lockdown. Study objectives thus were first, to establish what actions individuals take in their dealing with social and physical distancing Second, to establish the impact of social media (internet and WhatsApp) on the promotion of continued productivity during COVID-19 lockdown. Conceptually, engaging in this particular creative challenge involved a potential mind-change for both researcher and participants. All individuals involved were persuaded to momentarily distance themselves from personal issues during the 21-day lockdown by creating a daily time-space for creative activity. I envisioned the process of becoming perceptive to new perspectives and innovative ideas carrying the potential to promote a positive mindset in participants.

I consider this dissertation to be a valuable document reporting on the complexity of both performing an inquiry and engaging in the evidence production process during a year of lockdown and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Identifying

participants for an inquiry engaging an arts-based approach in a semi-rural area, where people are constantly migrating due to seasonal work and their attempts to find better living conditions, was challenging. Keeping those participants engaged throughout the inquiry was even more difficult. Therefore, the announcement of a lockdown period on March 26, 2020, came as an unwelcome turn to the participants' evidence production process which had just started in the first week of February 2020. Furthermore, since the outcomes of this inquiry were intended to be used to add value to the post-school youths' personal development and ongoing learning needs, it was particularly important to maintain the communication link between researcher and participants over a period which turned out to be much longer than the initially announced twenty-one days.

3.3.7 Reading and viewing evidence (data analysis)

Traditionally, data analysis is defined as one of the steps in a systematic process of interpretation, condensation, and synthesising, although the procedures followed are seldom purely analytical (Henning, 2004/2011:80). According to Henning (2004/2011:103), the strength of an interpretative inquiry is built by using different approaches to "working the data". Similarly, post-qualitative inquiry sets out to 'open the future up to possibilities' (Lather & St Pierre, 2013:629) by encouraging researchers to question prevailing realities and traditions, resisting the "habitual reading of data" (Lather, 2013:639) in favour of a closer explication of the uses and roles of theorisations, conceptualisations, and discursive tools (Gerrard, Rudolph & Sriprakash, 2016).

Therefore, based on these descriptions, discourse analysis, a process "both similar to and different from content analysis" (Henning, 2004/2011:117) was chosen for this inquiry. Discourse analysis is similar to traditional content analysis in the sense of scouring the evidence and looking for pertinent themes, but it is different from the traditional analysis since the premise on which this present inquiry is based is the valuing of multiple perspectives. The clues to those perspectives needed to be found in the different ways the participants made sense of their reality, and how they used these, together with the multimodal approach to express those perceptions. The variety and variability of evidence requiring different transcriptional possibilities emphasised the problems that currently define the world of interactive meaning-making. Multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) (Kress, 2011[1996]) represents the analysis of different symbolic modes (visuals, sound, and action) within a text, and moves beyond the limitations of traditional discourse- and content analysis. Developmental questions such as, "What discourse(s) frame(s) the language action and the way in which the

participants make sense of their reality” (Henning, 2004/2011:117-118) relate to developmental phenomenography. Individual studies which use this method often “demonstrate subtle variations or combine elements from multiple approaches” (Green & Bowden, 2009:52, 53). Thus, when planning the exploration of evidence, pre-project questionnaires, visual material, including photo stills, short-film, and post-project questionnaires, and a combination of the arts-based approach, developmental phenomenography and MMDA was used. The analysis of data/co-created evidence began only after the full set of data had been produced. Bowden (2005) explains his preference for waiting till this stage is reached:

If the development of the structural relationships is undertaken simultaneously with the development of the categories of description, there is potential to distort the categories by including the relation of the researcher to the phenomenon in addition to the true focus of the study, the relation between the subjects and the phenomenon. (Bowden, 2005:16).

Further questions about “how was this discourse produced?” and “how is it maintained in the social context? (Henning, 2004/2011:118), were useful in guiding the exploration (analysis) of the film literacy project, pertaining to ‘moving (film) images’, photo stills, and text. In this sense, the photo stills and shorfilms were seen as artefacts – carriers of new knowledge and understanding that required exploration (analysis) and understanding (interpretation), thus relating to arts-based inquiry. Henning (2004/2011:109) uses the term ‘global analysis’, suggesting a holistic, integrated and intensive study of the raw data/evidence by making notes and drawing concept or mind maps, all without disassembling the data into segments as in content analysis and other processes.

The following paragraphs outline the exploration of multimodal evidence (analysis approach) chronologically.

3.4 Analytical questions and leitmotifs

Initially, and guided by the work of Gunter Kress (2011), I decided to use the notion of leitmotifs. The raw evidence comprised questionnaires and visuals, audio clips, and shortfilm-productions. I first read, viewed and listened to this evidence to see how it was organised. I looked for clues about how the participants situated the readers and the viewers within their expressions of interest/pre-project questionnaires. I found a number of key leitmotifs:

- Involvement in the arts to inspire others

- Desire to understand self and own capabilities
- Being truthful to yourself and your beliefs
- Expectations to learn more about the technical aspects of filmmaking
- Challenges with digital devices and the internet
- Desire to share knowledge with their communities

It was crucial to know the grounding for the participants' ideas in their texts. These leitmotifs were the foundations for the rest of the participants' verbal and visual reflections. Furthermore, these main leitmotifs and accompanying notes indicated the different ways in which the participants attempted to make sense of their realities relating to interactive engagement in the shortfilm-making project.

Seven leading questions provided a frame for the pre-project workshop.

1. Provide a short bio, describing what you have been doing since you finished high school.
2. Which skills have you acquired since leaving school that you consider useful?
3. How have you initially become interested in the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making initiative?
4. What do you expect from the shortfilm-making workshop?
5. What are your challenges with using digital devices and the internet?
6. Where would you like to see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity?
7. What message to the youth of your community would you like to leave with your shortfilm?

These questions corresponded with the following study aims:

- to establish what participants' reflections reveal about their experience of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement;
- to establish how active engagement in a short film making initiative can contribute to participants becoming critically self-aware of possible learning opportunities within their communities;
- to establish how participants' newly gained critical self-awareness can contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally.

Looking at the participants' shortfilm titles, and thinking about how those titles might link to the identified leitmotifs, led to inquiring what the shortfilms were about, and why they were created. Although both the content and context helped to situate the viewer, the reasons offered for why these shortfilms were presented, shaped and justified the participants' reflections. Questions such as, why does this participant present this idea? and, what does the participant want the viewer to take from the presentation of the

idea? were asked. Part of Kress's 2011 argument sees MMDA as cross-cultural, that it reveals meaning-making, and affects all forms of the composition of one's discourse (Kress, 2011:190). This argument indicates that there are many ways to examine discourse. For the participants, their reflections situated their current conversation in the ongoing (education/academic) conversation about the relevance of film literacy to improving the quality of the participants' own lives, their communities and global communities.

In line with Kress's (2011) argument, the participants' reflections in multimodal format indicated that there are many different ways to address issues related to the widening global literacy skills gap (IIASA, 2020), and communicated what represents an applicable multi-literacy pedagogy for our current times.

According to Kress (2011), people construct knowledge through their social interactions, and 'new' knowledge is being made because of the agency and independence people have to accept another's ideas. Pertaining to this inquiry, the identities of both the speakers (participants) and the listener/reader/viewer (audience) are significant in the meaning-making process. Also, the power that the speaker (participants) might have over the audience; and the power in terms of the credibility that the audience might give to a speaker (participant). Kress (2011) further claims that multiple modes, producing layered meaning, are shaped by our social environment(s) which, in turn shape us. In relation to this inquiry, the participants were shaped by the information that they accumulated through engaging in the '*Myturn*' project, and capturing their experiences of the world. In turn, the participants had the potential to transform their social environment. Kress's (2011) ideas regarding MMDA is summaries eloquently in the following quote:

"Multimodal discourse analysis opens up the possibility of moving against the reductiveness of the twentieth century generalisations and abstraction toward a full account of the impact of humans". (Kress, 2011:46)

Translated to this inquiry, Kress's 2011 description of the uses of MMDA, suggested that, if the participants (post-school youths and researcher) looked deeply beyond generalisations and abstractions into agency, power, and identity, they could draw out meaning from their interactions within the '*Myturn*' Project. It is, however, important to realise that meaning-making is part of an ongoing learning process. Questions such as, what does it mean to engage in this type of discourse?, how is new knowledge developed?, and how is meaning made? assist the meaning-making process, a process which cannot lead to a full understanding without the recognition of all of these

different modes. Both Kress (1996/2001; 2011) and Gee (2011) present their audience with a similar model for discourse analysis; the difference comes from viewing the world through personal lenses. Whereas Gee (2011), as a social linguist, focuses on language and the idea of social, as well as social and discourse communities, Kress emphasises meaning-making from a cognitivist and education background. Kress's MMDA-model thus has relevance to an education-oriented audience, who would be looking at knowledge which makes sense. In terms of this inquiry it was key to keep asking who the post-school author was, from a "holistic kind of knowing"-perspective (Greenwood, 2012:18). And what were they bringing to this conversation about the use/relevance of film literacy?

Post-project reflections were guided by the following semi-structured, open-ended questions:

1. Which part of the short film making project did you enjoy most? Why?
2. What was most challenging? Why?
3. Which new skills have you acquired?
4. Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?
5. What did you learn about yourself during the project?
6. Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?
7. When you show your shortfilm to an audience of your choice or talk about your film to people, what would you want them to learn from you?
8. What do you think about the potential of making such short films, for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures?
9. What do you see as a further development of this short film-project?
10. How can this short film project help young people to learn about civic responsibility towards the workspace and work culture in which they hope to succeed?

Pertaining to the question 10, attention is drawn to the seldom focused upon "dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities" and the variety of different ways they "engage with and shape their lives in their environments" (Moletsane, 2012:3). In this inquiry, an attempt was made to emphasise film literacy as a boundary crossing concept and to encourage the participants to perceive boundaries as potential learning-resources towards their future work-experiences (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011:153).

At this stage it was possible to highlight the discourse markers – "specific instances of the use of words or phrases that exemplify the discourse (and its often-accompanying metaphor)" (Henning, 2004/2011:119). By making connections between these

instances across all of the evidence, including the visual material, an ensemble of meaning was created to confirm whether there was indeed a recurring pattern, as well as to identify isolated occurrences. Instead of looking for content or concepts per se, I looked for the “type of language used and the nature of other data, such as the symbolic meaning in pictures and the use of imagery” (Henning, 2004/2011:120). However, these instances were not labelled as units of discursive meaning, grouped together in categories as conventionally might have been the case. This further confirmed the understanding that it is impossible to disassemble concepts and evidence into isolated segments that would fit into predetermined, systematically structured categories. Rather, the evidence was viewed and re-viewed as interconnected, even entangled in nature, across all three phases of the shortfilm-making project.

To allow new insights and new understandings to emerge, an objective approach to exploring evidence (data analysis), stripped of researcher bias and preconceived ideas was essential. The strength of discourse analysis lies in the uncovering of “social layers of meaning and multiple realities” (Henning, 2004/2011:120), a process that a basic content analysis might not have made possible. Discourse analysis has received critiques for being “vague in terms of analytic procedures and ...little methodical substance” (Flick, 1998:203-204), and for a lack of tried-and-tested methodical procedures (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). However, critics have admitted that discourse analysis done in collaboration with further interpretation beyond strict linguistic expression, would render them less sceptical of its value. Hence, the importance of working with a variety of expressions as the starting point for more extensive interpretations needs to be acknowledged (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Henning, 2004/2011:121). Eybers (2019, <https://www.researchgate.net>) adds that, in South Africa the “application of those modes of communication/argumentation which reflect discursive practices of our local communities, in addition to conventional modes of communicating and arguing”, is problematic.

Since ‘film literacy’ represents a different dimension of human communication to traditionally accepted modes of communication, transcending language barriers through multimodal media, a strategy to evaluate the application of these multimodal reflections was conclusive. ‘Reflection’ is fundamental to experiential learning discourses. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985:33) define reflection as the “activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it”. For the participants, ‘recapturing’ and ‘reliving’ their experiences occurred throughout the ‘Myturn’ Project and occurred in multimodal forms: pre- and post-project questionnaires, individual short-films, and the screening event, additionally involving

audience reflections. Though complicated, the multimodal nature of the reflections provided rich evidence to be explored through an iterative process. Multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) and a four-category scheme, originally developed for assessing reflection levels in written work (Kember, McKay, Sinclair & Wong, 2008), were applied across the evidence. I realised that two additional categories were required to accommodate the diversity of participant-responses. A zero-response category was added to precede habitual action. Further development, in the form of spontaneous responses, required a category after critical reflection. Table 3.2 summarises the categories in their adapted forms, as they were applied to explore the respondents' reflection levels.

Table 3.2: A description of the criteria and symbols used to consider the participants' level of understanding before and after the shortfilm making project

REFLECTION LEVEL	SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
1	ZR	Zero response indicated that the participant has not attempted in any way to respond to the question.
2	HA	Habitual action occurred when an answer was offered without giving it some thought.
3	BU	A basic understanding would show an attempt to understand, although the answer given may not be related to real-life applications.
4	RA	Reflective action: The ability to reflect on an understanding would indicate personal insight and/or practical application
5	CR	Critical reflection would imply a change in perspective, something that should not be expected during the early stages of the project as the participants were developing their reflective skills over time, in the course of the project.
6	FD	Further development in the form of spontaneous responses

By considering changes in the participants' reflective thinking levels throughout their engagement in the shortfilm-making project, provided an indication of how and to what extent they understand their own situations and readiness to embrace new challenges and improve competencies.

3.5 Designing a system for presentation of evidence (data)

Both primary and secondary sources were employed in this inquiry. Secondary sources comprise both text and digital format: regional profiles, publications, journal articles, documentary films, and digital film editing tutorials. These secondary sources provided a philosophical basis for the other evidence sources. Participant reflections, produced in text, image/shortfilm, and audio format provided the primary, multimodal evidence, which in turn complicated the evidence presentation process due to the varying formats. Both text and creative work are recognised as integral components of the final dissertation submission for examination (Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2011:252). My evidence presentation informs and is informed by the “iterative nature of the interaction between research and practice” (Gough-Brady, 2019:185), and by a combination of both experiential and analytical understandings. I believe the use of this methodology can expand and increase ways to articulate education research, and change the understandings about what could or should be usefully communicated, a process which also could potentially impact the nature of research. Wolfe (2017:435), in her post-qualitative filmic research in education, mentions the co-created interconnection between the participants, researcher, film artefact, and virtual audience that remains in flux. Similarly, shortfilm as visual data in this inquiry becomes “perpetual performative research in action” (Barad, 2014:175; Berlant & Edelman, 2014: xvii; Pitts-Taylor, 2016:35; Wolfe, 2017:435) and represents an alternative approach to ethnographic representation in educational research.

3.6 Credibility & the criteria for appraisal

(Post) Qualitative data are often criticised for lack of objectivity and therefore not regarded as trustworthy. Whereas traditional scientific research, in order to be legitimated, requires a variety of criteria, such as validity, reliability and statistical significance, these criteria in arts-based educational research (ABER) are replaced by overall credibility (Eisner, 1980; 1981; Leavy, 2009; Baron & Eisner, 2012; Romiger, 2015). Lincoln and Guba’s (1985:294–301) four criteria of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were applied to promote the trustworthiness in this inquiry. The persuasiveness of a personal vision was essential, as represented by the participants’ views as shortfilm-makers to inform their audience. The authenticity of the inquiry was determined by the audience’s view of its credibility. This credibility concerned the way in which the research process shaped their world-view, or some aspect of their (figured) world-view. Taking Lincoln and Guba’s

(1985:294–301) four criteria of trustworthiness as a benchmark, the section below describes how these criteria were applied to promote the trustworthiness of this inquiry:

- Since the purpose of this post-qualitative inquiry was to explore and describe the participants' reflections from their point of view, the participants were considered to be the only people who would legitimately be able to evaluate the credibility of the findings. I gave feedback on my results to the community of inquiry for verification. Any discrepancies in perceptions of the meaning of the conclusions occur, these will also be recorded. Credibility will be further enhanced by using a variety of evidence production methods; in this inquiry, these will include questionnaires and the short film productions.
- Transferability: because this inquiry was situated in a specific context, the generalisation of the outcomes or the direct transfer to other contexts is problematic. If, however, 'other contexts'- contexts other than that of this inquiry - refer to education and alternative arts disciplines, then the outcomes may be considered transferrable (Greenwood & Levin, 2005; Polit & Beck, 2010). In post-qualitative research, knowing as situated inquiry (Le Grange, 2018:11) "is about how far knowledge is able to travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations".
- Dependability: triangulation will be used to enhance both the dependability (the application of several research methods) and credibility (through cross-verification from two or more sources) of my inquiry. The results from the two sets of questionnaires and the short film productions will be compared for cross-verification.
- 'Confirmability' refers to the degree to which the results of the inquiry were able to be confirmed or authenticated by other researchers.

3.7 Generalisation and replication of the study

The generalisability of a topic or research process is less often discussed in qualitative than in quantitative research, where the ability to generalise is considered as a key criterion. Polit and Beck (2010:1451) define generalisation as "an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad conclusions from particular instances". Unlike the quantitative approach, which emphasises the generalisability of findings (Kumar, 2014), a qualitative approach "follows an open, flexible and unstructured approach to enquiry" (Kumar, 2014:14), emphasises description over measurement, and places little or no emphasis on generalisation. Recently, there has been a growing tendency by leaders in qualitative research to acknowledge that "in-depth qualitative research is especially well suited for revealing higher-level concepts and theories that are not unique to a particular participant or setting" (Glaser, 2002; Misco, 2007; Polit & Beck, 2010:1452). Ayres, Kavanagh, and Knafel (2003:881) observe that, "Just as with statistical analysis,

the end product of qualitative analysis is a generalisation, regardless of the language used to describe it". Three models of generalisability have been developed over the last three decades (Firestone, 1993): the first, a classical model concerning statistical generalisation, has been referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as nomothetic, extrapolating from a sample to a population. Researchers using the second model, analytic generalisation (Firestone, 1993), attempt to generalise from specifics to broader structures within theory-driven quantitative research. In comparing the point of analysis and interpretation in the qualitative approach, qualitative researchers distinguish between knowledge that is "relevant to all (or many) study participants, in contrast to aspects of the experience that are unique to particular participants, as is the case in quantitative research (Ayres et al., 2003; Polit & Beck, 2010:1453). Similarly, in qualitative research, Greenwood and Levin (2005) proposed a two-step model for generalising knowledge to new settings through a process of reflective action. First, the potential user attempts to conceptualise the context in which the outcomes were created. Second, the user needs to understand the contextual conditions of the new setting while reflecting upon the consequences of applying the outcomes to the new context. The third model of generalisability, referred to as transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), case-to-case translation (Firestone, 1993), or reader generalisability (Misco, 2007), involves the use of outcomes from an inquiry to a completely different group of people or setting (Polit & Beck, 2010:1453).

According to Firestone (1993), replication is an important strategy to consider when making sampling decisions in all three models of generalisation, applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research. He argues that "When conditions vary, successful replication contributes to generalisability. Similar results under different conditions illustrate the robustness of the finding" (Firestone, 1993:17). In this inquiry, critical case sampling involves selecting significant replicates that could enable the researcher to crystallise a conceptualisation. One needs to be aware that the three models of generalisation (Firestone, 1993) under discussion, are "ideals, not representations of reality" (Polit & Beck, 2010:1457). The attention in this inquiry is drawn to the dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in particular semi-rural communities and the variety of different ways they "engage with and shape their lives in their environments" (Moletsane, 2012:3). Since humans have different perceptions, it is impossible to reach absolute agreement and cast generalisations over a social behaviour.

3.8 Ethical considerations specific to the intended study/project

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Seven post-school youths' expressions of interest to participate were received on the basis of their shared interest in shortfilm-making. I provided an overview of the inquiry to these youths, and informed them that their possible participation in the 'Myturn'-project was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the project at any time. Participants who indicated their keenness to be part of this inquiry received consent forms. Full details regarding the inquiry purpose, process, procedures, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and identification of the researcher were clearly described in the consent form (Appendix A). This information was explained orally by the researcher. To protect the identities of the participants their names were not revealed; a coding system was used instead. The transcribed evidence, as well as the original shortfilms, were stored on a hard drive to ensure safety and a research trail.

3.9 Delineation of, and limitations to, this research

I consider post-qualitative research to have greater value and significance than quantitative research in a developing country such as South Africa because it is useful in providing an in-depth understanding of individuals, community, and the society. This inquiry focused on the perceptions of seven purposefully engaged post-school participants with Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts experience, and who were residing in different communities within the Langeberg district, Western Cape, South Africa. The culturally diverse characteristics of communities situated within this area should not be seen as a weakness of the research process, but rather as an aspect that could explore and engender a wide and rich variation in the participants' experiences. The inquiry objectives explained in Section 1.3 were not aimed at exploring film literacy education in the broad context of the curriculum. This process would have involved many more projects and a wide variety of subjects. The focus of this inquiry is not on "poverty, disease, neglect, backwardness, marginalization, depopulation, conservatism, tribalism, racism, resettlement, corruption, entropy, and exclusion" – contexts, highlighted by Balfour et al. (2008:101) for evaluating "under-performance in some aspect of development" (Moletsane, 2012:3). Rather, attention is drawn to what is seldom focused on, the "dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities" and the variety of different ways they "engage with and shape their lives in their environments" (Moletsane, 2012:3). My aim with this inquiry was to investigate new understandings of the notion of film literacy in a particular

teaching and learning environment. These new understandings involved a deeper insight, specifically into the perceptions held by post-school youths' in their active engagement in situations related to film literacy, critical self-awareness, transpersonal growth, interconnectedness, multi-perspectives, and understanding. Being both educator and researcher made me an integral and subjective part of this inquiry. I therefore acknowledged, from two points of view, my own potential bias in this process. Firstly, by means of researcher awareness that "bias is an unavoidable part of the process of coming to know something" (Elliott & Timulak, 2005:148), secondly, by eliciting second-order responses from a demographically diverse group, using open-ended questions, and keeping detailed notes and electronic recordings. Finally, I made every effort to maintain an unbiased approach towards participants' viewpoints, and to avoid overpowering or distorting the outcomes with the way the questions were framed.

3.10 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to communicate the relevance to the present inquiry of a combined philosophical underpinning (constructivist/interpretivist; critical/transformational; pragmatic) and a post-qualitative research approach. Developmental phenomenography, with an arts-based enhancement, served as an open-ended strategy with possibilities to be usefully adapted to confront contemporary challenges in non-formal education. The focus was essentially on describing the variations in the post-school participants' collective experiences within their figured worlds. Multimodal discourse analysis was employed to organise and explore the variety and variability of evidence (visual, sound and action) that required different transcriptional possibilities. In the next chapter I introduce a different way of thinking and working with the evidence, produced for the purpose of this inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR

NAVIGATING THE EVIDENCE, PART 1: Becoming film literate

“Understanding, as distinguished from having correct information and scientific knowledge... is an unending activity by which, in constant change and variation, we come to terms with and reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world.”

Hannah Arendt (2005: 307–308)

4.1 Introduction

Given the post-digital nature of contemporary society, Generation Z-youths who communicate primarily through social media and texts find themselves living in a “phigital” world (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76). In an attempt to figure out their positionality they are often challenged by a vastly distorted perception of reality due to constant change and variation within that reality. Moreover, our multimodal environment which comprises digital devices and applications that impact every aspect of our lives, demands from ...an expanding sense of literacy to provide us with the competences to understand different ways of working and knowing. “Literacy is about far more than just availability and technology. More than anything it is about the ability to understand the language of the moving image” (Preisler Schedin, 2019:185). Living in a digital world which is constantly permeated by moving images and new technologies, does not automatically make the population of that world film literate. This inquiry into the relevance of film literacy finds itself within a global debate about how to become multi-literate in an “increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world” (UNESCO, 2017). A review of existing literature revealed that, due to continuously changing communication modes as a result of ongoing technological innovation, understandings of film literacy together remain an evolving construct. Thus, for the purpose of this inquiry, film literacy is defined by me as a boundary-crossing competence which translates into an ability to transcend language barriers. This in turn represents an attempt to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines and across culturally defined boundaries.

The nature of knowledge production within this inquiry was arts-based and this knowledge was both created and performed by a select group of seven post-school youths within a non-formal education context. This process essentially required the construction of alternative forms of “(re)imagining, (re)presentations and critical

reflections” (Sanders, 1999:555,559), which are described and discussed across Chapters Four, Five, and Six. The purpose of this discussion is to respond to the question: *How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst post-school youth?* For practical and developmental purposes Chapters Four, Five, and Six, are each devoted to a particular sub-question and corresponding research objective. The three sub-questions provided a conceptual focus on film literacy, critical self-awareness, post-school youth, and transpersonal growth, which together aimed to enact reliable, useable, and new insights for both academics and practitioners. Essentially, this presentation-triad should be regarded as a “palimpsest landscape” (Knight, 2016:<https://serc.carleton.edu/68942>), in other words, imparting evidence created within different multimodal spaces of contact between the research participants and their audiences in both virtual and real-time occurrences. This ‘assemblage’ or ‘layered’ nature of evidence particularly benefited this inquiry and my preferences for reimagining data/evidence analysis. This assemblage process represented an attempt to resist conventional coding and categorising (Le Grange 2018:8). In practice, this layering of evidence related to moving beyond the habitual reading and interpretation of data (Lather, 2013:639) towards a process of thinking and working differently with data and analysis processes. Hence, the use of ‘evidence’ and ‘reading/viewing of evidence’.

As the first of three interpretive expressions of my inquiry evidence (data), which were created over ten-months from February to November 2020, Chapter Four communicates the participants’ collective understandings relating to their pre-project knowledge of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement. Figure 4.1 focuses on the relation between Chapter Four, Sub-question 1 and the main research question. Interconnecting lines between Sub-questions 1–3 and the main research question emphasise the assemblage nature of evidence production across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

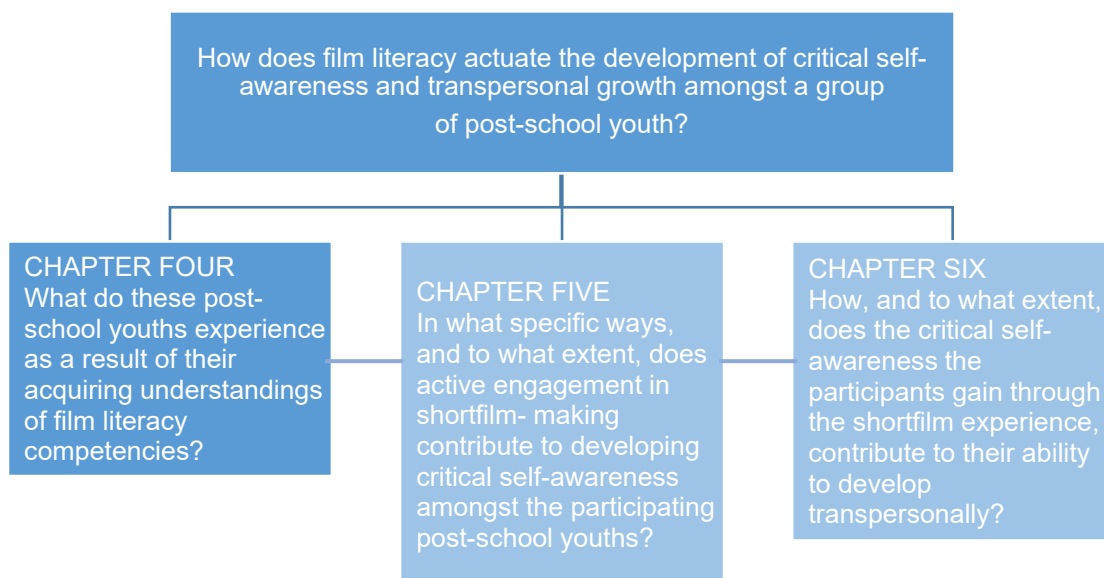


Figure 4.1: A comprehensive understanding of the participants' film literacy-knowledge necessitated a re-visit of the main research question across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

A bigger-picture perspective on the participants' acquiring/creating understandings of film literacy was assembled across Chapters Four, Five, and Six by means of pre-project responses and post-project reflections. This is another reason why concepts needed to be viewed in an intra-connected manner, and evidence should not be disassembled into isolated segments as in traditional content analysis. The experimental shortfilm-making project, as described across Chapters Four, Five, and Six, (referred to as the 'Myturn' Initiative) involved designing a space (which included virtual space during the lockdown period in 2020) within which to engage participants in possible learning opportunities and in an experiential way. Their active engagement in a three-part shortfilm-making project was aimed to facilitate for them the embodiment of a broader perspective. From that "expanded as well as interconnected sense of self" (Dängeli, 2019:10) newly developed insights were meant to enable the participants to address the personal and social issues they had identified, in more thoughtful and productive ways. By viewing their surroundings (rather than capturing 'selfies') with fresh eyes (Kaomea, 2014:15; Shklovskij, 1965) through their smartphone camera-lenses, participants were offered the opportunity to transform their ways of perceiving the world through a process of learning by performing new roles as cinematographers and directors of their own stories (Fenwick 2001:3). The aim was to raise their awareness of the possibilities for them to find the meaning and purpose of their existence through artistic expressions (Greene, 1995a) by viewing the world they share from different and new perspectives. Their involvement in a range of different Arts meant that the participants' creative talents were considered as an essential resource. Most important to ask was how their existing skills, knowledge, and talents, as well as

those being brought into existence through active participation in the shortfilm-productions, might impact their personal and social lives after the completion of the project.

The evidence (data) was 'enacted' rather than 'represented'. The researcher pointed out the leitmotifs that transpired throughout this inquiry. Pertaining to this inquiry, 'leitmotifs' are metaphorical threads, "strings of words that are more than mere words" (Holyoak, 2019:13). Beginning with my presentation and discussion of evidence in Chapter Four, each leitmotif is introduced, followed by the participants' responses on pre-project questions, and a detailed discussion of the participants' expressions. These findings sought to bring into being the "new" which, according to Foucault and Deleuze (St. Pierre, 2019:10) was embodied by the lives of these post-school youth. By embracing an integrated or "immanent ethics" (Le Grange, 2017:102), I accepted the "creative power of life" (Le Grange, 2017:102), which I saw functioning as an ethical principle within my inquiry. The relevance thereof for the participants draws on a transpersonal understanding about becoming critically aware of an expanded sense of their selves. Furthermore, because their selves are integrally entangled with the evidence (data) they created, the evidence (participant responses, shortfilm-productions, and reflections) would accompany the sense of self in its expanded state. In practice, this reflective process related to an attempt to avoid disassembling the evidence (data) into segments which is the case with content analysis and other linear and systematic processes.

Rather than following traditional data analysis conventions, the researcher attempted to "open the future up to possibilities" (Lather & St Pierre, 2013:629) by developing a range of "analytical questions" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012:7) from the concepts, explored in this inquiry. This implied a process of 'thinking with' concepts that "reorient thinking" and the "creation of the *not yet* instead of the repetition of what *is*" (St. Pierre, 2019:1, the author's italics). Therefore, "plugging" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013:261) the leading concepts, namely, film literacy, critical self-awareness, transpersonal growth, and post-school youth into Lev Vygotsky's 1978 definition of learning, represented an attempt to open up experiential learning spaces. In practice, this 'plugging into' relates to the participants' active engagement in the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project whose aim was to be personally meaningful and rewarding, as well as to strengthen self-confidence in the participants' own learning abilities. In addition this refers to practical applications of the "many specialised abilities for thinking about a variety of things' (Vygotsky, 1978). As such, by creating an objective distance from the self in order to view the familiar and taken-for-granted of their own situations in their shortfilm-productions, the participants

might acquire the critical-creative abilities needed to redefine issues from a different viewpoint.

From the theories which informed my exploration of enhanced learning opportunities the following foundational leitmotifs emerged: a desire to contribute to society, underpinned by critical citizenship; the creative realm, informed by both figured worlds and arts-based theories; spiritual enlightenment, strengthened by perspectives of transpersonal theory and the pursuit of knowledge relating to transformative learning theories. For the participants, 'spiritual enlightenment' relates to a renewed awareness of the world, particularly of their immediate environment, and making a decision/developing agency to do something about those issues which might keep them from living a productive, meaningful life.

My developmental phenomenographic approach, and the intricate connections to constantly changing and varying real-world practices, and communicating my different ways of "thinking with data and data analysis" (Le Grange, 2018:8), described and discussed across Chapters Four, Five, and Six, was a continuous and unending activity. The following sections provide an explication of how my conceptual focus was employed in collaboration with theorisations, conceptualisations, and relevant analytical questions to derive new knowledge and understanding from originally created evidence.

4.2 Navigating understandings-in-becoming across key concepts

In operating outside the formal curriculum, this inquiry aimed to redefine film literacy, as a distinctive learning field whose aim is to advance the transformative competencies young adults need to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society. In this context it was necessary to explore how an integrated, devised arts-based project might contribute to academic research contexts beyond simply being an 'artistic' project. In addition I wanted the project to be understood from more than one viewpoint and by a range of different communities. The participants' visual experiences encountered through active engagement in the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making project were intended to take them "out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123). In response to sub-question one, *What do the post-school youths' responses reveal about their knowledge of film literacy?*, the participants' existing conditions and pre-project knowledge were explored through an open-ended questionnaire, comprising of seven questions. To determine the extent of the impact of the experiential learning encounter, the researcher needed to know what "the familiar"

and “taken for granted” consisted of in the participants’ everyday-life situations. Moreover, it was a given that each individual brought their own personal beliefs, cultural values, assumptions, traditions, knowledge, skills, desires, and expectations into this potential learning space. These were significant frames of reference which had to be respected and taken into account in terms of the acceptance or rejection of what constituted ‘new’ knowledge constructed through participants’ active engagement in the shortfilm-making project. The following seven questions/specifications provided structural threads for the pre-production phase of the shortfilm-making project.

1. Provide a short bio, describing what you have been doing since you finished high school.
2. Which skills, that you consider useful, have you acquired since leaving school?
3. How did you initially become interested in the ‘*Myturn*’ shortfilm-making initiative?
4. What do you expect from the shortfilm-making workshop?
5. What are your specific challenges with using digital devices and the internet?
6. What message would you like to leave with your shortfilm to the youth of your community?
7. Where would you like to see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity in terms of further development?

4.2.1 Thinking with the affordances of film literacy

These questions were derived from my exploration of existing literature. Firstly, from literature on the scope of film as a multimodal form of literacy, particularly as boundary-crossing competence (Dirkinck-Holmfeld, 2006; Walker & Nocon, 2007; Fox, 2011) to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines, and culturally defined boundaries. Secondly, on how to address the challenges of 21st century-skills shortages along a continuum of lifelong learning (OECD, 2019; WEF, 2020); and correspondingly, and key to this life-long learning process, how to address the recognition of multi-literacy as a human right, as a strategy towards personal empowerment, and as a means of social and human development (UN, SDG 4, 2015; UNESCO, 2017; Nordquist, 2019). The use of open-ended questions was important to providing ample space for detailed responses, the possibility of different opinions or interpretations, together with the possibility of eliciting analysis and argument rather than offering a basic summary or description.

Thus, the first two pre-project questions:

1. *Provide a short bio, describing what you have been doing since you finished high school, and,*

2. *Which skills that you consider useful have you acquired since leaving school?* The purpose of this question was to establish insights into the participants' "existing conditions...and present situation" (Greene, 1995:50). Participant reflections were thus meant to inform the reader/viewer about the nature of their particular "familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123) contexts within which the participants' visual experiences transpired.

The third pre-project question, *How did you initially become interested in the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making initiative?* aimed to shed more light on the nature and extent of the participants "literacy in film" (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966:9) at that particular point in time, prior to the commencement of the project. Apart from introducing the post-school youths to the reader, the knowledge imparted about the nature of this particular participant-group is aimed to establish the foundation (set the scene) for the second and third pre-project question.

Participants' written expressions of interest to participate in the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making project, and their responses to the pre-project questionnaire, both submitted during the initial developmental (pre-production) stage of this inquiry, provided the raw evidence from which the findings were enacted and described and discussed in this Chapter Four. Deriving significant key leitmotifs from the raw evidence was crucial to establishing the foundations for the participants' verbal and visual reflections. These reflections were yet to emerge, or be created, during the production phase and to be viewed during the post-production phase of this inquiry. The use of strategies such as involvement, engagement, participation, collaboration, dialogue, and reflection to derive the key leitmotifs I regarded as significant and of value to the process. The following presentation (4.2.1.1 – 4.2...), comprising participant responses and accompanying notes, indicates the different ways in which individual participants responded to the first pre-project question: *'Provide a short bio, describing what you have been doing since you finished high school.'*

4.2.1.1 Involvement

Involvement indicates several aspects: active participation, risking one's attention and time to do something, interacting, collaborating with something or someone – often unfamiliar, and having expectations that the experience would be both meaningful and personally rewarding. Different forms of involvement transpired through the participants' responses to the first pre-project question. Personal involvement in studies, as well as study-related achievements for some of the youths, were revealed:

Participant #6 introduced herself proudly:

I am a 24-year-old fashion designing graduate. A female that's multi-talented. I'm a creator of garments, love all aspects of music and a sports woman.

A detailed description of participant #15's achievements clearly shows her involvement in and enthusiasm for the Arts:

I am a Female Artist and Photographer from Zolani, Ashton. After receiving my Matric Certificate, I went and did a Short Course in Photography which I did through UCT in partnering with GetSmarter. I eventually finished my course and got my Digital Photography Certificate. I got to do the whole course at home, which was nice because I got to do a lot of landscape photography. I also did a lot of research on the different photography styles and art styles in preparation for the following year which was going to be the Year in which I started my first year In BA Visual Communication Design, Visual Communication Design is a mixture of Photography as well as Graphic Design. It's finding various ways of delivering a message or advertising a service or a product.

Participant #14's response, apart from his involvement in the Arts, also reveals an involvement in his community:

Since I have finished high school, I have been active in the industry through Zabalaza Festival in Baxter Theatre and Artscape Festivals. I created my own Public Arts Festival for the community and local artists.

Participant #11 also described a long-term and part-time involvement in the arts, as well as his ambition:

I was studying and working part time since I left school. I now help my parents in their pastry shop. I am now currently working on my fine arts portfolio for my application to UCT. (desire to improve)

His response describes, apart from his studies and part time work, his involvement in family matters, as does the response of participant #5, although her study-plans have been interrupted.

After high school I went to college for a year and studied Financial Accounting. I couldn't finish since I had financial trouble. I started working weekends to help my family and earn extra money for myself.

Participant #15 found herself in a similar situation to that of participant #5:

I was to start my second year in 2018 but unfortunately I couldn't go back to college due to financial reasons.

4.2.1.2 Discussion: Involvement

Pertaining to my inquiry, strategies such as involvement, engagement, participation, collaboration, (multimodal) discourse, and reflection, created a firm network and support-system for both the production of evidence (data), and for deriving significant leitmotifs from the originally created evidence. Participant responses revealed different forms of involvement: personal involvement in studies and study-related achievements; involvement in the Arts, leading to community involvement; involvement in family matters; and becoming involved in this inquiry as equal partners. Participant responses also revealed their unfortunate involvement in hardships, such as interrupted study plans and financial trouble (Participants #5 and #15). Working within the geographical context, in the communities and among the youth with which I had already been involved as Visual Arts educator since 2008, established my position as researcher. Participants' written expressions, prior to and during the following two phases of the project – their verbal, audible, and visual expressions - serve to situate the reader and viewer within participants' particular individual(collective) situations.

The question of “aesthetic taste” (Spronk, 2016:26), due to researcher involvement, could potentially complicate her making of objective decisions concerning the creation of artefacts. However, I addressed issues like these by creating spaces for differences to be negotiated creatively. In this sense, social interaction was regarded as significant and valuable because it opened up the space for participant voices, in addition to the voice of the researcher. Widely recognised as one of the most crucial aspects of critical pedagogy (Darder, Boltodano & Torres, 2003:15; Freire, 1972:49; Smidt, 2015:14), dialogue was considered important to the development of trust, tolerance, and understanding – essential aspects to live and collaborate with one another despite differing opinions. The process of perspective-transformation clearly required “an engagement with and an objective distance from our culture” (Allsup, 2003:158). Here, ‘objective distance’ implies a (transpersonal) expanded sense of self, by opening up our perceptive modes to assess and figure out new possibilities of both intra- and interaction with the world around us. ‘Intra-action’ (Barad, 2007), pertaining to this inquiry, is understood as a layering of meaning and matter, of conversations in-becoming, resonating with the emerging field of non-representational research (Ingold, 2015:vii; Le Grange, 2018:7). Likewise, I saw researcher awareness of the many different ways to approach post-qualitative inquiry (Ulmer & Nordstrom, 2017) to strengthen connections between participants' subjective ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al.,

1998) and the “objective realm” (Holyoak, 2019) of new knowledge. As researchers we may approach academic inquiry in many and unique ways: “... we also may enter and exit at different locations at different points in time. But we are, in these ways, walking together” (Ulmer & Nordstrom, 2017:1) at the same time attempting to watch our participants “in their natural settings as they really were” (St. Pierre, 2014:7).

For some participants involvement in the Arts was an important stepping-stone towards their further development because it implied an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate. Becoming involved in the *‘Myturn’* shortfilm-making project as ‘equal partners’ (Henning, 2004/2011:24) emphasised the significance and value of effective collaboration amongst the participants, including the researcher. Their individually created shortfilms served as visual objects which could enable participants to “acquire objective and scientific knowledge of their own context and objectively see what things need to change in the objectified reality” (Freire, 2000). In this case ‘scientific knowledge’ relates to a body of reliable, new knowledge created through experimentation, reflection, and documentation in multimodal format. Reflection on own experiences – before and after the shortfilm-making project - was a crucial part of this experiential learning process. Participants needed to show interest, be open-minded, and critically self-aware. They were encouraged to describe their experiences, critically analyse them, link new understandings with existing knowledge, and make judgements about the value of their shortfilm-making experience. Their emotions played an important role in giving meaning to, and judging, their experiences. The relevance of multimodal ‘filmic language’ was emphasised because of its ability to engage multiple senses.

4.2.2 Transformative competencies

For participants’ learning to be transformative, it was crucial that it relate to both the participants’ existing real-life conditions and to something they were trying to bring into being, something that would go beyond their immediate situation (Greene, 1995:50). The second pre-project question, *Which skills that you consider useful have you acquired since leaving school?* revealed valuable insights into the strength of the participants’ selves/characters. Their responses further confirmed the understanding that it is impossible to disassemble concepts and evidence into isolated segments that fit into a predetermined, systematically structured chapter-template. Therefore, the evidence, relating to the development of the second key concept, namely critical self-awareness, is discussed across Chapters Four and Five. Through this extended discussion I wanted to establish how these post-school participants’ active engagement

in shortfilm-making might contribute to their becoming critically self-aware of new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming.

4.2.2.1 Exploring critical self-awareness

The development of new insights into the multiple possible ways through which young citizens could progress to become change agents, required a development of their critical self-awareness (Kumar, 2008), a constant awareness of their own thoughts, emotions and actions (Krishnamurti, n.d) and a sense of willingness to consciously adapt to change. It further implied a situation of moving forward while often dealing with the unknown.

Participant #5 described her insights into her own willingness to venture into, and to adapt to, the unknown:

Since leaving school I've learned that I can survive on my own and I can thrive in conditions I am not familiar with. I've learned how to work with accounting programmes as well, and that I can be very independent.

For young post-school adults, to intra-actively engage in opportunities, such as were offered in the 'Myturn'-project and are intended to be offered in future projects, could be transformative. Transformative potential refers to a developmental process in the course of which the participants' actions in response to "a raised perception of reality" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980) have the potential to lead to a new quality of life experience. For learning to be transformative, it was crucial that it had to relate to both the participants' existing conditions and to something they were trying to bring into being, something that would go beyond their present situation (Greene, 1995:50).

Participant #6 wrote of her attempt to transform her present situation:

I have skilled up my graphic designs & logo/business cards making and perfecting my designs.

Similarly, Participant #11 wrote:

Through working after school, I have learnt many of people skills and communication skills.

Participant #14 listed his skills-development post high school:

The skills I have acquired since I left high school are several because I started challenging myself to see what more I have in me. I have the following:

Motivational Speaker
Youth Developer (Life Coaching, Career Advice)
Facilitator for Drama and Character Development
Writing and Performing Poetry
Script Writer
Actor
Theatre Production Director.

Transformative learning can take a variety of forms involving reframing in either objective or subjective ways. In the case of the present inquiry this reframing involved firstly, becoming critically aware of one's own and others' assumptions. Critical thinkers have the ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, and the participants needed to recognise their frames of reference, and then, by using their imaginations, redefine issues from a different viewpoint. The participants needed assistance to participate effectively in discourse that would enable them to validate their newly acquired understandings. Since learning is a social process, discourse was key to these participants gaining new insights (Mezirow, 1997:10). It was important for them to understand that, as long as what we learn continues to match our existing frames of reference, no transformative changes are likely to occur. When we are confronted by rapid changes, "thinking as an autonomous and responsible agent is essential for full citizenship in democracy and for moral decision making" (Mezirow, 1997a:7). The relevance of this to post-school youths growing up in contemporary society, lies in the need for them to learn how to make their own interpretations by using their personal frames of reference, "rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others" (Mezirow, 1997:5). This capability is closely linked to critical citizenship in terms of being a democratic and educated citizen, one who consciously enters into and attempts to understand the worldviews, experiences, and lives of others. Furthermore, in this process artistic experiences are valued as 'genuine experience' (Gadamer (1975/2003:100), which essentially do not leave those involved, unchanged. In the case of my inquiry, discourse as "space of contact" (Delacruz, 2006:21) aimed to create in the participants clear understandings of the nature of the realities that would be encountered during the 'Myturn'-project.

Participant #15's personal story/reflection shows, among other emotions, situations, and personal qualities, intercultural relations, gratitude, dealing with frustrations, perseverance, learning of multimodal communication skills, and being true to herself. Her response furthermore reveals a continuous process of reflecting on her actions, as well as acting on her reflections:

Even though sometimes I felt so tired when I went to the Art class, tired from the whole school day, I'm humbled to say I attended the Art class because without it I wouldn't be where I am right now. I did my first year in 2017, the busiest year in my journey of 'receiving' education, but the most eye opening one too. I got to interact with different kinds of people, understanding the frustrations with going to college but still having the ability to wake up each and every morning to learn something in order to get to live the life they always wanted. I realised that art will always be a personal thing, even in college I had to write reasons as to why I took a photograph in a certain way, what it means, what the smallest detail meant. I had to keep a visual diary (like in High school) to document my thought process, to completely share why I design the way I design why did I maybe use stars in a drawing or design. I believe that's when I realised that I can fully be myself that I shouldn't have to cut off certain things that I learnt in high school to look like the mature student or "Miss Know it all". It was mainly about knowing yourself and being able to give a message in the most artistic way I could. I eventually passed my modules.

4.2.2.2 Discussion: Critical self-awareness

Participants' responses revealed their acquisition of both essential hard and soft skills. Hard skills involve all the learned abilities, attained and improved through practice, repetition, and education/training. While hard skills are essential to promote efficiency and productivity in the contemporary world of work, in the work-space, these hard skills are complemented by certain character traits and interpersonal skills, which also embody one's relationship with other people. Soft skills are transferrable, and promote adaptability and a flexible mindset, thus relating to the 'how' within work situations. Soft skills mentioned by the participants include, but are not limited to, 'people-skills', communication skills, listening skills, creative thinking, work and time-management, problem solving, empathy, and tolerance. Unlike technical job-specific skills, soft skills relate to the kind of emotional intelligence which allows people to 'read' others. These skills are also key to both personal and professional development. Unfortunately, in the traditional classroom, soft skills are much harder to learn, assess, and evaluate (Connett, 2022). Likewise, standardisation within mainstream education is regarded by arts-based research (ABR) as counterproductive (Eisner, 1980/81) in favour of artistically expressive forms of communicating research evidence. Relating to the use

of film literacy, these artistically expressive forms include multimodal expressions to enhance the explication of specific words, the situated position of particular ideas within the narrative, and the awareness of a particular voice, tone and tempo. These are significant factors concerning the communication of situated knowledge (St. Pierre, 2013: 648; Le Grange, 2018:6) within this inquiry.

It was a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of received, familiar, unchallenged, and unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept, rest (Foucault, 1988:155). St. Pierre (2014) quotes Foucault (1988) to emphasise that it became very clear that “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, [and] transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (Foucault, 1988:155; St. Pierre, 2014:4). Only by “living in the new perspective” (Baumgartner, 2001:17), and opening up our modes of perception (Barad, 2010; Wolfe, 2017; Dängeli, 2019) can the empowering conditions of awareness be accessed and employed to figure out (Holland, et al, 1998) meaningful new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming. ‘New possibilities’ relates to the multimodal form of artistic knowledge, offering a “significant advantage in that some goals are better accomplished with different representations” (Skains, 2018:87). Moreover, I observed how, through active engagement, participation, and collaboration in the ‘Myturn’-project, the participants’ basic discourse knowledge was transformed to multimodal discourse understandings and applications, involving continuous learning processes. Yet, the process whereby these abstract, artistic knowledges were translated into written text, was and is a challenging one. In the course of the ‘Myturn’ project, multimodal expressions were found to extend the participants’ traditional range of literacy pedagogy to knowledge processes of transformative pedagogies. These transformative pedagogies connect with the third pre-project question: *How did you initially become interested in the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making initiative?*

4.2.3 Expressions of interest, desire and expectations

The following leitmotifs and accompanying notes indicate the different ways in which the participants responded to pre-project question 3. Interest, desire, and expectations relate to the feeling of wanting to give your time and attention to something, or of wanting to become involved with, and to discover more about, the matter of interest.

4.2.3.1 Initial interest

Participants' responses to the third pre-project question were aimed to establish how the post-school youths initially became interested in the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making initiative.

Participant #5 expressed her desire to become involved in a new art form:

*What interested me in short-film making was that I can learn a new artform.
I love drawing and music so to learn a new art skill excited me.*

Participant #6 described her aspiration:

A friend first told us and made us do this but I'm planning a show where I want film part of my runway.

Participant #10 described her interest and desire as relating to her community:

The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama but it stays hidden and dies out too. And I want to change that.

Participant #11 expressed a desire and hope to expand his capabilities:

The chance to understand a bit more about the film industry and hopefully develop my skills and further understand my capabilities.

Participant #14 wanted to take on a challenge:

Two years ago, I realised that throughout my career I have been scared to take the challenge of being in screen or behind cameras, because of the competition the film industry have. So, when the opportunity came I told myself it's time to stretch myself and explore my skills.

Participant #15 shared her concerns about the project:

I have been busy planning for this film project, but I am just struggling to find a model for it. But then again, I have been meaning to ask you some questions regarding it, I am a bit afraid that people might not like the concept or idea behind the film.

4.2.3.2 Discussion: Initial interest (reflective action towards practical application)

Participant #5 was excited about the possibility of learning a new artform. She could relate her love for drawing and music to a new interest, namely shortfilm-making. Her ability to reflect on an understanding indicated personal insight and practical

application. The phrase, “made us do this”, in participant #6’s response creates the idea that there was a challenge involved in her decision to participate. No further details were provided to elaborate on “us”. Although participant #6 initially had been persuaded by a friend to “do this”, she realised the benefits such a workshop might have, since she was planning a fashion show in which film would be an integral part. The response, provided by participant #10, captured the essence of this inquiry in an eloquent manner. Much was revealed about the influence of the geographical location of her community on available creative resources and livelihood. It further revealed that she had become critically aware of these factors and had a desire to change the situation. For participant #11, becoming involved in a shortfilm-making project related to an opportunity to improve both his understanding about the film industry and his capabilities. Already, his response indicated a sense of personal insight and potential practical application. All three responses showed varying forms of reflective action. Participant #14’s explanation clearly indicated a critical self-reflection, motivated by a change in perspective. He acknowledged his fear and when the shortfilm-making opportunity presented itself, he decided to do something to develop his skills and overcome his fear. Embodied in this response was an element of expectation which led to Question 4: *What do you expect from the shortfilm-making workshop?* However, for these participants, becoming aware of their own expectations, together with thinking, perceiving, and feeling differently, were not enough to ensure the significance of the ‘Myturn’-project. For a learning experience to be transformative, participants needed to acquire agency, to express a ‘desire’ to do something about their everyday-life realities. Thus, before attending to participant-expectations, their ‘desire’ needed to be addressed.

4.2.3.3 Desire

Within the space between the participants’ acquired knowledge and their figured worlds, intertwined with the aspects of ‘initial interest’ (5.2.1.1) and ‘expectations’ (5.2.3.1), exists ‘desire’. These intellectual and moral forms of desire to function successfully, and to act responsibly in the adult world do not together constitute an unconscious reaction. This reaction also involves curiosity, a desire to belong, and self-actualisation, and required participant reflection and action upon their worlds in order for them to begin to transform some concerning aspect of their realities.

An external perspective on (A remark about?) her desire to become involved in learning a new art form, namely, shortfilm-making from one of participant #5’s peers, reads:

Your desires drives you forward. Decide if you want to survive and do it through kindness and enthusiasm.

Participant #6:

Creating my own films as desired.

Participant #10 expressed her desire:

The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama but it stays hidden and dies out too. And I want to change that.

Participant #11 expressed a desire to improve/advance his career:

I am now currently working on my fine arts portfolio for my application to UCT.

4.2.3.4 Discussion: Desire

The intention of participants' active engagement in the 'Myturn'-project was for them to envision and create more than the conventional shortfilm, which acted as a stepping-stone towards further development/self-improvement. Participants' responses to pre-project questions 3 to 7 revealed two unfolding perceptions of desire: a desire to understand self and own capabilities, and a desire to share knowledge with their communities. Based on the views of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2013), the question posed revealing 'desire' was not directed at uncovering the meaning of 'self', 'capabilities', 'knowledge', or 'communities'. The relevance to the inquiry of this question resided in our being able to pose the question, 'how do these realities work?' Moreover, how might these realities be employed to benefit the intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the participants as human beings?

At the first introductory 'Myturn'-meeting, one of participant #5's peers wrote her the following message, intended as an encouragement to participate in the shortfilm-making project: "*Your desires drives you forward. Decide if you want to survive and do it through kindness and enthusiasm*".

Motivation – both internal and external - plays a vital role in the lives of post-school youths who enter the adult world for the first time. 'Kindness', and 'enthusiasm', similar to 'desire', are states of mind, relating to self-actualisation. Participant #6's response involved a sense of self-confidence in her own learning abilities, and a belief in the potential of the learning experiences provided by the 'Myturn'-project to be personally

rewarding and meaningful. Her desire to create her own films related to both existing conditions and to something she was trying to bring into being, something that went beyond her immediate situation at that moment in time. The response, provided by participant #10, captured the essence of this inquiry in an eloquent manner. Much was revealed about her awareness of the impact the geographical location of her community had on available creative resources and livelihoods. It further revealed that she had become critically aware of these facts and had a desire to change the situation. Parallel to the ontological turn, marked by Deleuze's and Guattari's (1980/2013) purely immanent theory of desire, the evidence (data) analysis pertaining to this inquiry moved beyond interpretation, "(s)truggling with and against, becoming more and other, 'in a field of production of desire'." (Lather, 2013:634).

4.2.3.5 Expectations

Asked about their expectations for the workshop, five of the participants responded as follows:

Participant #5 d:

With my excitement I was eager to learn how to work with editing programmes and how to use the talent I have in more than one way.

Participant #6:

I want to make my own films.

Participant #11:

To further understand myself while also learning many new skills to hopefully apply to my life and career one day.

Participant #14:

(I) expect to grow and be empowered to continue doing more of what I will be grasping from the workshop. I also hope to learn more about the technical aspects of making a film.

Participant #15 expected

To find a different method of expressing myself. I am so excited! Thanks again for the opportunity Ma'am.

4.2.3.6 Discussion: Expectations

While closely related to hopes, opportunities, beliefs, and to something which does not yet exist for them, the participants' expectations could be regarded as "something that goes beyond the present situation" (Greene, 1995:50). If the 'Myturn' project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants' non-formal

education contexts, their active engagements first needed to take them “out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1995:123); second, their self-confidence in their learning abilities needed to be boosted; third, their beliefs in the possible learning experiences needed to be strengthened in order to be potentially personally rewarding and meaningful (Rogers, 1959); and finally, it had to relate to both existing conditions and to something they were trying to bring into being, to verify its significance for them and for the inquiry as a transformative pedagogy. For participant #5, learning how to work with editing programmes, and how to use the talent she has in more than one way, meant actively engaging with something beyond her familiar experiences with arts and music. Participant #6’s response, although extremely brief, indicated both self-confidence in her own learning abilities, and a belief in the potential of the project. Likewise, participant #11’s response emphasised his self-confidence in his own learning abilities, while also referring to the practical applications of new skills to a future life and career. Participant #14’s detailed response referred to his expectations to grow and be empowered, indicating a strong confidence in both his learning abilities and the potential benefits the workshop might have for him. His hope to learn more about the technical aspects of film-making, in particular, relate to a space out of the familiar and taken-for-granted, as well as a space between existing conditions and something beyond the individual participants’ immediate and present situations.

4.3 Findings in transit

Due to the developmental nature of this inquiry, the findings presented here as yet provide no final answers, and I had no intention for them to do so. As the first part of the presentation-triad, Chapter Four emphasises the ongoing nature of life-long learning, which is particularly aimed at: a) addressing the knowledge-gap concerning the relationship between literacy and social connectedness in a non-formal education context (Benavot, 2015); b) the application of the life-long learning theory to the literacy goal of the United Nations (UN) fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4, 2015; Haneman, 2015b); c) accentuating the role of multi-literacy education in recognising literacy as a human right and a tool of personal empowerment, as well as a means for sustainable social and human development (Nordquist, 2019); d) developing new competencies for young people to navigate the digital world and to acquire access to potential livelihood opportunities (Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Kapur, 2019). This inquiry into the potential use and value of film literacy provides possible options to address an emergent question, namely, how to become multi-literate in an “increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world” (UNESCO, 2017).

The participants' responses to sub-question one, *What do the post-school youths responses reveal about their knowledge of film literacy?*, were to enable an exploration of their existing conditions and pre-project knowledge through four open-ended questions. Together, these questions were intended to provide both a conceptual focus on film literacy, and the structural threads for this Chapter Four. 'Conceptual focus', pertaining to this inquiry, refers to an integrated, purposeful 'knowing' about critical and creative thinking. It was hoped that participants, having acquired conceptual understandings, would be able to relate to more than isolated facts and methods. 'Understanding' in this sense relates to participants being able to perceive, recognise, and make, connections. This understanding involves ways of thinking without the 'ruins' of confining, prescribed definitions of film literacy, together with critical self-awareness and transpersonal development. In addition, for the researcher this understanding involves informed by theories relating to these concepts. Moreover, by thinking differently about knowledge resources, the possibilities of finding a potential hidden truth, or an unexpected question, one which demands the inclusion of new references and/or mentioning new insights close to the end of an inquiry, is an open-ended reality – an "unending activity" (Arendt, 2005:307-308). Participant responses revealed a shared desire to develop their abilities to transfer their newly acquired knowledge into future situations and to be able to apply this knowledge to different contexts in ways described by Allsup (2003:159) as "composing, performing" and "action upon the world". As Greene (1995) puts it, it is crucial that "...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation" (1995:50), conditions which create opportunities for post-school youth to engage in visual experiences intended to take them "out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123). The process of facilitating a transformation of the commonplace (Allsup, 2003:159) through intuitive and creative practice sought to encourage participants to 'think on their feet' and to improvise ways to navigate through present and future uncertainty, chaos, and complexity (Finlay 2008:3-4; Rossi, 2017). The new perception to which I refer entails a distinctive 'transpersonal', educational approach relating to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self, an approach which would promote individual, and in turn, societal transformation (Buckler, 2013; Rowe & Braud, 2013). Rather than questioning the *meaning* of said concepts, we instead asked, how does film literacy *actuate* critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth? The specific aim of the evidence production process described in this chapter was to establish the nature and extent of the participants' "literacy in film" (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966:9) at that particular point in time, and more specifically in an era of continuous technological advancement. The

findings relating to participant-knowledge about film literacy involved (implied) the sampled post-school youths' acceptance of ownership of the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project. It also involved their demonstrating self-confidence in their ability to learn, and a feeling that their active engagement in the potential learning opportunity would be personally rewarding. The attributes related to film literacy, and the contribution of those attributes to advancing the transformative competencies young adults need to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society, were regarded as significant and of value both to the project and to the participants themselves, particularly, within the non-formal education context within which this inquiry was situated.

The findings showed that the participants' understandings about "literacy in film" (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966:9) were mainly concerned with "what it does, what it might do, how it might affect what other things do and how it might be affected by them" (Hillier & Abrahams, 2013:4). Newly acquired insights about the significant relevance of film literacy, derived from the findings, needed to be viewed in close connection with the growing demand for a different, more integrated approach to all levels of education on the part of educators and policy makers (Herodotou, Sharples, Gaved, Kukulsa-Hulme, Rienties, Scanlon & Whitelock, 2019). This different approach would involve a broadened scope of literacy which would develop, in both educators and students/young people, the competency to transcend both cultural and language barriers. Rather than accepting the subcategory-position of film literacy (Higham, 2016), I argue that film literacy needs to be redefined as a distinctive learning field, one focused on the cultivation of a new and different dimension of human communication. For the purpose of this inquiry, 'becoming film literate' means to acquire competencies in understanding the potential of a multimodal, filmic language, and how to use(apply) the multimodality of filmic language to enact those potentialities. The 'application' of newly acquired understandings to the making of the shortfilms added a practical focus to this inquiry, and these understandings were accompanied by the possibility of being labelled "problematic and unpredictable" (Wolfe, 2017:430). Problematic (Rousell, 2019), due to the representational nature of arts-based expressions and its apparent incompatibility with the post-qualitative approach. Apparent unpredictability, emphasised by the subordinate position of artistic modes of inquiry in relation to academic theory (Burgin, 2006:101), and inequality relating to fact, artefact, and process (Latour & Woolgar, 1986:236). From the four competencies which were employed to organise the body of literature that informed my inquiry, "intercultural understanding" and "communication and practical application" (Blell & Lütge, 2004)

were considered to be the most useful to clarifying the pre-project findings presented in this chapter.

Participants' responses to the question of how and why they initially became interested in the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making initiative recall Barrett's (2015:3) reference to the great power of film as a technologically evolving art form. However, it was essential to establish how the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making project could acquire a legitimate position in research contexts beyond simply being 'artistic'. In addition, the project needed to be understood from more than one viewpoint and by different communities. As mentioned, the participants' involvement in the Arts served as a significant stepping-stone towards their further development, with implications for their emotional engagement and willingness to participate. Their expressions of interest revealed *excitement* about learning a "new artform"; "a new art skill" (Participant #5); a *desire* to make "film part of my runway" (Participant #6); to *change* the situation of hidden talent in her community (Participant #10); "to *understand* a bit more about the film industry and hopefully *develop* my skills and further understand my capabilities" (Participant #11); to *change* the fear of being "in screen or behind the cameras, because of the competition the film industry" (Participant #14); to *embrace* the opportunity to "explore my skills" (Participant #14); as well as *being* "a bit afraid that people might not like the concept or idea behind the film" (Participant #15). These participant responses emphasise the relevance to the application of film literacy of encouraging the development of transpersonal growth. 'Conceptual focus' encompasses knowing in two ways: firstly, it is knowing in intraconnected ways, a process which is not always clearly organised, but may develop into a more organised formation if it has an appropriate purpose. Secondly, it involves knowing along the developmental/scaffolding continuum, recalling Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development.

The post-qualitative defines data as not being "something out there that we gather or collect and is not isolated from self" (Le Grange, 2018:8). Additionally, MacLure (2013:660) and St. Pierre (2013b:652) call into question what conventionally counts as data and a researchers' relationship to those data, while Wolfe (2017:431) posits that in her filmic research, "all the data were and continue to be co-created" by the researcher, participants and virtual audience ... through engaging ontoepistemological relations in the present" (Wolfe, 2017:431). The relevance of these views to my inquiry resides in the idea that "(t)he subjective, descriptive data produced are linguistic, aesthetic, and affective, and are differentially digested through a diegesis by/with the virtual viewer who intra-acts with the filmic interview" (Wolfe, 2017:431). Similarly, Åkerlind, Bowden and Green (2011:75) suggest that "each researcher also needs to

make a reasoned decision on areas of variation in practice”. Based on these views and positions, my preference for inquiry, open-methodology, evidence, analytical questions, and leitmotifs instead of the conventional idea of ‘data’ collection and analysis, and the traditional, accepted rigid, systematic research methodology.

Researcher awareness of the responsible and innovative selection of concepts, perspectives, and integration of reflexive knowledge into the research and the use of innovative practices was a key aspect in this chapter. Researcher awareness involved anticipation and reflection concerning (a) the ethical implications of this research; (b) the direct engagement with the participants (internal stakeholders) and their audiences (firstly, members of their respective communities, and secondly, in terms of this inquiry, external examiners; educators; creative practitioners); and (c) alternative ways of formally communicating the knowledge that was acquired through this study, including the integration of the feedback into the participants’ respective communities of practice by means of newsletters and whatsapp messages.

4.4 Summary

The main aim of Chapter Four was to describe and discuss, and, from this discussion, to establish, the nature and extent of the participants’ “literacy in film” (Forsdale & Forsdale, 1966:9) at a specific point in time, and particularly in the context of continuous and rapid technological advancement. The points at issue are integrally connected to the main research question: *How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth?* Evidence was limited to the participants’ reflective responses on the first four leading pre-project questions:

1. *Provide a short bio, describing what you have been doing since you finished high school;*
2. *Which skills that you consider useful have you acquired since leaving school?*
3. *How did you initially become interested in the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making initiative?*
4. *What do you expect from the shortfilm-making workshop?*

The participants’ responses to these questions yielded valuable insights into their “existing conditions...and present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). The reader is thus informed about the nature of the participants’ “familiar and the taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1995:123) contexts within which their visual experiences would transpire. These insights related to the pre-production phase of the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making project. Correspondingly, due to continuously changing communication modes as a result of ongoing technological innovation, understandings of film literacy remains an

evolving construct. A bigger-picture perspective on the participants' knowledge of film literacy necessitated a re-visit to the pre-project questions during the production-phase, as described and discussed in Chapter Five. This is another reason why concepts needed to be viewed in an intra-connected manner, and why evidence should not be disassembled into isolated segments as it is in traditional content analysis. Film literacy, for the participants, related to actively engaging something beyond their familiar and taken-for-granted situations. To gain a deeper understanding of that 'something beyond', the reader first needed to acquire an insight into the nature of the participants' existing situations.

The findings reveal various forms of participant involvement: personal involvement in studies, as well as study-related achievements; involvement in the Arts, leading to community involvement; involvement in family matters and hardships, such as interrupted study plans and financial trouble; and researcher and participant-involvement in the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project as equal partners, which revealed and emphasised the significance of effective collaboration. A collaborative involvement in the Arts acted as an important stepping-stone towards the participants' further development, implying an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate. This also involved continuous learning processes on different levels: cognitive/intellectual development, emotional/sensitivity, and social/community interaction. From a critical perspective (Johnson & Morris, 2010:83) emotional, moral, and social development are crucial aspects for nurturing harmonious relationships based on a critical awareness of self and the other (Kerasovitis, 2020:59) within the context of our shared web of life. The transformation of the participants' perspective(s) involved direct engagement as well as an engagement with, and an objective distance from, our culture(s) (Freire, 2000:92; Greene, 2001:53; Allsup, 2003:158), while active engagement in the '*Myturn*'-project had the potential to contribute to participants' becoming critically self-aware of new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming. Performing an objective distance did not require the researcher and post-school participants to isolate (Freire, 2000; Allsup, 2003:15) the self or disconnect the self from the shortfilms as units of artistic and cultural expression. It rather related to praxis and poiesis, whereby the individual shortfilm-productions were brought into existence through a transformative experience (Agamben, 1999:72; Heidegger, 1977:5; 2008:56). It was about transforming the familiar and taken-for-granted, "a kind of distancing, an uncoupling from your practical interests, your impinging concerns, to see what we sometimes describe as the qualities of things, to make out contours, shapes, angles, even to hear sound as sound" (Greene, 2001:53). In this context, the nature of engagement was both action-based (participating, performing, creating) and

epistemological (seeing, becoming aware, connecting), (Allsup, 2003:159). During this early stage of the inquiry, findings about the post-school participants' interest in developing film literacy competencies related to learning a new artform and/or learning a new art skill; becoming aware of the potential of integrating own literacy in film with a shortfilm-production as part of an existing situation (planned fashion show), and visually documenting own and family activities during the lockdown-period. Furthermore, a desire to unveil hidden talent and to change existing conditions of insecure feelings and fear of expressing opinions about daily-life issues. Findings revealed participant expectations to explore what can be done to bring about the kind of desired personal and social changes.

The following Chapter Five performs the second part of the presentation-triad, and focuses on evidence relating to the further development in the participants of critical self-awareness.

CHAPTER FIVE

NAVIGATING THE EVIDENCE, PART 2: The development of critical self-awareness

“Learning takes place not in the relation between a representation and an action (reproduction of the Same) but in the relation between a sign and a response (encounter with the Other)” (Deleuze 1994:22)

5.1 Introduction

The previous Chapter Four communicated the participants’ collective understandings relating to their pre-project knowledge of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement. Chapter Five, as the second part of my presentation-triad, was designed to impart the evidence created around the second sub-question, *‘In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in shortfilm-making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths?’* As was mentioned in previous chapters, a post-qualitative approach, complemented by developmental phenomenography, particularly benefited the ‘layered’ nature of the multimodal evidence. The introduction of an arts-based methodological enhancement suited my preference for thinking and working differently from the way in which traditional data and analysis processes are conducted. The focus in Chapter Five is firstly directed to pre-project questions 5, 6, and 7, thus concluding the pre-production phase. Secondly, the focus is directed to the inquiry evidence which was created during the production phase of the *‘Myturn’*-project. In doing so, I wanted to establish in what specific ways, and to what extent, active engagement in shortfilm-making contributes to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths? I argue that ‘learning’ for the participants in this inquiry occurred within the space between critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth, and refers to what Dängeli (2019:22) describes as “constantly unfolding and interlinked processes within one’s awareness, where the boundaries between subject and object seem to dissolve”. In this sense, the strengths of spaciousness and in-between boundary positions provided by the spider’s thread metaphor (Holyoak, 2019) served as a useful methodological tool to emphasise the interconnected nature of the evidence which, for practical reasons, had to be layered across the palimpsest-landscape of Chapters Four, Five, and Six. An attempt to gain a comprehensive view of the participants’ constantly unfolding, interconnected understandings, necessitated a re-visit of the main research question across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.. Please refer to Figure 5.1. The aim of this particular mode of perceiving reality was to focus the participants’ attention on “both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the

context that connects them” (Deleuze, 1994; Dängeli, 2019:10). It is this interconnectedness between the participants’ own thoughts and feelings, those of others, and their interrelated contexts that are addressed in detail in the following Chapter Six, which focuses on sub-question 3.

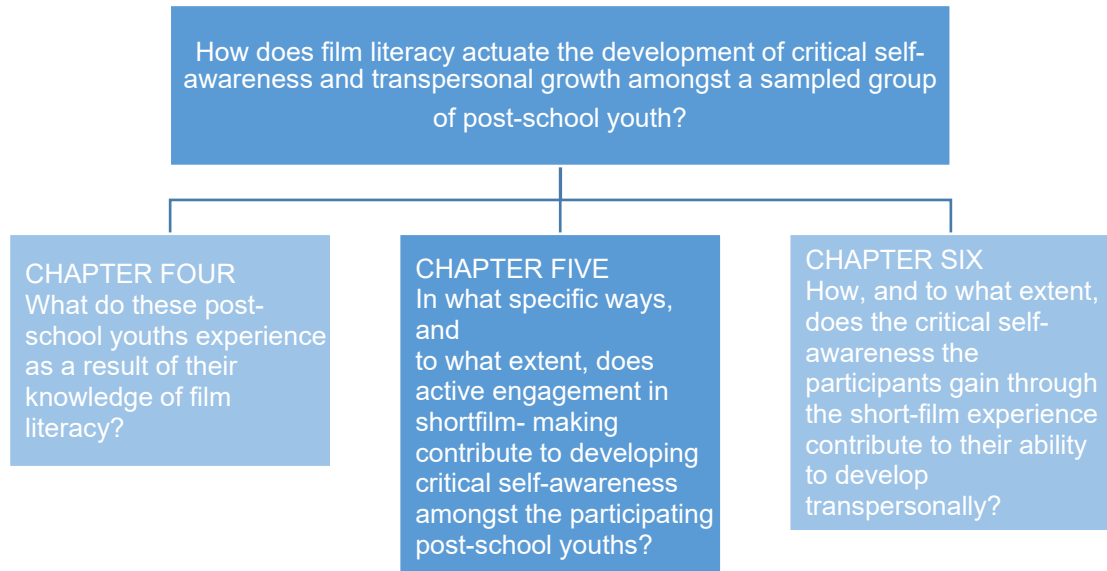


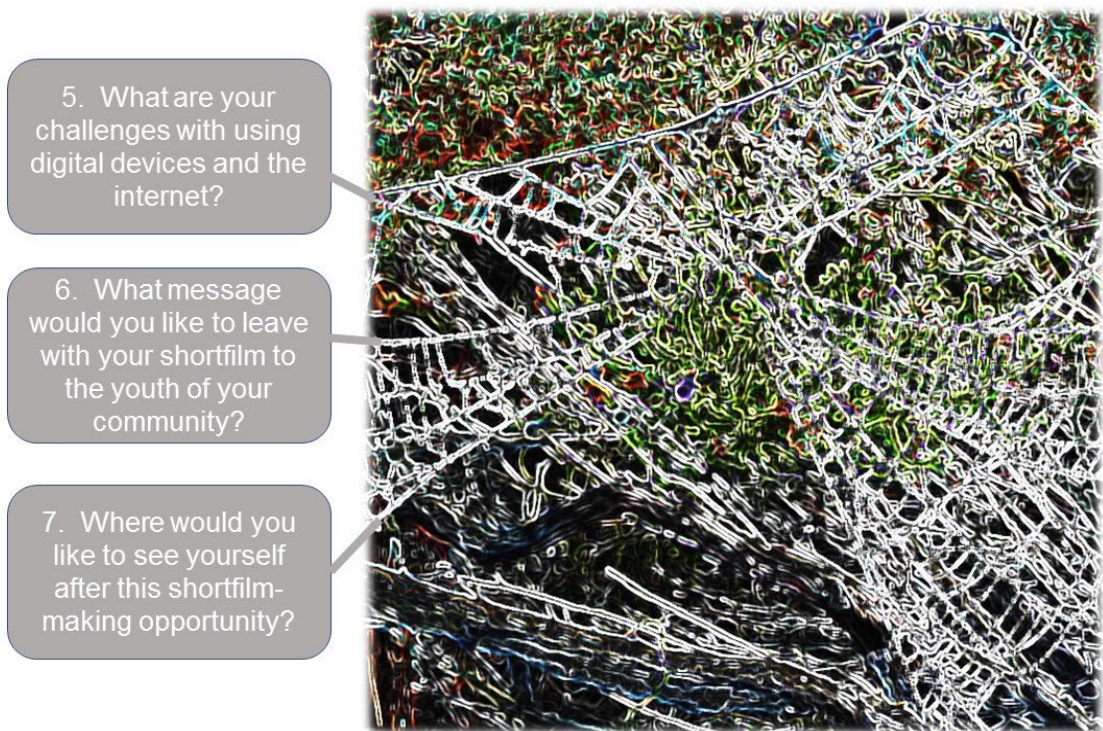
Figure 5.1: A comprehensive understanding of the participants’ film literacy-knowledge necessitated a re-visiting of the main research question across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

Transpersonal growth involves an “Open Awareness... as the flow of pure experience interconnected with the rest of reality” (Dängeli, 2019:7). The aim of facilitating this particular mode of perceiving reality was to focus the participants’ attention to “both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them” (Deleuze 1994; Dängeli, 2019:10). As mentioned previously, if the *‘Myturn’* project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants’ non-formal education contexts, their active engagement first needed to take them “out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1995:123); second, to boost their self-confidence in their learning abilities; third, to strengthen their beliefs in the possible learning experiences to be potentially personally rewarding and meaningful (Rogers,1959); and, finally, their active engagement had to relate to both existing conditions and to something they were trying to bring into being, “something that goes beyond the present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). For the purpose of this inquiry, that ‘something’ the participants were trying to bring into being, refers to their experimental shortfilm-productions. The nature of the participants’ present situation relates to their growing up in a screen-orientated world, surrounded by opportunities to “teach themselves about any topic they are interested in without even leaving their bedroom” (Driscoll, 2020:4). Opportunities like these require access to a range of

equipment: smartphone, USB cable, memory card, laptop/PC (optional), editing software, anti-virus security, and, most importantly, access to a stable internet connection. This last piece of equipment represented a potential challenge for these post-school youths, who were living in a semi-rural geographical area, known for its continuous poor connectivity. These challenges created spaces for opportunities for these youths to transform demanding situations in meaningful ways. Therefore, prior to the commencement of the project, asking the participants about possible challenges they might experience with using digital devices and the internet was essential to ensure active and ongoing participation.

5.2 Experiential learning spaces and reflective activities

The first four pre-project questions, discussed in Chapter Four, aimed to establish insights into the participants' "existing conditions...and present situation" (Greene, 1995:50). Participant reflections were thus aimed to inform the reader/viewer about the nature of their "familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123) contexts within which the participants' visual experiences transpired. In the following sections the three remaining questions, acting as structural threads, conclude the pre-production phase of the shortfilm-making project.



(Photo source: W. Smidt 2022)

Figure 5.2: Even though valuable connections were made during the pre-production phase, in what specific ways and to what extent these fragile "filaments" (Holyoak, 2019:13) would be challenged during the months to come, was still unknown.

Experiential learning spaces were designed to accommodate reflective activities as a means of assessing and critically evaluating the participants' own thoughts and actions. The participants first described their post-school experiences. Second, they brought an awareness and evaluation of their feelings and thoughts about what they would consider useful in terms of the skills mentioned. Third, they reflected on how and why they had gained an interest in the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making initiative. Fourth, they were asked to share their insights about their expectations and draw conclusions about how to respond to the various challenges mentioned. Finally, participants were encouraged to consider, and to propose, a message for the youth in their communities, one that would be communicated through their shortfilm productions. In addition, they were asked to envision how they wanted to apply their experiential learnings in future situations once the project was completed.

Living in a technologically advanced, interconnected world, contemporary youths are daily increasing their engagement with digital technologies and digital media. Unfortunately, many young South Africans are confronted by challenges in the process of connecting to the digital world. Furthermore, our multimodal environment, which includes devices that impact every aspect of our lives, demands an expanding sense of literacy from us to provide us with the competences to understand different ways of working and knowing. These challenges create spaces for opportunities to transform challenging situations in meaningful ways. Where and how to start, were some of the questions that preceded the design of the shortfilm-making project, through which the evidence (data) of this research, was created. During both the production and post-production phases of the shortfilm-making project multimodal spaces were opened-up within which the above-mentioned issues were attended to in creative ways.

Though the multimodal nature of the reflections proved complex, they provided rich evidence from which to explore, through following "continual cycles of reading and re-reading" (Green & Bowden, 2009:67), and cycles of viewing and re-viewing the created evidence. An adapted version of a four-category scheme, originally developed for assessing reflection levels in written work (Kember, McKay, Sinclair & Wong, 2008) was applied across the evidence. I realised that two additional categories were required to accommodate the diversity of participant-responses. A zero-response category was added to precede habitual action. Further development, in the form of spontaneous responses, required a category after critical reflection. Table 5.1 in Section 5.3.2 shows how this adapted scheme (or strategy?) was applied to capture the participants' levels of understanding in response to Pre-project Question (PPQ) 5; followed by Table 5.2:

Pre-project Question 6 in Section 5.3.4; and Table 5.3: Pre-project Question 7 in Section 5.3.6.

Although I did not see this scheme as an accurate measure, I considered it to have provided a strategy to avoid a subjective assessment by the researcher of the participants' work. The strength of this appraisal-strategy resides in its ability to provide a holistic view of the participants' progress across the entire project. In this sense, the application of this strategy before, during, and after the project-activities was crucial to enhance trustworthiness.

Participant engagement in shortfilm-making focused on the potential development of a critical self-awareness that can lead to transpersonal growth. Critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth have become essential capacities, particularly for post-school youth to acquire and possess, living as they are in an age of uncertainty where the ways they live, learn, work and interact are continually changing (Belshaw, 2012; Dängeli, 2019; Smidt, 2015). I believe that critical self-awareness through the encouragement of critical reflection on what and how people learn, as well as how they act upon and 'live' their new perspectives, has the potential to lead to personal transformation. Transpersonal growth implies a whole-person approach, focusing on the importance of questioning concepts such as value, meaning, and purpose, which, by implication, may lead to social applications towards a more sustainable world (Anderson, 1991, 1998; 2011; Dängeli, 2019; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). Transpersonal values (Rowe & Netzer, 2012) whose purpose is to create a safe and inclusive environment, while being sensitive towards people from all walks of life, correspond with the common set of shared values in Johnson and Morris's framework for critical citizenship education (2010:77).

A conceptual focus was employed, in collaboration with theorisations, conceptualisations, and relevant analytical questions, to derive new knowledge and understanding from the originally created evidence. The evidence (data) was 'enacted' rather than 'represented' by pointing out the leitmotifs (signs) that transpired throughout this inquiry. Each leitmotif is introduced, followed by the participants' expressions, and a detailed discussion of the findings. These findings sought to bring into being the "new", which, according to Foucault and Deleuze (St. Pierre, 2019:10), was embodied by the lives of the post-school youths.

The following leitmotifs and accompanying notes indicate the different ways in which the participants responded to pre-project questions 5, 6, and 7, thus progressing towards the production phase of the shortfilm-making project.

5.3.1 Challenges with technology

Opportunities for post-school youth to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society correspond with the potential power of technology to change the world at scale, the ability to work from home to study online, and to meet virtually. However, these are all possibilities requiring a fast, stable, and well-priced internet connection. Unfortunately, the digital divide remains an unsolved reality to very large numbers of young South African citizens. As this inquiry was situated in a semi-rural geographical area which is known for its continual poor connectivity, asking the participants prior to the project about possible challenges they might experience with using digital devices and the internet, was essential to ensuring their active participation. Also, in order for one to be able to communicate effectively in an increasingly multimodal world, advanced comprehension and literacy skills have become essential, and hence the relevance of film literacy competencies. The following participant responses relate to pre-project question 5:

What are your challenges with using digital devices and the internet?

This question was considered relevant within both the available community resources, and in particular the resources available to the participants, given its intended application in the shortfilm-making project.

Participant #5 asserted:

I don't have challenges with using digital devices nor the internet.

Participant #6 declared:

Not having wifi makes it difficult.

Participant #11 mentioned some challenges:

Maybe a few challenges in using the digital devices; am not very tech savvy; don't often use digital devices but am keen to learn.

Participant #14 responded:

I don't have challenges as such, because I have always been curious about knowing digitals and knowing about sites or software to use to make a great film or video of my work.

Participant #15 declared:

I only received regular data last night because I only had Whatsapp.

Participant #17 reminded:

Anything can happen and you can lose your hard work, so there is always a stress factor involved.

5.3.2 Discussion: Challenges with technology

If the ‘Myturn’ project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants’ non-formal education contexts, their technical knowledge, as revealed in this inquiry needed to be converted into a reflective knowledge.

Table 5.1: A results-table, showing how participant responses on PPQ 5 were aligned to the criteria of the table, introduced in Chapter Three.

PRE-PQ 5: What are your challenges with using digital devices and the internet?						
Participant	1 0	2 HA	3 BU	4 RA	5 CR	6 FD
#5		HA				
#6						
#11			BU	RA		
#14					CR	
#15		HA				
#17		HA				

Feedback from the participants varied from their holding a position between a habitual response to those reporting having a basic understanding: *‘I only received regular data’* and *‘I only had Whatsapp’*; and *‘I don’t have challenges’*, which was a habitual response without giving further applications some thought, to *‘maybe a few challenges’*, a response which indicates a basic understanding. Although very brief, *‘Not having wifi makes it difficult’*, communicates reflective thought, while *‘am not very tech savvy... but am keen to learn’*, shows some degree of critical reflection. Participants #14 and #15 both provided a reason. This was indicated by “because I...”, although participant #15’s response does not provide a logical response to the question. A more detailed reflection, however, involving a *‘curiosity about knowing digitals’* and *“knowing about sites or software to use”*, reveals a sense of self-confidence in his learning abilities, and a sense of curiosity, together with practical application of resources. Participant #17’s response describes her feelings when using digital devices and the internet, and not challenges she has with technology as such.

These reflections formed part of the pre-project phase of the shortfilm-making project. As the participants proceeded towards the production and post production phases, the challenges increased. The format of the shortfilm-files became too large to share on Whatsapp, and Google Drive was employed as a more suitable alternative. Sending

the completed shortfilm-productions required sufficient data and stable internet connections – aspects which created as many challenges as opportunities to find alternative ways to deliver the final work. If there had not been lockdown regulations and social distancing due to COVID-19, the participants would have met at a scheduled workshop where any technical issues would have been discussed on the spot and final work would have been transferred using a flash drive or usb-cable.

Apart from the everyday accessibility-challenges, the participants' conventional human perception of reality was challenged by the interconnected nature of the world, technological advancements that are always in-becoming, and a continuous reshaping of the boundaries between science, technology, and art. As a result, their multimodal environment, comprising devices that impact every aspect of their lives, demanded of them an expanding sense of literacy. In practice, the participants required competences to understand different ways of working through the potential technological challenges they might confront during the making of their shortfilms. Furthermore, they required competences for ways of expressing their messages 'multimodally', and finding best practices to share their shortfilm-productions with the youth in their communities. In this sense, film literacy involves more than digital- and media literacy by extending the experiences and particular kinds of awareness of one personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment. The aim of experiential learning spaces was to take the participants out of the familiar and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, doing, and being. However, when it came to visual thinking, the development of competencies in film literacy provided the affordances to the participants for them to communicate visual messages in a meaningful manner that would help build understanding, awareness and a new or different familiarity. Therefore, participants were encouraged to relate their own shortfilm-messages to the frames of reference of their youth-audience, and subsequently establish a connection with the knowledge they were sharing with them.

When viewing these humble attempts to make a difference, from a 'bigger picture-perspective', the '*Myturn*' initiative might appear small and insignificant against the background of extensive global literacy studies (Lutz, IASA, 2020). However, the relevance of these attempts resides, not in the shortfilm-projects or participating post-school youths per se. Instead, it resides in the potential impact of what they do, and the potential to address "(t)he widening global gap in the literacy skills of the working-age population" (Lutz, 2020). Becoming critically aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their own situations had the potential to lead to the development of an extended sense of self for the participants. Advancing measures of human capital as this inquiry sought to do, might empower the post-school youths involved in the project to improve

their lives and those of other youths, sharing not only their experiences and reflections on their immediate environment, but a critical awareness of the wider everyday life-world.

5.3.3 Active community engagement: Youth in focus

In the introduction to Chapter One, I maintained that, despite the increased academic interest in film literacy education, considerable confusion still exists about the scope of film as a form of literacy. This section focuses on literacy in the specific sense of a boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178), on that facilitates communication and cooperation across disciplines, culturally defined boundaries and between communities of practice-members (Wenger, 1998; Fox, 2011:70) in a non-formal, post-school context. Keeping in mind that the screening event of the first stage of the 'Myturn' project had been designed around *Youth Day 2020*, it was crucial to ask the participants, *What message would you like to leave to the youth of your community with your shortfilm?*

Participant #5 reflected, offering an encouraging message to her community:

I want my community to appreciate the culture that they have even if the past was hard. To life (live) in the moment to learn from your mistakes and to work hard at their dream and strive for what they believe in.

Participant #6 expressed a similar sentiment:

Everything is possible if you just believe.

Participant #11 responded:

To be yourself because nobody else can be you but you.

Participant #14 hoped to share the benefits of his personal values and beliefs:

The only message I would like to leave is what I stand for which is "Until you understand life is a Game, you won't make it unless you then get strategies to play along in the Game you will make it. Fighting hard to achieve your dreams and vision because in this day and age you must not expect to be given but work to get it yourself.

Participant #15 hoped to raise awareness and for there to be open expression of internalised issues and feelings:

To be able to comment or talk about the issues that everybody is most likely aware of but refuse to publicly speak/comment on those issues.

Participant #17 also hoped to convey a positive, encouraging message:

I want to send the message that no matter your past and circumstances, you can build a future.

5.3.4 Discussion of active community engagement: Youth in focus

‘Community engagement’ has dual relevance to this inquiry. Apart from its relation to a particular geographical area, it refers to the ‘Myturn’-community of practice, a community populated and developed by the post-school youths who participated in this inquiry. It was their passion for being involved in the Arts and their keen interest in shortfilm-making that brought the post-school youths who participated in this inquiry, together.

These youths distinguished themselves from formalised learning and professional groups. They saw themselves as having developed naturally and organically as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) through informal social interaction. The fact that the characteristics of this community of practice vary regarding its demographic diversity, and that participants live in different communities within the wider geographical location of this inquiry, should not be seen as a weakness, but rather as a benefit in terms of a wider and richer variation in the participants’ responses. Maximum variation that yields a “pool of meanings across individuals”; a “researcher-interpreted collective voice”, is an important characteristic of the developmental phenomenographic approach (Green & Bowden, 2009:64, 67).

Table 5.2: A results-table, showing how participant responses on PPQ 6 were aligned to the criteria of the table, introduced in Chapter Three.

PRE-PQ 6: What message would you like to leave with your shortfilm to the youth of your community?						
Participant	1 0	2 HA	3 BU	4 RA	5 CR	6 FD
#5					CR	
#6		HA				
#11			BU			
#14					CR	
#15				RA		
#17		HA				

These post-school youth-participants shared more than skills, knowledge and abilities. Members of this ‘Myturn’-community of practice shared the gratification of seeing growth and development in other young citizens and in their lives. Their respective messages were characterised by the desire to take their fellow youths out of their

familiar and taken-for-granted situations and mind-sets: *“to appreciate the culture that they have even if the past was hard”* (Participant #5), and *“you must not expect to be given but work to get it yourself”*. Their messages showed a desire to boost the participants’ self-confidence in their learning abilities, with an emphasis on values and beliefs, specific strategies, and hard work to make the project personally rewarding and meaningful: *“learn from your mistakes”*; *“work hard at their dream”*; *“strive for what they believe in”* (Participant #5), and *“Fighting hard to achieve your dreams and vision”* (Participant #14). Also, *“Everything is possible if you just believe”* (Participant #6); *“be yourself”* (Participant #11), and *“you won’t make it unless you then get strategies to play along”*. In this last-mentioned message, participant #14 suggested that certain strategies are required to *“make it”*, while Participant #17’s response (*“I want to send the message that no matter your past and circumstances, you can build a future”*), while being positive and encouraging, did not clarify what is required to overcome past circumstances. Because the participants grew up in the same communities as the youth to which their messages were directed, they could relate to the existing conditions within their communities and share hope for something good to materialise beyond their present situation. In her message, participant #15 addressed the youth’s abilities *“to comment or talk about the issues that everybody is most likely aware of but refuse to publicly speak/comment on”*. Post-school participants’ community involvement included expanding experiences of a personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment – interactions of this kind are not likely to leave those involved unchanged.

Within the *‘Myturn’*-community we were eager to develop our domain of practice by employing and sharing our own set of resources in order to find possible ways through which we could explore and evaluate potential experiential learning-spaces. Yet, there was a problem. Because the *‘Myturn’* shortfilm-making opportunity was based on a sense of willingness to participate (Gramsci, 1971; Brosio, 1994:49), to learn with others (Johnson & Morris, 2010:90), and to adapt to change (Costandius, 2012:20), and by embracing new perspectives from people other than themselves, it was essential to create a rhythm of persistent communication. Drawing on the scholarship of Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002), the following strategies were implemented to ensure the continuity of the participants’ active engagement. Face-to-face meetings in workshop-format were semi-structured, permitting space for participants’ input and spontaneous interactions. Open dialogue between inside and outside perspectives related to a researcher-awareness of essential interaction between participants’ perspectives within the *‘Myturn’*-community of practice, and eliciting external perspectives where possible and relevant. Since the participants’ shortfilm-messages

were directed at the youth in their communities, it was essential to listen carefully and to hear what those youths were saying.

Thus, different levels of participation were invited into the '*Myturn*'-community of practice to ensure as far as possible that participants developed a critical self-awareness of multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self, with the aim of promoting individual, and in turn, societal transformation (Buckler, 2013; Rowe & Braud, 2013).

The use of both private and public communication spaces provided participants experiential learning opportunities with them performing different roles as cinematographers and directors of their own stories (Fenwick 2001:3). If the participants' inter-relationships and intra-connectivity with the youth living in their communities were to be developed in "sustainable, defensible, responsible and inclusive" (Bawden, 2011:4–5) ways, we would need to establish applicable understandings. These understandings involved a sense of becoming receptive to the connections between oneself and others, and to the environment (Dängeli, 2019:11, 22). 'Environment' in this sense also involved the 'figured worlds' (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) performed by the participants' shortfilm-productions which were based on a collective visioning and the imagining of alternative realities and identities. Active engagement in the '*Myturn*'-community of practice required taking responsibility for careful consideration of the emerging values when bringing forth different worlds together with others.

Taking responsibility for careful consideration of the emerging values also required learning 'appropriate' ways of knowing as a matter of becoming aware how human languaging "constructs and creates worlds which are in processes of becoming" (Romm, 2015:417). The ability to fully understand something or someone includes the power of abstract thought, an individual's perception or reasoning of a situation, and an empathetic awareness or tolerance (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77; Trivers & Starkey, 2012:141). Granting the participants a high degree of voice and ownership in their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) within the community of practice-context, might engender comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds, also finding "different ways of seeing" (Nash, Kent & Reid, 2014:33), thinking, feeling and acting (Jarvis, 2006:14).

5.3.5 Aspirations

The seventh and last pre-project question addressed the participants' aspirations: *Where would you like to see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity?* This was a complex, yet essential, question inviting the participants to explore their existing conditions in conjunction with something beyond the present in addition to developing self-confidence in their own learning abilities, evaluating potentially rewarding and meaningful learning opportunities, and making choices about ways of thinking and acting that might take them out of their familiar and taken-for-granted ways of being.

Participant #5 gave specific details in terms of her desire for an expanded critical appreciation of films:

I see myself appreciating movies, films, and short films more and the time and creativity directors, writers and actors put into the film.

Participant #6 voiced her desire:

Creating my own films as desired.

Participant #11 saw her creativity being expanded:

I'd like to see myself hopefully bring the short film making experience to my tattooing and arts in a creative way.

Participant #14 was specific:

I would like to see myself creating my own work or being in a media house learning more about filming and all its aspects.

Participant #15 was also specific about her next step:

I have contacted City Varsity and spoke to them about their film course. I did get their application forms earlier this year and filled in the questionnaire but apparently those were old ones, and they gave me the new ones and I finished answering the new questionnaires.

5.3.6 Discussion: Aspirations

A South African study (Devika, 2021) found that contrary to the literature on challenging structural limitations both historical and current, these post-school youths at the youth development centre showed aspirations for a "better life and for educational opportunities that would enable them to access professional and managerial jobs and upward social mobility" (Devika, 2021:19). 'Aspirations' encompass ambitions, beliefs, goals, hopes, desires, wants and wishes. For the participating post-school youths to

envision future aspirations was no easy task, since it involved entering figured worlds which, at that time, had not been part of their frames of reference or physical realities.

Table 5.3: A results-table, showing how participant responses on PPQ 7 were aligned to the criteria of the table, introduced in Chapter Three.

PRE-PQ 7: Where would you like to see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity?						
Participant	1 0	2 HA	3 BU	4 RA	5 CR	6 FD
#5			BU			
#6		HA				
#11				RA		
#14				RA		
#15		BU				

In her mind's eye, participant #5 visualised herself having acquired the ability to understand all the aspects involved in making a film. *“Creating my own films as desired”* (Participant #6), and *“creating my own work... or being in a media house learning more”* (Participant #14), reflected their self-confidence in their own learning abilities for both participants. Participant #11 expressed desire for having acquired the ability to evaluate potentially rewarding and meaningful learning opportunities, by considering the possibility to connect the upcoming shortfilm-making experience to his existing creative work, namely, *“tattooing and arts”*. Although participant #15 did not respond directly to the question, her extended expression indicated that she visualised herself doing a film course, and at the time of the *‘Myturn’*-project, had been busy with her application-process.

The expressions of all the participants showed them exploring something beyond the present moment. What was lacking at that moment were strategies for how to achieve those goals. While having clear objectives is useful and appropriate in certain educational situations, during this conceptualising/envisioning phase of the shortfilm-making project, it was more important to “open the aperture” (Dängeli, 2019:9) of their critical self-awareness and, through experiential learning, expand their frames of reference.

Valuable connections were made during this early developmental phase. Yet, we were unaware of how these fragile “filaments” (Holyoak, 2019:13) would be challenged during the months to come. Apart from creating the ‘real-time’ footage, the actual making of the shortfilms required a set of specific skills and values, including

commitment, respect, collaboration, social responsibility, democratic rights, and personal dignity, among others. In this sense, experiential learning, film literacy education, and research ethics share a common set of ethical considerations (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77). In response to the “emergent ontological practice”, (Harraway, 2008; Zofia, 2017:124) it is essential to look back across this chapter with respect to what had been established during the period, April to August 2020 concerning the actively engaged post-school participants.

5.4 A fragile engagement

An engagement in shortfilm-making can be a powerful experience, as well as an exciting and educational one. But in what specific ways, and to what extent, can the post-school participants said to be transformed by these experiences? Becoming transformed is a fragile, developmental, and ongoing learning process. Hence the relevance of the experiential approach to learning found in both the post-qualitative and developmental phenomenographic approaches.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis revealed the fragility and interconnected nature of the world, as well as disrupting the entire learning ecosystem. Simultaneously, we saw how these consequences provided valuable learning opportunities for students, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers as they faced the global crisis. The uncertain nature of the deeply impacted academic world as a result of the global COVID-19 health crisis, further problematised research in a developing country such as South Africa. Although initially not the intention (this inquiry having started before the pandemic), I consider this dissertation to have become a valuable document, one which reports on the complexity of performing an inquiry and engaging in the evidence (data) generation process during a year of lockdown and social distancing. Even now, in the pandemic’s aftermath, people are forced to expose themselves to the media and interpretations of the messages they encounter. The development of an ability to access, critically evaluate, create, and share information effectively across cultural and language barriers has become essential.

The project’s intended ‘*Youth Day*’ and ‘*Heritage Day*’-events alike offered presentation opportunities for the participants’ shortfilm productions. The ‘*Watch Party*’-concept was new to most of the participants, and something unanticipated, and that we never expected to turn out in the way that it did. Despite the efforts to stay connected as a research-team, not all of the participants had access to internet all of the time. Therefore, an online *Youth Day 2020 ‘Watch Party’*, which was intended to act as a

substitute for the actual screening event, did not reach all the participants simultaneously. Participants' reflective expressions – although few in number, were crucial, considering continued productivity during lockdown's required social and physical distancing.

5.5 Unexpected opportunities within an unanticipated learning space

The following section zooms in on the participant feedback received after the online *Youth Day and Heritage Day 'Watch Party'*-events during 2020. Nine semi-structured, open-ended questions provided a basic structure for participants' expressions. These were received in both text and voice messages. The following sections each address a post-Watch Party-question, followed by participant reflections and a discussion of the findings. These reflective questions were intended to follow the participants' progress during the lockdown period and to keep them creatively connected.

1. *Which part of 'Watch Party' did you enjoy most? Why?*
2. *What was the most challenging? Why?*
3. *Which new skills have you acquired?*
4. *Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?*
5. *What did you learn about yourself during the Youth Day project?*
6. *Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?*
7. *What did you want your 'Watch Party' audience to learn from you?*
8. *What do you think about the potential of making such shortfilms, for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures?*
9. *What do you think you are able to do as a result of having experienced all of this 'Youth Day'/'Watch Party' short film-making event?*

Table 5.4: A results-table, showing how participants' Post-Watch Party reflections were aligned to the criteria of the table, introduced in Chapter Three.

Participant	Post-Watch Party Reflections: 2020								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
#5	RA	RA	RA	CR	CR	CR	RA	RA	CR
#14	CR	CR	BU	CR	CR	RA	CR	RA	BU
#17	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	BU	RA	RA

Participant reflections on these questions are followed by discussions, focusing on the evidence of the cultivation of advanced reflection skills, and film literacy competencies, both integral to transpersonal growth.

5.5.1 Which part of ‘Watch Party’ did you enjoy most? Why?

Participant #5 replied:

I was inspired by the music and artistry that was used by the different individuals, from musicians, dancers to photographers.

Participant #14 elaborated:

I enjoyed the showcase of the clothes made by C. I appreciated the great performances of Khoisan Dance. To me I think we focus too much on what is mostly on our televisions and forget great talented people like C who need such platforms to elevate their work to be seen by other people out there. That dance got me thinking that we are in a beautiful diverse society, and also humbled by the fact that Khoisan is part of our society and needs to be acknowledged.

Participant #17 responded positively:

An aspect I loved was being able to watch all of the talents. A lot of times acts like the dances and some dramas take place while I am occupied so I was always sad about missing out on that experience, so being able to see some new acts was really great.

Discussion:

In contrast to pre-project responses, which indicated more habitual and basic levels of understanding, the *Watch Party*-reflections revealed evidence of a critical awareness of self and others. These reflections recall the development of those competencies, required to “cultivate humanity” (Nussbaum, 1997:245). Critical self-examination was evident in participant expressions such as: “*I was inspired by*”; “*I enjoyed*”; “*I appreciated*”; “*I think*”... “*got me thinking*”; “*humbled by*”; “*I loved... being able to watch*”; “*I was always sad*”; and more. The development of a critical way of thinking about “one’s own culture and traditions” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), was revealed by expressions such as: “*different individuals, from musicians, dancers to photographers*”; “*the clothes made by C*”; “*great performances of Khoisan Dance*”; and “*beautiful diverse society*”. Participants’ newly developing abilities to see themselves as human beings “bound to all humans with ties of concern” (Nussbaum, 1997:245) extend beyond the idea of making/watching their shortfilm-productions purely for art’s sake. Instead, this extended

ability shows participants considering how using their film literacy competencies as components of human experience, are essentially knowable and accessible (Livingstone, 2004; Glotov, 2018). This process involves a deeper, transpersonal development which goes beyond the construction of meaning by integrating emotional experience with reflection (Kolb, 1984). Thus, asking, “How might film literacy competencies be applied to improve the quality of human life” involves a combination of “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1995b:5), “narrative imagination” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), and emotional experience (Kolb, 1994), a particular combination that has the potential to sensitise the audience and encourage them into action. In this sense, participants’ active engagement revealed aspects of mindful engagement, together with intercultural understanding, and the ability to communicate meaningfully in a number of ‘languages’, or modalities (Greene, 1995b:57). These included fashion, poetry, drama, imagery, music, and dance which have the potential to reach diverse audiences, comprising the art world, academia, and the public.

5.5.2 What was the most challenging? Why?

Participant #5 described her anxiety about her inadequacy:

The most challenging thing for me was the criticism because I was scared that I didn't do enough. That it wasn't inspirational and creative enough.

Participant #14 identified a connectivity challenge:

Nothing was challenging really because the internet and the social media is what I know. The concerning part though, is the network. Any internet difficulties can ruin almost everything without you having control over such.

Participant #17 saw her particular challenge in a positive light:

As someone who presented poetry that I wrote from pure emotion on the internet it was challenging to put it all out there without any assurance of how it will go and not knowing who is watching me made me anxious, but I trusted the process and it turned out wonderful.

Discussion:

The second question opened up a space to share issues concerning voice and power which, according to Deardorff, (2009) forms part of intercultural competence. Participants’ expressions revealed deep-seated issues of uncertainty, fear and anxiety beyond the initial challenges with not having access to the internet or experiencing bad connectivity. Most challenging to participants were “*the criticism because I was scared*

that I didn't do enough. That it wasn't inspirational and creative enough"; "the network. Any internet difficulties can ruin almost everything without you having control over such"; and "to put it all out there without any assurance of how it will go and not knowing who is watching me made me anxious". From these reflections one could gather that aspects, such as the ability to produce work that was both creative and inspirational, having control over the process, knowing, and being able to trust the social process, were of considerable importance to the participants. Experiencing these challenges, and finding ways to overcome fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, were part of the experiential learning space provided by the 'Myturn'-project.

5.5.3 Which new skills have you acquired?

Participant #5:

I've learned to trust my artistry and how to use music and visualization.

Participant #14's brief response was:

Shortfilm-making – mastering and editing

Participant #17:

Being able to watch my video back before sending it made me realise how fast I speak and that [I] can come across as unclear, so I worked on speaking slower and I was satisfied with the final product. (An opportunity I would not have had on stage).

Discussion:

Although brief, the responses of participants #5 and #14 reveal more than routine or habitual responses. There is a clear reference to practical application and self-confidence in their own learning abilities. Participant #17 recognised her limitations, suggested a possible resolution, and provided feedback. These reflections were directed critically at herself and her own actions, while keeping the ways in which she thought she came across to her audience in mind. This indicates the ability on her part to take ownership of her own learning process and to grow transpersonally.

5.5.4 Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?

Both participant #5 and #14 found the skills they had acquired through their active engagement in the *Youth Day Watch Party*-event useful, although in different ways:

Participant #5 replied:

Yes I see these skills as useful. It helps build my character as a person and help me see things in a different light now.

Participant #14, who had a keen interest in the performing arts, affirmed:

Yes I do. I have grown interest in Television and Film Making. I didn't think I will be so creative and excited to try more.

Participant #17 responded positively and enthusiastically:

Yes! Now I know how to present myself on stage, seeing as I watched myself back now!

Discussion:

The ability to be aware of one's own self - one's actions, thoughts and emotions - indicates personal insight and/or practical application, as well as the development of reflective skills over time. In this sense, these reflective progress-questions were found extremely valuable to the process of documenting participant development over time.

5.5.5 What did you learn about yourself during the Youth Day-project?

Participant #5's positive response:

That I love being creative and that I get more inspiration from music and movement and that I am telling stories in those aspect rather than just using words.

Turning the focus to the self, participant #14 critically reflected:

I discovered that I have a lot to offer beyond what I think of myself or the skills I have. I learnt that it is okay not to know and fail, but it is motivating and fruitful to try again with a positive attitude and actually be in a competition with yourself to produce the best.

Participant #17 reflected:

My emotions in my voice sometimes makes me lose my focus when presenting my poems and that was exactly what I was congratulated on, so I know that it is okay, that is what poetry is! Emotions!

Discussion:

Learning from the shortfilm-making experience was as much about the re-construction of previous experiences, as it had been about actively engaging in experiences at the

time. Reflecting on experiences, and carefully re-evaluating them, was an essential part of the participants' personal development. Their reflective practice went beyond their routinely recalling the events of the day. It involved their conscious exploration of their own experiences and deliberate attempts to strengthen their beliefs in possible learning experiences to be potentially personally rewarding and meaningful.

If the 'Myturn' project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants' non-formal education contexts, their active engagements first needed to take them "out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123); second, it needed to boost their self-confidence in their learning abilities; third, to strengthen their beliefs in the possible learning experiences to be potentially personally rewarding and meaningful (Rogers, 1959); and finally, it had to relate to both existing conditions and to something we were trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation" (Greene, 1995:50).

5.5.6 Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?

Participant #5 said:

The new knowledge of myself is very useful. I now know that in order to get and stay inspired is to use the different sounds around me.

Participant #14 replied:

Yes it is useful, because I have used what I have already, together with the new knowledge to create more exciting and great ideas.

Participant #17 responded:

Yes! As I said now I learned to accept my emotions as it presents itself.

Discussion:

Participants' reflections showed them considering the new knowledge about themselves to be useful, personally rewarding, and meaningful. It related to acquiring an awareness and a willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production, and new ways of knowing: "*to use the different sounds around me*"; "*to create more exciting and great ideas*"; and "*to accept my emotions as it presents itself*".

The new knowledge further related to both existing conditions and to the shortfilm productions that the participants were trying to bring into being, the kind of knowledge

and process “that goes beyond the present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). The shortfilm-productions needed to be experienced through “processes that imply feelings, conscience, and inspiration” (Booth, 1985:85) to develop into a new form of knowledge (Kant, 1952). This expanded awareness denotes the acquisition of knowledge which can alter or transform our frames of reference (Mezirow, 1991); even the meaning structures we create in our lives (Frankl, 2008; Pappas, 2016).

5.5.7 What did you want your ‘Watch Party’ audience to learn from you?

Participant #5 described this in nurturing terms:

I wanted the watch party audience to learn that is sometimes okay to take a break and work on themselves. To take care of them so they can take better care of others. To grow and never give up even if the road to their success is hard.

Participant #14 related this to resilience:

I wanted them to know that it is possible and never lay down, because the situation is forcing you to. Find other ways to be the best in what you do.

Participant #17 responded:

(That) I have enjoyed, respected and nurtured our beautiful planet. (And then directed the question at the audience) Have you?

Discussion:

At this stage of the ‘Myturn’-project (mid-August 2020) the participants had the opportunity to meet face-to-face, although briefly and the contact was subjected to interrupted workshop experiences during the long months of lockdown and social distancing in 2020. The purpose of the workshop sessions was to establish a community of practice, and create a potential learning-space within which the participants could share questions and ideas about the shortfilm-making process. However, during the months of April to August 2020, participants had to work from home, and apply their ideas to the making of ‘prototype’ shortfilm-productions. They were confronted by various challenges, including basic access to the internet, not having enough data, finding a suitable editing program to operate on their smart phones, technical issues concerning the sharing of huge files online, and practical issues of not being able to attend a screening opportunity.

Therefore, their responses to this question were underpinned by critical self-reflection on “a genuine experience... induced by the work which does not leave him who has it

unchanged” (Gadamer, 1975/2003:100). They were actually speaking from empowered positions, while still being part of an ongoing experiential learning process. It was only when acting upon the newly created meaning structures by “living in the new perspective” (Baumgartner, 2001:17) that empowering conditions of awareness could be accessed and employed in meaningful and productive ways. Participant #17’s question, “*Have you?*”, directed at her audience(s), opened up pathways for all those involved in this project to increase their powers of acting” (Le Grange, 2018:9). With her question, the participant created an in-between space as a “gap between what one is and what one should become” (Frankl, 1992:109-110). Dängeli (2019:78) uses the term, ‘liminal’, to define an in-between space which is “open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing”. Here, ‘liminal space’ relates to a transitional process, holding the potential for transformation.

5.5.8 When asked about the potential of events such as the *Youth Day Watch Party*, for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures,

Participant #5 said:

I think such shortfilms help the youth see a different path because most of them feel lost because they don't know what they want for their futures yet. So, by seeing these short film they can get inspired to become directors, dancers, musicians or artists.

Participant #14 responded:

I'm excited and honoured by it, because passing such skills to my peers and other older people will be great, because it will also teach or show them that you don't have to wait for a phone call from anyone. Instead, you can create your own opportunities.

Participant #17 asserted:

Now, their videos reach 'sooo' much further than they originally would have; people seeking talent, sitting in other provinces can log on and so much possibilities can present themselves.

Discussion:

Pertaining to film literacy competencies, both the filmmakers and audience benefited. They developed skills for “critical self-examination and critical thinking about one’s own culture and traditions” (Nussbaum, 1997:245). Secondly, the ability to “see oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), was relevant to the young participants in this inquiry in terms of becoming responsible creators of film-material. Thirdly, narrative imagination denoted the ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another person, a situation which involved morality and emotion. I believe that, in terms of our complex global context, acquiring these competencies, in particular, empathy, may potentially benefit our development as global citizens. Both Dewey (1938) and Greene (1995a) deal with the topic of aesthetic experience and the possibilities contained within experiences of art, which in the context of my inquiry, include shortfilm-making. For Greene (1995a) and Dewey (1938), a debate about art and its meaning therefore goes beyond the idea of art for art’s sake, and instead, considers how art is a component of human experience, essentially knowable and accessible (Livingstone, 2004; Glotov, 2018). These thoughts related to both their existing conditions and to something the participants were trying to bring into being, something that “goes beyond the present situation” (Greene, 1995:50). As such, although the final shortfilm productions act as evidence of this inquiry, the total shortfilm-making project had been, for the participants, more about the experience and process than the results.

5.5.9 What do you think you are able do now that you have gone through this ‘Youth Day’/ ‘Watch Party’ -event?

Participant #5 elaborated on her response:

This experience taught me that I can think more outside the box and go bigger with my shortfilm, that I should use my knowledge and my inspiration that I get, not only from everyone and everything around me, but also from my peers. To use music, movement and visuals to help tell my story that hopefully can inspire our youth.

Participant #14 replied:

I can do more creating and being creative with the new skills I have got through the program. I’m looking forward in creating more work and inspire others.

Participant #17 said:

Now I received “pointers” on how to act on video, and now I know for the future (seeing as technology is becoming more and more parts of our lives).

Discussion:

The responses, “*more outside the box*”, “*inspire our youth/others*”, and “*being creative*”, are indications of *states of the mind which develop over time*. The responses, taken together, are deeply contextual – the participants actively engaged in a community of fellow shortfilm-makers. Ideas and strategies were shared, and they offered some critical feedback to one another. Over time, the participants developed abilities to make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas, including the application of creative thinking and inspiration, to think outside the box. This is a continuous process (Bennett, Deardorff, 2009), facilitated by experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Their development of intercultural understanding implied the participants’ willingness to deal with diversity by perceiving human values and behaviour from wider angles, not simply imagining the self to be normal or superior (Deardorff, 2009; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Such an attitude required a sense of “inherent mindfulness” (Dängeli, 2019:84) which formed part of an expanded sense of the participants’ selves, nurturing the ability to adapt and regulate their thoughts, feelings and actions according to the situation”.

Many of the applications of arts-based inquiry serve an instrumental purpose: to acquire awareness and willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production, and new ways of knowing. In the following section an example of such a new context in the form of a coaching opportunity is described and discussed.

5.6.1 A potential coaching opportunity

In his *Watch Party*-reflections, participant #14 indicated that he was “*looking forward to creating more work and inspire others*”. During a meeting on August 17, 2020, he mentioned having a keen interest in facilitating his own ‘*Myturn*’-group. The evidence of what he had achieved in the creative industry during the year 2020, despite all the challenges (and subsequent new opportunities) COVID19-lockdown bestowed upon us, was truly impressive. Therefore, in response to his readiness and willingness to share his newly achieved skills and expertise, participant #14 was offered an opportunity to expand his coaching competencies. ‘COACH’, in ‘*Myturn*’-terms, refers to ‘Creating skill-building Opportunities for the youth by combining our passion for the Arts with our ability to adapt to CHange’. In the ‘*Myturn*’-tradition, it was suggested that

three leading questions, namely, 'Who are we? What are we? Where are we going?' be used to guide him in the way forward.

A second participant was identified to engage in a potential coaching opportunity. In her *Watch Party*-reflections, participant #5 indicated that she loved "*being creative*", "*can think more outside the box*", and expressed a desire to use her knowledge to "*inspire our youth*". As with participant #14, from the evidence of participant #5's shortfilm-making achievement during the year 2020, despite the same lockdown challenges and opportunities experienced by participant #14, was equally impressive. Therefore, in response to her readiness and willingness to share her newly achieved skills and expertise, participant #5 was offered this opportunity to expand her coaching competencies. Although participant #5 shared her newly achieved skills and software expertise with fellow participants within the 'Myturn' community of practice, as well as with a family member, she did not return her EOI form. Similarly, a third participating youth, participant #17, presented 'the making of her experimental shortfilm' to an audience of fellow 'Myturn'-participants with great enthusiasm, but did not express an interest in taking the coaching opportunity a step further. Focusing more on her *Heritage Day* shortfilm-message, she pointed out how image, sound, and action were used to make a connection between the past and present, and the importance of nurturing worthwhile beliefs and values as a resource and inspiration to future generations. This coaching opportunity was open to all the participants within the 'Myturn' community of practice. The example below, provides an insight into participant #14's critical reflections, as evidenced by his responses to the following five questions:

1. *How would you go about creating a skill-building opportunity for your own 'Myturn'- group?*
2. *Who will your group members be and how many will you be able to accommodate?*
3. *I am aware of your existing drama group. Will 'drama' be the 'thread that binds your new 'Myturn'-group together, or will there also be other Art(s) forms involved?*
4. *Thinking about our first 'Myturn' workshop-series, what would you like to change to make the workshop more practical, relevant and applicable to your context?*

5. What are your expectations for your 'Myturn'-group, and do you foresee any particular challenges?

5.6.2 How would you go about creating a skill-building opportunity for your own 'Myturn'-group?

Participant #14:

For such a project it is fun in terms of using competition and topics that relate with my group for them to understand and learn from each other on how to use their phone in creating something big like a short film... Also using their own environmental circumstances for them to dig deeper in their creative minds.

5.6.3 Who will your group members be and how many will you be able to accommodate?

Participant #14:

At this stage I'm not sure who will be the group member, simply because I do not want to accommodate people who have no interest in learning and developing their skills. For the skill to have value to someone who have it, one have to be open and take in the skill. I do not mind the number of people per session.

5.6.4 I am aware of your existing drama group. Will 'drama' be the 'thread that binds your new 'Myturn'-group together, or will there also be other Art(s) forms involved?

Every arts form will be included, because for such project you can't really have restrictions, because you don't want to box the participants.

5.6.5 Thinking about our first 'Myturn' workshop-series, what would you like to change to make the workshop more practical, relevant and applicable to your context?

Adding more people to the workshop so people can interact, and opening up time for people to express themselves just out of the project to gain the understanding of the people you work with and plan properly on how to conduct the sessions.

5.6.6 What are your expectations for your 'Myturn'-group, and do you foresee any particular challenges?

The problems I foresee at this point is the attendance of people to the workshops, because of the pandemic, and most importantly, the type of smartphone one has will also be problematic in downloading the app.

5.6.7 Discussion: A potential coaching opportunity

The intention behind this opportunity was for the participant to share their newly acquired knowledge with a peer or family member, and to make their own 2-3 min. shortfilm for the *Heritage Day- Watch Party*, September 24, 2020. They were invited to attend a workshop to observe and to gain information, and to ask any questions they might have. When we eventually had the opportunity to meet face-to-face during middle August 2020, it took some time to re-trace our threads to where we had left off at the end of March 2020 with the first announcement of the lockdown regulations. It had been essential to follow-up on the *Youth-Day Watch Party*-event and at that stage, to remind the participants about the upcoming *Heritage Day Watch Party*-event in preparation for the final screening of their shortfilm-productions in November 2020.

It can be argued that the participants in this inquiry, to grow transpersonally, needed to take ownership of their own learning process. The aim of the coaching opportunity was to provide a space for ongoing experiential learning. I saw participants who took up and engaged in such an opportunity as potentially able to advance the capabilities necessary for post-school youths to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society. Participant #14 was enthusiastic about his coaching opportunity and suggested a 'fun project', using a competition-strategy and topics that related to his potential group. He wanted his potential group to understand and learn from one another about "*how to use their phone in creating something big like a short film*", as well as "*using their own environmental circumstances ... to dig deeper in their creative minds.*" The response from participants on the whole was extremely disappointing. Possible reasons for the lack of interest could be derived from participant #14's reflections. "*(N)o interest in learning and developing their skills*", despite the fact that "*(e)very arts form will be included*" in an attempt not to place any restrictions upon the youth's creativity. For skill-building opportunities to have value to someone, "*one has to be open and take in the skill*" – something which obviously did not happen. The problems participant #14 had foreseen at that point were mainly "*the attendance of people to the workshops, because of the pandemic, and, most importantly, the type of smartphone one has will also be problematic in downloading the app.*"

5.7 Summary

This Chapter Five focused on the inquiry evidence created during the second phase of the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making project which ran from April to August 2020. The chapter aimed to address sub-question two: *In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in shortfilm-making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths?* Pre-project questions 5, 6, and 7 formed the structural threads which intricately connect Chapters Four and Five.

Reflective questions were employed throughout the three phases of the shortfilm-project to "open the aperture" (Dängeli, 2019:9) of participants' critical self-awareness and expand their frames of reference through experiential learning. This particular mode of perceiving reality aimed to focus the participants' attention on "both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them" (Deleuze 1994; Dängeli, 2019:10). This kind of perceiving is a valuable indication of the participants' transpersonal understanding of becoming critically aware of an expanded sense of their selves. Furthermore, it helps them to assess and figure out new possibilities of both intra- and interaction with the world around them. The participant responses to the reflective questions emphasise the relevance of the application of film literacy to encouraging the development of transpersonal growth.

Feedback from the participants concerning challenges with technology (5.2.1.) varied from habitual responses and basic understandings, to reflective thought, and a hint to critical reflection. At this very early stage of the shortfilm-project, advanced reflective skills could not have been expected from the participants. Their technical knowledge had first to be converted into a reflective knowledge if the shortfilm-making project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants' non-formal education contexts. Although very brief, a sense of self-confidence in learning abilities, and an envisioned practical application of resources, were revealed.

'Community engagement' has dual relevance to this inquiry: firstly, it refers to the participants' geographical living space; secondly, to the 'Myturn'-community of practice. As members of the 'Myturn'-community of practice, participants shared the gratification of seeing growth and development in the lives of other young citizens. Involvement in the Arts was considered an important steppingstone towards further development because this involvement implied an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate.

Becoming involved in the inquiry process as an “equal partner” (Henning, 2004/2011:24) emphasised the significance of effective collaboration between the researcher and the participants. Key to the experiential transformative learning process is a focus on bringing about positive change to people’s lives, and to the wider world, through a continuous and cyclical process of reflecting on action, as well as acting on reflection. As people transform into knowledge societies, advanced comprehension and literacy skills become essential to communicate effectively in an increasingly multimodal world.

Although initially not the intention (because this inquiry started before the pandemic), this dissertation has become a valuable document, one that is reporting on the complexity of performing an inquiry and engaging in the evidence (data) generation process during a year of lockdown and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The next chapter, Chapter Six, forms the third part of the presentation-triad and communicates the evidence which was created during the final phase of the *‘Myturn’*-project.

CHAPTER SIX

NAVIGATING THE EVIDENCE, PART 3: The development of transpersonal growth

“The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.”
John Berger (1972:7)

6.1 Introduction

Building on the foundation of evidence established by the two preceding chapters, Chapter Six communicates and discusses the evidence created during the final phase of the ‘Myturn’-project, from September to November 2020. In focus is Sub-question three: *How, and to what extent, does the critical self-awareness the participants gain through the shortfilm-experience contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally?*

This third part of the presentation-triad aims to establish how the participants’ newly gained critical self-awareness might contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally. Several recent researchers in the field of critical self-awareness and ‘open awareness’ in teaching see both critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth as essential capacities for all learners, including post-school youth, to acquire in order for them to function effectively in their future employment and as responsible citizens. I see these capacities as particularly essential for the sampled group of post-school youth who live in an age of uncertainty, with the ways they live, learn, work and interact continually changing (Belshaw, 2012; Dängeli, 2019; Smidt, 2015). I argue that the development of a critical self-awareness in these youth, through the encouragement of critical reflection on what and how they learn, as well as how they act upon and ‘live’ their new perspectives, has the potential to lead to their personal transformation. Pertaining to this inquiry, transpersonal growth encompasses the development in an individual of multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self (Buckler, 2013; Rowe & Braud, 2013), through “constantly unfolding and interlinked processes within one’s awareness” (Dängeli, 2019:22). Thus, I considered it important to encourage and maintain a positive attitude amongst all involved in this inquiry, despite the extremely disruptive challenges experienced by all during 2020. Therefore, “*Sharing happiness and positive vibes*”, an expression derived from the participants’ proposed shortfilm messages, was a collective decision for the

inclusive theme, and thread which bound the presentations together at the final screening event.

In the course of this chapter I discuss, first, the different contexts which created the palimpsest-landscape within which this third part of the evidence presentation-triad was brought into being. Second, I communicate relevant post-project reflections, and follow these with a discussion of the findings and a chapter summary.

The following section addresses the initial intentions and eventual realities of the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project. These intra-connected elements created the palimpsest-landscape within which this inquiry was brought into being. Section 6.2 addresses the initial intentions and eventual realities of the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project.

6.2 The liminal space between intentions and realities

Initially strategic plans were designed with the entire inquiry in mind and began with the main aim, namely, to establish how the process of becoming film literacy-competent might actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst the participating group of post-school youth. The above reference to 'liminal space' relates to an in-between space which is "open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing" (Herman, 2015:111; Dängeli, 2019:78). Here, 'liminal space' relates to a transitional process, holding the potential for transformation. I argue that experiential learning instances for the participating post-school youths occurred within the space between critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth. This process refers also to "constantly unfolding and interlinked processes within one's awareness, where the boundaries between subject and object seem to dissolve (Dängeli, 2019:22). For the post-school youths who willingly expressed their interest in becoming actively engaged in the '*Myturn*' initiative, these ongoing, interconnected activities relate to living "both in material and immaterial dimensions of experienced reality" (Eigen, 1993:74). This understanding recalls the notion of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), as well as the transpersonal space/time realm as "moving presence" (Herman, 2015:112), with obvious relevance to film literacy. In practice, the liminal space between intentions and realities can thus be defined as a meeting between the "world that is known to be" and the "world that is becoming" (Herman, 2015:112). For the participants, the known world refers to the space/time before their involvement in the shortfilm-making project, where the world-in-becoming refers to the space/time after the project. In agreement with Herman (2015), I found communicating

this being in-between worlds is best done through the arts. My finding was accompanied by a renewed awareness of the particular relevance of both the post-qualitative and developmental phenomenographic approaches, which allowed me to bring this inquiry into being. I found these perspectives particularly significant for this chapter, which is concerned with transpersonal growth, and with focusing on “experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125) connecting individual transformation with social change. The fact that Herman (2015) does not specify the particular kind of literacy required to communicate this ‘liminal’ experience, reveals a knowledge gap – one that my inquiry into the language (use) involved in film literacy sought to address.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, my inquiry was not directed at a theoretical focus on the homogenous rural space (Odora-Hoppers, 2004), nor on the ‘deficiencies’ of rural communities (Budge, 2005), nor was it a comparison between semi-rural and urban contexts. Although significant, these foci do not relate directly to my research focus. My focus was on the dynamic character, powerful integral values, and agencies within (semi) rural communities, on communities which stand independent of urban contexts (Balfour et al., 2008; Moletsane, 2012:3). Having as focal point the variety of different ways young adults “engage with and shape their lives in their environments” (Moletsane, 2012:3), serves to clarify the use of developmental phenomenography for my inquiry. Further, with a few exceptions, fifty or so years ago educators traditionally possessed limited knowledge of school-leavers’ real-life worlds, and understood relatively little of the further education sector and the particular challenges post-school youth were experiencing in the 1970s when they were attempting to prepare themselves for making a living (Sternhouse, 1975: 42). More recently, a widening global literacy skills gap, despite good progress in terms of access to education in developing countries like Africa and South Asia (Lutz, 2020; IIASA, 2020), has become of critical concern. Based on research, and on my own experience, I have come to realise the importance and urgency of transformation within contemporary South African education. It was in the light of this that the topic for this Doctoral research in education was chosen.

The “post-production evidence’, presented in this chapter was created by the ‘*Myturn*’ post-school community-of-practice within the context of the present-day communications and non-formal education environments. This enquiry is located in the question of how film literacy actuates critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a group of post-school youth, and, as has been described in detail, explored

a post-qualitative approach. Guided by transformative learning theory, the inquiry positioned the participants' shortfilm-productions as physical experiences within a continuous reflection cycle, as indicated in Figure 6.1. The evidence brought into existence (Agamben, 1999:72; Heidegger, 1977:5; 2008:56) during each phase of the shortfilm-making project, emphasised the impact on the participants of their reflecting on their experiences, followed by an evaluation (discussion) of these experiences and their feelings about, and perceptions of, these, and, from these, identified a development of a new phase. Transpersonal growth relates to an ongoing "holistic, expansive, growthful, transformative" learning experience (Rowe & Braud, 2013:671). Gadamer (1975/2003:100) was of the view that encounters induced by artworks embody authentic experiences with transformative potential "which does not leave him who has it unchanged". In light of this view, I found it both necessary and desirable to explore how an integrated, devised arts-based project might contribute to academic research contexts beyond the limited scope of an artistic project.

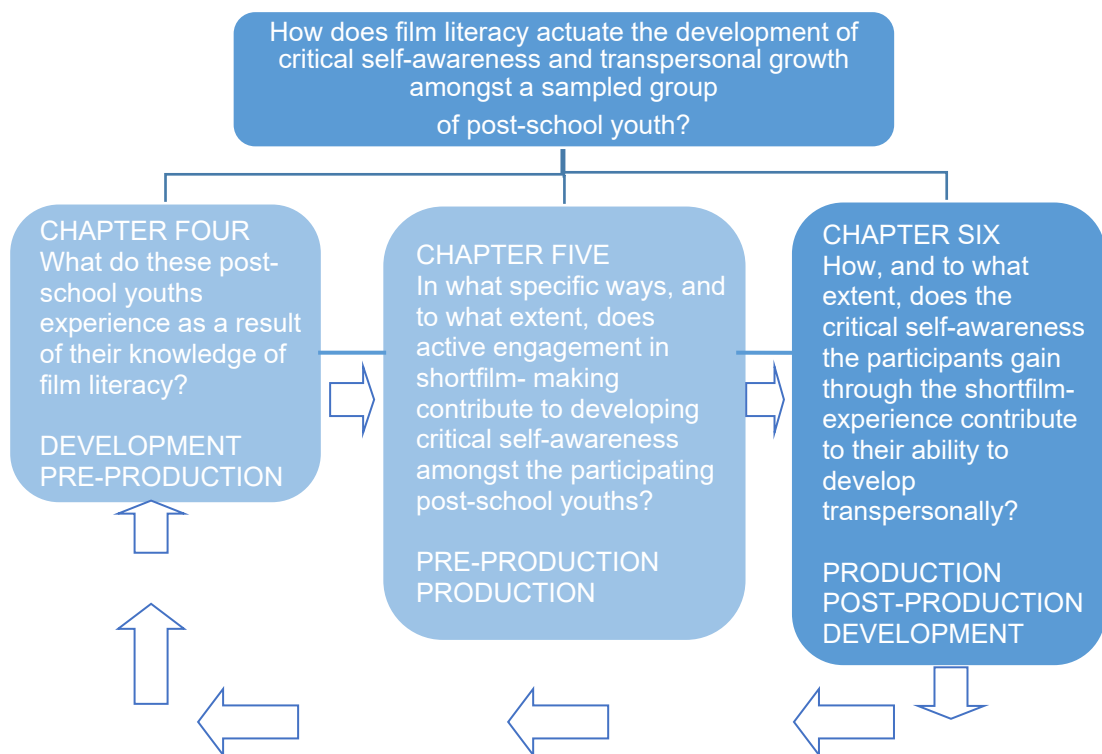


Figure 6.1: A comprehensive understanding of the participants' film literacy-knowledge necessitated a re-visit of the main research question across Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

6.2.1 Dynamic character, powerful integral values, and agencies within semi-rural communities

From a post-qualitative viewpoint, the understanding of 'setting' in this inquiry is based on the idea that "(p)lace is always different. According to this theoretical perspective,

each setting is unique, and constantly productive of the new" (Massey, 2005:162), and "(e)ach new geographic location shapes a different new" (Nordstrom & Ulmer, 2017:7). The 'dynamic' and 'different' involve a number of interrelated settings: South Africa as contextual setting, the Western Cape Province and semi-rural Langeberg countryside as geographical setting; the physical community settings where the participants met with the researcher during the developmental phase, and locations where the shortfilm-footage were shot; the 'figured worlds' (Holland et al.,1998) within the participants' minds; the virtual environment, created during the lockdown-months in 2020, whose purpose was to keep all involved creatively connected; the technological settings of different editing software 'environments' on the participants' smartphones; and, in particular, and as described in this chapter, the physical space of the boutique cinema where the participants shortfilm-productions were screened. This last, however, was not the final setting, but the beginning of a new developmental phase situated within the figured mind-worlds of the audience who interpreted the shortfilm-productions according to both their own unique and shared frames of reference.

For the participants, the process of seeking and finding best practices to share their shortfilm-productions with the youth of their communities, required competences related to ways to express their messages 'multimodally'. In this sense, film literacy transcends the boundaries of digital- and media literacy by extending experiences of a personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment. For the participants, this process first required taking responsibility for careful consideration of the emerging values when bringing forth different worlds together with others. Second, learning 'appropriate' ways of knowing as a matter of becoming aware how human languaging "constructs and creates worlds which are in processes of becoming" (Romm, 2015:417). Third, the ability to understand something or someone, including the power of abstract thought, an individual's perception or reasoning of a situation, and an individual's empathetic awareness or tolerance of others (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77; Trivers & Starkey, 2012:141). It was hoped that the participants, in the process of becoming involved in the inquiry process as equal partners (Henning, 2004/2011:24) might engender in participating individuals and in the group as a whole, comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds. Furthermore, the objectives of the shortfilm-making project specifically devised for the purpose of this inquiry, correspond with the five areas identified by Dewey (1916) in his contribution to critical citizenship education. The influence of Pragmatism on education as a "matter of instrumental values", and the understanding that practice-related topics are studied because they provide "some end beyond themselves" (Dewey, 1916: 342, 249, 353,

251) found relevance in this inquiry, with reference to the outcomes of developmental phenomenography which “are no end in themselves” (Green & Bowden, 2009:52).

During the 2020mlockdown-period the boundaries of this inquiry expanded even further, with participants accepting a virtual setting as space of contact between researcher and participants. Since the outcomes of this inquiry aimed to add value to the post-school youths’ personal development and continuous learning needs, it was particularly important to maintain the communication link between researcher and participants over a period which turned out to be much longer than the initially announced twenty-one days. This expanded sense of ‘setting’ therefore unveils the co-existence of multiple forms of knowledge (Visvanathan, 2009). Correspondingly, I found the becoming aware of “knowing as situated inquiry”, and particularly, questioning “how far knowledge is able to travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations” (Le Grange, 2018:11) to be significant to this inquiry. In this becoming aware, my attention was increasingly drawn to the seldom focused upon “dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities” and the variety of different ways in which they “engage with and shape their lives in their environments” (Moletsane, 2012:3).

6.2.2 The variety and variability of evidence

The variety and variability of multimodal-evidence created by the participants, a process which required different transcriptional possibilities, emphasised the problems that currently define the world of interactive meaning-making. As has been mentioned, the premise on which this inquiry is based valued multiple perspectives. The clues to those perspectives needed to be found in the different ways the participants made sense of their realities, together with the multimodal approach to express those perceptions. Surrounded by fields of potential knowledge production, the participants’ positionality – personal values, perspectives, and location in time and space - influenced their understandings of the world, and their decisions about how to respond (act/ behave). Then by using their knowledge, imagination, and shortfilm-expressions, they were able to redefine and address the issues at stake from a different viewpoint. Here, I want to draw attention to participant #15’s proposed shortfilm-message to the youth of her community: “To be able to comment or talk about the issues that everybody is most likely aware of but refuse to publicly speak/comment on those issues” (Chapter Five, Section 5.5.3).

6.2.3 Experiential learning opportunities

As was mentioned in Section 6.2 above, despite notable research done on the real-life and education challenges faced by school leavers since the 1970s, as well on access to education in developing countries like Africa and South Asia (Lutz, 2020; IIASA, 2020), the widening global literacy skills gap of the working-age population continues to significantly impact both the lives of their citizens and the advancement of their societies. Pertaining to this inquiry, participant reflections generated in multimodal format indicated many different ways to address issues related to the widening global literacy skills gap (IIASA, 2020), and, in my view, communicated and explored an applicable multi-literacy pedagogy for our current times. The use of multiple modes which produced layered understandings, was shaped by the participants' social environment(s) which, in turn, could be seen to shape their being in this world. I observed both the participants' beings and their becomings to be shaped by the information that they accumulated through engaging in the *'Myturn'* project, and by capturing their experiences of their world. In turn, the participants showed themselves to have the desire and the potential to transform their social environment.

This inquiry is underpinned by my belief that all humans, but including and specifically post-school youth, have inherent capabilities to develop according to their unique potential. While finding a parallel in the ideas of Goldstein (1939) and Frankl (1946), 'potential' in this sense might be directed toward creativity (arts-based theory; figured worlds); spiritual enlightenment (transpersonal theory); pursuit of knowledge (transformative learning); and the desire to contribute to society (critical citizenship). From an arts-based perspective, this idea and mode of revealing and developing capabilities relates to an opportunity to collaboratively create spaces for inquiry by engaging a select post-school group, and by raising critical questions about relevant modes of expression in the field of education. These modes of thought represent a close link between the arts, science, and technology in any attempt to promote transformative (life-long) learning in a particular post-school context. Opportunities to become participating, self-directed, responsible, reflective, and productive citizens, could come to be seen as essential for post-school youth's sustainable cognitive, emotional, creative, ethical, and spiritual development. The relevance of this for post-school youths, growing up in contemporary societies, resides in their need to learn how to make their own interpretations by using their personal frames of reference, "rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others" (Mezirow, 1997:5). This self-reliant capability is closely linked to critical citizenship in the sense of becoming and being the democratic and educated citizen who consciously enters into and attempts to understand the worldviews, experiences, and lives of others.

For the post-school participants in their new roles as cinematographers of their individual short films, a transpersonal emphasis, addressing the emotional and spiritual aspects of human development, is believed to be essentially transformational (Rowe & Netzer, 2012). As such, these post-school youths needed to recognise their own frames of reference when responding to the invitation to participate in the shortfilm-making project. My current argument about post-school youth's role as change agents in their societies is that this role would be realised through transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003), informed by a critical self-awareness of their positionality.

6.2.4 Education for transformation

My choice of topic for this Doctoral research in education was based on my realisation of the importance and urgency of transformation within contemporary South African education, in particular in the present-day communications environment, non-formal education, a post-school community, and non-representational research (Ingold, 2015:vii; Le Grange, 2018:7). My encompassing post-qualitative approach enabled an assemblage of relevant methods with the potential to unfold through intra-actions with the world, thus making possible the transformation of the world (Le Grange, 2018:8). Experiential, intellectual, and /or social transformation is key to such studies such as my inquiry due to its inherently complex nature, which requires alternative strategies to those of traditional research. (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin & Gouzouasis, 2006:1252). I found a post-qualitative approach useful to an inquiry such as mine, which is concerned with transpersonal growth, and which focuses on “experiences in which the sense of identity or self *extends* beyond (trans) the individual or personal, to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125). Thus, I saw participation in this inquiry as having the potential to connect individual transformation with social change.

The transformative learning theory comprises three essential mechanisms that are seen by researchers such as Walker (2008) to facilitate the learning and transformation of young adults growing up in contemporary societies. This process involves critical reflection, centrality of experience, and rational discourse. Walker (2008), who argues that we cannot guarantee that transformation or change will take place in an educational setting, would agree that the ‘*Myturn*’ Initiative cannot guarantee transformation in the lives of the participating post-school youths. However, the ‘*Myturn*’ shortfilm-making project sought to provide the conditions – ‘educate in such a way’ – for enabling the kind of educational development process that supports human flourishing is enabled” (Walker, 2008b:156). Thus, based on theorists such as Walker

(2008), I would argue that critical self-awareness can be developed through the encouragement of critical reflection on what and how people learn, as well as on how they act upon and 'live' their new perspectives, and this awareness has the potential to lead to personal transformation.

Transformation of perspectives could be the result of a more adaptive and reflective attitude towards life on the part of a young person, while they remain open to the interconnectedness of thought and action. Both Freire and Greene contend that the process of perspective-transformation requires "an engagement with and an objective distance from our culture" (Allsup 2003:158). Transformation is of no value if it is not enthused by the belief that the history of all peoples has meaning and equal importance (Smidt, 2015:19). This transformation of perceptions and attitudes could lead to the attainment of a true critical pedagogy (Johnson & Morris 2010:92), one that proposes the emancipation and transformation of education in South Africa and leads us towards a better society. Correspondingly, due to continuously changing communication modes, the result of ongoing technological innovation, understanding of film literacy remains an evolving construct: hence the need for innovative pedagogical approaches.

6.2.5 Present-day communications environment, and non-formal education

Because the outcomes of this inquiry were seen to add value to the post-school youths' personal development and continuous learning needs, it was particularly important to maintain the communication link between researcher and participants over an extended period in 2020, one which turned out to be much longer than the initially announced twenty-one days. Since 2020, online learning has increasingly become an integral part of the present-day communications environment. Multimodal forms of communication have added value to the complexity of online learning, expanding the variety of possible ways to acquire information and make meaning of concepts (Kress, 2003/2010; Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013). The implications of this expanding interest in multimodal literacy for educational practices stretch across an increasing range of education domains, including research, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment (O'Halloran & Smith, 2011; Mills & Unsworth, 2018). For this inquiry, operating outside the formal curriculum required the relevant literature which could advise educators and policy makers on how to navigate challenges in non-formal post-school education, namely to "create possibilities for participation and collaboration across a diversity of sites" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:132). In this inquiry, an attempt was made to emphasise the main value(s) of film literacy as a boundary crossing concept by recognising increasing diversity in and between entities such as educational institutions

that embody past learning experiences for the participating post-school youth; everyday life as the present moment; and perception of boundaries as potential learning-resources towards the future work-experiences of post-school youth (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:153).

I found pragmatic education, serving as a critique of traditional education (Dewey, 1916; Gardner & Davis, 2013; Mason, 2017; Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018: 1551), to be relevant to this inquiry, in the course of which “truth is formed by its results” (Adeleye, 2017), and that young adults need to continually adjust and improve their ways of thinking to adapt to fast changing real-life situations. While keeping in mind what was posited about the creation of long-term economic value awareness to address the decreasing relevance of the global education system (Krishnan, 2020), the third and final workshop-series embodied the long-term goals of the ‘*Myturn*’-project. Participants’ filmmaking activities culminated in a shortfilm screening event to highlight collective knowledge production, while also contemplating the potential for future development. Ongoing goals included personal development; competitiveness; employability; a foundation for further study; and potential economic benefits which might come from uploading future shortfilm productions for public viewing on social media platforms.

Initially, the intention of this third phase was to offer interested participants an opportunity to become part of an adjudicator’s panel. They would be asked to select ten shortfilms in no particular order, from a total of seventeen, which they considered best represented originality, creativity, skilled cinematography, and message effectiveness. The seven youths who had remained actively engaged throughout all three phases of the ‘*Myturn*’-project decided instead to screen all seventeen shortfilm submissions, including those from their peers who, due to personal and practical reasons, withdrew at various stages of the project. Their decision was based on an insistence on equal opportunities for all who were or had been involved in the ‘*Myturn*’ Initiative, and there was a focus on (trans) personal development rather than on shortfilm-content. Certificates were, however, awarded to participants who completed all three phases of the filmmaking-project, to acknowledge their dedicated participation. The cinema audience was selected by the participants and comprised of close family and friends. A dedicated space on the back of the ‘*Myturn*’ screening-event program (Figure 6.2) provided an opportunity for feedback from audience-members who were willing to share their opinions on this first real-time screening event.

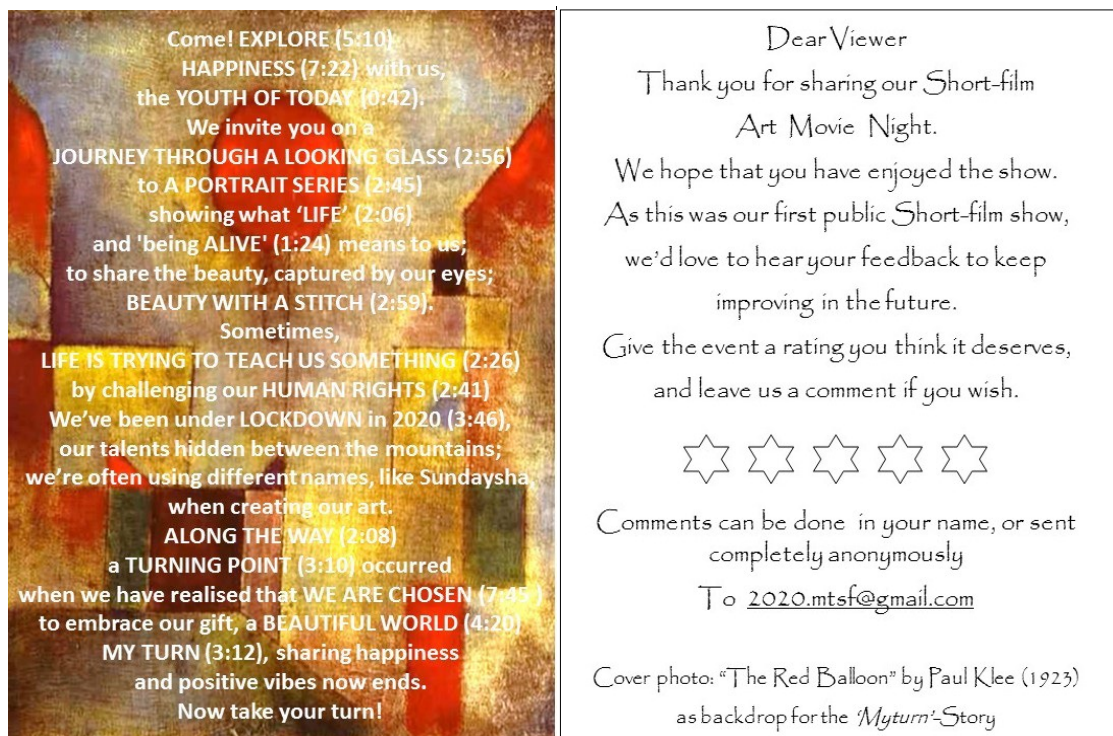


Figure 6.2: The shortfilm-titles were arranged to tell the 'Myturn'-story on the cover of the screening-event program and present an opportunity for feedback from audience-members on the back.

6.3 Post-production

This section sought to communicate post-project reflections from seven actively engaged participants, as well as from a few spontaneous responses from audience members who attended the 'Myturn' screening event at the cinema in real time. The significance of using the term, *post-production* is two-fold. Literally, post-production refers to the final and most significant (Larkin, 2019) stage in the filmmaking process where all the audio and visual material is assembled to create a multisensory experience – the shortfilm, relating to this particular inquiry. Figuratively speaking, it refers to the 'making of spacetime' (Barad, 2003/2007; Zofia, 2017) – the coming together of all the significant elements required, to create the physical/virtual environment in which this inquiry realised. The decision to include responses from outside of the participants' immediate community of 'inquiry-practice' was underpinned by the fact that these shortfilm productions were in fact created by the youth for the youth of their communities. The opinions of these youths provided valuable references and alternative perspectives for the participants' ongoing learning-opportunities.

6.3.1 Participant responses, the day after the final real-time screening event

The time had come to reflect on an event which marked the end of the 'Myturn' shortfilm project for the participants. Although we said goodbye at the final shortfilm screening

event, the day after, three participants requested a brief meeting before submitting their post-project reflections. Still brimming with excitement about the previous evening, they couldn't wait to share immediate thoughts. With their experiences still fresh in mind, I found these responses of great value as a prelude to their post-project reflections. Since this was a spontaneous meeting to clarify a few practical details about the submission of their post-project reflections, no formal questionnaire guided the expression of their immediate thoughts about the shortfilm screening event. Their immediate thoughts were recorded, transcribed and for clarity purposes, assembled according to particular points of interest. My justification for including these spontaneous reflections, was underpinned by the following aspects:

First, since the nature of these reflections was spontaneous, they were regarded as a valuable indication of the post-school youths' growing abilities to reflect on an understanding, and of their showing personal insight and/or practical application of their newly acquired insights. Second, this inquiry could become relevant in its effort to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels" (Kaplan, 2005) only if and when the participants' developed the ability to convert their technical knowledge, evident from this inquiry, into a reflective knowledge. Third, the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making project would be considered as significant only if the participants' active engagements could take them out of the familiar and taken-for-granted; boost their self-confidence in their learning abilities; strengthen their beliefs in possible learning experiences to be potentially rewarding and meaningful; and if it related to their existing conditions in connection with something (not yet existing) beyond their present situations.

New insights revealed through these expressions established the extent to which the participants had developed their abilities to begin to critically reflect on their immediate situations. Critical self-reflection would imply a change in perspective, something that would not have been expected from the participants earlier in the project. Meaningful personal and social transformation may develop from critical self-reflection to benefit ethical and moral education (Mezirow, 1998; Fenwick, 2001; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Costandius, Rosochacki & Le Roux, 2014). Transpersonal growth per se involves an "Open Awareness... as the flow of pure experience interconnected with the rest of reality" (Dängeli, 2019:7). This particular mode of perceiving reality aimed to focus the participants' attention to "both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them" (Deleuze 1994; Dängeli, 2019:10).

In addition it was expected at this stage that the participating post-school youths would take responsibility for carefully considering the values that become visible when bringing forth different worlds with others.

'Different worlds' mentioned in the above quote by Bawden (2011) recall transpersonal perspectives, in the sense of becoming receptive to the connections between oneself and others, and with the environment (Dängeli, 2019:11, 22). Secondly, 'different worlds' relate to 'figured worlds' (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998). This is based on a collective visioning and the imagining of alternative realities and identities. Bawden (2011) emphasises 'appropriate' ways of knowing as a matter of becoming aware of the ways in which human languaging "constructs and creates worlds which are in processes of becoming" (Romm, 2015:417).

The following leitmotifs and accompanying notes communicate participants' immediate thoughts, prior to submitting their post-project reflections:

6.3.1.1 First impressions: Primary awarenesses embody reflections on direct, non-verbal, sensory experiences on a multimodal level.

6.3.1.2 Time of year: Reflecting on the suitability of the screening time in terms of future application, and contemplating the best time of year for the screening, was considered important.

6.3.1.3 Shortfilm length/Running time: Many hours of dedicated work went into the making and editing of each shortfilm-production. Discussing the best running time will also determine the length of the show.

6.3.1.4 Music/Sound: This is crucial since musical effects or sound should complement the film material as such, rather than be seen as an add-on.

6.3.1.5 The use of text/sub-titles: This is relevant only if it improves understanding.

6.3.1.6 Key insights: These are the take-away messages which might impact future experiential learning opportunities.

6.3.1.1 First impressions

After many months of living according to lockdown regulations and social distancing, the '*Myturn*' screening event marked the first opportunity for the youths to attend a function in real-time and to view their shortfilms on a film screen rather than on their digital device screens. When being invited to share their feelings of excitement, and particularly their first impressions about the previous evening's event, the participants responded as follows:

Participant #5:

I feel entertained. It was valuable seeing my film for the first time.

Participant #11:

Time to sort out the bugs!

Participant #14:

Happy to see some stressed... not happy with the results... on the edge, trying to figure out how they will respond. It triggers the awareness... someone is going to watch my film!

Participant#5's feeling of being 'entertained' relates to their positive experience of receiving special attention. "(S)eeing my film for the first time" (Participant #5) relates to a process of perspective-transformation which, according to both Freire and Greene, requires "an engagement with and an objective distance from our culture" (Allsup 2003:158). I would argue that the development of such a skill is highly achievable through shortfilm-making. The "bugs" (Participant #11) that needed sorting out, refers to technical issues experienced during the making and presentation of this participant's shortfilm, an experience shared by a few others who were using similar software applications in the making and submission of their work. Here, "some" (Participant #14) refers to his fellow participants' who appeared to be stressed when realising that there was a difference between how they figured the appearance of their shortfilms, and the actual screening thereof in real time. He felt that their shortfilm presentations could have been better. He further revealed that he was anxious (literally sitting on the edge of his chair) to figure out how "they" (the audience) would respond to his shortfilm. The word, "triggers", (Participant #14) implies action – this experience raised a (critical) awareness beyond the self. He realised that his shortfilm creation would be seen through someone else's eyes and from someone else's perspective. This, once again, relates to a process of perspective transformation, and thus a form of transpersonal development.

6.3.1.2 Time of year

The leitmotif, 'Time of year' was derived from the participants' first impressions of their screening event: The participants spontaneously shared their first impressions about the previous evening's event:

Participant #14 considered that “(T)he shortfilm festival should be independent from celebrations such as Youth Day or Heritage month”, to which participant #5 replied, suggesting ... “mid-year or early spring.”

Participant #14 continued, arguing that “(A) film festival... uh...meant to be independent, otherwise defeats its purpose... uhm ...May. The majority of international movies are premiered in May.”

Drawing on the work of Kember, McKay, Sinclair and Wong (2008), one can argue that all three of these responses expressed more than a basic understanding, and that they could well be related to real-life applications. The participants’ abilities to reflect on an understanding that there are more suitable time-slots for a shortfilm festival indicated personal insight. This level of critical reflection implied a change in their perspectives, a change that would not have been expected during the early stages of the project during which the participants were gradually developing their reflective skills over a period of ten months.

6.3.1.3 Shortfilm length/Running time

Participant #11 remarked that “Less is more!” He refers to the potential of the shortfilm-mode to communicate a powerful message in less time than it would do in a full-length film.

Participant #5 said, “8 – 10 min is perfect” (although only two out of the seventeen screened films were longer than 7 min, while the others fall into the between two minutes and four minutes and twenty seconds category).

Participant #14 said, “We need to be more creative in keeping the audience’s minds alive” The example he gave of a ‘more creative’ film was a shortfilm of his one of his fellow participants, *I am chosen* (2020). He explained that, in his opinion, the film could have more text/dialogue, although he thought that the “changing scenes worked well”, as demonstrated in Fig. 6.2 below.



Figure 6.3: Participant #14's response shows his newly acquired competence to deal appropriately, critically, and social-responsibly, but also in a self-determined and creative way with films

When participants were invited to share their opinions about the element of time in terms of both the structure and the presentation of the shortfilms, participant #11 used the expression, "*less is more*", in a very apt way. This phrase embodies the notion that the essence of good design is simplicity with a clear outcome – a valuable practical consideration, since it was the first attempt at shortfilm-making for all but two of the participants. No further questions were asked by the researcher to verify whether participant #11 knew the origin of the phrase, since I thought this was outside the scope and relevance of the discussion. Yet, the phrase should be documented as a spontaneous response by the participant, showing a sense of both understanding and practical application.

Participant #5's response should be described as a reaction rather than a critical reflection, since she did not focus on the running times of the shortfilms presented at the '*Myturn*' screening event. Instead, her comment should be seen as a running time suggestion for similar future events. It could then be regarded as a development from habitual (re)action to reflective action.

Participant #14's response, in a certain way, corresponded with words or phrases such as "exploring, developing, evaluating, and making choices" as used by Johnson and Morris (2010:78) to clarify the concept and process of critical thinking. These descriptors further recall Osler and Starkey's checklist for effective citizenship projects, a list comprising 'cooperative practice'; 'independent reasoning; critical awareness'; and 'intercultural communication' (Osler & Starkey, 1999:213). In turn, these terms could be said to relate to Blell and Lütge's explanation of film literacy as "the capability to deal appropriately, critically, and social-responsibly, but also in a self-determined and creative way with films within a foreign-language and intercultural context" (Blell & Lütge, 2004:404).

6.3.1.4 Music/Sound

In the '*Myturn*'-project, music and sound formed an inextricable part of the participants' shortfilm-presentations. The participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about the possibility to make shortfilms without an 'artificial' soundtrack. Since they possessed the ability to play a variety of music instruments, participants #7 and #9 indicated that they preferred to use their own "*original music*" (Fig. 6.3). Likewise, participant #5 pointed out that one could "*create your own music*", and participant #11 made a suggestion to "*record natural sounds*".



Figure 6.4: From an experiential viewpoint, the participants came to realise that creating and recording own music rather than using soundtracks, downloaded from the internet, added value to their shortfilm-productions and created opportunities to apply their artistic talents.

Participant #14 suggested that “one should stay away from voice-overs... and dialogue” when exploring shortfilm-making for the first time. Yet, during a year of lockdown and social distancing, sending voice-recordings, and adding audible elements to visual footage that was taken before the lockdown, was one of the practical challenges the participants had to deal with creatively. Please refer to Fig. 6.4.

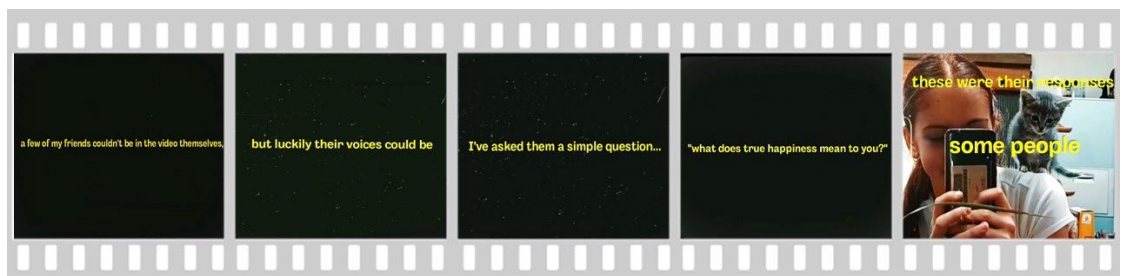


Figure 6.5: “a few of my friends couldn’t be in the video themselves... but luckily their voices could be... I’ve asked them a simple question... ‘What does true happiness mean to you?’... these were their responses...”

Valuable and insightful comments were offered by the participants from an experiential viewpoint/position. Without really ‘knowing’, the fact that knowledge (music and sound-effects in this sense) is created and not simply discovered; and that understanding was developed by doing, these responses would not have been possible. How to work across and beyond conventional ways of knowing (downloading existing ‘known’ music, for example), and how to develop a new language, or new forms of language, with the aim to communicate new insights, proved problematic. ‘How to’ in this sense relates to aspects such as aesthetic perception which, according to Dewey (2005:48), involves “doing and undergoing” in an encounter. This new ‘knowing’ furthermore showed a close connection to film as art form, comprising “narrative structure, use of camera, colour, performance, sound, music, editing and composition” (Oxford University, 2020). The aim was to establish how the shortfilm-making space might contribute to the exploration of the participants’ selves by providing limitless possibilities. The artistic practice/creative production of shortfilm was positioned as physical experience within a continuous reflection cycle (Kolb & Fry, 1975; Schön, 1983), whose aim was to bring about positive change in people’s lives. For the participants, this process involved moving from physical self-centred understandings of reality to experiential creations of authentic reality (shortfilm-productions), involving an expanded awareness of other possibilities which nurtured their potential transpersonal growth.

6.3.1.5 The use of text/sub-titles

In close connection to ‘running time’ and ‘adding music/sound effects’, the next point of interest was ‘text and sub-titles’. Please refer to Figure 6.5



Figure 6.6: Photo-stills of scenes in which the use of text and subtitles were examined and discussed by the participants.

Participant #11 remarked, *“Timing is important ... use a specific style and do not over-use it.”*

Participant #5 reminded the group to *“Be sensitive to people wearing glasses.”*

Participant #14 said, *“Whatever you use... (should) trigger the audience’s imagination.”*

The youths had to remind themselves of the purpose behind their participation in the 'Myturn'-project. This was to establish how active engagement in an experiential shortfilm-making initiative could advance their competencies to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of their semi-rural communities, as well as in the wider society. As has been described, sharing their shortfilms with an audience (virtual and in real-life/real-time), involved multimodal communication strategies. Therefore, it was essential for the participants to carefully consider how they were going to capture their audience's attention, and what they would want the audience to learn from viewing their shortfilm creations (Please refer to Post-project Question #7). The first comment by participant #11 addressed the aspect of where/when and how text/sub-titles should be incorporated into the shortfilm. This could be determined by personal, cultural, or functional considerations which would enhance viewer perception. Participant #5 showed sensitivity to other people's wellbeing. Her response implied an expanded sense of self, achieved through opening up her perceptive modes to assess and figure out new possibilities of both intra- and interaction with others and the world around her (Dängeli, 2019:22). Being involved in an expanded awareness of other possibilities nurtured potential transpersonal growth. As such, film literacy-competencies became part of the altered or expanded selves of both the participants and their audiences.

6.3.1.6 Key insights

During our brief meeting, two more participants shared their immediate feelings through Whatsapp messages. They described their key take aways as follows:

Participant #1 said, *"Seeing the others' work was the best of it and I could also learn from their shortfilms..."*

Participant #5 reflected, *"... the awareness that my film is still a work in progress."*

Likewise, participant #8 remarked, *"The most special moment of the shortfilm evening was to meet my other sisters that did videos, and I learned a lot from them."*

Participant #14 replied, *"Seeing each other and listening to their videos and the balloon film... that is the greatest moment I ever had... really getting to know each other."*

Participant #17 was deeply touched by the amount of time and effort that involved in the making of the shortfilms: *"To see the time and work that went into each film and to obtain a deeper look into their passions, was something very unique"*.

A few very important insights were established by the participants' expressions above. Their responses evidenced their willingness and desire to learn further skills through active engagement (Gramsci, 1971; Brosio, 1994:49) in this shortfilm-making experience and served as "shared praxis", with the purpose of transforming traditional education practices (Fishman & McLaren, 2005:425-426). They showed a willingness "to learn with others" (Johnson & Morris, 2010:90), to adapt to change through "pedagogies of engagement" (Costandius, 2012:20), and to embrace new perspectives from people other than themselves, as well as a willingness to acquire awareness, together with a willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production, and new ways of knowing (Barone & Eisner, 2012:13). This included the development and sharpening of their senses, in particular through a process of learning how to 'see' (Kinsman, 1452-1519; Berger, 1972:7. The shortfilm-productions had to be experienced through "processes that imply feelings, conscience, and inspiration" (Booth, 1985:85) to develop into a new form of knowledge (Kant, 1952). This expanded awareness denotes the acquisition of the kind of knowledge which can alter or transform our frames of reference (Mezirow, 1991), including even the meaning structures we create in our lives (Frankl, 2008; Pappas, 2016). Lowenfeld (1975:5) and Bateson (1987:143) believed that understandings, which are constructed through the senses, "can become knowledge in the mind." (For the participants, this form of knowledge was revealed through critical self-reflection on "a genuine experience... induced by the work which does not leave him who has it unchanged" (Gadamer, 1975/2003:100). Only when acting upon the newly created meaning structures by "living in the new perspective" (Baumgartner, 2001:17) can empowering conditions of awareness be accessed and employed in meaningful and productive ways.

6.4 Post-project reflections

The '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making experience aimed to create an affinity space (Gee, 2005) within which the participants were encouraged to consciously adopt an objective distance from their familiar and taken-for-granted cultural ways of thinking, doing, and being, and, from this perspective, to figure out their world by reflecting upon material reality. As multimodal forms of communication, participants' shortfilm-productions added value to the complexity of online learning, expanding the possible ways to acquire information and make meaning of concepts (Kress, 2003/2010; Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013). The following section presents comprehensive feedback on the reflections of three participants upon their active engagement in the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project, which spanned a ten-month period from February to November 2020.

These semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires were communicated by email and voice-notes, after the final screening event. The findings were intended to establish how the affordances of film literacy competencies might have actuated the collective development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth on the part of the post-school participants. The questions posed to participants, and their reflections in response to the questions are followed by discussions of the findings from this post-project process.

Post-project reflections were guided by the following semi-structured, open-ended questions:

1. Which part of the short film making project did you enjoy most? Why?
2. What was most challenging? Why?
3. Which new skills do you consider yourself to have acquired?
4. Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?
5. What did you learn about yourself during the project?
6. Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?
7. When you show your short film to an audience of your choice or talk about your film to people, what, specifically, would you want them to learn from you and your film?
8. What do you think about the potential of making such short films for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures?
9. What do you see as a further development of this short film-project?
10. How can this short film project help young people to learn about civic responsibility to the workspace and the culture in which they hope to succeed?

Table 6.1: A results-table, showing how participant responses on PPQ 1 – 10 were aligned to the criteria of the table, introduced in Chapter Three.

Participant	Post-project reflections: Nov. 2020									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
#7	RA	CR	BU	RA	RA	RA	RA	BU/ RA	BU/ RA	RA
#9	CR	CR	CR	RA	CR	CR	CR	CR	RA	RA
#14	RA	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	RA	CR	CR	CR/FD

A review of the main research question, *How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth?* is required here to bring the post-project questions into perspective.

QUESTION 1: Which part of the shortfilm-making project did you enjoy most? Why?

Participant #7: *Going out with friends and having so much fun while shooting videos. Why? Because we could share ideas and see what works and doesn't as a team.*

Participant #9: *Ok, so the part that I enjoyed the most about making my short film was planning on what I was going to film every day and since I had uhm... I couldn't... since I had limits of what I could film... uhm... in other words I couldn't outside into town or go for a walk-in nature to film something because my video takes place during lockdown, I had to think very creative about what I was going to film at home. So, the favourite part for me was having to think about what was I going to film at home... uhm... that was... interesting or... artistic or creative enough to put into my video. And I just enjoyed that the most because I have never done something like that before. Usually, when I make a short film, I would go to someplace else rather than my home. But since I was stuck at home, uhm... it was nice to... to think creative... uhm... in that setting.*

Participant #14: *Ah, the first question...well I enjoyed the... the first-first part where we gather pictures, and we have roles to play, and it shows nice teamwork that interest in ... in ... in ... in us as the ... um ... delegates was great. Ah people were happy because you could see the collaboration of people as much as we're working on our own videos but you .. you still... you still had time to work together, chill together, give each other ideas and all that, and that was fa-fantastic too.*

6.4.1 Potentially rewarding and meaningful learning experiences

The 'Shortfilm project', referred to all three phases across the ten months from March to November 2020. 'Enjoyment' here, is understood as a positive emotion relating to interaction, "*Going out with friends*"; social and emotional learning, "*share ideas and see what works and doesn't as a team*" (Participant #7). Likewise, participant #14 described his enjoyment by using expressions such as "*gather pictures*"; "*nice teamwork*"; "*collaboration*"; "*work together, chill together*"; and "*give each other ideas*". Here, active engagement strengthened his beliefs in the potential of the project to be personally rewarding and meaningful. This was confirmed by his use of "*fantastic*". In contrast, participant #9 found joy in "*planning on what I was going to film every day*"

since she was constrained by lockdown conditions: *"I couldn't outside into town or go for a walk-in nature ...during lockdown"* and *"stuck at home"*. Positive thoughts relate to satisfaction and often serve as motivation to tackle challenges: Despite these limitations, participant #9 *"had to think very creative about what I (she) was going to film at home"* because she had *"never done something like that before."* Although this was challenging, participant #9 described her *"having to think about what was interesting or... artistic or creative enough"*, as her *"favourite part"* and *"nice to... to think creative"*.

These reflections resonate with recent research on pandemic pedagogies (Sahlberg, 2020, Hollweck & Doucet, 2020:297), whose findings reveal that "relationships, social and emotional learning, student and teacher well-being, authentic assessments, direct instructions and creative play are now more important than ever". From such research we can conclude that communication is integral to our distinctive human interaction in both real-life as well as virtual worlds. Although Vygotsky's (1978) viewpoints about learning and the acquisition of many specialised abilities have lasted far beyond his time, the extent to which social interaction becomes imperative to human livelihood will remain questionable within a constantly changing society. Pertaining to the non-formal context of this inquiry, attention is drawn to the seldom focused upon "dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities" and the variety of different ways they "engage with and shape their lives in their environments" (Moletsane, 2012:3). The post-school youths distinguish themselves as a group from formalised learning and professional groups as they evolved as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) through an organic process of informal social interaction. Through such cultural interaction people have an opportunity to explore both their differences and their similarities, a process which carries the potential for them to learn in beneficial ways from each other. Face-to-face meetings in workshop-format (when practically possible) were semi-structured, permitting space for participants' input and spontaneous interactions. Open dialogue between inside and outside perspectives related to a researcher-awareness of essential interaction between participants' perspectives within the *'Myturn'*-community of practice and through external perspectives where possible and relevant.

Akkerman and Bakker (2011) advise researchers to move beyond the limitations of a systemic or macro perspective by also espousing a situated or micro perspective. This enables identification of which individual is experiencing a particular discontinuity and within which activities or interactions. Only then are researchers in a position to study

how “sociocultural differences play out in, and are being shaped by, knowledge processes, personal and professional relations, and meditations, but also in feelings of belonging and identities” (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:153). Intercultural interaction, in my opinion does not verify any form of understanding. Neither does exposure to the media (Potter, 1998) and interaction with people of diverse cultural contexts imply or guarantee intercultural learning (Amir, 1969; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Learning happens all the time, often unconsciously, particularly in times of knowledge work in which life-long learning is integral to an interconnected economy (Bennett, 2012; Deardorff, 2020). Shortfilm enables researchers to study social behaviour, society, patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and the culture that surrounds everyday life in real-life contexts. Accordingly, through critical analysis of data derived from footage, and captured during fieldwork, researchers can develop a body of knowledge about social order and social change. Translated to this inquiry, and taking into account this cluster of influencing factors, meant that, if the participants (post-school youths and researcher) looked deeply beyond generalisations and abstractions into agency, power, and identity, they could draw out meaning from their interactions within the ‘Myturn’ Project. It is however important to realise that meaning making is part of an ongoing learning process.

QUESTION 2: What was most challenging? Why?

Participant #7: *Most challenging was receiving voice notes from people with the correct volume. Since I didn't record them myself and they had to do it on their own, some voice recordings were faded or too soft and I had to ask them to retry by holding the mic closer to their mouths.*

Participant #9: *Ok, so number two my answer is sort of going to be the same as my answer in the first question but basically what was the most challenging, I think was the fact that I... uhm... there was limits on where I could go to, to film; to shoot videos; because, like I said, I had to do everything at home. So, the most challenging part for me was also having to think what I was going to film; because at some point I almost ran out of ideas. So, I had to think out of the box, you know.*

Participant #14: *Ah the next question... the most challenging part I think for me personally is that uhm I, I was in a different space mentally so uhm time ah to, to, to first the excitement I had for the project ... uhm ... didn't reflect so well I, I hoped to more I hoped to, to have done a lot of... uhm ... films but just the*

way I i-imagined ...uhm ... the first time I heard about the, the, the Myturn film project.

6.4.2 Independent reasoning

Participant reflections in response to the **second post-project question** revealed their abilities to identify the nature of particular challenges, to critically self-reflect and evaluate issues relating to these challenges, and to consider possible solutions. Although she enjoyed the company of her friends in her shortfilm-making process, participant #7 experienced technical challenges regarding the 'voice-'notes' sent to her by the 'actors' (her friends) who featured in her shortfilm. Feelings of enjoyment experienced by participant #9 motivated her positive response to challenges when she "almost ran out of ideas" and "had to think out of the box". Her reflection relates to an to participant #14 describing earlier an awkward emotional challenge. He felt that he was "in a different space mentally" because the "excitement" he previously had for the shortfilm-making project "didn't reflect so well" and that he initially "hoped" to have achieved a lot more.

QUESTION 3: Which new skills have you acquired?

Participant #7: Voice-overs

Participant #9: *The new skills that I have acquired I think was just having to work with a new app because I used, I think it was... uhm... Filmora Go that I used but I had to use another app. So, uh... the new skills was, if this counts as a new skill... it was having to live with a new app called Inshot.*

Participant #14: *The third question: Well, I'm excited about filmmaking; detail is one of the skills I've, I've, I've... uhm... acquired which is now (useful? unclear). When I shoot a normal picture, I pay attention to detail, I pay attention to whether its portrait or landscape and you, you know I, I have an eye. Now I just, I don't just use my camera because I'm just using a bit (? unclear) I'm investing time and investing what I learnt in, in the film project and put myself into that I want (to?) teach and I want this, and I want that. So, that's the thing, the interest I've learnt, the, the skill to, you know, watch the detail and be sure what I'm doing and, and actually enjoy what I'm doing.*

6.4.3 Reflective practice

Pertaining to this inquiry, reflective practice (reflexivity) was used as a strategy to enable the participants' (be)coming to terms with different understandings of reality as experiential creations. Participant #7's response, which referred to "Voice-overs", provided no explanation or elaboration, and therefore occupied a boundary position between a habitual action and a basic understanding. "(H)aving to work" and "having to live with a new app" are considered by participant #9 as skills. A more critical reflective approach was found in participant #14's expression. This shows his ability to relate the acquisition of useful skills, such as developing an eye for detail, to his interest in, excitement about, and enjoyment of, film-making. A further development is mentioned here – implementation of newly acquired knowledge. He refers to "investing time" and wanting to teach what he had learned from the film project. Participants' technical knowledge, evident from this inquiry, however, needed to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Only then could this inquiry become significant in its effort to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels" (Kaplan, 2005).

The ability to reflect on an understanding indicates personal insight and/or practical application. Critical reflection, though, implies a change in perspective, something that would be expected from participants towards the end of a project since reflective skills develop over time. In this complex, situated study the participants were granted a high degree of voice in, and ownership of, their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154), while also keeping the neutrality of the entire inquiry initiative in mind. Therefore, a dynamic focus on asking what their reflections did or might bring into being rather than what it meant, had to be maintained. According to Fenwick (2001), meaningful personal and social transformation may develop from critical reflection to benefit ethical and moral education (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Art-based inquiry provided a space for critical reflection on action, thus connecting with the concept of praxis (Freire, 1972:40; Giroux, 2003:38). Shortfilm-making, in the context of my inquiry, served as a 'productive situation' (Spronk, 2016:69) through which the inquiry was performed and thought processes developed, thus facilitating critical reflection. Becoming film literate required the deep learning of a set of specific practices, and ethical/social characteristics and responsibilities including commitment, respect, collaboration, social responsibility, democratic rights, and personal dignity, among others. I argue that critical self-awareness, through the encouragement of critical reflection on how people learn, as well as how they act upon and 'live' their new perspectives, could lead to profound personal transformation. For the post-school

youths who participated in this study, 'transformation' indicated more than imagining "alternative scenarios" (Allsup, 2003:17; Greene, 2001). It referred to the potential of entering new figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998; Nash et al., 2014) through critical self-reflection on how their newly acquired perspectives might be applied to their distinctive situations. Designing/creating spaces for reflective practice offers the possibility of transformative learning, which is not limited to individual experiences, but also crosses the boundaries of patterns and relationships within a collective environment, and/or on a systemic level.

QUESTION 4: Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?

Participant #7: *Yes, because I love videos with soft music in the background and a louder voice speaking.*

Participant #9: *Yes, I do definitely regard these skills as useful in any way because... I think it's nice to... uhm... become familiar with... the various types of apps... video editing apps... uhm... because most of the time the one app has a feature that the other app does not have. So, yeah, I would say that the skills... these skills were useful to me.*

Participant #14: *For sure, these skills are super useful ...ah because I am in the entertainment industry with... uhm the, the Covid-19 kicking in; now I can't go to a theatre to watch a show and all that for, for safety reasons and... ah. So now, what the market, or what is growing, is the, the, the, the film industry you know, because now people going allow(?) it to live channels, live shows, facebook lives, inter-Instagram lives and all that. People are, are just out there to, to put their content out and everything, So, uhm it is super useful because it came on a right time... uhm because this is a skill much needed now.*

6.4.4 Communication through the language of film

The experience of acquiring new skills was indeed meaningful and personally rewarding. One could even sense varying levels in learning how to critically reflect on an experience. As such, reflective practice as a strategy became part of the participants' newly developing skills-toolbox. A wide range of valuable understandings were established and expressed in text, as well as in visual and audio-format through participants' shortfilm productions.

Coupled with reviewing their prior knowledge before participating in the project participants had the opportunity to develop the ability to reason, draw comparisons, and make decisions based on active engagement and on considering different options. An awareness of one's own preferences and style: *"soft music in the background and a louder voice speaking"* (Participant #7). An awareness of becoming *"familiar with"* different options; knowing that *"one app has a feature that the other app does not have"* (Participant #9), helps in the making of informed decisions. Participant #14 mentioned the impact of Covid-19 on his own creative practice: *"... now I can't go to a theatre to watch a show"*. In the process he became aware of a developing process outside of the cinema: *"what is growing is the, the, the, the film industry"* because people *"put their content out"* on *"live channels, live shows, facebook lives, inter-Instagram"*. In his comment, *"(I)t came on a right time... uhm because this is a skill much needed now"*, 'skill' would be understood as the ability to *"put their content out"*, in other words, to communicate through the language of film, in other words, film literacy. These expressions can be said to show an expanded sense of self, indicating development towards transpersonal growth (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125)

QUESTION 5: What did you learn about yourself during the project?

Participant #7: *That I absolutely love having fun/sharing joy with other people and that I love capturing those moments*

Participant #9: *Ok, so what I learn about myself was that I'm more capable of doing things than I thought I was capable of. Uhm... I learnt that... uhm... not only can I be creative when it comes to things like painting or sketching or writing poems, or whatever, but as well as...uhm making a shortfilm[as well].*

Participant #14: *I learnt... uhm a, a lot of things about myself or a few; no not a few uhm because you, you... uhm... uhm, I'm a different person when it comes to the entertainment industry: I'm not a...as... uhm... a person that normally people know because I take it so seriously; and you-you know, I, I, as a director and as a leader I, I conduct myself in a certain way (way?) because of... uhm... the results or the picture in my head that I want to achieve, that it was great to, to, to have find myself.. uhm... you-you know, taking a step back and allowing other people to, to express themselves and to, as, as, as they please and learn along the way... uh..., because... uhm... yeah. Because it, it also, I didn't want to come across as a person because I mean in the business,*

now I want to... uhm... be on top of everybody; I-I was just happy to take a step back and learn like everybody else.

6.4.5 The space between existing knowledge and figured worlds

Human learning and development have become a topic as diverse and contested as is the wealth of research approaches in education. The desire to function successfully and to act responsibly in the adult world involves more than simply learning information about this world. An ongoing balance should be maintained between existing knowledge, belonging to an old world and the creation of new learning spaces/opportunities where the youth have opportunities to learn how to employ artificial intelligence in the development of their original ideas, and how to revitalise, improve, and advance the world. Based on the idea of purposeful and meaningful human existence, Viktor Frankl describes this 'in-between' space as a "gap between what one is and what one should become" (1992:109–110), while the idea of "liminal space as used by Herman (2015) and Dängeli (2019), and how this relates to the space between an individual's critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth is described in Section 6.2 above Dängeli (2019:78) sees this as an in-between space which is "open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing", thus relating to a transitional process which holds the potential for transformation. Herman uses the term as parallel, meaning a construct for transpersonal space/time (Herman, 2015:111), a meeting between the "world that is known to be" and the "world that is becoming" (Herman, 2015:112). All these definitions relate to an understanding of figured worlds (Holland, et al., 1998) as together constituting an imagined world. According to Herman, the best way to communicate this 'being in-between worlds', is through the arts. The fact that she does not specify the language required to communicate this experience reveals a knowledge gap on her part – one that my inquiry into the language (use) involved in film literacy, sought to address. What is important to my study is the development of a critical awareness of the interconnected nature /relationship between the figured image as seen by the "mind's eye" (Cartier-Bresson, 1997:76) in the "reconfigured sense of subjectivity" (Le Grange, 2018:7) and what can be seen on the camera screen, after the cinematographer has pressed the control to capture an image. There is still another "figured worlds"-understanding – the one within the minds of the viewers who have interpreted the short-films according to their unique frames of reference. To complete the full circle of the creative process, the space of the boutique cinema provided the final stage setting where all the figured worlds as mentioned, can be said to connect.

For knowledge-production to become a transformative experience, an engagement with modes of learning outside confined, formal school learning spaces is required to “inform, educate and shape identities in non-formal contexts” (Giroux, 2011; Head & Jaap, 2016:12). Reference to ‘the project’ in Question 5 relates to the ‘*Myturn*’ shortfilm-making project, which was devised as a non-formal space, encouraging the development of learning experiences, and employing multimodal forms of communication. The significance and value of such a project depended upon and involved active participant engagement, to strengthen participants’ beliefs that this learning opportunity had the potential to be both personally rewarding and meaningful.

Participant #7 became aware of a passion for “*having fun/sharing joy with other people*” and “*capturing those moments*” (Participant #7). Yet, capturing an experience would remain of personal value only. The expanding of one’s sense of self and the opening of one’s awareness of, and on the part of, other people, that experience could gain in value. In this context this meant for both the participant in her role as director/cinematographer and her audience(s). The shortfilm-making project enhanced participant #9’s self-confidence in her learning-abilities. She learnt that she was “*more capable of doing things*” than she thought she was. Her creativity stretched beyond “*painting or sketching or writing poems*”, to include the creating and making of shortfilms. Participant #14 learnt that he had to step back from his leadership position and accept a willingness to learn with and from other people. Having acquired new insights about their individual selves, it was crucial to ask participants how this knowledge would be applied to others in within a wider context.

QUESTION 6: Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?

Participant #7: *Yes, because now I can grow and make more videos where I capture people’s happiness.*

Participant #9: *I do definitely regard this knowledge of me useful in any way because now I know I have enough courage and confidence to go on and make other short films because I know I’m capable of doing it.*

Participant #14: *Yeah, of-of course; especially in these circumstances now with the pandemic in play... uhm... it is, it is useful to, for one to, to sit down and, and, and reflect and through, through the project itself you, you know you,*

it was important to sit and look and, and, and, and appreciate the skills and the knowledge you have uhm acquired as a person and apply that to your life.

6.4.6 Practical application

Participants' reflections clearly demonstrate their personal insight, their ability to reflect, and to provide an example of practical application: *"Yes, because", "I do definitely... because", and "Yeah, of-of course; especially". "(N)ow I can grow and make more videos"; "... now I know I have enough courage and confidence to go on"; and "appreciate the skills and the knowledge you have".* All of these responses indicate a sense of self-confidence in their own learning abilities. Expressions such as *"where I capture people's happiness"; "make other short films", and "in these circumstances now with the pandemic in play... apply that to your life"*, demonstrate the youths' ability to relate to existing conditions, and to something not yet existing (Herman, 2015:112), by providing clear goals.

Practical application relates to active engagement in a process of continuous learning. Relating this process to this inquiry, holistic education was concerned with the development, not only of the participants' technical skills, but with their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, and spiritual potentials. Therefore, it was essential at this point, to expand our awareness (Dängeli, 2019) from the self to connecting with other human beings, namely our 'cinema audience'. These collective realities would not be left unchanged, but a process of transformation would occur through looking into the lives of the participants through their shortfilm productions. In turn, the individual personal realities of the participants would be influenced by the collective realities in different ways. In the course of this process it was necessary to review the nature of an open or expanded awareness (Dängeli & Geldenhuys, 2018:38–39) in the transpersonal sense. According to Dängeli (2019:129), a "flexible, fluid, and dynamic state" may enact changes in our frames of reference about how we are experiencing ourselves at a given moment. This state may further enable the development of new insights, and, in addition, potentially enable an "increased sense of interconnectedness and compassion" (Dängeli, 2019:129). As such, the development of film literacy-competencies became part of the altered or expanded selves of both the participants and their audiences. Their entering the expanded state of open awareness demonstrated, through the sharing of their shortfilm productions with their audiences, how both the participants and audience members had the opportunity to experience a shared reality. Within this shared reality of potential, according to Walsh and Vaughan (1980:21), transformations of thoughts, personality,

and existence (being) may occur; in other words, “a whole new self can be realised” (Dängeli, 2019:137). In their roles as change agents, the post-school youths had the opportunity to share with, and impart certain aspects of their realities to, the audience. Since they accepted ownership of their shortfilm-productions, they also had the power to decide what exactly they wanted the audience to see and to know about their everyday realities.

QUESTION 7: When you show your shortfilm to an audience of your choice or talk about your film to people, what would you want them to learn from you?

Participant #7: *That I appreciate what gives joy to others, including myself.*

Participant #9: *Alright, if I show my short film to anybody (everybody?)... uhm... the one thing that I want them to learn from me is that... uhm... I tried to look at everything, I think, through ...how do you say... rose-tinted glasses. Uhm... I tried to take something and make it as beautiful as possible... uhm... so, what I want them to see through my video is, despite the fact that we are all in lockdown, and people were feeling negative and (...) and hopeless because, I mean, it must be so boring being at home; you can't really do anything. That does not stop you from being creative... I mean, that can still... I mean that still means you could still do something, you know, artistic and enjoy yourself. Even if it's just in your room, I mean, still. So, what I want people to learn from me is that... I try to make the best from every situation. Uhm... and like I said, I try to look at everything in the most aesthetically pleasing way as possible.*

Participant #14: *Well, looking at my film, I would do... uhm the main thing is I would want people to learn that ...uhm, you, you know, if ,if you ca... if ,if, if you knock and the door is not open (in), that's not the end of the world. You just have to create another door. So, you, you one ca., someone, someone can close the door for you, but that does not mean you cannot create your own doors and, and make it happen for you. So that's what I wanna ... want people to learn. I want people to understand that e ..will... life itself is a game and before you are defeated, or you, before you lose, you should know your game plan – that's my favourite code, created by yours truly. So, yeah.*

6.4.7 Experiential learning – an ongoing process

'Learn', as in the latter part of post-project question 7, "What would you want them to learn from you?", relates to 'hear', 'discover', 'realise', 'understand', 'become skilled at', and 'gain knowledge of'. The 'shortfilm' or 'film', referred to involved participants' presentations at the final screening event, bound together by a comprehensive theme, "*Sharing happiness and positive vibes*". This theme was derived from the approach taken by the participants towards the project, and expressed through their shortfilms. An attempt to communicate positive attitudes was emphasised by participants' expressions of "*joy*", "*rose-tinted glasses*", and "*enjoy yourself*". The negative side was not ignored though: "...*despite the fact that we are all in lockdown and people were feeling negative*", and (...) "... *and hopeless*"... "*it must be so boring being at home*". However, participants went further, towards providing alternatives: "...*as beautiful as possible*"; "...*try to make the best from every situation*"; "...*create another door*", and "*you should know your game plan*". For the participants, acceptance of ownership of their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) granted them comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds. Apart from finding "different ways of seeing" (Nash, Kent & Reid, 2014:33), thinking, feeling and acting (Jarvis, 2006:14), the process in-becoming film literate empowered the participants with courage to express their thoughts and ideas. Through a 'figured worlds'-lens (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998), the participants might have found new ways to express their inner experiences in the hope of connecting their subjective 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998) to the "objective realm in which communication is (was) possible" (Holyoak, 2019:13).

This special connection, and resultant transformation, is an ongoing process, involving both the participants and their audiences, extending even to after the conclusion of the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making project. The shortfilms would thus become the participants' 'multimodal' voices, with the opportunity created for them to reach wider audiences. Their acceptance of ownership of their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) in turn granted the participants comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples' figured worlds. Through "constantly unfolding and interlinked processes" (Dängeli, 2019:22) within the participants' awareness, they developed multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of their selves (Buckler, 2013; Rowe & Braud, 2013). In other words, they experienced transpersonal growth.

QUESTION 8: What do you think about the potential of making such short films for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures?

'Potential' in this sense might be directed not only towards unearthing their capabilities, but also toward creativity, spiritual enlightenment, pursuit of knowledge, and the desire to contribute to society.

Participant #7: *Creating these videos can open many doors for young people. It might start small, but it can lead to you becoming a professional filmmaker!*

Participant #9: *I think everybody, every young person has the ...uhm... has the ability or the potential to make such a short film to learn more about themselves, and their environment, and so on. uhm... I think especially... uhm... because when I look at all the people who were there on the night of the movies ...uhm... there... I mean... there were people ...we were ... even though we're all young, we all came from different backgrounds and that's what makes it so interesting... is that we can all create these movies from a different viewpoint.*

Participant #14: *Uhm.. I have big dreams about the project because you, you know short films are m ...playing a big role in young people to ...today because... uhm... not everyone is, is interested or loves text; so, vi...visuals help a lot; people learn quicker in visual; they know, because what you see, stays in your mind and whenever you have to put it down it's not hard to put it on paper because it, it was a visual so it...it's great for young people, it's a great opportunity; it's a new interest which one can take as a hobby but, and, and then it ends up as a career. So, for sure it is great, great, great thing and I am having a whole lot of... uhm... dreams and plans for, for young people.*

6.4.8 Dialogue between internal and external perspectives

For the participants, finding alternative ways of thinking, being, and doing, opened a dialogue between their inside and their outside perspectives. This led to an essential interaction between participants' perspectives within the 'Myturn'-community of practice and external perspectives, where possible and relevant. An example of such an interaction is described below. These external perspectives belong to a young post-school adult, involved in youth art development, who attended the first introductory 'Myturn' meeting. The post-school youth, nick-named AM to conceal her real identity,

expressed her thoughts about envisioning possibilities for young people, based on own experiences:

In our community, matric is regarded as the end of the study phase for most people. The youth need to become aware of alternative possibilities... (they) need to learn how to live their lives among bad living conditions that are part of their everyday lives. There was a time in my life that drama and writing helped me to cope with depressing circumstances... yes, involvement in artistic activities has the potential to change ways of thinking and ways of living.

Likewise, participant #7 explained that young people's engagement in activities like creating videos on a small scale might open the doors to a professional career in filmmaking. Referring to the young people who attended their 'movie night', participant #9 was of the view that all young people have the potential to make a shortfilm. She highlights her conviction that making shortfilms helps people to learn more about their own selves and their environment. She finds that, coming from different backgrounds makes it interesting, since the 'movies' would be created from different viewpoints. His involvement in community projects made participant #14 aware of the benefits shortfilm-making might have for young people. This was particularly the case in a fast-paced world where visuals and audio are preferred by most young people to using text. He shares participant #9's viewpoint about a hobby which can become a career. Acquiring abilities such as these involves an ongoing learning process, one which empowers individuals to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential across multiple areas. Acquiring this attitude allows individuals to participate more fully in their communities and in a wider twenty-first century global society.

QUESTION 9: What do you see as a further development of this shortfilm-project?

'Seeing' possibilities for future developments relates to the ability to imagine a better world, to reason, draw comparisons and to make decisions based on active engagement and on the considering of different options.

Participant #7: *There might be more films in the future which lead to more evenings where people can have the opportunity to go and enjoy them!*

Participant #9: *Alright, as for the development, I can definitely see this project you know... uhm... becoming more of a big... becoming a bigger deal, like for*

example, ...uhm... more people can ...uhm... make these short films and uhm... into them... into this... project, and for example, I mean ...this year it was only one evening... but I ...two evenings... but I mean... everything was showed in... was shown in one evening. So, I think... uhm... this could definitely ...uhm... be expanded and become like ...uhm...a two night..., three night...,or even a week type of event where every day of the week there are different short films showing.

Participant #14: *Well, the further development of course will be having the short film 'Myturn' project... uhm... taking a step into schools... uhm... with various programmes and teaching young... uhm... learners the skill while they're still at school, and while they're still in a stage where they're finding themselves and trying to pass school and get to varsity and all that, but having the skill in the bag will also enhance the chances of them not settling for anything less than what they love, what they're interested in, what they wanna do, and having such a skill and such a program behind you – it's amazing.*

6.4.9 Further development beyond the present situation

The idea to expand the 'Myturn' shortfilm-project to involving more films, more evenings, more people, and to establish it as a recurring event, was supported by the responses of both participant #7 and #9. Participant #14, however, envisioned the shortfilm-project to take a step back from a post school project to one in schools to benefit younger learners. He expressed a strong conviction that exploring new knowledge production, using a variety of approaches to address these learners' needs, would prepare them for life after school. This was precisely the purpose of the 'Myturn' initiative – to prepare the youth for the world of work, besides preparing them to contribute in creative and responsible ways to their communities and to society.

The intention of the 'Myturn' shortfilm project was not aimed at transforming the participants into filmmakers, cinematographers, or directors, per se. In an immediate sense, their acquiring of these skills simply provided them with potential career opportunities to take up should they wish to do so, or opportunities present themselves. Rather, the focus of their experiential transformative learning process was on bringing about positive change to their own and other people's lives and the wider world through a continuous and cyclical process of reflecting on action, as well as acting on reflection. Rather, their newly acquired insights should be implemented in the participants' personal and social situations/contexts to reflect on concerning issues which might

keep them from living a productive, meaningful life. As people transform into knowledge societies, advanced comprehension and literacy skills have become essential to their abilities to communicate effectively in a rapidly increasingly multimodal world. Transformation of the self requires maintaining an ongoing balance between existing knowledge, belonging to an old world, and the creation of new learning spaces/opportunities. Pertaining to this inquiry, this transformation process involves designing opportunities for youth to be able to learn how to employ innovative technologies in the development of their original ideas, to revitalise, improve and advance the world.

The complexity of finding a suitable form of literacy to accurately express thoughts and emotions was clearly notable in the production of evidence (data).

Ongoing plans emerging from the project related to those participants who intended to address further development beyond the final screening event. Involvement in the Arts for some participants was an important steppingstone for further development because it implied an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate in any future project and/or learning process. Their intra-action and willingness to engage in further development of these understandings opened new pathways for potential transpersonal growth. Becoming involved in the 'Myturn' shortfilm-making project as 'equal partners' (Henning, 2004/2011:24) emphasised the importance of effective collaboration between the researcher and participants. Their individually created shortfilms served as visual objects which enabled them to "acquire objective and scientific knowledge of their own context and objectively see what things need to change in the objectified reality" (Freire, 2000).

QUESTION 10: How can this shortfilm project help young people to learn about civic responsibility to the workspace and to the culture in which they hope to succeed?

Participant #7 responded by saying:

Seeing through the eyes of different people (ages, cultures and genders) can educate others on what they experience and what they label as important in society.

Participant #9:

Ok, so before I think the last question is... I think people can learn this by looking at other peoples' videos, like I said ...uhm... we were all ... on the evening that

we ... that the films were showcased, we were all, I mean, all of us who entered shortfilms, we came... we come ...sorry... from different backgrounds ...and... different cultures even. So, I think we can learn about... we can take something from everybody's video and learn something from it in terms of civic responsibility, and the workspace, and so on.

Participant #14:

Well, like-like I said previously into, the only way to help, is to take the program out of the RAD office, out of the RA- of the Myturn film ah graduates to the young people out there. To the schools where young people are, the schools where-be it (?) high schools and be there and impart the skills to-to the next person because that will help to-to-to uhm penetrating into their minds and for them to have possibilities to learn about themselves and their communities and their surroundings while doing something they're interested in and they enjoy, because I believe it's easier to learn and it's easier to progress when what, when whatever you are doing is you are enjoying it, you are loving it; progress is easier that way. So, yeah, thank you very much Wendy. I hope this helps, I really-really do and yeah, and happy New Year. I hope you're great. Uhm my side, uh there's a possibility I might not get into varsity this year, uh-uhm because of the financial problems but I'm still pushing and trying by all means to get uhm even if it's corresponding, uhm course uhm and do it uhm not liking the fact that I am not studying anything at the moment. It's really-really-really not sitting well with me, so uhm, yeah. Thanks!

6.4.10 Civic responsibility to the workspace and culture: A reality without boundaries

It should be noted that the 'Myturn' shortfilm project per se, could not guarantee that transformation or change would take place in the context of its non-formal educational setting (Walker, 2008b:156). By devising the space of contact, and providing the conditions, our intention was to educate a group of young people in ways that might enable their transpersonal human development. The aspect of civic involvement was addressed by granting the participants a high degree of voice and ownership as both directors and cinematographers of own shortfilms. Reference to 'voice' does not necessarily indicate spoken voice; it points to an opportunity for participants to communicate their discoveries in a particular multimodal form of perception (New

London Group, 1996; 2009; Kress, 2009), to create a message for a purpose and for an audience.

“Seeing through the eyes of others”: (Participant #7) refers to literally seeing the world as others see it. Nussbaum (1997/2011) defines this ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another person, as “narrative imagination” which also involves morality and emotion. In other words, it involves different forms of consciousness. Acquiring knowledge is not the same as morality (Gardner, 1999:180-181; Arendt, 1998[1958]; 2006:192[1954]) but if we want to reflect on the past and imagine a better future, we have to include both the moral and emotional dimensions of learning (Illeris, 2003b:171; Costandius, 2012). *“(E)ducate others”* (Participant #7), recalls the development of two further competencies proposed by Nussbaum to cultivate humanity. *“(C)ritical self-examination and critical thinking about one’s own culture and traditions”* (Nussbaum, 1997:245) benefits the participants as both filmmakers and as audience of one another’s shortfilms, as well as their external public audience(s). Likewise, participant #9 acknowledged the fact that the youth, coming as they did from different cultural backgrounds, could learn something about civic responsibility, and the workspace of the project by watching and taking something(s) from their peers’ shortfilms. It is important to remind ourselves again that the ‘something’ relates to developing potential beyond the mere content of participants’ shortfilms. It involves affective, cognitive and sensory dimensions (Anderson, 1998/2011; Lattuada, 2010; Ollagnier-Beldame, 2020), based on a reality without boundaries (Lattuada, 2010:9).

Seeing “oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern” (Nussbaum, 1997:245) is relevant to the young participants in this inquiry in terms of their becoming responsible creators of film-material. In our complex global context, acquiring these competencies may potentially benefit our development as global citizens. For the youth, what is required for them to acquire a deep understanding of intercultural differences globally, is an engagement with people in their local contexts who hold different constructs of meaning (Kymlicka, 2003). However, in a real-world context stereotyping and othering – viewing the world in terms of categories and ascribing fixed identities to other people who one sees as different from oneself, should be avoided. *“(D)ifferent backgrounds”* and *“different cultures”* (Participant #9) relates to Holland’s and co-authors’ understanding of ‘figured worlds’, as “socially produced, culturally constituted activities” (Holland et al., 1998:40-41), where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understandings (identities). Their understanding of ‘figured worlds’, namely, “socially produced, culturally constituted activities” (Holland et al., 1998:40-41), where people

come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understandings (identities), underpins this inquiry.

Participant #14 suggested that he would extend the shortfilm-making program further, out of its current *'Myturn'* Initiative-context, as well as out of the Rural Art Development-context and into the high school environment. He believes that the desired progress for the youth would occur more easily when they are able to participate in a form of learning which enables them to engage with their particular interests, and which they would enjoy. He elaborated on this idea by referring to his own situation which, at that particular moment of his engagement in the *'Myturn'* project, had been one of serious concern to him. Greene (1995:50), was of the view that it is crucial that "...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation". Dewey (1934) and Freire (1970) echo her in their assertion that students' visual experiences serve to take them "out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123), and, through intuitive and creative practice, to help them 'think on their feet' and improvise ways to navigate through uncertainty, chaos, and complexity (Finlay 2008:3-4; Rossi, 2017). This new perception entails a distinctive 'transpersonal', educational approach, on which relates to multi-dimensional perspectives on reality beyond the boundaries of the self to promote individual, and in turn, societal transformation (Buckler, 2013; Rowe & Braud, 2013).

6.6 Summary

This Chapter Six navigated the evidence created during the final phase of the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making project. Its focus was sub-question three, the corresponding inquiry objective, and relevant post-project reflections. The chapter's aim was to establish how the participants' newly gained critical self-awareness might have enabled their further transpersonal development. In this process a number of realities within which the project operated were conversed. First was looking at possible ways to work across and beyond conventional ways of knowing, and how to develop a new language, or forms of language, whose purpose would be to communicate new insights, was found to be problematic. However, the participants' active engagement within the creative space provided by the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making initiative was found to have enabled them to become critically self-aware of the strengths and resources available to them in their semi-rural communities and of creative ways to employ these to face and transform the complexities of everyday life. Based on this, participants' individually created short-films should be understood as "non-prescriptive" (Wolfe, 2017:248)

productions of their authentic realities-in-becoming. Another reality was our realisation that active engagement with film literacy competencies required the deep learning and development in them of a set of specific characteristics or sensibilities, which included commitment, respect, collaboration and social responsibility. For the participants, this process occurred through moving from physical self-centred understandings of reality to experiential creations of authentic reality (shortfilm-productions). This involved an expanded awareness of other possibilities, which could nurture their potential transpersonal growth. Thus, for these post-school participants, the process of their acquisition of film literacy-competencies became integrally part of their altered or expanded selves and the selves of their audiences.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION OF THE ILLUSION

“In truth, a blank sheet
Declares by the void
That there is nothing as beautiful
As that which does not exist.”

An excerpt from *La Feuille Blanche* by Paul Valéry (1943:42)

7.1 Introduction

How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth? The truth is that this question has no final, clear-cut answer. Therefore, I find myself once again engaged with a blank page. I am left with the hope of a space having been created for myself and others thinking differently about questions relating to research in education, together with the possibility of the reimagining of the relevance of the findings to the lives that the young adult participants are likely to live after their research encounter. In turn, beyond the apparent emptiness of the blank page lives an entanglement of ideas, conceptual practices, happenings, and reflections – collectively described as my inquiry-based research in education. Due to continuously changing communication modes and learning approaches which are the result of ongoing technological innovation, a holistic understanding of film literacy and its potentialities remains an evolving construct.

Building on specialisation from my Master’s degree, awarded by Stellenbosch University in 2015, and on its components, I explored the potential of film literacy as a boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007:178) through an inquiry-based research project at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology from 2017 to 2023. This inquiry aimed to explore the use of film literacy in the context of non-formal South African education. This was done through the intra-active participation of a sampled group of young adults in a shortfilm-making project which was geared at productive change both within the participants themselves, and within a specific post-school community of practice. The participants’ active engagement involved a continuum of learning (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:52) in the course of which it was intended that they would develop new understandings about critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth, and would ultimately excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political

spheres of their communities and in wider society. My engaging in contemporary educational research in a post-digital world, where knowledge and competencies informing this inquiry are constantly changing, created in me a researcher-awareness that established methodologies lack the flexibility, openness, and unfolding connections required to maintain ongoing usefulness and relevance. This awareness implies an essential focus on the acceptance of an open-methodology for inquiring about the world. This would require different dimensions of human communication, transcending language barriers through multimodal media and a developmental stage of capacity building that points past post-modern cultural perspectives, and past formal educational modes of thinking. The strengths of spaciousness and in-between boundary positions provided by the spider's thread metaphor (Holyoak, 2019) served as a useful methodological tool to progressively create a flexible structure to support the gradually unfolding design of my inquiry-based research. I worked with the assumption that inquiry still requires "knowing, thinking, measuring, theorising, and observing" (Barad, 2007:90; Perold-Bull & Costandius, 2019:46), each action is considered as an essential component of the other, and intra-connected to the larger picture of continual learning, as shown in Figure 7.1.



Figure 7.1: Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991/2009; Rowe & Netzer, 2012; Romm, 2015) framed the participants' shortfilm-projects as physical experiences in a continuous reflection cycle.

Interconnectedness, multiperspective, and understanding are the three key principles on which my researcher-actions and thinking are based. The sub-headings, *enhanced learning opportunities*, *the desire to understand*, *reflective action*, and *ethical considerations* were derived from the notion of "lifeworthy" learning (Perkins, 2014). In this chapter I firstly communicate a summary of the key findings in relation to the research aims and questions. This is followed by a discussion of the value and contribution of the findings to contemporary research in education. Thereafter, I review the limitations of the study and propose possible directions for future research.

7.2 Finding 1: Enhanced learning opportunities: pre-project key findings

This doctoral research in education was concerned with how the developmental outcomes of the research could positively affect the lives of the post-school participants in the study. This inquiry unfolded across the three phases of the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making initiative. It firstly explored the participants' collective understandings relating to their pre-project knowledge of film literacy in an era of continuous technological advancement. Secondly, it established in what specific ways, and to what extent, active engagement in shortfilm-making have contributed to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths. Thirdly, it revealed new insights about how the participants' critical self-awareness, gained through their active engagement in a shortfilm-making initiative, have contributed to their ability to develop transpersonally. Reflective activities in experiential learning settings were developed to review and critically evaluate participants' own ideas and behaviours. The researcher's transformative praxis (Maseko, 2018; Luitel & Dahal, 2020) included creating evidence rather than collecting it. The researcher's theory of increased learning led to the following core leitmotifs:

- Different forms of active engagement/involvement
- A desire to contribute to society, supported by critical citizenship;
- Both figured worlds and arts-based theories inform the creative realm;
- The pursuit of knowledge relates to transformative learning theories;
- Spiritual enlightenment is bolstered by perspectives of transpersonal theory.

Across the next sections these "leitmotifs", or metaphorical strings of words that involve praxis beyond ordinary words (Holyoak, 2019:13), are related to specific participant reflections to illustrate the researchers' argument. The following findings and implications originated from the developmental and pre-production phases of the shortfilm-making project. It is important to note that many of these leitmotifs, findings, and related themes are interconnected, and therefore, often share characteristics relating to value judgements and acquired competencies.

The first findings transpired as a result of participant-engagement in a pre-project inquiry – a reflective activity comprising seven questions (Chapter Three, section 3.4). The attendees began by discussing their post-school experiences. Thereafter, they presented an awareness and appraisal of their emotions and views about what they believed would be valuable in terms of the talents they have listed as part of the discussion. This was followed by a discussion about how and why they were interested in the '*Myturn*' shortfilm-making initiative. Next, students were invited to express their observations regarding their expectations and develop judgements about how to react

to the various obstacles identified. Lastly, participants were urged to think about and offer a message for the youths in their communities, one which would be conveyed through their shortfilm-projects. They were also invited to imagine how they would use their experiential learnings in future circumstances after the project was done. Eight themes were derived from the participants' reflections.

7.2.1 Theme 1: Post-school experiences, revealing different forms of active engagement

The concept or activity of 'involvement' indicates several aspects: active participation, risking one's attention and time to do something, interacting, collaborating with something or someone – often unfamiliar -, and having expectations that the experience would be both meaningful and personally rewarding. Different forms of involvement transpired through the participants' responses to the pre-project inquiry about *'what they have been doing since they finished high school'*: **personal involvement in studies and study-related achievements**: *"I am a 24-year-old fashion designing graduate"* (P #6), *"I started my first year in BA Visual Communication Design"* (P #15); *"I was studying and working part time since I left school"* (P #11); **involvement in the arts**: *"I created my own Public Arts Festival"* (P #14), *"I am a Female Artist and Photographer"* (P #15); **leading to community involvement**: *"The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama"* (P #10), *"for the community and local artists"* (P #14); **involvement in family matters**: *"I now help my parents in their pastry shop"* (P #11); and *"I started working weekends to help my family and earn extra money for myself"* (P #5). Participant reflections also revealed their **unfortunate involvement in hardships**, such as interrupted study plans and financial trouble: *"I couldn't finish since I had financial trouble"* (P #5) and *"I was to start my second year in 2018 but unfortunately I couldn't go back to college due to financial reasons"* (P #15). The term 'community involvement' has two meanings in this context. Aside from its physical context, it alludes to the 'Myturn'-community of practice, inhabited and further developed by the post-school youths who engaged in this inquiry. These young adults were drawn together by their enthusiasm for the arts and intense interest in shortfilm-making. Becoming actively engaged, involved navigating challenges in non-formal post-school education, such as attempting to "create possibilities for participation and collaboration across a diversity of sites" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:132).

7.2.2 Theme 2: A venture into an unknown life beyond school

It would be thought that young adults belonging to Generation Z and Generation Alpha, one would assume that growing up in a screen-orientated world they would have

acquired abilities to teach themselves about any topic of personal interest online (Driscoll, 2020:4). One would also assume that having online access to everything would create in young adults a basic understanding of the interconnected nature of the human condition. However, success and personal needs have different meanings for twenty-first century-students to those e in the past, as the participants' reflections on the question, *Which skills, that you consider useful, have you acquired since leaving school?* have shown. The question is relevant because it revealed valuable insights into the strengths of the participants' selves/characters. The 'figured worlds' with which they engage in the 21st century have become more numerous and complex (Perkins, 2014). Their responses raised an awareness of a need, different from the need to attain success and achievement, and a continuous learning-opportunity within the communities where they live. For some, their becoming part of youth-art development projects fulfilled, among others, the following personal needs:

“... to look beyond matric as the end of the study phase for most people” (P #1); “to become aware of alternative possibilities” (P #3); an opportunity to bring about change in their communities by making “people aware of the hidden talents of the youth” (P #10); “to learn how to live their lives among bad living conditions that are part of their everyday lives” (P #12); “support from their parents, teachers, and communities”(P #13); “a dream to follow” (P #14); to share issues that caused unhappiness in one’s life without “being scared that you will be judged by the ones you thought you trusted...” (P #15); and to have “someone to express their pride in his achievements” (P #16).

For a learning-experience to be transformative in nature, it was crucial that it relate to both the participants' existing real-life conditions and to something they were trying to bring into being, something that would go beyond their immediate situation (Greene, 1995:50). The reader is thus informed about the nature of the participants' "existing conditions...and present situation" (Greene, 1995:50) as contexts within which their visual experiences would transpire during the second and third phases of the shortfilm-project. Moreover, it was a given that each individual brought their own personal beliefs, cultural values, assumptions, traditions, knowledge, skills, desires, and expectations into this potential learning space. These were significant frames of reference which had to be respected and taken into account in terms of the acceptance or rejection of what constituted 'new' knowledge constructed through participants' active engagement in the shortfilm-making project. Participant #5 described her insights into her own **willingness to venture into the unknown**: *“I’ve learned that I can thrive in conditions*

I am not familiar with”, and to adapt to the unknown: “I’ve learned that I can survive on my own... and that I can be very independent.” Participant #6 wrote of her attempt to transform her present situation by **skilling up** her “*graphic designs & logo/business cards making and perfecting*” her designs. Similarly, participant #11 wrote that “*working after school*” **enabled him** to “*have learnt many of people skills and communication skills*”. Early **traces of critical self-awareness** are evident in Participant #14’s response: “*I started challenging myself to see what more I have in me*”.

Participant #15’s personal story/reflection on her attitude to the skills she considered to be valuable and useful shows, among other, **emotions**: “*Even though sometimes I felt so tired when I went to the Art class, tired from the whole school day*”; **personal qualities**: “*I’m humbled to say*”; **gratitude**: “*I attended the Art class because without it I wouldn’t be where I am right now*”; **situations**: “*I did my first year in 2017, the busiest year in my journey of ‘receiving’ education, but the most eye opening one too*”; **intercultural relations**: “*I got to interact with different kinds of people*”; **dealing with frustrations**: “*understanding the frustrations with going to college*”; **learning of multimodal communication skills**: “*I had to write reasons as to why I took a photograph in a certain way, what it means, what the smallest detail meant. I had to keep a visual diary (like in High school) to document my thought process, to completely share why I design the way I design*”; **being true to and ‘knowing’ herself**: “*I realised that I can fully be myself that I shouldn’t have to cut off certain things that I learnt in high school to look like the mature student or ‘Miss Know it all’*”. It was mainly about **knowing yourself**; **and perseverance**: “*I eventually passed my modules*”. (Chapter Four, Section 4.2.2.1)

7.2.3 Theme 3: Expressions of interest, expectation, aspiration, and fear

Participant responses to the pre-project inquiry of ‘*how and why they initially became interested in, and ‘what they expect from the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making initiative*’, are closely related. Participant expectations indicated a further development of their initial interest and established the foundation upon which the shortfilm-making project was designed, and the shortfilm-productions were realised for the purpose of this inquiry. The following responses recall Barrett’s (2015:3) reference to the great power of film as a technologically evolving art form: “*What interested me in shortfilm-making was that I can learn a new artform*” and “*I was eager to learn how to work with editing programmes and how to use the talent I have in more than one way*” (P #5). For participant #5, this implied actively engaging with something beyond her familiar experiences with arts and music. Expectations were expressed by one participant: “*to understand a bit more about the film industry and hopefully develop my skills and*

further understand my capabilities” (P #11). This emphasised his self-confidence in his own learning abilities, while also referring to the practical applications of new skills to a future life and career. Similarly, participant #14: “... *expect to grow and be empowered...and hope to learn more about the technical aspects of making a film*”, indicating a strong confidence in both his learning abilities and the potential benefits the workshop might have for him. Additionally, attention is drawn to the interconnectedness and cultural specificity of emotions and attitudes, such as interest, curiosity, expectation, aspiration, and fear – essential aspects relating to human motivation, learning, and development – across the three project-phases, findings, leitmotifs/themes, and developmental outcomes of this inquiry. The participants’ involvement in the Arts served as a significant stepping-stone towards their further development, with implications for their emotional engagement and willingness to participate. However, it was essential to establish how the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making project could acquire a legitimate position in research contexts beyond simply being ‘artistic’. In addition, the project needed to be understood from more than one viewpoint and by different communities.

The response of participant #6 concerning her interest in the shortfilm-project, “*A friend first told us and made us do this*”, creates the idea that there was a certain amount of resistance and a challenge involved in her decision to participate. However, “... *but I’m planning a show where I want film part of my runway*”, and “*I want to make my own films*”, imply a change in perspective and a sense of self-confidence in her own learning abilities, together with a belief in the potential of the shortfilm-making project, and developing an aspiration when she realised the benefits such an engagement might have. The performing arts and film industry also have a downside: “*I have been scared to take the challenge of being in screen or behind cameras, because of the competition the film industry have*” (P #14) and “*I am a bit afraid that people might not like the concept or idea behind the film*” (P #15). Fortunately, both participants’ perceptions changed for the better: “*when the opportunity came I told myself it’s time to stretch myself and explore my skills*” (P #14) and “*To find a different method of expressing myself. I am so excited!*” (P #15). Both these expressions relate to a space out of and beyond the familiar and taken-for-granted, as well as a space between existing conditions, and something beyond the individual participants’ immediate and present situations. All three participants managed to overcome challenges through their willingness to adapt to change – in this instance to a positive situation, which could be considered as a transformative experience.

7.2.4 Theme 4: Challenges with technology

Opportunities for post-school youth to excel in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of society correspond with the potential power of technology to change the world at scale, with the ability to work from home in order to study online, and to meet virtually.

As our collective world becomes smaller through increasing interconnectedness, the 'figured worlds' (Holland, et al., 1998) with which we individually engage, become one complex entanglement (Barad, 2007). Despite these possible opportunities, the digital divide remains an unsolved reality for many young South African citizens. As this inquiry was situated in a semi-rural geographical area known for its continual poor connectivity, asking the participants prior to the project, *'What are your challenges with using digital devices and the internet?'* was essential to ensuring their active participation. Given that effective communication in an increasingly multimodal world necessitates both advanced comprehension and (multimodal) literacy skills, acquiring film literacy competencies have gained essential relevance. If the *'Myturn'* project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants' non-formal education contexts, their technical knowledge, as revealed in this inquiry needed to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Thus, feedback from the participants regarding the extent of their technical knowledge varied from their holding a position between a habitual response to those reporting having a basic understanding: *'I only received regular data'* (P #15) and *'I only had Whatsapp'* (P #15); and *'I don't have challenges'* (P #5) the latter being a habitual response, without a participant giving further applications some thought, to *'maybe a few challenges'*, (P #11) a response which indicates a basic understanding. However, the very brief response, *'Not having wifi makes it difficult'* (P #6) communicates reflective thought, while *'am not very tech savvy... but am keen to learn'* (P #11), shows some degree of critical reflection. Participants #14 and #15 have both provided a reason. This was indicated by *"because I..."*, although participant #15's response does not provide a logical response to the question. A more detailed reflection, however, involving a 'curiosity about knowing digitals' and *"knowing about sites or software to use"*, reveals a sense of self-confidence in his learning abilities, and a sense of curiosity, together with a practical application of resources. Participant #17's response, *"Anything can happen...you can lose your hard work...always a stress factor involved"*, describes her feelings when using digital devices and the internet, rather than the challenges she has with technology as such. These reflections formed part of the pre-project phase of the shortfilm-making project. As the participants proceeded towards the production and post production phases, the challenges increased.

7.2.5 Theme 5: A desire to contribute to society, supported by critical citizenship

The young adult participants shared more than skills, knowledge, and abilities. Members of this *'Myturn'*-community of practice shared the gratification of seeing growth and development in the lives of other young citizens as well as in their own lives. This realisation on their part found relevance in the question: *What message would you like to leave with your shortfilm to the youth of your community?* The participants' respective messages were characterised by the desire to take their fellow youths out of their familiar and taken-for-granted situations and mind-sets: *"to appreciate the culture that they have even if the past was hard"* (P #5), and *"you must not expect to be given but work to get it yourself"* (P #14). Their messages showed a desire to boost other young citizens' self-confidence in their own learning abilities, with an emphasis on values and beliefs, specific strategies, and hard work to make potential learning experiences personally rewarding and meaningful: *"learn from your mistakes"*; *"work hard at their dream"*; *"strive for what they believe in"* (P #5), and *"Fighting hard to achieve your dreams and vision"* (P #14). Also, *"Everything is possible if you just believe"* (P #6); *"be yourself"* (P #11), and *"you won't make it unless you then get strategies to play along"* (P #14). In this last-mentioned message, participant #14 suggested that certain strategies are required to *"make it"*. Participant #17's message of hope: *"that no matter your past and circumstances, you can build a future"*, while being positive and encouraging, did not clarify what is required to overcome past circumstances. Because the participants grew up in the same communities as the youth to which their messages were directed, they could relate to the existing conditions within their communities, and share hope for something good to materialise beyond their present situation. Apart from her poetical expression of a desire, *"The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama but it stays hidden and dies out too. And I want to change that"* (P #10), much was revealed about the influence of the geographical location of her community on available creative resources and livelihood. Her responses further revealed that she had become critically aware of these factors, and had a desire to change the situation. In her message, participant #15 addressed the youths' abilities *"to comment or talk about the issues that everybody is most likely aware of but refuse to publicly speak/comment on"*. Post-school participants' community involvement included expanding experiences of a personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment – interactions of this kind are not likely to leave those involved unchanged.

7.2.6 Theme 6: Both figured worlds and arts-based theories inform the creative realm

'Aspirations' encompass ambitions, beliefs, goals, hopes, desires, and wishes. For the participating post-school youths to envision future aspirations was no easy task, since this involved entering figured worlds which, at that time, had not been part of their frames of reference or their physical realities. Therefore, in response to '*Where would you like to see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity in terms of further development?*', in her mind's eye, participant #5 visualised herself having acquired the ability to understand all the aspects involved in making a film: "*I see myself appreciating movies, films, and short films more and the time and creativity directors, writers and actors put into the film*". "*Creating my own films as desired*" (P #6), and "*creating my own work... or being in a media house learning more*" (P #14), reflected the self-confidence of these two youths in their own learning abilities. Participant #11 expressed a desire for acquiring the ability to evaluate potentially rewarding and meaningful learning opportunities by considering the possibility to connect the upcoming shortfilm-making experience to his existing creative work, namely, "*tattooing and arts*". Although participant #15 did not respond directly to the question, her extended expression (Chapter Five, Section 5.3.5) indicated that she visualised herself doing a film course, and at the time of the '*Myturn*'-project had been busy with her application-process. The reflections of four out of the six participants who responded to this particular question showed them exploring something beyond the present moment. What was lacking at that moment were practical strategies for ways to achieve those goals. While having clear objectives is useful and appropriate in certain educational situations, during this conceptualising/envisioning phase of the shortfilm-making project, it was more important to "open the aperture" (Dängeli, 2019:9) of their critical self-awareness and, through experiential learning, expand their frames of reference. Apart from creating the 'real-time' footage, the actual making of the shortfilms required a set of specific skills and values, including commitment, respect, collaboration, social responsibility, democratic rights, and personal dignity, among others. In this sense, experiential learning, film literacy education, and research ethics share a common set of ethical considerations (Johnson & Morris, 2010:77).

7.2.7 Theme 7: The pursuit of knowledge relates to transformative learning theories

An engagement in shortfilm-making can be a powerful experience, as well as an exciting and educational one. But the posing of the question, '*In what specific ways, and to what extent, can the post-school participants said to be transformed by these experiences?*' showed that becoming transformed is a fragile, developmental, and

ongoing learning process. If the *'Myturn'* project were to be of any significance as a transformative pedagogy within the participants' non-formal education contexts, their technical knowledge, as revealed in this inquiry, needed to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Hence the relevance of the experiential approach to learning, found in both the post-qualitative and developmental phenomenographic approaches.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis not only revealed the fragility and interconnected nature of the world, but also disrupted the entire learning ecosystem. Simultaneously, we saw how these consequences provided valuable learning opportunities for students, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers as they all faced the global crisis. The uncertain nature of the deeply impacted academic world as a result of the global COVID-19 health crisis further problematised research in a developing country such as South Africa. Although initially not the intention (this inquiry having started before the pandemic), I consider this dissertation, which documented research done during the pandemic, to have become a valuable document. It is one which reports on the complexity of performing an inquiry, engaging in the evidence (data) generation process, and maintaining ongoing participant involvement during a year of lockdown and social distancing. Even now, in the pandemic's aftermath, people are forced to expose themselves to the media and to engage in interpretations of the messages they encounter. The development of an ability to access, critically evaluate, create, and share information effectively across cultural and language barriers has become essential.

Both the projects, the intended 'Youth Day' and 'Heritage Day' events offered presentation opportunities for the participants' shortfilm productions. The 'Watch Party' concept was new to most of the participants, and something unanticipated, and one that we never expected to turn out in the way it did. Despite the efforts to stay connected as a research-team, not all of the participants had access to internet all of the time. Therefore, an online Youth Day 2020 'Watch Party', which was intended to act as a substitute for the actual screening event, did not reach or include all the participants simultaneously. Participants' reflective expressions, although few in number, were crucial, considering continued productivity, and with the social and physical distancing required during lockdown.

7.2.8 Theme 8: Spiritual enlightenment is bolstered by perspectives of transpersonal theory

Within the context of this inquiry, 'spiritual enlightenment' implies a renewed awareness of the world, particularly an awareness of the participants' immediate surroundings, and

their co-creative participation in life (Ferrer, 2011:2–3) to overcome obstacles standing in the way of a productive, meaningful existence. As the participants proceeded towards the second (production) and third (post production) phases, together with the physical, social, and emotional challenges during the lockdown period in 2020, they encountered unexpected opportunities within unanticipated home-based and virtual learning spaces. A shared interest in the Arts acted as a valuable and significant thread to strengthen the connection between the young adults during the months of social distancing. Findings derived from participant-feedback indicated that film literacy involves more than digital and media literacy, and this could be achieved by extending the experiences and particular kinds of awareness of one personal mind to other minds as part of a larger environment. When viewing these humble attempts to make a difference from a ‘bigger picture-perspective’, the ‘*Myturn*’ initiative might appear small and insignificant against the background of extensive global literacy studies (Lutz, IASA, 2020). However, the relevance of these attempts resides, not in the shortfilm-projects or participating post-school youths per se. It resides in the potential impact of what these youths do, and their potential to address the expanding global literacy skills-demands experienced by the working-age population (Lutz, 2020). Becoming critically aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their own situations had the potential to lead to the development of an extended sense of self for the participants. Advancing measures of human capital, as this inquiry sought to do, might empower the post-school youths involved in the project to improve their lives and those of other youths, sharing not only their experiences and reflections on their immediate environment, but a critical awareness of the wider everyday life-world. Participants’ expressions revealed deep-seated issues of uncertainty, fear and anxiety beyond the initial challenges of not having access to the internet, or experiencing bad connectivity. From these reflections one could gather that aspects, such as the ability to produce work that was both creative and inspirational, having control over the process, knowing, and being able to trust the social process, were of considerable importance to the participants. Experiencing these challenges, and finding ways to overcome fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, were part of the experiential learning space provided by the ‘*Myturn*’-project. In this sense, these reflective progress-questions were found extremely valuable to the process of documenting participant development over time. Additionally, asking reflective questions was a means to encourage metacognitive development.

The following section zooms in on the participant feedback received after the online Youth Day and Heritage Day ‘Watch Party’ events during 2020. Nine semi-structured, open-ended questions provided a basic structure for participants’ expressions (Chapter Five, Section 5.5). These were received in both text and voice messages. These

reflective questions were intended to follow the participants' progress during the lockdown period and to keep them creatively connected. The findings provide evidence of unexpected opportunities within an unanticipated learning space. Participants define "spiritual enlightenment" as a renewed awareness of the world, in particular of their immediate surroundings, and including taking action to overcome existing obstacles to achieve a productive, meaningful existence.

7.3 Finding 2: The desire to understand

For the participants, 'taking action' related to acquiring twenty-first century competencies that would give them insight into the dynamics of critical-creative thinking, human relations, critical citizenship, multimodal/film literacy, and civic responsibility, among others. The following section 7.3.1, including sub-sections 7.3.1.1 to 7.3.1.9, present the findings related to the participants' Watch Party-experiences which served as a multimodal holistic creative intervention, providing practical pathways to address unforeseen situations and support the participants during a difficult time. By engaging the hearts and minds of the participating young adults aimed to provide them with opportunities to take an objective distance from the physical realities they encountered at that time. By doing so, might enable them to find alternative ways to come to grips with pressing issues. The artistic, creative nature of shortfilm-making aimed to allow the participants to communicate their thoughts and feelings that they otherwise would find awkward to express in words. Additionally, by sharing their shortfilm-messages virtually could provide hope and transformative experiences to other young people in their communities who found themselves in similar pressing situations.

7.3.1 Unexpected opportunities within unanticipated learning spaces: Watch Party

Each of the following sections addresses a post-Watch Party-question, followed by participant responses which showed their reflections on the question, and a discussion of the findings. I consider these findings to have provided valuable insights into the specific ways in which, and the extent to which, the participants' knowledge and understanding of their previous learning experiences might have enabled them to develop an understanding of the potential of unexpected opportunities which emerged within unanticipated learning spaces: firstly, I discuss the Watch Party-event, and secondly, the reflections on the opportunities provided for coaching.

7.3.1.1 Theme 1: Traces of critical self-awareness

In contrast to pre-project responses, which indicated more habitual and basic levels of understanding, the Watch Party-reflections revealed evidence of a critical awareness of self and others. Responding to: ***Which part of 'Watch Party' did you enjoy most? Why?***, participant reflections recalled the development of those competencies required to “cultivate humanity” (Nussbaum, 1997:245). Critical self-examination was evident in participant expressions, such as: “*I was inspired by*”; “*I enjoyed*”; “*I appreciated*”; “*I think*”; “*got me thinking*”; “*humbled by*”; “*I loved... being able to watch*”; “*I was always sad*”, to mention some of the responses. The development of a critical way of thinking about “one’s own culture and traditions” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), was revealed by expressions such as: “*different individuals, from musicians, dancers to photographers*”; “*the clothes made by C*”; “*great performances of Khoisan Dance*”; and “*beautiful diverse society*”. Participants’ newly developing abilities to see themselves as human beings “bound to all humans with ties of concern” (Nussbaum, 1997:245) extended beyond the idea of making/watching their shortfilm-productions purely for art’s sake.

This extended ability shows participants considering how using their film literacy competencies as components of human experience are essentially knowable and accessible (Livingstone, 2004; Glotov, 2018). Transpersonal development goes beyond meaning formation by merging emotional experience with contemplation (Kolb, 1984). So, asking “*How might film literacy competencies be applied to improve the quality of human life?*” requires “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1995b:5), “narrative imagination” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), and emotional experience (Kolb, 1994), all of which can sensitise and motivate the audience. Hence, participants’ active involvement showed thoughtful engagement, intercultural understanding, and meaningful communication in several “languages” or modalities (Greene, 1995b:57). These included fashion, poetry, drama, imagery, music, and dance, all of which have the potential to reach diverse audiences, comprising the art world, academia, and the public.

7.3.1.2 Theme 2: Anxiety about criticism and connectivity challenges

The question, ***What was the most challenging? Why?***, opened up a space in which to share issues concerning voice and power which, according to Deardorff, (2009) forms part of intercultural competence. Participants’ expressions revealed deep-seated issues of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety beyond the initial challenges occasioned by not having access to the internet or experiencing bad connectivity. Some of the most challenging obstacles participants mentioned were “*the criticism because I was scared that I didn’t do enough. That it wasn’t inspirational and creative enough*” (P #5); “*the*

network. Any internet difficulties can ruin almost everything without you having control over such” (P #14); and *“to put it all out there without any assurance of how it will go and not knowing who is watching me made me anxious”* (P #17). From these reflections one could gather that challenging aspects of the process, such as the ability to produce work that participants considered was both creative and inspirational, having control over the process, knowing, and being able to trust the social process, were of considerable importance to the participants. Experiencing these challenges, and finding ways to overcome fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, were part of the experiential learning space provided by the ‘Myturn’-project.

7.3.1.3 Theme 3: practical application and self-confidence in own learning abilities

In response to the question: ***Which new skills have you acquired?***, the responses of participants #5 and #14, although very brief, reveal more than routine or habitual responses. There is a clear reference to practical application and self-confidence in their own learning abilities. Participant #17 recognised her limitations, suggested a possible resolution, and provided feedback. These reflections were directed critically at herself and her own actions, while keeping the ways in which she thought she came across to her audience in mind. This indicates the ability on her part to take ownership of her own learning process and to grow transpersonally: *“An opportunity I would not have had on stage”*.

7.3.1.4 Theme 4: Useful skill-building through active engagement

In response to: ***Do you regard these skills as useful to you in any way?*** both participants #5 and #14 found the skills they had acquired through their active engagement in the Youth Day Watch Party-event useful, although in different ways. In contrast to participant #5, who found *“these skills as useful. It helps build my character as a person and help me see things in a different light now”*, participant #6’s answer was blunt: *“No, I didn’t”*. Participant #17 responded positively and enthusiastically: *“Yes! Now I know how to present myself on stage, seeing as I watched myself back now!”* The ability to be critically aware of one's own self, of one's actions, thoughts, and emotions, indicates personal insight and/or practical application, as well as the development of reflective skills over time. In this sense, these reflective progress-questions were found to be extremely valuable to the process of documenting participant development over time.

7.3.1.5 Theme 5: A conscious strengthening of beliefs in possible learning experiences

What did you learn about yourself during the Youth Day-project? Learning from the shortfilm-making experience was as much about the re-construction of previous experiences, as it had been about actively engaging in experiences at the time: *“I love being creative...I get more inspiration from music and movement...I am telling stories in those aspect rather than just using words”*. Reflecting on experiences, and carefully re-evaluating them, was an essential part of the participants’ personal development: *“I actually knew how to make a video. Inshot is a nice effective app”* (P #6). Their reflective practice went beyond their routinely and habitually recalling the events of the day. Turning the focus to the self, participant #14 critically reflected: *“I discovered that I have a lot to offer beyond what I think of myself or the skills I have. I learnt that it is okay not to know and fail, but it is motivating and fruitful to try again with a positive attitude and actually be in a competition with yourself to produce the best.”* The reflective process involved their conscious exploration of their own experiences and deliberate attempts to strengthen their beliefs in the potential of possible learning experiences to be personally rewarding and meaningful: *“so I know that it is okay, that is what poetry is! Emotions!”* (P #17). Additionally, the participant reflections acknowledged the benefits of using multiple modes to both create and communicate their shortfilm-messages to the youth.

7.3.1.6 Theme 6: An expanded awareness of new contexts of knowledge production

Participants’ reflections on: ***Do you regard this new knowledge of yourself as useful in any way?*** showed them considering the new knowledge about themselves to be useful, personally rewarding, and meaningful. Participants’ reflections on this question related to their acquiring an awareness and a willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production, and new ways of knowing (Barone & Eisner, 2012:13): *“to use the different sounds around me”* (P #5); *“to create more exciting and great ideas”* (P #14) and *“to accept my emotions as it presents itself”* (P #17). In contrast to these more expansive reflections, participant #6 replied briefly: *“Yes”*. The new knowledge further related to both their existing and familiar conditions and to the shortfilm-productions that the participants were trying to bring into being. This knowledge can be described as the kind of knowledge and process *“that goes beyond the present situation”* (Greene, 1995:50). Thus, to become aware of or acquire this new knowledge, the shortfilm-productions needed to be experienced by participants through *“processes that imply feelings, conscience, and inspiration”* (Booth, 1985:85) to develop into a new form of knowledge (Kant, 1952). This expanded

awareness denotes the acquisition of knowledge which can alter or transform our frames of reference (Mezirow, 1991), including the meaning structures we create in our lives (Frankl, 2008; Pappas, 2016).

7.3.1.7 Theme 7: Empowering positions within ongoing learning experiences

What did you want your 'Watch Party' audience to learn from you? During the months of April to August 2020, participants had to work from home, and apply their ideas to the making of 'prototype' shortfilm-productions. They were confronted by various challenges, including basic access to the internet, not having enough data, finding a suitable editing program to operate on their smart phones, technical issues concerning the sharing of huge files online, and practical issues of not being able to attend a screening opportunity, and the resultant misunderstandings: *"Not everyone was helping with the Watch Party as we weren't asked to do so; only thing we did was to send a video! So I don't know how to answer or react to this question"*. (P #6).

'Not having wifi makes it difficult' provides a possible reason why participant #6 could not fully participate and missed out on some of the briefings. However, in spite of these challenges, the participants were actually speaking from empowered positions, while still being part of an ongoing experiential learning process. Their responses involved nurturing aspects: *"I wanted the watch party audience to learn that is sometimes okay to take a break and work on themselves. To take care of them so they can take better care of others. To grow and never give up even if the road to their success is hard"* (P #5). *"I wanted them to know that it is possible and never lay down, because the situation is forcing you to. Find other ways to be the best in what you do"* (P #14). These responses were also related to resilience. It was only when acting upon the newly created meaning structures by "living in the new perspective" (Baumgartner, 2001:17) that empowering conditions of awareness could be accessed and employed in meaningful and productive ways. Participant #17's reflection, *"(That) I have enjoyed, respected and nurtured our beautiful planet"*, was followed by the question, *"Have you?"*, directed at her audience(s), opened up pathways for all those involved in this project to increase their "powers of acting" (Le Grange, 2018:9). With her question, the participant created an in-between space as a "gap between what one is and what one should become" (Frankl, 1992:109-110). Dängeli (2019:78) uses the term, 'liminal', to define an in-between space which is "open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing". Here, 'liminal space' relates to a transitional process, holding for the participants the potential for transformation. Therefore, their responses to this question were underpinned by critical self-reflection on "a genuine experience... induced by the work which does not leave him who has it unchanged" (Gadamer, 1975/2003:100).

7.3.1.8 Theme 8: A focus on experience and process rather than results

When asked about the **potential** of events, such as the Youth Day Watch Party, for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures, participant #6 did not respond. Participant #5 thought that *“such shortfilms help the youth see a different path because most of them feel lost because they don’t know what they want for their futures yet”*. He continued by referring to the potential value of active engagement with other people of all ages in online events such as the Youth Day Watch Party: *“So, by seeing these shortfilms they can get inspired to become directors, dancers, musicians or artists”*. Participant #14 considered *“passing such skills to my peers and other older people”* and the idea that *“it will also teach or show them that...you can create your own opportunities”*, as potentially meaningful and rewarding. Participant #17 acknowledged the fact that their shortfilm-productions and corresponding messages now had the potential to reach wider audiences: *“Now, their videos reach ‘sooo’ much further than they originally would have; people seeking talent, sitting in other provinces can log on and so much possibilities can present themselves”*. Pertaining to film literacy competencies, both the filmmakers and audience benefited. Firstly, they developed skills for “critical self-examination and critical thinking about one’s own culture and traditions” (Nussbaum, 1997:245). Secondly, the ability to “see oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern” (Nussbaum, 1997:245), was relevant to the young participants in this inquiry in terms of becoming responsible creators of film-material. Thirdly, Nussbaum’s (1997) concept of ‘narrative imagination’ denoted the ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another person, a situation which involved morality and emotion. I believe that, in terms of our complex global context, acquiring these competencies, in particular, empathy, may potentially benefit our development as valuable global citizens.

7.3.1.9 Theme 9: Enhanced understandings of distinctive figured worlds through critical self-awareness

The responses to: ***What do you think you are able to do now that you have gone through this ‘Youth Day’/ ‘Watch Party’-event?***, which included, *“I can think more outside the box”*, *“inspire our youth”* (P #5), *“being creative...and inspire others”* (P #14), and *“technology is becoming more and more parts of our lives”* (P #17), are indications of states of the mind which develop over time, while *“inspire our youth”* (P#5) and *“inspire others”* (P #14), together with *“I received pointers on how to act on video”* (P #17), indicate a sense of sharing and a kind of social/community connection. Participant #6’s reflexive answer, *“Continue my work alone!”* emphasised her

empowered attitude, and autonomy, and her ability to continue her work, the proof of which was her shortfilm.

The *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making experience aimed to create an 'affinity space' (Gee, 2005) within which the participants were encouraged to consciously adopt an objective distance from their familiar and taken-for-granted cultural ways of thinking, doing, and being, and, from this perspective, to figure out their world by reflecting upon selves, others, and their physical environment. The participants' reflective practice went beyond their routinely recalling the events of the day. It involved their conscious exploration of their own experiences, and, as has been mentioned, their deliberate attempts to strengthen their beliefs in possible learning experiences to be potentially personally rewarding and meaningful. Participants' reflections showed them considering the new knowledge about themselves to be useful, personally rewarding, and meaningful. These reflections related to acquiring an awareness and a willingness to accept not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge-production, and new ways of knowing (Barone & Eisner, 2012). New knowledge further related to both the participants' existing conditions and to the shortfilm productions that the participants were trying to bring into being; the kind of knowledge and process that transcend their familiar and taken-for-granted situations (Greene, 1995).

7.3.2 Potentially rewarding and meaningful learning experiences: Coaching

A coaching opportunity transpired as a further development in response to the keen interest and willingness of three participants to share their newly achieved shortfilm-making skills and expertise, as well as to expand their coaching competencies. Sub-question two: *In what specific ways, and to what extent, does active engagement in shortfilm-making contribute to developing critical self-awareness amongst the participating post-school youths?* provided the structural threads which intricately connect both experiential opportunities – Watch Party and coaching. The aim of the coaching opportunity was to provide a space for ongoing experiential learning, one which would be open to all the participants within the *'Myturn'* community of practice. Unfortunately, the response from participants on the whole was extremely disappointing. Possible reasons for the lack of interest could be derived from participant #14's reflections (Chapter Five, Section 5.6.1–5.6.6). *"(N)o interest in learning and developing their skills"*, despite the fact that *"(e)very arts form will be included"* in an attempt not to place any restrictions upon the youths' creativity. For skill-building opportunities to have value to someone, *"one has to be open and take in the skill."* – something which obviously did not happen. The problems participant #14 had foreseen

at that point were mainly *“the attendance of people to the workshops, because of the pandemic, and, most importantly, the type of smartphone one has will also be problematic in downloading the app.”* Within the ‘Myturn’ community of practice, participant #5 shared with fellow participants her experientially developed skills relating to the use of particular editing software, and the importing of music into a shortfilm-production. Participant #17 presented the making of her experimental shortfilm to an audience of fellow ‘Myturn’ participants in preparation for the Heritage Day Watch Party. Focusing more on the shortfilm-message, she pointed out how image, sound, and action were used to make a connection between the past and present, and the importance of nurturing worthwhile beliefs and values as a resource and inspiration to future generations.

The following section presents a brief overview of the findings and implications for the research involving four participants’ post-project reflections, and relates to sub-question three: *How, and to what extent, does the critical self-awareness the participants gain through the shortfilm-experience contribute to their ability to develop transpersonally?* This semi-structured, open-ended inquiry (Chapter Three, Section 3.4, and Chapter Six, Section 6.4) was conducted and communicated by email and voice-notes subsequent to the final screening of the participants’ shortfilms. A review of the main research question, *How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth?* is required here to bring the post-project questions and corresponding reflections into perspective. Ten further leitmotifs transpired, which are discussed below.

7.4 Finding 3: Reflective action: looking back across the ‘Myturn’-engagement

The participants’ process of reflection on their own experiences – before, during and after the shortfilm-making project – was a crucial part of this experiential learning process. The ability of the participating youths to question reality was not meant as a form of critique, implying that their distinctive situations are not acceptable as they are. Rather it was a matter of focusing attention on “what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices” rest (Foucault, 1988:154). In response to perceiving their selves and lives as works of art which are under constant construction (Markula, 2004:102), the participants’ shortfilm-productions can be said to include and combine both their creative activities and their realities. These will always remain part of a process of (re)creation when viewed by different audiences in different contexts or settings. At this point it becomes important

to ask whether the intended messages, embodied by these shortfilm productions would still make “sense in other locations” (Le Grange, 2018:11).

7.4.1 Theme 1: A micro perspective on the Myturn-project

In the question, *Which part of the shortfilm-making project did you enjoy most? Why?*, ‘enjoyment’ is understood as a positive emotion relating to **interaction**, “*Going out with friends*”; **social and emotional learning**, “*share ideas and see what works and doesn’t as a team*” (P #7). Likewise, participant #14 described his enjoyment as well as his social and emotional learning experience by using expressions such as “*gather pictures*”; “*nice teamwork*”; “*collaboration*”; “*work together, chill together*”; and “*give each other ideas*”. Here, **active engagement** strengthened his beliefs in the potential of the project to be personally rewarding and meaningful. This was confirmed by his use of “*fantastic*”. In contrast, participant #9 found joy in “*planning on what I was going to film every day*” since she was constrained by lockdown conditions: “*I couldn’t outside into town or go for a walk-in nature ...during lockdown*” and was “*stuck at home*”. Positive thoughts relate to satisfaction and often serve as **motivation to tackle challenges**: Despite these limitations, participant #9 “*had to think very creative about what I (she) was going to film at home*” because she had “*never done something like that before.*” Although this was challenging, participant #9 described “*having to think about what was interesting or... artistic or creative enough*”, as her “*favourite part*” and “*nice to... to think creative*”. These reflections provided valuable insights into the variety of different ways the participating youths engaged with and were shaping their lives in both their immediate personal, and their community, environments.

In exploring this theme, attention is drawn to the significant value of intercultural relationships, communication as integral part of distinctive human interaction in both real-life as well as in virtual worlds, social and emotional learning, feelings of belonging, and involvement in creative processes. These reflections resonate with recent research on pandemic pedagogies (Sahlberg, 2020; Hollweck & Doucet, 2020:297). However, intercultural interaction, in my opinion, does not necessarily imply or verify any form of understanding. Neither does exposure to the media (Potter, 1998), and nor does interaction with people from diverse cultural contexts imply or guarantee intercultural learning (Amir, 1969; Sveinsdóttir, 2012). Learning happens all the time, often unconsciously, particularly in times of knowledge work during which life-long learning is integral to an interconnected economy (Bennett, 2012; Deardorff, 2020). In this inquiry, the participants, including the researcher, by moving beyond the limitations of a systemic or macro perspective (Akkerman & Bakker (2011), and espousing a situated or micro perspective, could draw out meaning from their interactions within the ‘Myturn’

project. It is however important to keep in mind that meaning-making is part of an ongoing, rather than a discrete, learning process.

7.4.2 Independent reasoning

Participant reflections in response to the question, *What was most challenging? Why?*, revealed their abilities to **identify the nature of particular challenges**, to **critically self-reflect** and **evaluate issues** relating to these challenges, and to **consider possible solutions**. Although she enjoyed the company of her friends in her shortfilm-making process, participant #7 experienced technical challenges regarding “*receiving voice notes from people with the correct volume*”, sent to her by the ‘actors’ (her friends) who featured in her shortfilm. The feelings of enjoyment participant #9 experienced motivated her positive response to some challenges when she “*almost ran out of ideas*” and “*had to think out of the box*”. Her reflection relates to participant #14’s description of an earlier, awkward emotional challenge. He felt that he was “*in a different space mentally*” because the “*excitement*” he previously had for the shortfilm-making project “*didn’t reflect so well*” and that he initially “*hoped*” to have achieved a lot more.

7.4.3 Personal insight and practical application

The ability to reflect on an understanding indicates personal insight and/or practical application. Critical reflection, though, implies a change in perspective, something that would be expected from participants towards the end of a project since reflective skills develop over time. Shortfilm-making thus served as a ‘productive situation’ (Spronk, 2016:69) through and in which this inquiry (involving an arts-based approach) was performed and thought processes developed, thus facilitating critical reflection on the part of the participants. Pertaining to post-project inquiry, *Which new skills have you acquired?*, reflective questions were used as a strategy to enable the participants’ (be)coming to terms with different understandings of reality as experiential creations. Participant #7’s brief response, which referred to “*Voice-overs*”, provided no explanation or elaboration, and therefore occupied a boundary position between a habitual action and a basic understanding. “*(H)aving to work with a new app*” and “*having to live with a new app*” are considered by participant #9 as part of developing skills. A more critical reflective approach was found in participant #14’s expression (Chapter Six, Section 6.4.3) which shows his ability to **relate the acquisition of useful skills**, such as “*I have an eye*” (developing an eye for) “*attention to detail... to whether it’s portrait or landscape*”, to his “*interest (in what) I’ve learnt*”, being “*excited about filmmaking*”, and to enjoyment, “*actually enjoy what I’m doing*”. A further development is mentioned here – **implementation of newly acquired knowledge**. He refers to

“investing time” and wanting to teach what he had learned from the film project. Participants’ technical knowledge, evident from this inquiry, however, needed to be converted into reflective knowledge. Only then could this inquiry become significant and substantial, rather than ephemeral, in its effort to impact “attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels” (Kaplan, 2005).

7.4.4 Communication through the language of film

The experience of acquiring new skills was indeed found to be meaningful and personally rewarding. One could even sense, on the part of participants, varying levels in their learning how to **critically reflect on an experience**. As such, reflective practice as a strategy became part of the participants’ newly developing skills-toolbox. A wide range of valuable understandings were established and expressed in text as well as in visual and audio-format through the participants’ shortfilm productions. In addition to reviewing their existing knowledge before joining the project, participants were given the chance to enhance their skills in reasoning, drawing comparisons, and making decisions through active engagement. They also had the opportunity to contemplate various options. Participants had acquired the ability to **reason, draw comparisons, and make decisions based on active engagement**, and to **consider different options**. An **awareness of one’s own preferences and style**: *“soft music in the background and a louder voice speaking”* (P #7). An awareness of becoming *“familiar with”* different options; knowing that *“one app has a feature that the other app does not have”* (P #9) was found to help in the **making of informed decisions**. Participant #14 mentioned the impact of Covid-19 on his own creative practice: *“... now I can’t go to a theatre to watch a show”*. In the process he became aware of a developing process outside of the cinema: *“what is growing is the, the, the, the film industry”* because people *“put their content out”* on *“live channels, live shows, facebook lives, inter-Instagram lives and all that”*. In his comment, *“(I)t came on a right time... uhm because this is a skill much needed now”*, participant #14 was firstly referring to the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making opportunity. Then, ‘skill’ would be understood as ‘shortfilm-making’ and sharing the production with an audience: *“put their content out”*. In other words, to **communicate through the language of film**, in fewer words, **film literacy**. These expressions can be said to **show an expanded sense of self**, indicating **development towards transpersonal growth** (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125).

7.4.5 The space between existing knowledge and figured worlds

Participant #7 became aware of a passion for *“having fun/sharing joy with other people”* and *“capturing those moments”* (P #7). Yet, capturing an experience would remain of personal value only. The **expanding of one’s sense of self** and the **opening of one’s**

awareness of, and on the part of, other people, that experience could gain in value. In this context this implied a valuable experience for the participant both in her role as director/cinematographer and for her audience(s). The shortfilm-making project thus **enhanced** participant #9's **self-confidence in her learning-abilities**. She learnt that she was *"more capable of doing things"* than she thought she was. Her creativity stretched beyond *"painting or sketching or writing poems"*, to include the creating and making of shortfilms. Participant #14 learnt that he had to step back from his leadership position and **accept a willingness to learn with and from other people**. As a researcher, observing the participants having acquired new insights about their individual selves, it was crucial to ask participants how this knowledge would be applied to, and benefit, others in a wider context.

7.4.6 Self-confidence in own learning abilities

Participants' reflections clearly demonstrate their personal insight, their ability to reflect, and to provide an example of practical application: *"Yes, because"*, *"I do definitely... because"*, and *"Yeah, of-of course; especially"*. *"(N)ow I can grow and make more videos"*; *"... now I know I have enough courage and confidence to go on"*; and *"appreciate the skills and the knowledge you have"*. All of these responses from participants indicate a sense of self-confidence in their own learning abilities. Expressions such as *"where I capture people's happiness"*; *"make other short films"*, and *"in these circumstances now with the pandemic in play... apply that to your life"*, demonstrate the youths' ability to relate to existing conditions, and also to something not yet existing (Herman, 2015:112), by providing clear goals.

7.4.7 Experiential learning – an ongoing process (Chapter Six, Section 6.4.7)

The question in focus was: *When you show your shortfilm to an audience of your choice or talk about your film to people, what would you want them to learn from you?* 'Learn', in the latter part of the question relates to 'hear', 'discover', 'realise', 'understand', 'become skilled at', and 'gain knowledge of'. Participant #9 made it very clear that she wants *"them to learn from"* her to *"take something and make it as beautiful... the most aesthetically pleasing way as possible as possible... try to make the best from every situation"*. She continues to say, *"despite the fact that we are all in lockdown, and people were feeling negative... you could still do something...artistic and enjoy yourself"*. 'Your shortfilm' and 'your film' both referred to involved participants' presentations at the final screening event. These were bound together by a comprehensive theme, *"Sharing happiness and positive vibes"*. An attempt to communicate positive attitudes was emphasised by participants' expressions of *"joy"* (P #7), *"rose-tinted glasses"*, and *"enjoy yourself"* (P #9). However, the negative side

was not ignored: “...*despite the fact that we are all in lockdown and people were feeling negative*”, and (...) “... *and hopeless*”...; “*it must be so boring being at home*” (P #9), indicated some empathy. In spite of these acknowledgements, participants went further, moving towards providing alternatives: “...*create another door*”, and “*you should know your game plan*” (P #14). For the participating youths, acceptance of ownership of their own learning experiences (Morgan & Streb, 2001:154) granted them comprehension, respect, and tolerance of other peoples’ figured worlds. Apart from finding “different ways of seeing” (Nash, Kent & Reid, 2014:33), thinking, feeling and acting (Jarvis, 2006:14), the process in-becoming film literate empowered the participants with courage to express their thoughts and ideas. For participant #14 who in the pre-project inquiry had expressed his expectation “*to grow and be empowered*”, this implied reaching his goal. Thus, through a ‘figured worlds’-lens (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998), the participants might have found new ways to express their inner experiences in the hope of connecting their subjective ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al., 1998) to the “objective realm in which communication is (was) possible” (Holyoak, 2019:13).

7.4.8 Dialogue between internal and external perspectives

What do you think about the potential of making such short films for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures?

'Potential' in this sense in this question posed to participants might be directed not only towards unearthing their capabilities, but also toward **creativity**: “*yes, involvement in artistic activities has the potential to change ways of thinking and ways of living*”; **spiritual enlightenment**: “*drama and writing helped me to cope with depressing circumstances*”; **pursuit of knowledge**: “*In our community, matric is regarded as the end of the study phase for most people. The youth need to become aware of alternative possibilities...*”; and **the desire to contribute to society**: one young post-school adult expressed her **desire to make the youth in her community aware** of “*how to live their lives among bad living conditions that are part of their everyday lives*”. These external perspectives belong to a young post-school adult, involved in youth art development, who attended the ‘Myturn’ screening-event. This event opened a dialogue, which led to an essential interaction between participants’ perspectives within the ‘Myturn’-community of practice and the external perspectives of peers and audience members where possible and relevant. Participant #5 thinks, “*such shortfilms help the youth see a different path because most of them feel lost because they don’t know what they want for their futures yet.*” Both participant #7 and participant #14 explained that young people’s engagement in activities, such as creating videos on a small scale, might “*open many doors for young people... to you becoming a*

professional filmmaker!" (P #7); and *"a new interest which one can take as a hobby but, and, and then it ends up as a career"* (P #14). Referring to the young people who attended their 'movie night', participant #9 was of the view that *"everybody, every young person has the... ability or the potential to make such a short film"*. She highlights her conviction that making shortfilms helps people *"to learn more about themselves, and their environment"*. She finds the fact that participants come from different backgrounds makes the project interesting, since *"we can all create these movies from a different viewpoint."* His involvement in community projects made participant #14 aware of the benefits shortfilm-making might have for young people. He considered this particularly the case in a fast-paced world where *"people learn quicker in visual... because what you see stays in your mind"...* *"it's a great opportunity"*. In my view, acquiring abilities such as these involves an ongoing learning process, one which empowers individuals to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential across multiple areas.

7.4.9 Further development beyond the present situation

What do you see as a further development of this shortfilm-project?

In this question, 'Seeing' possibilities for future developments relates to the ability to **imagine a better world**, to **reason**, **draw comparisons** and to **make decisions** based on active engagement and on the considering of **different options**. The idea to expand the 'Myturn' shortfilm-project to involve *"more films in the future which lead to more evenings"* (P #7), and *"more people"* to establish it as a recurring event, was supported by the responses of both participant #7 and #9. Participant #14, however, envisioned the shortfilm-project *"taking a step (back) into schools... teaching young... learners with various programmes"*. Because *"people learn quicker in visual; they know, because what you see, stays in your mind"* (P #14). This was precisely the purpose of the 'Myturn' initiative – to prepare the youth for the world of work, besides preparing them to contribute in creative and responsible ways to their communities and to society. As a culturally and educationally enriching activity, apart from practical skill-building, this shortfilm-making project were designed to broaden the participants' perspectives on cultural differences by developing skills for "critical self-examination and critical thinking about one's own culture and traditions"(Nussbaum, 1997:245): *"That dance got me thinking that we are in a beautiful diverse society"* (P #14) and *"all of us who entered shortfilms, we came... from different backgrounds ...and... different cultures even"* (P #9). Also, to broaden the participants' perspectives on an understanding of life-long learning, as well as their emotional and social development: *"Seeing through the eyes*

of different people (ages, cultures and genders) can educate others on what they experience and what they label as important in society” (P #7).

The intention of the *‘Myturn’* shortfilm project was not to transform the participants into filmmakers, cinematographers, or directors, per se. In an immediate sense, their acquiring of these skills simply provided them with potential career opportunities to explore and/or take up should they wish to do so, or should opportunities present themselves. Thus, the focus of their experiential transformative learning process was on bringing about positive change to their own and other people’s lives and to the wider world through a continuous and cyclical process of reflecting on action, as well as acting on reflection. The idea was that their newly acquired insights should be implemented in the participants’ personal and social situations/contexts in ways which would encourage them to reflect on those issues which might be keeping them from living a productive, meaningful life. As people transform into knowledge societies, advanced comprehension and literacy skills have become essential to their abilities to communicate effectively in a rapidly increasingly multimodal world. Transformation of the self requires maintaining an ongoing balance between existing knowledge, belonging to an old world, and the creation of new learning spaces/opportunities. In practice, this relates to using a combination of own words, still and moving images, natural sound, authentic music and song in contrast to using readily available downloads from social media platforms. Pertaining to this inquiry, this transformation process has involved and involves designing opportunities for youth to be able to learn how to employ innovative technologies in the development of their original ideas, to revitalise, improve and advance their personal lives as well as their social lives within and beyond their community-contexts.

What was clearly notable in the production of evidence (data) was the complexities of finding a suitable form of literacy for participants to accurately and honestly express their thoughts and emotions.

Ongoing plans emerging from the project related to those participants who intended to address the further development of the project beyond the final screening event. Involvement in the Arts for some participants was an important steppingstone for further development because this involvement implied an emotional engagement and a willingness to actively participate in any future project and/or learning process. Their intra-action and willingness to engage in further development of these understandings opened new pathways for potential transpersonal growth. Becoming involved in the *‘Myturn’* shortfilm-making project as ‘equal partners’ (Henning, 2004/2011:24)

emphasised the importance of effective collaboration between the researcher and participants. Their individually-created shortfilms served as visual objects which enabled them to “acquire objective and scientific knowledge of their own context and objectively see what things need to change in the objectified reality” (Freire, 2000).

7.4.10 Civic responsibility to the workspace and culture: A reality without boundaries

The aspect of civic involvement was addressed by asking the participating youths *‘How can this shortfilm project help young people to learn about civic responsibility to the workspace and to the culture in which they hope to succeed?’* It is important to note that the participants were granted a high degree of voice and ownership as both directors and cinematographers of their own shortfilms. Reference to ‘voice’ does not necessarily indicate spoken voice; it points to an opportunity for participants to communicate their discoveries through a particular multimodal form of perception (New London Group, 1996; 2009; Kress, 2009), to create a message for a purpose and for an audience. “[my] seeing through the eyes of different people (ages, cultures and genders) can educate others on what they experience and what they label as important in society” (P #7), refers to literally visualising, to seeing the world as others see it. This ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another person, defined by Nussbaum (1997:245/2022) as “narrative imagination”, also involves morality and emotion. In other words, it involves different forms of consciousness. “(E)ducate others” (P #7), recalls the development of two further competencies proposed by Nussbaum to cultivate humanity. “(C)ritical self-examination and critical thinking about one’s own culture and traditions” (Nussbaum, 1997:245) benefits the participants as both filmmakers and as audience of one another’s shortfilms, as well as benefitting their external public audience(s). Likewise, participant #9 acknowledged the fact that the youth, coming as they did from different cultural backgrounds, could “take something from everybody’s video and learn something from it in terms of civic responsibility, and the workspace”. It is important to remind ourselves again that the ‘something’ mentioned by participant #9 relates to developing potential beyond the mere content of the participants’ shortfilms. It involves affective, cognitive and sensory dimensions (Anderson, 1998/2011; Lattuada, 2010; Ollagnier-Beldame, 2020), based on a reality without boundaries (Lattuada, 2010:9).

However, in a real-world context stereotyping and othering – viewing the world in terms of categories and ascribing fixed identities to other people whom one sees as different from oneself, should obviously be avoided. “(D)ifferent backgrounds” and “different cultures” (P #9) relates to Holland’s and co-authors’ understanding of ‘figured worlds’

as “socially produced, culturally constituted activities” (Holland et al., 1998:40-41), where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understandings (identities). The understanding of ‘figured worlds’ as “socially produced, culturally constituted activities” (Holland et al., 1998:40-41), where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understandings (identities), underpins this inquiry.

Participant #14 suggested that he would extend the shortfilm-making program further, beyond its current ‘Myturn’ Initiative-context, as well as out of the Rural Art Development-context and into the high school environment. He believes that the desired progress for both high school and post-school youth is likely to occur more easily when they “*have possibilities to learn about themselves and their communities and their surroundings while doing something they’re interested in and they enjoy.*” He elaborated on this idea by referring to his own situation which, at that particular moment of his engagement in the ‘Myturn’ project, had been one of serious concern to him.

7.5 Finding 4: Ethical considerations

Post-qualitative research accepts the inextricable connection between ethics, ontology, and knowledge defined by Barad (2007:409) as “ethico-onto-epistemology”. The following sections discuss the contribution of the inquiry, and present a different perspective on boundaries and limitations, as well as on recommendations for further research.

7.5.1 Contribution of the inquiry

Through my involvement in Visual Arts and Design in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase, I became aware of both a need and an opportunity for scholarship to make visible not only new knowledge, but also new contexts for knowledge production and new ways of communicating these insights. Within the context of multimodal literacy-education, this study attempted to establish the potential of film literacy to actuate critical self-awareness within individual participants and within a group of post-school participants, as well as develop their transpersonal growth towards an “expanded sense of self” (Dängeli, 2019:9). An additional aim was to describe the possible future applications of those potentialities. The term ‘inquiry’ was used to distinguish my doctoral research in education from mainstream tradition, although my intention was never to define my alternative approach in opposition to more traditional research conceptions. Rather, the literary, performing, and visual arts

aspects which pertained to this inquiry offered unconventional pathways for the researcher to expand the competencies of the participants, together with their creativity and knowing. Also, by devising a thoroughly considered synthesis of approaches (post-qualitative, developmental phenomenographic, and arts-based) I was able to create, explore, and communicate evidence in ways that present a holistic picture of a variety of efforts (alternative pathways). In a wider sense the research sought to promote the participants' self-directed, life-long learning. I see the detailed, descriptive style of post-qualitative inquiry (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011) as particularly benefitting the practitioner who prefers to explore new forms of knowledge, and new forms of research other than traditional scientific research. The uncertain nature of current-day academic life, which has been deeply impacted by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis, has further problematised research in South Africa as a developing country. Therefore, I view this inquiry as a valuable document, one which reports on the complexity of doing research and of engaging in the data production process during a year of lockdown and social distancing occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ultimate contribution of the inquiry, as shown in Figure 7.2, resides in the creation of a theory about film literacy as a boundary-crossing competence to facilitate communication and collaboration across disciplines, and culturally defined boundaries; secondly, in the application of a research strategy rarely used in educational research, namely developmental phenomenography. Finally, the implementation of an arts-based educational research-approach was considered to have responded to the dearth of practical research on the arts-based doctorate as an emerging genre within academic research. As multimodal forms of communication, participants' shortfilm-productions added value to the complexity of online learning, thus expanding the possible ways to acquire information and make meaning of concepts (Kress, 2003/2010; Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013).

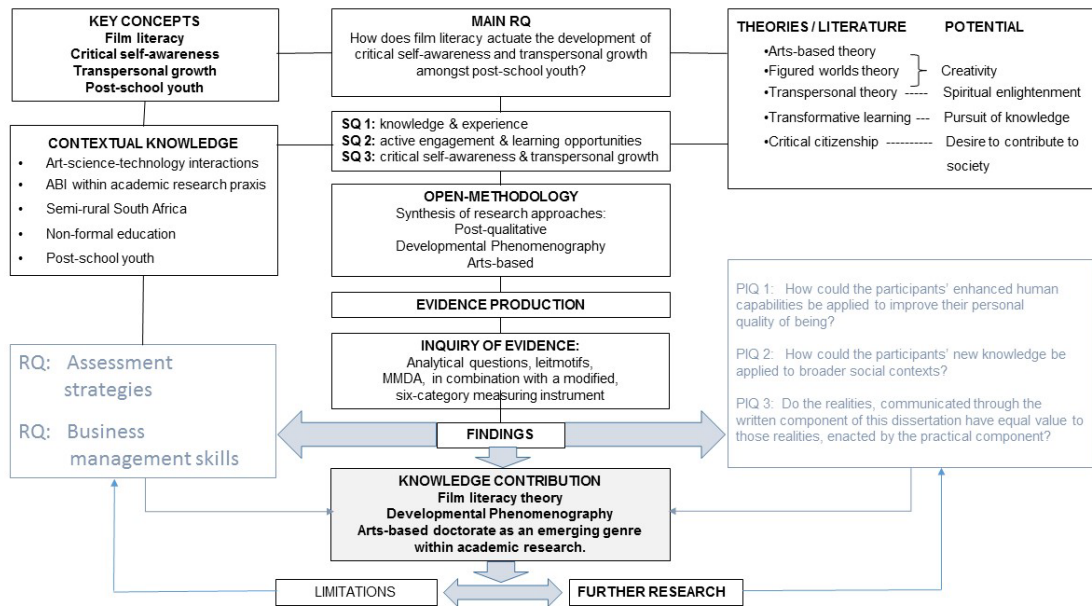


Figure 7.2: A revised conceptual focus showing the ultimate contribution of this inquiry.

7.5.2 Thinking differently about boundaries and limitations

This post-qualitative inquiry responded to certain limitations within the field of educational methodology concerning the “dual nature of critical and experiential knowledges” (Gibson, 2015:4; Gough-Brady, 2019:181). While exploring the potential of film literacy, this inquiry aimed to integrate interpersonal, intrapersonal, and transpersonal human experiences by structurally transcending the limitations of linear time and confined three-dimensional space. In working towards a broadened scope of literacy, I explored the potential of film literacy to address the ongoing need for a different approach to teaching and learning in all levels of education. This is an approach that transcends language barriers, and supports the unpredictable nature of 21st century project-orientated employment opportunities. Particularly now, in a post-Covid context, these realities directly impact young adults who, through no fault of their own, find themselves frictionally unemployed and/or in non-formal education situations.

The intention of my inquiry was not to address the ‘deficiencies’ of rural communities nor to draw a comparison between the semi-rural communities that formed the geographical setting of my inquiry, and urban contexts. Although significant, these concepts did not relate directly to my research focus. Rather, attention was drawn to the seldom focused upon “dynamic interactions of the people who live, learn and work in these communities, and the variety of different ways they “engage with and shape their lives in their environments” (Moletsane, 2012:3): in my inquiry these were frictionally unemployed post-school youths. I found the semi-rural context in which this

inquiry is situated awkward to describe. This is due to the variety of different understandings concerning rurality (Budge, 2005; Balfour, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2008; Mitchell & De Lange, 2011) and rural education (Moletsane, 2012; White & Corbett, 2014; MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas, 2016) that exist in the current media and in academic discourse. Given this context, two questions that are not part of my focus emerged, namely, how underdeveloped should an area be to be classified as 'rural?' and what kind of developments should be in place in a geographical area to merit the 'urban' label/classification?. The *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making initiative, devised for the purpose of this inquiry, sought to create an experiential environment where young adults would learn to question, explore possible answers, set their own expectations, and try out new ideas without constantly being afraid of being wrong or not meeting certain rigid standards. One way in which the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making experience contributed to alternative post-school programs with a focus on multimodal-learning in a non-formal education context, is by providing a platform for the participating youth to express themselves freely and creatively. However, as already mentioned, the intention of the *'Myturn'* initiative was not to transform the participants into filmmakers, cinematographers, or directors, per se. In an immediate sense, acquiring a basic understanding of the skills they needed to make a shortfilm simply provided participants with potential career opportunities to take up, should they wish to do so, or when/if opportunities present themselves. The *'Myturn'* shortfilm project per se, could not guarantee that meaningful transformation or change would take place in the participants in the context of the non-formal educational setting. Rather, I considered that their newly acquired insights should be implemented within the participants' personal and social situations/contexts in ways which would encourage them to reflect on issues which might be keeping them from living a productive, meaningful life. These reflections could include their having to figure out their positionality within a phigital world, and their becoming critically self-aware that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime. Their reflections should also help them to develop the ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, and to recognise their own frames of reference for them to then, by using their imaginations, go on to redefine issues in thoughtful ways that differ from their and others' previously limited viewpoints. Thus, the intended relevance of the arts-based component in this inquiry will be determined by its educational value to the participants who are personally and socially involved in visual and performing arts-practices. Participant reflections on the following two questions clearly indicated the scope of the educational value relating to their active engagement in the shortfilm-making project.

- **Which new skills have you acquired?**

Participant #5's positive response:

That I love being creative and that I get more inspiration from music and movement and that I am telling stories in those aspect rather than just using words”.

Participant #9: *“The new skills that I have acquired I think was just having to work with a new app.*

Participant #14:

Well, I'm excited about filmmaking; detail is one of the skills I've, I've, I've... uhm... acquired which is now (useful? unclear). When I shoot a normal picture, I pay attention to detail, I pay attention to whether its portrait or landscape and you, you know I, I have an eye. Now I just, I don't just use my camera because I'm just using a bit (? unclear) I'm investing time and investing what I learnt in, in the film project and put myself into that I want (to?) teach and I want this, and I want that. So, that's the thing, the interest I've learnt, the, the skill to, you know, watch the detail and be sure what I'm doing and, and actually enjoy what I'm doing.

- **What did you learn about yourself during the project?**

Participant #9:

“Ok, so what I learn about myself was that I'm more capable of doing things than I thought I was capable of. Uhm... I learnt that... uhm... not only can I be creative when it comes to things like painting or sketching or writing poems, or whatever, but as well as...uhm making a shortfilm[as well]”.

Participant #10 developed an awareness relating to her community:

“The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama but it stays hidden and dies out too. And I want to change that”.

Participant #14:

“I learnt... uhm a, a lot of things about myself or a few; no not a few uhm because you, you... uhm... uhm, I'm a different person when it comes to the entertainment industry: I'm not a...as... uhm... a person that normally people know because I take it so seriously; and you-you know, I, I, as a director and as a leader I, I conduct myself in a certain wing (way?) because of... uhm... the results or the picture in my head that I want to achieve, that it was great to, to, to have find myself.. uhm... you-you know, taking a step back and allowing other people to, to express themselves and to, as, as, as they please and learn along the way... uh..., because... uhm... yeah. Because it, it also, I didn't want to come across as a person because I mean in the business, now I want to... uhm... be on top of everybody; I-I was just happy to take a step back and learn like everybody else”.

Turning the focus to the self, participant #14 critically reflected:

"I discovered that I have a lot to offer beyond what I think of myself or the skills I have. I learnt that it is okay not to know and fail, but it is motivating and fruitful to try again with a positive attitude and actually be in a competition with yourself to produce the best".

Participant #17 reflected:

"My emotions in my voice sometimes makes me lose my focus when presenting my poems and that was exactly what I was congratulated on, so I know that it is okay, that is what poetry is! Emotions!"

It is crucial to keep in mind that the participants' shortfilm-productions as artistic/cultural expressions, should not be misunderstood as outcomes of this inquiry. Drawing on the strengths of developmental phenomenography, the shortfilm-productions should rather be understood as humble beginnings, and as a part of an ongoing multimodal discourse. Likewise, there can be "no end or closure" (Le Grange, 2018:12) to post-qualitative inquiry.

The findings indicated that new understandings have been developed through the meanings that both the young filmmakers and their audience assigned to them. The researchers own critical insight here is the reality that the shortfilm-productions per se do not have the ability to transform the daily-life issues that were the origin of this inquiry study. Rather, newly acquired insights could or should be implemented in the participants' personal and social situations/contexts to enable them to reflect on these issues. The participants' technical knowledge, which became evident in the process of this inquiry needed to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Only then could this inquiry, in its effort to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels", become meaningful both to the participants themselves, and to research (Kaplan, 2005).

In retrospect, the 'Myturn'-initiative, although it created a space/spaces for new ideas, did not appear to create adequate space (within the available time) for all the participants to acquire an expanded sense of their selves, one which would enable them to grow transpersonally, as intended. The term 'initiative' was chosen to indicate the start of an activity within which new knowledge would be produced, involving three smaller project-phases, with the hope that this process would continue, independently of this study. 'Myturn' embodies action taken for the purpose of transformation from personal to transpersonal growth and wellbeing.

7.5.3 Recommendations for further research

As a critique on the limitations of the traditional understanding of ‘setting’ in the sense of a physical location or site within which the traditional interview or observation is done (St. Pierre, 2014:7), the process of my inquiry expanded the traditional meaning of setting which, in itself could be a topic for further research,. The expanded sense of ‘setting’, ‘location,’ or ‘site’ therefore unveils the “right of multiple forms of knowledge to co-exist. This plurality recognises the diversity of knowledges not only as methods, but as ways of life” (Visvanathan, 2009), a statement to which I want to add, ‘and as alternative ways to perform academic research’. A question for further research crossed my mind: what about the ‘mind settings’; the ‘location’ or imaginative ‘sites’ where the ideas for the shortfilm-productions, in the minds of the participants, originated? In light of these aspects, one could say that ‘setting’, in terms of sites where audiences engage ‘film literacy’ competencies, will always be in-becoming. In conclusion, despite these limitations, the potential benefits of using their newly acquired film literacy competencies has the potential to contribute significantly to the participants in this study developing critical self-awareness amongst post-school youth. By transcending cultural boundaries and language barriers through multimodal shortfilm-making experiences, and by reflecting on their own perspectives and the perspectives of others, and by working collaboratively, young adults can gain a deeper understanding of their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and how they themselves relate to others. This can help young people develop a more critical and empathetic perspective on the world around them and can better equip them to navigate their future lives and careers. Further research is needed concerning business management principles and support for post-school youth to realise and actuate their professional career opportunities. Since the developmental phenomenographic approach to my inquiry focussed on describing a collective variety of different perspectives of a particular post-school group, further research might focus on individual resilience as such, particularly in the context of rising youth unemployment in South Africa (Devika, 2021:19).

Stakeholders in educational decision-making processes could benefit by engaging in a new form of education, and by addressing real-life situations with the purpose of strengthening inclusivity, resilience, and peace-building. Drawing on the findings of this inquiry, I might then ask three further questions: How could the participants’ enhanced human capabilities be applied in a real-life and practical sense to improve their personal quality of being? How could the participants’ new understandings/knowledge be applied to broader social contexts? With specific relevance to educational research

policy and practice, the question arises: do the realities, as communicated through the written component of my dissertation have equal value to those realities, enacted by the practical component?

7.6 Concluding thoughts

This inquiry responded to the need for a different approach to non-formal education by devising a thoroughly considered synthesis of approaches, namely, post-qualitative, developmental phenomenography, and arts-based approaches, to create, explore, and communicate evidence in ways that present a holistic picture of alternative pathways. The intention of the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-project was not to transform the participants into filmmakers, cinematographers, or directors, per se. In an immediate sense, their acquiring of these skills simply provided participants with potential career opportunities to take up should they wish to do so, or if and when opportunities present themselves. The *'Myturn'* shortfilm project per se, could not guarantee that transformation or change would take place in the context of its non-formal educational setting. Despite these limitations, the benefits of active participation in the *'Myturn'* shortfilm-making project for some of the participating young adults were found to include developing critical self-awareness, transcending cultural and language barriers, and gaining a deeper understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. From these findings I would argue that distinctive interactions with other human beings in both real-life as well as virtual worlds can also equip young people with critical and empathetic perspectives to navigate their future lives and careers. This study conducted in South Africa found shortfilm-making to have contributed to developing critical self-awareness among the participants by questioning their assumptions and established patterns of thinking. However, there are challenges in developing new competencies which would enable young people to navigate the digital world and access potential livelihood opportunities. Both my educational experience and a review of the literature, as well as the *'Myturn'* project have suggested that ongoing learning and adaptation are necessary to establish new understandings of reality. The study prompts questions about how enhanced human capabilities can improve personal quality of being, how new understandings can be applied to broader social contexts, and whether practical components have equal value with written components in educational research. Ultimately, the study highlights the potential for film literacy to contribute in a variety of ways to the personal and social growth of post-school youth.

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APPENDIX A



Faculty of Education
Ethics informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Wendy Smidt from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The title of the research is:

THE USE OF FILM LITERACY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND TRANSPERSONAL GROWTH AMONGST POST-SCHOOL YOUTH.

The findings of this study will contribute towards a positive application in the lives of the post-school participants. This includes, but is not limited to personal development, competitiveness, employability, and a foundation for further study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because (give a reason why the candidate has been chosen) you have successfully submitted the expression of interest (EOI) to participate in the short film-making project.

The research will entail questionnaires, three training workshops on how to make a shortfilm, the shortfilm you will make yourself, and writing about your experience.

If you volunteer to participate in this study you will be asked to complete questionnaires about your own experiences, attend three workshops on how to make a short film, then make your shortfilm, and write up your experiences of the whole process. I will arrange with you the times and places of each of these activities. To be able to make your shortfilm, you must have a smartphone, USB cable, memory card, laptop or PC, editing software and anti-virus security on your laptop and phone.

You may contact me at any time should you have any questions about the research before or during the study. You will also be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason. There will be no discrimination against you as a result of your participation or non-participation.

Kind regards,

.....
Tel:
.....

E-mail:
.....

Please sign this consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

By signing this consent, you indicate that you understand the purpose of the research and what your participation will entail and that you participate voluntarily although you can withdraw at any time should you wish to.

APPENDIX B: SHORTFILM TRANSCRIPTS AND ACCOMPANYING NOTES

The following seven shortfilm-examples were selected because they provide multiple perspectives relating to the main topic of inquiry: *How does film literacy actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst a sampled group of post-school youth?* Accompanying notes marked by the sub-headings: **Introduction and background**, **Knowledge of film literacy**, **The development of critical self-awareness**, and **The development of transpersonal growth**, relates to the three sub-questions in response to the main research question. Additionally, these notes correspond with in-text discussion of participants' reflections. Drawing on the strengths of developmental phenomenography, these shortfilm-productions should rather be understood as humble beginnings, and as a part of an ongoing multimodal discourse. The possibility exists that similar as well as conflicting understandings could be derived from these examples when viewed through different eyes.

EXAMPLE 1

Introduction and background

PARTICIPANT #5: "COLOUR PURPLE PRODUCTIONS ...CM and Co."

Participant #5 submitted two experimental shortfilm-productions and selected the second film, "*A journey through a looking glass*" for the final screening event in November 2020.

Submission 1: "*Be a work in progress*" - created to celebrate *Youth Day 2020*.

This 00:02:14 min short film begins with The Colour Purple productions-logo, appearing on the screen, accompanied by lo-fi background beats. A young female voice continues: "When we were younger, we all dreamt of becoming a doctor, lawyer, dancer, or even a singer. We wanted to be the best students. We stayed up late, studying, working hard behind the desk – for long hours sometimes; falling asleep behind the same desk, or even crying because of the workload. But one thing we must not forget is to take care of ourselves". Following these words, a hip-hop dance video clip, and a young male narrator reminds the viewer, "Don't forget to spend time with yourself, family, and friends. Try to focus on your goals and what lies ahead".

Next, a young female is dancing in front of a white backdrop while the words 'fear' and 'lost' appear on her left and right sides. She wipes 'fear' away with her left hand and kicks at it to make it disappear, then tosses 'lost' out of sight. When 'lonely' and 'grieve' appear, the dancer instantly wipes it away with both arms, to leave only the phrases 'lo' and 've' (the beginning and end of 'lonely' and 'grieve' respectively). These phrases are swiped to the centre of the white backdrop, where the dancer embraces the combined word, 'love', with both hands. At the end of the music/dance insert, a still image of a red carpet covering five steps, appears.

The words "Define Your goal", "Develop a Plan", "Take Action", and "Stick To It" lead the viewer's eye to "Success" at the top. Lo-fi music returns to accompany the credit roll and conclude the short film.

The male and female narrators' voices continue in duet: "Never forget to follow your dreams. Even though the road to success is hard, you will succeed. Allow yourself to live a happy life, give yourself time, love yourself; be proud of yourself. Be a work in progress and know that it's ok to change your mind along the way". In a brief note accompanying her submission, the participant described her short film as "a journey through the eye of the maker. It's colourful, artistic and expresses something different". About her brand name, she remarked, "Purple is one of the many colours in the film and the one that stood out the most." Although this comment formed part of the participant's pre-project reflection, it already showed potential of reflective action, sensing personal insight and/or practical application.

Submission 2: "A journey through a looking glass", created to celebrate *Heritage Day 2020*. The 00:02:56 min short film starts with lively background music and "The color Purple Production" logo, designed by the participant to label her work, appears. It is followed by the words "FLASH WARNING" and "DISCLAIMER: NOT ALL ORIGINAL CONTENT". As the film-title, "A journey through a looking glass", appears on the screen, a young woman's voice is heard, addressing her audience/viewers: "Let me take you on a journey and look at what heritage means". An image of samosas appears, followed by several images of traditional food and dress, typical of South Africa from the participant's perspective.

A TikTok-insert shows the participant and her brother performing a cheerful dance. This is followed by more TikTok music and dance inserts – clearly popular among the youth. These music and dance inserts transition to a photo collage derived from the inserts. Featuring eight images, the collage apparently summarises the participant's understanding of an inherited sense of family identity. But, since this study focused on 'how' understanding is expressed, rather than 'what' (content), this piece of data provided an insight into the participant's 'knowledge of film literacy' (SQ 1), as well as the development of critical awareness (SQ 2) and transpersonal growth (SQ 3).

Knowledge of film literacy

Literature about the ontology of film literacy highlights its close relation to multimodal forms of expression (Jewitt, 2009:3). The participant used the short film-medium, which she describes as "a new art form", as an extension of her personal interests in drawing, music, and editing programs, "to help tell a story". Moving between printed matter and digital screen enabled the application of various communication modes. Multimodal forms of communication, such as still images (logo, traditional food and dress), moving images (dance), and audio (music and voice-over), added value to the complexity of sharing knowledge online. It further expanded the possible ways to acquire information and make meaning of concepts (Kress, 2003/2010;

Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013) such as heritage, “across many disciplines... against the backdrop of considerable social change” (Jewitt, 2009:3). What Cole and Keyssar (1985:68) describe as the “potential for creating shared meaning and the socio-cultural circumstances that make certain orders of meaning valuable”, was practically implemented in the ‘Myturn’ short film project through methodologies relevant to the study of film literacy.

The development of critical self-awareness

Responding to the question, *What initially interested you in this short film-making initiative?*, the participant replied: “I was eager to learn how to work with editing programs and how to use the talent I have in more than one way.” Figuring out alternative possibilities, has been part of the participant’s daily life-challenges in trying to establish a sustainable livelihood. This insight was derived from comments made by the participant in response to the question, *Which skills have you acquired since leaving school that you consider useful?* “After High School I went to college for a year and studied Financial Accounting. I couldn’t finish since I had financial trouble. I started working weekends to help my family and earn extra money for myself. Since leaving school, I’ve learned that I can survive on my own and that I can thrive in conditions I am not familiar with.” For this participant, critical self-awareness implied an expanded sense of self (Dängeli, 2019:9), which required the opening up of her perceptive modes to assess and figure out new possibilities of both inter- and intra-action (Barad, 2007) with the world around her. Recognising the fact that the figuring out process is self-constructed by nature, and influenced on a daily basis by socio-cultural, political and organisational contexts (Gramsci, 1971; Freire, 1972; Giroux, 2003; Walker, 2018), was an important stepping-stone in this participant’s development towards transpersonal growth. She had to figure out her position within a “phigital” world (Stillman & Stillman, 2017:76) to become critically aware that spaces for learning and work can be created anywhere, anytime. For Participant #5, this understanding was confirmed by submitting her expression of interest to participate in the ‘Myturn’-project. Her situation is not unique. What is exceptional, is that she decided to act despite negative bias and the tendency to focus on what is wrong and overlook what one has to work with, particularly in crisis times such as the past two years since 2020.

The development of transpersonal growth

In response to the question, *What message would you like to leave with your short film to the youth of your community?*, the participant wrote: “I want my community to appreciate the culture that they have, even if the past was hard. To live in the moment, to learn from past mistakes, to work hard at their dream, and strive for what they believe in.” These objectives correspond with the main aim of this study, namely, to establish how film literacy can actuate the development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth amongst post-school youth, to advance the transformative competencies young adults need to excel in the social,

cultural, economic, and political spheres of society. The participant's outreach strategies to her community involved popular, multimodal youth language – creative art, photography, moving images, and music, dance, and voice messages. These “experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125) marked attempts to connect individual transformation with social change. Moreover, to establish a socially and culturally constructed system of communication. I find it necessary to frequently remind the reader that the focus of above mentioned “experiences” lies in the ‘how’ – the multimodal strategies to communicate through shortfilm-medium rather than merely the message content.

EXAMPLE 2

Introduction and background

Participant #7 named her shortfilm-production “Happiness”.

Runtime: 00:07:23

The sound of rain and a black-out screen meet the viewer's senses. The words, “seeing others happy, is what makes me happy”, appear in lowercase, yellow font colour. The sound of rain and the text continue: “a few of my friends couldn't be here in the video themselves, but luckily their voices could be. [Lo-fi jazz beats blend with the sound of rain] I've asked a simple question... what does true happiness means to you... and what makes YOU truly happy? ...these were their responses...”

Friend 1: [female voice] “happiness ...true happiness is something we often forget to acknowledge... for me, true happiness is seeing people fight daily for successful and beautiful endings...true happiness is placing your worth and self-love above anything and anyone else ...it is a state of mind constantly being in love with myself...true happiness is having my family – my precious jewels ...receiving unconditional love daily ...true happiness is my friendships – the ones who entered my life and never left ... true happiness is appreciating pain because out of all the pain and regrets we receive lessons learnt ...true happiness is not always about getting what we want all the time ...it is about loving what we have and being grateful for it ...so never forget to be truly happy.”

Friend 2: [male voice] “I think happiness varies from person to person ...some people ...uhm ...find happiness within materialistic things you know... cars, money and it could be temporary or permanent you never know. Uhm... some people... uhm find happiness within their beliefs... uhm ...whether it be religious, or whatever ...uhm ...and some other people find their happiness within other people ...uhm ...such as you know your family, your friends, your significant other ...ya. I, personally found happiness within God and my friends... uhm ...why I say this is because I can speak my mind; I can act however I want to; I can be myself free of judgement... uhm... like I know if I do something stupid... ya, they might laugh at me but they'll pick me up

when I fall and they'll always be there when I need them and you know, just knowing that someone has your back is the best feeling ever... so that's where my happiness is. I know I can count on God, my friends, and ya!"

Friend 3: [female voice]

"The best thing that has probably happened to me this year is actually being in a happy, healthy relationship... to feel so loved by someone who doesn't want anything from you, or doesn't judge you when you break out dancing and singing at the weirdest times. I think one of the happiest yet heart-breaking and saddest moments in my life was last week when one of my best friends died. I never knew how it felt to lose someone so close to you and feel so guilty for not telling them how much you appreciated and loved them. This year has truly been a struggle but I've never felt happier and I've never felt closer to my best friends. I've never been surrounded by better friends who only uplift each other and accept each other for being totally crazy. I've had better years but I've never had better lessons to learn than this year."

Friend 4: [female voice]

"For me, pure happiness comes from living for the Lord and accepting him... as your Lord and Saviour because in him I found my joy... if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have been here today so I guess that's why living for him is something that gives me joy and that... uhm... is so pure to me and something that makes me really happy, is living for Him, praising His name, worshipping Him and just being with the people that truly loves me like my family and friends... that gives me pure joy... just the little things in life.... uhm... makes it worthwhile... yes [laugh]... that is what happiness is to me, and what pure joy is to me... living my life to the fullest. Living it for the Lord and ... enjoying it with the people I love."

Friend 5: [female voice]

"What is true happiness to me? Immediately memories flood my mind and I'm taken back to a time where I laughed like there was no one around, sang at the top of my lungs without caring whether I was out of tune or not. I'm reminded of the ocean and that night where I watched the sky change from blue to a burning bright orange to darkness, and small freckles of stars filled the space. Happiness, when felt, is like your favourite blanket, enveloping you and you feel safe. It is hearing a Christmas song play in a store during October and the sound of a baby laughing. It is driving aimlessly around with my sister, playing our favourite songs on repeat. It is the moments we experience and the people we experience these moments with. It is when everything around you reminds you of something good."

Knowledge of film literacy

Participant #7 described her 'film literacy'-experience as "seeing through the eyes of different people". The part of the short-film making project she enjoyed most was "going out with friends and having so much fun while shooting videos. Why? Because we could share ideas and see what works and doesn't as a team". Little did any participant know in the beginning of 2020

that they would have to adapt to social and physical distancing during COVID-19 lockdown. Moreover, how social media (internet and WhatsApp) would impact individuals' ability to stay connected during the entire lockdown period. Responding to these circumstances, the participant reflected: "most challenging was receiving voice notes from people with the correct volume, since I didn't record them myself, and they [referring to friends] had to do it on their own... some voice recordings were faded or too soft and I had to ask them to retry by holding the mic close to their mouths." New skills required? "Voice-overs".

The development of critical self-awareness

To whether she regard these skills as useful in any way, participant #7 responded: "yes because I love videos with soft music in the background and a louder voice, speaking." What did she learn about herself during the filmmaking project? "That I absolutely love having fun/sharing joy with other people & that I love capturing those moments." Does she regard this new knowledge of herself as useful in any way? "Yes, because now I can grow and make more videos where I capture other peoples' happiness." These reflections reveal an expanded sense of self – participant #7 realised that she had to open up her perceptive modes to assess and figure out new possibilities of both intra- and interaction with the world around her. It is argued that 'learning' how to cope in difficult circumstances, occurs within the space between critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth which, in itself is always in flux. Becoming critically self-aware through being encouraged to reflect on own actions, learning curves, and living out new perspectives, lead to personal transformation for participant #7. Newly acquired insights lead to more than imagining alternative 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998). Instead, the participant embraced new possibilities through critical reflection on a challenging situation. She managed to facilitate and maintain communication and cooperation across culturally defined boundaries and between communities of practice-members [friends] (Wenger, 1998; Fox, 2011:70). Often, one tends to limit one's possibilities by relying on changeable frames of reference and planned strategies. Unexpected external interferences often propels one's thinking to new perspectives (De Bono, 1996).

The development of transpersonal growth

Critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth have become essential capacities for particularly post-school youth living in an age of uncertainty where the ways they live, learn, work and interact are continually changing (Belshaw, 2012; Dängeli, 2019; Smidt, 2015). "(S)eeing through the eyes of different people" – friends, in this particular short film, involves experiences in which the sense of self extends beyond (trans) the participant "to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos" (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Dängeli, 2019:42; 125) connecting individual transformation with social change. Transpersonal growth implies a whole-person approach, focusing on the importance of questioning concepts such

as value, meaning and purpose, which, by implication, may lead to social applications towards a more sustainable world (Anderson, 1991; 1998; 2011; Dängeli, 2019; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). The participant's response to the question, 'When you show your short-film to anybody or talk about your film to anybody, what you would want them to learn from you?' implied a process of formulating, expressing and communicating an idea by moving one's perspective from the self to other: "that I appreciate what gives joy to other, including myself". Questioning the potential of short-film making for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their future revealed that: "creating these videos can open many doors for young people. It might start small but it can lead to you, becoming a professional filmmaker!" Participant #7 foresees as a further development of this short film-project that "there might be more films in the future which lead to more evenings [movie nights] where people can have the opportunity to go and enjoy them!" Still extending beyond (trans) the self "to encompass wider aspects of humankind" the following question addresses the aspect of responsible citizenship (DeJaeghere & Tudball, 2007; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Costandius, Rososhacki, and Le Roux, 2014). *How can this short-film project help young people to learn about civic responsibility to the workspace and culture in which they hope to succeed?* Participants' post-project reflections (Section 7.4.10, p. 269) provided possible answers to this question.

EXAMPLE 3:

Introduction and background

Participant #9: SUNDAYSHA (Pr.) "My pseudonym/pen name for when it comes to art"

"Lockdown 2020"

Runtime: 00:03:47

The opening scene to this short film introduces its audience to a brightly blue and red coloured background image, reminding of mandala-like patterns. The sound of instrumental piano music from the Synthesia App on Google Play, played and recorded by the participant, created the atmosphere for this shortfilm about living creatively during the first twenty-one days of lockdown. Next, a hand appears, opening a poetry book. On the left-hand page the words, "Nothing is more dangerous than an idea, when it is the only one you have", are visible, and "If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk." These words correspond with the participant's reflection in response to the question: *What was the most challenging part of creating a shortfilm?* as discussed below.

Knowledge of film literacy

"Usually, when I make a short film, I would go to someplace else rather than my home. But since I was stuck at home, uhm... it was nice to... to think creative... uhm... in that setting." 'Stuck at home' referred to the lockdown time during 2020, hence the title of the short film,

occupying a time span of twenty-one days; from Friday, 27 March 2020 at 05:39:19 pm to Friday, 17 April 2022 at 06:22:43 pm. The participant continues: “So, the most challenging part for me was also having to think what I was going to film; because at some point I almost ran out of ideas. So, I had to think out of the box, you know.” ‘Out of the box-thinking’ relates to thinking differently – the participant had to suddenly adapt to a situation, totally unlike the usual. Employing creative power to motivate lateral thinking (De Bono, 1996), had been the aim of the ‘21 days connected by creativity’ intervention during the early data creation stage, to maintain the established connection with the participants. According to De Bono (1996), approaching circumstances from new angles beyond habitual responses, is an essential skill. It enabled the youth participants to bring their original short films into being, and to revisit own ideas in a variety of unexpected ways. The making and thereafter, the viewing of their short films, served as “an engagement with and an objective distance from our [their] culture” (Allsup 2003:158). Thus, engaging film literacy in educational contexts could be a possible way to create spaces for differences to be negotiated creatively.

The development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth

Critical self-awareness in this study implies an expanded sense of self by opening up our perceptive modes to assess and figure out new possibilities of both intra- and interaction with the world around us. ‘Intra-action’ (Barad, 2007) here is understood as a layering of meaning and matter, of conversations in-becoming, resonating with the emerging field of non-representational research (Ingold, 2015: vii; Le Grange, 2018:7). “The new skills that I have acquired I think was just having to work with a new app because I used, I think it was... uhm... Filmora Go that I used but I had to use another app. So, uh... the new skills was, if this counts as a new skill... it was having to live with a new app called Inshot.” Participation in the ‘Myturn’-project aimed to enable young adults to develop skills and confidence. It also generated previously seemingly remote personal possibilities, such as how to action ideas in the workplace and greater society.

EXAMPLE 4:

Introduction and background

Participant #10’s shortfilm-production responds to her awareness and desire, expressed during the early developmental and pre-production cycle of the ‘Myturn’ shortfilm-making project: “The small town surrounded by mountains hides a lot of talent beautiful music, dance, drama but it stays hidden and dies out too. And I want to change that”.

“Chosen”

Runtime: 00:07:45 min

Production Co name: IGP Studios

The 07:45 min short film, using first person narration, allows the viewer a glimpse into a day in

the life of Amethyst Foster (the name of her main character, chosen by participant #10). It provides an insight in the life of a post-school youth who dreams about a successful career in the performing arts, and what it takes to be successful in an audition. Below, the words of Ammy (short for Amethyst):

“Well, hi there! Hi! I’m here to tell you my story, and this is how it goes: You know [sigh], I’m just your normal girl with a whole lot of dreams and all I’ve ever been doing is working so hard. And I’m going to show you guys how I got to where I want to be.

So, I haven’t even introduced myself to you guys. My name is Amethyst. Amethyst Foster but you can call me Ammy and the girl you’re about to see right now...boom... that’s me.

So, my day starts off with this routine I have, and I always beat my alarm clock. So then, go ahead and I brush my teeth; I freshen up and I get ready to go to any and every audition that I can get myself into. [Sigh] Guys, wish me luck. But you know what, I’ve got a good feeling about this one. [Spaces between first-person narrations are filled with background music]

So, in I go to my audition and there’s this grumpy-looking business-dude that I need to impress. These guys are always so pissed for no reason. I mean, come on, was it a part of your job requirements to look so angry, geez! But guys, I’m going to do my best. Look at him, he’s not even smiling! Woogh! It’s going to be hard...

[Sigh] So, he gave me a big, fat no. But it’s ok, I got a good feeling about the next one.

[Before Ammy’s next audition, the viewer’s attention is drawn to another audition, sharing Ammy’s view and what she is hearing while waiting her turn.

[Good afternoon – male voice] Good afternoon! [And your name? – male voice] My name is Amethyst Foster. [What will you be singing today?] I’ll be singing ‘Best part by her’. Can I start? [Ammy performs her song. Next scene shows Ammy, exiting the audition room.] [Sigh] Wow, another ‘no’! But it’s ok. Right, I mean, Mom always says that we should use these ‘no’s’ as a stepping stone to get where we want to be in life. So, we don’t settle for a ‘no’. I mean, these business dudes don’t make it easier out here. But hey, we are not going to give up. I mean, let’s keep pushing because I believe each one of us sitting here right now – we are born to be something greater in this life. We are chosen. And yeah, these ‘no’s’ are frustrating... I mean, the point of my story is... sometimes we fall, sometimes we fail... but we need to embrace our talent. Do any and everything to develop or involve our talent... but [sigh] let’s take chances, let’s take risks. We do not settle for ‘no’s’ because I believe that I am chosen, and so are you.”

The development of critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth

The development of new insights about the multiple possible ways through which young citizens can enhance their abilities transpersonally to become change agents, requires critical self-awareness of ‘one’s own self’ (Kumar, 2008), a constant, self-reflexive awareness of own thoughts, emotions and actions (Krishnamurti, 1998). Foucault (1988:154) saw this as a

process which serves to identify the kinds of assumptions, and familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought on which our accepted practices rest. Foucault emphasised that “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, [and] transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (Foucault,1988:155; St. Pierre, 2014:4). Only by “living in the new perspective” (Baumgartner, 2001:17), and opening up our modes of perception (Barad, 2010; Wolfe, 2017; Dängeli, 2019) can the empowering conditions of awareness be accessed and employed to conceptualise meaningful new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming (Holland, et al,1998). A fundamental requirement for both educators and students in undertaking this process is the cultivation of a willingness to adapt to change and to be open to new perspectives from people other than themselves in an educational approach relating to multi-dimensional perspectives of reality beyond the boundaries of the self. Her own transformation process which had been enacted by actively engaging the opportunities provided by the shortfilm-project enabled participant #10 to share personal experience with fellow participants, the youth of her community (in real-time cinema), as well as with a wider online audience.

EXAMPLE 5:

Introduction and background

Participant #11

“Along the Way”

The opening scene of the 00:02:58 min short film in full colour, shows a close-up view of a hand, opening the latch of a wooden gate, accompanied by the sound of creaking hinges. A paved footpath leads the viewer to a space outside where a white vehicle is parked. Traffic and bird sounds strengthen the idea of being ‘outside’, while a glimpse of a passing vehicle is shown. The next scene shows a hand, opening the vehicle’s door, which when closed, shut out all the exterior sounds. The words, “And so we start” in purple font colour, appear on the screen at the same moment the sound of keys turning in the ignition is heard. Guitar music takes the viewer to the next scene, showing a sketch book page on which some pencils are thrown, followed by the hand, picking up a yellow highlighter. As the hand starts writing “Along the Way” in yellow, the drive starts. The focus is on the road ahead, from the driver’s perspective as if the viewer is in the driver’s seat. Next, a poster showing a road from the same perspective, disappearing in the distance, appears on the screen with the words “AIM FOR THE SKY, BUT MOVE SLOWLY, ENJOYING EVERY STEP ALONG THE WAY. IT IS ALL THOSE LITTLE STEPS THAT MAKE THE JOURNEY COMPLETE”. All the words are printed in bold white, except ‘COMPLETE’, which holds the viewer’s attention in bright yellow. The sketchbook page reappears, showing the first lines of a pencil drawing. This drawing in progressive stages of completion alternates with brief moments of the road trip throughout the short film, accompanied by instrumental music. A quote by Dwight D. Eisenhower fills the

screen: “Accomplishments will prove to be a journey, not a destination”, followed by the credit roll. The destination of the filmed road trip is not revealed but left to the viewer to complete. In his pre-project reflection, participant #11 indicated that he was working on his fine arts portfolio for his application to university, and that he, through helping out in parents’ shop, acquired people skills and communication skills.

Knowledge of film literacy

In his pre-project reflection, participant #11 acknowledged the potential which participation in, “The chance to understand a bit more about the film industry and hopefully develop my skills and further understand my capabilities”, interested him in the short film-making initiative. In response to a question about his expectations of the film-making workshop, he replied: “To further understand myself while also learning new skills to hopefully apply to my life and career one day”. He also mentioned a few challenges: “Maybe a few challenges in using the digital devices; am not very tech savvy... don’t often use digital devices but am keen to learn”. Participant #11’s reflections on his current knowledge about short film making, revolved around his personal situation at that time.

The development of critical self-awareness

By using words such as “(t}he chance to understand”, “a bit more”, “hopefully develop”, “further understand”, and “hopefully apply”, participant #11 shows a desire to move forward while dealing with the unknown. It implies a situation of not trying to understand everything at once (Taleb, 2014; 2020), while also embracing aspects of risk-taking and personal responsibility. It is argued that ‘learning’ for the participants in this inquiry, occurs within the space between critical self-awareness and transpersonal growth which, in itself is always in-becoming.

The development of transpersonal growth

In response to the question, Where would you like to see yourself after this short film-making opportunity?, participant #11 replied: “I’d like to see myself hopefully bring the short film-making experience to my tattooing and arts in a creative way”. His pre-project reflections showed a sense of “willing participation” (Gramsci, 1971; Brosio, 1994:49), being “willing to learn with others” (Johnson & Morris, 2010:90); a keen desire to adapt to change through “pedagogies of engagement” (Costandius, 2012:20) and to embrace new perspectives from people other than himself. Participant #11’s message to the youth in his community, shared through both his short film and an accompanying note, “To be yourself because nobody else can be you, but you”, accentuates the importance of a constant awareness of own thoughts, emotions, and actions (Krishnamurti, n.d). His short film focuses on an expanded sense of self (Dängeli, 2019:9), since the viewer’s attention is drawn to the outside world, while being reminded that personal development is an ongoing process. By positioning the viewer in his shoes – creating

the impression that the viewer is walking through the gate, drawing, and driving, the participant opened up multiple modes of perception (Barad, 2010; Wolfe, 2017; Dängeli, 2019) for both himself and the viewer. It is crucial that "...our transformative pedagogies must relate to both existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond the present situation" (Greene, 1995:50). The visual experiences, encountered by both the participant and the viewer(s), have served to take them "out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995:123) through intuitive and creative practice to help them 'think on their feet' and improvise how to navigate through uncertainty, chaos, and complexity (Finlay 2008:3-4; Rossi, 2017). Not revealing the destination of the road trip in the short film, empowered conditions of awareness to be accessed and employed by the viewer to figure out (Holland, et al, 1998) meaningful new possibilities of being, thinking, acting, and becoming.

EXAMPLE 6:

Introduction and background

Participant #14: KING V-star PRODUCTIONS

"Visual Poem"

The 02:30 short film is structured around a poem, written by the participant as a message of hope for the youth during lockdown in 2020. Dramatic piano music introduces the opening scene and set the tone for the rest of the short film, which is presented entirely in black and white. The young male narrator's voice is heard as his figure enters the garden scene and walks towards a tall tree, positioned in the centre of the screen.

Knowledge of film literacy

In his EOI, the participant clearly indicated his keen interest in the Performing Arts, and his experience as an actor and theatre maker in the creative industry. Hence, the use of a combination of art forms to communicate his message to the youth. Apart from coping with the consequences of social distancing during the 2020 lockdown period, the participant had to explore his skills and his curiosity "about knowing digitals and knowing about sites or software to use, to make a great film or video of my work"; and "learning more about filming and all its aspects". The kind of reality created and communicated through this short film, relates to the post-qualitative approach which enables scholars to view reality as a "flattened ontology" (St. Pierre, 2019:8) without "a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:23). Instead, the world at a particular moment in 2020, the poem, the author, the actor, the short film, its creator, and viewers are to be "thought as acting on one another simultaneously" (Mazzei, 2013:735). This entanglement of human and non-human bodies requires an understanding of a reality, always in becoming. It is this continual unfolding of

reality which is recreated every time the short film is seen by different viewers in a different context. Acquiring different identities – author, actor, cinematographer, editor, and viewer, presupposes different ways of seeing and doing. Furthermore, being on screen as well as behind the camera enabled this particular participant to experience “an engagement with and an objective distance from our [his] culture” (Allsup 2003:158).

The development of critical self-awareness

Responding to the question, “*What initially interested you in this short film-making initiative?*”, the participant remarked: “I have been scared to take the challenge of being on screen or behind the cameras because of the competition the film industry have. So when the opportunity came I told myself it’s time to stretch myself and explore my skills. “These remarks are evident of a critical thinking process which led to the participant becoming aware of his thoughts, emotions, and actions. Juxtaposing ‘temptation’ and ‘sorrows’ with ‘better tomorrows’, and ‘confusing’ and ‘losing in hopes’ with ‘peace in my mind’ in the poem, suggests reflective practice in studying his own experiences to improve his ways of working within his community and with local artists. It describes a process of putting his thoughts into action; a process of reflecting on the possibilities “to think differently, rather than legitimating what is already known ... a test of the limits that we may go beyond” (Foucault: 1992:8-9).

The development of transpersonal growth

The message the participant would like to leave for the youth of his community, is as follows: “Until you understand life is a Game, you won’t make it, unless you then get strategies to play along in the Game, you will make it. Fighting hard to achieve your dreams and vision because in this day and age you must not expect to be given but work to get it yourself”. References to “fighting” and “relocating a goal” in the poem relates to the participant overcoming self-doubt, addiction, and inner conflict. Drawing from these experiences he reaches out to the youth in his community, persuading them to work “for a better tomorrow”. Moving from physical self-centred understandings of the realities that limited his progress to experiential creations of reality, involved an expanded awareness of other possibilities, which nurtured the potential for this participant to grow transpersonally.

EXAMPLE 7:

Participant #17: (finger) Print Productions

Participant #17 submitted two experimental shortfilm-productions and selected the second film, “A beautiful world”, for the final screening event in November 2020.

A discussion of participant’s proposal for the making of an experimental short film-production: “Heritage Day”.

“Hello everyone!”...answered by “Hello’s” from group members. “

“How are you guys doing today?” “Fine, thank you” and “We are doing great” (group members).
“I’m about to make your day much greater!” “That’s it!” (group member)
“Ok. Now, my film that I did is around the theme of Heritage, and the theme is a man, walking all the way through my film. And that is you, following in the footsteps of your ancestors and what they left you, and staying on the right path. And then at one point we cut to someone, dropping their hat and someone else, picking it up. That’s almost like symbolising, you, leaving something; you, dropping something for future generations. And the music I’m playing over it, is *Starry, Starry night* by Don Maclean, and he’s singing about Vincent Van Goch, also an artist like us. And he’s singing about people not understanding him while he lived, and uhm... singing about his artwork. So, I hope that gives more appreciation to my artwork that I’m going to show today. The 01:00 min short film trial is shown, followed by a ‘Ta-da!’ from the participant and comments from the group, “Pragtig”, “That’s great, that’s great”. Pragtig, Pragtig! (Applause).

“A beautiful world”

The 04:19 min short film captures scenes of the participant’s immediate surroundings and take the viewer on a short journey through the daily life-world of the participant. All the camera work – still photographs and cinematography, are the participant’s own, original work. Backed by gentle instrumental music, the opening scene shows a bird’s eye view of a small country town, nestled between mountains. The clear voice of the young female narrator shares the following message: “We were given a precious world - a beautiful, pure, clean world. But we take it for granted.

Trashing the place, burning the place, and making it inhabitable for future generations.

We need to appreciate the wildness, the pure nature, the pure beauty and the rarity of all we’ve been gifted with”.

At 00:00:36 sec, as the narrator’s voice fades away, the lyrics of “Burn the ships”, sung by For King & Country take over and continues until 00:01:32 min when the narrator’s voice reappears: “So take care of this beautiful planet, because this is the gift from our generation to the next.” At 00:01:40 the narrator’s voice fades back into the remaining part of “Burn the ships” which continues until, at 00:03:16 min it transitions into “God only knows”, also performed by For King and Country. The music continues right up to the end of the short film, supporting the credit roll at 00:03:59, and last two sentences of the participant’s message to the youth: “Don’t let the rush of your day overpower the beauty of your life. Take a step back and appreciate your surroundings”.

Knowledge of film literacy

In her pre-project reflection, participant #17 wrote, “I like to learn new skills every day, so this is a subject I don’t know a lot about, that needs to change”. In response to the question, *What initially interested you in this shortfilm-making initiative?*, she replied: “It is a place where I can

combine all of the creative interests that I have. Photography, art, poetry, singing, and editing". These multi-disciplinary talents and efforts to act as change agents are the ones that most often remain untapped beyond the participants' communities. Acquiring an understanding of the multiple possible ways through which young citizens can enhance their abilities to become change agents, can essentially be transformative (Mezirow, 1997; Rowe & Netzer, 2012; Pappas, 2016). The participant's openness to change and considerable variety in interests, are among the job requirements within the twenty-first century workspace (WEF, 2020:154).

The development of critical self-awareness

Participant #17's reflection shares a clear understanding about recognising own shortcomings, her willingness to learn, and realising the benefits involved in continuous learning. In response to the question, *Where would you see yourself after this shortfilm-making opportunity?*, participant #17 replied: "As I said, learning new skills is always great, so I will use it one point or another". During this early stage of the project, the participant could only reflect on the possibilities "to think differently, rather than legitimating what is already known" (Foucault: 1992:8-9). Her post-project reflection opened a space to reflect on the value and relevance participation in this project had to both her personal and transpersonal development, "... a test of the limits that we[she] may go beyond" (Foucault: 1992:8-9). "As someone who presented poetry that I wrote from pure emotion on the internet, it was challenging to put it all out there without any assurance of how it will go and not knowing who is watching me made me anxious, but I trusted the process and it turned out wonderful".

Clearly, using digital devices and the internet as possible ways to communicate with a wider audience, posed challenges to participant #17. The uncertainties of the new experience and "not knowing", left her with feelings of anxiousness. On the other hand, she reflected on her trust in the process, and that she was satisfied with how the online experience turned out for her.

The development of transpersonal growth

"With this film I want to send the message that no matter your past and circumstances, you can build a future" not only speaks to participant #17's audience – first online, later in real time. It involves opening her awareness to her personal experience, allowing it to gradually unfold, "without judging it according to preconceived ideas" (Welwood, 2016; Dängeli, 2019:131). Her own transformation process enabled her to share personal online experience with fellow participants, the youth of her community, as well as a wider online audience. She reflected as follows: "Being able to watch my video back before sending it, made me realise how fast I speak and that I can come across as unclear. So, I worked on speaking slower and I was satisfied with the final product. (An opportunity I would not have had on stage)." Expressions like these, implying a change in perspective, would not have been expected during the early

stages of the shortfilm-making project, as the participants developed their reflective skills over time. Moreover, participants' newly acquired technical knowledge, gained from their shortfilm-making experience had to be converted into a reflective knowledge. Only then this research could become significant in its effort to impact "attitudes and perceptual change on the personal and transpersonal levels" (Kaplan, 2005). An example of personal transformation is visible in participant #17's response to the following question: *What do you think you can do now after you have gone through this 'Heritage Day'/ 'Watch Party'-event?* "Now I received "pointers" on how to act on video and now I know for the future (seeing as technology is becoming more and more parts of our lives)." Transformation on a transpersonal level was displayed in the way participant #17 responded when asked what she thinks about the potential of events such as the recent Heritage Day Watch Party, for young people to learn about themselves and to help them to envision possibilities for their futures? "Now, their videos reach 'sooo' much further than they originally would have; people seeking talent, sitting in other provinces can log on and so much possibilities can present themselves."

RESEARCHER'S NOTE

During this arts-based inquiry I have witnessed as many success stories as I have seen hardships. And it is still a privilege to share my passion for the arts, creativity and education with such a talented group of young adults. Yet, sometimes I wonder if they have the desire to improve their life situations as much as I want to see them do that. Particularly, when a participant turns his/her back on an opportunity to develop skills and talents, I wonder why they rather choose to struggle than to enjoy progress and wellbeing. Do I want them to live a better life more than they do? Each new decade brings forth unique circumstances and challenges that require constant innovation. I believe in the power of the Arts to inspire, to go beyond governmental spaces and education systems – places where traditional diplomacy most often is addressed. Through cultural interaction people have an opportunity to explore both their differences and their similarities, with the potential to learn from one another. Similarly, a transdisciplinary (Klein, 2014; Wang, et al, 2017; Rigolot, 2020), inquiry-based approach to research, relating to the exploration of a relevant concept, issue or problem that integrates the perspectives of multiple disciplines, enables new knowledge and holistic understanding to connect to real life experiences. Emerging questions driven by human development will always find a space or opening for contributing to new research. In the words of Keith Holyoak (2019:200): "The spider's web is another metaphor, perhaps several. However dense the weave, the web creates not a wall but a net with spaces that let light pass through it."