

**AFRICAN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM: AN ADULT TEACHING APPROACH IN GAUTENG
DISTRICT 6**

By

TEBOHO NGUBANE

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SUPERVISOR: DR PT MATHEBULA

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DECLARATION

STUDENT: 4307 327 – 1

I declare that **AFRICAN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM: AN ADULT TEACHING APPROACH IN GAUTENG DISTRICT 6** is my own unaided original work. All sources that I have consulted have been specified and acknowledged by means of complete references.

DATE.....

SIGNATURE.....

(MR. T. S. NGUBANE)

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ABSTRACT

Adult education in South Africa is at a developmental stage as it has moved from the national Department of Basic Education to the Department of Higher Education and Training in April 2015. Hence adult learners are still taught using the western approach to Pedagogy (child teaching approach) since the introduction of adult education early in the 1970s. The objective of this study was to find out if African Social Constructivism as an adult teaching approach in Gauteng District 6, guides adult teaching? This study was qualitative and a questionnaire plus interviews were employed. The study made a distinct comparison between African Traditional view of education and the western form of education. The findings of this study shows that African Social Constructivism as an approach seems not to be guiding adult teaching in Gauteng District 6. Consequently, African Social Constructivism is defended and justified because it recognises immanent adult respect and human dignity of all adult learners in South African adult centres.

Key words:

African traditional education, western education, African social constructivism, immanent adult respect, human dignity, social constructivism, pedagogy, adult centres.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	-	Adult Education and Training
ASC	-	African Social Constructivism
ATE	-	African Traditional Education
DoBE	-	Department of Basic Education
DHET	-	Department of Higher Education and Training
ERCEP	-	East Rand Continuing Education Programme
IQMS	-	Integrated Quality Management Systems
RPL	-	Recognition of Prior Learning
SC	-	Social Constructivism
TKM	-	Thuto Ke Maatla
UNISA	-	University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Adult education was introduced in South Africa around the early 1970s as a 'night school'. The said adult education programme was aimed at educating illiterate adults in order to develop themselves and make their lives better. In facilitating this form of education, western models of primary schooling were adopted and used to teach these adults. But if we look closer at the present education policy documents, it is apparent that the vision for adult education is still alive but the practice is different. In addition to the aforementioned, current education policy does not live up to the ideals that are set out in the Constitution of the Republic of South African (1996).

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) regard respect and human dignity as basic constitutional values in South Africa. Two of the aims of the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) are to (1) "promote the constitutional values which underline an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality, and freedom; and (2) respect and encourage democracy and foster a culture which promotes fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for adult teaching" (p2). The Western philosophy of education involves a theoretical discipline with special method of analysis, at the same time African philosophy of education "...is any kind of wisdom, individual or collective, any set of principles presenting some degree of coherence and intended to govern the daily practice of a man or a people (Hountondji, 1983: 47). However, in the western approach to education, the principle of community (communalism) is seen as secondary to the primary value of individualism. This is contradictory to the view of African traditional education that emphasises the social nature of individuals and group membership which is what makes African humans.

Against this background, in African traditional education adult learners possess a reservoir of life experiences, but they are taught using the western approaches by professionally-trained teachers.

This is the challenge that the South African adult education is presently facing. With that said, in African traditional education, the recognition of prior learning is placed at the centre; that is, adult learners are put in the position of authority since they possess prior knowledge when they enrol in an adult centre (and might be older than their teacher).

Consequently, African social constructivism emphasises and recognises prior learning in the context of western type of education. The adult teaching approach that acknowledges the life experiences that African adult learners have acquired informally or non-formally will be accommodating the respect and human dignity deserved by African adult learners in South African adult centres as their constitutional right. For instance, adult teaching in South Africa puts considerable emphasis on the respect and dignity of adults in learning centres. By this I mean that adult learners' treatment is characterised by respect and human dignity. The researcher maintains that they are not treated with respect and dignity (a basic constitutional value) by adult educators in the South African adult classroom.

Against this backdrop, I contend that the teaching approach that puts prior knowledge at the heart of adult teaching is most likely to acknowledge the inherent respect and human dignity of adult learners in South Africa. Hence, I argue that African traditional education (informal), and social constructivism (formal) teaching approaches should be seen as compatible and not disparate teaching approaches in adult teaching centres in South Africa.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Arguably, adult education policy documents, namely the ABET Act 52 of 2000 (The Presidency, 2000) and the National Policy on Community Colleges (DHET, 2015), are silent when it comes to giving credence to inherent adult respect and human dignity in post-apartheid South Africa. This is a clear indication that even the present Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) is not representative of the African adult teaching approaches that respect adult learners.

In my view, adult teaching approaches that encompass adult respect and human dignity are worth investigating in this study because, presently, the South African adult centres employ an adult teaching approach that recognises individuals first and the community later. Western education is provided in institutions within a formal process where the children sit behind the desk and the teacher stands in front teaching. In this type of education, children are regarded as empty vessels that should have knowledge poured into them.

Given that most adult centres are geared towards accommodating South African adult learners and teachers and yet their learning and teaching approach is western; it is apparent that a myriad of challenges are bound to arise. Therefore, this study intends to address some of the challenges that in the approach with the view to incorporating the intrinsic values of African traditional education. As stated earlier, human dignity and immanent respect for adult learners is neglected during adult lessons using a western approach. Essentially when the African adult learners come to learn, their prior learning is not recognised as required. They ought to learn from the known to the unknown (not the other way around). Therefore, African Social Constructivism is an adult teaching approach that may fuse African traditional education and western education for productive adult teaching in South Africa.

The relevance of the study has been informed by the current occupation of the researcher as an adult educator. The researcher witnessed incidents of adult learners being treated with disrespect and being made to feel less than human during their adult lessons in South African adult centres. For instance, during a lesson observation for the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) at an adult centre, I witnessed an adult learner being responded to in unpleasant manner when he asked the educator to further elaborate on “the e-mail” as he did not understand the technicalities around it because he had never come across one. Instead of the adult educator explaining, he laughed and answered the learner by saying “I do not have words to explain it further because I have already done so”. After this response from the adult educator, the learner felt demeaned. As a result of the response, the rest of the class stopped participating until the lesson ended.

In another instance the teacher called a level 2 learner (Grade 5 learner) by his first name during the lesson and the learner was not happy based on the fact that the teacher was younger than the learner in terms of age. It was unfortunate because the teacher could not see the importance of respecting the elderly learner based on the western way of seeing this as not disrespectful. Clearly, the life experiences which constitute prior knowledge that these adult learners had was not recognised by the educators in question because if they did, they would have treated the adult learners differently. It is clear that the teaching approach that was used by the educators in these two lessons did not consider immanent respect and human dignity, hence these principles were not applied during the lessons. This resulted in humiliation and embarrassment of these adult learners. Furthermore, making adult learners feel disrespected adds salt to the wound, considering the fact that these learners did not have an opportunity early in life to be educated, knowledgeable and skilled. Adult education and training is an opportunity for them to develop themselves accordingly, find suitable jobs and better their lives and that of their families. To drive this point home, adult education is meant to change learners' lives for the better. Moreover, feeling less dignified takes away a very important part of human nature from these adult learners and makes them lack confidence, self-belief and focus in life generally. The results of all this is that adult learners tend to be passive instead of being active during the lesson. They might even go to the extent of being less interested in getting an education due to the unpleasant experiences they endure when they are taught. I suggest that employing an adult teaching approach that will recognise the adult learners' immanent respect and human dignity seems to be the solution to this challenge.

Thus, instances of disrespect occur, for example, when adult teachers make fun of adult learners (see Mkhwanazi, 2001:83). In addition, the main objective of any lesson is to acquire knowledge or skills through relevant teaching approaches. This was not evident when looking at these two separate incidents because of the ill-treatment of adult learners. Questions and concerns around adult teaching approaches are raised by the researcher in this study which will make it possible to get into the details of adult teaching approaches that could be appropriate for adult education.

Adult educators teaching in adult centres must adopt the approach that “human dignity is appreciated in that everyone is seen as having inherent dignity, as well as the right to have their dignity respected and protected” (Broodryk, 2006:32). This type of thinking in teaching adults would achieve the fundamental goal of making adult learners feel respected and dignified in their classrooms as required by the principles of African social constructivism as an adult teaching approach.

If successfully carried out, the research will benefit the South African education sector in general, Adult Education and Training sector, adult learners, and educators. For example the South African Adult Education and Training sector could benefit by looking at the possibilities of employing the suggested relevant adult teaching approach. Adult learners would benefit by drawing on their inherent adult respect and human dignity during their learning in order for them to feel human in their adult classes. Adult educators would be able to explore the possibilities of the suggested adult teaching approach that encompasses inherent adult respect and human dignity. The South African education sector, in general, would have an opportunity to look at the possibility of employing different adult teaching approaches that would yield the required and expected outcomes where adult learners will be treated in a humane manner and be respected.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Personal experience has prompted me to investigate the magnitude of challenges that adult learners encounter at learning centres. I was then interested to find out if there are better ways that adult educators can use to teach adult learners from the African perspective.

In line with the above, this problem statement is:

African social constructivism is an adult teaching approach that would create a conducive teaching environment in the adult centres.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

“Is African social constructivism an approach that guides adult teaching in adult education centres?”

The sub-questions are:

- Does the current western approach to adult teaching address or incorporate the African principle of communalism in adult teaching?
- How does the current western type of education address or incorporate the African principle of recognition of prior learning?
- How is African social constructivism likely to benefit adult teaching?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are based on the problem statement and the research questions and are to:

- Establish the extent to which African social constructivism guides adult teaching in Gauteng Education District 6;
- Establish the extent to which adult educators promote African communalism and by implication the recognition of prior learning in Gauteng Education District 6;
- Establish the educational benefits of the African social constructivism as a teaching approach in South African adult education in Gauteng Education District 6.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed the qualitative method, using a combination of interviews, written questionnaires and document analysis for data collection. The research sites were two adult learning centres situated in Gauteng education district 6, namely Tembisa and Thuto Ke Maatla.

The population comprised of all adult educators who had completed the Fundisa for Change Biodiversity model and all adult learners in the adult learning centres. The sample was purposively and conveniently selected with four educators and four learners being selected. Data analysis consisted of coding of interview transcripts and the answers to the written questionnaires and triangulation of the results to ensure that they were valid and trustworthy. The ethical principles include requesting permission to conduct the research, obtain informed consent from participants and preservation of confidentiality were followed.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the findings and conclusions from the study may not necessarily apply to other adult education centres because of the limited constraints attributed to the sample size. Only two out of nine Adult Education and Training (AET) centres were sampled due to time constraints and the scope of the dissertation. This limited sample size is not necessarily representative of Gauteng education district 6 which comprises nine AET centres in this district (Thembisa, Kwazini, Wattville, Daveyton, Jiyane, Thuto Ke Maatla (TKM), East Rand Continuing Education Programme (ERCEP), New Millenium and Nashville). It is possible that if a bigger or a representative sample was taken, a different outcome could be reached. Secondly, since there has been no study conducted on fusing the African education and western education in South African adult centres, the results may not be able to be compared to existing practices. Therefore, the effectiveness of this fusion is based on exploring whether the suggested adult teaching approach guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6 which will be a limitation on its own because it will need further application and assessments to get satisfactory results. Basically, this means that the limitation suggests further research opportunities based on this adult teaching approach and its effectiveness.

Hence this adult teaching approach is suggested to try and influence and guide the development of adult education in the South African context. The ABET Act, (2000) and the 2015 National Policy on Community Colleges seem not to address the adult teaching approaches; instead they focus on the management of ABET / AET community education and training colleges / centres.

Thirdly, not having the curriculum that supports this teaching and learning approach is another limitation to this research.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is structured as follows;

Chapter 1: Orientation to the study: This chapter contains the background and motivation, research problem, aims, paradigm perspective and research design.

Chapter 2: Literature review: The chapter provides an in-depth study of existing research into African Traditional Education, prior learning from an African perspective, and social constructivism.

Chapter 3: Research design: This chapter turns to methodology, data collection, analysis, population, samples, data collection instruments and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis: This chapter focuses on the analysis and findings from the empirical research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations: This final chapter contains integrated discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The relevant literature is reflected in this chapter and covers the following concepts which form the building blocks of the study:

- African traditional education: The background including some of the characteristics and fundamental goals of African traditional education plus communalism are presented and discussed.
- Prior learning from an African perspective: The African view of prior learning is at the centre of this part of the research.
- Social constructivism: western type of education is discussed in this part. The concept of individualism is looked at in detail and how it contributes to the broader picture of Western education.
- The tenets of African social constructivism are identified.
- Comparative analysis of African traditional education and social constructivism: Specific differences between the African traditional education and the social constructivism are identified and mentioned.
- The fusion of African traditional education and western education: Immanent adult respect and human dignity as characteristics guiding the suggested adult teaching approach in South African adult centres are explored.
- Finally, the benefits of African social constructivism are addressed and different stakeholders who will benefit are mentioned.

2.2 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL EDUCATION (ATE)

According to Christie (1988:30), in pre-colonial African societies before white people came to Africa to colonise the continent, “education was part of daily life. African children learned through experience from doing tasks”. African children were not and are still not in some parts of Africa expected to attend formal classes, sit behind a desk and be taught by professional teachers in order to learn and acquire necessary life skills and knowledge to live well within their communities.

For example, some of the work and chores that children engage in include boys looking after cows and girls fetching water. African children learn through storytelling, initiation ceremonies and plays. “The boys learn how to distinguish useful grasses and dangerous weeds, how to stalk wild game, and how to care for cattle, sheep and goats” (Kajubi, 1974, cited in Mathebula, 2009:173).

In support of Kajubi “African traditional education is based on a philosophy of education, which emphasises learning by doing, respect for elders, lifelong education, training on the job, learning to live and living to learn” (Oduarana, 2002, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003:436). This type of education inculcates respect for African elders and those in position of power and authority.

Akinpelu (1987: 2) states that in the traditional African society “... philosophy ... is used for the profound saying of the elders, words which are both witty and pregnant with meanings; ...they are usually treated with deep respect ... words [are the] accumulated wisdom of generations that have passed to the great beyond”. This quotation is necessary to give a holistic picture of what African philosophy is about. Hountondji (1983:35) talks about

“Bantu philosophy and hierarchy of forces since these are the foundation of social order and, so to speak, its metaphysical bedrock”. “At the top of the scale, we are told, there is God, both spirit and creator. Then come the forefathers, the founders of the various clans, the arch-patriarchs to whom God first communicated the vital force. Then there are the dead of the tribe, in order of seniority; these are the intermediaries through whom the ancestral forces exert their influence over the living generation. The living themselves, who come next, are stratified not only by law but in accordance with their very being, with primogeniture (i.e. the state of being the firstborn child) and their organic degree of life, in other words with their vital power (*ibid.*:85). Right at the bottom of the scale the lower forces, animal, vegetable or mineral, are also said to be stratified according to vital power, rank or primogeniture. Thus, analogies are possible between a human group and a lower animal group, for instance: He who is the chief in the human order ‘demonstrates’ his superiority rank by the use of a riyal animal’s skin” (Hountondji, 1983:36).

African traditional education view adults as knowledgeable, thus they need to be treated with immanent respect and human dignity. For example; initiation ceremonies and storytelling are conducted by adults because of their prior knowledge. Therefore, African adults are knowledgeable, and should be respected and be treated with human dignity because of the prior knowledge they possess through life experiences. When African adults are respected and made to feel dignified when they are addressed, they tend to exercise their rightful level of authority in participating meaningfully when dealing with educational challenges by using their previous life experiences to yield the required results. (Naidoo. 2016) Makes it clear that “The idea is that this education will produce people who are not alienated from their communities and are sensitive to the challenges facing Africa”. (Naidoo. 2016) Further asserts that “... the curriculum involves developing scholarship and research established in African intellectual traditions”. This point is emphasised by (Lockett. 2016: 2) noting that this curriculum should focus on social justice based on the experiences of black people.

Arguably, the fundamental goal of African traditional education (Fafunwa, 1974, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinki, 2003:429) are; (1) To develop character; (2) To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority; (3) To develop a sense of belonging and participate actively in family and community affairs. These goals would be carried over into adult life. For the purposes of this study, the dissertation will examine whether goal 3 is reflected in adult centres in general.

Broodryk (2006:63) explains what it means to respect elders in an African way by stating that “respect stipulates the authority elders have over young people, parents over children It not only emphasises respect for the people one knows, but also for those one does not know”. Whilst human dignity is explained as seeing everyone as having inherent dignity, as well as the right to have their dignity respected and protected (Broodryk, 2006:35). Akinpelu (1987: 2) posits that “... the elders form the link with the departed, ancestral spirits, and the words they speak are therefore not their own, they are words of experience....” In other words, elders possess a reservoir of life experiences that inform their position of authority especially in passing the acquired skills and knowledge to the younger generation; hence, they command inherent respect and human dignity.

2.2.1 Prior Learning in an African perspective

Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003) state that African traditional education (ATE) means raise up which assumes unleashing the potential of people to understand things. This definition of ATE basically means that people possess knowledge that needs tapping into for their development. The ATE is based on five principles which are preparationism, functionalism, perennialism, communalism, and wholisticism (Ocitti, *et al.*, 1971, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003:431). For this study the researcher focuses on communalism which implies living together, sharing possessions and responsibilities.

In other words, communalism recognises the community first and the individual second. For example: “children belong to the community and every member of the community has a stake in their upbringing” (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003:432). There is a saying that “it takes a whole village to raise a child” (Healey, 1998:n.p.).

African traditional education (ATE) is based on knowledgeable learners, informal and communitarian processes, meaning that elderly learners are recognised as possessing life experiences that they gained during social activities where they are part of the community before they acknowledge their individuality. Growing up within the community that works together provides a platform to acquire a lot of knowledge and skills.

Since we are in Africa and we are Africans, the context which is our environment is African; however, because of the influence of colonialism, the content (teaching approach) is western in our adult centres and this is a challenge. The western approach is characterised by adult learners being taught by professionally trained teachers, being required to write formal assessments that may include class work, home-work and tests in order confirm their knowledge and skills as competent or not yet competent and then being given certificates or reports based on these results. By contrast, learning in ATE is done through observation, initiation and repetition of what the elders did and it is not formal (Rodney, 1972, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003:432). Therefore, the African view of education respects adults as knowledgeable and dignified even if they did not attend formal teaching as expected by the western education.

Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003:432) regard African elders as walking libraries based on the knowledge they possess as members of the community.

Knowles (1980:44-45) defines andragogy to mean “the art and science of helping adults learn”. Akinpelu (1987:2) claims that the adults’ words are “...accumulated wisdom of generations that have passed to the great beyond”, while Knowles (1980) asserts that adult learners have gained lifelong experiences which form the basis for of their conceptual knowledge. Tough (1967) supports Knowles’ assertion about the adult learner having prior learning. The acquired prior learning by adult learners is influenced by one of the African traditional education principles of working together as a community, which is communalism (Ocitti, *et al.*, 1971, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinki, 2003:431). This point is emphasised by Christie (1988) in saying “African children learned through experience from doing tasks”.

Although Knowles (1980) is not writing about African traditional societies, the author argues that adult learners have a reservoir of experience and they are self-directed. Tough (1967) confirms this because he believes that adult learners have the ability to apply basic processes of planning, conducting and evaluating learning processes and identify their own learning objectives.

One of the debates is based on the question that says “can andragogy be considered an adult learning theory or just a set of assumptions?” (Merriam, 2001: 5). Knowles argues that andragogy is not a theory but a model of assumptions about learning. Given this debate, I am in support of Knowles’ claim that andragogy is a set of assumptions not a learning theory because his research was based on what he assumed about adult learners, at the same time a theory is a conceptual framework in which knowledge is absorbed, processed and retained during learning like behaviourist, cognitive constructivist and social constructivist. Knowles (1980: 43) describes four basic assumptions about the adult learners. Knowles’ assumptions include:

- Self-concept: As a person matures his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one being a self-directed human being;

- Experience: As a person matures, he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource of learning;
- Readiness to learn: As a person matures, his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles; and
- Oriented to learning: As a person matures, his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness. This demands that their curricula should be based on practical application of solving immediate problems.

Adults will make their own plans and make sound decisions by gaining knowledge and skill to “detect and cope with personal and situational blocks to learning” in their motivation to learn (Tennant, 2006:10). Adult learners are not illiterate since they bring some knowledge with them into their class rooms, although they may be regarded as illiterate. Thus, RPL should be recognised when they are taught. Thus, I concur with Knowles’ view (Knowles, 1980, cited in Tennant, 2006: 9) that adult learners have their own unique way of being taught which is influenced by their own personal life experiences. This requires the post-modern adult educator to be continuously well-trained to think African and act western in recognising the principles of immanent respect and human dignity in teaching adult learners. He further argues that adult educators have the responsibility of adopting an andragogical approach to adult teaching (Knowles, 1980, cited in Tennant, 2006: 9) which is recognising a reservoir of life experiences that these adult learners bring along when teaching them within the formal setting (thinking African and acting western). I therefore acknowledge that the facilitation of adult teaching is in a continuous and developing state globally. Hence the need to employ social constructivism as a theoretical foundation for this research.

2.2.2 Traditional Western Education Approach

There are three characteristics of western education: it is provided in institutions, it is formal and learners are not knowledgeable up until they are formally taught. Essentially, the western education consist of a behaviourist approach characteristics where the teacher (a) has all the knowledge and (b) is responsible for transmitting that knowledge to the learners (Scheurman, 1998), in terms of a curriculum that is mandated by an educational authority as to what to teach and when to teach it. Locke (1960) points out that western education is based on the idea that we are “.....all born infants, weak and helpless, without knowledge or understanding (empty slates)”. Thus, learners need to learn within the formal setting and processes of formal schooling where there is a teacher standing in front of the class delivering the lesson and learners sitting down learning from the information being delivered. At the end, there will be class work, a test or an examination to assess the learners’ competence. Thus, learners are required to go through some formal assessment process where they would be evaluated on being competent or not competent according to the set standard of results by the recognised authority appointed by the state like the department of education. Adult learners are considered to have no knowledge at all because they did not formally sit behind the desk to be formally taught by a trained teacher, and were not formally assessed and confirmed to be competent or not competent as the set standard by the regulatory authorities.

2.2.3 Social Constructivism (SC)

Constructivist theory came to the fore as a reaction against behaviourism. It “acknowledges that the teacher is not a transmitter of knowledge but rather a facilitator and provider of experiences from which learners will learn (Scheurman, 1998). Similarly, pupils are not absorbers of knowledge but active participants in constructing their own meaning based on strongly held preconceptions” (Aldridge, Fraser & Sabela, 2004:245). Social constructivism (SC) takes it one step further and posits that learners construct their own meaning through social interaction based on their own experiences in order for the world to make sense to them (Vygotsky,1978).

Trent, Artiles and Englert (1998:287) state that “Social constructivism assumes that individuals are active learners who craft knowledge based on their prior experiences”.

According to Booyse (2010:42), “learners interact with the world by exploring and manipulating objects, wrestling with questions and controversies, or performing experiments. As a result, learners maybe more likely to remember concepts and knowledge discovered on their own (in contrast to a transmission/behaviourist model)”. The students are seen as achieving learning objectives through the process of experiencing new phenomena, interpreting the experiences based on prior knowledge, reasoning about new experiences, and reflecting on their experiences (Mbatl, 2013: 49).

My understanding of this idea is that, when learners craft knowledge, it is based on their social context and the construction process will be an interaction with other individuals. For example, when individuals interact with other individuals, it is usually for their own benefit first and the community comes second.

2.2.4 African Traditional Education

As stated in chapter 1, the main aim of this research is to investigate if African social constructivism is an approach that guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6. The differences between the ATE and SC are outlined briefly in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Distinct difference between ATE and SC

<u>African Traditional Education (ATE)</u>	<u>Western Education – Social Constructivism (SC)</u>
1. Informal.	Formal.
2. Knowledgeable learners.	Learners construct their own meanings from social experiences.
3. Lived experiences.	Personal experience
4. Provided in communities.	Provided in institutions.

ATE is informal (learners do not sit behind a desk and there is no teacher in front of the class teaching them), communitarian (people see the community first and their individuality second) and it is based on immanent adult respect and human dignity. On the other hand, SC is formal (learners sit behind a desk and the teacher is in front of the class teaching them); individualistic (people see their individuality first and the community second) and does not emphasise immanent adult respect.

African traditional education as a view and social constructivism as a theory are relevant in forming a meaningful conceptual frame underpinning the study. Put it differently, adult learners create their own knowledge based on their existing knowledge or prior learning. These are ATE features which are found in African thinking and they form the primary lens of this study. Since these three ideas are central to this thesis, they are elaborated on in the sections below.

2.2.4.1 Self-directedness

This model of adult learning acknowledges the uniqueness of learners and recognises differences amongst them. Age is not the main distinction between adult learners and child learners, but some factors like informal and non-formal education they went through way before the formal education may be considered in this regard. As the adult learner matures, he or she becomes self-directed in his or her learning (Knowles, 1975 cited in Merriam, 2011:8), hence he or she would move from the dependent to the independent stage (Knowles, 1980). Adult learners seem to develop an internal and personal need for education which is influenced by the role they play within the community, compared to child learners who are motivated by external factors. Thus, adult learners are self-directive, that is to say they are able to solve their own problems and that of their own communities. Tough (1971, cited in Merriam, 2011:8) describes this learning as “widespread, that occurs as part of adults’ everyday life, that is systematic and yet does not depend on the instructor or classroom”.

The difference between the way adult learners and child learners learn and are taught is a continuous and developing debate within the adult education as many educationists are

striving to find the distinct differences. McKenzie (1979) views andragogy and pedagogy as different from each other in terms of practice, while Houle (1972) posits that education is the same for all human beings irrespective of age or gender. Knowles' (1980) assumptions about an adult learner and the development of the theory of andragogy has assisted the adult education to have a different perspective of adult teaching and learning. Adult teaching and learning should involve emotional, psychological and intellectual being in order to achieve self-actualisation as the main goal for adult education (Knowles, 1980).

Assumptions about the adult learners affirms adult learners' self-directedness as follows: (a) dependence personality to self-directedness: becoming more independent than a dependent person; (b) having a reservoir of experiences: acquired informal knowledge should be recognised in their learning and teaching for effective and productive lessons; (c) learning that is more oriented to their social roles: learning for a specific goal in life; (d) problem-centred learning and the acquisition of problem solving skills: learning that helps them to solve everyday life problems (See Knowles 1980: 43 cited in Merriam (2001: 5).

2.2.4.2 Reservoir of life experiences

Seemingly a distinct adult characteristic that sets apart the adult learner from the child learner, this is one of Knowles' (1980) assumptions about an adult learner which forms the foundation for his andragogy as a learning theory for adult learners. This adult learner characteristic informs the recognition of prior learning (RPL) within adult education. Since adult learners are perceived to be having a reservoir of life experiences they have gained either informally or non-formally during their interaction with others in a social or work environment, it is therefore expected that they use it for their own benefit. Thus, it is required that this fact is acknowledged and recognised during adult teaching in order to achieve one of the teaching objectives which is for adults to gain problem-solving skills.

Adult learners are regarded as having more responsibilities than child learners because of the social roles they are expected to play and use the life experiences they have accumulated in their life time. "This life experience can be an asset when it enhances the

learning events, adding to the interpretation and the complexity of the subject matter at hand” (Lawler, 1991:6). They are usually motivated to go to school voluntarily due to the personal and social goals they intend to achieve within a specified period of time. Cross (1980) argues that as an adult learner develops, he or she tends to develop the ability to enact, articulate, and apply the information during teaching and learning activities.

ASC recognises social interaction between people based on their lived and personal experiences which forms the base of their knowledge. A key aspect of ASC is prior learning i.e, adult educators apply the principles of RPL during their adult teaching approaches. This means that all the acquired life experiences of the adult learner will be considered and recognised accordingly during lessons provided in South African adult learning centres.

Like in many developing countries, South Africa is no exception in adopting the recognition of prior learning which is aimed at accelerating the adult development based on informally, non-formally or formally acquired knowledge and skills, thereby allowing the adult learner to be credited accordingly by being awarded the relevant qualification in a form of a certificate, diploma or degree. This is only after the necessary assessment has been done.

Mayet (2003) looks at the vision and mission of RPL as follows:

- Knowledge, skills and competencies that employees and workers already have are identified (and, where appropriate, certificated) so that individuals’ skills levels are raised;
- The outcomes of RPL are linked to career and personal development plans, thus ensuring that career paths are available; and that
- The quality of education and training will be improved by identifying and monitoring the key criteria supported by capacity development throughout the sector.

All the above objectives emphasise acknowledging life experiences brought in the class room by adult learners. Therefore, emphasising the importance of applying RPL within adult education so as to achieve the required outcomes. It does not matter whether these life experiences are lived (AET) or are personal (SC); instead their importance is to be

recognised during adult teaching in order to provide effective and meaningful adult lessons.

2.2.4.3 Ability to create their own knowledge

Usually it becomes very difficult for adult learners to relate to lessons they do not have prior knowledge or experience of. They then tend to find the lesson complex and difficult to understand. It is found to be even more difficult within a formal setting where life experiences are not recognised when adults are taught. Adult teaching is a system in which life experiences are used to create new knowledge in order to understand what is taught (see Merriam and Caffarella, 1999: 38).

The ability to create knowledge is one of the concepts describing an adult learners' uniqueness and it is at the centre of adult education, as constructivism fosters learner's freedom to explore in their own context with the aim to find their own meaning (see Booyse, 2010: 37). The learning outcomes will be achieved "...through the process of experiencing new phenomena, interpreting the experiences based on prior knowledge, reasoning about new experiences, and reflecting on their experiences". This ability to create knowledge takes place when students combine their existing knowledge with the newly acquired knowledge in making sense of what they are taught (see Mbatl, 2013: 49), while the traditional teaching and learning approach directly compels the teacher to teach what is to be included in the test or examination so that learners can pass because that is the main objective of the traditional lessons which is contrary to constructivism.

Adult learners create their own knowledge during their lesson with the guidance of the adult educator as a facilitator in the teaching process. They do this by relating the new information to the existing prior knowledge (life experiences) and that provides a platform for a meaningful understanding of the specific lesson concept. The knowledge and skills acquired would be beneficial for personal and community development.

2.2.4.4 The differences between SC and ASC

While these principles are generally well-known in terms of western approaches and may be applied in South African adult learning centres, the difference is that, at the centre of the philosophy of African social constructivism is a teaching approach which is centred on immanent adult respect and human dignity. According to Broodryk (2006:2), "...respect is the basis of structured and disciplined society" which "is closely linked to the skill of living an ordered and structured life" which adult learners are striving to achieve. These concepts are not new as they have been mandated in various declarations and documents spanning the last sixty years, for example, the South African Constitution (1996) and CAPS (DBE, 2010). African adult education should therefore be based on universal values like respect and human dignity. The African traditional characteristic of *ubuntu* (human dignity) does not appear to be uniquely African but includes humanistic "concern, caring and compassion which is also prominent in the western thought" (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2005:548).

My contention is that ASC is the appropriate teaching approach to use when teaching adults in South African adult centres. When adult learners are taught, they need to be treated with immanent respect and human dignity. ASC is expected to yield the following results based on these values:

- (a) African adult educators will treat adult learners with respect and dignity when teaching them because of the reservoir of life experience they possess.
- (b) The learning environment will be conducive for the adult learners when they are treated with human dignity by allowing them to raise their own points of view and opinions about the lesson during their teaching.
- (c) Adult learners will feel comfortable and respected when they are being taught, thus they will be happy to attend the lessons in the South African adult centres.
- (d) The roles of thinking western and acting western will change to "thinking African and acting western" in the South African adult centres for the common good of all.

This means that ASC is a formidable adult teaching philosophy to contribute to the advancement of developing adult teaching in South Africa.

ASC is a teaching approach that will add what has been missing in teaching the South African adult learners in a formal setting but the thinking is African. Since there are notable good elements of African philosophy like (a) knowledgeable learners, (b) lived experiences and the good elements of western philosophy that include (a) Learners constructing their own meanings from social experiences, (b) personal experiences, it is vital that these elements are employed to bring about the necessary envisaged balance between these two types of philosophies.

2. Knowledgeable learners.	Learners construct their own meanings from social experiences.
3. Lived experiences.	Personal experience

2.2.5 Fusion of African Traditional Education and Western Education

Practically speaking, presently western teaching approaches are predominant in adult learning centres because adult learners are taught formally by professional teachers using a western curriculum (content) in an African environment (context). So, despite the fact that we are at the tip of Southern Africa (context), the teaching approaches that are currently employed in adult centres are western which is a challenge to African learners and African educators when it comes to the teaching concepts (content).

Compounding this problem, it is evident that we think western and act western in our South African adult centres. The way of thinking and acting western in South African adult centres demands investigation. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003) state that "...we are calling for a merger of what is good in African traditional education with the good aspects of the formal education of the western type". Enslin and Horsthemke (2005:555) argue that the merger between the African and western type of education "should not go beyond a mere appeal, and that Adeyemi and Adeyinka fail to specify the (concrete) aspects of traditional education that should not be taught and, for that matter, the 'good' aspects of western formal education". In addition, Enslin and Horsthemke (2005) state that they failed to provide guidelines on how to strike the balance between African and western forms of education.

Furthermore, they do not elaborate on the weighting, prioritising, or reconciliation of these forms of education. In the end, Adeyemi and Adeyinka proposed merger remains in substantial and unfocused. Due to this lacuna, the research intends to answer this vexed question on how African and western types of education can be merged.

2.2.6 African Social Constructivism

In a nutshell, at the centre African Social Constructivism is a teaching approach with immanent adult respect and human dignity. ASC recognises social interaction between people based on their lived and personal experience which influences their environment to acquire the necessary experience. The distinct differences between the ATE and the SC are described above to determine a possible merger of the 'good' aspects between the two types of education.

The lived experience from ATE represents the thinking which must be African. The institutions and formal settings of teaching adults were taken from SC hence the possibility of this merger is validated in this research. Hence, blending the African (traditional) and western (modern) education would be appropriate because African adult learners in Africa will be comfortable and proud of who they are.

Adult learners will attend their classes willingly and happily because they know that they are respected and they will not lose their human dignity by being taught and made to feel small and less of human beings because "...respect is the basis of structured and disciplined society" (Broodryk, 2006:2). Being treated like in a human being will make the adult learners to be proud of being African because "respect is closely linked to the skill of living an ordered and structured life" (Broodryk, 2006:2) which adult learners are striving to achieve. African Social Constructivism (ASC) in South African adult centres is intended as a teaching approach for educational benefit. It is the fusion of African Traditional education (ATE) and Social Constructivism (SC) characterised by immanent respect and human dignity.

Thus, my conceptual frame is based on; (1) self-directedness, (2) having a reservoir of life experiences and (3) the adult learners' ability to create their own knowledge.

These are ATE features which are found in African thinking and they form the primary lens of this study. Social Constructivism (SC) is linked to scenarios of adult learners being taught in a western model of education; SC is the secondary lens of this research.

Therefore, by having the African thinking based on respect and human dignity being applied in a western formal setting where learners are in class and the necessary assessment would take place, African adult learners should be taught based on the African thinking incorporated into western universal values like respect and human dignity (e.g. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, South African Constitution, 1996, and CAPS 2010). Similarly, the western practices which are characterised by formal assessments and formal outcomes or results should be incorporated. Thinking African and acting western in the South African adult centres will benefit adult learners, adult teachers and the South African adult education.

The researcher acknowledges the western universal context like class rooms found in existing adult centres and western practices like CAPS 2010 and ABET Act 52 of 2000 that are employed in the South African adult centres. The African concept is the thinking that is characterised by the immanent adult respect and human dignity. It is worth noting that presently the adult teachers are teaching African adult learners in adult centres using western teaching approaches to teach adult learners. As a result, African Social Constructivism (ASC) in South African adult centres is arguably the teaching approach that can bring about the required and necessary balance between the African traditional education and the western education. This adult teaching approach intends to inculcate human dignity and respect as important characteristics of this adult teaching approach.

These roles of thinking western and acting western in South African adult centres must be reversed in order to balance the scale, meaning traditional education and modern western education.

In support of ASC, the researcher has arrived at the following conclusions:

- 1) We have institutions that are western and we put human faces in these institutions (African Elders) – humans which are African. We bring the western conception to life by fusing the African view of education with western tradition.

- 2) Interestingly, these African concepts (e.g. immanent respect and human dignity) also find expression in western philosophy of education that guides post-apartheid education document policies in South Africa.
- 3) Inherent respect and human dignity are reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001).
- 4) Against this background of African and western perspectives, adult educators teaching in these westernised institutions must acknowledge the African way of thinking which can be complemented by western practices.

Hence blending the African (traditional) and western (modern) education would be appropriate because African adult learners in Africa will be comfortable and proud of who they are. The thesis is aimed at showing how this could be accomplished.

2.2.7 Decolonised, Afrocentric Education

A recent development in South African education circles is the call for decolonised, Afrocentric education, which appears to support the ASC philosophy. In a 'Fees Must Fall' march in Cape Town in September 2016, during an interview with Jenni Evans of News 24, one of the students, Athabile Nonxuba, summed up the definition of what decolonised, Afrocentric education is, as follows:

"The current curriculum dehumanises black students. We study all these white dead men who presided over our oppression, and we are made to use their thinking as a standard and as a point of departure. Our own thinking as Africans has been undermined. We must have our own education from our own continent; we cannot be decolonised by white people who colonised us. Decolonisation advances the interests of Africans instead of advancing Eurocentric interests. Eurocentrism does not advance our interests culturally, socially and economically. It does not resolve the issues of Africa. Education is not neutral; it serves a particular interest. Students are forced to accept certain standard works to study in certain fields – even the work of Karl Marx. Although considered worthy, the German's philosopher's work is offered repeatedly as a standard, instead of introducing new ideas by Africans. For decolonised education to be introduced, the

existing system must be overthrown, and the people it is supposed to serve must define it for themselves. We want to review that system and that curriculum, and that can't happen without a decolonised institution".

The above definition indicates the 'thinking aspect' as central to the need of decolonising education in South Africa and ultimately in the African continent. When "our own thinking as African has been undermined", we automatically become dehumanised as Africans in Africa. It seems as if once the decolonisation of the mind is achieved, the rest will follow suit in achieving the decolonisation of education in Africa. Adult education is also affected by the colonised way of white thinking as a standard since the western teaching approach is employed in teaching adults. ASC could be the starting point in influencing changes in education policies' approach to teaching in adult centres in South Africa.

2.2.8 How is ASC likely to assume respect for elders and human dignity?

The African Social Constructivism would be the appropriate teaching approach when teaching adults in the South African adult centres. Since recognition of prior learning is at the centre of ASC, adult teachers will be expected to apply RPL during their adult teaching approaches. This means that all the acquired life experiences of the adult learner will be considered and recognised accordingly during the adult lessons in the South Africa adult centres. When adult learners are taught, they are likely to be treated with immanent respect and human dignity. ASC is expected to yield the following results based on human dignity and adult immanent respect:

- (a) African adult teachers will treat adult learners with respect and dignity when teaching them because of the reservoir of life experience they possess.
- (b) The learning environment will be conducive for the adult learners when they are treated with human dignity by allowing them to raise their own points of view and opinions about the lesson during their teaching.
- (c) Adult learners will feel comfortable and respected when they are being taught, thus they will be happy to attend the lessons in the South African adult centres.
- (d) The roles of thinking western and acting western will change to thinking African and acting western in the South African adult centres for the common good of all.

This means African Social Constructivism (ASC) is a formidable adult teaching process that would contribute to the advancement of adult teaching in South Africa. ASC is a teaching approach that will add what has been missing in teaching the South African adult learners in a formal setting but the thinking is African. Immanent respect for elders and human dignity should be the cornerstone in everyday classroom teaching activities of these adult learners in South African adult centres.

2.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the background of African Traditional Education and western education including some of the differences between them. Prior learning in the African perspective and social constructivism as part of western education are acknowledged in this chapter. The concept of African social constructivism was broadly addressed with mention of new developments in this regard, such as a decolonised education. This chapter also attempts to answer the question on how a merger between African traditional education and western education could take place. The literature in this research confirms the possibility of fusing African and western types of education which could bring about a different approach to teaching South African adult learners by employing African social constructivism as an adult teaching approach. The chapter concludes by also showing that African Traditional Education and social constructivism are compatible and not entirely distinct approaches to education.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is empirical in nature; the researcher will rely on the evidence gathered in the field in order to make sound conclusions and recommendations. The evidence and knowledge will be gained by means of interviews and document analysis which will include adult educators' experience on adult teaching approaches. To the researcher, the term 'empirical' means "guided by evidence obtained from systematic research methods rather than from opinions or theories" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:9). A research design is a detailed plan on how the investigation will be conducted and it is aimed at researching a specific phenomenon. The qualitative approach provides insights into the problem and it seems to be effective in answering the research question: "Is African Social Constructivism an approach that guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6?" This research intends to understand the extent to which African social constructivism is guiding the adult teaching approach in an adult education centre. It also tries to answer the question on how African traditional education can be merged with western education.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research is concerned with a behaviour as it naturally occurs by using words to describe in detailed what happened in order to explain in-depth on why and how the behaviour occurs. Nieuwenhuis (2010:15) views qualitative research as a research approach intended to understand the processes and own contexts and surroundings which determine ones' behavioural patterns and pre-occupied with answering the *why* questions of the research. Therefore, qualitative research approach is a process employed in educational research to collect relevant data in order to interpret, explain and predict (see Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 47). Quantitative approach sentence removed. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities which are socially constructed and the understanding of the social situation is from the participants' point of view" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:12).

In trying to answer the research questions on whether the African social constructivism as an adult teaching approach is guiding the adult teaching approaches in Gauteng education district 6, the site of the research, there could be more than one possible answer. This is so because of the social situations that influences the participants' reality and points of view.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:321) posit that there are nine key characteristics of qualitative research:

- 1) Natural settings: Study of behaviour as it occurs or occurred naturally
- 2) Context sensitivity: Consideration of situational factors
- 3) Direct data collection: Researcher collects data directly from the source
- 4) Rich narrative description: Detailed narratives that provide in-depth understanding of behaviour
- 5) Process orientation: Focus on why and how behaviour occurs
- 6) Inductive data analysis: Generalisations are induced from synthesising gathered information
- 7) Participant perspectives: Focus on participants' understanding, descriptions, labels, and meanings
- 8) Emergent design: The design evolves and changes as the study takes place.
- 9) Complexity of understanding and explanation: Understandings and explanations are complex, with multiple perspectives.

McMillan and Schumacher's (2010) nine key characteristics of qualitative research are useful for the study because they will help the researcher to determine whether the African social constructivism approach is employed in adult centres. This requires that situational factors should be considered, with rich data being collected directly from the adult educators and adult learners. Fundamentally, qualitative research characteristics will be used to understand African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6. The researcher used qualitative research because it will allow him to relate and describe the phenomenon being researched as accurately as possible in words instead of numbers.

The researcher was able to explain his findings through the existing or emerging concepts during the analysis of the collected data because of employing the qualitative approach in this thesis. Through qualitative approach, data analysis was done with the consideration of patterns that are formed to emphasise the understanding of the data analysed which might have been complex.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:6) emphasise that “common sense and practical thinking are used to determine the best approach (e.g. quantitative, qualitative), depending on the purpose of the study and the contextual factors”. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen qualitative approach because it is informed by the interpretive/constructivist research paradigm that uses systematic procedures and maintains that there are socially constructed realities that emphasise values and context.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:22) state that the central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subject of human experience”. Applying this paradigm will benefit the researcher to understand the teaching approaches used in adult centres.

Briggs, Coleman and Morrison (2012:66) state that “interpretive approaches are good for first phase exploratory studies in order to understand educational processes and procedures”. The teaching experiences of adult educators would be understood from the point of the adult teaching approaches that adult educators use presently. For example: how effective these adult teaching approaches are?, whether the recognition of prior learning is recognised in the applied adult teaching approaches?, and if immanent adult respect and human dignity are observed and practised?

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In the words of De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2012), a research design contains a set of decisions to be made by the researcher regarding the topic to be studied. Briggs, *et al.* (2012: 75) define research design as a schema that constitutes the research study while McMillian and Schumacher (2010), cited in Mampshe (2015:49) see it as a

procedure for conducting the study, which includes the general plan of the project. The researcher should investigate and experiment with a number of methods until a satisfactory result is achieved (see McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:23). This means that the researcher needs to gather the relevant data to understand how African social constructivism guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6. By understanding the present adult teaching strategies, the researcher will be able to better understand the possibilities of ASC being employed as the adult teaching approach within adult education centres. The decisions on planning, implementation and managing research processes are also part of the qualitative method of this study.

3.5 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research strategy includes the following: sampling, collection of data and analysis of results.

3.5.1 Research site

According to Badenhorst (2013), data collection strategies are based on how the researcher will gain access, collect and organise data for the research. The research sites were two adult education centres in Gauteng education district 6, more specifically in the areas of Tembisa and Thuto Ke Maatla. Access to the research sites was officially obtained by the official written letters of permission (Appendix D, E and F). The research sites were chosen because they were easily accessible as the researcher is working at these sites. These sites are the biggest in terms of the number of adult learners' enrolment and adult educators in Gauteng district 6, which allowed the researcher to collect the rich and relevant required qualitative data. The researcher has personally witnessed the unfair treatment of adult learners. But even so, it was important to get the official access to this research sites.

3.5.2 Sampling and Population

Creswell (2010:118) maintains that there must be a precise reason in choosing a specific sampling technique. Maximum variation sampling was chosen for this research. According to McMillan *et al.* (2006:327) maximum variation sampling "is a strategy to

illuminate different aspects of the research problem”. This definition relates well to the research problem as it intends to clarify the immanent adult respect and human dignity within this research. This sampling strategy assumes that in order to get a complete picture about teaching approaches in adult centres a diverse sampling was necessary. The sample criteria included years of experience of adult educators and different learning areas in which they were involved. Furthermore, the NQF levels of the programmes was also considered. ABET Level 1 is equivalent to Grade 3; ABET Level 2 is equivalent to Grade 5; ABET Level 3 is equivalent to Grade 7; ABET Level 4 is equivalent to Grade 9.

The study sample was selected from two AET centres out of nine, selected on the basis of convenience of access. A total number of four adult educators and four adult learners were selected, 2 from each centre. The sample is described in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Sample selection

<u>AET CENTRE</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>	<u>ABET LEVEL</u>
Tembisa	Educator 1	Level 1 (= Grade 3)
Tembisa	Educator 2	Level 2 (= Grade 5)
Thuto Ke Maatla	Educator 3	Level 3 (= Grade 7)
Thuto Ke Maatla	Educator 4	Level 4 (= Grade 9)
Tembisa	Learner 1	Level 1 (Grade 3)
Tembisa	Learner 2	Level 2 (Grade 5)
Thuto Ke Maatla	Learner 3	Level 3 (Grade 7)
Thuto Ke Maatla	Learner 4	Level 4 (Grade 9)

3.5.3 Data Collection Methods

Three data collection techniques were employed by the researcher in this research namely; interviews, questionnaires and analysis of documents in order to collect relevant data. Adult educators were interviewed based on different levels between level 1 and 4, while the adult learners were asked to complete a written questionnaire. Given that collection and analysis of data can be time-consuming (Mouton, 2001), the methods were limited to these three sources. Cohen *et al.*, (2007:141) view triangulation as the

application of more than two data collection methods. This confirms the researcher's choice of employing these three data collection techniques for the purpose of triangulation in order to confirm the findings and achieve validity. Additionally, Creswell (2005: 600) asserts that employing different data collection techniques such as interviews, questionnaire and documents is to authenticate data from participants. Three different data collection techniques used in this research provides a platform for the rich data to be collected and reliable conclusions to be arrived at.

3.5.3.1 Interviews

The researcher elected to use semi-structured interviews for data collection. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:396) posit that using the semi-structured interviews is an "approach...to identify trends and explore them further to obtain insights into the topic under investigation". The researcher intends to obtain insight into the experiences of adult educators and adult learners to determine whether adult teaching in Gauteng District 6 is guided by the African social constructivist paradigm. This data collection strategy is relevant to this research based on the valuable, rich data that interviews are expected to provide.

There is a range of interview formats from which to choose from, i.e. structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. To elaborate, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with open-ended questions were used in this study (Baloyi, 2007) which allowed for some degree of structuredness without the problems inherent in unstructured interviews which could sidetrack the participants into dealing with topics that are not pertinent to the interview questions (Appendix A). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and can be used with all age groups. This form of interview is flexible to the extent that the researcher can prepare questions in advance and ask them in a different sequence or order during the interviews or ask additional, related questions to get more information. This will assist in gathering descriptive data in the participants' own words.

Briggs, *et al.* (2012:79) and Merriam (2009: 87) cited in Mampshe (2015:63) suggest that semi-structured interviews are carried out mostly in a qualitative case study which allows the participants to respond in their own way. Therefore, the participants will not be channelled to answer in a specific way, even though follow-up questions may be asked for greater clarification. De Vos, *et al.* (2012:342) state that the quality of the semi-structured interview depends largely on the skills of the researcher. Which means that the researcher not only needs to be able to ask correct and relevant questions but he also needs observation skills, “empathic sensitivity and intellectual judgment” (Gorden, 1988:7).

Interviews were audio-recorded with the participants’ permission so that they could be transcribed for later analysis.

3.5.3.2 Document analysis

Document analysis was used to clarify any misunderstanding or to better understand the participants’ point of view provided during the interviews. Briggs, *et al.* (2012: 297) indicates that documents should to be analysed in the context of the data collected and this supports the idea of supplementing the interview data collection technique with document analysis of the following documents:

- Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001);
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996);
- ABET Level 4 – Life Orientation work schedule (2014);
- ABET Act 52 of 2000; and
- The National Policy No, 569 on Community Colleges (2015).

3.5.3.3 Questionnaires

In simple terms a questionnaire is a form that participants complete and return to the researcher (see Creswell, 2012, cited in Norman, 2012: 51). In order for the researcher to apply this kind of data collection technique, consideration was given to different factors that might affect the accuracy of the results based on the data to be collected in this project and they include that a questionnaire :

1) allows a lot of data to be collected; 2) is quicker than interviews; 3) is easy to manage; 4) is not complex to analyse; 5) is less expensive; 6) affords anonymity and confidentiality for participants and 7) is more objective (see Creswell, 2012, cited in Norman, 2012: 51). It was very important for the learner participants to be given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires in their own time, space and day suitable to them. The best suitable technique available was the questionnaire for this project rather than verbal questions asked in an interview considering that they might be intimidated especially using English as their second language. The questions were structured in simple and clear language in order to collect rich and relevant data.

3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:367) assert that in qualitative research, plenty of time is required for data to be analysed, summarised and interpreted. The researcher has employed the following data analysis process which is also illustrated below in Figure 3.1. Triangulation was used to verify the information:

- Collect data: Interviews and questionnaires were administered and relevant data collected.
- Organise data: Read collected data at least more than once and arranged into meaningful and workable groupings.
- Transcribe data into segments: Writing down the organised and selected data into their respective divisions in order to facilitate the analysis process.
- Code data: Provide codes on the data divisions for better understanding and have segments containing one idea. The data coding is labelling segments.
- Describe data: Develop descriptions of the codes based on the respective data.
- Categorise data: Categories are developed from the described data. This is to create a clear meaning of the analysed data.
- Develop patterns: Patterns are formed to emphasise the understanding of the data analysed which might be complex.

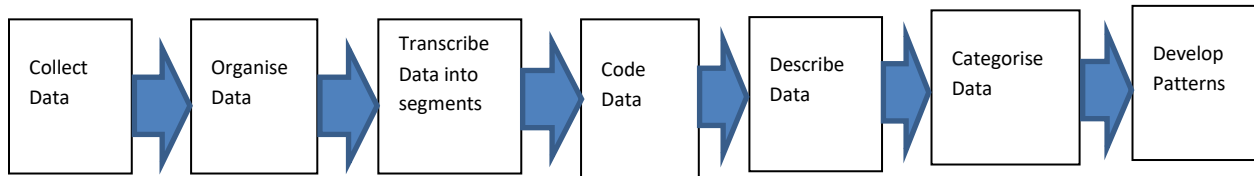


Figure 3.1: Steps in analysing qualitative data

Source: Adapted from McMillan and Schumacher (2006:369)

As defined by De Vos and Fouche (1998: 336), data analysis is a process that aims at breaking down a complex whole into meaningful parts for better understanding of the information provided. After collecting data from the audio-recorded interviews, description of events emerged from the data by creating relevant codes and themes which formed the basis for data analysis. Triangulation which is a tool that facilitates data validation by comparing data from two or more sources was employed to verify the collected data. The two sources were interviews with adult educators and interviews with adult learners. The data from the interviews were compared to see to what extent they agreed or differed. Therefore, data analysis is the logical system of searching and arranging the collected data in order to expand the understanding and to enable the researcher to present what has been discovered to others (see Creswell, 1994, cited in Norman, 2012: 52).

3.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness must be assured by triangulation, verbatim accounts and participants' language according to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:404-411). The researcher used triangulation of information from the two sets of interviews (with educators and learners) to ensure trustworthiness.

Briggs, *et al.* (2012:301) state that, "credibility is to assess a document for accuracy" and it will assist the researcher to verify all relevant data to be analysed in this research. Within the credibility and trustworthy process, the researcher is required to make sure that his understanding of the collected data is the same as that of the participants. This is to ensure that the researcher and participants agree on the description and opinions about the phenomenon of African social constructivism in adult learning centres.

The researcher collected data as accurately by recording the interviews verbatim in order to draw credible and trustworthy conclusions for this research.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics keep participants safe from harm and ensure mutual trust between the participants and the researcher throughout the research process (Briggs *et al.*, 2012:90). Four pillars of ethics will inform the intention to protect participants from any form of harm or prejudice during the conduct of this study, namely safety, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and the right to withdraw. Effectively, the researcher must carry the responsibility of taking care of participants from the beginning to the end of the research. After the researcher explained the purpose and scope of the research, informed consent was obtained from participants (Appendix C). The participants' confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were respected and maintained throughout the research process by the researcher as required. Dhlamini (2012: 115) states that "researchers must take care of and treat their participants with respect and seek their co-operation". The researcher also reminded participants about their rights to withdraw from participating in the study if they felt the need to do so. The necessary official process for ethical clearance was followed through various stakeholders that included obtaining permission from the Department of Higher Education and Training, Tembisa and Thuto Ke Maatla AET centres and the University of South Africa (UNISA) as required (Appendix D, E and F).

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter reflected on the qualitative research approach to obtain in-depth understanding of why and how behaviour occurs within natural settings. The participants' view point were important in order to verify their understanding of the phenomena and that of the researcher. It also explained the research methodology and paradigm which indicates that there are more than one social realities, the population and sampling which gives the brief background of the participants and the type of sampling chosen, the data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and the analysis of documents, the data analysis process produced the results and findings and the ethical considerations which assisted the researcher to conduct the research as required.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aims and objectives of this dissertation, are namely to:

- Establish the extent to which African social constructivism guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6,
- Establish the extent to which adult educators promote African communalism and by implication the application of prior learning; and
- Establish educational benefits of African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach in South African adult education.

The results and analysis that were derived from the qualitative data collected by means of documents, adult educators' semi-structured interviews and adult learners' questionnaires, data analysis and the emerging themes are presented in this chapter. The researcher presents the findings by identifying broad categories and the codes from the collected qualitative data which lead to the conclusion and recommendations.

4.2 FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENTS ANALYSED FOR TRIANGULATION.

- The manifesto on values, education and democracy (2001: 3) is a document that is founded on the "ideals and concepts of democracy, social justice, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, Ubuntu (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of law, respect and reconciliation in a way that suggests how the Constitution can be taught, as part of the curriculum, and brought to life in the classroom, as well as applied practically in programmes and policy-making by educators, administrators, governing bodies and officials" (Manifesto on values, education and democracy, 2001: 3).

This research focused on respect and Ubuntu (human dignity) as the principles of African social constructivism which is the proposed adult teaching approach for use in adult learning centres. The semi-structured interviews probed if adult teaching was guided by the African social constructivism in Gauteng education district 6 based on these principles.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) is the highest law of the Republic of South Africa which was used as the basis for developing the manifesto on values, education and democracy (2001). Additionally, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) in Chapter 1 Sub-section 2, also states that “This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic, and any law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled”, which qualifies the manifesto on values, education and democracy to be a valued document. The Constitution is founded on four values: (a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. (b) Non-racialism and non-sexism. (c) Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law. (d) Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters’ roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness (Chapter 1 sub-section 1). For the benefit of this research the focus was on the first one which is (a) human dignity.

- ABET Level 4 – Life Orientation work schedule (2014): This is a curriculum document which guides the adult teacher in delivering the curriculum through the identified class room activities which form the basis of a lesson plan. This research probed this document in terms of the African or western teaching approach that might be presently used in Gauteng education district 6. The researcher found that this document seems not to be guided by the African social constructivism as an adult teaching approach in Gauteng district 6 which is based on the values of adult immanent respect and human dignity.
- ABET Act 52 of 2000 and the National Policy No, 569 on Community Colleges, 2015: these documents are respectively the first and second policy documents intended to create some direction for the provision of adult education in South Africa. These two policy documents affirm the administration and management of ABET centres but they are silent when it comes to inherent respect and human dignity. The 2015 National Policy No, 569 on Community Colleges encompasses new ABET developments and changes adult learning centres to community learning centres and their new structure.

4.3 OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

4.3.1 Description of the adult educators

The two males and two female adult educators who were the respondents in this research have between 3 and 13 years of experience in teaching adults. Their combined years of experience in teaching adult learners is 25 and it is where they started their teaching careers, which makes them appropriate participants. The professional qualifications they have are between the Higher certificate in ABET and the Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) and 50% of them are currently taking courses to develop themselves professionally in the field of education while the other 50% will continue only next year due to unforeseen circumstances. All these educators deem it important for one to continue developing oneself in teaching adults because of the ever-changing needs which mandate the curriculum to change accordingly. Furthermore, adult educators and adult learners are not from the same cultural background.

4.3.2 Description of the adult learners

The four adult learner participants were all females (the word “and” is removed) between 23 and 41 years of age. They all had some form of formal education but had been out of school for more than 10 years before they started attending ABET classes. During the time this research was conducted, they were attending levels 1 – 4 in their respective adult centres. All of them had children, two of them were married, one was the student representative at her centre and the community leader. They were all intending to finish their grade 12 and then pursue their respective careers which included nursing, early childhood development practitioner (ECD) and office administration.

4.4. COLLECTION OF DATA

4.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

I individually met with all the respondents which consisted of 4 adult educators in our different semi-structured interview meetings. The semi-structured interview meetings went according to our meeting schedules in the two, identified community learning centres namely, Tembisa CLC and TKM CLC and all participants kept their appointments with

me. Seven main questions were used in this semi-structured interview with some follow up questions where there was a need. These main questions were provided and discussed with all participants for better understanding in the briefing meeting which took place before each interview (Appendix A). During the briefing meetings, the participants' informed consent was obtained.

4.4.2 Questionnaire

I had individual meetings with the adult learners where the research purpose was verbally explained including the questionnaire and their consent form. All consent forms were signed by the adult learners after they agreed to take part in this research. These learners were studying ABET Level 1 to Level 4 programmes. They were requested to complete the questionnaire in writing. The researcher collected the questionnaires from these adult learners between 3 and 7 days after they were issued, due to personal reasons encountered by these adult learners. The questionnaire is found in Appendix B.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND EMERGING THEMES

Data analysis meant transcription of all respondents' audio-recorded interviews verbatim and the written answers from the questionnaire (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 for manually coded text), then reading through the transcriptions a few times to firstly obtain an overall impression of the content and context, at the same time identifying key words, sentences and paragraphs, which was an important action in the research project in order to make sense of, interpret and theorise those data (see Smit 2002, cited in Ditsele, 2015: 53). As is to be expected, the researcher had to identify and select the common codes from the rich data that is collected in order to develop the necessary themes. Hence the researcher has used two participants (1 for interviews and 4 for questionnaires) in the analysis of data and the emerging themes because these capture the overview essence of what is meant by the participants overall impression. As the discussion has indicated, an analysis process that is well developed and comprehensive would afford the researcher to formulate meaningful conclusions.

Table 4.1: Example of manually coded text from the semi-structured interviews.

QUESTION	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
<p>In your view, what are the key principles that guide the western approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?</p>	<p>Respondent 1: In my view the difference is not that much. In a western approach when a person learns is <u>doing that for himself or herself</u> but in an African approach when a person is taught <u>the purpose is for the benefit of the whole community</u>. In as far as respect is concern I suppose even in the western approach <u>respect is emphasised to some extent</u> even if it is true that African approach differs with western approach because in a western approach any person old or young they call each other by names. If the adult person's name is Charles, you just call them Charles but in an African approach I will not call my adult learner by name. I will rather use the surname preceded by a title (Mr. or Baba).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing it for himself or herself instead of the whole community. • Respect emphasised to some extent.
<p>How do you acknowledge recognition of prior learning in your adult</p>	<p>Respondent 1: Yes I do acknowledge the knowledge that the learners possess before starting teaching. I am of the view that when you teach adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are empty or do not have knowledge.

QUESTION	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
<p>classes in Gauteng District 6?</p>	<p>you do not teach <u>people who are empty or who do not have knowledge</u>. It is important to start by assessing what the learners know in a as far as that lesson is concern. Example: When I am teaching a lesson about how to use an ATM machine. I will give the learners a lesson topic and then <u>ask them what they know about the ATM machine instead of me telling them first</u>. In that way I will be able to fill in the gaps on what they do not know about how to use the ATM machine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them what they know about the ATM machine instead of me telling them first.
<p>What is your understanding of African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?</p>	<p>Respondent 1 = As the name suggests, African is about people living in Africa and social means <u>how people interact with each other in a constructive manner</u>. My understanding is that as Africans we should come up with an approach that would <u>make our adult learners dignified or respected</u>. This approach should <u>acknowledge skills and knowledge</u> that these adult learners possess even if they have never been to school. This approach should <u>not make the adult learners feel belittled</u> because they have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How people interact with each other in a constructive manner. • Make our adult learners dignified or respected. • Acknowledge skills and knowledge. • Not to make adult learners feel belittled.

QUESTION	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
	never seen a class room door during their days as young people.	
What are the possible challenges to African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?	<p>Respondent 1 = I do not think that they will be challenges as such, except in a set up <u>where the adult teacher is not of an African origin.</u> Where there is an African adult teacher by origin and the adult learners are Africans I am of a view that there should be no challenges because the approach will make the adult learners feel at liberty knowing that they are respected and their knowledge is taken to cognisance. The adult learners will also know that the reason they are at school is to gain more or fill in the knowledge and skills gap not that they are viewed in the light that they are empty vessels. Where the adult teacher is employing the western approach only in teaching adult learners there will be challenges because the teaching approach should touch what the adult learners know which means you will be teaching them from the known to the unknown. The approach must involve the teaching that is in context with their environment. Learning is encouraged</p>	<p>Where an adult teacher is not of African origin.</p> <p>Not acknowledging the African way of life.</p>

QUESTION	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
	<p>to involve touching base with the learners' daily life or teaching them to apply what they have learned in order to improve their lives in one way or the other. Basically what the adult teacher will be saying to the adult learners is that <u>“We do not acknowledge your way of life but we want to want to teach you something new all together”</u>. The main purpose is to empower them in doing things better than before. They should find something that was difficult yesterday easy today in order to do things better.</p>	

Table 4.2: Example of manually coded text from the adult learners' questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
<p>Does this western teaching have African teaching as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?</p>	<p>Respondent 4 = <u>Not quite, western teaching has got to us so much that we have forgotten about our African ways</u>, who we really are, <u>our customs and the respect</u> we should give out and receive from people.</p>	<p>Not quite, we have forgotten about our African customs and respect.</p>
<p>In your view, the way you are taught is it</p>	<p>Respondent 4 = It is guided by <u>both western and African</u>,</p>	<p>Both, but mostly by the western approach.</p>

QUESTIONNAIRE	TRANSCRIPTION	CODE
guided by western, African or both in Gauteng District 6?	<u>though we are being taught mostly in the western</u> way we also get some African feel to the way we are being taught.	
How is African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching likely to benefit adult learners in Gauteng District 6?	Respondent 4 = (a) <u>More knowledge</u> , (b) <u>learning path made easy</u> , (c) <u>prior learning acknowledged</u> .	More knowledge, learning path made easy, prior learning acknowledged.

4.6 FINDINGS

This section consist of analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

4.6.1 Findings from the Semi-Structured Interviews

Question 1: In your view, what are the key principles that guide the western approach to adult teaching?

The researcher asserts an overview of responses from the respondents in that some of the principles that guide the western approach to adult teaching include individualism, respect to some extent and the dominance of English as a language.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 - Q1 "... In a western approach when a person learns is doing that for himself or herself but in an African approach when a person is taught the purpose is for the benefit of the whole community. In as far as respect is concern I suppose even in the western approach respect is emphasised to some extent...If the adult person's name is Charles

you just call them Charles but in an African approach I will not call my adult learner by name. I will rather use the surname preceded by a title (Mr. or Baba)."

T/R2 - Q1 "...as an English teacher you have to teach adult learners in English but some adult learners do not understand English. The second one is that there are no African home language story books for Level 1 to 3."

T/R4 - Q1 = "...As an adult teacher you must apply the principle of Ubuntu which includes respect but in the western approach calling the elderly women by name is acceptable".

Question 2: Do these western principles incorporate African communalism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?

This question called for the understanding and knowledge of the western approach and the influence that the African approach based on communalism has on the western teaching approach. The researcher's analysis on this question is that respondents' general understanding was that no African communalism is found in the western approach and the curriculum used is western.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R2 – Q2 "...The African element is not part of the curriculum because my work schedule does not involve any African element."

T/R3 – Q2 "...They do not incorporate Africanism instead the western approach is dominating the lessons in our adult class rooms..."

Question 3: How do you acknowledge recognition of prior learning in your adult classes?

In this question the respondents were required to give their own evidence on the application of the recognition of prior learning during their lessons in the adult classes. The researcher noted that respondents' acknowledged the principle of the recognition of

prior learning by recognising that the adult learners did not come into the class rooms as empty vessels and they will asked questions during the lesson introduction based on the lesson topic as part of the recognition of prior learning.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 - Q3 "...I am of the view that when you teach adults you do not teach people who are empty or who do not have knowledge. I will give the learners a lesson topic and then ask them what they know about the ATM machine instead of me telling them first. In that way I will be able to fill in the gaps on what they do not know about how to use the ATM machine"

T/R3 - Q3 = I acknowledge the recognition of prior learning by asking my adult learners questions. I then realize how much they know from the questions I have asked them and their answers to those questions.

T/R4 - Q3 "Yes it falls in automatically in a day-to-day learning teaching within the curriculum or the subject that one is teaching. This is done by assessing learners through questions that are not difficult in terms of their previous knowledge."

Question 4: Is your teaching guided by western, African or both approaches?

The respondents were required to show their understanding of the teaching approach they used in their teaching. This question also probed for the possibility of the two teaching approaches being employed or the possibility of one approach being dominant in their teaching. The researcher confirms the respondents' responses in that they confirmed that both approaches are applied but the western approach is dominant. Respect as one of the African principles in adult teaching is the most applicable and is what makes the difference between the approaches.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 - Q4 “It is guided by both to some extent ...a principle of respect involved even if an adult cannot write or read....the person is still an adult and possesses some knowledge and some skills ...”

T/R2 - Q4 = “...young adult learners to do that as a symbol of respect to the elderly learners. Greeting is one of ways that I use to bring in the African element in the class where titles and praises will be used during this process.”

T/R3 - Q4 = “Myself and most of my colleagues at our adult centre apply respect all the time when we teach.”

T/R4 - Q4 “Both but dominantly is the western approach...I think in the entire District 6 in Gauteng the western approach is dominant.”

Question 5: What is your understanding of African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching?

This question called for the individual general understanding of African social constructivism as an approach in adult teaching. The general understanding and responses of the respondents as analysed by the researcher was that it is an interaction between people; it is a way of respecting and restoring dignity of adult learners; it recognises knowledge and skills; it make adult learners not to feel belittled, embraces Ubuntu, and embraces African identity and African values.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q5 “As the name suggests, African is about people living in Africa and social means how people interact with each other in a constructive manner. My understanding is that as Africans we should come up with an approach that would make our adult learners dignified or respected. This approach should acknowledge skills and knowledge that these adult learners possess even if they have never been to school.

This approach should not make the adult learners feel belittled because they have never seen a class room door during their days as young people”

T/R2 – Q5 “It is about Ubuntu that we must bring back in our classes so that it is not lost. Respect must be there especially to our elderly adult learners because they appreciate it a lot especially when you use the title or praises. We must know who we are and where we come from...”

T/R4 – Q5 “...It has to do with who you are. It has to do with identity... construct African values. ...maintain the Africa values.”

Question 6: What are the possible challenges to using African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching?

The aim of this question was to identify all possible challenges that might be encountered for this suggested adult teaching approach. The expected challenges could come from stakeholders like adult educators, adult learners, the community and the district office (Department of Higher Education and Training). The researcher noted that possible challenges that the respondents identified included adult educators who are not of African origin, adult educators who apply only the western approach to adult teaching, work schedules, African language facilitators, politics and the social environment that is predominantly influenced by the western way of life.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q6 “I do not think that they will be challenges as such, except in a set up where the adult teacher is not of an African origin. Where there is an African adult teacher by origin and the adult learners are Africans I am of a view that there should be no challenges...”

T/R2 - Q6 “One of the challenges will be the language work schedule... The district might have a challenge because they do not have relevant facilitators in African languages hence the African element will be a challenge to add on to the curriculum.”

T/R4 – Q6 “Adult educators will not have a problem in applying the African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach in District 6 Gauteng except that the politics and social environment might play a negative role due to the western way of life or doing things which is dominant.”

Question 7: How is African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching likely to benefit adult learners?

The objective of this question was to identify the possible benefits that adult learners might have through the suggested African social constructivism as a teaching approach to adult teaching. The general trend of responses from the respondents as gathered by the researcher was that Africanism would be embraced; learning would be easier; it would increase learning interest and empower learners; teaching would be received well; learners would know their roots and respect would be increased; Ubuntu would be applied; and prior learning would be acknowledged.

Semi-structured interview excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q7 “(a) Learning context will embrace the learners’ Africanism and social set ups, (b) Learning will be easy, (c) learning interest will be created, (d) empowering adult learners will be easy because new learning will be easily accepted by adult learners, (e) Learning and teaching will be received well by adult learners.”

T/R2 – Q7 “(a) To know their roots, (b) respect elders, (c) gain African knowledge.”

T/R3 – Q7 “(a) Respect one another, (b) Ubuntu.”

T/R4 – Q7 “(a) More knowledge, (b) learning path made easy, (c) prior learning acknowledged.”

4.6.2 Findings from the Adult Learners' Questionnaires

Question 1: In your view, what are the main things that guide the western approach to adult teaching?

The overview of responses from the respondents highlighted disrespect from some adult educators, plus the learning and teaching support materials.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R2 – Q1 “Teachers must respect us as students...not supposed to laugh at us...”

T/R3 – Q1 “The main thing is that western teaching has respect and understanding of the character of learners.”

T/R4 – Q1 “The resources that are being used like chalk board, tables, chairs, text books, etc...”

Question 2: Does western teaching include African approaches to adult teaching?

This question called for an understanding and knowledge of the western approach and the influence that the African approach has on the western teaching approach used in the lessons. The respondents' general understanding was that there is no African teaching in the western teaching approach because of the adult educators' favouritism in class and because they had forgotten their African customs and respect.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q2 “No because some of them don't respect learners and force the learner to pronounce every sound clearly.”

T/R2 – Q2 “No because these days at school they use favouritism...”

T/R4 – Q2 “Not quite, western teaching has got to us so much that we have forgotten about our African ways, who we really are, our customs and the respect we should give out and receive from people.”

Question 3: How is the recognition of prior learning acknowledged in your adult classes?

In this question, the respondents were required to give their own evidence on the application of the recognition of prior learning during their lessons. The respondents indicated that, in some classes, it was not acknowledged because adult educators did not respect adult learners and adult educators forgot that adult learners attended adult classes to add to the knowledge and skills they already had. However, most of the respondents acknowledged that RPL was applied, because adult educators made sure that the adult learners understood what they were being taught by taking time to explain concepts to them based on what they already knew.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R2 – Q3 “...some teachers don’t respect us because they think we are coming to adult school because we were doing wrong things and it is not like that. Instead we are here in adult school because we want more knowledge and to rectify our mistakes.”

T/R3 – Q3 “It is acknowledged and it is the base of learning.”

T/R4 – Q3 “It is acknowledged...make sure that we are all clear about what they are teaching us...they are willing to help us understand better.”

Question 4: In your own view, is the way you are taught guided by western, African or both approaches?

The respondents were required to show the understanding of the teaching approach that was used in their lessons. This question also probed for the possibility of the two teaching approaches being employed or the possibility of one approach being dominant in the adult

teaching. Respondents confirmed that both approaches were applied but the western approach was dominant. Respect as one of the African principles in adult teaching was the most applicable and it made a difference in both the approaches used.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – 4 “Some of teachers are teaching with both western and African in Gauteng.”

T/R2 – 4 “It is guided by both western and African. I am saying this because we are taught by different educators and some of them are able to teach us with respect but some are not able to give us that respect...”

T/R3 – 4 “It is guided by both western and African teaching.”

T/R4 – 4 “It is guided by both western and African, though we are being taught mostly in the western way we also get some African feel to the way we are being taught.”

Question 5: What is your understanding of African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching?

This question called for the individuals’ general understanding of the African social constructivism as an approach in adult teaching. The general understanding and responses of the respondents was that it is how to acquire knowledge and learning; how to use African teaching skills to bring about change in adult centres; how adult learners would be treated like adults; how it could be used as a way of communication between teachers and learners and as to create an understanding of the lesson being taught.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q5 “...how people might acquire knowledge and learn.”

T/R2 – Q5 “I understand that it is a topic that is trying to make change...by using African skill on teaching...we need to be treated like adults with respect ...improve our level of learning.”

T/R3 – Q5 “It is a way of communication between teacher and learners...”

T/R4 – Q5 “...We can use the other methods just like African Social Constructivism to easily understand.”

Question 6: What are the possible challenges to African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching?

The aim of this question was to identify all possible problems that might be encountered for this suggested adult teaching approach. The expected challenges could come from stakeholders like adult educators, adult learners, the community and the district office. The possible challenges that the respondents identified include adult educators who might not be comfortable; adult educators who did not like change; the language used; western teaching; and forgetting respect.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R2 – Q6 “I think teachers will start not to be comfortable with this African social constructivism because they are not used to this African teaching.”

T/R3 – Q6 “Language barrier is one.”

T/R4 – Q6 “western teaching is one of the major challenges. It is the mostly used teaching method these days and it has made people to forget about their background and how they were raised and groomed with respect.”

Question 7: How is African social constructivism as an approach to adult teaching likely to benefit adult learners?

The objective of this question was to identify the possible benefits that the adult learners might have through the use of African social constructivism as a teaching approach to adult teaching. The general trend of responses from the respondents was that students would find their own answers; adult learners would be treated with respect, adult learners

would have confidence in knowing who they are, and be able to use their African languages to understand what was being taught.

Questionnaire excerpts from respondents

T/R1 – Q7 “...to <u>help them find their own answers</u> using many techniques in teaching process.”
--

T/R2 – Q7 “...I think <u>we will benefit respect...because we will be treated as adults. We will also benefit confidence in the way that we won't be ashamed of whom we are.</u> ”
--

T/R3 – Q7 “... <u>to know other languages. To understand well what is being taught.</u> ”

4.7 SUMMARY

The chapter aims to provide analysis of results to answer research questions. Examples of manually coded text derived from semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires created a platform for the analysis of results in this research. The excerpts from the respondents were provided as evidence in assisting the understanding of the general responses of the respondents in all the questions that were posed to them in the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Conclusions and recommendations of this research based on these findings are addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation was inspired by personal experiences the researcher had about the way that adult learners are treated in the adult centres by being made to feel belittled, less dignified and disrespected. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings are presented in this chapter of the research.

This dissertation was aimed at finding out if adult teaching in Gauteng District 6 was guided by the African Social Constructivism as an adult teaching approach. The researcher focused on the current western approach to adult teaching if it addresses the African principle of communalism in adult teaching Gauteng District 6 including how it acknowledges the recognition of prior learning (RPL) plus the benefit that adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6 will gain from the suggested African Social Constructivism as an adult teaching approach. In order for the aim of this mini – dissertation to be realized, the views, insights and perceptions of the adult educators and adult learners were explored through gathering of the relevant required data. The researcher then employed semi-structured interviews, the questionnaire and the document review as the data gathering techniques. The qualitative, descriptive and interpretative approach is being used in analysing the data to produce the results.

5.2 LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

The review of literature showed that there are differences between African Traditional Education (ATE) and western education in terms of their principles that include respect, human dignity (Ubuntu), recognition of prior learning and social interactions. It was also shown that there was a possibility of merging the two types of education based on the identified gap as stated in section 2.1.6. African social constructivism (ASC) in South African adult centres is arguably the teaching approach that can bring about the required and necessary balance between African traditional education and western education. This adult teaching approach should be based on the values of human dignity and immanent respect.

5.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The summary of the results are a product of the findings presented in Chapter 4 which were guided by the main research questions of this dissertation:

Main question

“Is African Social Constructivism an approach that guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6?”

The sub-questions

- Does the current western approach to adult teaching address or incorporate the African principle of communalism in adult teaching Gauteng District 6?
- How does the current western type of education address or incorporate the African principle of communalism in adult teaching (recognition of prior learning) Gauteng District 6?
- How is African Social Constructivism likely to benefit adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6?

The following two findings are the major findings of this research:

- 1) Adult teaching in Gauteng District 6 seems not to be guided by African Social Constructivism as an adult teaching approach, even though recognition of prior learning is employed in adult centres. The western approach presently in use in adult centres is based on its identified principles of individualism and respect to some extent. Adult educators in Gauteng District 6 employ both western and African teaching approaches in teaching adults but the western approach is dominant.
- 2) There are possible benefits for adult educators and adult learners that this research has identified. These benefits are included in the aims and objectives of the documents that should have an influence in bringing Africanism back into South African adult education, the researcher suggest that this could be done by fusing African Traditional Education (ATE) with western education.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The research aims that are based on the research questions were answered in this research and were influenced by the research problem in section 1.3 which is the statement of the problem:

5.3.1 The extent to which African social constructivism guides adult teaching in Gauteng education district 6.

Adult teaching in Gauteng District 6 seem not to be guided by African social constructivism as a teaching approach based on the fact that the suggested principles of this approach seem not be employed during the adult teaching. It was also found that some adult educators seem not to have had adequate training and development, plus their identity which is linked to their past experiences as they teach the way they are taught. This might lead to some extent that their attitude in teaching is seen as undutiful to the adult learners in the adult class rooms because they tend to laugh at the adult learners when they made a mistake during the lesson.

5.3.2 The extent to which adult educators promote African communalism and by implication the recognition of prior learning in Gauteng District 6.

This research provided evidence that indicates the usage and acknowledgement of the recognition of prior learning in Gauteng District 6 adult centres. The general response from the interviews and the questionnaire proves that RPL is employed in different situations and mostly in the beginning of each lesson in order to find out the adult learners' acquired knowledge and skills of the lesson topic being taught. Educators recognise that the adult learners are not coming into the class rooms as not knowledgeable and they generally asked questions during the lesson to check prior learning.

5.3.3 The educational benefits of the African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach in adult education in Gauteng Education District 6.

The overview of the responses from respondents confirmed that there are many possible benefits that could be experienced specifically by the adult educators and adult learners in Gauteng District 6. These benefits include Africanism being embraced; learning being easy; increased learning interest; empowering learners; learning to be received well; learners knowing their roots; increase in respect; application of Ubuntu; acknowledgement of prior learning; students being able to find their own answers; confidence and self-esteem; knowing other African languages; and understanding what is being taught in the classroom.

Like any other teaching approach, African social constructivism has its own challenges that were identified in this research. Some of these challenges that maybe encountered included adult educators who are not of African origin, adult educators who apply only the western approach to adult teaching, work schedules presently used in adult centres, the availability of African language facilitators in the district office, politics and the social environment that is dominantly influenced by the western way of life. Furthermore, adult educators might not be comfortable because they are not used to African teaching approach. Language is a barrier because English is an additional language to these adult learners. Western teaching is a barrier including the way people have forgotten respect.

The major conclusion of this study is that African social constructivism as an adult teaching approach in Gauteng District 6 is not being used despite principles being included in policy documents and legislation that underpin the South African adult teaching and training sector. However, the researcher argues that this conclusion underscores the need for African social constructivism (ASC), informed by the principles of immanent respect for elders and human dignity, to be used as an adult teaching approach in the South African adult education and training sector.

5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitations to this dissertation:

- The sample size used was small, based on the number of adult centres in District 6.
- The main focus was on immanent respect for elders and human dignity of adult learners during adult teaching.
- No study has been conducted on how African education could be fused with western education in South Africa.
- The curriculum does not support ASC as an adult teaching approach.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature of this dissertation has indicated that African social constructivism is an appropriate teaching approach that applies the principles of immanent adult respect and human dignity when teaching adults in the South African adult centres.

I therefore make following recommendations:

- District 6 Adult educators should be trained by the district office on the proposed adult teaching approach which will be based on changing their western thinking into African thinking within the western setting.
- African social constructivism should be employed in adult class rooms as an adult teaching approach in Gauteng District 6 after training by the District office.

The researcher recommends further research that could be based on the effectiveness of ASC as a teaching approach and on how assessments using this approach could be done to achieve the outcomes stated in the CAPS curriculum.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

REF: 2016/09/14/43073271/19/MC

1. In your view, what are the key principles that guide the Western approach to adult teaching
2. Do these Western principles incorporate African communalism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?
3. How do you acknowledge recognition of prior learning in your adult classes in Gauteng District 6?
4. Is your approach to teaching guided by Western, African or both in Gauteng District 6?
5. What is your understanding of African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?
6. What are the possible challenges to African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?
7. How is African Social Constructivism as an approach to adult teaching likely to benefit adult learners in Gauteng District 6?

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

REF: 2016/09/14/43073271/19/MC

1. In your view, what are the main things that guide the Western teaching to adult teaching?

2. Does this Western teaching have African teaching as an approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?

3. How is the recognition of prior learning acknowledged in your adult classes in Gauteng District 6?

4. In your view, the way you are taught is it guided by Western, African or both in Gauteng District 6?

5. What is your understanding of African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?

6. What are the possible challenges to African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach to adult teaching in Gauteng District 6?

7. How is African Social Constructivism as a teaching approach to adult teaching likely to benefit adult learners in Gauteng District 6?

APPENDIX C: LETTER REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT

REF: 2016/09/14/43073271/19/MC

Dear

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Teboho Solomon Ngubane, will be conducting as part of my research as a master's student. The titled of my research is **African Social Constructivism: An Adult Teaching Approach in Gauteng District 6** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of how adult learners are taught in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview or questionnaire I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve how adult learners are taught, by determining the extent at which the African Social Constructivism as an adult teaching approach guides adult teaching in Gauteng District 6, South Africa.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve a questionnaire or an interview of approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes and the second session for interview follow ups will be about the same in length and these two interviews will be spread over two days. It will take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the questionnaire questions or interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed including the questionnaire for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 12 months in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 076 887 9167 or by e-mail at teboho.ngubane@gmail.com . I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on the next page.

Yours faithfully

Teboho Solomon Ngubane
The Researcher
Cell No: 076 887 9167
Student number: 43073271

CONSENT FORM:

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study **African Social Constructivism: An Adult Teaching Approach in Gauteng District 6**. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview / questionnaire may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

APPENDIX D: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION: DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



GAUTENG
Community Education and Training
CET COLLEGE

Dear Mr T.S. Ngubane,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN GAUTENG CET.COLLEGE

The above matter refers to your letter dated 13 September 2016.

The Gauteng Community Education and Training College (GCET C) would like to grant permission to Mr T.S. Ngubane (Student No: 43073271) to conduct academic research within the two community centres (Thuto Ke Maatla and Tembisa) at the College.

Trust that the studies will contribute towards his personal development and the improvement of the sector towards uplifting and empowerment of the poorest of the poor.

Kind regards.

C.K. Wee

Mr. CK.Wee

Principal

083 396 3089

28 September 2016

Gauteng Community Education and Training College

Head Office: CJC Crown Mines Campus, 17 Shaft Street, Crown Mines, 2027

Tel: 011 494 9040/1

Email: clifford.wee@gauteng.gov.za

APPENDIX E: LETTERS REQUESTING PERMISSION: TEMBISA AND THUTO KE MAATLA AET CENTRES



TEMBISA COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

26 September 2016

PERMISSION FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN OUR CENTRE

Dear Mr. T. S. Ngubane,

Following your letter dated 23 September 2016, it is our pleasure to inform you (Mr. T. S. Ngubane – Student No: 43073271) that you are granted an opportunity to conduct your academic research in our centre.

Hope you will find this in order and your research project would be of benefit to our centre and the community of Tembisa.



Kind regards.

T. M. Mahori

Learning Centre Coordinator

Tembisa Community Learning Centre

Phone: 011 056 8994

e-mail: tembisaet@gmail.com



THUTO-KE-MAATLA COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

25 September 2016

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Dear Mr. T. S. Ngubane,

This serves as an official letter to grant Mr. T. S. Ngubane (student number 43073271) permission to conduct an academic research at our centre as per his request letter dated 23 September 2016.

We hope that this project will benefit the South African ABET sector.



Kind regards.

M. M. Mothapo

Learning Centre Coordinator

Thuto-Ke-Maatla Community Learning Centre

Phone: 011 056 8994

e-mail: tembisaet@gmail.com



APPENDIX F: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA) ETHICAL CLEARANCE



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 September 2016

Ref : 2016/09/14/43073271/19/MC
Student : Mr TS Ngubane
Student Number : 43073271

Dear Mr Ngubane

Decision: Approved

Researcher: Mr TS Ngubane
Tel: +2711 056 8994
Email: Teboho.ngubane@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr. PT Mathebula
University of the Witwatersrand
Wits School of Education
Tel: +2760 695 7174
Email: Thokozani.mathebula@wits.ac.za

Proposal: African social constructivism: An adult teaching approach in Gauteng District 6

Qualification: M Ed in Adult Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 14 September 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Note:

The reference number **2016/09/14/43073271/19/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA, 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za