



# **Factors influencing success in adult learning on learnerships**

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

7 November 2012

## **Abstract**

Learnerships are a type of workplace training designed to improve learners' chances of securing employment or to create the basis for self-employment. The purpose of this study is to identify, explain and describe the factors which influence the success of adult learning on learnerships in the FM&P SETA sector in South Africa. Qualitative focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with learners who had completed their learnerships within the past 24 months in the FP&M SETA sector. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. Factors which were improved through the learnerships included personal growth, confidence, holistic understanding of the business and an increased desire for further education. This study highlights the importance of the practical component of the learnerships and reconfirms the need for it to remain the primary component of the curriculum. It is though this component that learning is solidified and a deeper and broader understanding of business realised. Finally, this study found that some of the considerations in designing the most successful model for learning in structured, occupation-based programmes are: adequate and accessible mentorship, the role of the facilitator, better communication, clearer expectations from all parties and career development opportunities.

**Keywords:** Learnerships; adult learning; andragogy; constructivism

## Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Marco Magni

7 November 2012

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the following people who made this research possible:

My supervisor, Dr Lucy Voss-Price, thank you for your guidance and patience. Your interest and knowledge on the subject of adult education is inspiring.

Sarah, my wife, you have been an incredible pillar of strength and support throughout my masters and my research. I love you dearly.

My family, for being supportive and understanding. To my father, Andrea, who encouraged me to enrol with the MBA. And to my mother-in-law, Sandra, for assisting with the editing.

My employer, Aranda Textile Mills, for their support over the last two years.

To Frans Barnard and the Aranda Learnership College for all their assistance and expertise on the subject of learnerships.

And lastly to the respondents who participated in the focus groups and interviews, thank you.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

### **1.1. Research Title**

Factors influencing success in adult learning on learnerships

### **1.2. Research Background / Context**

South Africa's economy has transformed. Previously it was primarily focused on the agriculture and mining sectors and is now shifting towards more knowledge-based sectors. This change had broad implications for employment patterns and the type of skills required by the labour market. A large percentage of the country's workforce now lacks the basic competencies or skills required to meet the new challenges of the more knowledge-based sectors (Davies & Farquharson, 2004).

The Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 introduced by the Department of Labour were designed to address this problem (RSA Department of Labour, 1998). Davies & Farquharson (2004) describe how the South African economy has been divided into sectors for the purpose of skills development and quality assurance. All companies and registered employers are required to pay an annual Skills Development Levy, based on their total remuneration costs for their employees.

Each of the defined sectors has had to establish a Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA). And each SETA is required to prepare a sector skills development strategy and to disburse grants collected from the Skills Development Levies back to employers for approved skills development programmes (Davies & Farquharson, 2004).

Learnerships are just one of the types of skills development programmes which aim to address high unemployment rates and serious skills shortages in South Africa. It is argued that the inception of the learnership programme was the most important development to the intermediate skills arena in the post-Apartheid era (Kraak, 2008).

## **The Learnership Concept**

The term learnership describes a particular model of workplace training in South Africa. De Jager, Hattingh and Huster (2002) define a learnership as ‘a route to a nationally recognised qualification that relates to an occupation and consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience’ (p. 21). Learnerships are modelled on the apprenticeship tradition but, unlike apprenticeships which apply to selected trades only, learnerships apply to any occupation. Learnerships are designed to improve learners’ chances of securing employment in formal jobs or to create the basis for self-employment (Badroodien, 2005).

The learnership model of education and training was introduced in South Africa in 2001 as a means to obtaining a qualification that integrates and structures theoretical learning at Further Education and Training institutions with workplace experience (Mawoyo & Robinson, 2005).

Kraak (2008) states that learnerships were designed to provide a more structured and systematic approach to learning in the workplace. There is a large focus on the practical component of the training in order to link the theory with real-world experience and the workplace (Kraak, 2008). Learnership agreements are drawn up between employer, training provider and learner to establish the conditions of employment and the required practical work experience. Furthermore, a learnership must culminate in a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Davies & Farquharson, 2004).

## **Learnerships in Context**

Skills development and training are strategies employed to improve capacity development. It represents a formal opportunity to impart knowledge and skills in particular content areas with the intention of subsequent employment absorption into those areas. In low to middle income countries, where opportunities for education and formal training are limited, many people who have been trained are requesting that training is accredited and linked to a formal system of qualification and accreditation. It is therefore the belief that it can lead to further career-development and educational opportunities. In response to this demand, many countries have created qualification and accreditation bodies to formalise the training and skills development environment. An example of such a country is Australia, where the country runs the TGA

(training.gov.au) programme. The TGA administers all vocational education and training in Australia. In South Africa, SAQA and the NQF through the Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) provide the environment to create and develop skills and education programmes (Bisschoff & Govender, 2004).

### **The National Qualifications Framework**

The NQF provides for an interrelated system of training and awarding of qualifications, governed by three Qualifications Authorities, under the control of the SAQA. SAQA's standards setting and quality assurance are handled by three quality councils (QCs) for three different sectors of the training and education landscape:

- Umalusi quality assures all General and Further Education and Training qualifications, including vocational education;
- The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Committee for Higher Education (CHE) is focused on the quality of university qualifications; and
- The Quality and Qualifications Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) is responsible for standards and quality assurance in education and training in and for occupations and the workplace.

### **Sector Education Training Authorities (SETA)**

SETAs were established in terms of the Skills Development Act. They have been responsible since April 2000 for the disbursement of the training levies payable by all employers (Badroodien, 2005). With the assistance of the South African Revenue Service and the Department of Labour, funds are collected and distributed through a management system to sectors requiring skills development and improvement. The responsibility of the SETAs is to ensure that the various sectors are adequately equipped with the necessary skills required by each sector. In order to achieve this they ensure that education and training:

- Is provided subject to validation and quality assurance;
- Meets agreed standards within a national framework;
- Ensures that new entrants to the labour market are adequately trained, and;
- Acknowledges and enhances the skills of the current work force.

For the purpose of this study sampling will be gathered from the Fibre Processing & Manufacturing (FP&M) SETA. The FP&M SETA encompasses the following industries: Clothing; Footwear; Forestry; Furniture; General Goods; Leather; Packaging; Printing; Publishing; Pulp & Paper; Textiles; Wood Products.

### **1.3. Research Aim**

The purpose of this study is to identify, explain and describe the factors which influence the success of adult learning on learnerships in the FM&P SETA sector in South Africa. Although there is, in the broad context of adult learning, much literature on the factors that lead to the success of adult learning, there appears to be little in the context of the learnership programme. Studies have been carried out to address effective management models for learnerships – see Davies and Farquharson (2004); as well as proposed conceptual frameworks for workplace learning – see Jacobs and Park (2009). Indeed, as the learnership concept is relatively new, the literature on the topic is limited (Davies & Farquharson, 2004). This research and proposed framework seeks to build on the invaluable contribution of current literature to the topic of workplace learning in the context of South African learnerships.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Learning Theories

There are a number of learning theories that are applicable to adult learning. This literature review will briefly explore the following theories that may be applicable to the proposed research:

- Behaviourist
- Humanist
- Cognitive
- Social
- Constructivist

Each theory will be critically reviewed and an emergent theory will be used to underpin the literature and study design.

#### Behaviourist Theory

Behaviourist theory was first put forward by Ivan Pavlov and built upon by the likes of Thorndike, John B Watson and BF Skinner. This theory suggests that behaviours that are positively reinforced and encouraged will reoccur and behaviours that are discouraged and punished will eventually end. However this theory has been criticized as being over-simplistic. It has also been criticized for only being influenced by external factors, not taking into consideration what may have been internalised by the learner.

#### Humanist Theory

The key proponents of humanism theory were Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles. Humanists believe that all people are inherently good and have the ability to strive for a better world for all. Within the context of adult learning, a humanist orientation implies that adults should be empowered to be responsible for their own decisions in learning. Critics of humanistic theory believe the theory is too idealistic and does not provide insight into the evil and irresponsible side of human nature.

## Cognitive Theory

Prominent theorists for cognitive learning include Robert Gagne, Jean Piaget and James Hartley. Cognitive theory describes learning as a process which should be viewed holistically and not in its individual parts. Piaget's theory is broad and covers the period from birth to adolescence, including concepts around the acquisition of language, scientific reasoning, moral development and memory.

## Social Theory

Social learning theory was derived from the work of Albert Bandura, who was considered the leading proponent of this theory. There are a number of principles and models found within this theory, however the fundamental concept is that learning can occur simply by observing the behaviour of others and what the outcome of those behaviours are. Critics of social learning theory argue that theorists take a deterministic view of human behaviour and therefore assume an absence of free will.

## Constructivist Theory

The constructivist learning theory proposes that learners learn in an active environment and construct new knowledge based on their existing knowledge base (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1973; Bruner, 1996; in Huang, 2002). This theory views learning as an active process that involves people learning by building concepts and ideas based on past experience or one's own knowledge. There have been numerous questions around the validity of the theory. Critics argue that if the basis for understanding concepts is absent, in other words the building blocks leading to learning, then learning will not take place. This is particularly apt amongst young learners who may still be at the developmental stage of learning how to learn.

This study aims to understand what influences the learning of adult learners in learnerships; therefore the constructivist theory of learning will underpin this study. The learnership model is designed around the workplace, with a large component focused on the practical or active participation of applying learning in a workplace scenario (Davies & Farquharson, 2004). In the view of this writer, the acquisition of learning in a learnership model is constructivist in nature. This study will shed light on whether this approach holds up in the context of adult learners acquiring skills which are directly applicable to the workplace.

## 2.2. Andragogy: Adult learning theory

For more than a millennium a vast amount of time and effort has been spent to develop techniques and strategies around teaching children. The concept first developed in the seventh century in Europe, where schools were organised to teach young boys in preparation for the priesthood (Knowles, 1990). It was termed *pedagogy*, a word of Greek origin. Translated, the second part of the word “gogy” means *leading*, which has in time been modified to teaching or instruction (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). The prefix “peda” translates as *child*; therefore the word has been described as the art and science of teaching children (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). The prefix of the word *andragogy*, “andra”, translates as *adult*, therefore meaning the art and science of teaching adults (Forrest & Peterson, 2006).

It has been argued that over the last number of centuries up until today, learning institutes and educators still approach adult learning in a pedagogical manner (Knowles, 1990; Forrest & Peterson, 2006). This can be understood when teaching children, as society assumes they must occupy a position of full-time students (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Forrest and Peterson (2006) go on to say an adult is someone who has taken up some sort of primary role in society, for example: as a spouse, parent or worker. In light of this definition, a characteristic of adult learning should be knowledge transferred in the application of real-life situations.

Unlike pedagogy, the term andragogy only dates back to the nineteenth century; contemporary use of the concept was developed by the works of Malcolm Knowles (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). However, the distinction of the two approaches to teaching has been questioned. Educators argue that in some instances where andragogy was carried out in pre-adult populations the results were indeed effective (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). But Knowles (1980) then went on to re-categorise the terms into subject-centred pedagogy and learner-centred andragogy.

There are a number of principles that define andragogy. Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998) define the following six principles:

**Table 1: The 6 Principles of Andragogy**

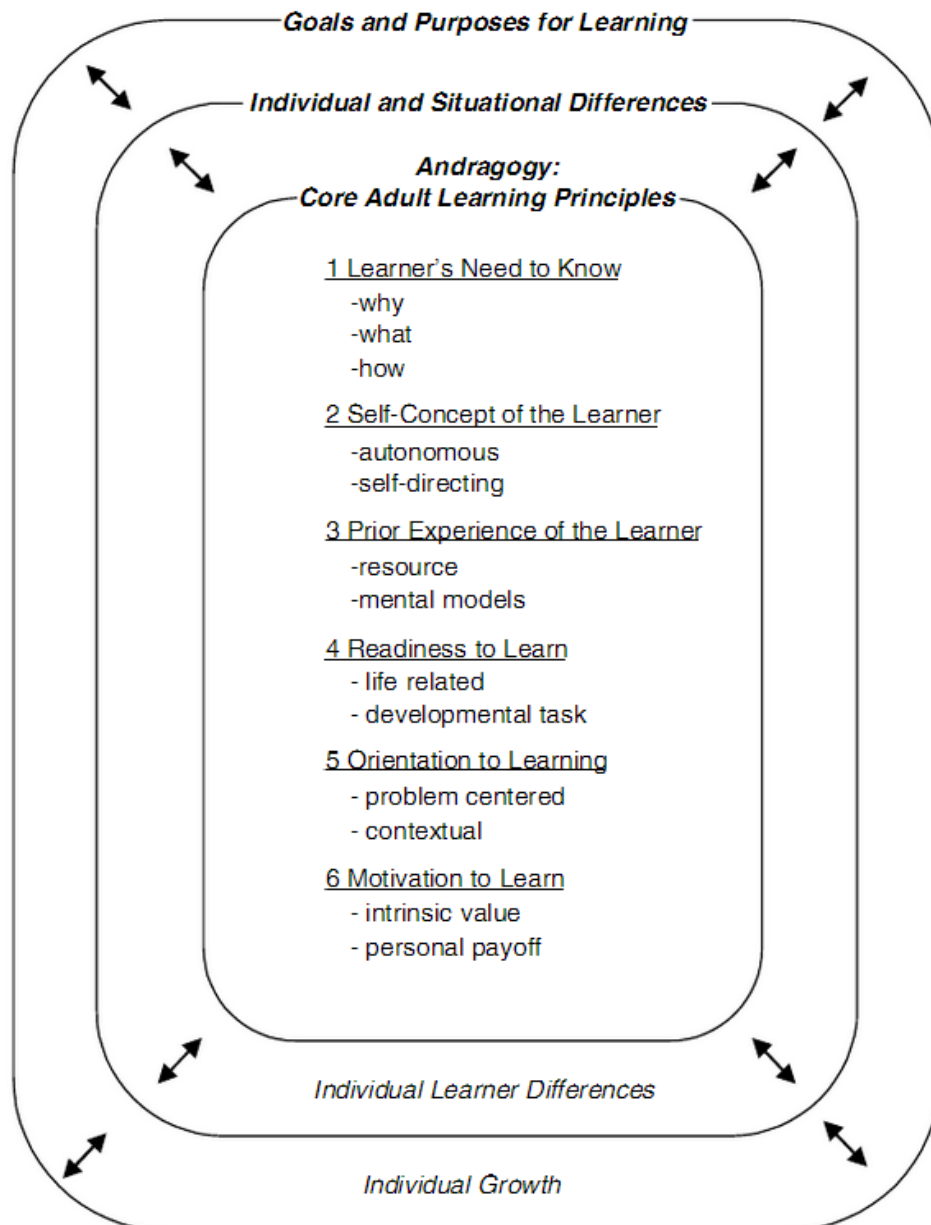
Principle:	Description:
Learner's need to know	Adults need to know how learning will be conducted, what learning will occur, and why learning is important
Self-concept learning	Adults are aware of themselves; the ability to be in control of what is being taught is the purpose of learning
Prior experience	Adults bring their own previous experience to the educational environment, building on it and using it in the learning process
Readiness to learn	Adults become aware of the need to learn to improve their life situation
Orientation to learning	Adults prefer learning in a context which can be applied to real-world situations
Motivation to learn	Adults are generally motivated to learn as they are able to see the benefits for their life situation

Knowles et al., (1998) went on to develop a conceptual framework incorporating these principles. Figure 1 depicts the framework showing three layers, or dimensions, when approaching andragogy in practice. The two outer rings, *Goals and Purposes for Learning* and *Individual and Situational Differences*, integrate additional influences by adult learners to the core principles of andragogy. The model recognises that these influences are not homogenous and therefore the approach to adult learning can be situational or multifaceted.

The outer ring, *Goals and Purposes for Learning*, are portrayed as outcomes that develop from adult learning. The second ring, *Individual and Situational Differences*, can be defined as variables. These variables are either at individual learner, situational or subject-matter differences (Knowles et al., 2005).

The framework developed for this research (see figure 2) has close affiliation with The Andragogy in Practice Framework. This will be explored towards the end of the literature review.

**Figure 1: Andragogy in Practice (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998)**



Andragogy and pedagogy are not teaching techniques, but philosophies that educators look to for guidance (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). This study hopes to shed light on what underpins the success of teaching philosophies in learnerships.

### **2.3. Emerging Trends in Workplace Learning**

Prior to the mid-1980s, workplace learning was considered primarily as acquisition (Fenwick, 2008); individuals were believed to acquire new skills that were viewed as being fixed and appropriate for the intended purpose and without change during the knowledge transfer. Employees were considered to be acquiring knowledge and therefore intellectual capacity and resources for a business, which would therefore result in a greater return on investment (Fenwick, 2008).

But Fenwick (2008) then stipulates that “constructivist notions of workplace learning as sense making have become more frequent since the mid-1980s as reflective, self-directed learning, transformative learning, and learning style concepts filtered into training literature” (p. 19).

### **2.4. Revising Adult Learning Theory**

Merriam (2008) proposes a number of different theories that make up a modern day thinking perspective on adult learning. Merriam (2008) goes on to propagate that adult learning is becoming “a complex phenomenon that can never be reduced to a single, simple explanation” (p. 94). It consists of old theories mixed in together with new theories, and will probably evolve over time. Thus in this context “learning is a multidimensional phenomenon and not just a cognitive activity” (Merriam, 2008, p. 94).

### **2.5. The Success of Learnerships**

In a study by Bisschoff and Govender (2004) most respondents indicated that current training is “sometimes” effective. The qualitative interviews validated the quantitative findings, with respondents explaining that there were “pockets of success” in transferring learning in the workplace. The authors suggest that one of the factors which impacts on skills development in the workplace is the capacity of training service providers.

Smith, Jennings, and Solanki (2005) found that both learners and employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with learnerships in South Africa. The authors suggest that when learners are provided with workplace learning by an accredited provider, learners are given the opportunity to make the link between structured learning and workplace experience and receive training that culminates in a nationally recognised qualification. However, the study found that the high levels of satisfaction are not consistent across all groups of learners. In particular, there are differences in satisfaction levels between those employed versus those unemployed and across the NQF divide (Smith et al., 2005).

Some of the factors which affect the successful implementation of learnerships in South Africa are described by Smith et al. (2005) as:

- the nature of skills required (basic, intermediate or high level),
- the nature of employment conditions (whether learners are employed or unemployed),
- the level of participation (by both the learner and the employer)
- the incentives in place (for both the learner and the employer)

The existing evidence explains some of the factors which influence the success of learnerships. However, few studies have investigated the factors which influence the successful learning of adult learners in learnerships.

## **2.6. Proposed Framework**

The proposed framework for this study is based on the learning theories reviewed thus far. The literature has indicated that there is not just one path to successful adult learning, but that it can be situational, multifaceted and continuously evolving (Knowles et al., 1998, 2005; Merriam, 2008). In light of this and in the context of the study, the researcher has created a framework (figure 2) that attempts to place the learnership in context. The framework depicts the three stages in which an adult learner would:

1. Engage with the learnership
2. Experience the implementation of the learnership
3. Realise the benefits of the learnership

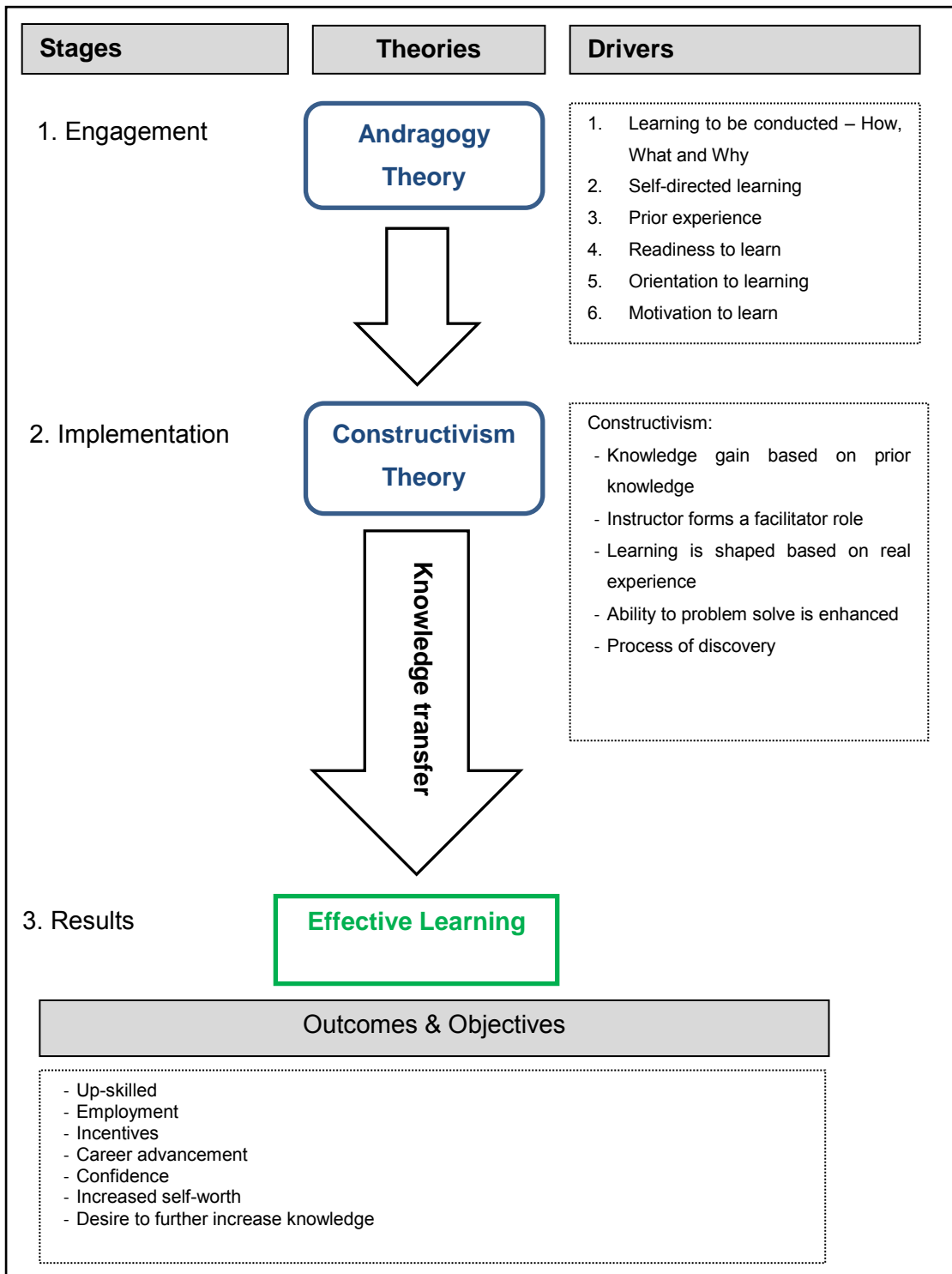
The first stage, termed *Engagement*, is underpinned by the six principles of andragogy (Knowles et al., 1998). Engagement can be defined as the main drivers behind the reason an adult would enrol on the learnership. Bar *self-directed learning*, all the principles were aptly suited in guiding the researcher to the correct discussion points used in the research.

The second stage, *Implementation*, is underpinned by the constructivist learning theory. Implementation can be defined as the process which a learner is required to undergo in order to receive his learnership qualification. The five drivers derived from constructivism listed in the framework for this stage were also aptly suited in guiding the researcher to the correct discussion points.

The final stage, *Results*, can be understood as the outcomes and objectives of the learnership. This stage is based on the fact that all learnership programmes have an ending and culminate in an NQF qualification. Aside from the qualification, the research findings indicate various other outcomes that benefited the learner.

It can be argued that this framework is too one-directional and in the context of the learnership, could also include learning theories such as cognitivist theories. The validity of the framework will be analysed further in the discussions chapter of this study.

**Figure 2: Framework for understanding the factors that lead to successful learning on learnerships**



### **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **Research Question 1:**

What is improved through learnership training (technical skills, manager-worker relationships, worker confidence)?

#### **Research Question 2:**

To what extent is the practical work component of the learnerships the primary benefit (driver) and are there other elements which may also assist the learning process in learnerships?

#### **Research Question 3:**

What are the considerations in designing the most successful model for learning in structured, occupation-based programmes?

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Introduction

This research was an applied qualitative study. Qualitative research has been described as “a naturalistic interpretive approach concerned with understanding the meaning which people attach to phenomena within their social worlds” (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p3). Qualitative research was the best approach for this study because the researcher wanted to understand the meaning participants attached to phenomena within their own world of experience. In addition, qualitative research allowed for a flexible research design (Snape & Spencer, 2003) which facilitated the exploratory nature of this study.

Applied research is a scientific investigation which is conducted in order to generate knowledge that will directly improve the understanding or resolution of a contemporary issue (Snape & Spencer, 2003). This research was not undertaken to simply advance knowledge but rather to achieve an improved understanding of the factors which contribute to the success of learning in learnerships.

### 4.2. Form of Research

The form of research used for this study was contextual research. Contextual research “is concerned with identifying *what* exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself” (Ritchie, 2003, p.27). It is one of the primary methods of qualitative research to facilitate and describe phenomena experienced by the population being studied. It offers an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of issues, to see what they are about, and to possibly find connections between such issues (Ritchie, 2003). The resulting evidence can therefore be used to “describe the meaning that people attach to an experience, event, circumstance or other phenomenon” (Ritchie, 2003, p27).

This form of research was appropriate to this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it facilitated an understanding of the conceptual factors critical to the success (or which hinder) learning in learnerships. Secondly, it tied in with the contextual nature of the learnership model of delivery, in that a large component of the qualification is completed at the workplace.

### **4.3. Research Philosophy**

The research philosophy which underpinned this study was interpretivism. Interpretivism can be understood as the study of social phenomena as they appear in their natural environment (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research as “an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” (p3). Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2000).

### **4.4. Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Saunders and Lewis (2012) define purposive sampling as “a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher’s judgement is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premises” (p138). It is also used when an understanding is needed in order to make logical generalisations (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). A private FET college was used as the source of the sample. Learners who had completed a learnership were purposively sampled using the records of the private FET college which administered the learnership. This college offers learnership qualifications to the FP&M SETA sector. The reasons for using purposive sampling are:

- Time was a limiting factor
- Information rich cases were purposively sought out
- Generalisations could be avoided

In this study, learners who had completed their learnerships within the past 24 months in the FP&M sector were identified through the private FET college and the Human Resource departments of established FP&M companies in South Africa. These learners were invited to participate in focus group discussions (FGD). The sample size consisted of four focus groups. Each focus group had at least four respondents.

#### 4.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Specific criteria were required in order to ensure the demographics of the respondents were similar. There were two reasons for this approach: Firstly, the limited sample size; and secondly, to ensure the interpretive and naturalistic environment was maintained.

##### Inclusion criteria for the study

1. Completed a learnership within the past 24 months in the FP&M SETA sector
2. Provided informed consent for the study

##### Exclusion criteria for the study

1. Has a tertiary qualification

Information rich cases were identified in the FGDs. These individuals were purposively sampled and invited to complete in-depth interviews to validate the themed findings from the FGDs. At least one individual from each FGD was sampled.

#### 4.6. Data Collection

This study used both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews as methods for data collection. These methods “involve close contact with the people being studied, whereby the researcher is the primary instrument” (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p4). Focus groups involved a discussion with at least four respondents which was led by the researcher. In-depth interviews were carried out on an individual level between specifically identified respondents from the focus groups and the researcher. Focus groups were used in the initial stage to raise and begin to explore relevant issues (Ritchie, 2003) and to understand group norms and identify individual rich cases. These issues were then taken forward with the individual rich cases that were identified in the focus groups using in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The appropriateness of the use of focus groups to this study can be linked to the underlying philosophy of interpretivism, in which the setting of a focus group is more naturalistic and provides a social context for research (Ritchie, 2003). It provides a

platform for people to think and talk openly about the topic and to possibly elicit new insights that may not have previously been considered by the researcher. In-depth interviews were appropriate because “they provide a detailed investigation of people’s personal perspectives, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and for very detailed subject coverage” (Ritchie, 2003, p36). Therefore these two approaches were ideally suited to the contextual nature of this research.

#### **4.7. Data Analysis**

A total of four focus groups and four in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (see appendices 3-10).

Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. This method was used to classify the words in text into a few chosen categories chosen because of their theoretical importance. This data analysis technique provides a systematic means of measuring the frequency, order, or intensity of words or phrases (Burns & Grove 2005).

#### **4.8. Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to this study. However the researcher has made every effort to minimise these as described below.

This study had a relatively small sample size. While the purpose of this research was not to make generalisations, the small sample size may limit the extent to which these findings can be used for South African companies. However, the same themes emerged in each of the FGDs and interviews conducted and it is unlikely that more FGDs and interviews would yield new findings.

Another limitation of this study is the fact that all respondents undertook their learnerships through one FET college. Learners who completed learnerships with other colleges may have had different experiences. However, sampling these respondents would not have been feasible as the researcher had no access to these colleges.

While every effort was made to ensure that key informants understood the purpose of the study, misconceptions regarding the research may have introduced bias. In

particular if respondents believed they might benefit from the study (e.g. gain additional funding for further studies), they may have altered their responses.

Language may have been a limiting factor in this study. The FGDs and interviews were conducted in English. The researcher attempted to use easy-to-understand language in order to ensure that respondents understood the questions. Although all respondents indicated that they were comfortable speaking English it is possible that interviews in the vernacular would have yielded more in-depth results.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter will look at the results of the data gathered from the focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) carried out in this study. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the results will be explored via thematic content analysis. Themes were identified by the frequency of responses and whether they were positive or negative responses to the particular theme.

The themes have been grouped into three sections that tie in with the framework. Primarily:

- Engagement with the learnership – prior to commencement
- Implementation of the learnership
- Outcomes of the learnership

### 5.2. Engagement

As stipulated above, this section explored the results of the respondents in respect to their engagement with the learnership prior to commencement. In respect of this study, the term engagement can be defined as what the primary drivers were for learners to enrol on the learnership programme.

#### 5.2.1. Education as a means to further oneself

The phrase to ‘further oneself’ can be understood as an individual wanting to improve the situation in which he or she currently finds himself. In the context of the learnership, the responses from the respondents indicated that this represented a way to improve their knowledge and skills, thus enabling them either to enter employment for the first time or to enhance their career opportunities - “... *it’s a good thing that we have to learn all this stuff to go further in life.*” [IDI 4; Lines 12-13].

All the respondents confirmed the importance of education for progress – “*in these days without knowledge you are lost, because everywhere you go you need to learn something to be able to process, to progress.*” [IDI 3; Lines 11-12]. In particular, a

number of them articulated this progress as employment. IDI 2 suggested that *“If you want to get employed... in fact to be successful you need to have an education. Without education you won’t go anywhere with the company.”* [IDI 2; Lines 10-11]. Employment both at their current companies and beyond were seen as useful outcomes of getting an education – *“Even if we are not working here anymore we can maybe go to other companies and work with the experience that we got.”* [FGD 1; Lines 36-37]. ?

### 5.2.2. Readiness to learn

Readiness to learn implies the mental preparedness of a person to undertake the challenge of a learnership and an understanding that it will extend their boundaries of knowledge and skills. The vast majority of the respondents agreed that they were ready to embark upon the learnership. They were not forced into doing learnerships; however, many were unemployed which may have been a catalyst to encourage them to take the learnership opportunity. None of the respondents replied that they were not prepared or ready to learn.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that one needs to be prepared to learn in order to benefit from the learnership – *“It would be, as long as we were prepared to learn.”* [FGD 1; Line 104]. However, prior to the learnerships, many of the respondents were unemployed and the learnership seemed like a great opportunity for employment – *“Yes I was ready to engage because I was not working or doing anything at that moment.”* [FGD 2; Line 82-83]. For others it was the drive of unemployment and an opportunity to study for the first time – *“Yes, for me like I’m just an ordinary guy, who didn’t study, who was at home, not working. So I thought an opportunity for me, because I have just learnt a great deal about learnerships, because something that I had has been granted to people who are underprivileged. For me it was an opportunity.”* [FGD 2; Lines 77-80].

Unemployment definitely seems to be the most important driver behind the respondent’s readiness to learn. Even a recent matriculant expressed his reason for applying for a learnership – *“For me it was a year after my matric, so I was also unemployed. My aunt told me about this learnership so I applied.”* [FGD 3; Lines 34-35].

Taking into account the above themes, it was apparent that most of the respondents engaged with the learnership out of necessity. Many were previously unemployed and the learnership offered was the only ‘employment’ or potential employment option at the time.

### **5.3. Implementation**

This section explores the themes that emerged during the implementation of the learnership. Implementation can be understood as the requirements of the learners by the learnership over the duration of the programme.

#### **5.3.1. Encouragement and motivation**

The theme of encouragement and motivation ran through both the engagement and implementation sections of the framework. Encouragement can be understood as external influences, usually people known to the learner that keep the learner focused on achieving their learnership. Motivation can be seen as a driver that keeps the learner interested in the learnership. The driver could be the potential benefits to the learner during and post-completion of the learnership.

Many of the respondents highlighted the importance of encouragement when engaging with the learnership. However, encouragement and motivation became crucial during the implementation of the learnership. External encouragement came from family and spouses – *“There was encouragement. Even at home. Even our children, when I say I’m doing my homework or doing whatever, they would be like anxious to know what I’m doing...”* [FGD 1; Lines 190-191]. Internal encouragement came from the programme facilitator, line manager or workplace mentor. FGD 1 indicated that - *“In addition to that, I would say that there was encouragement from our mentor because our director was asking us every day... “You’ve got an assignment, what have you done?” Then “how was your assignment?” Before we submit our assignment she wanted to see and assess it and correct us and say ok, there you should have done like this or like this. And also motivation.”* [FGD 1; Lines 200-203].

In particular, encouragement was necessary at the point where respondents wanted to quit – *“Yes, for me it was. I even wanted to quit, but they (family) say that I must hold on...”* [FGD 4; Line 276]. Good encouragement was backed up with reasons why the

respondent should not give up – *“I was at a point of quitting...” “...I called my sister and I was like “this is too much for little pay, I can’t do this, I am not built for this” and she said “you know what, you can quit, its ok. But as a sister I will support you and be there for you but this is a stepping stone for you...” “So after I had the talk with her I decided to stay.” [IDI 4; Lines 24-31].*

Where encouragement and motivation came from within the company, it appeared the respondents were less likely to consider giving up and rather more focused on potential benefits - *“they said if you had to do the learnership it will open opportunities for you. Like if there is a position that’s going to be available in the work place they firstly consider those people with learnerships.” [IDI 3; Lines 21-23].* Being presented with real opportunities certainly was a big motivating factor – *“When I got here at Frams the HR was very supportive. He encouraged us to study further besides doing the learnership, because they promised to employ us and he told us about the opportunities that are available in the company that we can study” [IDI 2; Lines 28-30].*

Other motivating factors were the longer-term benefits of doing a learnership, particularly where respondents viewed it as an opportunity and a stepping stone to greater prospects – *“when you want a job they need one year experience. So it was a good opportunity; when I heard that there is this learnership. So that if I can finish my diploma, I will have a year experience. I won’t struggle to find another job.” [FGD 2; Lines 87-88].*

For those that were more confident in themselves, self-motivation gave them drive and encouragement – *“If I got an opportunity, I also want to go to the top structure of the company. So that encouraged me and I think that... if there is another opportunity I’ll make sure that I grab it.” [FGD 1; Lines 217-219].*

One negative motivating factor that came through quite strongly was the low wage rate associated with the learnership – *“Ok, like at first, when they tell you about the learnership, you first disagree with it. You go like “oh, I won’t earn such a small amount of money”.” [FGD 2; Lines 97-98].* Especially when respondents were exposed to what their colleagues (full-time employees) were earning for essentially doing the same job – *“Yes, night shift and money was unfair. Because at the same time you will be exposed to that payslip of other people and you are doing the same.” [FGD 2; Lines 363-364].*

The theme of motivation and encouragement became extremely prominent during the engagement of the learners, but particularly during the implementation stage. The results also indicate that the learners were hesitant or potentially lacked in confidence

going into the learnership; suggesting that adult learners may be apprehensive going into a new learning environment. Hence, the need for support is crucial, in the form of encouragement and motivation and an important factor to the success of the learner.

### 5.3.2. Employer involvement

Employer involvement came through as a strong theme during the implementation of the learnership. In the context of learnerships, employer involvement can be understood as participation of the employer towards the learners' understanding and progress through the course of the programme. The participation could be in the form of:

- Mentorship
- Assistance with theoretical work e.g. homework, assignments, etc.
- Assistance in the practical application in the workplace

The employer could be any current employee of the organisation where the learnership is being carried out. For example: a line manager, director, a person from the human resources department, or a colleague.

Those respondents whose employer was actively involved in their learnership seemed to emphasise the importance of such involvement to the overall outcome of the learnership – *“They were supportive, our manager, our director was supporting us. Because she was coming to our class, to the college, to sit with us, and support us.”* [FGD 1; Lines 93-94]. This element is crucial, particularly when learners were struggling with a concept, as FGD 4 explains *“Because every time we struggled here the head of the department sat down with us and explained the whole thing...”* [FGD 4; Lines 109-111].

The success of employer involvement is enhanced by the openness and willingness of their involvement – *“Our production manager at the time will come and assist us and will encourage us and if we have a problem we must feel free to come to him and ask whatever question you want to ask.”* [FGD 3; Lines 73-75]. Some respondents thought it was fortunate to have involved employers, as FGD 2 articulates: *“We are lucky enough because we have friendly managers – people we can talk to anytime. The managing director is not a person you cannot go to his office.”* [FGD 2; Lines 304-306].

However, in the instances where there was a lack, or no support, the respondents were far more cynical towards the learnership and in some instances would bring up the perception of exploitation. It was also discouraging when the employer treated them like a regular employee, expecting them to perform in the same manner. FGD 2 explains, *“From my side I can say that training here is very tough. When you are already in the line they expect more work from you... And if you are a slow learner you won’t survive”* [FGD 2; Lines 174-177]. This statement appears to contradict the quote in previous paragraphs, as both quotes originate from the same focus group discussion. However, they came from different respondents, possibly indicating that the employer did not treat all learners equally.

There seemed to be a strong correlation between those who received employer support and those who did not receive any support to the overall satisfaction experienced by learners on the programme. There also appeared to be a negative perception of the learnership by employees, particularly when the programme was run for the first time – *“I don’t think we would have achieved this whole thing. Because here at Fram’s we were the first group, the learnership thing. It was the first thing here at Fram’s with us. So we performed very well due to that.”* [IDI 2; Lines 65-67]. This issue will be looked at further when discussing the notion of e communication. The importance of a mentor (employer involvement) is even more crucial when such negativity towards the learnership exists amongst the general workforce – *“...I was lonely up here and with all these negative people in the workplace, you feel like lonely and whatever – you can’t talk to somebody; but he was there, you can talk to him and he was there and... so I felt ok, he was good.”* [IDI 4; Lines 80-83].

The results of this programme indicate a definite need for employer involvement. Based on the findings, the ideal involvement would be in the form of mentorship. However, mentorship that is carried out by those who are interested and take care in assisting learners yields positive results. In addition, multiple cases involving numerous employees enhance the learnership experience for the learners.

### **5.3.3. Communication**

Communication also came through as a strong theme; however, it was viewed in a more negative light. In most cases there was a severe lack of communication and the respondents spoke passionately on this point – *“They don’t communicate with students, you have to find out information for ourselves. So it is a little bit*

*disappointing.” [FGD 4; Lines 126-127]. The disappointment did come to some as a surprise – “...they didn’t explain anything. They just took me to the department and say ok this is where you are going to work and I was like ok.” [FGD 4; Lines 72-73].*

*“From my side everything was fine except when we were about to finish our learnership, nobody informed us... we spent more than three weeks with nobody saying anything.” [FGD 2; Lines 236-238]*

Whether it was the course outline, programme structure, or communication to employees within the organisation as to what the learnership was all about, the learners felt let down. FGD 3 explains the situation around fellow colleagues – *“Well it wasn’t easy with our colleagues. They were not quite happy about this whole thing, because they thought we were going to occupy higher positions than them.” [FGD 3; Lines 212-213]*

In a couple of the responses, the respondents even mentioned that they felt as though they were being treated like kids. And in some cases the learner was unaware that an external college was running the learnership – *“I didn’t even know that the college was involved. I only learned afterwards, because I thought the lecturer just came in and just give us the material to work on and she left.” [IDI 4; Lines 150-151].*

There were, however, some responses indicating that communication was sufficient and in some instances handled well - *“I believe it was handled very well.” [IDI 2, Line 95].* As with the question of employer involvement, the positive and negative responses correlated with overall satisfaction of the learnership programme by the respective respondents. IDI 1, who was from the focus group that all responded positively to the learnership, had this to say about the communication: *“Well it (communication) was handled very well...” “...we were informed from the beginning. We were informed what we needed to bring, what we shouldn’t be bringing and we were informed when is our class...” [IDI 1; Lines 77-83].*

The results reflect that only one focus group was satisfied with the level of communication. This focus group happens to be the same group that had multiple employer involvements throughout the learnership, including intervention by one of their directors. The interest that the employer took in the learnership may have influenced the level of communication. The findings indicate that the main areas of improvement to communication to be addressed are:

- Communication by the training service provider to the learner

- Communication between the company and the learner
- Communication between the company and their employees

Generally, communication requires little effort and usually costs nothing. Employers, having been privy to hearing complaints from the learners first-hand, would then be able to resolve some issues merely by opening the correct communication channels. The importance of communication will be discussed further in the next chapter.

#### **5.3.4. Lack of support from colleagues**

The majority of respondents felt that their fellow work colleagues had a negative impact on their experience of the learnership programme. These colleagues are defined as normal employees of the company at the site where the respondent completed their learnership. A recurring theme in an understanding of why there was a lack of support is the perception of the respondent's colleagues that the learners would be replacing them once their learnerships were completed. This points to poor communication on behalf of the employer to current employees as to what the learnerships were all about, particularly when the learnership programme was run for the first time.

When fellow work colleagues began to understand the concept of the learnership their attitude did begin to change – *“...when we came here they thought we are going to take their jobs and things like that.” “...but now they just understand that we just did the learnership to give us opportunities and jobs. Because those people, those old people, they can't even read and write. So it's difficult for them to enter for learnerships. But now they understand that it's not about taking their jobs.” [IDI 3; Lines 47-53].* During the course of the programme, work colleagues began to understand that the learnership was not about existing workers losing their jobs. However, had they understood this earlier they probably would have been prepared to share knowledge more freely – *“...but they were not bad, they were just scared... for them I believe they were negative because they thought that we were there to take their jobs or something. So you kind of understand that afterwards “oh, she was scared because I am a new learner – she thinks I'm going to steal her job. So maybe she's a temporary worker” and she's like “oh my gosh, I'm going to teach little kid my job and then I'm going to go and she's going to stay” so she felt like no that's why I'm not going to learn you anything.” [IDI 4; Lines 137-143].*

However, the cold reception of the respondent's colleagues did not always weigh heavily on the outcome of the learnership. In some instance it actually motivated the respondent – *“Although we had a problem with other... our fellow employees. They had this attitude towards us which made us feel like we don't belong here.” “Well you know for me, it motivated me.” [IDI 2; Lines 85-87].*

*“From the other employees... some people might be jealous. They are saying why is he going on the learnership, and why can't they get a chance. Because there is no understanding why.” [IDI 1; Lines 41-43].*

The issue of poor or negative support from work colleagues was a recurring theme for most respondents. The findings indicate that this issue may have been resolved by better communication and therefore ties in with the previous finding. Even though in a few instances the lack of support actually motivated learners, overall the results indicate that had support and encouragement come from their work colleagues, learning would have been enhanced and knowledge transfer would also have occurred on a peer-to-peer level.

### **5.3.5. Importance of the practical component**

The importance of the practical component of the learnership programme came through strongly in all the respondents. The practical component was the section where learners were able to apply the theory they had learnt to the workplace. The amount of practical application varied depending on the NQF level of the learnership. Here is an example of how the practical component would take form: a learner doing a learnership in textiles would learn the theory behind how the product is manufactured, from raw fibre through to a finished article. One component, for example, would be spinning the fibre into yarn. Once the learner understands the reason for this process and what is involved (the machinery and skills involved, for instance), the learner is then able to make it happen in practice on the factory floor. As the learner gets an understanding of the process, he may be introduced to the processes that precede and follow it; thus better understanding more of the value chain – *“Yes, while we were on the factory floor. Because he explained the whole thing and he took us to spinning (department) and showed us like if these guys don't do this and we get the raw material and we are supposed to be running with the right one so weaving can start making the right blanket. But if we get the wrong thing then weaving has to stop. So you understand like*

*“oh, my word, this is supposed to do the right thing and this is the whole process... and wow” it was fascinating.” [IDI 4; Lines 194-199].*

The respondents felt that it was during the practical application of what they had covered in the theory that learning was solidified – *“It (the practical component) is very important. In fact it gives you a better understanding of this whole thing.” [IDI 2; Line 103].* Thus in doing so made learning easier – *“...you get it right. Makes it much more easier.” [FGD 3; Line 209].* Most of the respondents viewed the practical component as the most important part of the programme – *“...I learnt most of the stuff, important stuff, at the department.” [FGD 4; Line 109].*

The respondents also felt a deeper understanding of the learnership subject matter. Coupled with this, the practical component was where many of the respondents began to understand the different processes that made up the operations of their respective companies. *“And the fact that we did it practically – we were given a chance to do everything practically. So you got to get a much better idea about this whole thing (company).” FGD 3; Lines 204-205].*

The practical component also allowed the learner to see where his contribution was going, as well as seeing where he might still be lacking in understanding – *“...it was a very important part when it comes to what you are doing practically, because that’s where each and every one can see that, you know what I am benefiting there and there, I am lacking there and there so maybe if we come back here... we do the practical, we go back to class and we tell our lecturers that you know what, we are lacking there and there, and then you can help assist me on that to improve myself.” [FGD 1; Lines 81-86].*

The practical component is where excitement was created. IDI 4 enthusiastically expressed himself thus: *“I learnt all this stuff. It was fascinating...” “...how everything comes together at the end of the day. Like oh my gosh I didn’t even know that.” [IDI 4; Lines 179-183].*

*“I would say in the practical. I remember my lecturer saying this is how you should tackle this.” [FGD 1; Lines 140-141].*

The findings from the study confirm the high importance of the practical component in a learnership. It is the researcher’s opinion that the findings on the practical component do indeed suggest that it is the most important factor to the learnership programme. However, it must be considered that the quality of the practical component plays an

important role. In other words: how the practical component is structured, how is it facilitated, and what the performance expectations are all play a significant part in its efficacy.

### 5.3.6. Competent facilitator

All the respondents received their learnership through the same service provider, the Aranda Learnership College. The nature of the learnership is that it is primarily conducted at the workplace; the role of the facilitator played an important role in representing the training service provider.

A competent facilitator appeared to have played an important role in the success of the learnership. Firstly, the facilitator had to make the learners feel comfortable in a classroom environment, particularly if they hadn't been in a learning environment for a number of years – *“Well it was more enjoyable and that it made me feel like I am not in a classroom, you know. But it made me feel like a person, an elder person, who needs to learn. It made me open my mind wide. Because the way in which it was conducted, the classes, it gave us time to... two minutes to have that joke to relax your mind and then go back to our learning and then we have time to have a break and then we go back to our learning. It gives us that time and a chance to think that we are here to learn.”* [IDI 1; Lines 114-119].

Secondly, the way in which they were taught made a significant impact on the learners' perceptions of the learnership. A great appreciation was expressed when facilitators encouraged learners to find the answers themselves. FGD 1 elaborates – *“...they would give us some clues but not on everything. And then after that you have to think for yourself and get it right and if you don't understand you just ask. And even if they don't give you the exact answer but they just give you a light on whatever you ask them.”* [FGD 1; Lines 146-149]. At the same time, it was important to give time and attention to each learner – *“...they encourage us to find the answers by ourselves. Because when they came here they ask each and every one to our input of our understandings and our answers; and then they consult us one by one like where we missed it.”* [IDI 3; Lines 129-131]. This technique encouraged learners to discover new ways of problem-solving, as well as making them aware of additional knowledge sources – *“When we were doing assignments we were not getting answers from him [lecturer] but we had to go look for... do research by our self; go to libraries – and I can't remember when I last wen to the library [laughs].”* [IDI 1; Lines 123-125].

A personal touch and one-on-one interaction was also encouraging to the learners as IDI 4 explains: *“She (the facilitator) would actually sit down with me and explain the whole thing, like no you’re supposed to be doing this and everything like that and she would say like go and sit down and if you get stuck you can come back and I’ll help you.”* [IDI 4; Lines 214-217].

However, there was also criticism of the facilitator. Ironically these criticisms came from the learners who were doing their learnership at Aranda Textile Mills. In this case the learners felt a general lack of presence by the facilitator. Both physical presence, often not arriving for lectures, and also not being engaged – *“Was there even facilitation?”* [FGD 4; Line 137].

*“I’ll pass on that”* (in response to whether the facilitation was any good) [FGD 4; Line 138].

In summary, the findings on the role of facilitator indicate the importance of the teaching style. The results indicate that the adult learner enjoys having to work out answers for himself, yet to be able to go to a facilitator for guidance should the need arise

### **5.3.7. Learner vs Employer expectations**

The majority of respondents felt let down with regard to the expectations they had envisaged from the learnership. Again, this speaks to the issue of communications. Had clear objectives and rewards been communicated from the start of the learnership, the respondents’ expectations would probably have realised, and issues like resentment and exploitation would probably not have arisen – *“You end up doing the same job as they (colleagues) do, working same hours like them, working night shifts – so something that we didn’t expect to do. But at the end of the day, you cannot just withdraw and stay at home. You end up taking whatever is coming. So somehow is fair but somehow unfair.”* [FGD 2; Lines 126-129].

On the other hand, it does appear that some companies do view the learnership as a form of cheap labour, expecting the same output as regular employees – *“...I can say that training here is very tough. When you are already in the line they expect more work from you.”* *“And if you are a slow learner you won’t survive.”* [FGD 2; Lines 174-177]. Particularly when the learners felt they were not quite ready for full production output, as FGD2 explains, *“It was good while we were still under training, working with*

*the trainer only. But when we go for production, it was difficult.” “...they needed more work and we were not ready. We were under pressure.” [FGD 2; Lines 281-284].*

The findings of this theme indicate that there was a very poor understanding by the learners of what the company’s expectations of them were in respect to the learnership. Also, in some cases, there appeared to be a misalignment between what the company expected from learners and what the learners through the learnership programme, had to offer the company.

#### **5.4. Outcomes**

There does appear to have been an effective transfer of skills as a result of the learnership. However, overall satisfaction with the learnership varies, and the reasons for this can be identified by the responses of individuals to the issues already discussed.

This section of the results will assess learnership outcomes as experienced by the respondents. Besides the effective transfer of skills, there are a number of additional outcomes that came through in the results.

##### **5.4.1. Holistic understanding of the business**

One of the main outcomes was a greater understanding of the different business processes that are interlinked with the objectives of the learnership – *“It (the learnership) has helped a lot because you can understand everything that is done here in the workplace. They can put you into bottom stock, everywhere – you can just understand what is happening.” [FGD3; Lines 151-153].*

From the responses it appeared that the learnership facilitated with this understanding, and had it not been for the learnerships, this greater insight would not have been realised. FGD 1 articulates this point very well: *“...I would say that it did help because it made my mind to see a bigger picture of the company, not only where I am working in a small space. But you see a bigger picture and the future of the company.” [FGD 1; Lines 177-179].* It also enabled the learners to see opportunity in other parts of the business – *“It’s like understanding everything that’s happening here on the ground floor. If they take you there, if there is a position there, you can go. I don’t have to start from the beginning for them to teach you...” [IDI 3; Lines 25-27].*

As mentioned previously, it also gives the learner a better understanding of where he fits into the process and helps him understand the importance of doing the job well – *“...the right one so weaving can start making the right blanket. But if we get the wrong thing then weaving has to stop. So you understand like “oh, my word, this is supposed to do the right thing and this is the whole process... and wow” it was fascinating.” [IDI 4; Lines 196-199].*

*“It is very important. In fact it gives you a better understanding of this whole thing (the company)” [IDI 2; Line 103].*

The findings of this section indicated that learners, through the practical component of the learnership, were able to grasp a better overall understanding of the business that was outside of the scope of the learnership. It appears this occurred at a quicker rate than that of regular employees who had not been involved in any learnership programme.

#### **5.4.2. Career development**

The majority of respondents believed that the learnership programme would have a positive impact on their career development. No respondents replied in the negative. Some respondents indicated they had, within a few years, already been promoted or found themselves working in a different division – *“I did the same, Sewing Mechanist for a year. Then after a year we get a position of admin.” [FGD 2; Lines 57-58].*

A couple of respondents became interested in education, one even becoming a learnership facilitator – *“I’ve done the assessment for the moderator. So basically I’m the facilitator here.” [FGD 3; Line 175].* Another aspiring to also become a facilitator or even a teacher – *“...when I was with the learnership I felt like I could do this, I could do that, I could... actually be a teacher one day, or be a facilitator. I was thinking this person was not doing well, maybe I could do it better – or something like that.” [IDI 4; Lines 254-256].*

At the same time, the learnerships inspired a feeling of ambition and prompted learners to set themselves goals because they realised the learnership would only take them so far. FGD 2 spoke passionately on this point: *“So you need to be passionate about what you do, and also have goals.” “Because as soon as you maybe get stuck on that sewing machine, you are stuck there on the sewing machine for the rest of your life.” [FGD 2; Lines 296-300].*

The results show that once learners were engaged with the learnership they began, not only to realise the benefits, but to aspire to something more than the learnership offered. The findings indicate that confidence gained by the learners in acknowledging that they could achieve a learnership qualification transpired into confidence at being able to achieve greater and more challenging positions.

#### 5.4.3. Hunger for further education

This desire was prominent among all the respondents. The majority of respondents had, subsequent to completing the learnership, enrolled to study further or were planning to study in the not too distant future. The feeling that emerged was that the learnership helped the respondents to understand the importance of further education, something that should not stop once the learnership was completed, as IDI 4 explains. *“It’s a good thing. Like, we all need to be studying further, even if you can have all the degrees and everything, I still feel like I want to study further...”* [IDI 4; Lines 278-279]. Another respondent really felt the learnership had opened a whole new perspective on education – *“...the learnership opened my brain so that in a way I have to go for things that I want. I can’t just sit around, I have to learn further. That’s why I’m going to study next year.”* [IDI 3; Lines 176-178].

It is remarkable that so many of the respondents indicated that they were currently enrolled in further studies. It is even more impressive that some of the courses are at a much higher level than that of the learnership qualification:

*“...right now currently I am doing stock control at cutting. It is based on logistics. But I am not yet studying, but I will do that next year.”* [FGD 2; Lines 51-53].

*“...I am also at school at the same time. I am doing Information Management at UNISA.”* [FGD 2; Lines 45-46].

*“...based on your performance and the constructive mind that you have, maybe you can do something else. But I started doing sewing until now and I started doing engineering now.”* [FGD 2; Lines 20-22].

*“I am already studying.”* “At UNISA” [FGD 4; Lines 300-302].

*“...I did it (Public Administration) at UNISA – they paid for me.”* “Yes, I am looking forward to that (studying further). I am thinking about that. Considering studying next year.” [IDI 2; Lines 134-139].

The results of this theme strongly indicated that the learnership provided a platform for learners to study further - *“So now you are much eager to learn other courses. For me it was a stepping stone, really. I could see that you know what – I could even study something else” [FGD 3; Lines 183-184]*. The findings also indicate that the majority of the respondents have already enrolled in a further education programme, thus confirming this finding.

#### 5.4.4. Personal growth

The respondents replied with a number of personal attributes that they felt the learnership had helped them discover and develop. The main attribute that came through was that of confidence – *“You know, now we are confident...” [FGD 3; Line 182]*.

The prominent attributes that came through were:

- **Personal growth and confidence** - *“...and for you to grow. I think it did help you a lot to uplift yourself.” [FGD 1; Line 175]*. The increased confidence in learners, as previously highlighted, impacted on many of the themes emerging from this study. It ties in closely with factors such as motivation, career development and the desire for further education. Confidence in taking additional responsibility also presented itself as FGD 2 elaborates: *“I’ll try and do this operation because they used to source and when it goes to that operation things will just stay there waiting for a person. No one was interested in doing it. So I ended up taking all the responsibility” [FGD 2; 255-258]*.
- **Personal planning** – *“...I didn’t know that as a human being you must have a plan.” [FGD 1; Lines 155-156]*. Personal planning links to the themes of career development of this further education, occasioned by interaction with the learnership.

There were a few less prominent attributes that came through the findings. However, one would probably need further research to justify as a finding:

- **Independence** – *“How to be responsible...” “And to be independent...” [FGD 4; Line 206-208]*.
- **Communication skills** – *“How to communicate with other people.” [FGD 4; Line 207]*.

- **Awareness of strengths and weaknesses** – *“...it helped me a lot to know myself, because there was a time when they were teaching us about your strengths and your weaknesses. So some other things like that you don’t see them until you start learning about them and then you know your strength and your weaknesses.” [FGD 1; Lines 164-168].*

## 5.5. Conclusion

The results of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews showed a number of strong themes coming through from the research. The results tie in closely with the framework provided in the literature, indicating that the approach used in the interview schedules was appropriate for the study.

## 6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at what light was shed by the results into the research questions proposed in chapter 3. The three research questions put forward were constructed to facilitate an understanding of what factors influence success in adult learning on learnerships. Reference to the framework developed for the study will be brought into the discussions where appropriate.

### 6.2. Research question 1:

*Question:* What is improved through learnership training?

The majority of the respondents completed a learnership that was focused on a particular manufacturing process. As described in the methodology, this is referred to as a process-orientated learnership. The process required an understanding of why it was needed and how it fitted into the overall process flow of the product being manufactured. In most instances, the process required an understanding of a particular machine operation. However, the process required, above all, a level of skill in order to satisfactorily achieve the required standard, level of output, care and safety when operating machinery. As was outlined in the research methodology, only respondents who were currently employed were selected for the research. In the case of the respondents who had completed a process-orientated learnership, they were all subsequently employed in the positions intended as a result of the learnership. The results clearly indicate that through the design of the programme – classroom based theory developing into practical application – the learners agreed that their learning and understanding was enhanced. This speaks to both the constructivism and andragogy theories outlined in the framework.

Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998) stipulate that adults prefer learning in a context which can be applied to real-world situations. Therefore one can conclude that technical skills were indeed improved through the learnership programme.

According to the learners, an area that was significantly improved through the learnership was personal growth. As discussed in the results the primary areas of personal growth that came through as a result of the learnership were:

- Confidence
- Personal planning

Confidence was a key growth area to most of the respondents. It encouraged them not only to complete the learnership but also confidence in themselves to pursue higher positions within the organisation and to tackle more challenging further education qualifications. Confidence and personal growth can be linked to

which indicates the benefits of the principles to adult learning as encompassed by *individual growth*. Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998) go on to say that maybe adult education should focus more on individual growth, as opposed to the structured requirements of professional human resource departments. This will be elaborated further when looking at the considerations in designing the most successful model for learning.

As stated above, an increased desire to further oneself, particularly through further education, emerged strongly from the results. Most of the respondents indicated this and said the desire was spurred by having the opportunity to engage with the learnership. Intuitively, this links to the concept of individual growth suggested by Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998).

The final area of improvement which can be deduced from the results is that of a holistic understanding of the respective business or the business processes that learners engaged with during the learnership. This understanding lends itself to the constructivism theory in terms of which a process of discovery ensues during the learning process (see framework). It is clear from the engagement with the respondents, most of whom were employed by the company before they undertook the learnership, that there was a clearer understanding of the business on completion of the learnership. The respondents who were unemployed prior to enrolling with the learnership, who in other words had no experience within the company, found that they had progressed further and had a better understanding of the business than that their colleagues who had not done the learnership.

## 6.2. Research question 2:

*Question:* To what extent is the practical work component of the learnership the primary benefit (driver) and are there other elements which may also assist the learning process in learnerships?

The learnership model focuses a large portion on the practical component requirement. It is where the theoretical learning integrates with workplace experience (Mawoyo & Robinson, 2005). The results indicated that the practical component of the learnership was indeed the primary benefit to the outcome and of the learnership. The table below summarises some of the main reasons as expressed by the respondents.

**Table 2: Reasons to justify the practical component as the primary benefit**

Learning is solidified	Through physical application of theory covered, learning was enhanced and embedded
Deeper understanding	Better understanding of why the process is required
Broader understanding	Able to see what comes before and after the process – what affects the learner’s ability to carry out their function, and who they may impact further up the value chain
Value of contribution	Seeing the value of their contribution to the process and therefore the business
Excitement	Physically seeing the process in action created excitement and enthusiasm

The reasons above confirm the appropriate use of the theories in the study. Andragogy speaks about orientation to learning (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998) where adult learners prefer to use the concepts and activities they have learned in the workplace (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). The constructivism learning theory advocates that learning is shaped on real experience which has undoubtedly been confirmed by these results.

The outcome is therefore advantageous to both the learner and the company (Jacobs & Park, 2009). The learner is able to grasp skills and concepts relatively quickly; and the company is in a position to bring in new employees that are not only able to

satisfactorily meet the required skill levels, but also appreciate and have a wider understanding of the business.

### **6.3. Research question 3:**

*Question:* What are the considerations in designing the most successful model for learning in structured, occupation-based programmes?

The results of the study have shown that there are a number of factors to consider when designing an occupation-based programme, such as this kind of learnership, that enhance the learning process. Certainly the practical component, as previously described, plays a vital role. However, there are a number of other, softer factors which could be critical to the success of learning. These factors need to be considered not only in the design and structure of the programme, but also in the ways they are implemented throughout the various stages of the programme.

The importance of employer involvement resonated with many of the respondents. Those who received support in some way or form were encouraged to perform better and were able to better deal with tough situations that had arisen. Those respondents also held the learnership in much higher regard, whereas those who did not appeared to have a far more negative perception of the programme. The suggestion would be to ensure that every learner enrolled on a learnership is paired up with a mentor that is employed at the site-of-delivery (in other words the company at which the learnership is being carried out). A mentor not only acts a sounding board for questions and encouragement, but can also help the learner realise his full potential (Fletcher, 2007).

One of the most important factors to consider is the role the facilitator plays. As described in the framework of the study, proponents of constructivism suggest that the role of an instructor or teacher should be to facilitate the process of learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2008) as opposed to a more dogmatic, pedagogical approach (Knowles, 1990; Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Even though the learnership model does indeed refer to the educator as a facilitator, it is important to stress the function that a facilitator plays in the training and recruitment of such educators. The results indicate that many facilitators performed their function correctly and in so doing received generous appraisal by the respondents. However, there were some respondents who indicated a lack of professionalism by their facilitator, particularly in their understanding of the

subject and their ability to convey its meaning. These respondents also displayed high levels of negativity towards the learnership programme.

Another factor one should consider is the necessary and appropriate use of communication. Communication came through in the results as being generally negative. The respondents felt that the general lack of communication impacted on their motivation. Some areas of communication that were raised by the respondents as needing attention were:

- A clearer understanding of how the learnership would be conducted
- A better understanding of the role-players i.e. FET college training providers, facilitators, employers
- Communication to company's non-learnership employees around the learnership

In this regard, the issue of communication speaks to the theory of andragogy where the adult learner wants to know *how* learning will take place (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998). It also speaks the notion that adult learners want to be treated as 'adults' (Harker, 2009).

The next consideration, clearer expectations, ties in closely with that of communication and the notion of adult learners wanting to be treated as 'adults'. The respondents indicated that honest and clear expectations would provide a better platform for understanding than expectations that were not clearly expressed. Better understanding of expectations should be two-fold. Firstly, expectations of what the learnership has to offer and potential benefits on completion of the programme must be made clear. One of the principles of andragogy (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998), *motivation to learn*, describes adult learners being motivated to learn on the basis that they are able to see the benefits to their current life situation. Secondly, clearer expectations of what their employer requires of them during the course of the learnership must be explained at the outset. These expectations should ideally be set out and monitored by the training provider.

When considering a successful model for learning, two last factors are interlinked. They are career development and incentives. The respondents clearly indicated that they would have preferred an incentive programme to work together with the learnership. Working towards a goal encourages one to perform. In the case of this study the goal could be guaranteed employment or the development of a career plan. Many of the respondents indicated that the learnership was to be a stepping-stone in their career,

clearly indicating their ambition to study further in order to enhance their future career possibilities. This ambition can be linked back to the area of *personal growth* discussed in the first section of the research.

The findings of Smith et al. (2005) confirm some of the findings from this research. Smith et al. (2005) describe the following factors that influence the successful implementation of learnerships: the nature of skills required is appropriate to the programme; opportunity for employment subsequent to the learnership; level of participation by both the learner and the employer; and the incentive in place.

The table below shows a summary of the factors needing consideration when designing the most successful model for learning:

**Table 3: Factors most necessary for the design of a successful occupation-based programme**

<b>Factor:</b>	<b>Description:</b>
Mentorship	Every learner to be assigned a designated mentor at the site-of-delivery
Facilitation	The emphasis on facilitation as the role of the educator
Communication	Good communication between employer and learner; and between training provider and learner
Expectations	Clear and realistic expectations set from the beginning by the training provider and the employer
Career development	Career planning and incentives drive success in learnerships

#### **6.4. Summary**

The results of the study indicate that the research objectives have been met. The emergent themes from the study underpin the objectives set by the research questions. However, due to the limited sample size, there may well be other factors not discovered in this research. Recommendations for further research will be detailed in the concluding chapter.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

### **7.1. Purpose of Study**

This study was undertaken to determine what factors influence the success of adult learnerships. The current structure of the learnership may be based on sound adult learning theory; however, little research has been undertaken into what factors could enhance the learning experience for the adult learner. Hence, the methodology of this study was exploratory in nature. Guided by appropriate learning theories, namely andragogy and constructivism, the results showed interesting insights into what these factors may be.

### **7.2. Main Findings**

The outcomes of the study can be summarised into three sections. The first section looked at what is improved through learnership training. Notwithstanding an improvement in technical skills, as this is after all the primary objective behind the learnership, there were a number of other areas that came through strongly. The personal growth factor experienced by the learner, together with the finding of the learner's desire to further himself, was one of them. These findings show that learners are not just interested in acquiring a skill in order to carry out a function related only to that skill, but to be able to have the opportunity to grow within the organisation. The final notable area which was improved was the ability for the learner to quickly grasp a holistic understanding of the business at which the learnership was being conducted. It could be said, then, that the learnership stimulates increased drive and aspirations among the workers involved.

The second section of the findings relates to the importance of the practical component of the learnership. Not only do the results highlight the importance of the practical component, but they go a long way towards reconfirming the justification for having the practical component as the primary focus of the curriculum. The findings show that this area was where learning was solidified; a deeper and broader understanding of the business was realised; the value of their contribution to the whole was understood; and the excitement of physically applying the theory learnt in a real world context was communicated.

The final section of the findings focus on what factors one should consider when designing the most successful model for learning when it comes to structured, occupational-based programmes. Many of these factors are already applicable to the learnership in some way or form. However, the findings indicate the gravity of the salient factors; and how they are managed often determines the success or failure of the learnership programme, as perceived by the learners. These factors are: adequate and accessible mentorship; the role of the facilitator; better all-round communication; clearer expectations by all parties; and the opportunity for career development.

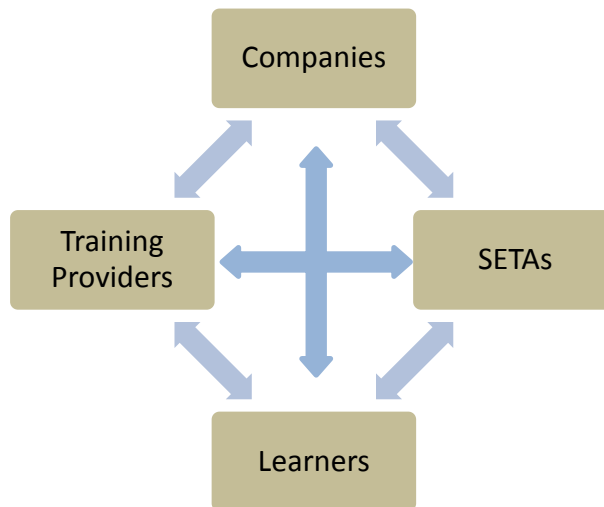
### **7.3. Recommendations to Stakeholders**

Here the writer will discuss a number of recommendations put forward to various stakeholders. It is important to realise that all stakeholders mutually benefit from the recommendations. In other words, a recommendation aimed at a particular stakeholder will have, if not immediately, but eventually a positive impact on the other stakeholders.

*For example: Mandatory mentorship for every new learner is instituted as a requirement by the SETA. The impact of this results in a far quicker time for the learner to achieve the necessary skill level and moves into production. The company benefits from the increased productivity and has a potential employee that is already engaged with the business. The company endorses the learnership concept and other companies also begin to engage with the concept. The training provider is recommended by the original company and so their business grows. The SETA is seen as a success. And so it goes on.*

The various learnership stakeholders can be categorised into the following four groups shown in figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Learnership Stakeholders**



Companies that have engaged with the learnership concept, and who regularly enrol learners, have much to gain from the insight gathered by this study. Recommendations would be to acknowledge that learners become more ambitious once they have engaged with the learnership programme, and therefore companies should develop a career plan early on in the programme with those learners displaying potential. The findings also indicated that learners desired to work their way up within the organisation. This should bode well for companies, in that learners are not just looking for the ‘next best thing’, but would rather stay and grow from within the organisation. If companies aim is to get the most out of their learnership programme, then another recommendation would be to insist that every learner has a mentor. And the final recommendation would be to enhance communication around the programme – both to the learners and especially, to the employees.

In respect to training providers, the follow recommendations emanating from the study are encouraged: Ensure facilitators play the correct role of facilitation in the process of knowledge transfer. The research showed little evidence of a pedagogical style of teaching, which is encouraging. Adult learners want to learn by personal enquiry and by the process of discovery. The next recommendation, in line with company recommendations, would be to enhance communication. In this case it would be communication to learners of the curriculum, learner progress, the role of the company, and so on. Adult learners need to know *how*, *what* and *why* (Knowles et al., 1998) learning will take place, as well as deserving the courtesy of being treated like adults.

The final recommendation to training providers is to be absolutely clear and communicative around the expectations required by the learner as well as what expectations the learner can ultimately expect from the learnership. This links to the previous recommendation of how adult learners require to be treated.

The next stakeholder, the SETA's, should be cognisant of all the findings from this study when designing and redesigning learnership programmes. Some of the findings are consequential benefits to the learner that really has, limited, if any, impact on the design and implementation. However, these findings, such as personal growth, increased ambition to further oneself and holistic understanding, are factors that can be used to market and promote the learnership concept to business and to potential learner candidates. The main recommendations would obviously come from the results detailing the factors to consider when designing the most successful model for learning in occupation-based training programmes. Most of these factors, such as communication, expectations and career development, are primarily left up to the training provider and the company; however, these areas can be made more detailed and explicit as requirements for the learnerships are pushed down from the SETAs. The recommendation of mentorship should definitely be followed through as a standard requirement for all learnerships.

The final stakeholder, the learner, was the focal point for the study and the source of data collected to bring in these results. Therefore the recommendations emanate from their responses.

#### **7.4. Future Research**

There is no conclusive evidence that the findings in this study would be similar with a larger sample size. Future research, possibly including an empirical quantitative approach, could be conducted to determine the validity of the findings.

Further research could be undertaken to establish whether these findings can be generalised across different SETAs, as well as different training providers.

The findings of this study could be used as the basis for researching the effectiveness of public FET colleges versus private FET colleges.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Schedule: Focus Group Discussion

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#### Interview Schedule: Focus Group Discussion

**Topic:** Factors which influence adult learning in learnerships

**Researcher:** Marco Magni

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#### Instructions:

Researcher introduces himself and asks the respondents to reciprocate.

Researcher explains the reason for the focus group discussion and discusses anonymity with regard to the research findings.

Researcher issues each respondent with a consent form, and carefully explains the particulars contained therein.

Researcher initiates discussion based on the guiding questions and probes as described below.

---

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Tell me about the learnership programme that you completed?

Probe:

- ❖ What or who influenced you to do the programme?
- ❖ Why did you enrol in the programme?

2. Tell me about the structure of the learnership programme?

Probe:

- ❖ Practical / workplace experience

- ❖ What were the support structures that assisted you: employer / line manager
- ❖ What is your impression of the FET service provider?
- ❖ What worked / did not work during the programme?

3. Tell me about the practical component of the learnership programme?

Probe:

- ❖ How did the instructor / lecturer facilitate the programme?
- ❖ When do you think the best learning occurred?
- ❖ What caused this?
- ❖ How would you describe the journey of a learnership programme?
- ❖ What other skills / abilities have you acquired from completing the programme?

4. How do you believe the learnership has contributed towards your technical skills?

Probe:

- ❖ What is your overall impression of the outcome of the programme?

5. What do you believe were the most influential factors that made the learnership a good / bad experience?

Probe:

- ❖ What else do you believe you have gained from completing the learnership programme?

## Appendix 2: Interview Schedule: In-Depth Interview

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### Interview Schedule: In-Depth Interview

**Topic:** Factors Influencing Success in Adult Learning on Learnerships

**Researcher:** Marco Magni

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#### Instructions:

Researcher introduces himself and asks the respondent to reciprocate.

Researcher explains the reason for the in-depth interview and discusses anonymity with regards to the research findings.

Researcher issues the respondent with a consent form, and carefully explains the particulars contained therein.

Researcher begins the discussion based on the guiding questions and probes as described below.

---

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Why do you believe that learning is important? **[Andragogy]**

Probe:

- ❖ What realisation led you to believe this?

2. Tell me more about what encouraged you to do the learnership? **[Andragogy]**

Probe:

- ❖ How ready were you to undertake the learnership?
- ❖ How relevant was the choice in relation to your life situation at the time?

3. Were you motivated to learn? **[Andragogy]**

Probe:

- ❖ Tell me how you were motivated?
- ❖ What encouraged your motivation?

4. What motivated you to keep you interested in the learnership? **[Andragogy]**

Probe:

- ❖ What was motivating or demotivating from the employees in your company?
- ❖ How do you think it would have helped had they been more encouraging?
- ❖ What external motivating factors assisted you during the learnership?

5. How would you describe the involvement of your employer during the learnership? **[Theme question]**

Probe:

- ❖ No involvement: Do you believe this hindered your progress in the learnership?
- ❖ Involvement: How important would you say this was in relation to what you have gained from the learnership?
- ❖ What was the type of involvement (direct, assistance, encouraging)?

6. What would be your suggestions be to improve the way in which the learnership is delivered?

Probe:

- ❖ What improvements would you make to the structure of the programme?
- ❖ What improvement would you make to the practical component of the learnership?

7. What were the working conditions like during the course of the programme?

**[Theme question]**

Probe:

- ❖ How did fellow colleagues treat you?
- ❖ How influential would you say this was to the overall outcome of the learnership?

8. How do you believe the communication around the learnership was generally handled? **[Theme question]**

Probe:

- ❖ From a service provider perspective?
- ❖ From an employer perspective?

9. How important was the practical component of the learnership? **[Andragogy]**  
**[Constructivism]**

Probe:

- ❖ Why do you think the practical component was so important?
- ❖ At what point in the programme did you think learning was maximised?
- ❖ If practical component: At what stage during the practical component did everything start to fall into place?

10. Did prior knowledge or experience play an important role in choosing to do the learnership? **[Andragogy]** **[Constructivism]**

Probe:

- ❖ If yes: How would you say it facilitated your learning in the learnership?

11. How would you describe the style of teaching from your instructor?  
**[Constructivism]**

Probe:

- ❖ Did they encourage you to find answers yourself?
- ❖ What style of teaching do you think would best suit the learnership?

12. What did you want to achieve from the learnership? **[Results]**

Probe:

- ❖ Was career development important?

13. What else did you gain from the learnership that you did not expect? **[Results]**

Probe:

- ❖ What are your thoughts about studying further?
- ❖ Did you experience any other personal growth?

1 **Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion 1 (FGD 1)**

2 **Focus Group Discussion 1: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012**

3 **Company: Gina@Work**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondents:

- 6 1. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
7 2. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
8 3. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
9 4. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*
- 

10

11 R: So was everyone on the same learnership programme?

12 1,2,3,4: Yes.

13 R: what was is called?

14 2: NQF4 Commerce Management.

15 R: I am going to ask questions, whoever wants to answer them please free to do so. If  
16 you would like to add anything please jump in.

17 R: Tell me about the learnership programme that you completed? Would anyone like to  
18 give me a brief overview?

19 3: It was a NQF4. Mainly it was on how we should work with other people and how we  
20 could reach our goals. And how could we uplift our company.

21 R: What or who influenced you to complete the programme? What influenced you to  
22 say “I’m going to do the learnership”?

23 4: We got the information from our manager. She came up to us with the idea and she  
24 told us what are the benefits of this, it’s not only for the company, it’s for our self,  
25 uplifting us in our job and in our workplace.

26 R: Ok, so based on that you decided you wanted to go on the programme.

27 4: Yes.

28 R: Did your employer approach you or did they approach you individually? Did they  
29 approach you one on one and say there is a learnership programme, this is what it is,  
30 and would you like to go on it?

31 3: They called us and we were all asked at once.

32 2: Yes, from our supervisor.

33 R: So obviously they said that it would help in terms of the company but that it would  
34 help you as well.

35 1: Yes, and how to work with people.

36 3: Even if we are not working here anymore we can maybe go to other companies and  
37 work with the experience that we got.

38 R: So, it would help your career development, whether it was here or somewhere else?

39 1, 2, 3: Yes.

40 R: And was there any motivation as well? So when heard about the programme were  
41 you excited?

42 2, 3: Yes, very excited.

43 R: And I suppose that in itself was saying “ok, I’m ready, let’s go” and it started.

44 3: Yes.

45 R: Tell me about the Learnership programme structure? So how was it structured? For  
46 example was there theory work, classroom work, was there practical experience?

47 1: Yes.

48 R: Can someone just run through how it went, over how many months?

49 2: Nine months.

50 R: And how did it start?

51 1: It started in March 2010.

52 2: Yes, it started in March 2010, and we were taking one day off a week and we were  
53 attended there (FET College), doing theories.

54 R: And you were attending class where?

55 3: Randfontein.

56 2: Yes, at Aranda.

57 R: At the college?

58 3: Yes.

59 R: Ok, so you were attending once a week.

60 1: Once a week on Thursdays.

61 R: Ok and that ran for nine months?

62 2: Yes.

63 R: Was there a practical part of the learnership? So was there any part of the  
64 programme that you had to do at work here?

65 3: Yes, there were meetings with some of the staff members, chairing the meetings,  
66 deciding on how we are going to work for a day.

67 1: Yes, they teach us how to... if you want to hold a meeting you must just set a date,  
68 time, day.

69 R: So, was the practical side of it, the part of the programme that you do over here,  
70 was that helpful?

71 2: Yes.

72 1: Yes, too much.

73 3: Too much, yes.

74 R: Would you say that was the most important part?

75 2: It was.

76 R: Was it where most of the learning occurred? Because it is one thing when you look  
77 at theory the whole time and you have a lecturer who says this is what the theory says,  
78 and you look at it and you read it and you learn it, but then when you put it into practice  
79 does it make it clear?

80 1, 2, 3: Yes.

81 4: In addition on that, I would say that it was a very important part when it comes to  
82 what you are doing practically, because that's where each and every one can see that,  
83 you know what I am benefiting there and there, I am lacking there and there so maybe  
84 if we come back here, and what you call, we do the practical, we go back to class and  
85 we tell our lecturers that you know what, we are lacking there and there, and then you  
86 can help assist me on that to improve myself.

87 R: Ok, so the learning experience was also the feedback to the lecturer and it wasn't  
88 just one way. You would say "this is what we have learnt and this is what we may be  
89 missing; what we may be lacking"?

90 3: Yes.

91 R: Ok, great. And what support structures did you have. What I mean by that was your  
92 employer, or your line manager, were they very supportive?

93 1: They were supportive, our manager, our director was supporting us. Because she  
94 was coming to our class, to the college, to sit with us, and support us.

95 R: Oh, really?

96 2, 3: Yes.

97 1: And to ask questions to open our minds.

98 R: Ok, brilliant. So your mentor here was very much involved in the process?

99 3: Yes.

100 R: And you found that it helped?

101 2: Very much so.

102 R: Had your mentor here not been involved and if they said "you know what, just go" –  
103 would it have been as good, or not?

104 3: It would be, as long as we were prepared to learn. It would be, yes.

105 R: So, what you are saying is that you need to be prepared to learn?

106 1: Yes.

107 R: So you have to go with an open mind and be prepared to learn?

108 1, 2, 3: Yes.

109 R: Ok, great. And what is your impression of the service provider, of the college? Did  
110 you think that they managed the programme well? What was positive and what was  
111 negative?

112 2: There was nothing negative. Everything was positive. It was good.

113 R: So you think the programme was run well?

114 1,2,3: Yes.

115 R: And it was delivered well?

116 1,2,3: Yes.

117 4: In addition on that, the programme was run well because as a human being we all  
118 get tired. So we need to be... it's not that from 8 to 4 we are in the class, so we get  
119 enough rest to refresh ourselves and then we have refreshments at the college,  
120 provided by the college.

121 R: Great.

122 4: So it was very, very good.

123 R: Ok, excellent. Ok, can you go into a bit more detail on the practical side of the  
124 learnership? So as we said earlier on, you had to come back and do exercises over  
125 here, am I right?

126 1: Yes

127 R: Can you go into a bit more information about that?

128 4: Well on the practical I would say what you have benefited there is that you start your  
129 day; you need to have a plan. How are you going to carry on with your day? So, you  
130 can't just start your day with a blank mind, so you must have a plan. So you sit down  
131 with your team, say if they are three of them, sit down with them and you say "we are  
132 going to do this and this and this and this..." And then another thing, if something  
133 comes across that you to accommodate space to squeeze it in. But when you squeeze  
134 it in, it shouldn't interrupt what you have planned – you need to carry on with your plan.

135 R: Ok, great that is excellent. When do you think that the best learning occurred? At  
136 what stage of the programme? So for example, when you are in class and you try  
137 something out and then suddenly you have an 'Ah-ha' moment – when you go 'ah' that

138 makes sense. Did you have those experiences? At what stage – if you can remember  
139 any time in the programme when you thought “ok, I really understand now”?

140 4: I would say in the practical. I remember my lecturer saying this is how you should  
141 tackle this.

142 1: Almost fix it like this.

143 R: Great. How did your instructor or lecturer facilitate the programme? In the sense that  
144 when you were in class, were they more of a guide or did they teach down? Do you  
145 know what I mean – did they encourage you to find your own way through the theory?

146 3: Yes, they would give us some clues but not on everything. And then after that you  
147 have to think for yourself and get it right and if you don't understand you just ask. And  
148 even if they don't give you the exact answer but they just give you a light on whatever  
149 you ask them.

150 R: Excellent, and that obviously helped as well?

151 2, 3: Yes.

152 R: Ok, great. And then other than the outcomes of the learnership, for example if it was  
153 a commerce programme and they were outlines set, where there any other skills or  
154 abilities which you have picked up – over and above what you have learnt?

155 4: I would say yes, because as an individual, myself, I didn't know that as a human being  
156 you must have a plan. Like you know what, today I'm going to do this and do this, but  
157 that I have learnt is not only for the company, but for myself I have to do this and this,  
158 which makes it easier for me. Because you know what, I can go to my list and I can say  
159 “I have done this and I have done this, I haven't done this”. So that it can also help you  
160 personally.

161 R: Absolutely. Ok great, so it has also helped you organise your personal life?

162 1,2: Yes.

163 R: Does anybody else want to add to anything that has just been said?

164 2: To my side, it helped me a lot to know myself, because there was a time when they  
165 were teaching us about your strengths and your weaknesses. So some other things  
166 like that you don't see them until you start learning about them and then you know your  
167 strength and your weaknesses. Because usually sometimes you combine those things

168 together, you don't differentiate what is a strength and what is a weakness most of the  
169 time. So I have learnt a lot from that.

170 R: Ok, great. So that's over and above. How do you believe the learnership has  
171 contributed towards your technical skills? This programme was more from a commerce  
172 and management side, so it wasn't really applied to the technical skills. Let me  
173 rephrase that – the outcome of the learnership, would you say it has improved your  
174 ability to do your work?

175 3: Yes it did, and for you to grow. I think it did help you a lot to uplift yourself.

176 R: Ok, great.

177 4: In addition to that, yes I would say that it did help because it made my mind to see a  
178 bigger picture of the company, not only where I am working in a small space. But you  
179 see a bigger picture and the future of the company.

180 R: Great. What was your overall impression of the outcome – your overall satisfaction  
181 with the programme? We did mention it at the start and you all said you were very  
182 happy with how it went and you think the outcome was good?

183 1, 2, 3: Yes.

184 R: What do you believe were the most influential factors that made the learnership a  
185 good experience? You have mentioned the practical component; you have mentioned  
186 the mentorship and also the way in which the lecturer taught. Was there anything else?  
187 Other factors that you thought contributed, for example encouragement from your  
188 colleagues or your family?

189 2: There was.

190 3: There was encouragement. Even at home. Even our children, when I say I'm doing  
191 my homework or doing whatever, they would be like anxious to know what I'm doing...

192 2: They would ask questions

193 3: ...asking the questions like "can you still read, can you still write?" Because they  
194 think we just grown up and we were never children before. And they see me having big  
195 files and things... "Mummy, can you still write, can you still read? With these big files,  
196 how are you going to manage to do this?" [Laughter]

197 4: In addition to that, I would say that there was encouragement from our mentor  
198 because our director was asking us every day...

199 2, 3: Yes, every day

200 4: She would say "you've got an assignment, what have you done?" Then "how was  
201 your assignment?" Before we submit our assignment she wanted to see and assess it  
202 and correct us and say ok, there you should have done like this or like this. And also  
203 motivation.

204 R: Ok, great.

205 3: And it therefore went easy in that way, in that we get support from both sides –  
206 home, family and work.

207 R: What were your personal objectives? Where do you see this helping you going  
208 forward? We have mentioned career development. Has this also encouraged you to  
209 carry on learning? So if the opportunity arises again, you are going jump onto it?

210 1, 3: Yes, I would jump onto it

211 R: Is there anything else that anyone else would like to add? Anything positive or  
212 negative, also if there are any recommendation that you would like to put forward as  
213 well?

214 4: I may say that this learnership has helped a lot because as I have said before it has  
215 opened my mind to see a bigger picture of the company. We were given structures of  
216 the company, from the MD down to the floor management. So I looked at myself and  
217 said, you know what, why should I be at floor management. If I got an opportunity, I  
218 also want to go to the top structure of the company. So that encouraged me and I think  
219 that... if there is another opportunity I'll make sure that I grab it.

220 R: Excellent. Thank you very much.

1 **Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion 2 (FGD 2)**

2 **Focus Group Discussion 2: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012**

3 **Company: Automotive Leather Company (ACL)**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondents:

6 1. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

7 2. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

8 3. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

9 4. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

10

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11 R: What learnership did you complete? Does anybody want to start?

12 4: It was called a Sewing Learnership

13 R: Were you all on the same one?

14 4: We were all on different ones.

15 R: Ok, so yours was a sewing learnership?

16 4: Yes. I started sewing. After sewing is whereby after a year of completing my  
17 learnership, whereby I started doing something else – different prospective or a  
18 different position.

19 R: Ok.

20 4: Yes, based on your performance and the constructive mind that you have, maybe  
21 you can do something else. But I started doing sewing until now and I started doing  
22 engineering now.

23 R: Excellent. So from the learnership which you completed, you have moved from  
24 sewing to engineering. Am I right?

25 4: Yes.

26 R: And are you studying now again?

27 4: I am having a list of open points, whereby I record everything that I have learnt and  
28 some other things that I need to learn for courses, to institutions. So I have to write

29 everything that I have to learn so that I can start meeting with my manager so that we  
30 can see what I will be studying. I probably will be studying from next year. But this year  
31 I have doing some in-house studies, whereby I learn how to do my job and stuff. I have  
32 a list of open points, because there are some certain courses that I need to take to  
33 understand all the procedures and steps and everything.

34 R: Ok great, that is excellent. And you completed the learnership when?

35 4: Completed – I can say that it was a contract that ended in 2009.

36 R: 2009?

37 4: Yes, 2009. The contracted ended then. Because we had a contract for a year. It  
38 started as a learnership, and then after the learnership they gave us the contract. We  
39 received a one year contract.

40 R: And Rendani, what learnership did you do?

41 3: Sewing Mechanist.

42 R: Ok.

43 3: I started last year and I finished this year. They gave us a certificate. I am doing  
44 forming (sewing skill) however would like to do another like joining, big parts, and learn  
45 more. I am also at school at the same time. I am doing Information Management at  
46 UNISA.

47 R: Brilliant. And how long is that for?

48 3: By next year I'll be done.

49 R: Ok, great.

50 2: I was on the learnership – sewing. That's where I was with Thabo. As he already told  
51 you that it was a contract for a year and all this stuff. But right now currently I am doing  
52 stock control at cutting. It is based on logistics. But I am not yet studying, but I will do  
53 that next year.

54 R: So you are keen to also carry on studying?

55 2: Yes.

56 R: Ok, great. And Makhosazana?

57 1: I did the same, Sewing Mechanist for a year. Then after a year we get a position of  
58 admin.

59 R: And you are happy with that move?

60 1: Yes, so far I am good.

61 R: Ok, great. I am now just going to ask questions so whoever wants to answer, please  
62 do. What or who influenced you to enrol with the learnership?

63 4: In most cases, especially we from the black communities we get to engage on the  
64 learnership due to lack of opportunity to go to school. With many people who are on  
65 learnership, are people who were at home, probably for a year, two year after matric  
66 initially. But, it doesn't... what can I say... it is the opportunity that has been... it must  
67 be given to people who are underprivileged to make an opportunity to go to school,  
68 because most of us who came here for a learnership are people who are unemployed.  
69 Unemployed for a year or two years. So it is a great thing.

70 R: And who came to you and said there is a learnership, would you like to go on? Or  
71 did you enquire yourself? For example did your employer come to you and said there is  
72 a learnership being offered, would you like to go on?

73 4: In most cases, it is being advertised. Because we have a notice board here. It's been  
74 advertised so the employees, the people who work here are the one who gave us the  
75 information who said you can come to this xxx, there is an opportunity for a learnership.

76 R: Ok, what influenced you to say "ok, I want to go on it?"

77 4: Yes, for me like I'm just an ordinary guy, who didn't study, who was at home, not  
78 working. So I thought an opportunity for me, because I have just learnt a great deal  
79 about learnerships, because something that I had has been granted to people who are  
80 underprivileged. For me it was an opportunity.

81 R: And at the time were you also ready to engage with it?

82 4: Yes I was ready to engage because I was not working or doing anything at that  
83 moment.

84 R: Does anybody want to add anything else?

85 3: And also, when you are at school or university or college, when you want a job they  
86 need one year experience. So it was a good opportunity; when I heard that there is this

87 learnership. So that if I can finish my diploma, I will have a year experience. I won't  
88 struggle to find another job.

89 R: Ok. So it was more that you wanted to enter the working environment but you  
90 needed the experience and the learnership was a way to also get that experience?

91 3: Yes.

92 R: So the motivation was also to get...

93 3: A year experience. And when I found out that it is a sewing mechanist I didn't know  
94 about the machine. I find it interesting also to learn a machine, to learn how to sow.

95 R: Great. Does anybody else want to add anything?

96 1: Like me. I came here without knowing about the learnership. They just told me to  
97 report here, and fortunately... Ok, like at first, when they tell you about the learnership,  
98 you first disagree with it. You go like "oh, I won't earn such a small amount of money". I  
99 was expecting to get that pay.

100 R: Sure.

101 1: But because then you can't stay at home. You say "let me take the chance" then as  
102 time goes by I'll find a better job.

103 R: Ok. Who would like to tell me about the structure of the learnership? As in for how  
104 long was there, for example, theory, lectures, practical, exams etc. Does anybody want  
105 to run through the structure of the programme?

106 4: Normally it depends on the industry in which you work. Because you are working in  
107 an automotive industry. Like, firstly the structure did not go properly, in the first place,  
108 as we expected the learnership to go. That we needed to study for a period of six  
109 months or stuff. So here normally everything is based on skills and practical's. So  
110 unfortunately we did not get much time for theory. What happens exactly here is they  
111 just tell you about the environment where you work, how do they do things. And then  
112 after you go straight to the machines, they teach you how to sow. Because when you  
113 start here they took us for test, a one day test, whereby you need to sow on top of a  
114 paper with the needling without court seams, so they see you can go straight on the  
115 line.

116 R: Ok.

117 4: So we were not granted the opportunity to go study some other things, especially  
118 theory. The class side was not there, it was based on practical. As you start to sow and  
119 they can that you have learnt how to do it they take you straight to production. But most  
120 of the people get frustrated when it comes there, because some other things they didn't  
121 expect them. Maybe they expected to come here, do a learnership; lecturers must  
122 come here and stuff. So it didn't happen that way. But nevertheless with what happens,  
123 the thing is there should be a more structured thing, especially on the automotive side.  
124 Because most of the time, not only this company, all the automotive companies they  
125 can provide with a learnership. But you end up whatever... let me say, the permanent  
126 staff – people who are working here. You end up doing the same job as they do,  
127 working same hours like them, working night shifts – so something that we didn't  
128 expect to do. But at the end of the day, you cannot just withdraw and stay at home.  
129 You end up taking whatever is coming. So somehow is fair but somehow unfair.

130 R: Sure.

131 4: Yes, so the learnership should maybe be conducted by people from outside.

132 R: Was the learnership all done over here, or was some of it also done at an FET  
133 college?

134 4: No, all of the learnership was done here. That is how it is being conducted. That is  
135 why I am saying maybe next time if they can take some people from outside to bring  
136 them here so that they can follow all the procedures. Because remember something –  
137 if you come for a learnership here you also go to the internet café to research how this  
138 learnership is done, but to find out some other things, they are not happening. But you  
139 know as a learner here you just cannot come here and jump and say do this, do this,  
140 do this... but as it was the first time we are doing this maybe we thought this is the  
141 other position they are using. So when I do my researches and stuff, I found out on my  
142 automotive industries, they don't give much of the lecture. They more consider the  
143 skills.

144 R: But would you think that depends on the type of learnership?

145 4: Yes, it depends on the type.

146 R: So if it's more process orientated, like sewing, most of it will probably be practical?

147 4: Yes, most of the time it will be practical. Because as you can check, you cannot do  
148 sewing on theory. We have to sit at the machine and stuff.

149 R: Sure.

150 4: So when I check at other automotives they are using this machinery and stuff. So  
151 you cannot... they just show you how to operate this machine – what is right, what is  
152 wrong, what not to do. And at the end, you know. They put you there as an operator.  
153 So you end up working there. What is unfair about it is a learnership should not be  
154 considered... they must not consider you as an employee. They must take you as a  
155 student, they mustn't expect you to work as fluently as the people working here for  
156 instance.

157 R: So the expectation by your employer was for you to work like a normal employee?

158 4: Yes. So that is most concern people are having. Even a learnership like people  
159 come here with such small expectation but when they come here the employer expects  
160 more from you.

161 R: Yet you haven't got the experience and you are still learning the skills?

162 4: Yes, and remember also we as people... we also need some money

163 R: For sure.

164 4: You cannot so the same job by the same time and you earning more than me. So  
165 you give me enough stress.

166 R: For sure, absolutely.

167 4: So that's why I'm saying... it's fine for the company to offer learnership but it must be  
168 run by someone outside who can follow all the procedural things. But if I'm a supervisor  
169 working here I'll expect everything from you as much from people who are working  
170 here, it becomes unfair for a learner sometimes.

171 R: Ok. Does anybody want to add anything?

172 R: What were the support structures that assisted you? So for example, your employer  
173 or your line manager – were they quite supportive?

174 2: From my side I can say that training here is very tough. When you are already in the  
175 line they expect more work from you.

176 R: Really?

177 2: Yes. And if you are a slow learner you won't survive.

- 178 R: So would you say that there wasn't a good support?
- 179 2: Not at all. [Indicating no support]
- 180 1: Yes. [Backing previous statement]
- 181 R: So you didn't have a mentor here with you who coached you through the  
182 programme?
- 183 1, 2, 4: No.
- 184 R: Would you say that if you had had that type of support it would have helped?
- 185 1, 2, 3: Yes.
- 186 4: The way I told you, if it [learnership] had been conducted by... maybe by you coming  
187 from this institution from SETA, obviously there are certain things that these people like  
188 the line manager, they don't know about the learnership, they just think the learnership  
189 is how you been brought here – you start here after two months, you must go here. So  
190 somehow you end up coming here but you end up regretting it, but because of the  
191 passion, maybe you have the passion for sewing, end up liking what you do, you ignore  
192 the money and stuff.
- 193 R: Sure.
- 194 4: But those students who don't have the heart for it, they end up leaving, because they  
195 didn't get what they expected.
- 196 R: And maybe there isn't a career plan laid out for you? So you didn't have a  
197 programme that said you will start here, it might be quite low down, but you are going  
198 to learn a skill and we will support you through and then we will see how you will  
199 progress after that?
- 200 4: Yes.
- 201 2: But people aren't the same. Sometimes you will find one who will be (have) passion  
202 for you.
- 203 R: Ok.
- 204 R: Was there an external instructor who came or was there any external instructor or  
205 examiner?
- 206 4: No, it happened internally.

207 R: Ok, so there was no one who came from the outside?

208 4: No. People who came from outside, were people from SETA just to come and check  
209 how far you are, but they end up coming at the end of the year, knowing that the  
210 learnership has been completed so that have submit the certificate. But during the  
211 process of learnership, no.

212 R: Ok. So there wasn't an instructor?

213 4: The instructor was the trainer. The person who shows you how too...

214 R: And who was that? Was that someone from here?

215 R: Yes. Because remember there is a trainer here in this company – people train you  
216 how to sow. As I've told you before whatever the skill we had was the practical skills.  
217 So they have to bring someone who has the experience to sow so that they can show  
218 us. It is mostly based on sewing, not that it's wrong or anything, but just that it's mostly  
219 based on sewing.

220 R: Sure, because that is what learnership is for.

221 4: Yes, because some the learnerships, they are not the same. There is this  
222 administration learnership where you can get to work in the office, IT and stuff. So this  
223 one was based mostly on sewing, because this company is based on sewing. You will  
224 get the opportunity while you are busy sewing, whereby they can see your potential –  
225 where you may be good at and stuff. But mostly it was based on sewing. But  
226 automatically they have to give you a person who works here, who has the experience  
227 of working here. xxx (19:45) After 3 months of practicing that's when you are going to  
228 receive a certificate of process. Because they give you a process whereby maybe after  
229 two weeks, or two months, they say this person is good on this process, automatically  
230 they take you to production.

231 R: Ok, I see.

232 R: What would you say worked well and what did not work well in the learnership? So  
233 during the course of learning the skill and being trained; what factors worked well and  
234 what did not work well? You have already mentioned that they were more interested in  
235 production as opposed to your progress?

236 2: From my side everything was fine except when we were about to finish our  
237 learnership, nobody informed us... we spent more than three weeks with nobody

238 saying anything. We were expecting more money, and we were still getting the past  
239 pay.

240 R: Ok. So basically lack of communication?

241 2, 3: Yes.

242 R: And from the practical component – most of it was practical. When do you think the  
243 best learning occurred? So if your trainer shows you how to sow something and you try  
244 afterwards, when was the best part of learning the actual skill? Was it when you tried it  
245 the first time, or was it when you tried it again and again?

246 4: What I can say is that when I started sewing here I was working on what you can say  
247 is a difficult operation that no one was interested to train in. Especially the people who  
248 were working here, they were not interested to work there, because they had to take  
249 people with experience. I was doing edge-trimming. That was the most difficult  
250 operation because many people were getting warning forms and being fired because of  
251 that operation. Whenever you cut that thing, and you cut it too big, it won't fit on the  
252 cover – we were doing Mercedes-Benz at that moment. We were doing Mercedes-  
253 Benz products and they don't take any nonsense.

254 R: Sure.

255 4: So at the end of the day I end up doing xxx (23:40) and I say “no”, I'll try and do this  
256 operation because they used to source and when it goes to that operation things will  
257 just stay there waiting for a person. No one was interested in doing it. So I ended up  
258 taking all the responsibility so I know I'll do them and fortunately it didn't take me a day  
259 to do it right but I was fortunate because they didn't give me that pressure for a week to  
260 say do the 140 covers. But I ended up doing it and it went well.

261 R: So when you were under pressure to make sure you did that function well, it came  
262 right?

263 4: Yes, it came right. On the first year I came here in February, but in March I was  
264 already in production and nobody else was in production. I was the only one in  
265 production and I also didn't come for that specific project – it was another specific  
266 project that you had to be trained on, but I ended working on this line because of this  
267 operation, so I end up working on that operation. So at the end of the day I was  
268 surprised to be the operator of the year and they had been sewing for the past two

269 years for that operation but nothing came out correctly, but when I started with that  
270 everything went well and I was motivated by being the operator of the year.

271 R: Ok.

272 4: There was a ceremony and I end up getting a certificate, incentive and other stuff.  
273 So I ended up enjoying it. That was my turning point. But for the first twelve months of  
274 that learnership I was not a happy person, I was not very happy.

275 R: Ok.

276 4: Yes, because I had this thing on me but I couldn't take it out. The turning point was  
277 whereby I was motivated by that thing.

278 R: Does anybody else want to go through the journey of their learnership? Like Thabo  
279 explained, the first twelve months he didn't enjoy it and then there was a point where it  
280 turned for him. Does anybody else want to share their experience?

281 3: It was good while we were still under training, working with the trainer only. But when  
282 we go for production, it was difficult.

283 R: Really.

284 3: Yes, they needed more work and we were not ready. We were under pressure.

285 R: Ok.

286 3: But now we are fine.

287 R: And at what point did you know that you could manage it easily?

288 3: When I started to gain speed.

289 R: So that just came with time and with practice?

290 3: Yes.

291 R: How do you believe the learnership has contributed to your skills?

292 R: What is your overall impression of the learnership?

293 4: It depends on what kind of person you are. Do you have dreams and stuff, do you  
294 have goals in life. Because sometimes when you work in a company like this one, you  
295 can see the opportunities, you can see this person has worked there on a sewing

296 machine, this is the person who is doing this and this and this. So you need to be  
297 passionate about what you do, and also have goals.

298 R: Sure.

299 4: Because as soon as you maybe get stuck on that sewing machine, you are stuck  
300 there on the sewing machine for the rest of your life.

301 R: So you always want to have a plan?

302 4: Yes, there are a lot of opportunities here, but those opportunities you must work to  
303 get. Because we are more privileged because we are close to our managers and close  
304 to everybody. It's not like these people are very far. We are lucky enough because we  
305 have friendly managers – people we can talk to anytime. The managing director is not  
306 a person you cannot go to his office. You can go and knock to his office anytime,  
307 maybe explain to him what you want. As I have said before, as an engineer now, it's  
308 not something that came to me. I wanted to do it, because I was always knocking on  
309 their door. So it depends on the person, obviously we are not the same, we don't think  
310 the same.

311 R: Sure.

312 4: Yes, but for me it was an opportunity to get into this big company like this whereby  
313 you start to plan your whole life. But if it was not for this learnership obviously... it was  
314 not right the first time, but at least it opens some other doors.

315 R: And would you say that from doing one learnership it has also opened your mind to  
316 do other things?

317 4: Yes. You have to think broad... or ahead. And you have to look and you have to see  
318 that horizon, that vision you need to have. You need to participate more. Like what I  
319 have realised in this company you have to do more things voluntarily. Whereby after  
320 that they will recognise you, but as soon as you sit back, you sit back at the machine  
321 for the rest of your life.

322 R: Sure.

323 4: As soon as you start to do things voluntarily, helping with the quality and stuff – it's  
324 how you get opportunities.

325 R: And the learnership also made you understand that's that what you had to do?

326 4: Yes.

327 R: What else do you think you have gained from doing the learnership? Were there  
328 other insights, unrelated to the actual learnership, that you gained?

329 R: Now, having done a learnership, are you encouraged to further educate yourself?

330 1, 2: Yes.

331 R: Are you more motivated to participate in other courses, programmes or studies?

332 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes.

333 R: I think we are almost done. Is there anything else that anybody wants to add or you  
334 want to say in regards to the learnership?

335 4: Yes. I think people who provide the learnership, they should be the one who  
336 conducts it. They should never let the company run things, because the company will  
337 run it through their policies and stuff...

338 R: Sure

339 4: [something about policies conflicting] ...so next time they are having a learnership,  
340 people from SETA should be the one, people who provides the certificate they should  
341 be the one who run it because how can they provide the certificate but they don't what  
342 happens at the same time. Because you get the certificate from SETA but they are not  
343 the one who runs it. So the next thing they need to do when they provide learnership,  
344 because... with the money also, they say they are giving you an allowance – they say  
345 it's the money coming from the learnership and not from the company. But at the same  
346 time the company profitise from you, which is unfair. At the same time you are not  
347 getting incentive from that profit you make for the company. So I think they should run it  
348 professionally, they should send the...

349 R: Instructors...

350 4: Yes... instructors, bring into the company. If they provide the learnership in this  
351 company they should bring two or three instructors from outside, the people who can  
352 run it. So people can get used to the idea of where I am going. Not just to come after  
353 two weeks, still on production, start working night shifts and stuff, so if you check the  
354 clause for a learnership and obviously they are not going concurrently, then something  
355 is wrong, and that is something that demotivates a lot of people.

356 R: Sure.

357 4: So we start with 50 people group, but at the end of the day there were only 20  
358 people left, because things didn't run accordingly. So which is unfair to those who left  
359 because they had their reasons to leave. So I think next time learnership – bring those  
360 people from outside, maybe put the trainer here, but they must work with the people  
361 from outside. The most unfair thing is the money, because.

362 2: And the night shift.

363 4: Yes, night shift and money was unfair. Because at the same time you will be  
364 exposed to that payslip of other people and you are doing the same. They expect 30  
365 covers an hour from me and that guy is also doing 30 covers, but I'm not getting that  
366 money.

367 R: Was there ever an incentive to say once the learnership is completed...

368 4: Yes, once it is completed you also expect more but...

369 R: You don't?

370 4: ...you don't [get more]. Because of these labour brokers and stuff. So it's unfair  
371 sometimes. But it's fair... for me I was fortunate but for other people not so fortunate.  
372 But I have to think of the other people, who left, who came with me here, who was still  
373 earning whatever but they were promised so much but they were not getting it. The  
374 empty promise and stuff, that's what kills the morale of other people, especially those  
375 who did not finish the learnership, because some people don't finish. Many of them  
376 don't finish and end up looking for greener pastures somewhere else, you see.

377 R: Ok, thank you very much. If you have any further questions, or you would like to add  
378 anything, please call me or send me an email.

1 **Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion 3 (FGD 3)**

2 **Focus Group Discussion 3: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Frams United**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondents:

- 6 1. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
7 2. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
8 3. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
9 4. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*
- 

10

11 R: Who would like to begin by talking about the learnership that they completed?  
12 Anyone can start and anyone is more than welcome to jump in at any stage.

13 1: Well, the learnership was good. It did give us clarity about what is happening in the  
14 company.

15 R: Ok. What was the learnership called?

16 1: It was Bottom Stock.

17 R: Which is?

18 1: Which is assembling the bottom part of the shoe.

19 R: Oh, I see. Were you all on the same one?

20 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes.

21 R: Which year did you complete the learnership?

22 1, 3: For both of us it was 2009

23 2, 4: And for both of us it was 2010

24 R: Who or what influenced you to do the programme?

25 1: For me I was unemployed, so my husband who was working here, he's the one who  
26 said I should apply for the learnership.

27 R: So he found out that there was a learnership offer and he...

28 1: ...he said “why don’t I send my CV”

29 R: And how did you feel about it? Were you keen?

30 1: Yes, I was – I was happy about the whole thing.

31 3: I found out through the notice board. They wanted students for the learnership; I  
32 applied; we wrote the test; we passed the test; and they take us.

33 R: Ok, great.

34 4: For me it was a year after my matric, so I was also unemployed. My aunt told me  
35 about this learnership so I applied.

36 2: Well, for me I researched it on Google. I faxed my CV and that’s how I got it.

37 R: Ok, that’s excellent. So at the time you were looking for work opportunity or to study  
38 as well? What made you find this and say “this is what I want to try out”?

39 2: I was searching for learnerships actually, nearby where I can find it; then I saw  
40 United Frams Footwear Manufacturers. I clicked on it to find the details and everything.

41 R: And the main reason why you enrolled? Was it to get a job or was it to get some  
42 educational experience and a job, and then try to build and grow from there?

43 2: Yes, that was the main concern for me.

44 R: Can someone just run through the structure of the learnership? For example how  
45 many months of the year did it run for, was there much theory, classroom work, was  
46 there a practical component, was there exams. Can someone explain?

47 1: Well the duration took one year. Then we did different modules; the health and  
48 safety, the quality industry and all that; and there was the practical side of it; and we  
49 also did the theory then.

50 R: Ok.

51 1: And it was good.

52 R: It was good?

53 1: Yes.

54 R: So your overall impression of the learnership was good?

55 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes

56 R: Ok. And can you just go into a bit more detail on the practical side? Was it done  
57 here over here at the workplace?

58 1, 3, 4: Yes.

59 R: And the theory was done here or was it done at a college?

60 1: It was done here.

61 3: Only the lecturer come here.

62 4: The Aranda College. They will come here and we will do the theory.

63 R: And what were the support structures which you had? So for example, from your  
64 line manager, to the department manager, colleagues... was there quite a bit of  
65 support?

66 1: Yes, we did get support from our manager...

67 2: ...manager

68 R: And was that helpful?

69 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes.

70 3: Yes, it was.

71 R: Does someone want to explain how they helped? Were they encouraging, were they  
72 asking what you did in class, did they help you if you were unsure?

73 1: Yes, the production manager. Our production manager at the time will come and  
74 assist us and will encourage us and if we have a problem we must feel free to come to  
75 him and ask whatever question you want to ask.

76 R: Ok, great. And what was your impression of the Aranda College? What did you think  
77 of your lecturer, of your course work?

78 3: Well, it was ok.

79 R: Ok?

80 3: Everything was ok.

81 2: Everything they taught us we could understand easily, yes.

82 1: For me, I was just not happy. Even now I am not happy about the way they set up  
83 the modules.

84 R: Really?

85 1: Yes, because the questions that they ask sometimes you find that they are almost  
86 the same thing but put in a different way. I'm just not happy with the modules we are  
87 using. I think if maybe they could change it, one way of the other.

88 R: And which module are you referring too?

89 1: Basically the Bottom stock, the elective. I think not too much research is done on  
90 that. The way it is setup, they don't come and do research at the site. You get the  
91 point? They don't get an idea what is happening really in the bottom stock department.

92 R: Oh, I see.

93 1: It is not quite relevant to what we are doing.

94 R: Are you talking about the theory or the practical side?

95 1: The theory side.

96 R: Would you say that the theory side is often not related to work; it's more to give you  
97 a better understanding?

98 4: It's the elective. The elective has to do with what is done here. It has to do with that.  
99 It is not the core.

100 R: Ok. You were saying that that elective was not structured well. Was there anything  
101 else in the programme which you thought worked well or did not work well?

102 2: I think the production theory – that went very well for me.

103 3: Yes, the health and safety

104 2: The health and safety and the materials.

105 R: And what about the practical component? For example: did you spend time on the  
106 shop floor?

107 2: Practicing how to use the...

108 1: We spend most of the time on the floor.

109 R: Ok. Were you in the production line or were you still training? And if so, after how  
110 long did they bring you into production?

111 4: We were here almost every day. So, most of the time we spent at the work place, in  
112 the production side.

113 1, 3: Yes, in the production.

114 R: Ok. When would you say the best learning occurred? So at which point would you  
115 say to yourself “ ok, I’ve done a bit of theory, I’ve done some practical, and my manger  
116 is encouraging me... ok now it is all starting to fall into place” at what stage?

117 2: I think by the time of exams. [Laughter]

118 R: Well hopefully by the time of the exams. [Laughter]

119 1: But by the time we were exposed to the whole thing, to me it was quite  
120 understandable.

121 R: Really?

122 2: Yes, there was nothing that difficult.

123 R: So it wasn’t that hard?

124 1: It wasn’t. Everything just clicked.

125 R: And would you say that it just clicked because it was structured in the right way.

126 1: Yes, I can say that.

127 2: Easily understandable.

128 R: Ok. What did you think of your lecturer?

129 4: I think they were helpful because they explained everything to us. Even the  
130 assignment, they just came here and explained and help you when you don’t  
131 understand.

132 R: And what was their style of teaching? For example: did they show you everything or  
133 did they encourage you to also find your own way through?

134 4: They encouraged us to find our own answers.

135 R: Do you want add anything?

- 136 3: And the way they give us time for our assignment.
- 137 R: And how did you manage with the assignments? Were you doing them here at work  
138 or did you have to do them at home?
- 139 2: Well for us we had a choice of doing them at home, and they provided every  
140 Thursday after lunch time, we came here, sat here [training room] and do our  
141 assignments.
- 142 R: Ok, great. How would you describe your journey through the whole learnership? For  
143 example: how did you feel when you started; to half way through; to right at the end;  
144 and then afterwards?
- 145 3: It was fantastic.
- 146 4: It was a great journey, because when you started here you didn't understand  
147 anything, so when you move along you started to learn...
- 148 3: Yes, learn more things.
- 149 R: Ok. How do you believe the learnership has contributed to your technical skills?  
150 Obviously it is a very practical learnership, so it should've helped a lot?
- 151 4: It has helped a lot because you can understand everything that it done here in the  
152 workplace. They can put you into bottom stock, everywhere – you can just understand  
153 what is happening.
- 154 R: So are you now able to move around anywhere on the shop floor?
- 155 1: We can replace anywhere, yes.
- 156 R: So you can make a shoe from scratch? [Joke]
- 157 1: Yes. [Laughter]
- 158 R: Great, and your overall impression of the learnership programme?
- 159 3: It was worth it.
- 160 4: It was, because it gives us opportunities also.
- 161 R: What were your expectations afterwards? And also going forward?
- 162 2: I expected to be employed and here I am, employed.

163 R: Would you say that one of the objectives was to also build a career path as well?

164 2, 3, 4: Yes, yes.

165 R: Would you say that the learnership has encouraged you to learn again if the  
166 opportunity arises?

167 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes.

168 R: So if they offered you another course or another learnership, would you study  
169 further?

170 1, 2, 3: Yes, yes.

171 4: Yes, I would be glad to do that.

172 R: And is there space for that now? What other programmes are they offering here?

173 4: Health and safety, fire-fighter...

174 2: ...first aid

175 1: I've done the assessment for the moderator. So basically I'm the facilitator here.

176 R: So from here you would obviously want to move into more of a management role?

177 1: Yes.

178 R: Ok. What else do you believe you've gained from the learnership? Over and above  
179 what was on the course? How do you feel as an individual you have gained? For  
180 example: have you gained confidence in yourself, you feel there are greater  
181 opportunities open to you?

182 1: You know, now we are confident. You can pursue any career, this was a stepping  
183 stone. So now you are much eager to learn other courses. For me it was a stepping  
184 stone, really. I could see that you know what – I could even study something else.

185 R: Ok, great. So you would say that you are encouraged to study further?

186 1, 2, 3, 4: Yes.

187 R: Do you have any ideas what you would like to study after this?

188 1: Yes, I do.

189 R: Good. Does anybody want to add anything else? Anything else around the  
190 learnership or their experience?

191 R: Something else that I wanted to ask – did each of you have a mentor here to help  
192 you during the learnership programme?

193 1: I would say that you know that guy who was the production manager, most of the  
194 time he was the one mentoring us.

195 R: Ok, was he quite helpful and approachable?

196 1: Yes, he was. He was.

197 R: And would say because of that it made the whole experience a lot...

198 2, 3, 4: ...more easier. Yes it was.

199 R: So would you say the most important factors in having a successful learnership are  
200 what? Would say..

201 4: Mentorship

202 R: And would you say the lecturer?

203 2: Yes.

204 1: Yes. And the fact that we did it practically – we were given a chance to do everything  
205 practically. So you got to get a much better idea about this whole thing [company].

206 R: So the practical component is where everything, your learning, solidified? Everyone  
207 has been maybe helping you, you have done the theory and the course work, and  
208 when you go and practice it...

209 4: ...you get it right. Makes it much more easier.

210 R: And in respect to other support structures – for example you family and friends and  
211 colleagues? Were they quite helpful and encouraging?

212 1: Well it wasn't easy with our colleagues. They were not quite happy about this whole  
213 thing, because they thought we were going to occupy higher positions than them.

214 R: Really?

215 1: Yes. What I didn't like is that it was very stressful for us, because we were the first  
216 group who started with the learnership.

- 217 R: You were the first group?
- 218 1: Yes, it was so stressful. Only now whereby I think they are getting used to the whole  
219 idea of the learnership.
- 220 R: Would you say that if the learnership had been explained to everyone, it would have  
221 helped?
- 222 1: It would have made it much better.
- 223 R: I see.
- 224 1: Because sometimes when you have to come here [training room] to class they think  
225 you are going to play, you know? They just didn't like it – it didn't go down well with  
226 them.
- 227 R: Really?
- 228 1: Yes.
- 229 R: But now you say it is fine?
- 230 1: Yes, now they are used to it. I think they understand it much better.
- 231 R: And how many people are on learnerships now?
- 232 1: We have 20 now. We had 25 but 5 of them left.
- 233 R: Everyone who was on the learnership, whether it be your year [1,3] or your year  
234 [2,4], were they employed after completion of the learnership?
- 235 4: No.
- 236 1: Well in my group all of us were employed – the first group. Then with the other  
237 groups only some of them were employed.
- 238 R: And any other factors which you believed helped you in the learnership? Would you  
239 also say that at the time you were ready to learn?
- 240 3, 4: Yes, we were.
- 241 R: So you weren't forced into it?
- 242 1, 2, 3, 4: No, no.
- 243 R: You were ready and that helped?

244 2, 4: Yes.

245 R: Is there anything else that anyone would like to add?

246 R: Thank you very much for participating.

1 **Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion 4 (FGD 4)**

2 **Focus Group Discussion 4: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Aranda Textile Mills (Pty) Ltd**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondents:

- 6 1. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
7 2. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
8 3. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*  
9 4. *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*
- 

10

11 R: Am I right in saying that you all completed a learnership in 2009?

12 1, 2, 3: Yes.

13 4: Yes, but we haven't got our certificate yet.

14 R: You still haven't got your certificate?

15 1: Yes, and it's 2012.

16 R: Ok. Were you all doing the same learnership?

17 2: Yes.

18 R: Together at the same time?

19 1, 3, 4: Yes.

20 R: Ok. Does anybody want to explain to me what the learnership was all about? What  
21 the qualification was called, over what period of time?

22 3: The qualification was for NQF level 2, and we had to learn about the core: health  
23 and safety around the factory, the material, the quality of the product that we produce,  
24 and that we sell to the people... we had to learn that. And the productivity... and the  
25 other one that we did was the maths. So we had the facilitator coming through and  
26 giving us classes on that and if we didn't understand anything – especially on the...  
27 whatever the things that involved the department we had to go to the department and  
28 find out everything .

29 R: Ok. What or who influenced you to do the learnership?

30 1: Jobless. Poverty.

31 R: And how did you find out about the learnership?

32 3: For me I found out from Jorista the facilitator, because we were doing the course  
33 there for Coltech and she said that I must get her number, because they normally give  
34 out the learnership here. So she is going to call if in any case I don't get a job within a  
35 period. So she did call me and I came through.

36 R: Ok. So you were doing a course beforehand?

37 3: Yes.

38 R: And then you found out about the learnership while you were here.

39 3: Yes. But I was doing the course there at Aranda Learnership.

40 R: Ok.

41 1: I found out through a neighbour who was working here. That's how I got it.

42 R: And when you heard about it, what was your reaction and feelings?

43 1: Shew, I was over the moon. [Laughter]

44 R: Ok.

45 1: I was over the moon when she told me Aranda. I expected yo... you know what...  
46 [laughter]

47 R: But it was a stepping stone I suppose?

48 1, 3, 4: Yes.

49 1: I took it as a starting point, until today.

50 4: I found out from my nephew.

51 R: And you?

52 2: I found out from my dad. He has a friend here, at weaving.

53 R: Ok.

54 2: So his friend told him that they need someone who did physics and maths, but  
55 eish... [laughter] ...so I just came.

56 1: Try your luck.

57 2: Yes, try my luck, but there was no physics.

58 R: Would you say that...

59 2: But it does grow your mind... sometimes

60 R: But at the time just before, were you at a point where you were ready to try  
61 something new to learn? What I mean is when you found out about the learnership,  
62 were you keen and were you motivated to learn?

63 2: Yes, I was motivated to learn.

64 3: And I wasn't.

65 1: And I was, because I was fresh from school.

66 R: You were fresh from school?

67 1: Yes.

68 4: I was, yes. I wanted to have self-esteem... you know... to handle some criticisms,  
69 you know. Something like that.

70 R: Sure. Ok, and you Judith?

71 3: Not me [laughter].

72 R: Not you?

73 3: No. When I got here I was like... they didn't explain anything. They just took me to  
74 the department and say ok this is where you are going to work and I was like ok. In two  
75 weeks at the department I nearly quit because it was too much pressure, nothing that I  
76 had expected. I was expecting to be spending time in class... or something. And like  
77 the pay also... we had to start with like 700 or something. It was discouraging, you  
78 work so hard and you are still like 'oh my word'

79 4: And you came here with the concept of being a learner.

80 3: Yes.

81 R: So what you are saying is that they failed to communicate exactly how the course  
82 was going to be run?

83 1, 2, 4: Yes.

84 3: Yes, the whole thing. Like this is going to happen...

85 R: And if they had explained to you upfront what it is about would it have been better?

86 1: Maybe.

87 3: Yes.

88 2: Yes. Some of us wouldn't have came here. [Hesitant]

89 R: Ok, that's fine... you must say what you want, don't worry.

90 R: So why did you enrol? You were saying that you were unemployed, looking for a  
91 job? Was that the main reason?

92 4: Yes.

93 R: And maybe to get a qualification?

94 4: Yes, a certificate. Then where is it? We still haven't got it?

95 R: How come?

96 1: We don't know.

97 R: Must I make an enquiry for you?

98 1, 3, 4: Yes please.

99 R: Can someone tell me about the structure of the programme? So how long did it run  
100 for, how was it broken up?

101 1: 90% practical.

102 3: Yes [laughter].

103 R: And the theory component was that done in class?

104 2: Yes, but I don't think it was 90% practical...

105 1: Yes, but we spent most of our time in our departments.

106 4: We only came here once a week.

107 R: Would you say the practical and work experience, which you have already said is  
108 most of the programme, is the most important part? Is that where you think learning  
109 happened – in respect to what the learnership is all about?

110 3: Yes. For me I learnt most of the stuff, important stuff, at the department. Because  
111 every time we struggled here the head of the department sat down with us and  
112 explained the whole thing, this is how the wool... and everything... like the process it  
113 had to go through. Because if we had to go to someone who wasn't the coach they  
114 would say "ag I haven't got time for this – go to someone who will help you" so the  
115 head of the department was very nice and he helped us with everything that we  
116 struggled with. So I understand most of the stuff from him, instead of like the class.

117 4: And the class was not difficult.

118 R: It wasn't difficult?

119 3: Yes, it wasn't difficult [laughter].

120 R: Would you say the practical side is where you learnt it and understood it?

121 1, 3, 4: Yes.

122 R: What is your impression of the Aranda Learnership College?

123 1: Hew... [hesitation]

124 R: You can say want, don't worry.

125 4: So to be honest...

126 R: Yes.

127 4: They don't communicate with students, you have to find out information for  
128 ourselves. So it is a little bit disappointing.

129 R: So as we said earlier, the lack of communication was a big hindrance and a  
130 negative factor.

131 4: We thought that if we communicate we will have a better relationship.

132 R: Yes.

133 4: They can trust you.

- 134 R: Sure. And anything else? What was good about the college?
- 135 1: Coffee [laughter]. Coffee was good, for me. I am speaking for myself.
- 136 R: Ok, so what worked well in the programme? It can be anything, maybe the structure  
137 of the programme, or the mentorship, or was there good facilitation?
- 138 1: Was there even facilitation?
- 139 4: I'll pass on that [laughter]
- 140 2: Can you please repeat the question?
- 141 R: What I was saying is was there any part of the programme which worked well?
- 142 2: Yes. Every part it did went well. It's just that we didn't get a chance to learn like we  
143 were expecting. I think that is the problem... because we were expecting more and  
144 then we had too many facilitation, but we couldn't use them like the way we were  
145 expecting. You understand?
- 146 3: Yes.
- 147 2: So many staff were kept like... they were stingy like for those staff, you know? They  
148 are selfish, they can just say that we can stay in that room, and then you should not  
149 come near, you understand?
- 150 3: Yes, and that room is cold.
- 151 R: The lecture room is cold?
- 152 3: Yes. And during winter its worse. So sit for the whole day, and its cold. And Yolande  
153 is like "just don't make noise". And like we can't read our book for the whole day  
154 without doing anything; we expected some activity, even if we did our assignments and  
155 everything. I just expected more from the learnership. Like some activities.
- 156 2: Like sometimes you had like assignments that you have to submit. At least like  
157 Friday. Then you are making noise and they fire you... just go to the department. And  
158 the work is left behind.
- 159 1: Bottom line, no patience.
- 160 R: No patience?
- 161 1: Yes.

162 3: And we had to suffer all for one person. If like a little group was making noise that we  
163 would all get punished for.

164 R: So they treated you like...

165 3: Like little kids.

166 1: Yes.

167 R: Ok. And when you had class was there a lecturer here at all?

168 3: For me she was, because every time I struggle I would come to her and she would  
169 explain. Because mostly I wouldn't stay in class, because I worked three shifts, so I  
170 didn't get time to come to class. So when I had... I would come to her there was an  
171 assignment to do, she would help me. So I had like a one-on-one thing with her, but if I  
172 struggled with the maths I would ask my friend who was doing the learnership with me.  
173 And he would help me out.

174 2: But I don't think there was a lecturer, because some of the student they are too  
175 ignorant so they are afraid to talk, you see. So if there was a lecture, someone would  
176 ask everybody. Because some of them they didn't even understand anything because  
177 they were copying and stuff.

178 1: And that was allowed.

179 R: So the facilitation was poor?

180 2: Yes.

181 1: Yes, very poor.

182 4: Very poor.

183 R: But for you it wasn't so bad?

184 3: Yes, it wasn't so bad for me.

185 2: It was all about how you are determined to learn, as an individual. Otherwise, I don't  
186 think...

187 4: We were on ourselves.

188 3: Because I would come to class and they ask "did you do Health and Safety" and  
189 then they would say "give me your book, I will copy the whole thing" so were like ag...

190 2: And they didn't even care.

191 1: Whether you did it or not.

192 2: I could write the same thing as your colleague but they couldn't care.

193 4: Whether I know those things, or even understand them.

194 3: So that why I said lots of things I learned were from the head of department,  
195 because the Health and Safety issues, the quality and everything, he was there. So like  
196 even if I didn't get anything here I would go to him and say "What does that mean, this  
197 and that" and they explained everything. I think the department is the bigger issue. Like  
198 it should be there and helping you out through everything. But if you don't have people  
199 helping you out then you don't care about the learnership; you just want to get paid at  
200 the end of the month and just go home.

201 R: Ok. So would you say the best learning occurred in the department, right?

202 3: Yes, for me.

203 1: And for me.

204 4: Same thing for us.

205 R: What other skills or abilities have you picked up or you have learnt over and above  
206 what was outlined in the learnership?

207 3: How to be responsible.

208 1: Yes. How to communicate with other people.

209 3: And to be independent, I think gave us...

210 2: And even it opens doors for us. And then you start to focus on your future. Because  
211 when you stay just sitting at home, doing nothing, you can't even understand weeks...  
212 days, you understand?

213 R: Sure.

214 2: Yes, but when you come here every day... communicate... you just have to... the  
215 future is bright. Yes, you can think properly and focus on what you do best.

216 R: Would you say that having done the learnership and experiencing it, whether there  
217 were some good parts or bad parts, but it was a steppingstone, and also in respect to  
218 maybe your career path...

219 2: Sharp, sharp.

220 R: Is that also what was one of your objectives as well?

221 2: Yes, I would say that it does open a future for you when you are willing and when  
222 you do know what you want from life. So everything starts somewhere, you know, so it  
223 did help me because now I can see what I do, what I work for, ja...

224 R: Ok, does anybody want to add anything else?

225 R: How do you believe the learnership has contributed to your technical skills?

226 3: It broke my back [laughter]. Because all the hours that I worked there but it was  
227 good. Learning all the other important stuff about the machine itself, it was hectic,  
228 because d

229 R: And was it interesting to see how things worked?

230 1, 3, 4: Yes, it was.

231 4: Because it was a new thing to you.

232 3: Because on the one thing we got the wrong yarn, raw material – so I thought it was  
233 fine to run it. And then the head of the department said “no, no you cannot do that,  
234 because it then affects the whole department” and you say “oh wow, I didn’t know that”  
235 because I thought you are just run with it so you don’t care.

236 R: So it also puts into perspective how one part of the process fits into everything else  
237 – that it is all linked together.

238 3, 4: Yes.

239 R: What do you believe were the most influential factors that made the learnership a  
240 good experience or a bad experience?

241 2: I think for someone who knows what he wants / what she wants, it’s a good  
242 experience. Because you experience a lot. Even though it’s not what you didn’t expect  
243 but you got to work hard as a younger person.

244 R: Sure.

245 3: And the bad part for me was the people that we worked with – they treated us like  
246 we were kids. Like they would tell us what to do... she was a supervisor, if I was  
247 working with, this one old lady on me... she would like “oh, you’re supposed to be  
248 doing this” while she was concentrating more on the production while I do most of her  
249 work, so that she can keep up with the production. And I felt that was unfair, she had to  
250 communicate with me like a colleague, because we were on that level – I was a  
251 colleague not a little baby.

252 R: Sure.

253 3: So we had to lose respect for a lot of people, just for that. We expected more from  
254 them.

255 R: And what support structures did you have on the learnership? So whether it was  
256 your line manager or did you had a mentor?

257 4: Mentors were the colleagues.

258 R: And were they helpful and encouraging? I know that you said not?

259 3: No, because some of them would come and say “why are you wasting your time  
260 being here? You could be out there doing something” but the next day they are coming  
261 through here asking the lady if they can put in their daughter just so you can go so that  
262 their daughter can come through. You’re like what am I doing here?

263 4: The main problem is that they don’t have listening skills, they just talk. And they don’t  
264 want to listen.

265 R: Ok. And respect to a mentor? For example your line manager...

266 3: Yes, he was good. Our head of department he was very good, because he would  
267 talk to me even if I wasn’t doing the production very well or something. He would call  
268 me in his office and say “Judith, what’s wrong, because you have been doing well for  
269 the past week so what’s wrong with this week?” So I would tell him like I’m being  
270 discouraged by the person I’m working with, because she is always up in my business,  
271 she is not letting me do my job, she is expecting me to do her job. So that I feel like I’m  
272 not here... I’m not getting the same pay as her but she is expecting me to do more than  
273 her. What I expect to really be doing? So he would say no don’t take it like that, you  
274 know, just let everything supposed to be learning and everything... but he was good.

275 R: Ok. And anybody else? Did they have much support from their line manager?

- 276 R: And from a home and family point of view? Was there much support there?
- 277 2: Yes, for me it was. I even wanted to quit, but they say that I must hold on...
- 278 1: Something will come up; maybe Aranda will be better...
- 279 R: Right at the start you [4] said that you wanted to improve your confidence through  
280 the doing the learnership. Are there any other factors that you believe you have  
281 achieved?
- 282 4: You see my problem is that in my department there is no communication. Even if  
283 you can communicate to... somebody, they don't give a damn. They just work for  
284 month end [laughter], that's all. If you come with good ideas they criticize you...
- 285 3: They don't want to explore.
- 286 R: Really?
- 287 1, 4: Yes.
- 288 4: Maybe if Aranda can think...
- 289 R: Outside the box?
- 290 4: ...yes, not inside. Will see things that others can't see. I think it will be better.
- 291 R: I am sure you are right.
- 292 4: To teach these people how to communicate, listening skills...
- 293 3: Even the communication skills, like they just talk without even thinking. Ag it's just  
294 Judith she'll understand, I'm a grown up.
- 295 R: Ok. Is there anything else that you want to add in respect to the learnerships?
- 296 R: Would you say now that you have experienced the learnership, are you encouraged  
297 to study further?
- 298 1: Here?
- 299 R: No, I'm not saying here. If the opportunity arises to study further, would you be  
300 keen?
- 301 2: I am already studying.
- 302 R: Where are you studying?

303 2: At UNISA.

304 R: What course are you studying?

305 2: It's not the course that I want, you see...

306 R: Ok.

307 2: Yes, but it's a teaching course.

308 R: Ok, great.

309 3: I want to do that also.

310 2: It's been two years now. It's my second year.

311 R: And how's it going?

312 2: It's going well, but it's a lot of pressure.

313 1: Maybe it's better than here?

314 R: Does anybody want to add anything?

315 3: The facilitator also needs to know what they are talking about. If they come here  
316 giving a class they need to be on point. And if the learner is going to ask a question,  
317 they mustn't say "I'm going to go outside and find the answer for you" they should be  
318 on top of it.

319 R: Sure, absolutely.

320 3: Like this is what's happening. And give them more like... open mind to think out of  
321 the box also. Like "what do you think about this?" Get them involved... instead of just  
322 saying that this is what you're supposed to be doing, get on with it, I'm going to go  
323 outside while you do it. Then we are doing it, and just falling asleep there and then "no  
324 you're not supposed to be sleeping in class"

1 **Appendix 7: In-Depth Interview 1 (IDI 1)**

2 **Individual Interview 1: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Gina@Work**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondent: *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

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7 R: Do you believe that learning is important?

8 1: Yes I do.

9 R: Why?

10 1: I do believe it is important because it builds you mind and then it build it the ability,  
11 what you call, ability of doing things.

12 R: Ok.

13 1: It makes you reach... to see a lot of things in positive or negative you know so it  
14 assists in what you call... personality

15 R: And in the work environment?

16 1: Well in the work environment I can say it helps a lot because you can see the bigger  
17 picture in the working place when you can assist the company itself; because as a  
18 worker or employee you are an asset of the company so you need to assist the  
19 company. So by learning, or by getting the education, you assist the company.

20 R: Ok. Tell me more about what encouraged you to do the learnership?

21 1: Well, there are a lot of things that encouraged me; because from my background I  
22 haven't got a chance to go to tertiary so I said this is an opportunity, I have to grab it, I  
23 don't have to let it go, because I don't when else, or some other time I can find it. So I  
24 got that encouragement from my family – when I told them that there was an  
25 opportunity like this they said you know what you better take it.

26 R: Great.

27 1: Same to my mentor. She came to me and said Thulani, I know you are good at your  
28 work, what you doing, but this is an opportunity so you grab it. So I said you know what  
29 I need to up myself, so I said you know what I am taking it.

30 R: So you were ready to undertake the learnership?

31 1: Yes.

32 R: Were you motivated to learn?

33 1: Not as such, but my first lesson that motivated me, that made me see a light, that  
34 you know what, I can get somewhere with this learnership so I said I will stick with it.

35 R: What motivated you to keep you interested in the learnership?

36 1: During the course of the learnership, because what we were learning, what I have  
37 learnt there it is the same thing that what I am doing. So I assume it's more helpful to  
38 me because whatever I am doing, whatever I am learning, I am also practicing it in the  
39 workplace. So that will make me to build up myself.

40 R: What was motivating or demotivating from the other employees in the company?

41 1: Well in the company there was nothing that was demotivating. From the other  
42 employees... some people might be jealous. They are saying why is he going on the  
43 learnership, and why can't they get a chance. Because there is no understanding why.

44 R: Was it a major hindrance?

45 1: No, not at all.

46 R: How would you describe the involvement of your employer during the learnership?

47 1: It was very much appreciated because as an employer I couldn't expect her to leave  
48 her office and go to the college just to assess how are we doing in the lecture. I  
49 couldn't expect her to leave her work and to come to us and just to motivate us on how  
50 are we doing, how was the class and all of these things; assisting when it comes to  
51 assignments... So I can say that that was very much support from our employer.

52 R: Ok Great. What would your suggestions be to improve the way in which the  
53 learnership is delivered?

54 1: Well, my suggestion is that it shouldn't be only like the course that we did – it  
55 shouldn't be only that. I think they should be more steps that you need to take until we  
56 reach the higher level.

57 R: So what you are saying is that once the learnership is completed there should be  
58 programme to go into the next programme?

59 1: Yes.

60 R: But otherwise, of the learnership which you did, would you want to change  
61 anything? Or do you think for that learnership it was done well?

62 1: Well the learnership was conducted very well. Maybe I can say that... well we are all  
63 [7:52]. But on that, because of the technology there was a lot of improvements. I  
64 think that some of the learnership needs to be conducted via computerised, what you  
65 call it... so people can learn.

66 R: So to be able to learn other skills?

67 1: Yes.

68 R: So are you saying that the theory, or the classroom component, should have maybe  
69 been done through software on a PC?

70 1: Yes, I would suggest that.

71 R: What were the working conditions like during the learnership? Do you think you  
72 were treated fairly?

73 1: Yes, I was treated fairly.

74 R: Just to confirm, you were employed before you went on the learnership?

75 1: Yes.

76 R: How do you believe the communication around the learnership was handled?

77 1: Well it was handled very well. What I can say – from our lecture, from our... what  
78 you call it?

79 R: From the college?

80 1: Yes, from the college. And then we were informed from the beginning. We were  
81 informed what we needed to bring, what we shouldn't be bringing and we were

82 informed when is our class and every week and the lecturer was sending emails to us  
83 that when is the next class, what we will be doing, so you need to prepare yourself on  
84 this and this and this...

85 R: Ok, great. And the communication from your employer's side – how was that?

86 1: Yes, it was very helpful, because even if she wasn't here she would pick up the  
87 phone and phone us on our cell phone... say that guys the next class will be on a  
88 certain date, you need to prepare yourself on this, what you call, unit standard.

89 R: How important was the practical component of the learnership?

90 1: Well it was very much helpful because from a theory component you could have  
91 seen where you lacking. And when you go back to the lecture hall you can raise those  
92 questions that I'm lacking there and there and then you get assistance from the  
93 lecturer.

94 R: Ok. At what stage in the practical component did everything start to fall into place?  
95 In other words, at which point did the theory that you had learnt all start to make  
96 sense?

97 1: Well it started in the work environment that I could have seen that's where I'm  
98 lacking... where I'm lacking ???[13:30]

99 R: So how important would say the practical side of the learnership was?

100 1: Well it was important but it was more a combination, because without theory I  
101 couldn't have done the practical part. So if I combine the practical part and the theory...  
102 you see it was more important.

103 R: Did your prior knowledge or experience play an important role in deciding to go on  
104 the learnership?

105 1: Yes, it did.

106 R: Ok, and how would you say it helped your learning?

107 1: Well it helped a lot because I can say I had that thing that I need to upgrade myself.  
108 And then I started to work... I saw myself on the higher level, but I didn't have anything  
109 on my hand to say you know what I can move now. But when I got the chance I said  
110 you know what this is my chance, this is my life time chance, I better grab it. So with

111 what I believe on and what I have in front of me, I said let me take it and then go  
112 forward with it.

113 R: Great. How would you describe the style of teaching by your instructor?

114 1: Well it was more enjoyable and that it made me feel like I am not in a classroom, you  
115 know. But it made me feel like a person, an elder person, who needs to learn. It made  
116 me open my mind wide. Because the way in which it was conducted, the classes, it  
117 gave us time to... two minutes to have that joke to relax your mind and then go back to  
118 our learning and then we have time to have a break and then we go back to our  
119 learning. It gives us that time and a chance to think that we are here to learn.

120 R: Ok. And when it came to learning new theory did they encourage you to find the  
121 answers yourself?

122 1: Yes, they did. They did because we were doing the unit standard by ourselves  
123 before we were going to the class. When we were doing assignments we were not  
124 getting answers from him [lecturer] but we had to go look for... do research by our self;  
125 go to libraries – and I can't remember when I last wen to the library [laughs].

126 R: Ok. What style of teaching would you say is the best for a learnership?

127 1: I would say the best of teaching would be to let your learners to enjoy; feel and  
128 accept that they are in class. They mustn't feel that they are locked in somewhere  
129 where they are not feeling free. You need to make them feel free; ask questions; and  
130 it's not only about the learnership. Even generally – that you make them feel free and  
131 you can then easily encourage or influence them on what they need to learn.

132 R: And I suppose to also be treated like adults?

133 1: Yes, not like kids.

134 R: Ok great. So what did you want to achieve from the learnership – you said that you  
135 wanted to be able to move higher up in the organisation. Is there anything else that you  
136 want to achieve?

137 1: Yes. You know what; they say that education is broad. That's what they told me, that  
138 education is broad. So, I can't now it is the end. So I still need more... so if I get  
139 another opportunity I'm sure I can grab it.

140 R: Great, and was there anything that you gained that was not part of the learnership  
141 outcomes? Let me rephrase that – any other things that maybe you came to realise  
142 that were maybe not part of the outcome of the learnership?

143 1: Yes, there are a lot of things that I gained there. Because as I have said our lecturer,  
144 the way in which he conducted the classes. He was the person who was not only  
145 based on the learnership but even in general things, he was also motivating us in  
146 general, in life, all those things.

147 R: Ok, so more like a life coach?

148 1: Yes.

149 R: And you also mentioned about being kind to study further. Am I right?

150 1: Yes.

151 R: So if the opportunity arises, you would like to study again?

152 1: Yes I would.

153 R: Ok, I think that is it. Is there anything else which you would like to add?

1 **Appendix 8: In-Depth Interview 2 (IDI 2)**

2 **Individual Interview 2: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Frams United (1)**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondent: *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

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7 R: Do you believe that learning is important?

8 1: Yes it is. I believe so. I strongly believe.

9 R: Why do you think it is?

10 1: If you want to get employed... in fact to be successful you need to have an  
11 education. Without education you won't go anywhere with the company.

12 R: Tell me more about what encouraged you to do the learnership?

13 1: Basically I am one person who... I love studying. I didn't have an opportunity to  
14 further my studies so when I found out about the learnership I felt that it was a stepping  
15 stone for me. It will take me further. Maybe I can end up studying something that I  
16 wanted to do a long time ago, so for me it was a stepping stone. I wanted to take the  
17 chance.

18 R: Great. And at the time how relevant was your choice to do the learnership in relation  
19 to your life situation?

20 1: So...?

21 R: So from a readiness point of view?

22 1: Yes, I was ready for it.

23 R: Were you, at the time, motivated to learn?

24 1: Yes I was, I was.

25 R: And what or who encouraged your motivation?

26 1: What or who?

27 R: Yes, what or who – someone who encouraged you?

28 1: When I got here at Frams the HR was very supportive. He encouraged us to study  
29 further besides doing the learnership, because they promised to employ us and he told  
30 us about the opportunities that are available in the company that we can study; there  
31 are bursaries that we can apply and we can do whatever we want to do. So he was  
32 very much supportive. Even now he always encourages us to study as much as we  
33 can.

34 R: Great, that's excellent. What motivated you to keep you interested in the  
35 learnership?

36 1: When I started to the learnership; being exposed to this environment I was  
37 fascinated by this whole thing that was happening here. So every day I look forward in  
38 achieving better.

39 R: Great. And what was motivating or demotivating from other employees in your  
40 company?

41 1: One of the things that was demotivating was that some of the managers were not  
42 happy about us, the learners, and they didn't want us to be here for long.

43 R: Really?

44 1: In fact, it seems like they didn't see the significance of us being here. You get the  
45 point?

46 R: Yes. And has that the same situation now?

47 1: No, it has changed. It has changed a lot. I think now they are in tune with this whole  
48 thing.

49 R: How do you think it would've helped had they been a bit more understanding?

50 1: It would have been... maybe I would have enjoyed much better being here.

51 R: Ok. What things outside of work assisted you during the learnership?

52 1: Like?

53 R: Like external motivating factors, for example you family or your husband?

54 1: Yes, my husband was very much supportive.

55 R: Ok, great. And that helped?

56 1: Yes it did, it did.

57 R: Great. How would you describe the involvement of your employer during the  
58 learnership?

59 1: Well, they were involved. Big time; because they allow us to come to class whenever  
60 we had a problem, we want to come as a group and discuss something; they allow us  
61 to take as much time as we want. You take the point?

62 R: Ok, great.

63 1: It wasn't a problem.

64 R: And how important would say that was? For instance had they not been supportive?

65 1: I don't think we would have achieved this whole thing. Because here at Frams we  
66 were the first group, the learnership thing. It was the first thing here at Frams with us.  
67 So we performed very well due to that.

68 R: That is excellent. What would your suggestions be improve the learnership  
69 programme?

70 1: Hmm... what can it be really

71 R: There are two things. What can be improved regarding the structure of the  
72 programme?

73 1: You know my worry about the programme itself is that with the modules that were  
74 given to us, those study materials from Aranda. You know some of the questions, if not  
75 most of them, it's like they complement each other. To me it was so boring at some  
76 stage because it is like it was only one thing; you keep on repeating one thing.

77 R: Ok. I think you actually mentioned that last time in the focus group.

78 1: Yes. That was really boring.

79 R: And then any improvements you can recommend to the practical side of the  
80 learnership?

81 1: So far I am happy with the whole thing.

82 R: Ok, great. What were the working conditions like during the course of the  
83 learnership?

84 1: The working conditions are very good, because at the company they comply with the  
85 safety and health regulations, you know. So the working conditions were fine. Although  
86 we had a problem with other... our fellow employees. They had this attitude towards us  
87 which made us feel like we don't belong here.

88 R: Ok. And how influential would you say that was to the overall outcome?

89 1: Well you know for me, it motivated me.

90 R: Ok, so it actually motivated you?

91 1: It motivated me to work even harder, and prove to them 'you know what – I know  
92 why I am here and I'm going to do my best'.

93 R: Ok, great. And then how do believe the communication around the learnership was  
94 handled?

95 1: I believe it was handled very well.

96 R: From a learnership college point of view – was it handled well?

97 1: Yes, because whenever our facilitator will come, he will tell us that on this day I'll  
98 come and we'll do one two three. And when he comes here he is going to have all the  
99 time to attend to us.

100 R: Ok. And the communication from your employer?

101 1: It was good. Yes, it was good.

102 R: Ok, great. And then how important would you say the practical component was?

103 1: It is very important. In fact it gives you a better understanding of this whole thing.

104 R: Ok. At what stage during the practical component did everything start to fall into  
105 place?

106 1: I'll say because we started in February.

107 R: Ok.

108 1: Around June everything fall into place for me.

- 109 R: And would say that was because of the experience on the practical side?
- 110 1: The practical side, yes.
- 111 R: Did your prior knowledge or experience play an important role in choosing to do the  
112 learnership?
- 113 1: No, because when I started with the learnership I had never worked anywhere.
- 114 R: Ok.
- 115 1: Yes, I was just from school and I didn't do anything else.
- 116 R: Ok. How would you describe the style of the teaching from your instructor?
- 117 1: It was understandable. There was nothing difficult about the way he did it.
- 118 R: Ok. And then what did you want to achieve from the learnership?
- 119 1: I wanted to gain as much experience about this working environment. Because I am  
120 the kind of person who likes working with my hands, so I was looking at the fact that  
121 maybe one day I might think of starting my own business.
- 122 R: Great. And from a career development point of view – was it also something you  
123 had in mind?
- 124 1: Yes.
- 125 R: As you said that maybe this was like a stepping stone?
- 126 1: Yes.
- 127 R: That's excellent. Were there any things that you gained that were not part of the  
128 outcomes of the learnership? So anything else from a personal growth point of view
- 129 1: Yes, I gained a lot. Because... in fact with the learnership we were supposed to  
130 come here not every day to be employed, but we were employed permanently of which  
131 I managed to do some other things which I was unable to do. And because we were  
132 employed already I even studied something else. I did another course.
- 133 R: With Frams?
- 134 1: Yes. They paid for me. I did it UNISA – they paid for me.
- 135 R: What course was that?

136 1: Public Administration

137 R: Ok. And if there is the opportunity to study again, would you be keen?

138 1: Yes, I am looking forward to that. I am thinking about that. Considering studying next  
139 year.

140 R: Wonderful. Great. Is there anything else that you would like to add in respect to the  
141 learnership?

142 1: I am just happy about this whole thing. But you know my worry now is like maybe if  
143 they can change the thing that most of the learners that we are taking are young  
144 people. And what I have seen with these young people – they are not serious about  
145 life.

146 R: really?

147 1: Yes, they are not serious.

148 R: Why is that?

149 1: We'll bring in 20 learners and during the course of the year they will drop out due to  
150 the fact that they are not used to working and they don't have responsibilities, when I  
151 think of it. So to them it's like fun.

152 R: In that case, where do they think they are going to go afterwards?

153 1: Hmm...

154 R: Is it because they are very young and they still think that they are quite cool?

155 1: The impression that they get is that as learners they are not supposed to do things  
156 like practically, so when they are given a task like where they are asked 'put on glue' or  
157 'wear the overalls' they don't like it. You know, they are stylish people; they always  
158 want to look... [laughs]

159 R: So you think the youth have changed?

160 1: But the ones that we had, really. They complained about this place; the other one  
161 was saying 'no, the glue is making me sick' and be taken to another work station – still  
162 they complain. You know, you end up not understanding what is it they want; because  
163 they are so fortunate. Frams will take them on a full time basis for the whole year and

164 they will be paid like any other employee who will be doing that occupation. You get the  
165 point?

166 R: Yes, and it's a chance as well. If you look at our country now there is so much  
167 unemployment... that even if it is not what you want to do, it's a start.

168 1: It's a start. You don't know where you'll end up. They don't see it that way. So I was  
169 thinking maybe we could get older people, like people who are older than 30 maybe,  
170 because mostly we are taking form 18 years until 25.

171 R: So would say that in respect to the learnership it's more effective to those who are a  
172 little bit older?

173 1: Yes.

174 R: Would you say from 25 years onwards, they have a better approach and they are  
175 more keen?

176 1: Yes, they are more keen to learn. Even with our group. Most of us, we were older  
177 than this year. And we were so serious about the whole thing – I don't want to lie to  
178 you. We enjoyed each and every moment we had just to come here and study. It was  
179 so fascinating. But with this one [new learners] they will drag their feet, they wouldn't do  
180 their work. When Jorista [Facilitator] comes in they are not done yet, they are still  
181 writing what they gave them 3 weeks ago. With us it wasn't like that. Christo  
182 [Facilitator] will come here and they will be done. In fact he will give us something and  
183 within two days we are done.

184 R: That's good. Thank you.

1 **Appendix 9: In-Depth Interview 3 (IDI 3)**

2 **Individual Interview 3: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Frams United 2**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondent: *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

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6  
7 R: Do you believe that learning is important?

8 1: Yes, it's important. When you first came here we didn't know anything about shoes,  
9 like the production... so now I understand the whole process.

10 R: Ok. At what stage did you think that learning, in general, is important?

11 1: No, in these days without knowledge you are lost, because everywhere you go you  
12 need to learn something to be able to process, to progress.

13 R: Ok. And would you say that understanding happened at school or after school when  
14 you were a little bit older?

15 1: At school and after school. At school I didn't quite understand that learning was so  
16 important, but after school when I finished my matric I saw that learning is important so  
17 I need to go further with my studies. Because now without any qualifications it is  
18 difficult to get any job.

19 R: Yes, absolutely. And then tell me more about what encouraged you to do the  
20 learnership?

21 1: Learnership... they said if you had to do the learnership it will open opportunities for  
22 you. Like if there is a position that's going to be available in the work place they firstly  
23 consider those people with learnerships.

24 R: Ok, but what was the main motivation to do the learnership?

25 1: It's like understanding everything that's happening here on the ground floor. If they  
26 take you there, if there is a position there, you can go. I don't have to start from the  
27 beginning for them to teach you what is this, what is this. You already know what's  
28 happening.

29 R: Ok. At the time just before the learnership started would you say that you were  
30 ready to learn?

31 1: Yes, I was ready to learn.

32 R: And how relevant was the choice to do the learnership in relation to your life  
33 situation at the time?

34 1: It was a year after my matric, so I wanted to do something. So I posted for  
35 learnerships and I got this one.

36 R: Ok, great. Was there anything or anyone who motivated you or encouraged you?

37 1: Yes, our HR manager, Mr Ndebele, he used to encourage us that we must enjoy  
38 what we do and we must focus on this learnership, it can open up many things for us.

39 R: Ok, great. And then what motivated you to keep interested in the learnership?

40 1: It's just another kind of job, so what motivated me... I knew I could understand things  
41 here – so that kept me going and not give up. So yes, it was just like that.

42 R: So would say having a better understanding of the business and all the processes  
43 as well?

44 1: Yes, that's what kept me motivated.

45 R: And then what was motivating or demotivating from other employees in the  
46 company?

47 1: As we said the last time is that when we came here they thought we are going to  
48 take their jobs and things like that.

49 R: Yes, you actually mentioned that last time.

50 1: Yes, but now they just understand that we just did the learnership to give us  
51 opportunities and jobs. Because those people, those old people, they can't even read  
52 and write. So it's difficult for them to enter for learnerships. But now they understand  
53 that it's not about taking their jobs.

54 R: Ok. What things outside of work assisted you during the learnership?

55 1: Outside of work?

56 R: Whether it be motivation from a family member or...

57 1: Yes, outside of work, those things we do have, like health and safety. We used to  
58 go... even the one of material, to watch people house the shoes... even health and  
59 safety – it helps you to recognise things now. Even when you pass by the street you  
60 see that kid is doing the wrong thing, that's because you learn health and safety you  
61 tell him no that's not how you do things.

62 R: Ok, great. How would you describe the involvement of your employer during your  
63 learnership?

64 1: Our employer used to like, Mr Ndebele our HR, when you came he used to take us  
65 from department to department, from the leather to the material, to the people who cut,  
66 those ones who sow, those ones who put on the rubber. All the departments he used to  
67 take us to see what is happening. Even in our assignment of bottom-stock, we did  
68 that... they explained how many degrees must the machine be – all those things.

69 R: And how important would you say that involvement was to the learnership?

70 1: It was important because you really understood what you read, because it was  
71 practical at the same time.

72 R: Sure. What would your suggestions be to improve the way in which the learnership  
73 is delivered?

74 1: No, I don't think there is something notable to improve. Because me, I really got  
75 every assistance I needed.

76 R: Ok, great.

77 1: Even when I came here – some assignments I went to like those people who work  
78 here for so long, and they were kind to help us. So I didn't struggle with anything.

79 R: Fantastic. And any improvement to the practical component?

80 1: Practical, no. They also right, because when you came there and ask them they  
81 even gave you like a shoe that was damaged to show you like you must do it like this.  
82 They give you an opportunity to try and do that. So even practical was alright.

83 R: Ok, great. What were the working conditions like during the programme?

84 1: We work like those people who work, but every week we got like two hours to come  
85 here and discuss what are the challenges working here, and helped each other during  
86 our assignments.

87 R: Ok. And how do you believe the communication was handled around the  
88 learnership?

89 1: The communication was alright, because those tutors used to come every week, or  
90 once after two weeks. And they helped us a lot. Even in this assignment they showed  
91 us what they wanted and what they didn't want.

92 R: And the communication from the employer's side – was it also good?

93 1: Yes, it was good. He used to motivate us, even him. Like, he used to call us now and  
94 then, tell us what we must do – what we mustn't do.

95 R: Ok, great. How important was the practical component of the learnership.

96 1: As I said it was important... even health and safety was in there. They used to tell  
97 you when you work on the machine – what you must wear, what you mustn't wear,  
98 what you must do, like you must always focus because those machines can hurt you.

99 R: Ok, at which point in the programme do you think that learning was maximised?

100 1: I think we did it like equally... because in every assignment they used to take us...  
101 like in material – we went to the material store. We cut off the material, they taught us  
102 like this is for what and for what and for what. Even when we went for leather they  
103 showed us the different leathers: the one for the boot, the one for the heavy material...  
104 the one they make for soldiers and police. And the other one for safety boots like this  
105 one [pointing at his shoes], mine workers and so on. They showed us those kinds of  
106 things. They use different rubbers for those shoes. There are two machines, the  
107 ??[12:30] and the other machine. The other one is for this one; that one is for heavy  
108 shoes. So they showed us the practical component. This component is for this one,  
109 and this for this one.

110 R: Ok. At what stage in the learnership did everything start to fall into place?

111 1: To me it didn't take long because we worked like... we came here every day. So  
112 everything was in place because what we were doing there; when it came to  
113 knowledge you say 'oh this is what is happening' so it was so easy for us.

114 R: Ok, great. Did any prior knowledge or experience play an important role in choosing  
115 to do the learnership? Although you said that you were unemployed before, am I right?

116 1: Yes.

117 R: Ok, so that doesn't really apply. But going forward now if an opportunity arises –  
118 whether it is here or at another company – do you think your experience here and your  
119 learnership will help you?

120 1: Yes. They said this learnership can help us to go... they give us a list of companies,  
121 like mostly the clothes company and the leather company. So if there is a leather  
122 qualification you can apply in those companies.

123 R: Ok. And then how would you describe the teaching style of your instructor?

124 1: The teaching style... I'll describe it as very friendly in a way. They came to us like  
125 one by one, each and every one and they ask you, on your own, 'do you understand  
126 this?' Like they give us your full attention.

127 R: Ok, great. Did they encourage you to find the answers yourself; to work things out?  
128 Whether it was in the class or on the practical side?

129 1: Yes, they encourage us to find the answers by ourselves. Because when they came  
130 here they ask each and every one to our input of our understandings and our answers;  
131 and then they consult us one by one like where we missed it.

132 R: Ok. And then what style of teaching do you think would best suit the learnership?

133 1: The learnership, even the group work... because when we work here we work in  
134 different departments. So that thing of the way they give us two hours of every  
135 Thursday it really helped because that one came with the idea of that department, that  
136 one. So when you sat here we helped each other in different assignments. Like the one  
137 of material, the one of bottom-stock – the guy who worked downstairs helped us and  
138 showed us this is how it is done before we did the practical. Like with his knowledge he  
139 understood that before us. So he helped us because he was working there.

140 R: Ok, great. And then what did you want to achieve from the learnership?

141 1: From the learnership I wanted to understand what was happening here. And I really  
142 achieved the aim, because I really understand now what is happening in every  
143 department.

144 R: And did you want to be employed afterwards?

145 1: Yes, I wanted to be employed.

146 R: And from a career development point of view? You said that it would open up other  
147 doors – am I right?

148 1: Yes.

149 R: Where there any other things that you gained that were not part of the outcomes of  
150 the learnership?

151 1: Er...

152 R: Maybe from a personal point of view?

153 1: Yes, like this one... like when there is fire there is this who comes here to train us.

154 R: Ok.

155 1: Yes, this year they came. Like most people they entered so I'm going to enter next  
156 year. So they only take like 20 every year. That guy who I was here with, Bashin [from  
157 the FGD], already entered. They taught him first aid. Like if you are hurt, you go to him;  
158 he is going to bandage you and do that stuff.

159 R: Ok, so he is a first aid person?

160 1: Yes. Maybe I fall on the floor, but they are plenty who did that. Like when this one  
161 leaves the other one goes in. They take in 20 every year to train. So that everybody  
162 can be... can understand. That thing, you can also do it at home. Like when someone  
163 collapses you know what to do.

164 R: And then what are your thoughts about studying further?

165 1: Even here they gives us like... the company can pay for you if you do like  
166 management and logistics. Like some guy here is doing HR – even the company is  
167 helping him to study. So if you want to go further with your studies, so that you can get  
168 a great opportunity in the company. They are willing to help you further your studies.

169 R: And are you going to apply?

170 1: Yes, I have already applied to UNISA. I am going for logistics.

171 R: Ok, brilliant. And when do you start?

172 1: February. They said UNISA, the classes are going to start March but I have already  
173 sent my application, so I'm going to register.

174 R: Great stuff. And from a personal growth point of view – is there anything you feel  
175 that you have learnt from the learnership?

176 1: Yes, the learnership opened my brain so that in a way I have to go for things that I  
177 want. I can't just sit around, I have to learn further. That's why I'm going to study next  
178 year.

179 R: Great. Is there anything else that you would like say around the learnership?

180 1: Yes, I am alright with the learnership. I'm never experienced anything negative as I  
181 said. Everything was so smooth for me.

182 R: And it made the experience, I suppose, enjoyable?

183 1: Enjoyable, I think maybe even it was those people I was with here. Yes, the group I  
184 was here with.

185 R: That also helped?

186 1: Yes, because we understood each other, we didn't... everybody was friendly. Like if  
187 you didn't understand you can go to another person.

188 R: So would you say that helped as well?

189 1: Yes. I think so. Like that guy who worked from that department... so everybody  
190 contributed – maybe that's what helped a lot.

191 R: Ok, great. Thank you.

1 **Appendix 10: In-Depth Interview 4 (IDI 4)**

2 **Individual Interview 4: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

3 **Company: Aranda Textile Mills**

4 Researcher: Marco Magni

5 Respondents: *Names withheld due to confidentiality reasons – names made available on request*

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7 R: Do you believe that learning is important?

8 1: Of course it is.

9 R: And why do say that?

10 1: Because without learning we wouldn't be able to know the stuff that we are  
11 supposed to. If I didn't learn how to use a computer at the college I wouldn't know how  
12 to use it. So it actually... it's a good thing that we have to learn all this stuff to go further  
13 in life.

14 R: And what lead you to believe this? So at what stage in your life that maybe you  
15 thought ok well learning is not uncool, that so often youngsters feel at school, but that  
16 it's actually good to learn?

17 1: For me it was my mother because I saw her working hard for us and everything so I  
18 just wanted to learn and go further and do something because I wanted to do right by  
19 her, because of all the things she did for us. So I wanted for her to be proud of me, to  
20 see me doing something positive. And she was a good influence.

21 R: And I suppose a good inspiration?

22 1: Yes, and also my sister.

23 R: Ok, great. So what encouraged you to do the learnership?

24 1: I was at a point of quitting. Because I had only started and in my two weeks I wanted  
25 to quit and I called my sister and I was like "this is too much for little pay, I can't do this,  
26 I am not built for this" and she said "you know what, you can quit, its ok. But as a sister  
27 I will support you and be there for you but this is a stepping stone for you. I won't help  
28 you to reach that – you have to do it for yourself. If you do give up you are giving up on  
29 yourself and it's the first job that you actually did. And if you give up on it, you are going

30 to give up on the others. You are going say ‘ag, I’m not built for this and then...’ So  
31 after I had the talk with her I decided to stay.

32 R: Good. So would you say that it is important to have a good motivating support  
33 structure outside of the learnership?

34 1: Definitely. Yes, definitely.

35 R: I did ask you before, and I remember when I said were you motivated to learn? And  
36 you initially said “not”?

37 1: Yes [laughs], but like here I wasn’t motivated. Like I said before like when you get  
38 here and all these ladies, my colleagues were treating us like children, so I felt like  
39 what am I doing here actually. Like, what do I want to get from this? Am I here... like  
40 they discouraged us like “what are you doing here? You went from college and  
41 everything” and I said “you know what, I did go to college but it was difficult for me to  
42 get a job because I didn’t have the experience for it – for whatever I learned. So it was  
43 difficult so I thought if I took everything and with my sister’s advice she said “no, get  
44 this and maybe you going to get whatever in the future”.

45 R: For sure, great. I was also going to say what kept you motivated to keep you in the  
46 learnership, but it sounds like your sister...

47 1: Yes [laughs], but other things like after I got through the negative aspect of it, I  
48 realised that it was actually good to learn because I learned all the things that I didn’t  
49 know about – like the health and safety of the machines. How they were operated – I  
50 was like “wow” I got fascinated with all the... because we learnt different stuff, like the  
51 blankets how it’s supposed to be. Like if you can’t run the raw material for the blankets,  
52 it messes up the whole process. So we had to learn all... it was interesting.

53 R: That’s great.

54 1: Because when I got to Aranda I thought you know they just... I didn’t know all the  
55 processes that were involved. I thought “oh, my word, this is like wow” [laughs] and I  
56 was fascinated by that.

57 R: Ok, great. How would describe the involvement of your employer during the  
58 learnership?

59 1: For me, like I said before, it was the head of department, Nelson. Because he was  
60 more involved with everything that we did and he helped us through our learnership –

61 everything that we struggled with, he would sit down with us and explain the whole  
62 process. And he was helpful, and he made time for us. He said “no, I’m busy now but  
63 you guys can come later” and he explained everything. And if he didn’t have time he  
64 would tell the supervisor like “show them this” like if he was there. And if we went to  
65 him and talked... like if we had problems I could go to him and say “I’m not happy with  
66 this” and he would encourage us and say “what’s wrong”. Because one week of not  
67 making production he said “what’s wrong Judith, come here” and I thought oh my gosh  
68 I’m in trouble, what now? And I was too stressed for this, maybe the lady that I was  
69 working with was up in my business. So decided to slack off on the production and he  
70 said “no, that is not the way to go. You are supposed to be... you want to be treated as  
71 an adult so please behave like one, because you are here to work”. Because you  
72 spend most of your time here. I remember one discussion I had with him – he said “you  
73 spend most of your time here instead of at home, and if these ladies are not being  
74 like... grown-ups, you’re not supposed to be taking them with inside you. Just take it as  
75 you came here with lots of respect and I respect the older people... so I wonder what  
76 they mean, oh my gosh what do I do? Because I didn’t know an adult can be like this, I  
77 was like I don’t know how to behave in this situation. He said “just let them be, don’t let  
78 them change you. You just have to do your job and get to it.

79 R: So how important would you say that role, that Nelson played, was?

80 1: Yes, it was. Because I live from home, so I was lonely up here and with all these  
81 negative people in the workplace, you feel like lonely and whatever – you can’t talk to  
82 somebody; but he was there, you can talk to him and he was there and... so I felt ok,  
83 he was good.

84 R: Excellent. Ok, and then what would be your suggestions to improve the way in  
85 which the learnership is delivered?

86 1: Like I said before, the facilitator also needs to know what he’s talking about when he  
87 is standing up there. And he needs to get involved – if I’m a facilitator I’m still going to  
88 learn a lot from the other people, I’m just... I’m not going to say I come from the college  
89 or the university or whatever. I’m not going to take anything from them; I’m just going to  
90 tell them what to do and just going to leave after that. He’s supposed to get more  
91 involved and get their opinions and see if you are doing... like he can even draft a  
92 feedback and just give it to them. Like “how am I doing on this? Are you guys happy?”

93 R: So, some kind of feedback...

- 94 1: Yes, the facilitation that they are delivering.
- 95 R: And in terms of the structure of the programme, would you change anything?
- 96 1: No.
- 97 R: And the practical component?
- 98 1: No, even there... because at the department we had a schedule of this week we are  
99 going to do the health and safety, they are going to show us the machine works and  
100 everything, like the changes of it and everything like that. And the next week would be  
101 working on something else, like the material and... like the other week would be  
102 working on something else. So it was properly organised.
- 103 R: Ok, good. And what were the working conditions like during the course of  
104 programme?
- 105 1: Except for one day I had work on... because it was rainy and the rain got through the  
106 roof, so we had to put the material down there. But it was cold and we had to work  
107 there... [laughs] But other than that, especially with the health and safety, they teach us  
108 lot – you not supposed to be doing that, so it was also good because you know what  
109 I'm supposed to do and you know what I'm not supposed to do. And everything was  
110 fine, except for the rain.
- 111 R: And how did your fellow colleagues treat you? You already mentioned that they...
- 112 1: Not all of them were bad, but the most... because with them you supposed to... like  
113 with me you're not supposed to talk back to an adult when they speak to you. But I felt  
114 like they were putting me in a situation where I had to defend myself, so I had to speak  
115 up and do something if I was going to let the situation get worse.
- 116 R: Would say that is maybe a skill that you learnt through doing the programme?
- 117 1: Yes.
- 118 R: To stand up for yourself?
- 119 1: Exactly. So after the discussion I had with Nelson he also said that "you need to  
120 speak up. We are not going to know if you just keep quiet and everything and be angry  
121 at the machine. We are not going to know what's wrong with her. So you need to speak  
122 up and tell the supervisor I'm not happy with the lady that I'm working with because she  
123 is doing this and doing that. And even if... I did tell them I'm not happy with you and

124 she just brushed the whole thing off like I was so... ok, if the supervisor – she’s not  
125 going to believe me because they are friends or something like that. So I just left the  
126 situation like that.

127 R: Ok. So you said that not all of them behaved like that?

128 1: Yes, there were some people that were good and actually you could talk to them. I  
129 remember this one lady said – I could go to her and speak to her and she would listen  
130 to me. And actually listen, not say give me ??? [12:11] ...what’s the situation going to  
131 be, and she would actually listen. And after that I say “why are keeping quiet? I came to  
132 you to offer you something.” And she would say “no, you already know the answer, you  
133 just don’t want to act on it. Because you just came here for me to tell you what to do,  
134 but you actually know what you are supposed to do. So, I’m just here for you to listen”.

135 R: Ok, that’s good. And how important would you say the relationship with your  
136 colleagues, or how they treat you, is to the overall outcome of the learnership?

137 1: I avoided the bad people [laughs]... but they were not bad, they were just scared...  
138 for them I believe they were negative because they that we were there to take their  
139 jobs or something. So you kind of understand that afterwards “oh, she was scared  
140 because I am a new learner – she thinks I’m going to steal her job. So maybe she’s a  
141 temporary worker” and she’s like “oh my gosh, I’m going to teach little kid my job and  
142 then I’m going to go and she’s going to stay” so she felt like no that’s why I’m not going  
143 to learn you anything.

144 R: I suppose that also lends to communication?

145 1: Yes.

146 R: And that’s to my next point. How do believe that the communication around the  
147 learnership was handled?

148 1: [Laughs]

149 R: If you want to say from the learnership college point of view?

150 1: I didn’t even know that the college was involved. I only learned afterwards, because I  
151 thought the lecturer just came in and just give us the material to work on and she left.

152 R: so would say the communication wasn’t great? How would you rate it?

153 1: From what value? [laughs]

154 R: Say out of 10?

155 1: Hmm... let me think, I don't want to be bad...

156 R: No, you must be honest. You must 100% honest, please.

157 1: I would say 6.

158 R: Ok, and from an employer perspective?

159 1: How do you mean?

160 R: So for instance, if you think that the communication around the learnership between  
161 the provider and your manager had improved; and maybe also between the employer  
162 and your fellow colleagues?

163 1: For one thing I believe that the learning was not only in the class, there also needed  
164 to involve us in other things. Like not just say "sit there Judith and do your job". I just  
165 needed to be more involved in something because I felt like my brain wasn't thinking  
166 straight and I felt stressed like "oh my gosh, what am I doing here, people are just  
167 letting us sit in class, do our work, copy it from another person" I just needed them to  
168 come through and say you know guys... like get our opinion on something. We are not  
169 important but I just want to feel important, like I mattered, but I just was like oh, do your  
170 and go back to the department work again, go home and come back again and do the  
171 same stuff. There is no like... getting people involved in something, they just coming  
172 here working for their money and going home.

173 R: Ok. So would you say that communication needs to be handled better?

174 1: Yes, even if it's not...

175 R: Because it also speaks to other issues – maybe colleagues may treat you in a  
176 different way?

177 1: Yes.

178 R: And how important was the practical component of the learnership?

179 1: I think you have asked me that question before [laughs]... I learnt all this stuff. It was  
180 fascinating, like I said before, and...

181 R: I suppose to see how everything fits in...

182 1: yes, how everything comes together at the end of the day. Like oh my gosh I didn't  
183 even know that.

184 R: At which point in the programme did you think that learning was maximised?

185 1: At one point we were there at winding (department) and we were learning on quality  
186 and we had our supervisor, Lazarus – he worked here before but he left, and he was  
187 sitting there and explaining this whole situation and everything like that. And we were  
188 like “oh gosh”, on the quality studies – I can't explain it now because his words were  
189 big [laughs]. And he actually explained everything, on the wool and everything like that;  
190 if it's not in a certain way then the blanket... and I was like oh my gosh – it was so  
191 good. Because I felt there I could understand better about the blanket or what the  
192 material was supposed to be like, the quality we had to produce – I was like ok.

193 R: And that happened while you were on the practical component?

194 1: Yes, while we were on the factory floor. Because he explained the whole thing and  
195 he took us to spinning (department) and showed us like if these guys don't do this and  
196 we get the raw material and we are supposed to be running with the right one so  
197 weaving can start making the right blanket. But if we get the wrong thing then weaving  
198 has to stop. So you understand like “oh, my word, this is supposed to do the right thing  
199 and this is the whole process... and wow” it was fascinating.

200 R: Ok, great. Did your prior knowledge or experience play an important role in choosing  
201 to do the learnership?

202 1: No, I only chose to do the learnership because I was jobless. I didn't want to stay at  
203 home.

204 R: Were you ever employed before or was this your first job?

205 1: It was the first job for a company. I was a baby sitter before.

206 R: Ok. And then how would you describe the style of teaching by your instructor?

207 1: Can I... is it ok if I mention names?

208 R: Yes, it's ok if you want to mention names.

209 1: Ok for me, like with Jurista and Marshall, because they were our lecturer there. Like I  
210 said when I was doing my learnership there was a time when I had to three shifts so I  
211 wasn't spending more time in the class because sometime I had to work 2 to 10, knock

212 off at 10 o'clock in the evening; and 10 to 6, so I wasn't in the class. So if I was behind I  
213 would go to Jurista and I would say you know Jurisat I am behind what did they do on  
214 those two weeks that I wasn't here. She would actually sit down with me and explain  
215 the whole thing, like no you're supposed to be doing this and everything like that and  
216 she would say like go and sit down and if you get stuck you can come back and I'll help  
217 you. Also the same with Marshall.

218 R: So she was prepared to go out of her way to help you?

219 1: Yes.

220 R: But then did she encourage you to find answers yourself?

221 1: Yes, because she said like with the other stuff, she said you know I don't know the  
222 other stuff, like especially the material and whatever, so you have to go to the  
223 apartment and let the foreman help you or the supervisor or whoever. Go out and fins  
224 the information yourself.

225 R: Ok, great.

226 1: But other people they didn't want to go and find the information themselves, they  
227 would rather get it from the friends.

228 R: Now those people, what age were they? Were they generally younger?

229 1: Younger, yes.

230 R: What age?

231 1: 21, 20.

232 R: And the older learners, would you say they were keener to do the work?

233 1: I wouldn't say that. It depends on an individual, really.

234 R: Depends on the individual?

235 1: Yes, because when I first got here like I said, I was fascinated by the whole process,  
236 I was like wow, so I wanted to learn more. So I had to go to the right people. Like for  
237 other learners if they didn't come to class for the whole two weeks, they would just sit  
238 there and not be concerned like "ag, what did they do, I don't want to care about that".

239 R: So how many learners in your class were like you in respect to wanting to go out  
240 and finding the answers? And how many just didn't really care?

241 1: For others they were prepared to work but with the other people they discouraged  
242 them. Like “why you there my friend, you can just sit there, I’ll give you the answers, I  
243 was here last week. So don’t go there”. So you are actually like “oh, ok” because they  
244 just want to sit in class and talk about happened in the weekend. So yes, but other  
245 people I could see with them, they wanted to go out there and get more involved, but  
246 because of their friends they just...

247 R: So if more of the learners in your class had been prepared to learn, would you have  
248 said that would have been a better environment and it would have improved the  
249 outcome of the learnership?

250 1: Yes, yes, it would have definitely have helped.

251 R: And what did you want to achieve from the learnership?

252 1: I wanted to... wow, I don’t know really [laughs].

253 R: From a career development point of view?

254 1: Yes, because when I was with the learnership I felt like I could do this, I could do  
255 that, I could... actually be a teacher one day, or be a facilitator. I was thinking this  
256 person was not doing well, maybe I could do it better – or something like that.

257 R: So it also made you think a bit more...

258 1: Yes, and I believe like you know what, if I stick it out and everything like that – I  
259 could actually be a supervisor after learning all about this quality, material and  
260 everything – I’ve got the knowledge to do that.

261 R: Ok, great. Was there anything that you gained that was not part of the learnership  
262 programme? So you did mention that it did make you a bit more outspoken and  
263 confident...

264 1: Confident, yes. And it helped me to handle situations in a different way. Like if a  
265 situation arises, I wouldn’t be the first one to be like “hew, this happened” I would just  
266 sit back and let it happen but it actually got me more involved like in a situation. Like,  
267 this is my future we are talking about, this is my job... even if it’s not a job, it’s a  
268 learnership and I don’t know how long it’s going to last. Maybe after I am gone, but still  
269 I want to take as much from this as I possibly could. So this... the learnership actually  
270 prepared me for the real world, because if they were mean to me, if they were... they  
271 showed me like... you know what they prepared me for the real world. Because I

272 remember this one lady saying to me – because I was very angry that day, I had a fight  
273 with one of the ladies and I felt bad about it, but it wasn't my fault. I felt justified  
274 because I had to stand up for myself because she was putting me down, so I had to  
275 stand up for myself. So I felt bad afterwards so she said to me like “don't feel bad, you  
276 did the right thing for yourself”.

277 R: And what are your thoughts about studying further?

278 1: It's a good thing. Like, we all need to be studying further, even if you can have all the  
279 degrees and everything, I still feel like I want to study further because the one thing I  
280 wanted to do when I first did the learnership was to be a writer, but my mother said to  
281 me “you know what, the first time you are going to get your salary or your wage you are  
282 not going to be wanting anything else, you are just going to be wanting to get paid now”  
283 [laughs]. And I laughed at her and said “no, I'm not going to be like that” and then I am  
284 like that! So that dream is like long ago gone [laughs].

285 R: But it can still be a hobby or something you do in your free time.

286 1: Yes. I do write part time but it is not something that I can work on... my friend says it  
287 is just too dark – I'm not a happy person... [laughs], but actually I am.

288 R: Ok. And then did you experience any other personal growth or anything else that  
289 you would like to add?

290 1: I would say yes I did, because I came from college – I was a little kid thinking like  
291 you know what, the world owed me something, that I would just go out there and just  
292 get it without having to actually work hard for it. So it actually – the learnership taught  
293 me a lot, and with the other ladies... even if after we had our differences sorted out, I  
294 actually understand that these people were actually working hard for their job, and they  
295 had kids to feed and I remember my mom working hard for me and I would say “mom,  
296 quit your job please, I'm going to work hard for you now. It's time to relax” so those  
297 were the ladies that – maybe they don't have somebody like me at their home – they  
298 don't have a daughter like me, so it had to like wow... so my mom said “I'm proud of  
299 you” so I was like “ok, thank you” [laughs].

300 R: Excellent. Ok, is there anything else you would like to say about the learnership?

301 1: I would say that for one thing, I would like to thank Aranda for having it in the first  
302 place because it taught me a lot, really. And... I would say like if it had to be like... get

303 more people involved. And the facilitator really has to be there, really. So you don't get  
304 bored, you don't feel like why am I here in the first place, or am I just here to get paid.

305 R: So really from your side you are saying that you would like a bit more involvement  
306 from the facilitators...

307 1: Yes, because they always complain about something with the learners, and while I  
308 was working there they would complain about something and actually with the college,  
309 I would go to them and say you know what, the learners are complaining this, and I  
310 would get like "no, tell them that they have to wait" and I felt like these people were  
311 working hard and they earn a little money, so how do I tell them to wait if I'm working  
312 on an office. They think that I'm getting all this big money and I don't care about them.  
313 But I'm actually doing the best that I can. And if they are not doing the part of what they  
314 are supposed to be doing – I get the blame for it, they look at me and are like "that's  
315 why you are working here. You are involved; you are getting something from this". And  
316 I would say "no, I'm not but I can't do my job if I'm not getting the job that I'm supposed  
317 to be doing. So you need to understand it, because if I have to go and process  
318 something and give it wages say that increase these people's salary – I'm going to lose  
319 my job, because the people didn't do their job, so I can't do that.

320 R: Would you say that had you been employed by Aranda without the learnership,  
321 would you have progressed as fast to where you are now?

322 1: I don't think so, I don't think so.

323 R: So would you say it was an effective stepping-stone?

324 1: I think so. Because I don't think that even... if they did employ me, I would be  
325 working on a machine at make-up (department) or somewhere, so I wouldn't be  
326 recognised for anything. So even with our facilitator, Jurista, when she left she said you  
327 know what, "I'm going to tell My Barnard (HR director) about you and say this and that.  
328 That you went to the college and you did this and I see that you work hard and I'm  
329 going to recommend you for this job (her current position)" so I said ok. And I didn't  
330 take it seriously and I thought whatever "why would she do that for me". But she was  
331 actually a good person.

332 R: And a good mentor?

333 1: Yes.

334 R: Thank you.

