

**A GROUP DYNAMICS PERSPECTIVE OF THE EXPERIENCES OF
ADULT LEARNERS TAKING PART IN A LEARNERSHIP
PROGRAM**

by

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LETTER OF DECLARATION

I, Michelle Ward, hereby, certify that this dissertation entitled “**A group dynamics perspective of the experiences of adult learners taking part in a learnership program**” is being submitted by me to the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Department of Human Resources Management for the award of the degree Magister Commercii (Industrial and Organisational Psychology), is a bona fide record of research work carried out by me under the guidance of Jean Cooper.

The content of this dissertation, in full or in parts, is my own work and has not been submitted to any other Institution or university for the award of any other degree or diploma and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by completion.

Michelle Ward

July 2010

Signed: _____

DEDICATION

I wish to thank my Father and Saviour who granted me the ability and the opportunity to study. Now I can hopefully understand the human beings that He created a little better!

To my husband, Warren, thank you for understanding and assisting me in my studies from day one. This was a challenging time in our lives and your love and support worked wonders in motivating me. I love you!

To my parents, Peter and Frieda Tolsma and my two brothers, Pierré and Jacquis Tolsma: I cannot thank you enough for being there for me through these testing times. I will be eternally grateful for your unfaltering love, support and encouragement. No one can ask for a better family than you!

I wish to thank all my friends and family for being patient and understanding when I could not visit them as much as I would have liked to.

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ABSTRACT

A GROUP DYNAMICS PERSPECTIVE OF THE EXPERIENCES OF ADULT LEARNERS TAKING PART IN A LEARNERSHIP PROGRAM

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The aim of this study was to explore, from a group dynamics perspective, the adult learners' experiences in a learnership program structured to include employed and unemployed learners. A secondary aim was to develop guidelines for practitioners regarding the implementation of learnerships that are structured to include employed and unemployed learners, taking into account the group dynamics at play.

The case study played out within a pharmaceutical distribution company within South Africa. A qualitative, constructivist grounded theory method was used to analyse the data that were collected by means of questionnaires and focus groups. The data collected were transcribed and uploaded into Atlas.ti, which is a visual qualitative data analysis and theorybuilding software program that contributes to the management of qualitative data. It was used to complete a rigorous inductive-abductive analysis. The final code list contained 277 codes linked to 29 code families which in turn were linked to 8 super families. These super families were described and the experiences of the learners were then interpreted by means of a number of group dynamics theories and adult learning theories that were discussed in the preceding literature chapters.

In the case study the exploration of the learners' experience indicated that certain group dynamics were not taken into consideration and this led to an emotionally burdened experience. If one considers the adult learning theory, these experiences could influence

the learning effectiveness. The implementation of a learnership program taking the group dynamics into consideration prior to implementation thereof, could contribute towards a more successful learnership. Guidelines were given based on the conclusions of the research for example:

- Ensure that all the relevant parties including management, supervisors, employed learners, unemployed learners, employed staff, SETA etc. strive towards the same goal right from the start.
- Integrate the employed and unemployed learners' rights from the start so that the unemployed learners are accepted as part of the system.
- Make it very clear to the employed staff that the unemployed learners are not a threat to their employment within the company as the unemployed learners have not been given a commitment that they will be employed after the learnership.
- Make sure that the training facilitators are well trained and equipped to deal with the group dynamics that can develop in the classroom environment so that they can contribute to the containment of emotions and to alert the company of the events.
- Ensure that change agents are available to monitor and manage these group dynamics.
- Explain the differences and similarities that might exist between the groups and assist the groups to realise their mutually dependent relationship.

The guidelines obtained from this study can be used to stimulate the thinking process when planning and managing the implementation of a learnership program in order to be aware of consequential implications that group dynamics can have on the successful implementation of such a learning program. The conclusions and guidelines will be useful to human resources practitioners, training providers and line managers that are planning to implement similar learnership programs.

Key words: group; group theories; group dynamics; group constructs; learnership; adult learning.

UITTREKSEL

'N GROEPDINAMIKA PERSPEKTIEF VAN DIE ERVARINGS VAN VOLWASSE LEERDERS WAT DEELNEEM IN 'N LEERLINGSKAP PROGRAM

deur

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SIELKUNDE)

Die doel van die studie was om volwasse leerders betrokke by 'n leerlingskapprogram wat gestruktureer is om bestaande werkers en werklose leerders in te sluit, se ervaring vanuit 'n groepdinamika perspektief te ondersoek. 'n Sekondêre doelwit was om riglyne te ontwikkel vir mense in die praktyk met betrekking tot die implementering van 'n leerlingskapprogram vir volwasse leerders bestaande uit werklose leerders en leerders in diens van 'n bepaalde maatskappy, met in agneming van die groepdinamika daarby betrokke.

Die gevallestudie het plaasgevind binne 'n farmaseutiese verspreidingsmaatskappy in Suid-Afrika. 'n Kwalitatiewe, konstruktivistiese metode is gebruik om die data te analiseer wat deur vraelyste en fokusgroepe versamel is. Die data is getranskribeer en ingelees in Atlas.ti, wat 'n visuele kwalitatiewe data-analise en teoretiese gebaseerde sagtewareprogram is wat bydra tot die bestuur van kwalitatiewe data. Hierdie program is gebruik om 'n indringende gebaseerde teorieanalyse te doen. Die finale kodelys bestaan uit 277 kodes gekoppel aan 29 kode families wat weer op hul beurt gekoppel is aan 8 hoofamilies. Hierdie hoofamilies is beskryf en die navorsingsgebeure van die studie is by wyse van groepdinamikateorieë en volwasseleerteorieë (wat in die vorige literatuur hoofstukke van die studie bespreek is) geïnterpreteer.

In hierdie gevallestudie het die interpretasie van die ervarings van die leerders wat ondersoek is, daarop gewys dat sekere groepdinamika nie oorweeg is nie en dat dit gelei het tot 'n emosionele stresvolle ervaring. Volwasseleerteorie dui aan dat hierdie ervarings die leereffektiviteit kon beïnvloed het. Die implementering van 'n leerlingskap program waar die groepdinamika in ag geneem word voor die implementering kan bydra tot die sukses van soortgelyke leerlingskapprogramme.

Die riglyne wat deur hierdie studie verkry is, kan gebruik word om die denkproses te stimuleer tydens die beplanning en die bestuur van die implementering van soortgelyke leerlingskapprogramme. Dit sal veroorsaak dat die betrokke persone bewus is van die invloed van groepdinamika kan hê met betrekking tot die suksesvolle implementering van 'n leerlingskap program. Die navorsingsinligting wat ingewin is, sal bruikbaar wees vir menslike hulpbronne praktisyne, opleidingsvoorsieners en lynbestuurders wat beplan om 'n soortgelyke leerlingskapprogram te implementeer.

Sleutelwoorde: groep; groepteorieë; groepdinamika; groepkonstrukte; leerlingskap; volwasseleer.



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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDF	Skills Development Facilitator
SDLA	Skills Development Levies Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan

CHAPTER 1

Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life;
education is life itself. ~ John Dewey

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In South Africa an extremely high unemployment rate of 23.5% has been reported in the *Quarterly Labour Force Survey*, Quarter 2 (2009: v) by Statistics South Africa for the first quarter of 2009. The economic downturn of the last few years led to organisations retrenching and restructuring their workforces. These structural changes led to a lower demand for labour in the primary sectors and a higher demand in the secondary and tertiary sectors. This led to a skills gap within our labour market (Davies & Farquharson, 2004b).

One of South Africa's biggest concerns is the scarcity of skills. Mayer and Altman (2005) suggest that it is only through skills development that unemployment and poverty can be reduced and economic growth achieved. Babb and Meyer (2005) in their book *Perspectives in Learnership – South African Case Studies*, introduce their perspectives with the following statement: "There can be little argument that one of the key obstacles to the economic growth and social equity required of this country is the lack of skills". Without the necessary skilled employees, organisations cannot compete and survive in the challenging global economy, nor grow (Fester, 2006: i). Knowledge is the key to prosperity in a fiercely competitive global economy (Ramphele, 2007). Davies and Farquharson (2004a) came to the same conclusion based on statistics released by SAQA (South African Qualification Authority) that only 4.2% of our population have a qualification higher than matric and that addressing the skills gap is a high priority for the government.

Complicating the situation even more is that the scarcity of skills is higher within certain groups of people due to the race and gender discrimination that took place before South Africa became a democratic country. This underdevelopment is at the heart of the inequality in our society. Not all South Africans had the same opportunities to develop skills and attain qualifications as other South Africans had had and this imbalance needs to be addressed (Mayer & Altman, 2005). It is therefore important to help these people (a vast majority of our society) who were denied opportunities to develop their talents in order to achieve equality. The lack of skills is a fatal constraint to prosperity for the entire nation as those that are skilled, sell themselves in the labour market and the unskilled go hungry. (Ramphela, 2007)

As it is simply impossible to send the entire unschooled, unskilled and unqualified workforce back to school, the government decided to set the framework for occupational qualifications which recognises the experience and skills that are gained while performing a job (Badroodien, 2005). This system is based on the same principles as the system that was used for many years for apprentices. The difference is that the new system is not only for trades, like plumbing or fitting, but is open to any other sector requiring training, like hospitality or services (Fester, 2006:28).

In this way the shortage of suitable skills in South Africa can be addressed by shifting some of the responsibility for training and education from the formal education system to the labour market (Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as cited in Ramphela, 2007). Employees that have a lot of practical experience and already know how to perform the job, can now acquire the theoretical knowledge required to know why things are done the way they are done. An individual can be assessed based on the practical (how) and the theoretical (why) and found competent to perform in the particular occupation (Department of Labour 2002 NTD 2004 as cited in Fester, 2006). After the assessment the individual will be eligible for a registered qualification within the National Qualification Framework (NQF). The NQF is a framework that was established by the SAQA, by which all qualifications are evaluated according to national and international standards. Learnership courses have been developed to address critically scarce skills within a specific industry. The Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) approves learnerships for each sector according to their Sector Skill Plan (SSP) and then disburses grants to the employer for the implementation thereof (Sacht, 2001).

There are three ways of structuring learnership programs with regards to the employed-unemployed learners:

- Only having employed learners.
- Only having unemployed learners.
- Having both employed and unemployed learners.

During informal discussions with two experts in the field of learnerships it was established that the structuring of a learnership is dependent on the company, the economic climate, the level of the learnership, the type of learnership, as well as the requirements of the SETA by making the necessary funding available.

Whichever way it is implemented, the final aim must be reached: that the learners learn the maximum from the learnership program so that the company can gain longterm benefits by having a skilled and productive worker who is more likely to deliver an efficient service (Kiki Sebona SETA Bulletin May 2001 as cited in Sacht, 2001). To maximize the learning effectiveness, the subjective experience of the learners must be taken into account. Vince and Martin (1993) mentioned that they had turned their attention to the psychological experience of the learner as this influences the learning process, either positively or negatively. This will also result in the organisation benefiting to a maximum for the effort that was put in (return on investment), but most importantly realise the aim of the South African government's skills development strategy to enhance the skills level of all South Africans and in doing this we realise our dreams for the economy of South Africa (Ramphela, 2007).

1.2. The research problem

As the implementation of learnerships is a fairly new practice in South Africa a strong theoretical foundation has not yet been laid down. Researchers have, for many years, looked at concepts such as experiential learning, adult learning, apprenticeships, but specific research on the implementation and management of learnerships in the organisation is very limited (refer to paragraph 3.2.1).

Furthermore, having unemployed learners in the workplace and using them interchangeably with employed staff is a fairly new and complex concept: no clear guidelines exist as to how to manage the program in such a way as to maximise the

learning experience for the learner, as well as maximising the benefits for the organisation. In order to maximise the learning benefits, one should be careful not to negate the group dynamics when implementing a learnership structured to include employed and unemployed learners. The group dynamics originating from and within the learnership, could impact the learning experience and effectiveness (Vince & Martin, 1993). The problem is that no study till now has tried to make sense of the experiences of learners within a learnership program by looking at the group dynamics involved when it is structured to include employed and unemployed learners. Although the concept of learnerships as a method to address the skills shortage in South Africa could work exceptionally well if one judges it from a learning theory perspective, there is the possibility that it will not deliver on its promises if one does not consider the group dynamics involved. This leaves a gap in terms of our understanding of the effective implementation of learnerships.

Problem statement: Due to limited research, we do not, from a group dynamics perspective, understand the adult learners' experiences in a learnership program structured to include employed and unemployed learners.

1.3. Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to explore, from a group dynamics perspective, the adult learners' experiences in a learnership program structured to include employed and unemployed learners.

A secondary aim is to develop guidelines for practitioners regarding the implementation of learnerships in such a way that the group dynamics at play are truly taken into consideration. By taking the group dynamics into account in organising a learnership one can minimise the negative impact of group dynamics in an employed-unemployed structure for the learning experience, as well as maximising the positive impact that group dynamics can have and thus enhance the learning effectiveness of this kind of learnership.

1.4. Research Questions

- Which group dynamic processes were identified within the group of learners?
- What were the possible causes of these group processes?
- How did those processes impact the individual learner's experience?
- What guidelines can be followed to minimise the negative impact of the dynamics of the employed-unemployed structure on the learning and at the same time maximise the positive impact it can have?

1.5. Significance of the study

It would be very useful to the research community if a real-life case study implementing learnerships in an organisation, using employed and unemployed learners interchangeably as the implementation model, is analysed and described. Gathering this information will lead to suggestions for better implementation of similar programs in the future, which could be of practical significance to practitioners in the field of learnerships. This could therefore be of use to the training providers, the Human Resources Department, the management of the organisation, the SETA, etc.

By contributing to the research communities' understanding of group dynamic processes in a learnership program structured to include employed and unemployed learners, as well as the fact that it is interdisciplinary in nature, makes this study of valuable theoretical significance.

The methodological significance of this study is the fact that it has coupled the grounded theory analysis with an interpretation from a group dynamics perspective. This is a method of enquiry that has not been used in the field of learnerships before.

1.6. Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1 – General Introduction

This chapter explains the research problem, the aim of the study, the research questions as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 – Research design

In this chapter the research philosophy, approach and strategy are discussed. The research methodology with regards to data collections, sampling strategy, data collection methods and data analysis methods are discussed as well as quality and ethical considerations that were taken into account.

Chapter 3 – Learnerships and adult learning

This chapter is the first of two chapters based on a study of available literature. It explains the concept of learnerships and the origin thereof as well as the adult learning theory because the learners that took part in the learnership program were adult learners.

Chapter 4 – Group Dynamics

In this second chapter which is also based on a study of literature, Group Dynamics as a field is discussed and then followed by a brief summary of the main theories that have influenced the Group Dynamics field of study. Thereafter an integrated approach is used to discuss the constructs of a group. The group boundaries, in-out group dynamics, intergroup relations and group development are briefly discussed.

Chapter 5 – Results and Interpretation

This chapter provides a discussion of the results per Super Family and the interpretation thereof, based on the theories that were discussed in chapter 4. The influence that the group dynamics could have had on the learning effectiveness, taking into account the literature discussed in chapter 3, is also discussed.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter presents the conclusions and guidelines that are grouped into categories. It also presents the limitations and recommendations for further study.

Finally references will be listed.

1.7. Conclusion

The skills gap in South Africa is a reality that needs to be addressed. The apartheid era created an imbalance in the skills levels between race and gender. It is imperative that this be addressed to ensure longterm economic growth for South Africa. Learnerships are an effective way to address this issue and if one considers all the benefits of implementing learnerships within an organisation, it should be an easy decision for employers. One should, however, not forget that there are group dynamics that must be considered since the dynamics can impact on the learning experience of the learners and can, ultimately, influence the success of the learnership program. The success of the learnership program, in turn, will affect the success of the national skills strategy and the economic growth of South Africa.

The design of this research will now be discussed, before looking at the theoretical background of adult learning, learnerships and group dynamics. Once that is done, the data that were analysed will be discussed and interpreted from a group dynamics perspective. The results will be used to make suggestions on how to better manage the group dynamics within the employed-unemployed learnership structure.

CHAPTER 2

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. Introduction

When considering the significance of the research it is anticipated that this study will contribute towards gaining insight into the experiences of learners and towards more successful implementation of learnerships. The value of the research, however, will depend on the quality of the research. In this chapter the design of the research is discussed. Research design focuses on the end product or the aim of the research and the logic of the research. The research design consists of the philosophy, approach, strategy and methods used to address the research problem as outlined in paragraph 1.2.

2.2. Research philosophy

The philosophy, also known as the metatheory, metascience or epistemology of science, refers to the critical reflection on the nature of scientific inquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2006: 20). The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm will be the research philosophy of this study. Constructivists value the notion that people have multiple realities in their minds (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:28). Their viewpoint is that events are understood through interpretation, influenced by interactions within a social context: meaning is constructed through personal experience. The events within this case study will be constructed by the realities of the viewer and the viewed (Charmaz, 2006).

2.3. Research approach

A qualitative approach was used for this study. Qualitative analysis, according to Morse, in Thorne (2002), involves:

- *Comprehending* the phenomenon under study
- *Synthesising* a portrait of the phenomenon that accounts for the relations and linkages within its aspects
- *Theorising* about how and why these relations appear as they do, and
- *Recontextualising*, or putting the new knowledge about phenomena and relations back into the context of how others have articulated the evolving knowledge.

An explorative approach will be taken, as a specific problem is not the starting point but finding problem areas is the goal (Welman & Kruger 2001:12).

2.4. Case study as a research strategy

Welman and Kruger (2001: 21,183) describe the case study strategy as the opposite of hypothesis testing. They stated that it is research-directed at understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity by investigating the current happenings under natural circumstances. It is usually an investigation into the dynamics of a single system such as a family, project group or company. The better the sketch and more detailed the account (richness/density) of the subjects the better the understanding (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:53).

Case study, as a strategy, was rejected by Campbell and Stanley in 1966, claiming that it has almost no scientific value, but this statement was later changed by Cook and Campbell to say that it can yield valuable scientific information (Babbie & Mouton, 2006: 280). The fact that it is a single event, with unique circumstances, impacts on the degree of generalisation. Any content that surrounds a case study must be mentioned so that it can be taken into consideration - to allow for more accurate transferability. Babbie and Mouton (2006: 281) pointed out that one must consider multiple perspectives and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours.

Gould, Stapley, and Stein (2001) mentioned that in the field of system psychodynamics learning from experience is of fundamental value as it focuses on insight and understanding. Through analysing the case study it is possible to gain insight into the influence that the system and group dynamics had on the learners' experiences.

2.5. Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the research process and the kind of tools and procedures or steps to be used. The following components of the research process will be considered:

- Research setting
- Entrée and establishing researcher role
- The sampling method employed
- Data collection methods used
- The way in which the data were recorded and managed
- The analysis of the data

- Strategies used to ensure the quality of the research
- Reporting style followed
- Ethical considerations applied

2.5.1. Research setting

The study was conducted at a pharmaceutical distribution company in South Africa that forms part of the wholesale and retail industry. The learnership ran from March 2007 until September 2008. Two registered learnerships ran concurrently, one was Professional Driving (NQF level 4) and the other Wholesale and Retail (NQF level 3). The learnership was structured as employed-unemployed. The number of learners that took part was as follows:

Number of	Professional Driving	Wholesale and Retail
Employed learners	35	23
Unemployed learners	40	20

Not all learners were based on the premises in Johannesburg. Only those in Johannesburg were utilised for the purpose of this study. The learnership was structured in a way that would not disrupt the operations. The learners were divided into three groups. The groups were made up of half-employed learners and half-unemployed learners. When one group was in training, the other two groups were in the workplace. There were also times when all the learners were in the workplace. Only 30% of the learnership is theoretical training which meant that more time was spent in the workplace than in the classroom. The rationale behind the employed-unemployed structure was to ensure that enough hands were always available for operations to continue as normal. The anticipated labour flow in operation did not happen as planned, firstly, due to the unemployed learners not coming to work consistently, as well as the employed learners and employed staff not giving their commitment to the program.

2.5.2. Data collection methods used

Data are analysed and used to justify what the researcher concludes and recommends within the study. A literature review was done to gather information that forms the background to the case study, and on the theories that were used to understand the events within the case study. This is done to differentiate and focus the study (Babbie &

Mouton, 2006:566). The data regarding the subjective experience of the learners (employed and unemployed) taking part in the learnership program were collected making use of questionnaires, conducting focus groups with the learners and the personal input by the researcher.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire (Appendix C) was used to gather information with regard to the subjective experience the learners had of the learnership and the immediate issues that the learners dealt with and were able to identify. Open and closed questions were used to gather rich information. The questions were designed by the researcher and then refined by a knowledgeable person within the group dynamic field of study.

The questionnaires were completed in the training room of the organisation. All the candidates were given a pen, the consent form and the questionnaire. The reason for the questionnaire and the process to be followed was explained and an opportunity for questions was provided. After the consent form had been discussed, a few learners left when they realised their participation was voluntary. The rest stayed and completed the questionnaire.

Focus groups

Focus groups are planned discussions between selected participants (usually 4-12), guided by a moderator, in order to attain perceptions on a specific defined area. This is done by the group members sharing experience, feelings, views, emotions and ideas (Litosseliti, 2003).

Focus groups are not the only method that could have been used, but were chosen due to the fact that the information collected could be guided by the researcher. This happens when the moderator asks the right open-ended questions or when the comment or reaction of one of the group members prompts the emotions or thoughts of another group member. It is also different, as the collective data are shared and/or negotiated by the group participants, as opposed to the views and opinions of expert participants (Smit & Cilliers, 2006). The focus groups were implemented to explore what had been said by the individual learners in the questionnaires. Facts and issues between the group members

were discussed and at the same time more emotionally loaded information was collected from them.

The following proposed phases of conducting focus groups, as set out in Welman and Kruger (2001:189), were used to prepare and guide the process:

- The researcher introduces the topic to the group.
- The researcher sets rules, for example that only one person should speak at a time.
- Each participant (in turn) makes an opening statement regarding his/her experience of the topic.
- The researcher guides the open group discussion by asking questions such as “Most people here mentioned Z, but how does that fit in with A”?
- The session ends with each person (in turn) making a final statement that may not be challenged.

The focus groups were held in the training room that is well known to the learners. The tables were set up in a square shape with refreshments in the middle. Everyone could see everyone else. To lower the impact of the possible risk that the skill, ability and experience of the facilitator, as a relatively inexperienced researcher could have had, the focus groups were semistructured and conducted by two facilitators, the researcher and a training coordinator. The researcher was well acquainted with the employed learners as she was their HR Officer. The training coordinator was well acquainted with the unemployed learners as he had recruited them and was responsible for their wellbeing on the program. This dynamic means that both groups had someone present with whom they felt comfortable.

To create a comfortable, warm atmosphere the group discussion commenced by talking about something enjoyable that did not have anything to do with the reason for the gathering. The researcher then started to explain her dual role as HR Officer and at the same time, to try and ensure that the organisation learns from the learnership, but also uses the information for her studies towards her Master’s degree. She then explained the role of the training coordinator’s presence. A tape-recorder was placed on the table so that the learners could see it and it was explained that the reason for the recording was so that a full record would be available, thus allowing the researcher to participate in the

discussion. The attendees were asked if they had any questions to ask or objections to raise. No one asked any questions nor raised objections. The rules of the group, in terms of confidentiality of the group data, were negotiated and confirmed before the facilitator asked the first question. The length differed from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Structured questions, and the notes to stimulate discussion, were prepared beforehand based on the initial understanding of the researcher when she was reading the completed questionnaires that had been collected.

Focus groups were held separately with the employed and unemployed learners in order to avoid intimidation. One combined focus group took place a few weeks after the separate focus groups. The focus groups were rather difficult and stressful for the researcher as she was a relatively inexperienced researcher. The researcher did however, do a lot of reading before the time on focus groups and qualitative research so that the method could be better understood. The situation was even further complicated due to the learners struggling to express themselves. To try and prompt the learners to portray their true emotions, the researcher asked leading questions and sketched scenarios on which they could comment. The educational level and language barrier between the researcher and the participants provided a challenging situation. The training co-ordinator was included to help overcome the language barrier as the training co-ordinator was both fluent in English and in Zulu.

2.5.3. The sampling method employed

a. The sampling strategy

A population sampling strategy was used. All the employed and unemployed learners that formed part of the SETA Grant Learnership program at the organisation were asked to complete the questionnaire. Those who were willing to give their consent completed the questionnaire. There were only four that refused to complete the questionnaire due to a fear that they could be victimised. Some of those who did complete the questionnaire, were not honest or not really willing. These questionnaires were not included for further study. One of the learners who was very suspicious came back the day after the questionnaires had been completed to ask if he could have his questionnaire returned as he felt he gave his consent without understanding what he was consenting to. The questionnaire was returned and he was removed from of the sample. After all the eliminations, forty-six questionnaires completed by learners were used. Supervisors and

managers were asked to complete the same questionnaire but with a few additional questions around the managing of the program. Six completed questionnaires were received and used.

Purposeful (non-random) sampling was used to compile the focus groups. When this method is used, the researcher relies on his/her expertise to judge who must form part of the sample (Welman & Kruger, 2001:63). After the questionnaires had been completed, the researcher worked through the questionnaires to try and find out whose questionnaires indicated that they had the ability to express their emotions. They were then asked to form part of a focus group. All those who were asked to form part of the focus groups accepted the invitation. This method is criticised as it is claimed that each researcher will end up with a different sample and this makes it impossible to evaluate to which degree the sample represents the population (Welman & Kruger, 2001:63). Patton (in Coyne, 1997), however, noted the power and logic that method can contribute to qualitative research that requires that candidates rich in information are selected to ensure that one can learn as much as possible about the critical issues that are important to the purpose of the study. Five focus groups were conducted in total with an average of 6 participants taken part in the process.

b. Justification of sampling strategy

This non-probability sampling was used, relying on the availability and willingness of the learners. The goal was to collect the richest data possible and by giving each learner within the population the opportunity to express whether he wanted to form part of the research or not. This led to a diverse range of information (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:166-168). This method was decided on due to the power of selecting candidates rich in information, as mentioned in paragraph 2.5.3.a.

2.5.4. The way in which the data were coded and managed

The questionnaires consisted of hard copies to learners and were completed in the training room, under the supervision of the researcher and the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF). The hard copies were captured electronically, whereafter, they were placed in a safe place to which only the researcher had access. The focus groups were recorded on tape so that the researcher could act as a facilitator during the focus group and did not have to focus on remembering or writing down what was discussed. The

transcribed focus groups and questionnaires were then imported into the Atlas.ti software package that was used to assist in the data analysis process.

2.5.5. The analysis of the data

Unquestionably data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all the phases of a qualitative project (Thorne, 2000).

a. Type of analysis

The constructivist grounded theory method for data analysis was used. Constructivism recognises that it is a mutual process between the viewer and the viewed to create knowledge by interpreting subjects' meanings (Charmaz, 2006). This approach combines the inductive and deductive method.

An inductive approach to the data will have the purpose of condensing all the different data into a short summary, linking the information to categories or themes and then drawing conclusions/findings (Thomas, 2003). Welman and Kruger (2001:195) stated that this would indicate the relative incidence or frequency of themes and of the ways in which these themes were portrayed. Through an inductive fashion recurring patterns and consistent regularities can be identified. Here are the steps of the fluid process which was followed as set out by Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003):

Step 1: Getting to know your data

A comprehensive understanding of the data that you have collected and the reasons for collecting the data must be gathered. By reading the data over and over again a better understanding can be gathered. Intensive consideration of the data will lead to reducing the data by determining irrelevant data and focusing only on the data that fall within the scope of the research.

Step 2: Determining the focus of the analysis

The purpose of the analysis is guided by the research question: "What is it that we want to know?" The problem statement has to be solved by collecting and interpreting data.

Step 3: Categorising information

Categories for the data must be identified. After the categories have been identified, the

data are again thoroughly read and re-read to categorise them under the codes that were identified. This process does not involve numerical coding, but merely putting group information together to enable the researcher to identify patterns or themes.

Step 4: Identification of patterns or themes within and between categories

Patterns and themes will start to become apparent within and between the categories by looking at the display of the categorised information. Relative importance will also be evident if one looks at the number of times the same responses appear. Relationships between themes must be looked into to identify possible cause and effect.

The open coding should be done by following these steps according to Charmaz (2006:49):

- Remain open
- Stay close to the data
- Keep your codes simple and precise
- Construct short codes
- Preserve actions
- Compare data with data
- Move quickly through the data

In summary, keep it short, simple, active and analytic.

Due to the complexity of analysing large amounts of qualitative data, computer software programs are being developed to assist researchers in achieving a more rigorous, systematic and scientific way of analysing the data that cannot be analysed in other meaningful ways. Atlas.ti is a visual qualitative data analysis management and theory building software program (Archer, 2008) and was chosen due to the accessibility to training and the actual software.

The program helped the researcher to perform a code-based analysis by developing open codes for segments of text that at the same time give it a name and summarise and account for the piece of data and linking similar text in other documents to the same code (a meaning unit). The comment facility was utilised by the researcher to make notes on how the text is interpreted. Then the researcher linked the codes that can be categorised into a higher order group based on their relatedness to each other which is called a family.

The family comments were used to summarise the interpretation of all the codes and comments that belong to the family. A Super-family is moving into another higher order grouping level so that data can be categorised even more generally. This process will always be different, depending on who does the analysis, as no two researchers will code in the same manner.

The end product of this analysis can be seen by referring to the web page (see Appendix E). This serves as the audit trail of the “sense-making” process followed by the researcher. This end product represents the pivotal link between the data and the interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2006:46).

The deductive process was used when group theories were used to interpret the themes that were identified during the inductive process.

There should be a back and forth process between the inductive and deductive analysis which is referred to as abductive data analysis. The systematic thinking and combining method of Dubois and Gadde (2002) was used. Figure 1 below can be seen as the schematical representation of the back and forth process that exists throughout the research process between the empirical world (data) and the theory. This is influenced by the confrontation between the evolving framework and evolving case.

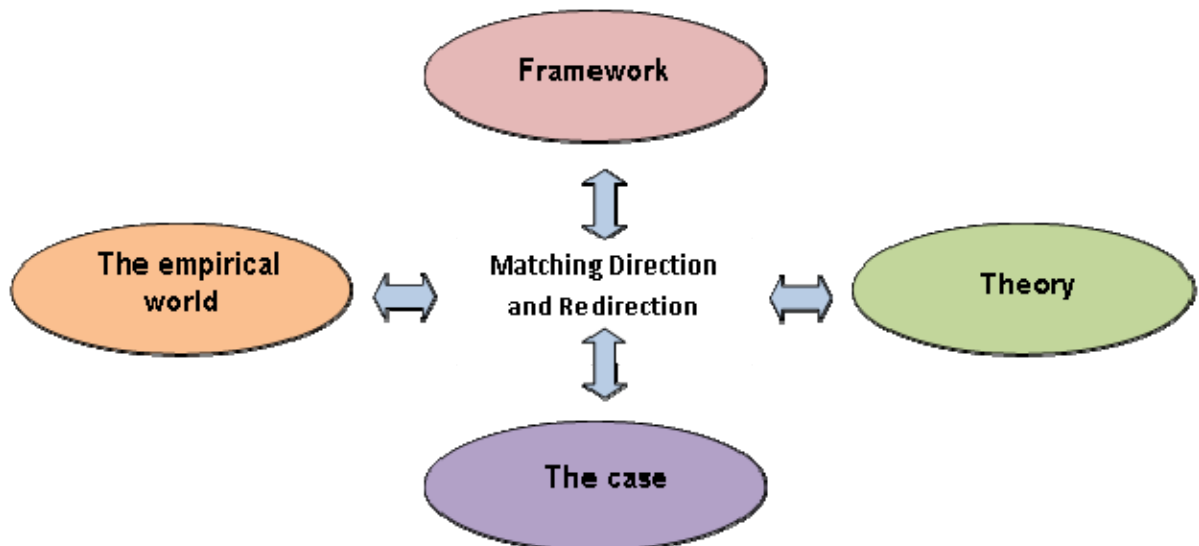


Figure 1: Systematic combining
(Dubois & Gadde, 2002:555)

b. Justification of method

Glaser (1978) stresses the interpretive, contextual and emerging nature of theory development. By making use of the abductive method one can categorise the data and then interpret it on the basis of experience, knowledge and existing theories. Charmaz (2008) described the grounded theory method as starting with inductive analysis of the data and then moving to abductive reasoning to understand the “embryonic observed findings”. It is aimed at explaining the anomalies of the data analysis/inductive analysis and allows for creative and intuitive interpretation of the empirical data by considering many theoretical concepts that could possibly explain what was observed in the data (Charmaz, 2008).

c. Interpretation of the data

Interpreting the data means attaching meaning and significance to the analysis (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). They suggest that one starts with a list of main issues that you have noticed as a result of categorising and arranging your data and then take a step back to think about what you have discovered. Thereafter Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) suggest that you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there any lessons learnt and what new things were uncovered?
- Is there any application to other studies and settings?
- Will people be able to use these findings in further studies and will they be able to understand your findings?

It often happens that you do not give meaning to your findings; therefore you should develop an outline for presenting your results to other people or for writing your final report.

In this study group dynamics theories were used as lenses through which to look at and then interpret the data. These theories enabled the researcher to indicate the influences of systems on one another and to provide a way to look at the group as a whole, including the visible and invisible elements of the group. Many constructs within the visible and invisible levels of the group were considered. The interpretations led to a better understanding of the conscious, unconscious and collective events in the group during the learnership. This led to recommendations for better management of the group dynamics that arise in the employed-unemployed structure of a learnership (Cilliers, 2005).

The adult learning theory was then used to very briefly look into the effect the dynamics that were apparent within the group could possibly have had on the effectiveness of the learning of the learners.

2.5.6. Entrée and establishing of researcher's role

The researcher had entrée into the research setting as it was her place of permanent employment. The researcher joined the organisation just as the learnership started. She was not involved in the negotiations and agreements with Management, the SETA or the Consultants. As HR Officer she was responsible for the HR issues. This meant that all the contracts, complaints, grievances, payment issues, absenteeism, disciplinary action, negativity at staff meetings, non-attendance of classes etc. were her responsibility. She was also given the responsibility by the Consulting Company to ensure the proper implementation of the learnership.

As HR officer and overseer in the learnership program, she was stunned by the fact that the learners did not want to form part of the learnership. Observing the total lack of involvement or refusal to attend training by individuals with these disadvantaged backgrounds, who were being given a lifetime opportunity of obtaining a free registered qualification, just did not make sense. One would think that individuals who had never had the opportunity to obtain a formal education, nor had access to resources to obtain a qualification, would give up many things in order to acquire a sound qualification. This prompted her, as researcher, to ask why there was this tendency and to try and understand what had gone wrong.

A meeting with the management of the organisation was scheduled to share with them her observations and her desire to rigorously research her early observations. She was granted formal permission to conduct the research.

2.5.7. Strategies used to ensure the quality of the research

To enhance the trustworthiness of this study the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were considered. The strategies used to achieve quality of research as well as the characteristics to enhance the quality of the research that the researcher had tried to make her own during the research process will be discussed briefly.

Credibility in qualitative research can be enhanced by triangulation which enhances the quality of the understanding that is generated and control bias by combining methods (Paton, 2001 in Golafshani, 2003). By filling in a questionnaire, focus groups and the personal interpretation of the researcher *multiple methods* of data collection were used which enhanced the transferability. Constructivists believe that knowledge is socially constructed between human beings interacting with one another and depends on changing circumstances. They value the notion that people have multiple realities in their minds and that multiple methods of searching for data are in order. This perspective also allows the participants to be part of the data collection and by making use of different sources of information like the learners, trainers, training providers, management, supervisors and coordinators *multiple observer triangulation* is achieved, which leads to gathering different perceptions and a better understanding of the phenomena. Multiple group theories were used for the interpretation of the data (*triangulation of theory*) (Golafshani, 2003:601-604).

A very “thick/rich” description of the case study was attempted to enhance the **transferability** of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). By purposefully sampling those who were identified during the questionnaires as more willing and more able to express their opinions, emotions and experience, contributed to maximising the range of specific information. Verification strategies were used to ensure transferability of the data as set out by Morse *et al.* (2002:11-13). This included *methodological coherence* which means congruence between the research question and the components of the method throughout the research process as the components or even the question can change. *Sampling sufficiency* was achieved by means of using the participants that represent or have the best knowledge and sufficient communication skills to account for all the aspects of the phenomena within the research topic. *Developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis* means to collect and analyse data concurrently (what is known and what one needs to know). *Thinking theoretically* was used - as the new data were reconfirmed with existing theory in order to provide a solid foundation.

Inquiry audit/audit trail was used to enhance the **dependability** as introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985:317-318). All tape-recordings, personal notes of the facilitator during the whole process, as well as the questionnaires, were systematically audited by the research

supervisor to ensure consistency. An audit trail CD (see Appendix E) has been provided to enhance the rigour of the study.

The product (the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations) of the process was assessed by the research supervisor to determine if it was supported by data and internally coherent so that the bottom line could be accepted and determine the study's **confirmability** (in Babbie & Mouton, 2006:278).

Important **characteristics** as mentioned by Guba and Lincoln (in Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers, 2002:5) that the researcher focused on are being responsive, adaptable to changing circumstances, being holistic, having a professional immediacy, sensitivity and expanding the ability of clarification and summarization.

2.5.8. Ethical considerations applied

a. Recruitment of candidates (Questionnaires)

The selection of the participants was done by way of volunteering to complete the questionnaire after signing the informed consent form. Voluntary participation was necessary due to the personal nature of this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Sharing deep emotional experiences with someone who is not usually the one you would conduct a deep conversation with can be intimidating and one might not reveal the truth or at least not the full truth if it is very sensitive or when you feel you are being forced into it. In this study it was imperative that the participants wanted to be part of the process in order to be open enough to share what they had experienced. This was also complicated by the fact that the research was done within a working context and they might have felt that this could impact on their employment, for example, being victimised for raising certain issues. By volunteering the participants acknowledged that they agreed with what was mentioned in the consent form which clearly indicates that the information that will be derived will be kept confidential and anonymous. See Appendix B for the consent form that was given to all participants.

b. Recruitment of candidates (Focus Groups)

The same method was applied to the recruiting of the candidates for the focus group as used to recruit candidates for the questionnaires as explained in paragraph 2.5.8 a. However, they did not sign an additional consent form for the focus group. In the focus

group anonymity, privacy and confidentiality cannot be promised by the researcher/moderator as the group members have to collectively negotiate and set the ground rules for the shared protection of the participants and the group data. This was done at the beginning of each focus group. Their comments were recorded.

c. Releasing of results

Results of this study may be released to the public after the study has been completed, but only if the company's name remains anonymous. The learners will also be able to view the results thereafter, if they wish to do so. All information given by learners, supervisors, trainers, etc. will be kept anonymous (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

d. Research itself

The organisation granted permission to the researcher to conduct the research. The data gathered were handled with great care to uphold the anonymous and confidential agreement with candidates. Proper referencing, according to research standards, was done to avoid plagiarism. See Appendix A for the declaration in regard to plagiarism.

e. Dual role of the researcher

It was kept in mind by the researcher that she was taking on two roles and that the one must not be more important than the other; nor should she try to achieve the one role's objective by unethical compromise of the other role's objective.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology that was used to conduct the research in a scientific, credible and transferable manner. This is important as it ensures that the study is of scientific value. In the next chapter the concept of learnerships will be presented. It is a fairly new medium to deliver adult learning in the South African workplace. Adult learning is also briefly discussed because it is important to understand the learners that take part in a learnership program as they are all adult learners.

CHAPTER 3

3. LEARNERSHIPS AND ADULT LEARNING

3.1. Introduction

It is through teaching our workforce scarce skills that South Africa will survive in the global competitive economic environment, as discussed in Chapter 1. Adult learning is consequently the only way that South Africa will be able to develop a skilled workforce in a reasonable time as it is not viable to wait for the school children to enter the market. The skills are needed now. A learnership is one way of training adult learners, especially in the workplace. The concept of learnerships as an effective way of adult learning in South Africa will be discussed, as well as the elements that have been identified and that are needed for an effective learnership, including the benefits that they will have for all parties concerned. This will be followed by a discussion of the basic principles of adult learning theory so that we can better understand learners within learnership programs.

3.2. Learnerships

3.2.1. General

Learnerships are elements of the macro skills development system which, according to Babb and Meyer (2005), is to be the one with the most apparent success. The effectiveness of learnerships is important to ensure the success of the overall skills development system as it provides the “how” of the National Development Strategy as mentioned by Parkinson (2006). Davies and Farquharson (2004b) noted of their study on learnerships in South Africa that the body of functional facts (applied knowledge) is relatively limited due to the fact that it is a relatively new concept.

3.2.2. The origin of learnerships as concept and its development up to now

Learnerships, as concept, made its appearance after the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 was introduced. As we mentioned before, learnership programs are very similar to and are based on the same model as that of apprenticeships which have been used for many years, but the main difference is that they can be applied to any occupation and not just reserved for trades, consequently making them more flexible as mentioned by Parkinson (2006).

3.2.3. Learnership defined

A learnership is a work-based route for learning and gaining a qualification within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) from level one to eight. It comprises workplace experience (practical) and instructional learning (theory) and always relates to a specific occupation (Mining Qualification Authority, n.d.).

A learnership combines theory with relevant practice on the job and is intended to teach the learner the 'ins-and-outs' of an occupation by practising all the aspects under the watchful eye of a qualified and experienced person. The learner is assessed according to occupational standards (outcomes) set by the NQF which is agreed upon by industry stakeholders in advance. It is usually made up of 120 credits or 1200 notional hours of learning. The learners do not only learn how things are done, but also why they are done (Fester, 2006:28). Learners are assessed throughout the learnership, thus differing from apprenticeships that are only assessed for competence at the end of the program. Another key difference is that one can enter into a learnership from age 16-60, as opposed to apprenticeships that could only be entered at the start of one's career (Parkinson, 2006).

A learnership agreement that is legally binding is entered into between three parties namely the learner; the employer or a group of employers and the training provider accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority Act, or group of such training providers to ensure the quality of the training and to maintain the integrity of the qualification (Fester, 2006:29).

Certain legislation guides the learnership process and these guides should be fully understood if one considers embarking on such a program. The understanding of these is, however, not relevant to the scope of this study and will just be listed:

- The South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA)
- The Skills Development Act (SDA)
- The Skills Development Levies Act (SDLA)
- The Employment Equity Act (EEA)

The learnerships that are established by the SETAs are directly targeted at the scarce skills within the particular sector and are a key element within the National Skills

Development Strategy (NSDS) and the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS). These learnerships are then included in an employer's workplace skills plan. If the plan is accepted, employers are granted the money to implement the learnerships. SETA's are evaluated by determining how successful they are in transforming the skills base in their sector through the implementation of learnerships (Davies & Farquharson, 2004b).

As learnerships are still an emerging field of study, there is little practical knowledge available on how they should be implemented, structured and managed (Davies & Farquharson, 2004a). One study was found that had considered elements that should be considered in the implementation and management of a learnership and the elements would briefly be mentioned and then the structuring would be discussed.

3.2.4. Elements of an effective learnership system

Elements of an effective learnership were identified by looking at different learnership programs in South Africa and identified as follows (Babb & Meyer: 2005):

- The overall purpose, aim and objectives of the system
- governance of the system
- the learning outcomes expressed as a qualification as well as broad individual and corporate objectives
- the selection of the learners
- the quality of learning provision
- the quality of on-the-job learning and work placement
- the provision of mentoring and coaching support
- the culture of the organisation
- the assessment process
- the process of ongoing evaluation
- the administration of the system

3.2.5. Different learnership structuring models

The legislation makes provision for two types of learners that can enter into a learnership, the employed learner and the unemployed learner. The **employed learner** includes those that are employees of an organisation and who have already gained experience ("the how"), but do not have any form of formal qualification for the job he/she is doing, nor do they have any theoretical background knowledge ("the why"). The company can now

enrol the employees for a learnership so that they can gain theoretical knowledge and in this way be able to receive a recognised qualification. The second type of learner is what is known as the **unemployed learner** who is not employed by an employer. They usually do not have any relevant job experience or any occupational qualification and battle to find employment due to their low levels of skills. They will, through the learnership program, be exposed to the practical experience, as well as the theoretical principles of the relevant occupation and this will enable them to obtain a qualification. This will enhance their chances of being employed (Skills Development Act No 97 of 1998).

No literature was found to date that focuses or even touches on the different ways of structuring the learnerships in the workplace. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a learnership program can be structured in three ways namely, only having employed learners, only having unemployed learners or having both employed and unemployed learners involved in the program. Criteria for selecting the right structure for a learnership program are not yet available. Experts in the field of learnerships said during informal discussions that they have worked with many different companies that have started to implement learnerships and all of the three different models are currently in practice. They mentioned that one must take many aspects such as the company, the economic climate, the level of the learnership, the type of learnership, as well as the requirements of the SETA (for making the necessary funding available) into consideration when the most appropriate model is to be decided on.

No matter which one of the structuring models is chosen for implementation, the learnership program will be of benefit to the parties involved. A list of benefits will now be presented, but it is by no means a complete list.

3.2.6. Benefits associated with learnerships

- Benefits for the unemployed Learner:
 - Provides learner with a nationally recognised qualification.
 - Provides a route to sustainable employment or self-employment (entry point into industry).
 - Provides learners with theoretical/institutional and practical / on-the-job experience.
 - Opens a window to future training and education.

- An allowance of R1250 is paid.
- Benefits for the employed learner
 - Provides learner with a nationally recognised qualification.
 - Recognizes and formalizes the employee's current experience and knowledge gained through many years of experience.
 - Provides a route to sustainable employment and growth opportunities in the company or self-employment.
 - Opens a window to future training and education.
 - Provides the learner with theoretical/institutional knowledge that forms the foundation of his/her everyday work. Many staff have the experience but do not have the formal qualification.
- Benefits for the employer
 - Skills development compliance.
 - Social development compliance.
 - Employment equity compliance.
 - A more productive workforce (skilled and self-assured employees).
 - Seventy percent of employed learners' annual remuneration or R17 500.
 - Tax rebates.
 - UIF Exemption
 - Special SETA grants
 - Fast-tracking of the development of current employees.
 - Transforming employees from dependable to participative.
 - Creating a pool of qualified and experienced employable candidates.
 - Becoming an employer of choice.
- Benefit for the country
 - Assist with lowering unemployment.
 - The attainment of the National Skills Development Strategy.
 - Increasing the number of skilled workers in the labour market pool, in particular the skills levels of previously unemployed learners.
 - Enabling individuals with skills to become self-employed.

(Adopted from Babb & Meyer: 2005 and extended)

It is important, however, to note that learnerships is a way of training adults and therefore a need exists for considering the theory on adult learning. By understanding the adult

learning theory, the learning experience of the adult learners within the learnership and the influence that the group dynamics could have on adult learnerships being introduced more successful. Many research studies have been done on adult learning and for the purpose of this study only a few topics have been identified and will now be discussed according to the relevance of the case study.

3.3. Adult learning

3.3.1. General

Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997) can be seen as the most recognised writer on adult learning. He is the one that coined the term 'andragogy' which is the theory of adult learning. It is the term 'pedagogy' which is the term used when referring to the teaching and learning of children. Knowles has identified principles that highlight the shift from pedagogy to andragogy (Mahar & Harford 2005). These principles will be discussed next.

3.3.2. Influence of the learner's emotions on the effectiveness of learning

Learning is facilitated or hampered by our emotions. Emotions determine, influence and drive learning and memory. There is a correlation between emotions, moods and motivation (Boekaerts, 2002).

In an article written by Russ Vince (2002:74) on the impact of emotion on organisational learning the following statement makes a lot of sense: "The tendency to ignore the impact of defensive reactions, and poor communication in organisations, are both products of an individual focus on learning. This arises from a lack of engagement with the emotional dynamics of organising."

Individuals that form part of an organisation carry with them an "organisation-in-the-mind" which is an expression of his/her emotional state that links the individual (according to his or her role in the organisation) with the dynamics that are characteristic of the organisation itself, as explained by Vince (2002:74).

Aspects of individual experience of learning are filtered through the emotional and psychological history of a person and are shaped through group processes and conditioned by broader forces of power within an organisation or system (Vince & Martin, 1993).

Anxiety is an emotion that can either promote or discourage learning, as stated by Vince and Martin (1993). Figure 2 illustrates the two ways anxiety can influence learning as illustrated by Vince and Mounon:

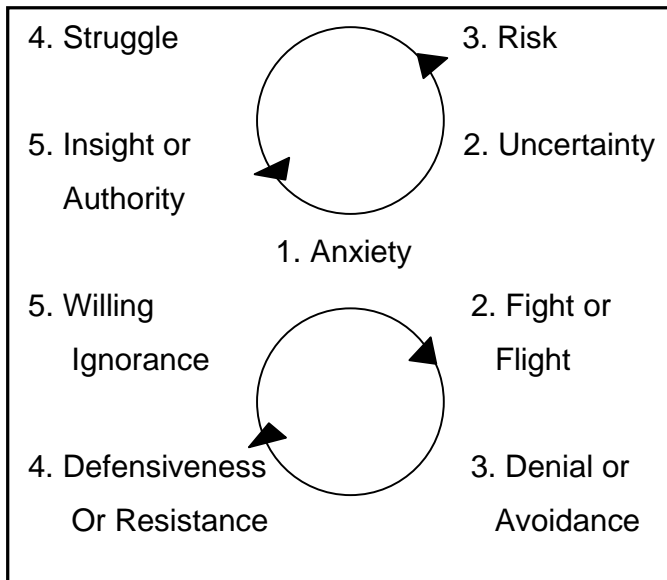


Figure 2: Cycle of emotions promoting and discouraging learning.
(Vince and Martin, 1993:208-209)

Anxiety is just one of the emotions that needs to be looked into. Feelings of being inferior, whether based on age or educational background, fear, anger, resentment, distrust, etc. must all be considered in order to understand where the emotion originated (which systems affected it) and what effect it has on the learner's learning experience.

3.3.3. Influence of learner's behaviours and attitudes on the effectiveness of learning

A study that was undertaken by the Workforce Development Project Performance and Innovation Unit in 2001 (Davies & Farquharson, 2004b) concluded that in addition to physical and structural barriers that affect participation in workplace training, the influence of a lack of confidence, a lack of motivation, a negative attitude towards education and training, peer group culture and the perception that no tangible benefit will occur/be gained because of the training.

3.3.4. Motivation to learn

Bergh and Theron (2003) mentioned that adults are motivated to learn, only when they experience a need to know something or want to perform more effectively in some aspects of their lives. Adult learners do not learn for the sake of learning or curiosity but only for the usefulness thereof. Hence, if learners are not properly convinced of the usefulness of the learnership, they might not have the needed motivation to take part in it.

Camp 1986 (Cited in Bergh & Theron, 2003) distinguishes between the need to learn as the value of the knowledge to the learner and the readiness to learn as the amount of knowledge the trainee already possesses and the trainee's subjective opinion of his or her ability to learn/study the material.

Salas 2001 (Cited in Bergh & Theron, 2003) explained that motivation for training is multi-faceted and is influenced by a set of individual characteristics such as self-efficiency, anxiety and conscientiousness, as well as situational characteristics, such as climate. The stronger the motivation the more effective the learning will be. There is no clear answer to what the best way of motivation is, but a balanced combination of reward, punishment, praise, social recognition and competition achieves better results than any of them in isolation (Bergh & Theron, 2003).

3.3.5. Experiential learning and cognitive map

Throughout life people go through experiences from which they learn. If these experiences happen under the right conditions, they will learn from them and this leads to changes in thinking, feeling and acting. This is how human beings change as they grow older and each new development stage is partially underpinned by the previous experiences (Ringer, 2002:47-49). All these experiences lead to the development of adult learners' cognitive maps over time and the more their experience becomes, the more detailed their maps become. Due to the different experiences of adult learners the same thing can mean different things to different people. Different things are real for different people and there is not one reality that exists independently of the persons who perceive any particular event (Ringer, 2002). In the training environment this leads to a situation in which the facilitator will have to apply different strategies to accommodate learners with different experiences/cognitive maps. This complicates the learning procedures, but if one is aware of this, it can be used as a learning resource. Another problem that can

arise is that adult learners can be reluctant to learn as they might believe they know everything as they have been doing the job for so long. Changing some or all of the parts relating to a concept on their cognitive map, means the concept has to be unlearned or reintegrated. This is why the learning process for adult learners takes longer. The concept map of a learner becomes part of his self-identity and should not be ignored because this leads to the rejection of the person and not the experience. This is especially true of under-educated adults as they have little to sustain their dignity (Bergh & Theron, 2003).

3.3.6. Social constructivism

Cooper, Basson and Schaap (2006) describe social constructivism as a process in which learners create their own truth due to the interaction with others. The culture and context in which these learners live must be understood as the construction of knowledge is based on this. Taylor, Marienau and Fiddler (2000) as cited in Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) summarised the main points in the theory of constructivism as follows:

- Knowledge is derived from an individual's interaction with social processes, and within a social context.
- Knowledge should be seen as a creative construction in which the individual learner is an actor or active participant or subject rather than a passive object.
- The way in which people make or construe meaning can change over time on the basis of prevailing experiences.

3.3.7. Conditions for adult learning

Peter Jarvis (2004) listed the following conditions that influence adult learning:

- Learning is considered a basic human need.
- Learning is especially de-motivated when there is disharmony between an individual's experience and his perception of the world.
- Adult learners like to participate in the learning processes.
- Adult learners bring their own experiences, meanings and needs to the learning situation.
- Adult learners bring to the learning situation their own self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Adults learn best when the self is not under threat.
- Adult learners need to feel that they are treated as adults.
- Adult learners have developed their own learning styles.

- Adult learners have had different educational biographies so they may learn at different speeds.
- Adults have developed a crystallised intelligence.
- Adults bring different physiological conditions to the learning situation, e.g. declining visual and/or audio abilities, less energy, failing health.

3.3.8. Self-direction in adult learning

The Humanistic philosophy, according to Elias and Merriam (1980) as cited in Brockett and Hiemstra (1991:124), has seven basic assumptions. They are as follows:

- Human nature is inherently good.
- Individuals are free and autonomous and, as a result, “capable of making significant personal choices within the constraints imposed by heredity, personal history, and environment”.
- Each person is a unique individual with unlimited potential for growth and development.
- Self-concept – one’s subjective perception of self – is an important influence on growth and development.
- Individuals possess an urge towards self-actualisation, the highest level of personal growth.
- Personally defined realities play an especially important role in humanistic thought.
- Individuals possess a sense of responsibility to themselves and others.

Criticism towards the humanistic philosophy must also be borne in mind. Tennant (1993) mentioned that the goodwill of people is a good thing and is desirable, but realistically conflict exists and if it is suppressed or avoided, it can have negative implications. One example he gave was in the training setting where conflict can stimulate and assist learning, but if suppressed it can, on the other hand, lead to catastrophic results. The criticism must be researched hand in hand with the philosophy to ensure a full picture.

Adult learners are self-directed and have a psychological need to be perceived and treated by others as capable of carrying out the responsibility of being responsible for their own lives. They want to decide for themselves whether they want to learn and if they do decide they want to, they want to decide what they want to learn (Bergh & Theron, 2003). Brookfield (1995) mentioned that self-directed learning in adult learning focuses on the

process of adults taking charge of their own learning with regard to goals, resources and methods.

3.3.9. Importance of groups in learning

Why do we make use of groups in the learning process? Johnson and Johnson (2006:13) point out that group dynamics are central to education because co-operative group-based work allows students to work together in a manner that is mutually beneficial to all the students involved. The concept of cooperative learning is when learners work together to maximize everyone's learning, as explained by Johnson and Johnson (2006:477). Careful consideration and utilisation of the conflict of differences between learners can turn into a benefit for both groups. This mutual beneficial relationship is especially true when the learners in the groups are adults, as they bring with them their own unique cognitive map as explained earlier.

3.4. Conclusion

When learnerships are implemented in any organisation the above elements of adult learning must be taken into account to ensure that the highest return on investment is achieved. It is clear that learnerships are an effective way of implementing the National Skills Development Strategy. In Babb and Meyer (2005) many case studies are described and indicated as being successful. These case studies are, however, focused on the final output of the learnership, but not on the experience of the learners. The next chapters will sketch a background of groups and group theory so that we can enhance the "sense making" process of the happenings or dynamics between the employed group and the unemployed group.

CHAPTER 4

4. GROUP DYNAMICS

4.1. Introduction

This study aims to contribute to the field of training and development with a specific focus on that of adult learning, within South Africa, by taking the group dynamics (visible and invisible) within a learnership seriously.

This chapter outlines the group dynamics field, some theoretical contributions to the field and specific group constructs that were identified by the researcher as being relevant within this case study. This will help to enhance the process of understanding the group dynamics within the learnership.

4.2. Groups

Numerous **definitions** of the term **groups** exist and the focus of each definition is slightly different depending on the author's perceptions (perspective/school of thought). Basic focus areas of the definitions of "group" that some authors have chosen are goals – Mills (1967) & Deutsch (1949), interdependence – Fiedler (1967) & Lewin (1951), interpersonal interaction – Bonner (1959) & Homans (1950), perception of membership – Bales (1950) & Smith (1945), structured relationships – Sherif & Sherif (1956), mutual influence – Shaw (1981) or motivation – Bass (1960) (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). All of the above are important and should form the basis of the definition of a group. Considering most of the above elements a group can be defined as: **Two or more individuals who are interacting and who are all interdependent, who have come together to be members of a group because they are motivated to achieve particular objectives.** There is either a formal group or an informal group (Robbins, 2003).

Cartwright and Zander (1968:46) define **group** as follows: "A group is an aggregate of individuals standing in certain descriptive (i.e. observable) relations to each other. The kinds of relations exemplified will, of course, depend upon or determine the kind of group, whether it be a family, an audience, a committee, a labour union, or a crowd."

Foulkes (1990:128) mentioned that the term "group" is used for a wide range of human aggregations and that it would be a tremendous work to unravel the way in which different

collections of people are the same and/or different. He then defined a group according to its value/purpose for group analysis.

It is **important** to understand the way in which humans function within groups so that the group can be managed in such a way that desirable outcomes are achieved by them. Understanding group dynamics is important because humans live in groups (Johnson & Johnson (2006:43). They are born into a first group (family), go to school in groups (class group, friend group), work in groups (organisation, formal project group, social group) and worship in groups (church, cell groups). These groups influence the way we see ourselves and how others perceive us, and this can be good or bad (Cartwright & Zander, 1968:23). The writers are of the opinion that desirable consequences from groups can deliberately be enhanced by understanding the dynamics of the group and that this makes it a relevant field of study – as all spheres of our society evolve around groups. No individual exists apart from and outside a society/social group (Dalal, 1998).

Groups are **powerful** and it is of critical importance to understand how they function - so as to ensure successful group work. Group dynamics are powerful due to the impact that they can have on individuals. One should only consider the significant impact a group can have on one's values, motivation, opinions and actions to know that the group's influence is powerful, sometimes it is positive and other times negative because each person's social unconscious is always present (Dalal, 1998). By observing Racing Boards, Norman Triplett discovered that cyclists that are racing against each other achieve faster times than when they are only racing against the clock (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). This is a good example of where the power of the group resulted in improved behaviour, adding to behaviour that had already been positive. The power of the group can also be negative and will then lead to destructive behaviour as in the case of the people from Zimbabwe that are voting for a leader that denies them basic needs like food and water. He is still idealised by the group because they have been so indoctrinated by the group (groupthink) that everything that the leader does, is good. A case study presented in Ringer (2002) about a group almost exploding emotionally, due to the killing of a wombat that did not exist, also indicates the intensity that group emotions can reach. The emotions contained in groups make a group very powerful but when the emotions are not managed correctly the tension can end in violence.

The **complexity** of a group, however, makes it very difficult to understand and manage (Dalal, 1998). Every group is influenced by the super system (context) within which it exists and has an influence on its subsystems (Agazarian, 1997:21-24). Within this system, many different constructs need to be well balanced if a group is to be successful. If one of these constructs (elements: i.e. leadership or membership) changes, the other constructs are all influenced. The individuals within these systems also form part of other systems and changes that take place in those systems will influence the events within this system (Gantt & Agazarian, 2004). Each individual is also influenced by his/her cognitive map (constructed by systems that the individual has been part of in his/her past) (Agazarian, 1997:24). However, not only do the individuals in the group and their backgrounds complicate the matter of understanding the group, but these individuals also stand in a relation to each other. Relationships between the group members have a profound impact on the group and these relationships are numerous – as each member has a relationship with each of the other group members. In a group of ten there are 45 interpersonal relationships, plus the relationship between each group member and the group-as-a-whole (Ringer, 2002). This dynamic web of relationships means that the group is always in a state of change and this makes the discussion of group dynamics a highly intricate topic. Another layer of complexity is added when we acknowledge that the person making the observations of the group is also an individual who forms part of other groups and has his/her own cognitive map and who is, therefore, also in a constant process of change. This means the perception of what happens in the group might be different at a different point in time for the same observer (Ringer, 2002:47-49).

The important role that groups play in our societies to ensure future existence and the powerful influence that groups can have on individuals, organisations and societies is of such great value that it is studied by many, even though it is an extremely complex phenomenon to study.

4.3. An overview of the development of the Group Dynamics field

Group dynamics is explained in Cartwright and Zander (1968:19) as the area of social science that focuses on advancing knowledge about the nature of group life. It is the scientific study of the nature of groups, behaviour in groups, group development, and the interrelations between groups and individuals, other groups and larger entities. The *American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology* defines it as the dynamics

of groups, rather than to refer to static processes, operations and changes that occur within social groups, which affect patterns of affiliation, communication, conflict, conformity, decision making, influences, leadership, norm formation, and power. It is Lewin (1948) that concluded that the behaviour of individuals is greatly influenced by the interactions in the group: the individuals behave as parts or components of the group, not simply as separate individuals (as stated in Agazarian & Peters, 1981:13). Group dynamics considers the group and the individual.

One must keep in mind that this field is still in its developmental phase and the theories that form the basis of this field have heterogeneous origins that were influenced by people from different theoretical orientations, different values, concepts, assumptions and methods (Cartwright & Zander, 1968:22). It was only in the twentieth-century that the specialists from the different fields within the social sciences, for example psychology (study of the group members' experience, internal observer) which has its origins in gestalt theory, psychoanalysis (which stems from psychiatric and clinical psychology), sociology (study of patterns of behaviour in groups, external observer) and the complexity theory, came together to start the process to substantiate group dynamics as an independent field of study (Ringer, 2002). Cartwright and Zander (1968:26) indicate that a student of this field must be prepared to encounter and make constructive use of a wide variety of theoretical approaches. Due to the large number of theories on groups, only those theories with a group dynamic orientation will be touched on in this study.

Kurt Lewin is said to be the founder of the field of Group Dynamics because group dynamics has its origin in the gestalt movement, of which the field theory is the best representative. Lewin was a major theoretician in the field theory (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). Lewin is seen as one of the most influential social psychologists of the twentieth century and a true theorist. He also worked with Muzafer Sherif (1906-1988), Theodore Newcomb (1903-1984) and W.F. Whyte (1914-2000). These three sociologists all contributed to the start of group dynamics as a field of study in its own right.

Cartwright and Zander in their book *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory* (1970) outline, in great detail, the contributions of all the early theorists like Lewin and Sherif, as well as other well known authors such as Bales, Janis, Festinger and Schacter. Within the perspective of social psychology, they took the individual as the unit of analysis to

consider how people became members of groups, how they lost or retained their individual free will whilst staying a member of the group and the level of power and influence within groups (Ringer 2002:30). They considered the visible and measurable behaviour of the individuals that they worked with.

The National Training Laboratory was established in the USA and it was here that **T-groups** (leaderless groups) with the focus of developing the group members to live better quality lives originated. Theorists who were involved in T-groups at the National Training Laboratory included Kurt Lewin, Dorothy Stock, Brandfort, Benne, Lippitt, Gibb and Leiberman (Ringer 2002:31).

Psychoanalytical principles were later used in England by theorists at the Tavistock Institute when they started to consider the principle of the **group-as-a-whole** that stems from Bion's work. They moved beyond the visible to consider the unconscious **minds** of the group members that are driven by **destructiveness**. Wilfred Bion's work was founded on the work of Melanie Klein and other Freudians who, in turn, were influenced by Sigmund Freud's work. These principles, coupled with those of **psychodrama**, were used by the theorists in France and Italy (Ringer 2002:32-33).

At about the same time as Bion, also in England, Foulkes developed a more positive and creative view of a group than Bion, even though he used the same foundation of theory – Freudian principles. His work was also strongly influenced by sociologist Norbert Elias (Dalal, 1998). Foulkes questioned the division between the individual and the group. He shifted towards a more **integrated** approach between an **interpersonal** view and a **group-as-a-whole** view of groups, by providing a model of the relationship between the individual and the group, while Bion had only focused on the group-as-a-whole (Ringer 2002:33).

Following on from Lewin's work and the subsequent Group Dynamics Movement, various modes and methods of group work flooded this field of study, especially in the USA. One important development was the encounter group method of Carl Rogers which was based on **humanistic principles**. The purpose of these groups was to grow and learn. Very little leadership was provided on how to achieve this purpose. This approach, together

with psychodrama, is not considered by Ringer as being theoretically group-based enough (Ringer 2002:33-34).

A huge contribution was also made by Irvin Yalom to the group psychotherapy field. He worked from the existential psychology perspective and theorised that the interpersonal relationships between members in a group are very important (Viljoen, 2008). He is seen as the most influential theorist in North America in the group therapy arena and his book called *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* is the one mostly prescribed for students within the group therapy field (Ringer, 2002).

One begins to see that there are various important theoretical differences, for instance do we take the individual or the group as the unit of analysis? Or, do we only work with observable and measurable behaviour, or do we also acknowledge the unconscious and invisible elements in the group? With her systems-centred approach to group work, Yvonne Agazarian made an important contribution in this regard. She tried to create a theoretical space where the tension between the individual and the group, and the visible and invisible group phenomena can be maintained (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). In her work she draws on the general systems theory of Von Bertalanffy, the field theory of Lewin, as well as the psychoanalytic theory of Bion. The development and growth of the **Systems Psychodynamics and the Group Relations movement** continues to combine the theoretical principles of psychoanalysis and the open systems theory. It looks at the influence of the structure (systems) within which the individuals find themselves and also the individual experiences within the systems.

This very brief outline of the development of group dynamics is firstly intended to outline the diverse theories and fields of study that comprise both the foundations and the influence of Group Dynamics as a field of study. However, it is also important to have a broad overview of the field so that the theoretical positioning of this research can be understood and analysed. This research project takes a group dynamics perspective that acknowledges conscious and unconscious phenomena on the levels of the individual, the group and the wider social context. In order to accomplish this, the following theoretical contributions will be discussed in more detail:

- Lewin's Field theory (Social Psychology)
- Bion's Group-as-a-Whole theory (Psychoanalysis)

- Foulkes's Group Analytic theory (Psychoanalysis and Sociology)
- Agazarian's Systems-centred approach (Systems theory) and
- Systems Psychodynamic theory as a recent development

These theories are indicated in chronological order and displayed in the timeline here below:

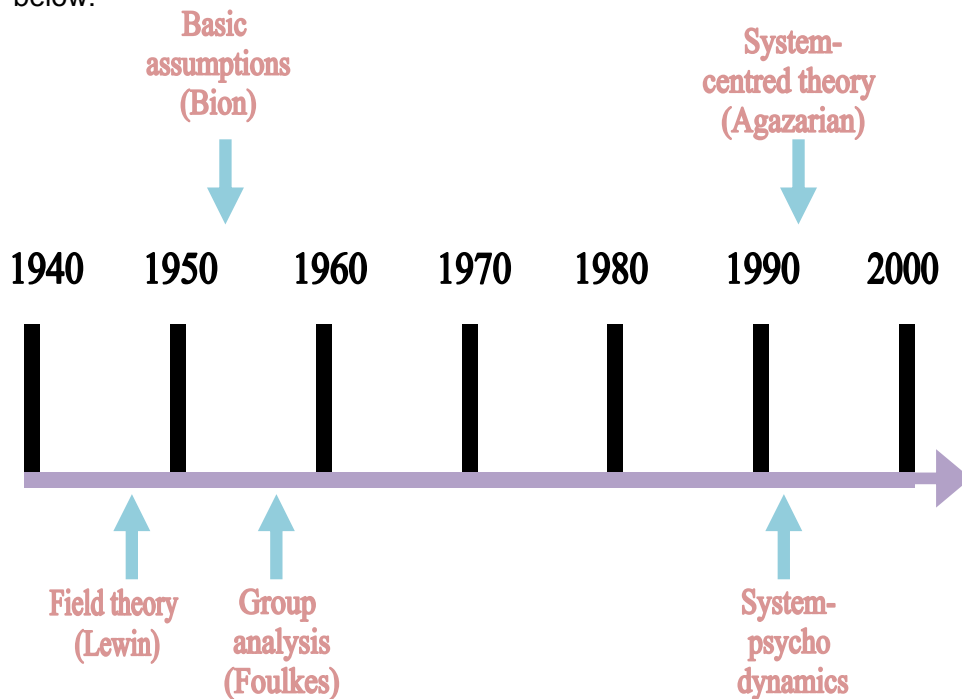


Figure 3: Timeline of specific theories

4.4. Lewin's Field theory

4.4.1. Background of author

Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) was born in Mogilno, Poland. His family were Jews, although the town's people were mostly Polish or Germans. As a child he knew that he did not belong to either of the groups (Cernius, 1986:21). Lewin started with research concerning group life after the end of World War II when he was free from doing war-related research. Lewin was a very creative person and had a growing concern for the psychology of groups and intergroup relations. There were two reasons that motivated him to understand more about groups, the first was his pre-war and wartime experiences when he had tried to rescue his fellow Jewish friends and family from Germany. Lewin was unsuccessful in rescuing his own mother and she died in a concentration camp. The second reason was because of two experiments that were conducted in the 1930-1940s.

The first experiment was about the impact that different leadership styles had on group atmosphere and behaviour. The second experiment was when the use of organic foods was promoted due to food shortages. They learned that “group decision” was much more powerful in getting people to use the organic foods than if the decisions were made by the individuals themselves (Cook, 1986: XII).

He established two research centres in 1945 named Research Centre for Group Dynamics and the Commission on Community Relations of the American Jewish Congress in order to fast-track the development of psychology concerning groups. In 1947 Lewin suddenly died and many have said that it is sad when you think that Lewin could still have contributed so much to social relationships and group life (Cook, 1986: XI).

Lewin has often been called the major figure in the history of modern social psychology. Tolman, E.C., as seen in Cook (1986:XI), said that Lewin was an experimentalist, and together with Freud, a Clinician, must be valued for being the first people that made psychology a science applicable to real human beings and to real human society.

4.4.2. Lewin’s field theory

The field theory does not explain behaviour; it is a metatheory that should be used to construct concepts and meaning, analyse concept types and classify these types into structures and dynamics. The structure concepts can be used to represent the whole of a person’s behaviour in his/her life space, as well as his/her needs. The dynamic concepts represent the goal-directed behaviour of the person (Pepitone, 1986: XV). The theory of Lewin suggests that behaviour is a function of the life space of the individual. The life space consists of perceptions of behavioural alternatives (different degrees of attractiveness, based on the usefulness of current needs) such as different activities that one can take part in, some clearly structured, others not. Certain obstructions in getting the person to take action may exist and can have a positive or negative influence in getting the person to perform the desired action. Lewin made use of the force-field physics principles to theorise that people go through different phases in their life-space by either being encouraged by forces or drawn by valences that exist along power vectors (Thelen, 1992:117). This implies that a person in his life space is drawn into different directions. The perceptions of him/herself, his/her environment and his/her perception of the group are integrated and will influence the role he takes in the group (Viljoen, 2008). Kurt Lewin

said that this field of research focuses on the forces and behaviours that facilitate and resist change in groups (Thelen, 1992:120).

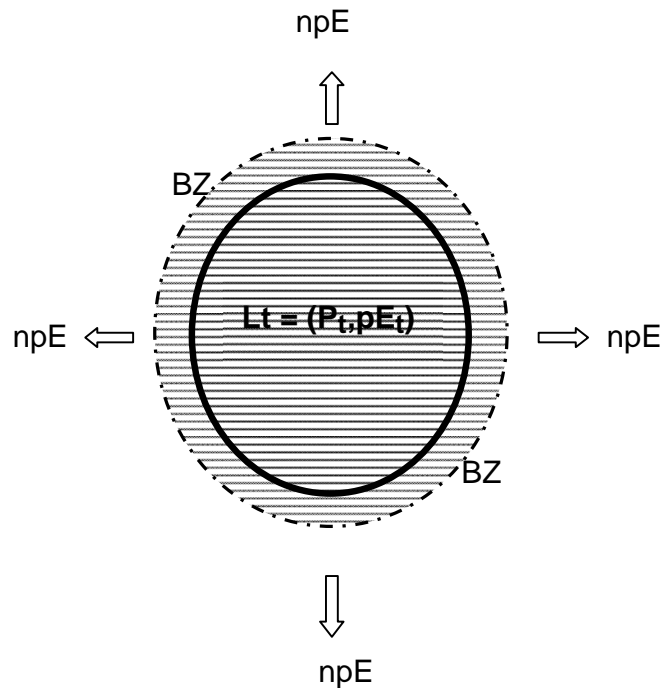
Lewin differed from American Psychologists as he did not focus so much on the influence of the past of an individual, on his or her behaviour, but rather the influence of the present. He suggested that a change in perception and cognition (a restructuring of the life space) normally precedes a change in behaviour. It can also be the other way around, when we are unable to solve a problem through action, we engage in fantasy solutions. It is not that Lewin was opposed to the “historical” explanation because he believed that it does have relevance, but he believed that the here and now, which he called “conditional-genetic” explanation, has more relevance. Behaviour is then seen as conceptualising the dynamic properties of the present experimental situation and the dynamic structure of the personality of the particular subject. The accuracy of the identified forces and regions of the person’s life space is important. Lewin was against fixed motives, classification and statistical averaging; he was interested in the dynamics of the concrete individual case in its particulars (Lewin, 1986).

4.4.3. Main contributions to group theory

Kurt Lewin is considered by some as the founder of “group dynamics” (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). A few main contributions that he has made in the field of group theory are set out below:

a. Life space

Life space is the central unit of behaviour research. Lewin made it clear that different structures in an individual’s life must be analysed; each structure provides valuable insights into behaviour (Back, 1986:59-60). The life space for an individual is the psychological environment as it exists for the person. The life space of a group is the group and the environment as it exists for the group. Figure 4 is a visual representation of this theory.



- npE: Non-psychological Environment (outside of Lewin's theory)
- BZ: Boundary Zone (part of npE, close to L_t)
- L_t : Life space at a given time (t) consisting of:
 - Pt: person's characteristics at a given time (t)
 - pEt: psychological Environment

Figure 4: Life space as a central unit of behaviour research.

(Wolf, 1986:45)

This is also true for a group. The behaviour of a group can be better understood if all the structures within the life space of the group are considered. One should consequently consider the psychological environment as it exists for the group. The life spaces of the individuals within the group should also be considered.

b. Interdependence

Lewin said that every event has a meaning, but the meaning is formed based on the background (Gershenfeld, 1986:95). A person (P), at any given point in time, is influenced by the groups within which he/she exists, as can be seen in Figure 5. It includes the following:

P – Person
F – Family
1F – Larger Family
uMC1 – upper middle class
I – Irish

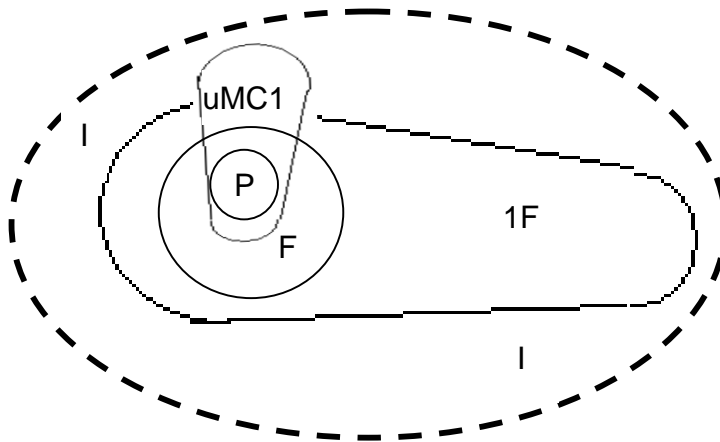


Figure 5: Intergroup relations of an individual.
(Gershenfeld, 1986:96)

This figure indicates sociological groups which humans are born into. These groups influence the way the individual will act within other groups outside of these groups, for instance a work group or a training group. This is because you learn certain norms and values within these groups that you carry over with you to the other groups. It is important to take this into account in order to better understand the behaviour of the group that one analyses.

c. T-groups

Lewin's continuous commitment to practically applying theory led to a workshop in 1946 (in Bethel, Maine) to explore the use of small groups to train community facilitators to strengthen democracy. Graduate students observed the groups with Lewin and at night they discussed the dynamics that they had observed. Two participants then asked to join. When a certain event/incident was discussed the one participant interrupted and argued about what they were discussing and then explained her side of the story. The following night all the participants turned up and took part in the discussion. It is here where it was

realised what a profound impact the reflection and feedback on group member interaction had and what had happened in the group and what impact it had had on members' own and others' attitudes, cognitive processes and feelings. It was realised that this was a way through which transformational learning and change could be improved (Cooke, 2007). These experiential groups were structured with the goal to study the group members' own behaviour and was intended to equip the members with tools to live better lives (Ringer 2002).

A T-group, as explained in Thelen (1992:120), is a group that contains twelve to twenty-five members that come together to learn "what goes on in groups" and how to participate more effectively in groups. Fifteen sessions of two to three hours were held over a period of three weeks with the members, trainer and assistant trainer. One of the most important lessons learned through T-groups, according to Thelen, is that if group members can function with less anxiety within groups, they can contribute at a higher level of intelligence and performance.

Much of what we know about groups today is because of T-group experiments in which the group members reflect on their own behaviour. This is a very powerful intervention in teaching groups to reflect on their own progress, group processes and growth.

d. The gestalt definition of "a whole is more than the sum of its parts" redefined, links the field theory to systems theory.

Lewin changed the definition from: "The whole is more than the sum of its parts" to: "The whole is different from the sum of its parts". This means no superiority exists for the value of the whole, as the whole and it's parts are both equal; the whole is just a different concept on its own (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). It was this change from quantitative sum to a qualitative difference isomorphic, which is central to systems theory.

4.5. Foulkes's Group Analytic model

4.5.1. Background of author

S.H. Foulkes (1898-1976) was a German Jewish psychoanalyst. He left for London in 1933. The reasons for his sudden move are not clear, but the fact that the Nazis were already increasing their power at that time could have been the reason. In London he obtained a medical qualification and spent the rest of his days as a psychoanalyst (Nitsun,

1996:18-19). Nitsun speculates that Foulkes was living in denial of his Jewish identity. He lived first as a refugee, then as an immigrant and only became a British citizen in 1938. He changed his surname and later his name. He had a very sudden death while busy with a group of psychoanalysts from the next generation.

4.5.2. Conceptualising the group

At the core of Foulkes' view of groups was what he called the group matrix. He saw this as the 'hypothetical web of communication' that draws on the past, present, and future lives of the individual members, as well as the conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal actions which become the dynamic core of group development. The matrix is seen as a container and is compared to the womb of a mother, due to its generative capacity (Nitsun, 1996:22). This theory is based on the notion that the individual cannot be understood apart from and outside the social environment. The medium through which these relationships are established is communication. Foulkes was convinced that without communication, human beings cannot relate to one another. Four levels of communication are shown in Figure 6 and each level is a distinct element of this theory:

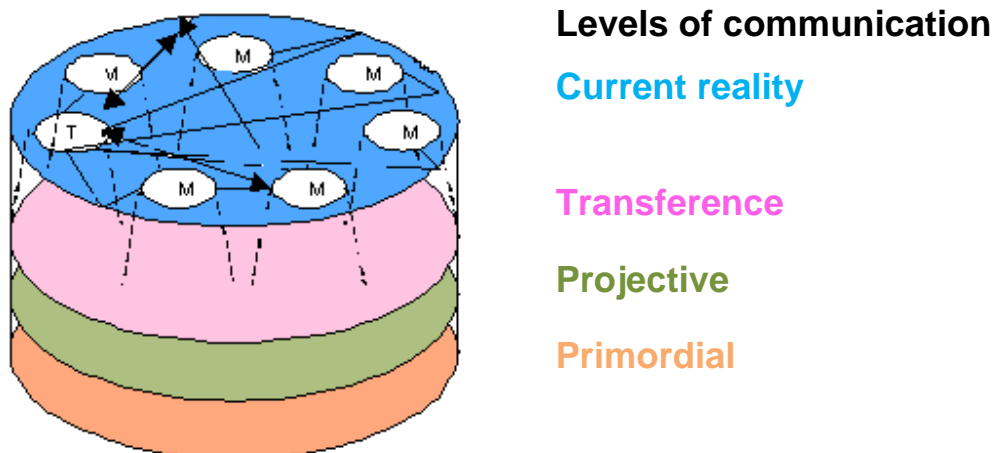


Figure 6: Group analysis: Conceptual structure of the group
(Adopted from Pines & Schlapobersky, 2000 as cited in Viljoen, 2008:10)

Current reality – That which is directly observable to all participants

Transference – The manner in which systems interact and link

- The here and now, the current reality (network) and links from the past are of the utmost significance when considering the total group situation – Foulkes, 1990:180
- Conscious or unconscious emotions from other situations are brought into the group situation.

Projective – movements and interchange of parts of members' intrapsychic systems and the relocation of these systems within the group network as a whole and *vica versa*.

Primordial – the collective unconscious level of communication (Viljoen, 2008).

Foulkes made an important contribution by emphasising communication and how it can help unblock and enhance communication in a group. He distinguished between the following concepts:

Mirroring – This is when one member sees elements of him/herself in another member of the group. This helps the person to deal with aspects of him/herself that are otherwise easily repressed. Here Foulkes mentions that a group is a 'hall of mirrors'.

Exchange – Sharing by group members takes place and can occur at different levels of depth. This contributes to the social and supportive function of a group.

Free-floating discussion – Group members contribute freely and a pattern develops which leads to an imaginative way of releasing emotions and unconscious thoughts that render great insight and understanding.

Resonance – Echoing of themes and feelings in the group creates identification amongst members. This awakens and heightens emotional awareness and leads to social bonding.

Translation – Making the unconscious conscious. This process occurs between the group and enables the members to move from primitive sharing of emotions to deep expressions of emotions.

The group matrix is the total network of communication or common ground shared by members that determines the meaning of events on which all communication and interpretation (verbal or non-verbal) rests. Behaviour is understood within this matrix. A distinction is made between the foundation matrix and the dynamic matrix. The first matrix refers to the basic things that are common to the group, for example culture,

language, age, etc. The second is the matrix of shared experiences as a group and it is this sharing that changes the group (Viljoen, 2008).

Foulkes also mentioned that *leadership* in the group should be horizontal and not vertical and he used the metaphor of a conductor of an orchestra. In today's terms this person is called a facilitator.

The optimistic view of the group by Foulkes creates the impression that he is unaware of the negative forces within a group. It is, however, not the case. Foulkes is aware of the negative elements, but is of the opinion that the negativity is within the individual alone and not as a result of, nor partly influenced by the group within which the individual functions. Foulkes believed that the negativity develops when there is an incompatibility between the individual and his/her original social grouping (family). He does not include this incompatibility in his model as he believes that the negative forces, such as aggression and destructive tendencies, can be transformed into healthy forms of aggression and assertiveness by the influence of another social group.

4.5.3. Main contributions to group theory

a. Communication

Foulkes is seen as the pioneer of group analysis. He linked our understanding of human communication in groups to a large body of art and science that deals with creation and transformation (Powell, as seen in Nitsun, 1996:22).

Foulkes focused on communication within the interactional processes in a group, as opposed to the processes in the isolated individual. He also contributed to researchers now being able to understand associations, based on the common ground of unconscious instinctive understanding of each other. Comments expressed by members in a group have the value of unconscious interpretations.

The emphasis he placed on context and his awareness of the interrelationship between small and large groups laid the basis for the application of group-analytical principles to non-clinical settings (Rance, as seen in Nitsun, 1996:23).

b. Potential of a group

Foulkes managed to create a vision of the powerfully creative potential of a group. Foulkes believed in the 'trust the group' which implies that the group has a deep-down creativity, integrity and healing power. He was very optimistic about the power of a group (Nitsun, 1996:29).

4.5.4. Nitsun's Antigroup

Nitsun suggested that the emphasis on wholes in Foulkes' approach accounts, in part, for the inadequacy of his theory, the vagueness and tendency to overgeneralise. A complete psychological theory requires both wholes and parts. Without the whole, the detail becomes fragmentary and meaningless, but, without details, wholes become empty and disseminate (Nitsun, 1996: 26).

Nitsun described his concept as follows: The antigroup broadly describes the destructive aspects of a group that threatens the integrity of the group. It is neither static, nor apparent in any group in the same way, but its sets of attitudes and impulses (conscious and unconscious) are manifested differently in every group. The antigroup, if it is resolved, will not destroy the group but strengthen the group and thus reinforces survival and creates an atmosphere of open-minded, creative power (Nitsun, as seen in Nitsun, 1996:44-45). Nitsun made it clear that it is important to understand that the emphasis must be placed on the second part of his concept. The negative and positive must be seen as complementary in creating an effective group. To let this happen the group needs to recognise and deal with the destructive forces before constructive development can take place (Nitsun, 1996, 45).

The antigroup influences the conductor/facilitator of the group by making him/her feel inadequate. The conductor/facilitator blames him/herself for the failure of the group when it does not function effectively. Nitsun says that if you can identify hopelessness within the facilitator, you will probably find an antigroup operating (Nitsun, 1996:56). The attitude of the conductor towards aggression, his/her ability to change the negative aggression to positive forcefulness and whether or not he/she acknowledges that an antigroup is a normal part in the group process, will determine his/her success in leading the group.

The antigroup can be manifested as (direct attacks on the group, undermining of the group, drop-outs, irregular attendance or scapegoating) or latent (underlying attitudes and expectations shared by the group members). The antigroup also follows developmental steps. The first stage is the early stage when there is a distinct awareness of the antigroup. Members are fearful, uncertain and hostile. This stage can commence in any stage of the group development. The middle stage is characterised by control of dominance, power and rivalry. Conflict levels are high between members as the negative emotions are released. If this is not handled correctly it can lead to the instability of the group. The mature stage is a stage that is filled with trust and intimacy. The greater openness of members can be a threat towards further exposure and confrontation, potentially provoking the antigroup all over again. The composition of group membership also influences the stages; when a new member joins, it can provoke the antigroup or if a specific member leaves the group, it can bring the antigroup to a halt (Nitsun, 1996: 58-62).

The antigroup's transformation to a functional group is seen as reparation. The group members recognise the destructiveness of the group and then they take responsibility for the wellbeing of the group (Nitsun, 1996:63).

The antigroup theory is very similar to Bion's theory of the group mentality with negative basic assumptions. An important difference is that Bion's theory does not recognise the individual, but only the 'group-as-a-whole'. In the antigroup the individual, subgroups and the whole group contribute to the dynamics of the process. Bion's theory does not leave much room for becoming an efficient group, but creates a gloomy picture of a continuous cycle of regression. Foulkes' theory denies the negative elements. In essence, Nitsun's antigroup theory is a combination of Foulkes overoptimistic theory and Bion's pessimistic theory.

4.6. Bion's basic assumptions theory

4.6.1. Background of author

Wilfred R. Bion (1906-1976) spent his early childhood years in India. He remembered his mother as cold and scary, always busy. His father's eyes always looked at him fiercely and he was always angry. Bion hated both his parents. When he was eight years old he was sent to a boarding school in England (Moxnes, 1998). He was a soldier in World War

l with an impressive reputation and he received an award of Honour. He was perceived by people as very powerful. He was not a talkative person, but when he spoke it always made sense and impacted on those who heard him. He was a good listener, sensitive and had a good sense of humour. Bion's wife died in 1944 with the birth of their child and he had to look after his daughter on his own. Dealing with the loss of his wife had a profound impact on his thoughts about groups. When Bion left the army, he completed his studies as a psychoanalyst at the London Institute. Bion married again in 1952 and found great joy in this relationship. The trouble he had experienced stimulated his creativity within the field of group dynamics. During World War II Bion worked with therapeutic groups at the Northfield Military Hospital in England. He left England in 1968 and moved to California where his focus moved from the group to the individual (Sutherland, 1992).

4.6.2. Conceptualising the group

Bion developed the term Work Group (W) which refers to the mental activity that a group has to perform in the real world and he mentioned that it has the same characteristics as Freud's term "ego". In the activity that needs to be performed cooperation is voluntary, but the activity is reliant on the capacity of the individual who is a "product" of years of training and experience and individual mental development (Bion, 1980:78).

Bion mentioned that in a group competition starts to exist between the Work Group (W) and the mental activities (emotional drives) of the group. These conflicting forces start to form a group that will satisfy the emotional needs of the group members and was termed 'the group mentality', which together with the way the group expresses itself, is referred to as the 'group culture'.

Bion created the term "basic assumptions" (unconscious) to refer to/describe the behavioural patterns that force the group into creating its own group mentality, which are in opposition to the group's own preservation activities. "Basic" indicates that it is for survival and "assumption" indicates the fact that the "survival motivation" is based on the collective projections of the group (Banet & Hayden, 1977:158). It is in the primitive stages of group functioning that faulty, regressive attempts to reconcile the conflicting pulls of individuality and group membership take place. They aim to preserve the group,

but in doing so undermine the purpose of the group (Nitsun, 1996: 65). He identified three basic assumptions which will be described in detail at a later stage (Sutherland, 1992).

Basic assumptions are powerful emotions that are generated automatically when people are combined in a group and are similar to a group of ideas that lead to the persons behaving in a certain way, and individuals are attracted to individuals that feel the same. Bion used the term 'valency' to describe this attractiveness of those who have the same emotions. Basic assumptions dominate the group culture that evolves (Miller, 1998). Bion said that these assumptions can become so strong that members' actions become controlled by them and this leads to actions that are unrelated to the tasks of the group (Agazarian, 1981). This leads to individuals losing their independence and becoming part of an undifferentiated whole (Agazarian, 1981). No individual likes to lose his/her independence, so it is a traumatic experience that leads to the group being more or less constantly in change, due to the continuous struggle of each individual between the assumptions, the group culture and his/her individuality (Sutherland, 1992:59).

The basic assumptions are unconscious motivating forces, but the conscious drive towards interaction with the real world gets the upper hand in the long run. If this adaptive urge was lacking, survival would be impossible. Bion mentioned that in the physical world unsolvable problems are apparent, but the social factors have proven their effect on the capacities of individuals to work together, if needed, until the magical event has been realised (Sutherland, 1992:59).

These unconscious primitive states of mind interfere with the group's explicit work tasks and undermine understanding and development (Brown, 1992:197). Our dependence on a chairperson or idol; or blaming the absent saboteurs; or defending our empire; or hoping that a fruitless discussion between two will provide a perfect answer to all; or ensuring the next generation of superior leaders, can often alert us to the need to do some work ourselves or otherwise sink further into a collective illusion of reality (Brown, 1992:192).

Bion implied that the more frustrating the tasks are, the better the chances are that the unconscious assumptions will become active. Individuals then find sense of security in the phantasies of the assumptions. This resistance, until something magical happens, is what he called "the hatred to learn" (Sutherland, 1992).

4.6.3. Main contributions to group theory

Bion, as mentioned in French and Vince (1999:6), said 'that the human individual is a political animal and cannot find fulfilment outside a group and cannot satisfy any emotional drive without expression of its social component'.

Bion is seen as the father of the Tavistock Institution which today is one of the leading institutions in researching interventions that are aimed at enhancing organisational and personal effectiveness and wellbeing (Gabriel, 2000:1593).

Bion developed the concept 'group-as-a-whole'. It is stated that there is no doubt that Bion made a profound impact on the field of group dynamics by distinguishing between the conscious and the unconscious within groups (Sutherland, 1992). The group-as-a-whole is invisible and can be seen as relating to a group just as personality relates to an individual. This group-as-a-whole is different from the dynamics of a collection of individuals (Agazarian & Peters, 1981).

Bion looks at a group on two levels: the manifested conscious, being the one level and the latent subconscious and unconscious, being the second level (Sutherland, 1992). The work group (W), which is conscious, and the basic assumptions group (ba), which is unconscious. Basic assumptions are patterns of behaviour that have caused the group to develop specific group mentality in opposition to the work activity. Bion mentioned that nowhere else is learning more hated and rejected than in a group where the basic assumptions are apparent.

Bion identified three of these patterns and named them ba D (dependence), ba F (fight/flight) and ba P (pairing). These three basic assumptions of Bion and a fourth one, added by P.M. Turquet (Banet & Hayden, 1977), will now be discussed. Viljoen (2008) visually displayed the three modes of Bion and those figures are shown below. A general discussion will follow.

a. Dependency

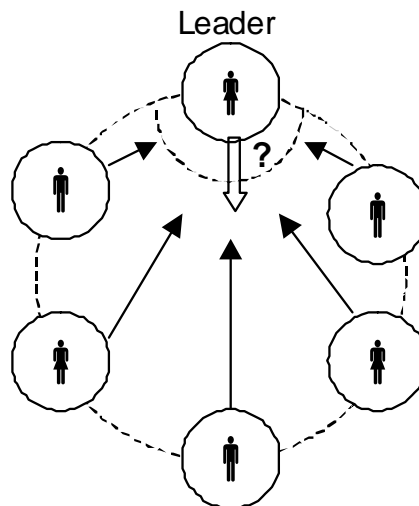


Figure 7: Dependency
(Viljoen, 2008:7)

The ba stage of dependency theory is based on the unconscious fantasy that the leader will come to the rescue of the group, in other words, one person is there to provide security by magically gratifying the group's longings. However, after some time, the group members tend to react to the assumption, due to immaturity and the voracity to produce. Groups react aggressively towards the person they envisaged to be the one that had to bring the magic pabulum and then does not succeed in doing what was expected (Sutherland, 1992:58). Schermer (1992:140) mentions that the group members view themselves as inferior to the leader. This leads to attempts to get as much knowledge from him as possible, but it never happens. The failure of the leader is, at first, ignored and then leads to the group members trying to find better leadership. The group is characterised by denial, envy and greed, as well as a defence against these, but the group feels close due to the feeling of helplessness and fear that they share.

b. Fight-Flight

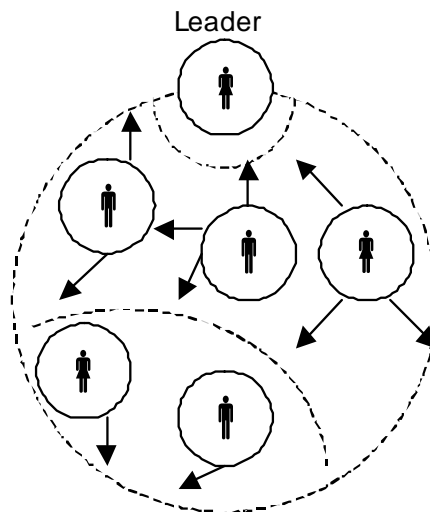


Figure 8: Fight Flight
(Viljoen, 2008:7)

The fight-flight mood is one of paranoia and it is this feeling that holds the group together. This appears as reaction to what the group wanted to avoid, namely the work activity which had forced the group to confront the need to develop by giving up their primitive magical ideas. This method, however, is ineffective and leads to a different activity from which the concept of ba F developed. (Sutherland, 1992:58) Schermer (1992:142) explained the ba F concept as follows: The group becomes united as a unit to fight against an unclear perceived enemy and to protect the group from in-fighting. There is no tolerance of anyone who does not share the ideology of the group. A tendency develops to forcefully control the leader or to experience the group being forcefully controlled by him and to experience “closeness” in a shared denial of intragroup hostility results in them projecting their aggression onto an outgroup. All these emotions are prevalent.

c. Pairing

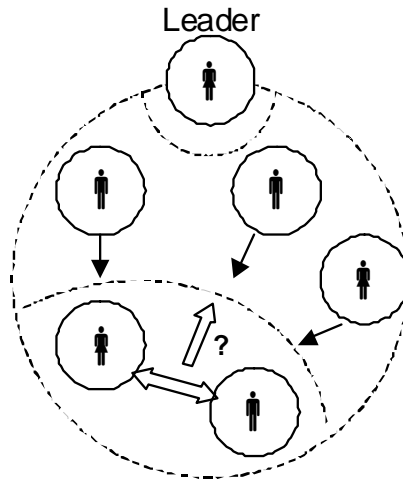


Figure 9: Pairing
(Viljoen, 2008:7)

The pairing mode is when the group members have the hope that two members will be paired to bring forth a Messiah that will save the group. Sutherland (1992:58) described it as two members, irrespective of sex, getting into a discussion to which all the group members listen with attention, with no impatience, as though they are in need of being the centre of attention. He said that it seemed that an unconscious fantasy developed that sex was the aim to reproduce and to keep the group together and preserve their threatened identity and survival. This gives the group the hope that they will be saved from the conflicts surrounding dependency and the fight-flight assumptions (Schermer, 1992:142).

d. Oneness

This basic assumption was added by Turquet in 1974 and refers to the stage when members join a group that is omnipotent and then surrender themselves as passive participators to create a feeling of wholeness (Banet & Hayden, 1977). Transformation takes place when group members feel they are losing their identity when trying to participate in the large group. A member first experiences a state called 'Singleton' (S), but in order to protect him/herself against the fear of losing his/her identity, this state changes to either 'Membership Individual' (MI) or 'Isolate' (I), rather than 'Individual

Member' (IM). It is at the 'Membership Individual' state that the "basic assumption state" of 'homogeneity' is realised. Members believe in complete equality, with no role differentiation in order to create a "magical unified" group. The 'Isolate', which creates an unconscious state of "disarray" is characterised by a state of social and cultural nothingness. The work group that is characterised by "heterogeneity" is called 'Individual Members' (Hopper, 2003).

Schermer (1992) presented the following schematic description of the characteristics of the basic assumptions:

	Dependency	Pairing	Fight-flight
Predominant defence mechanisms	Introjections Idealisation Devaluation	Denial Repression	Splitting Projection
Object relations	Leader as 'container-breast' Object hunger/object loss	Condensation of Oedipal and pre-Oedipal object relations via the primal scene	Bad, externalized object is pervasive Internal world is objectless
Narcissistic features	Over-idealisation of leader is a defence against narcissistic injury	Narcissistic self-object merger with the pair	Primary narcissism Narcissistic rage
Mythic features	The leader is anti-hero, prophet, and deity	Messianic myths; myth of the Birth of the Hero; Creation mythologies	Struggle between good and evil 'Paradise Lost'
Roles	The 'dual' of the leader Dependants and counterdependants	'Mary and Joseph' Over personal and impersonal	Fight leader Flight leader
Biogenetic core	Child-rearing and bonding	Reproduction and production	Protection of group from danger

Table 1: Characteristics of basic assumption states
(Schermer, 1992:139)

e. Group-as-a-whole

Bion observed that a group-as-a-whole has a life of its own that is independent of its members.

4.6.4. Tavistock Method (Group Relations)

This method was developed based on Bion's work. Bion mentioned that it is important to look at the individual as well as the group within which the individual is a member. This approach gradually grew and evolved into a method. In 1957 the first Group Relations Conference was held by the Tavistock Institute and the University of Leicester (Banet & Hayden, 1977:155).

If one looks at a group through the lens of the Tavistock theory it does not focus on the differences between the members, but it focuses on the commonality of the task, the function and motivation the task gives to the members of a group as result of the group-level phenomena. It is called "group relations" and refers to the dynamics of the 'group-as-a-whole' (Banet & Hayden, 1977:155).

When separate individuals (aggregate) become a group, the group behaves as a system that is, in some respects, greater than the sum of its parts and its primary task is to survive. Bion described this by using the metaphor of a clock. Yes, the clock has separate pieces like gears, springs and levers, but if you put them together they form a valuable clock. On their own the pieces could never have created (Banet & Hayden, 1977:156-157).

It is believed that when a person becomes a member of a group, his/her behaviour changes and a collective identity develops. The group is central and the member becomes the background (Banet & Hayden, 1977:157). Another premise is that a group has a life of its own, only as a consequence of the fantasies and projections of its members (Banet & Hayden, 1977:157).

4.7. Agazarian's System-centred theory

4.7.1. Background of author

Yvonne Agazarian started as an untrained nurse at Essondale (mental hospital in Vancouver) at the age of nineteen. Although it was a summer job, she became very

involved with the patients. She thought she was not trained, but, she realised that at her convent where she had been in charge of dormitories and study halls she had learned to manage difficult students by giving them responsibilities. In the ward at Essondale, she organised the ward by involving the more functional patients in daily tasks. This led to a drop in violence, to fewer admissions to side rooms and there was even a discharge of a patient which was an unheard of event. It was not because of any training or understanding psychotic behaviour, but due to a personal belief of Yvonne that it is important that one is responsible to and for one's environment and that a structure should be provided and responsibility be given. She said that indicating goals and clear guidelines are important. This was a start to her lifelong journey in the field of mental health (Agazarian, 1997:1-3).

In 1960 she went to America to get help for her blind son and ended up teaching at the Temple's Group Dynamics Centre. She was introduced to Lewin's Field Theory. After she had been trained in research principles, she realised that no common set of definitions for group dynamics and individual dynamics existed. This made it difficult to study the dynamics of groups as separate from the dynamics of individuals, or to look at the interdependence of the two. She then started by using Lewin's Field Theory, Korzybski's man-as-a-map-maker idea, Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, as well as Howard and Scott's stress theory to make sense of it all. This led to the following formulation of the basis assumption of her theory: "Behaviour is a function of perception of the problems that lie along the path to the goal" (Agazarian, 1997:3-4).

4.7.2. Conceptualising the group

System-centred theory approaches all living things, as small as a cell and as large as or larger than a society, by defining them isomorphically as systems that are similar in structure, function and dynamics. The advantage of describing all living human systems in this way is that it helps one to understand the dynamics of any one system and that this system says something about the dynamics of all the other systems in its hierarchy (Palmer, 1999:30). Important concepts of the general systems theory were summarised by Agazarian and Peters (1981) as follows:

1. Each system can be thought of as dynamically in relationship to its own components, its environment (of which it is a component) and the other two systems (of which it is either a subsystem or suprasystem).

2. Each system represents a focus for thinking within one level of abstraction.
3. The relationship between the systems can be conceptualised.
4. The crossing of system boundaries crosses levels of abstraction.
5. The input/output relationships between the systems can be stated.
6. The dynamic equilibrium (or 'goal') of each system can be distinguished from the goals of the other systems.
7. Each system is isomorphic (isomorphically related) to the others.

Makenzie (1997), as cited in Viljoen (2008), mentioned that it is more important to focus on the psychological boundaries than the physical boundaries when working with the group.

The system approach is based on the view that the whole and the parts are dynamically interrelated in complex and important ways (Vince, 2002:75). Each system exists in an environment of the system above it and forms the environment for the system below it (Viljoen, 2008). Figure 10 below is a systemic view of any one-dimensional system and displays the inputs of the system as the bigger systems within which the system functions and then the outputs become the systems that function within the system. The feedback loop indicates that the systems influence each other as they change.

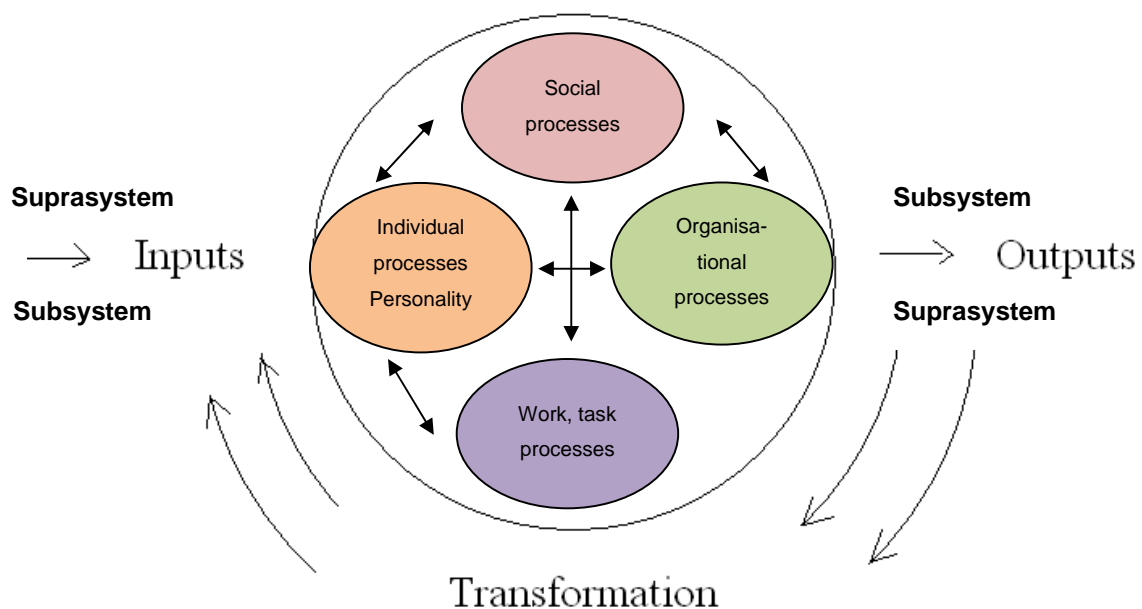


Figure 10: A basic open system model

(Adopted from Bergh & Theron, 2003: xiv)

The metaphor of the chess game with the threedimensional boards (see Figure 11 below) can be used to indicate that the input and output of one system influences its supra system and its subsystems. Agazarian is of the opinion that one can separately identify the individual, individual-member role and group-role and group-as-a-whole. This metaphor helps us to understand that a change in one system will inevitably change the supra or subsystem, just as moving a piece on the one board will change the game plan on that board, but that it also impacts on the relationship with the other systems/levels but with a different meaning, as well as a different meaning for the whole game (Agazarian & Peters, 1981).

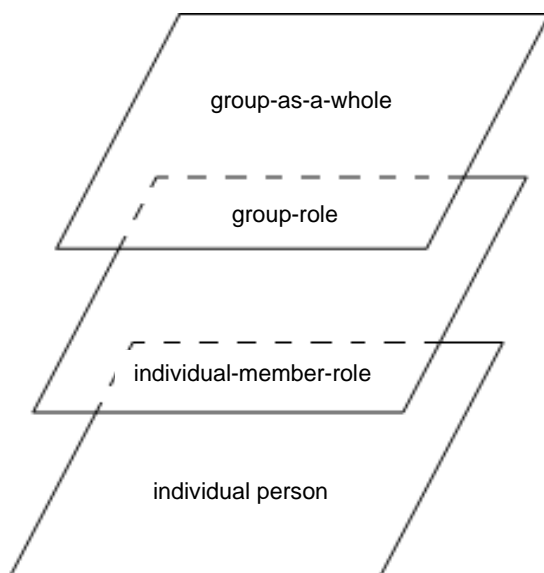


Figure 11: Three dynamic systems of analysis.
(Agazarian & Peters, 1981:41)

4.7.3. Main contributions to group theory

a. Self-centered system within a system-centered context

The blueprint for constructing a system-centered group was summarised by Agazarian (1997:33) in a table as follows:

Hierarchy: Every system exists in the environment of the system above it and is the environment for the system below it. The hierarchy of isomorphic systems defined for group and individual therapy is the member system, the subgroup system, and/or the group-as-a-whole system.

Definition

The systems-centered hierarchy

- Self-centered system:* intrapersonal personality and character, the source of potential energy for developing the systems-centered hierarchy.
- Observing system:* discriminates between thinking (comprehension) and emotion (apprehension) in the self-centered system.
- Member system:* contains self-centered system energy and vectors it into a subgroup.
- Subgroup system:* discriminates, contains splitting and integrating differences.
- Group-as-a-whole:* contains subgroup systems and vectors energy towards primary and secondary goals.

Operational method

Creating the systems-centered group by contextualising, boundarying, subgrouping and vectoring.

Techniques

- Observation of the hierarchy of system context.
- Functional subgrouping.
- The fork-in-the-road.
- Hierarchy of defence modification.

Table 2: Hierarchy: Definitions of Theory, Methods and Techniques

b. Subgrouping

Agazarian distinguished between deliberate functional subgrouping and stereotype subgrouping. Stereotype subgrouping happens due to obvious similarities between

members of a group and tends to split the group into subgroups for example: male/female; young/old. This supports the group-as-a-whole in the short run, but in the long run it slows down the rate of change. Functional subgrouping is an alternative to stereotype subgrouping and is used to manage conflicts that cause differences in groups. It influences the group in different stages within the development of the group (contains regression; weakens resistance to change; increases forces that drive the system towards its goals). This is done by deliberate division due to the lines of differences and the exploration of these differences (Agazarian, 1997:41).

c. Boundaries

Boundaries are described by Agazarian as containers that hold the energy for a system and which provide the system with the necessary energy needed for life. The boundaries determine the survival and the transformation of the system. She mentions that the structure provides the shape, but the boundaries provide imaginary lines to keep the group in shape. The boundaries between the technical and social tasks of the organisation and the nature and patterning of these tasks were a concept that Rice and Miller discussed in *Systems of Organisations* 1967 (Gould *et al.*, 2001:7). Miller then said that the view of a system to be open made it possible for one being able to consider what the relationship is between the technical and social tasks while, at the same time, considering the relationship of the individuals, the groups and the organisation. Boundaries are never static and are not conceived as a line but as a region. Boundaries can be for example: tasks, space, time, territorial, reality-irreality, role boundaries between staff, superiors and subordinates, different roles one person must take at different times, between the person and the role, between the inner person and the world of the individual, or the group and the external environment (Gould *et al.*, 2001:7-8).

4.8. Systems Psychodynamics

4.8.1. General

System psychodynamics is a method used to organise principles in organisational research. It is developmentally focused at deeper and converted behaviour of a system (Cilliers, 2005). According to Cilliers (2005:24) the System Psychodynamics as a theory is derived from the open systems centred theory as well as the Group Relations or Tavistock theory of which Bion was the founder. The field of system psychodynamics is described by Gould *et al.*, (2001:2-4) as a combination of the two fields of open systems

theory and of the psychodynamics theory. He simplified it by saying that this perspective is like working simultaneously from “the inside out” and “the outside in” and that one view is not more relevant than the other.

The **Open Systems/“The Outside In”** concept provides the main frame in which to make sense of the structural aspects of an organisational system which can include, but is not limited to the nature of the tasks, processes, the mission, the primary task as well as the conscious boundaries and the transactions across the nature and patterning of the organisation’s task (Gould *et al.*, 2001:2). “Systems” in this conceptual framework draws attention to the connected parts of a complex organisational whole (Neumann, 1999:57).

Originally (according to Fenichel as seen in Gould *et al.*, 2001:2), organisations were formed to satisfy the need of human beings, to satisfy their need for socialisation and to accomplish required tasks. Institutions, however, became external realities that function independently from human beings. The implication of this for the individual has emotional and psychological consequences/impacts and it is hence important to look at the implications thereof to make sense of the experience of the individual within the system.

The **Psychodynamic/“The Inside Out”** designation refers to psychoanalytic perspectives of individual experiences and mental processes such as transference, resistance, object relations, fantasy etc., as well as to the experiences of unconscious group and social processes which are simultaneously both a source and a consequence of unresolved or unrecognised organisational difficulties (Gould *et al.*, 2001:3). Psychodynamics as a theory originates from individual psychology, which describes the energising or motivating forces resulting from the interconnection between various parts of the individual’s personality or character structure (Neumann, 1999:57).

Psycho-dynamically, the intention is to look at the rational responses to the difficulties between the two groups, but also to recognise the powerful psychological undercurrents potentially influencing the nature of the relationships (Gould, Ebers & Clinchy, 1999:699).

Long (1999:724) described the psycho-dynamic approach as looking beyond the rational to those unconscious forces that collectively drive people. Social defences in a system against primitive anxieties are seen as a central feature in this perspective. These

defences hinder task performance and readiness for change and to resist new learning (Gould *et al.*, 2001:3). Prins (2006:337) mentioned that group members will avoid anxiety and threats to their self-esteem by trying to take control to try and better their self-esteem. As a group or subgroup that collectively feels that their self-esteem is in jeopardy, a group will unconsciously collude (social defence) to try and stand up against the fears and tension, often at the expense of the task performance. Social defences define “the way we do things here” as mentioned by Vince (2002:75) and this influences the way individuals create shared assumptions about the system within which they are organised and these mindsets can be difficult to change.

Gould *et al.*, (1999:700) explained the overarching psychodynamic postulate on which the theories are based as: groups come to share collectively, unconscious assumptions about other relevant groups that constitute their social/organisational environment. These assumptions are manifested in both conscious and unconscious processes, including projections, attributions, and stereotyping which shape the ensuing quality and character of their intergroup relationships.

Systems psychodynamics therefore provides a way of thinking about the energising or motivating forces resulting from the interconnection between various groups and subunits of a social system (Neumann, 1999:57). Gould *et al.*, (2001:3) mentioned that from this perspective it is believed that the observable structures that are rational and functional are continuously interacting with the members at all levels (conscious and unconscious) that influence the patterns of individual and group processes. This in turn again influences the observable structures. There is the notion that it is a backwards and forwards flow between the system and the psychodynamics within an organisation that needs to be considered if the happenings within the organisations want to be understood.

4.8.2. Five basic assumptions

Five basic assumptions or cornerstones of this perspective have been summarised in Cilliers (2005:24-25) as follows:

- **Dependency** (the group’s unconscious projection for attention and help on to an authority figure as parental object)
- **Fight/Flight** (a defence mechanism in trying to cope with discomfort, involving the authority figure)

- **Pairing** (unconsciously connecting with perceived powerful others, or splitting the authority figure(s) as an individual or as a pair in order to be able to identify with one part as a saviour)
- **One-ness/Me-ness** (the individuals escape into their own fantasy and inner-safe, comfortable and good world, whilst denying the presence of the group, as it is seen as the disturbing/bad part)
- **We-ness** (the unconscious need to join into a powerful union with and absorption into an omnipotent force, surrendering the self in passive participation)

The happenings in groups are not completely objective nor completely subjective (Heller, 2004). According to Menzies (in Prins, 2006:228), the subjective experiences of the group members and the fantasies that they have about the organisational life, influence the objective group processes as well as the emotions, feelings and thoughts and these, in turn, influence the tasks and performance within the group.

The unconscious mind is used when the conscious mind is being over-stimulated to manage paradoxical realities that are too difficult for the conscious mind (Ringer 2002). Resonance is a form of communication between group members at an unconscious level (unconscious to unconscious) and is described by Agazarian and Peters (1981:19) as a function of the interdependent, affective responses of members to particular shared conflicts as simulated in groups working together.

4.9. Specific group constructs: An integrated approach

In the previous sections an overview was given of the field of group dynamics and some of the contributions in terms of theoretical perspectives that will be focused on in this study. Subsequently some specific dynamic elements and concepts related to groups will be discussed.

Many ways to conceptualise groups exist, yet many encompass only some of the important group concepts. The following heuristic framework by H.S. Kriek (2009) is used to organise the various elements in the discussion:

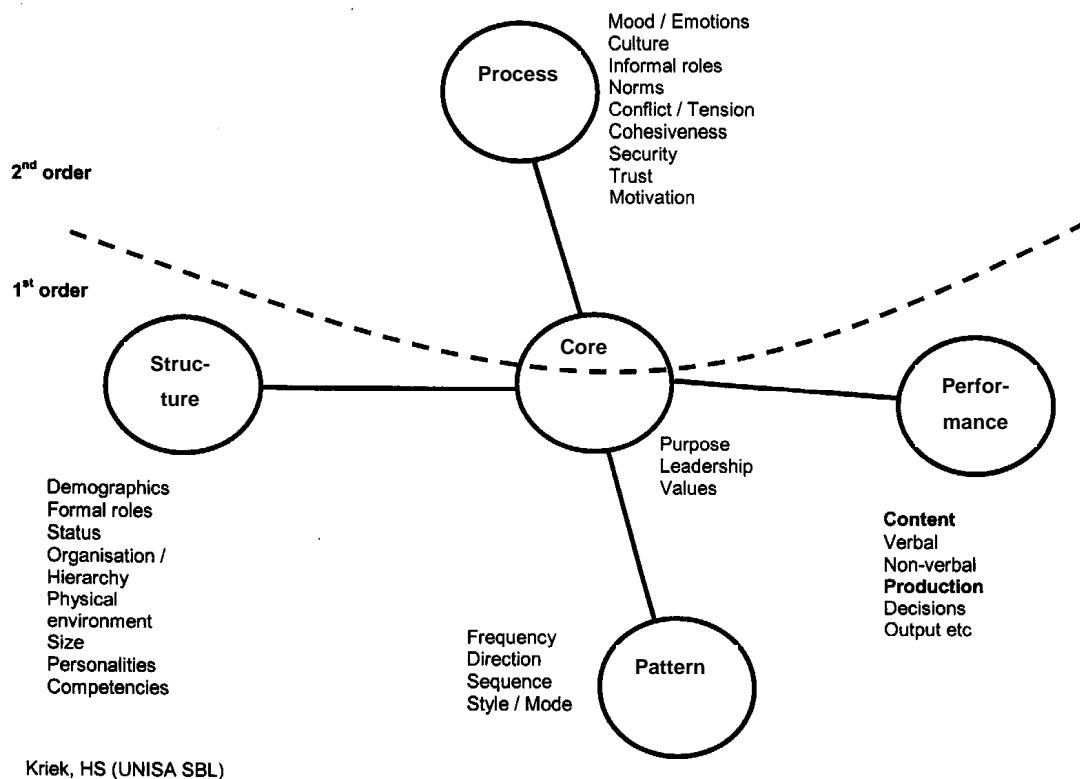


Figure 12: Group Constructs model
(Kriek, 2009:9)

Any group is made up of the constructs as set out above in Kriek's model which is based on the tetrahedral molecule structure of atoms. It represents one core atom with four atoms, extending from it at an equal distance. The different constructs are equally important to one another (Kriek, 2009). One of the atoms/constructs cannot be eliminated since that will lead to the molecule's core construction being changed (not being a group anymore).

Slight changes to the one construct will affect all the other constructs as the molecule/group will strive to keep its original identity, in spite of the changes that take place within the context it finds itself (Kriek, 2009). Changes within the molecule (moving of atoms) happen due to energy. According to Agazarian (1997) and Gantt and Agazarian (2004), energy is information and information is energy. If a construct in a group changes it is brought about by information/communication and the whole system, therefore, functions within a field of energy/communication. Within the field, all the systems have boundaries that are permeable to the energy. The moment there is an energy/information

exchange beyond the boundaries, change takes place. A human being discriminates and integrates information in order to function and this is the same for the organisation as a system. How information is managed within the structures of the system (discriminately and/or integrated) is how the system functions.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, this study will look at the visible, less visible and invisible parts of a group. The model above differentiates between the constructs that are visible/tangible (first order) and those that are invisible/intangible (second order). These levels are constantly present in any group and influence each other.

The reasoning behind breaking up the group into constructs is to enable discussion, analysis and interventions that will focus on certain elements of a group, in order to enhance the functioning of the group. To enhance the understanding of the constructs within the model above and enabling a proper analysis, the elements will now each be discussed briefly.

4.9.1. Core

The core is the hub of the group, where everything starts. A leader, with a vision of what needs to be achieved by valuing certain aspects, is the heart of any group and binds the group together.

a. Goal/purpose/vision

The definition of a group (refer to paragraph 4.2), indicates that a group consists of individuals coming together to achieve a set objective. Bion believed that a group cannot exist without tasks, as the goal/task directs the group function of the Workgroup (Roch, 1970). It is the objective/goal that is the purpose/reason for the individuals to join the group and makes the members of the group positively interdependent on one another, as each member contributes to the attainment of the group goal which helps the individual members to attain their goals. Lewin's field theory identifies the goal as a key concept because it defines the direction of the group. Enough group members must have a positive desire to attain this future state, for the group to be able to work effectively to attain the goal. Agazarian and Peters (1981) mentioned that the goal of a group is the framework for talking about behaviour in terms of direction and velocity. All behaviour can

be described in relation to this location/goal, either moving towards it or away from it. Goals are used in conflict situations, as they are the basis of what the members want to achieve, and also the measure against which members and group performance should be measured (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

The goal of the group should, however, be aligned with the goals of the individual member because members join groups because they have certain goals that they want to achieve and they want to do that by means of attaining the group goal (Kriek, 2009). If conflict exists between the perceived/group goals (invisible) and that of the individual's goals (visible), role conflict is apparent between the individual system and that of the group-as-a-whole.

Subgroups can have different goals, but should be related to the goal of the main group. Conflict arises when two subgroups are perceived having incompatible goals because the two groups will see each other as the enemy in the process of achieving their separate goal. This leads to negative interdependence and this causes competition and oppositional interaction which results in ineffective group work. It is only when positive interdependence can be established that success will be achieved in completing the goal. Positive interdependence leads to co-operative behaviour (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Agazarian and Peters (1981) identified four regions concerning goals and illustrated them as follows:

	Individual goal	Group goal
Explicit goal (Visible)	A (career growth, feeling secure etc.)	B (vision)
Implicit goal (Invisible)	C (hidden agenda)	D ("as if" states)

Figure 13: Implicit and Explicit, individual and group goal regions (Agazarian & Peters, 1981: 101)

The individual explicit goal is the reason why the individual says he joined the group. The group's explicit goal would be what is present in a Workgroup state as suggested by Bion and the group-implicit goal would be the Basic Assumption state of a group (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). The implicit goal for the individual is called the hidden agenda. The hidden agenda is difficult to diagnose due to invisible links between that which is observable and what happened before. This is when an issue that is not sorted out or is ignored in one subunit is shifted from the place of origin (where it should be sorted out) to a subunit. This dynamic can be functional but not for long. It hampers progress by increasing distrust that cannot be identified and addressed (Neumann, 1999:66-67).

Individuals respond emotionally to goals, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. If the set goals are not attained, that are experienced negatively, but if they are attained, positive emotions will be present. If members are perceived as hampering the achievement, negative emotions are evoked by the rest of the group.

b. Leadership

In any team the leadership role exists together with any other roles that are apparent to the specific group. This role could be an appointed role from outside the group or it can be decided by way of election. These are the formal aspects that are linked to certain functions that need to be performed by the leader. The leader sets the direction of the group (goal), motivates them to achieve the goal, provides the resources to achieve the goal, empowers and stimulates group members' creativity, guiding the decision-making process, resolves conflict, determines the climate and rewards performance. The informal and sometimes unconscious, roles expected of a leader are also important. This includes mentorship, counselling, acceptance and being a challenger and teacher. The leadership role is diverse, yet of absolute importance (Kriek, 2009).

c. Values

The foundation of the behaviour within groups is based on values. Values provide the framework against which members test the good/bad and important/unimportant aspects concerning their behaviour/actions. An example would be "respect" (Kriek, 2009).

4.9.2. Structure

The structure can be seen as the “make-up” of the group. Who is who, who does what, who reports to whom, where, how many, etc. Within the structure of a group two elements are always present and occur concurrently, namely change and stability. The group remains stable in spite of change and change is made possible because of stability (Kriek, 2009).

a. Demographics

These are the aspects and influences that make the members differ from one another. These would be factors such as age, race, gender, etc. As this is the basic “make-up” of each individual within the team, it must be taken into account as it influences the dynamics of the group (Kriek, 2009).

b. Formal roles

Formal roles are there for the management of responsibility, for the operation of the group and are the group’s name for the tasks that are assigned to each team member, for example, team leader or facilitator. Functional roles are roles given to members based on the skills that they have, for instance call centre agent or pharmacist. Process roles are given to members to ensure the continuity of the process. The role is not linked to the individual but to the tasks (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). If one individual is not fulfilling the role, someone else takes on the role.

c. Status

The status that you have within a team is mostly related to that of your position within the hierarchy. The higher you go up in the structure, the more status you have. It can also be linked to the role that you play, for instance if you are a shop steward your role would be different to that of the team leader. It is referred to by Robbins (2003) as a socially defined position or rank given to a person by group members.

d. Organisation/Hierarchy

The organisation and the organigram of the organisation sets out the functions and roles of each individual, at what level of responsibility each person is and who reports to whom. The structure is a graphical view of the organisation as a group and all the smaller groups (functional groups) within the organisation. This influences how teams function and what

autonomy they have, etc. The organisation also sets the time and place within which the group functions (Kriek, 2009).

e. Physical Environment

The physical environment includes where the organisation is situated, in what conditions the group functions, including temperature, noise levels, type of building and facilities (Kriek, 2009).

f. Size

Size can influence the flow of progress/operation, the smaller the more resistance can be present but the larger the group, the more likely “social loafing” becomes (Kriek, 2009).

g. Personalities

These are the interactive preferences of individuals and are always present in different combinations in each person (Kriek, 2009).

h. Competencies

These refer to the behaviour skills of each of the group members (Kriek, 2009).

4.9.3. Pattern

Patterns refer to the configuration relationships between components within the group/systems. These could be, for example, the relationship between the management and the provider, the way they interrelate and interact with one another. These relationships are manifested through patterns of communication (identified by considering how, when and where) and impact the dynamics of the group (Kriek, 2009).

a. Frequency

The number of times interaction takes place.

b. Direction

This is the direction in which interaction happens. Is it mostly upwards, only downwards or proper two-way interaction?

c. Sequence

What the cycle is within which the interaction takes place.

d. Style or mode

With what style is the interaction approached and maintained. Is it collaborative or instructive? (Kriek, 2009)

This is not a static construct as the pattern changes all the time, depending on the current context of the group, tasks and the needs of the group members. Groups also test different patterns to enable them to make use of the most suitable pattern (Kriek, 2009).

4.9.4. Performance

A group is formed on account of having a common goal/vision, as discussed in the previous paragraph. This component refers to measuring the attainment of the set goal by looking at short-term objectives.

a. Content

This is the social domain created by the team through interaction with one another. It is a symbolic non-concrete way of communicating the existence of the group's conceptual territory. There are two ways of communication: verbal or non-verbal (Kriek, 2009):

- Verbal – This is highly visible/tangible and is seen as the fuel for the development of a group. Themes or topics (formal or informal) can reveal the content.
- Non-verbal – These are behavioural messages that portray communication and that are not verbalised. Examples of this can be:
 - ✓ Body language (facial expressions, signs or gestures, hand gestures, eye contact or the lack of it, silences or making noises, sitting positions, standing up and leaving, positions of standing around, etc.)
 - ✓ Tone of voice (loudness, emotions such as aggression, tenderness, inattentiveness)
 - ✓ Physiological responses (scratching, fiddling, coughing, perspiration, stuttering, etc.)
 - ✓ Style of response is a certain combination of some of the abovementioned elements used by a member or the group.
 - ✓ At group-as-a-whole level non-verbal communication is for example go-slow strikes, absenteeism or deviating levels of performance.

b. Production

- Decisions – This concerns the gathering, analysing and processing of information between group members that leads to decision making. It is the decisions that influence the success of the group (Kriek, 2009).

- Outputs

Output is the implementation of the decisions that were made and is believed to assist the group in reaching the set goal (Kriek, 2009).

4.9.5. Process

These are the more invisible aspects of a group. Groups need to differentiate themselves from the rest of the organisation by ensuring that they are operating to reach their set objectives. These intangible aspects of a group are the glue that ties the group members together and gives an indication of the group's development, growth and operations (Kriek, 2009).

a. Mood/Emotions

Emotions portray the unconscious and cognitive thoughts of group members and should be carefully considered as the mood gives information as to what is going on within the group. Cooper (2007) stated that individuals contain their own emotions, but sometimes these emotions become so intense that they overflow into the group (an example would be a member crying). Ringer (2002) makes it clear that one should channel the group's reactions to this overflow of emotion carefully so that it does not strain the development of the group.

b. Culture

A culture refers to the way things are done within a group. It is self-binding and distinguishes the group from other groups in the way that they work towards attaining the set goals. The group determines this mode of working themselves, through norms and roles they take up and expect from one another (Kriek, 2009).

c. Informal roles

Informal roles take place in the invisible group when members take on certain roles. One needs to think of this as an individual voicing opinions, emotions, etc. on behalf of the group. It is important not to consider, for instance, a remark as that of the individual, but as that of the group-as-a-whole (Kriek, 2009). Merideth Belbin in 1981 identified certain roles within a team. Belbin's team roles describe a pattern of behaviour that characterises one person's behaviour in relationship to another in facilitating or restricting the progress of a team. Individuals respond to the demands of the team by putting their preferred/dominant characteristics to the use of the group-as-a-whole. The following roles were identified: Planter; Co-ordinator; Monitor-Evaluator; Implementer; Completer-Finisher; Resource-investigator; Shaper; Teamworker and Specialist (Belbin, 1993). A good balance is needed in a group to be successful, even though conscious division between these functions does not take place.

d. Norms

Norms are the 'rules' that govern the behaviour within a group. Norms set out the boundaries of time and space as they apply to common happenings within the group and indicate what is proper and what is improper behaviour. Members without these group skills, will be seen by other members of the group, as deviant and the group will manifest disequilibrium. This will lead to the specific member conforming or being disliked (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). Robbins (2003) differentiated between performance norms, appearance norms, social arrangement norms and allocation of norms associated with resources. Group members have a high impact on the other members to conform (adjust behaviour) to the norms of the group.

e. Conflict/Tension

Conflict is inevitable within a group. One should see conflict as a possibility because if it is seen as negative, it will not be dealt with and will hinder the growth and creativity of the group. Conflict can be open and verbalised or it can be kept internally by the group members. The conflict can indicate unconscious processes like projection, transference or identification and should be carefully considered on order to utilise this as an information source that can help the group move through these processes into a more productive mode (Cooper, 2007).

f. Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness is the degree to which the members of a group are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in the group. Cohesiveness, together with the level of performance norms, determines the productivity of the group (Robbins, 2003). Kriek (2009) described it as the invisible glue that binds the group together and that contributes to commonality and companionship. Cohesion can be enhanced by enhancing agreement on goals, getting group members to spend time together, focussing on similarities within the group (Kriek, 2009), increasing the perceived worth of being a group member and by isolating the group physically (Robbins, 2003).

g. Security

A group regulates its own level of security by ensuring that the risks are minimised to ensure success. The level of security within the group will lead to the level of comfort in sharing amongst members. Members will not all have the same level of security (Kriek, 2009).

h. Trust

For a group to be effective, high levels of trust need to be present amongst group members. Trust, not being a stable dynamic and being influenced by every action of a group member, makes it a complex dynamic to determine (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). Trust can be described as the belief that another person will behave appropriately or produce what is necessary in a given situation and which will result in beneficial consequences for you and/or the group. It is the perception about others' interests, motives and ideas and the belief that the other will honour his/her commitments. Trust is built on openness, sharing, empowerment, respect, cooperation and dependability. In order for someone to be trusted, they must act with trustworthy behaviour. It is far easier to break trust than to build it - so one must be very careful how one acts within a group. It is trust that creates the environment within which group members can perform at a high level (Kriek, 2009).

4.9.6. Context

The context of a group is the environment within which the system functions. This includes the distant context that the group exists in, as well as the direct context of the group. Kriek (2009) splits the context into two main categories, namely:

a. Ecological context

- Remote context which includes the political, economic, sociological and technological influences
- Organisational context which includes the culture, temporal, policies, operations, geographical location, seating, setting and team content

b. Actualised context

- Contextual strategies
- Sequential strategies
- Directional strategies
- Concealment strategies

4.9.7. Boundaries

Boundaries are the differences that can either separate or link teams together. According to Miller (in French & Vince, 1999) boundaries can mark the inside and outside of a group or sub-unit of the larger system such as time, tasks, territory, authority. Boundaries are of great importance as it is across these boundaries that emotions, opinions, perceptions and fantasies travel. Productivity can also be influenced by the boundaries.

4.9.8. In-out group dynamics

As said above, boundaries can separate a team if the differences between two groups within a group, are of such importance to them. This will lead to the two groups seeing each other as the “in group”/“own group” and the others as the “out group”/enemy. A subgrouping is the way a group offers explanations of the mental processes which give rise to behaviour (Palmer, 1999:30). Agazarian in Viljoen (2008) identified two different subgroupings, stereotypical subgrouping and functional subgrouping. Scapegoating is a stereotypical subgrouping where the split of hostility is projected onto the subgroup. If the group is unable to integrate this “split off hostility” back into the group, the development of the group is affected. Functional subgrouping provides a structure within which the split of hostility can be contained and managed. In order to start forming one group, the differences need to be outlined and acknowledged as mutually beneficial. Atoms need to

be different from one another to attract one another (positive and negative attracts). To form a strong new formation/group, two groups that are different should attract one another (Oosthuizen, 1979:11,33).

4.9.9. Intergroup relations

Miller and Rice (1967) as seen in Gould *et al.*, 1999:701 noted that a tremendous amount of anxiety is experienced by members of the different groups when they need to be merged into one group and have to set up an intergroup relationship. New boundaries that need to be set within the intergroup relationship cause group members to develop fears of losing their identity/power if the new boundaries are found to be more attractive and stronger than the old ones. The new group forms a new identity that combines elements of both the groups but is neither one of the old identities. Both groups must have the emotional ability and the capacity to take themselves out of their comfort zones into the newly formed group with uncertain boundaries for the new group to be successful. To set up a robust intergroup relationship between two subgroups, in a newly found group, one needs to have compelling superordinate goals. The process and structure of the new group can be better understood if we view it according to a group dynamic understanding (Gould *et al.*, 1999:699).

4.9.10. Group development

Different group development theories exist and are all useful in different ways and situations to make sense of groups. Two main approaches exist. The first is that of recurring-phases theories, that focus on identifiable patterns that happen over and over again, between which the group oscillates and includes the following theories:

- Robert Bales (1965) – Relationships between group members are formed by task-oriented work and emotional expressions and equilibrium should exist between the two.
- Wilfred Bion (1961) – A group is either in a workgroup state or in one of the basic assumption states.
- William Schultz (1962) – A group develops because members are concerned with affection, inclusion and control issues.

The second main approach is that of sequential-stage theories which are an identifiable pattern of stages that a group moves through as it develops. The following theories can be classified as sequential-stage theories:

- S.H. Foulkes (1957) – Groups move from the foundation matrix to the dynamic matrix and it is only in the dynamic matrix where the group can develop.
- Bruce Tuckman (1965) – Forming; storming; norming; performing and adjourning.

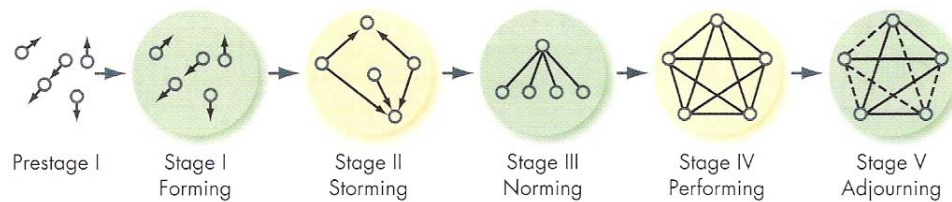


Figure 14: Stages of group development
(Robbins, 2003:221)

- Richard Moreland and John Levine (1982, 1988) – Groups have stages of membership namely prospective member, new member, full member, marginal member and ex-member.
- Worchel, Coutant-Sassic and Grossman (1992) – Distinguish six stages namely discontent; precipitation; identification; productivity; individual negotiation for expansion of tasks and disintegration.
- Gantt and Agazarian (2004) – Groups move from “we are the same” to feeling safe to being different; from having a common enemy to realising it is irrational; from attacking the leader to taking individual accountability and from collective to individual. This builds a platform that can sustain group development.
- Johnson, Johnson and Johnson (2006) – Defining and Structuring procedures; conforming to procedures and getting acquainted; recognising mutuality and building trust; rebelling and differentiating; committing to the group’s goal, procedures and members; functioning maturely and productively and terminating the group.

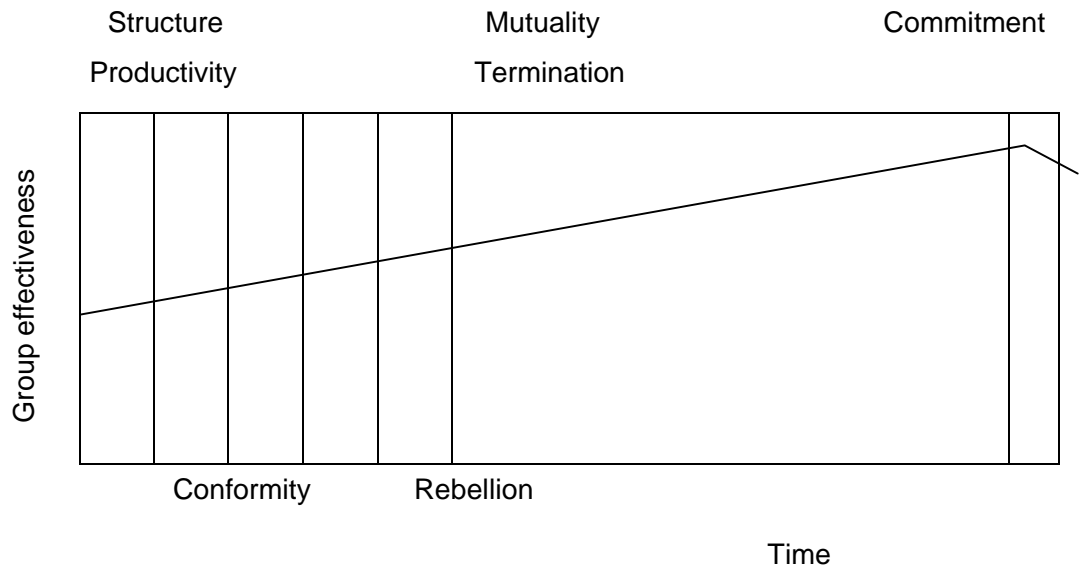


Figure 15: Stages of group development
(Johnson & Johnson, 2006:31)

- Robbins (2003) – Punctuated-Equilibrium model: temporary groups go through transitions between inertia and activity. The stages they propose are: First meeting that sets the group's direction; the first phase of group activities is one of inertia; a transition takes place at the end of this first phase which occurs when the group has used up half its allotted time; a transition initiates major changes; a second phase of inertia follows the transition and the group's last meeting is characterised by markedly accelerated activity.

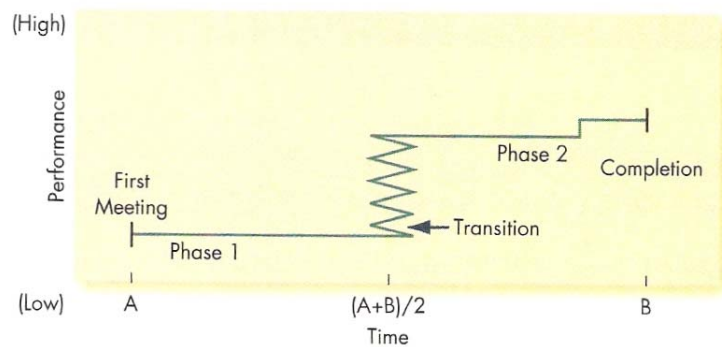


Figure 16: Stages of group development
(Robbins, 2003:222)

The development of a group can be understood by making use of the metaphor of waves of the ocean breaking on the shore (Cooper, 2007). The waves come in and retreat, moving forward and backwards, but every time coming up a little higher up the shore. A group moves forward and backwards but is able to enter the area of the uncertain every time they try again and so they grow towards a mature group that is unique.

4.10. Conclusion

An outline of groups, the field of group dynamics, specific theoretical contributions and some specific group constructs have been presented in this chapter. It can be concluded that groups are surely not a simple phenomenon. By taking group dynamic theories into account, one can analyse group happenings from more than one perspective/level. The theories discussed will be used as a guideline for the discussion of the group happenings that were identified within the specific case study during the rigorous analysis done, aided by Atlas.ti.

CHAPTER 5

5. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Introduction

In the first chapter the study was positioned and the aim was presented. The methodology was set out in Chapter 2 and the theories that form the basis for interpretation were discussed in Chapter 3 and 4. In this chapter the results of the rigorous analysis of the data will be presented and then interpreted in order to make recommendations for future implementation of similarly structured programs.

The method used for the data analysis was described in paragraph 2.5.5. All the questionnaires and focus groups were coded in Atlas.ti. This coding process (through which pieces of data information were organised and named according to the meaning of the text) led to 690 initial codes being created by using open coding. The 690 codes were then audited and grouped together as per relevancy. The final code list consists of 277 codes. These codes were then linked to 29 identified code families which are codes that can be categorised into a larger unit, based on their relevance. These families were also grouped into 8 super families. A visual representation of the families and super families can be seen in Figure 17 on page 83 and in tabular format in Table 3 on page 84.

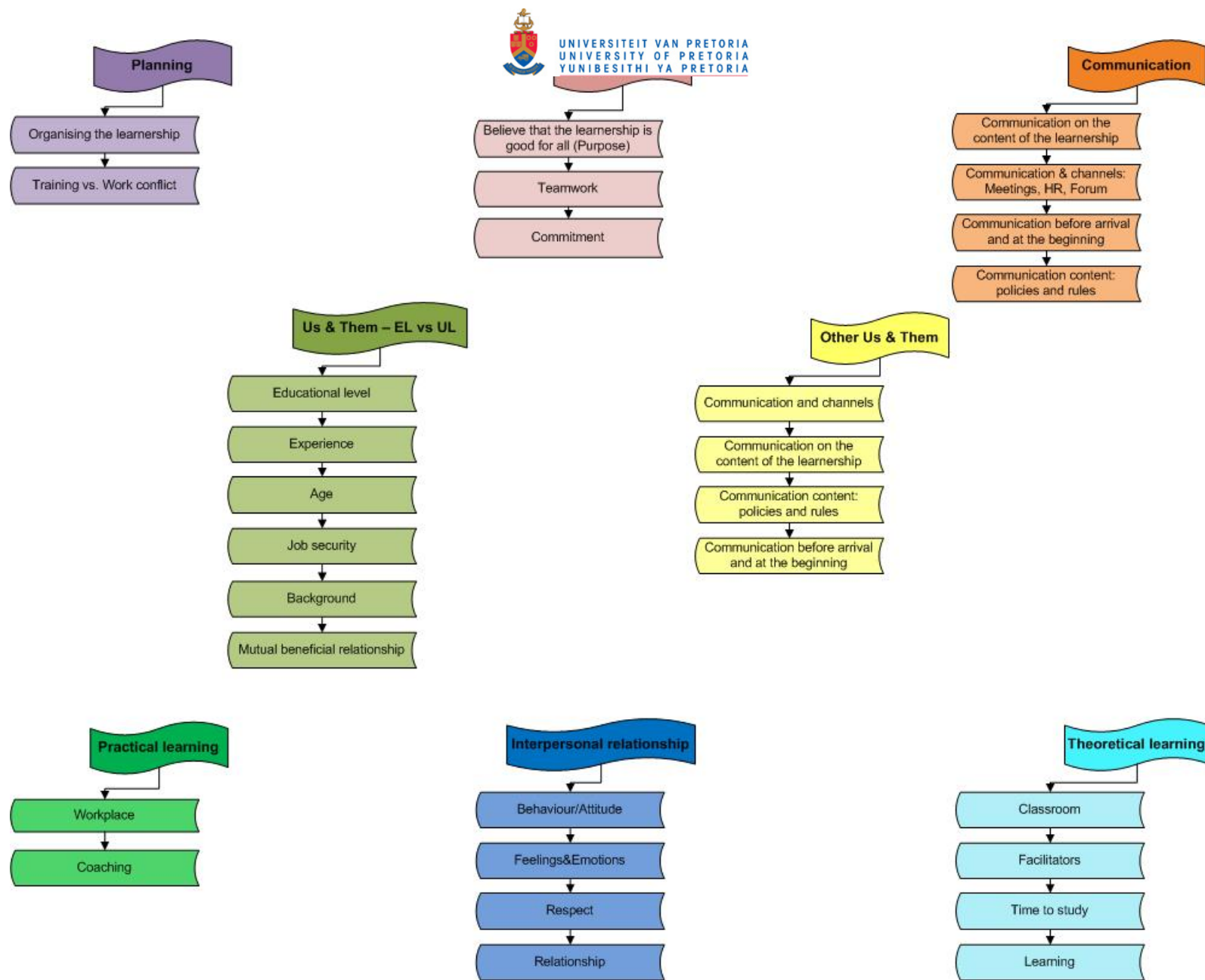


Figure 17: Schematic overview

Table 3 contains the results of the families and super families that have been identified, each in a different colour:

The number of times * that a portion of the text was linked to the code (groundedness) is indicated in brackets next to the codes.

Super Families	Families	Codes
Mutual goal	Believe that the learnership is good for all (purpose)	Aim of learnership (4)* Both groups wanted to gain knowledge/education (2) EL changed their mind about the value of the learnership (3) EL did not want to attend classes (2) EL felt hurt that company treated employees badly because they wanted to learn (1) EL felt more job secure after completing learnership (2) EL learned communication skills (2) EL learned to be a responsible persons (4) EL learned how to treat a customer (4) EL must convince staff that the learnership is good (1) EL were of the opinion that they would learn what they already knew (2) EL were part of the learnership to help UL by sharing practical experience (5) Employees that do not want to be part of learnership will come round if they are managed correctly (2) Learnership meant a lot to EL (6) Learnerships can work if the mistakes can be fixed (2) Managements inconsistency confused and discouraged the EL (3) One manager was so negative, that he indicated that he would not do it again if he could choose (1) Reason behind the training provided was not by choice but guided by legislation and the sectors skills plan (1) Reason for learnership - Development of disadvantaged people (2) Reason for learnership - Financial benefit (5) Reason for learnership - giving people experience (1) Reason for learnership – Upskilling staff (5) Reason for learnership: To develop practical skills of unemployed youth (1) UL believe EL are still from the old school, but that learnership is a way to change their mindset (2) UL started realising the value of the program later on in the learnership (1) Value of learnership (2)

Super Families	Families	Codes
Mutual goal	Teamwork	<p>EL and UL did not help each other at the beginning but later on they did (1) EL did respond positively and shared their knowledge, but later it did not happen easily (1) EL know that they must work together as a team (3) EL learned to work as a group (8) Forced group work in class was for own good to enhance relationship (6) Group members learned group skills through this process (4) [If groups are not mixed, competition arises between UL and EL (1) Integration of groups will improve relationships (3) Teamwork in the beginning could help (2) When both group utilise their strength to the benefit of each other, it leads to teamwork (3) Worked together as a team to finish the learnership (6)</p>
	Commitment	<p>Because the UL were not being fully inducted and incorporated in organisation, it made them feel they were not part of the team (1) Commitment of both groups (1) Commitment of UL is of utmost importance (4) EL changed their mind about the value of the learnership (3) EL did not attend class regularly (1) EL made UL do their work, so how could the EL say that the UL were lazy? (1) EL wants UL to be punished for non-commitment (2) EL were more serious and focused in class than UL (1) EL were perceived to be uncommitted (2) Losing training due to someone else not coming to work was experienced negatively (4) Management's support is of utmost importance for success (2) Management questioned our commitment to our work just because we were attending the classes (2) Managements inconsistency confused and discouraged the EL (3) Maybe the UL did not have enough confidence to work alone, so they rather did not turn up (2) One manager was so negative, that he indicated that he would not do it again if he could choose (1) Service Industry does not allow for uncommitted staff (EL or UL) (1) Some UL had the idea that they had come to learn and not to work (1) Some UL worked hard (2) The supervisor's management of learners influenced the learners' commitment (3) UL have to be committed or EL will suffer a loss of training time (1) UL irregular attendance led to operational constraints (3) UL started realising the value of the program later on in the learnership (1) UL wanted to avoid the workplace so as to avoid the potential conflict (1) UL were perceived to be uncommitted (9)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Interpersonal relationships	Behaviour/Attitude	<p>Attitudes in the workplace were strained towards the UL (1) Being insecure and uninformed led to the EL not wanting to accept the UL into the workplace] [Differences between the two groups negatively influenced attitude (1) EL after realising UL were not a threat, tried to bond with UL (2) EL did not attend class regularly (1) EL did not co-operate with UL at first (1) EL did not help UL in order to spite them and make them leave (2) EL implied that their knowledge and experience made them better than UL (2) EL threatened the UL by saying they do not have jobs here (1) EL took advantage of UL (5) EL treated UL as if they did not know anything (3) EL treated UL badly (4) EL wanted to dictate to the UL, but UL did not allow it (1) EL wanted to help UL (2) EL were aware that the UL knew they were unwelcome (1) Got to know each other in the class (1) No advantage, one family (1) Not welcoming UL in a friendly manner led to UL being negative towards EL (3) The EL indicated that they never felt that they did not want to be part of program (1) Thinking of myself and not the others (1) UL believe EL cannot coach them if they are not mature and do not know how to act themselves (1) UL believed EL handled things wrongly (4) UL could never figure out why EL were so negative (1) UL did not blame EL for feeling threatened and reacting on that (2) UL experienced the bad attitude of EL negatively (3) UL had to understand the EL behaviour before they dropped their negative view of EL (1) UL were isolated in the beginning (2) Very proud and protective of their workplace (1)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Interpersonal relationships	Feelings and Emotions	<p>EL and UL conflict was traumatic and very personal for the UL (3)</p> <p>EL enjoyed the UL(1)</p> <p>EL felt hurt that company treated employees badly because they wanted to learn (1)</p> <p>EL felt that they were not consulted as to what training they wanted to do (1)</p> <p>EL felt vulnerable due to them knowing their shortfall in educational level (3)</p> <p>EL had feelings of being inferior or not good enough (4)</p> <p>EL had mixed emotions towards UL (1)</p> <p>EL had to deal with their emotions before they accepted UL (1)</p> <p>EL made UL feel "used/misused" (1)</p> <p>EL only accepted the UL after realising that the UL were not a threat (4)</p> <p>EL projected their anger and mistrust onto the UL (2)</p> <p>EL redirected their uncertainty onto the UL? (1)</p> <p>EL refusing to work with the UL, caused the UL wanting to quit (2)</p> <p>EL were uncomfortable with UL (1)</p> <p>High levels of emotions apparent (2)</p> <p>If UL felt part of the group, they would not have reacted negatively (1)</p> <p>Insecurity within the EL group? (2)</p> <p>Learnership boosted EL self-worth (2)</p> <p>Management and training provider relationship impacts on the learners (1)</p> <p>Management's inconsistency confused and discouraged the EL (3)</p> <p>Need for recognition existed by the EL's (4)</p> <p>Not all the EL were negative about UL (1)</p> <p>Sharing territory is difficult if it has been yours for a long time (1)</p> <p>The start of the program was not so good but ended well (1)</p> <p>The supervisors' management of learners influenced the learners' commitment (3)</p> <p>UL became negative towards EL due to non-acceptance and this led to EL being even more suspicious of UL (1)</p> <p>UL blame company for having to cope with negative emotions from EL (3)</p> <p>UL could never figure out why EL were so negative (1)</p> <p>UL did not blame EL for feeling threatened and reacting to that (2)</p> <p>UL felt they were in the EL's way (3)</p> <p>UL had to understand the EL behaviour before they dropped their negative view of EL (1)</p> <p>UL were grateful for what they had learned and it made them stronger (1)</p> <p>UL were seen as spies in the eyes of the EL (2)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Interpersonal relationships	Respect	Lack of respect (2) Relationship depends on respect (1) UL not show respect towards EL and Facilitator (1)
	Relationship	Bad relationship due to lack of communication (5) EL thought UL would take their jobs which led to a bad relationship (7) Forced group work in class was for own good to enhance relationship (6) Good relationship with classmates (3) Not such a good relationship in the beginning, but the relationship improved with time (7) One family (6) Relationship better after EL did not feel threatened anymore (4) Relationship depends on respect (1) Relationship was good (6) Relationship was good due to being at the same level (1) Relationship was good due to communication (3) Relationship was good due to helping each other (13) Relationship was good, due to friendliness (1) Relationship was great due to EL helping UL in the workplace (9) Relationship was great due to sharing views (3) UL knew that it would be difficult and learned from it (1)
Communication	Communication of the content of learnership	Communicate the modules of the course (1) EL did not want to attend classes (2) EL learned communication skills (2) EL learned to be a responsible persons (4) EL learned to work as a group (8) EL learnt how to treat a customer (4) EL now started to understand the importance of their job (1) EL were of the opinion that they would learn what they already knew (2)

Super Families	Families	Codes
Communication	Communication and Channels: Meetings, HR, Forums	<p>Better communication from more experienced people needed (1)</p> <p>Better consultation with supervisors in planning the learnership and during the learnership will help a lot (2)</p> <p>Communication during the program could have assisted (5)</p> <p>Communication should be for all employees, not only those doing the learnership (1)</p> <p>Company must be involved in learnership more and not leave all to the provider (1)</p> <p>Continuous discussion groups during the learnership between all parties will help to sort out issues as the program progresses (4)</p> <p>Open the HR channel so that continuous assistance can be given (1)</p> <p>Operational division created by supervisor by having two separate meetings, one with EL and one with UL (1)</p> <p>Relationship was good due to communication (3)</p> <p>UL and EL wanted to be consulted (4)</p> <p>UL did not know how things would happen, and were unorganised (1)</p> <p>UL should be included in staff meetings (4)</p>
	Communication before arrival and at the beginning	<p>Bad relationship due to lack of communication (5)</p> <p>Because the UL were not being fully inducted and incorporated in organisation, it made them feel they were not part of the team (1)</p> <p>Being insecure and uninformed led to the EL not wanting to accept the UL into the workplace (1)</p> <p>Communication to staff before arrival of UL was not done properly (4)</p> <p>Communication was not done properly before the program, so supervisors did not know what to expect (1)</p> <p>Confirmation that UL were not there to take our jobs would have helped (2)</p> <p>EL and UL were not properly introduced (7)</p> <p>Lack of communication between EL and UL was confirmed by the company (1)</p> <p>Learnership process to be explained properly (12)</p> <p>Management communication from the start could have helped (3)</p> <p>Not welcoming UL in a friendly manner led to UL being negative towards EL (3)</p> <p>Training that started late confused staff as to who the learners were (1)</p> <p>UL were isolated in the beginning (2)</p>
	Communication content: policies and rules	<p>Policies and procedure knowledge will improve relationships (1)</p> <p>UL did not feel that they belonged due to not being informed of company policies(openness) (1)</p> <p>UL should be trained on company policies and procedures (3)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Planning	Organising the learnership	<p>Better communication from more experienced people needed (1) Better consultation with supervisors in planning the learnership and during the learnership will help a lot (2) Better planning will help (2) Company must be involved in learnership more and not leave all to the provider (1) EL received overtime and UL not, created negativity (3) Having extra hands was experienced positively (1) Lack of role definition for the supervisors within the learnership is apparent (1) Learnership was not well organised (5) Management and training provider relationship impacts on the learners (1) No performance management existed (2) One employee, taken from workplace, must be replaced with two learners as they are not trained (2) Service Industry (1) SETA, provider and organisation contract issues, influenced the learners (13) Short staffed for a reason (1) Supervisors battled when people went for the training and this made them negative towards the training (1) Supervisors had extra pressure during the learnership and experienced the learnership negatively (1) The fact that the UL received their stipends late, was really negatively experienced (1) Training that started late confused staff as to who the learners were (1) UL did not know how things would happen, and were unorganised (1) UL should have space in workplace to work (5)</p>
	Training vs. Work conflict	<p>Conflict between work and training (14) EL disadvantage removed from class (2) Going to work after class led to having less time for learning (3) Losing training due to someone else not coming to work was experienced negatively (4) Reduced theoretical days experienced negatively (16) Supervisors battled when people went for the training and this made them negative towards it (1) The decision that learners had to return to the workplace once their training was finished, was experienced negatively (2) Upset that employer saw the operations as more important (1)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Practical Learning	Workplace	<p>Attitudes in the workplace were strained towards the UL (1) Both groups were strong, one in the class situation and one in the workplace (2) Class vs. Practical (2) Classroom atmosphere/conditions were much better than the workplace (1) Conflict existed in the workplace (1) Difficulties were experienced in the group in the workplace (1) EL made UL feel "used/misused" (1) Good relationship with classmates (3) In classroom learners were appreciated but not in the workplace (1) Learnership negatively influenced performance (female distraction; sat back due to UL helping them) (1) No performance management existed (2) Operational division created by supervisor by having two separate meetings, one with EL and one with UL (1) Some UL had the idea that they had come to learn and not to work (1) Treatment of UL (2) UL found it difficult to cope with the workplace pressure (1) UL irregular attendance led to operational constraints (3) UL should have space in workplace to work (5) UL wanted to avoid the workplace so as to avoid the potential conflict (1) Unemployed learner drivers were unhappy about having to pay traffic fines (2) What the company wanted and what they did to the UL contradicted each other (1) Why didn't anyone mention that the workplace and experience were good? (1) Workplace did not fulfil to expectations (4) Workplace practicals were also experienced positively (2) Workplace practicals were not experienced positively (1)</p>
	Coaching	<p>Better consultation with supervisors in planning the learnership and during the learnership will help a lot (2) EL must teach the UL (1) EL should be trained on coaching skills before learnership (1) No performance management existed (2) Not all EL were bad coaches, but some were bullies (3) Some UL did not want to learn/listen to supervisors or EL (1) Supervisor and UL conflict that existed made UL less committed (1) Supervisor only indicated mistakes, never gave positive recognition (1) Supervisors did not communicate with learners (2) Supervisors should be trained on how to manage the UL (1) Supervisors should be trained to be mentors (3) UL felt unhappy if EL did not coach them properly (1)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Theoretical Learning	Classroom	<p>Bad relationship between EL and UL in the classroom (1)</p> <p>Bad relationship due to lack of communication (5)</p> <p>Both groups were strong, one in the class situation and one in the workplace (2)</p> <p>Class vs. Practical (2)</p> <p>Classroom atmosphere/conditions were much better than the workplace (1)</p> <p>Classroom helped to alleviate very sensitive uncertainties (1)</p> <p>Classroom/Theory was experienced positively (16)</p> <p>EL did not attend class regularly (1)</p> <p>EL did not want to attend classes (2)</p> <p>EL did not want to go to class, UL wanted them in class (1)</p> <p>EL experienced difficulty in class (10)</p> <p>EL were bored to learn things they know (1)</p> <p>Equality in the classroom (7)</p> <p>Forced group work in class was for own good to enhance relationship (6)</p> <p>Going to work after class led to having less time for learning (3)</p> <p>Good relationship with classmates (3)</p> <p>If groups are not mixed, competition arises between UL and EL (1)</p> <p>In classroom learners were appreciated but not in the workplace (1)</p> <p>Open the HR channel so that continuous assistance can be given (1)</p> <p>Some UL had the idea that they had come to learn and not to work (1)</p> <p>The classroom was instrumental in creating a better relationship (5)</p> <p>The negative classroom environment led to better relationships and less conflict between EL and UL (1)</p> <p>UL were a disturbance to EL in class when they finished before them (2)</p>
	Facilitators	<p>Facilitator had a positive influence (1)</p> <p>Facilitators communicated truthful information which led to better understanding (2)</p> <p>Facilitators helped learners understand difficult things (5)</p> <p>Facilitators were good (4)</p> <p>Facilitators were regarded highly (3)</p> <p>The facilitators played an important role in developing a better relationship between the EL and UL (2)</p> <p>The facilitators played important role in calming learners when they were upset with the company (1)</p>
	Time to study	<p>Going to work after class led to having less time for learning (3)</p> <p>Homework was difficult due to family responsibilities (1)</p> <p>Reduced theoretical days experienced negatively (16)</p> <p>UL advantages due to more study time, less work (2)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Theoretical Learning	Learning	<p>Bad relationship influenced the learning (1)</p> <p>Learned from the Program (9)</p> <p>Management's attitude towards learnership made EL stress which influenced them while studying and working (1)</p> <p>Management and training provider relationship impacts on the Learners (1)</p> <p>Negative attitude leads to a person not learning (1)</p> <p>Provider and company learned a lot (1)</p> <p>Some UL did not want to learn/listen to supervisors or EL (1)</p> <p>UL knew that it would be difficult and learned from it (1)</p> <p>UL were grateful for what they had learned and it made them stronger (1)</p> <p>UL were not motivated to learn due to feeling unwanted and misused (2)</p>
Us and Them – EL vs. UL	Educational level	<p>Both groups were strong, one in the class situation and one in the workplace (2)</p> <p>EL did not let UL's comments about them being old and stupid affect them (2)</p> <p>EL experienced difficulty in class (10)</p> <p>EL felt vulnerable due to them knowing about their shortfall in educational level (3)</p> <p>EL were more serious and focused in class than UL (1)</p> <p>Once EL realised in class that their level of education would not be exploited due to UL being more educated, they let down their defence (1)</p> <p>The UL learnt faster than EL (4)</p> <p>UL could assist EL in class due to being young and fresh from school (3)</p> <p>UL thought the EL were uneducated (2)</p> <p>UL were a disturbance to EL in class when they finished before them (2)</p>
	Experience	<p>Both groups were strong, one in the class situation and one in the workplace (2)</p> <p>EL did not want to give their responsibility to UL as they did not trust their abilities (1)</p> <p>EL had the advantage due to experience in the workplace (10)</p> <p>EL helped UL even though they did not want to (1)</p> <p>EL implied that their knowledge and experience made them better than UL (2)</p> <p>EL treated UL as if they did not know anything (3)</p> <p>EL were part of the learnership to help UL by sharing practical experience (5)</p> <p>Practical part, EL were much more efficient than UL (3)</p> <p>UL are not used to the work environment and do not know general rules (1)</p> <p>UL enjoyed learning from the EL's experience (3)</p> <p>Very proud and protective of their workplace (1)</p>
	Age	<p>EL also felt vulnerable due to them being older and the UL being younger (1)</p> <p>EL did not let UL's comments about them being old and stupid affect them (2)</p> <p>EL thought that their age would count against them as UL are young and can easily replace them (2)</p> <p>UL could assist EL in class due to being young and fresh from school (3)</p> <p>UL felt EL were old and could not really learn so well (2)</p> <p>UL had an advantage due to age (young ones just out of school) (2)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Us and Them – EL vs. UL	Job insecurity	<p>Being insecure and uninformed led to the EL not wanting to accept the UL into the workplace (1)</p> <p>Confirmation that UL were not there to take our jobs would have helped (2)</p> <p>Convincing EL that their jobs were not at risk was difficult (1)</p> <p>Drivers experienced a loss of job security when the UL had to learn the routes which only they knew (3)</p> <p>EL changed their mind about the value of the learnership (3)</p> <p>EL did not experience job security (4)</p> <p>EL fear of losing their jobs became less with time (1)</p> <p>EL felt more job secure after completing learnership (2)</p> <p>EL felt the UL were a threat to their jobs (5)</p> <p>EL had advantage as they had a job (1)</p> <p>EL thought that their age would count against them as UL are young and can easily replace them (2)</p> <p>EL thought UL would take their jobs (7)</p> <p>EL thought UL would take their jobs which led to a bad relationship (7)</p> <p>EL threatened the UL by saying they do not have jobs here (1)</p> <p>The fact that the UL received their stipends late, was really negatively experienced (1)</p>
	Background	<p>Differences between the two groups negatively influenced attitude (2)</p> <p>EL and UL helped each other positively due to different backgrounds (2)</p> <p>EL felt that UL were their brothers, and that they ought to help them (2)</p> <p>Same background/race (1)</p>
	Mutual beneficial relationship	<p>Both groups were strong, one in the class situation and one in the workplace (2)</p> <p>Buddy-buddy system (1)</p> <p>EL and UL did not help each other at the beginning but later on they did (1)</p> <p>EL and UL helped each other positively due to different backgrounds (2)</p> <p>EL did not want to go to class, UL wanted them in class (1)</p> <p>EL helped UL even though they did not want to (1)</p> <p>EL realised that the UL could help them in class where they were struggling (1)</p> <p>EL wanted to help UL (2)</p> <p>EL were part of the learnership to help UL by sharing practical experience (5)</p> <p>Relationship was good due to helping each other (13)</p> <p>Relationship was great due to EL helping UL in the workplace (9)</p> <p>Relationship was great due to sharing views (3)</p> <p>UL enjoyed learning from the EL's experience (3)</p> <p>When both groups utilise their strength to the benefit of each other, it leads to teamwork (3)</p> <p>Worked together as a team to finish the learnership (6)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Other Us and Them	EL vs. Employer /Management	<p>EL are used to no extras, they could not believe that management would give them free training (1)</p> <p>EL assumed it was the company that was at fault (2)</p> <p>EL did not care about the company (1)</p> <p>EL did not trust the intentions of the company (7)</p> <p>EL did not want to attend classes (2)</p> <p>EL do not use the right communication channels and work against the organisation (2)</p> <p>EL felt hurt that the company treated employees badly because they wanted to learn (1)</p> <p>EL felt that transparency and communication were not apparent within the organisation (1)</p> <p>EL had conflict with employer (1)</p> <p>EL threatened UL if they were to influence their playcard in their fight with the employer (1)</p> <p>EL tried to make UL negative about the company (1)</p> <p>History of employment relationship influences the learnership (3)</p> <p>Learners questioned the organisation's motives for implementing the learnership (2)</p> <p>Management tried to use UL to spite the EL (1)</p> <p>Need for recognition existed by the ELs (4)</p> <p>Non-acceptance of new manager influenced the staff (2)</p> <p>UL were seen as spies in the eyes of the EL (2)</p> <p>Underlying racial issue – perhaps employer/employee relationship (1)</p> <p>Upset that employer saw the operations as more important (1)</p>
	Employed staff vs. EL	<p>EL had conflict with their colleagues as well (1)</p> <p>Staff not on learnership felt they were taking more pressure because of the EL that were on the learnership (1)</p> <p>Staff that did not complete learnership were now at a disadvantage when compared with those that did (1)</p> <p>Staff that were not part of the learnership were still negative about it (1)</p>
	Employed staff vs. UL	<p>EL were treated better than UL by other staff as they knew them (1)</p> <p>Staff not on learnership did not accept UL learners (3)</p> <p>Staff not on learnership felt the UL were not able to work as efficiently and made them work harder (2)</p> <p>Staff not on learnership refused to work with and help the UL (1)</p> <p>Staff that were not part of the learnership were still negative about it (1)</p>

Super Families	Families	Codes
Other Us and Them	UL vs. Employer/Management	Learners questioned the organisation's motives for implementing the learnership (2) Management tried to use UL to spite the EL (1) Management was experienced as dominating and not willing to listen to UL (2) No transparency towards UL led to them questioning the intentions of the company (1) Supervisor and UL conflict that existed made UL be less committed (1) Supervisor only indicated mistakes, never gave positive recognition (1) Supervisors did not communicate with learners (2) UL blame company for having to cope with negative emotions from EL (3) UL felt that the company should either treat them like employees or not, but cannot have the best of both worlds (1) UL felt they could not approach management (1) UL were not motivated to learn due to feeling unwanted and misused (2)

Table 3: Super Families, Families and Codes

A complete list of codes and their comments, as well as the families and their comments, can be reviewed by making use of the webpage on the audit trail CD (Appendix E).

The researcher incorporated a schematically systems' view of the case study together with the model of Kriek, as presented in paragraph 4.9, which was used in describing the events of the learnership. Kriek's model that was discussed in detail earlier, sets out the different constructs of a group. The learnership, as a group, will be discussed by looking at these constructs. It is, however, important to understand more than just the group. One also needs to look at the group from a system perspective.

The learnership is a system within the organisation, which in turn is a system within the industry, which is again a system within the economy, which is a system within the country. Another system is the training arena of the country which is governed by laws and also by the political system. All these systems impact on one another and on those individuals that form part of these systems. By considering all the aspects of the systems within and around the systems (unemployed and employed groups of learners), one can consider the relations in reference to the power struggle and the political processes at the same time, as well as the unconscious or emotional processes involved (Vince, 2002:75). It is these systems within which a system functions, as well as the subsystems that function inside a group, that form the context of a group.

Each super family will be discussed separately. A description of what happened will be given first and then an interpretation as to how the events can be explained, by considering the theories that were discussed in Chapter 4. Please note that extracts of learners' contributions are *italicised* and referred to by using the primary document number (see Appendix E for the original text)*.

In the last section of each super family the possible influence on the learning effectiveness is mentioned briefly and is based on the theoretical aspects that were discussed in Chapter 3.

* The grammar of the extracts has only been revised where deemed absolutely necessary.

5.2. Super Family 1: Mutual goal

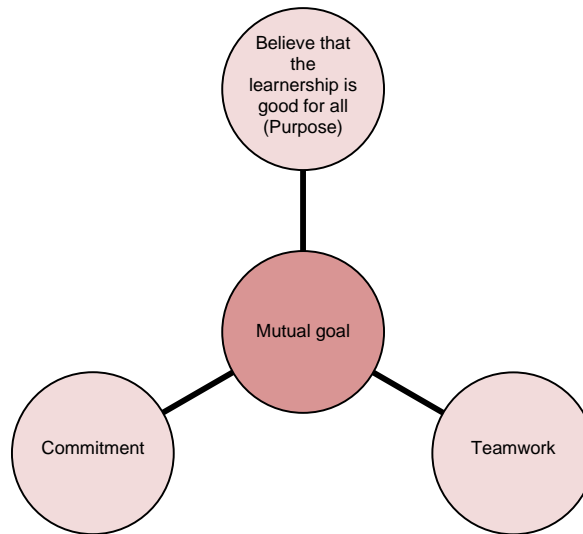


Figure 18: Super Family 1 ~ Mutual goal

Super Family 1: Mutual goal is made up of three families. They are:

- Believe that the learnership is good for all (Purpose) with 26 codes (64 quotations).
- Commitment with 11 codes (37 quotations).
- Teamwork with 24 codes (49 quotations).

5.2.1. Description

In the beginning the aim and the value was not communicated and understood properly by either the learners or the employees of the organisation. They only realised what the aim and value was later on: *When the learners realised the importance of the program and that it is to their benefit. They began committing themselves (P 50).* The company embarked on this project, without getting the buy-in of those that had to implement it, as well as those that should take part in it: *As it was the first time and the introduction was not done correctly, I was not certain of any expectations (P 47).* Those employees that (after the screening tests) were given the opportunity to take part in the program, did not know what content would be covered: *Tell us what it is all about, not only say it is a driving course, but all the other modules (P 56)* or that they will be attending a class with

unemployed learners. The employed learners did not know about the unemployed learners coming to their work premises until the day they arrived: *The permanent employees were not briefed about the arrival of the learners (P 53)*. The purpose of the learnership was to up-skill the staff, and to simultaneously train unemployed learners, but the employed learners did not know this. They were also not sure what they would benefit from the program as they believed that they knew how to do their jobs: *I did feel that the company thought I was not good enough but now I know that it was good for me (P 55)*.

The reaction of both the employed learners and the unemployed learners was that of non-commitment to the program: *Employed learners they were not into class most of the time (P 26)*; *Unemployed learners Absenteeism was very high and the will to learn was low (P 47)*. The employed learners did not participate in class (sometimes they did not even attend) but were committed to the workplace as they wanted to protect their jobs. The unemployed learners were committed to the classroom training, but within the workplace they were very unreliable in terms of attendance and productivity. The two groups were so busy making sure that they did not commit to the program that they were blind to the fact that they could benefit from one another as a team: *At first the relationship was not that good but as time went by we started getting closer and helping each other during classes and during work (P 46)*.

5.2.2. Interpretation

Basic assumption vs. Workgroup state

A group, by definition, is a group of people coming together to achieve set objectives. The goal of a group is the function of the Workgroup state and it is only in this state that the goal can be achieved (refer to paragraph 4.9.1.a). The group seemed to be caught up in the basic assumptions fight-flight state (ba P) more than the Workgroup working towards the goal. The employed learners first tried to flee by not attending the classes, but this did not work due to management enforcing it: *They threatened us, as they said if we do not go we will get into trouble (P 56)*. They then started fighting the perceived subgroup (the unemployed learners). The employed learners were aggressively projecting their fear and uncertainty onto the unemployed learners. This is revealed in the following comment: *when the others harassed you and swear at you (P 54)*. They experienced the feeling of being a tight group (employed learners) by unconsciously believing that no infighting was taking place (refer to paragraph 4.6.3.b). It became the group of employed learners'

implicit goal (baP) to fight the unemployed group and due to this the unemployed learners fled (absent in the workplace) from the group many times (refer to paragraph 4.9.1.a).

Belief in personal gain due to being part of the group

Having a mutual goal means that you believe in the good of the goal and you are committed to working as a team to achieve the mutual goal (Alswang & van Rensburg, 1989) and it is this mutual goal which makes the group members interdependent on one another (refer to paragraph 4.9.1.a). The aim of the learnership, as a way of training people, is to give people the opportunity to develop practical skills and have the theoretical knowledge about their job. This aim was understood by the unemployed learners: *It is all about getting experience in the workplace and learning about the job (P 53); During my study I learned things that I do not know and in the workplace I do experience the things that I learned in the class (P 19).*

The employed learners, however, did not understand the aim of the learnership when the program started as it had never been communicated clearly. Some of them felt insulted because the company wanted to train them in things that they already knew how to do: *They are going to tell me something that I know. It was also because we did not know the reason why I should go there. Now I know (P 56).* They did not understand the benefit that the program would have for them. Lewin mentioned that an individual must be able to identify what personal benefit he will achieve from being a member of a group before he steps up and fulfils his member role (refer to paragraph 4.4.2).

Individual and group goal interdependence

The employed learners perceived the group's explicit goal (to learn theoretical knowledge and practical skills) to be in conflict with their individual explicit goal (to continue as always - as they already knew what they were doing) and this unleashed many emotional responses. It is not possible to be committed to a group or to feel that you are interdependent on the other members, if you do not share the same goal (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). In this case the two groups had different goals (Employed learners wanted to get the theoretical part over and done with just because they had to and the unemployed learners really wanted to get as much practical experience as they could) but both were committed to the same overall goal (finishing the learnership successfully). They became common enemies which has been identified as one of the initial stages of

group development (Cooper, 2007). It seems that the two subgroups were initially unable to see that the two goals were compatible: *We did learn a lot from each other (P 57) but not in the beginning (P 53)* nor could they see that it would be mutually beneficial to achieve the other group's subgoal. It is this inability to accommodate the other group's goal which led to conflict (refer to paragraph 4.9.1.a).

Commitment of management

Management made remarks reflecting non-commitment to the goal: *The manager then later on during the learnership said that it was worthless. Then we were confused and discouraged (P 56)*. Some employed learners even suggested that they thought management only wanted to embark on the learnership for financial reasons: *They get something from the government and got a benefit for themselves as well. They are forcing us to join so that they can benefit. They wanted the government's money (P 56)*. If the core leadership, within a group, is not perceived to be committed to the goal or when distrust exists because it is believed that they have a different motive than is expressed to the group, members will not commit to the group, due to the negativity the group experiences (this is the heart of the group) (refer to paragraph 4.9.1).

Commitment of learners

The level of commitment of the leaders influenced the commitment of the employed and unemployed learners. The employed learners and management, in turn, influenced the level of commitment of the unemployed learners. The unemployed learners' inconsistent attendance could be an indication of the pressure that the employed learners' projection placed on them. This made the management even more uncommitted and the frustration can be seen in the following comment: *Problematic due to inconsistent attendance by learner staff. Management nightmare (P 47)*.

Boundaries

To work as a team the two groups had to be merged into one group. This meant that boundaries had to be moved and this process is known to entail high levels of anxiety (Miller and Rice (1967) as seen in Gould *et al.*, 1999:701). The employed learners feared that they would lose their identity of being "employed" due to the potential threat that the unemployed learners posed. They could also not perceive the new boundaries to be attractive (beneficial) (refer to paragraph 4.9.9). The employed learners were also fixed in

their ways and resisted the change. The unemployed learners were not as affected, as they did not have a boundary as a group, due to them all being recruited as individuals to join the learnership as a learner. They did, however, form a group with boundaries once the employed learners started to act negatively towards them so that they could stand up for one another. This can be seen as forming an out-group, based on the unconscious need to join into a powerful union (against a common enemy): We-ness (refer to paragraph 4.8.2).

Integration of subgroups' goals and boundaries led to teamwork

The two groups did not have a shared goal because the belief that the goal was good for all, received not commitment to and made teamwork/interdependence as a group impossible, a group without a heart (common goal) is not able to function/conceptualise themselves as a group (Refer to paragraph 4.9.1). The subgroups first have to offload their subgroup goals before they can take on the new realistic group goal (Cooper, 2007). It also means that the group is not able to set its external boundaries because it is the goal that demarcates/distinguishes the group from other systems (refer to paragraph 4.9.7).

The groups, however, learned to work together in the classroom: *We were taught how to work together as a team during learning process and encourage each other (P 8); Worked in groups and we had to interact with each other (P 57)*. This was brought about by the facilitators doing group work after creating groups consisting of employed learners and unemployed learners: *Make us communicate better and we started to understand one another and we started to work as a team (P 29)*. It seems that by changing the structure and, with that, the direction and sequence of communication, the facilitators were seen as authoritative figures (dependency on the facilitators in the class) and were able to dissolve unconscious and irrational beliefs between the subgroups and to channel the anxiety into productive work - which resulted in effective teamwork (from the Basic Assumption group to the Workgroup). This reminds us of Agazarian's technique of deliberate functional subgrouping, in order to break down stereotypes between subgroups (Agazarian, 1997).

The teamwork that then started to take place was in response to the complexity of the situation of having to cope with the two separate group boundaries. The new boundaries that were established set the new identity for the combined group that contained elements

of both groups but neither one of the old identities (refer to paragraph 4.9.9). The two groups started to realise and conceptualise the mutual goal they had within the new boundary, namely to finish the learnership: *Participate well during the program because all we have same goal in mind to get knowledge and understanding of workplace (P 43)*. Both groups realised that through working with the other group, they could benefit and more easily reach their own goal and the mutual goal by assisting one another: *Employed learners helped unemployed learners at workplace environment and unemployed learners helped employed learners during classes (P 34); We did learn a lot from each other (P 57)*. It might be that this was also why the mood changed within the group and why conflict seemed to be less within the group. Both groups indicated that they knew the importance of working together as a team: *We must be a unit (P 1); we were working hand in hand with each other focusing on the learnership (P 45)*.

If one considers Lewin's field theory, it seems that once the fear, uncertainty and perceived loss (forces pulling away from the goal) became weaker, the enabling forces became stronger (the force that was pulling them towards the goal) and the group was able to understand that the goal of the learnership was for the benefit of all the parties (the goal became more desirable), they were able to commit towards the goal and they were more motivated to work together (change in behaviour) as a team to achieve the mutual goal.

5.2.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Goal and belief in the benefit of the goal influenced the learning process

The employed learners did not have the needed motivation to learn from/during the program as they did not experience a need for it (Bergh & Theron, 2003). The lack of motivation was due to them not understanding the goal or what the learnership was all about and this led them to believe that the program was not of any benefit to them (refer to paragraph 3.3.4). It was only later on, when the goal became something that they desired that the motivation to learn started to develop.

Workforce Development Project Performance and Innovation Unit (2001) in Davies and Farquharson (2004b) mentioned that the lack of motivation and the perception that no tangible benefits will be gained by participation and will definitely influence the learning process. The employed learners felt insulted that they were expected to learn something

they already knew how to do. They based this on the information that they had received and felt nothing new would have been added to their field of knowledge. Some of the things were definitely things they knew how to do, but certain things can always be improved. This stubbornness to learn is due to adult learners having cognitive maps that already contain set ways of performing tasks and for them to unlearn these set ways and to reintegrate information into this map makes it more difficult and it takes longer than teaching a child. The reason why the employed learners took this so personally is because one's cognitive map becomes part of one's self-identity and if it is ignored, it is not just a rejection of their experiences, but also of the person him/herself (Berg & Theron, 2003) (refer to paragraph 3.3.5).

Goals and boundaries of subgroups influenced the learning process

The two subgroups functioned with different goals and boundaries separating them. The lack of integration in the beginning led to the development of defensive behaviour between the two groups. Vince (2002) said that by ignoring the impact that defensive reaction can have, the individuals' focus is taken away from learning, as they start to concentrate on fighting the enemy. The employed learners were more on the defence side in the beginning and could thus not focus on taking in the knowledge being presented to them in the classroom.

5.3. Super Family 2: Interpersonal relationships

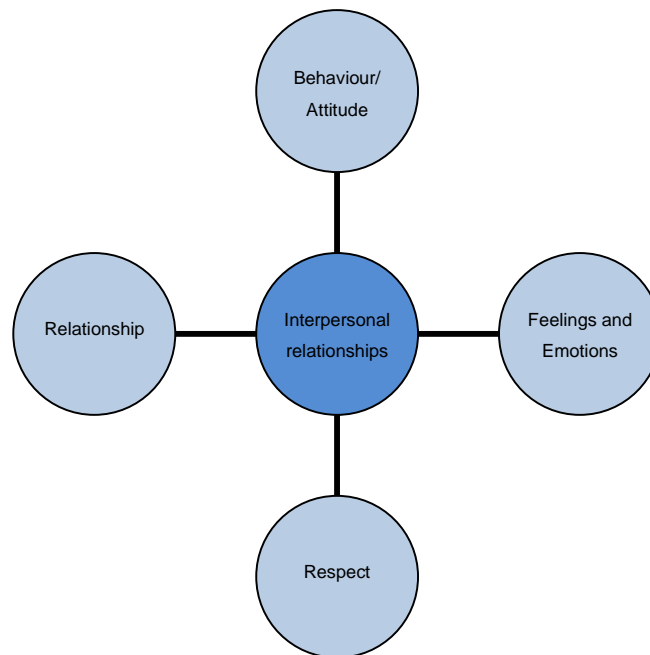


Figure 19: Super Family 2 ~ Interpersonal relationships

Super Family 2: Interpersonal relationships is made up of four families. They are:

- Behaviour/Attitude with 28 codes (47 quotations).
- Feelings and Emotions with 33 codes (60 quotations).
- Respect with 3 codes (3 quotations).
- Relationship with 16 codes (65 quotations).

5.3.1. Description

At the start of the learnership the two groups did not get off on a good footing. The employed learners were not prepared for the arrival of the new people or their integration into the system, nor did they understand why they were being added: *The permanent employees were not briefed about the arrival of the learners (P 53)*. No introduction was done between the groups so that they could start forming a picture about each other as to who they were and where they came from. This led to the two groups making up their own minds (pictures or stories) about the other group and this resulted in a strained relationship: *During the learnership it was difficult between the employed and unemployed learners (P 19)*. Incorporating new people into an already existing system that is not

working properly is not easy. The company did not do a good job of incorporating the unemployed learners into the organisational system.

The attitude that the employed learners developed towards the unemployed learners was that of seeing them as competition or enemies. No good connection could be made cognitively as they only perceived them as being a threat that should be eliminated: *You need to protect your job (P 56)*. The following feelings were apparent:

- Insecurity: *We lost some sort of security due to knowing that there is someone that now also knows my route (P 56); employed learner felt insecure (P 24)*,
- Being threatened: *I felt threatened as I thought they were going to take my job (P 57); threatened by unemployed learner (P 24)*,
- Being vulnerable: *Permanent learners felt exploited (P 53); being uncomfortable: Permanent guys are not comfortable with unemployed learners (P 53)* and
- Mistrust: *They thought the unemployed learners were spying (P 54)*.

This discomfort developed into emotions of

- anger,
- resentment: *There was resentment (P 56)* and
- resistance: *Did not want to welcome them (P 56)*.

The behaviours that displayed this attitude, physically were those of

- not welcoming them: *To be regarded as outcasts by employed workers in the company (P 23)*,
- non-acceptance: *The experience was not too good as I felt that we were not liked by the permanent drivers as I am a driver (P 23)*,
- non-commitment: *Employed learners were not in class most of the time (P 26)*,
- no co-operativeness: *When going to the workplace and driver did not want co-pilots (P 22)*,
- unhelpful: *They didn't want to mentor or motivate us as learners (P 25)*,
- spiteful: *When they made mistakes we left them, thinking that they would leave (P 56)*,
- harmful: *When the others harass and swear at you*,
- threatening: *They do take advantage of us when they say we don't know nothing about this place we gonna leave the job (P 19)*,

- taking advantage: *Other employed they take advantage over us because they think they are old employed (P 53),*
- treating them as useless: *They believed that the unemployed learner knows nothing, they know better because they have been in this industry for long (P 37),*
- dictating: *I mean they are permanent, what they say goes (P 21),*
- selfishness: *To be used by employed drivers to drive for them cause they are afraid of speed fines (P 27),*
- acting unfairly: *The person does not explain to you that you have done something wrong, they just shout and swear at you and whisper behind your back (P 54),*
- acting immaturity: *They are not mature in the way they act (P 54),*
- isolation: *We were isolated in the beginning (P 56) and protection of territory: for them it was their place and not ours (P 54).*

The negative attitude of the employed learners towards the unemployed learners made the unemployed learners react negatively: *Did not want to welcome them and when you were not friendly to them, they became negative (P 56).* No good connection was made within their mindset and between themselves and the employed learners. They developed feelings or emotions of

- hurt: *It made us feel very bad (P 53),*
- rejection: *Drivers not accepting us openly (P 28),*
- feeling uncomfortable: *Things were a bit uncomfortable (P 57),*
- being ignored: *Working with someone who doesn't talk to you, telling you that you are here to take his job (P 21),*
- felt unwelcome: *We as learners were not welcomed by the permanent staff with a good attitude (P 25),*
- not needed: *They made us feel that we were in the way (P 54),*
- not important: *No one wanted to hear from us (P 21),*
- excluded: *They did make us feel like we did not belong here (P 54),*
- mistreated: *Some of the employed learners were rude (P 21) and*
- misused: *They made us feel like they used us to do their work (P 54).*

This led them to being uncommitted, spiteful and acting negatively towards the employed learners.

Adding to the already negative experience of the negative attitude the employed learners portrayed towards them, the supervisors also had the wrong attitude. The supervisors had reasons for not having the right attitude towards the unemployed learners as will be explained in paragraph 5.5 and 5.6. This led, however, to them having to deal with even more negative emotions: *Learners felt that they were not appreciated by their supervisors. If the supervisor does not pay attention to you, are you then worth anything? (P 54).*

The negative attitude with which the unemployed learners reacted, led to the employed learners being more suspicious and reacting even more negatively: *They became negative and this made you even more suspicious (P 56).*

The employed learners also had a problem with the fact that the unemployed learners did not have the necessary respect for them or for the facilitators. Respect is an integral part of a relationship and the lack of respect in the relationship between the employed learners and unemployed learners definitely influenced their relationship negatively: *Relationship is good depending how people respect each other (P 13).*

In the classroom the facilitators started to deal with the fears and negative attitudes. This was done by communicating truthfully and by forcing the two groups to work together to finish projects. They got to know each other and were able to realise that their unconscious fears were not going to be realised: *Make us communicate better and we are starting to understand one another and started to work as a team (P 29).* The two groups were able to indicate at the end that they were one big happy family and it was not possible to see them as being separate anymore: *We were all us the company staff. There was no undermining anyone. We were singing the same tune. It was one big family (P 7); We are like brothers and sisters (P 6); I've experienced this as a good big family (P 33).*

Many comments were made about the great relationship that existed. Many of them said that this positive relationship existed because of working as a team: *The relationship between the employed learners and the unemployed learners was excellent because we work as a team (P 4), sharing views: The relationship between us and the unemployed learners was great because we shared most of the views (P 1); good communication:*

Good communication (P 12) but mostly because they helped each other: The relationship between employed learners and unemployed learners was very great because we helped each other (P 43); Help each other in different ways (P 7).

The unemployed learners, although it was a very emotional and difficult experience, felt that they had learned a lot due to the learnership and that they had developed as a person: *We are still grateful for the opportunity. We survived. We are better people today (P 54).*

The employed learners also completed the learnership with feelings of growth but more importantly, feeling less fearful and showing more self-confidence: *If that person is going to take my job it will be okay because then I will have my certificate (P 56).*

5.3.2. Interpretation

Most of what is discussed in this super family forms part of the more invisible constructs of the learnership group, that which is described by Kriek (2009) as the process. It is like the glue that keeps the other constructs of a group together (refer to paragraph 4.9.5).

Interpersonal relationship is influenced by one's attitude

An interpersonal relationship between people means that some sort of relation or connection exists. The relation can be perceived or experienced in different ways and leads to a specific attitude towards the other person or group. An attitude is the way one thinks, feels and behaves and it influences interpersonal and intergroup behaviour that can either distance people from each other or bring them together (Bergh & Theron, 2003). The connection between the subgroups, employed learners and unemployed learners was not managed properly in the beginning: *If we had initially handled it better, we would not have had such a bad attitude vibe (P 56).* The wrong attitude developed between the subgroups: *I had to deal with the employed staff's bad attitude (P 25); It then influenced me with a bad attitude even now, I prefer to work alone rather than with them (P 2).* The attitudes led to the subgroups being distanced from each other and did not bring them together or if one uses Kriek's (2009) metaphor, one can say that the glue that should have held the other constructs together, was not working.

Fear of losing their employment resulted in a negative attitude being developed

The origin of the attitude that the employed learners developed was that of fear for losing their job/security/means of providing for their families so they saw the unemployed learners as enemies, as different and as competition: *The employed when we come here they would treat us badly because they think we want to take their job (P 19); They thought when we are here on the learnership we will take their job (P 29)*. This fear developed because of profound experiences that the employed learners had to deal with in earlier days of their employment with the company which is what Foulkes named transference of the past into the here-and-now reality (paragraph 4.5.2). This was made worse when the company did not communicate the reason for the learnership clearly or in time (see paragraph 5.2 and 5.4), as well as making contradicting remarks: *The manager said that I was not employed as a learner but as a driver; I had to go and do deliveries as I am not benefiting anything from the learnership (P 56); The manager then later on during the learnership said that it was worthless. Then we were confused and discouraged (P 56)*. This led to employed learners mistrusting the intention/purpose of the learnership. As explained in paragraph 4.8.2, this paradoxical reality of the employed learners was redirected to their unconscious as the conscious mind was not able to deal with this paradoxical reality (Ringer, 2002). The employed learners saw the unemployed learners as working with the company in this covert project to get rid of them: *They even called us spies (P 53); They thought the unemployed learners were spying (P 54)*. This was an unconscious group fear and not an individual fear: *You never have the right answer. They sometimes talk as a group and then when they are alone they say different things (P 54); When you get to know them personally, you will find it is not all (P 53)*.

Fear of being inferior led to negative attitude

Employed learners also had feelings/fear of being inferior: *The permanent learners thought that they were going to be exposed (P 53)*. This was due to them being uncertain about their ability to cope within the classroom: *They were always negative about the training and wanted the schooling to end. They were scared (P 54); No cooperation from the drivers because of lack of confidence and knowledge (P 22)*. They also knew that the unemployed learners had a better education than they did and it had not been completed as long ago as theirs. They feared that this would result in the company rather employing the unemployed learners than them, if they did not perform as well as them in the classroom.

Group-as-a-whole basic assumption reaction because of fear

These reactions of the employed learners were thus a group-as-a-whole reaction as mentioned by Prince (2006) and the group tried to avoid the perceived threat by unconsciously conspiring to fight against these fears at the expense of the successful completion of the learnership/task performance (refer to paragraph 4.8.1). These fears were projected onto the unemployed learners: *Now they were blaming the learners (P 53); Some of them are blaming us and taking this whole thing very personally (P 54)*: which explains why it felt as if the two groups were fighting with one another, even though one could not physically see them fighting. This led to the learnership objectives not being realised. The intention had been that the two groups should work together to achieve the outcomes.

Reciprocal negative attitudes boycotted mutual dependence

The unemployed learners felt hurt and distant from the employed learners. This led to the unemployed learners being negative towards the employed learners: *They became negative (P 56)*. These reciprocal negative attitudes towards the other group at the start of the learnership influenced their opinion of each other, as well as the feelings and emotions that they developed towards each other, and the way they behaved towards each other: *I had a great experience with the learnership except for the first months of our attendance (P 27)*.

All these emotional dilemmas and anxieties boycotted mutual dependence. How these emotions were expressed, enacted and defended in their relations with each other affected the relationship between the two subgroups (Gould *et al.*, 1999:700).

Process of mending the broken relationship

The relationship was not positive in the beginning but it became better as time went by and things were sorted out: *At first the relationship was not that good but as time went by we started getting closer and helping each other during classes and during work (P 46)*. The two groups did not communicate with each other: *The permanent staff and the learners did not communicate well enough (P 51)*. In the classroom the facilitators were able to get the two groups to communicate and get to know each other better: *We got to know each other better in the classroom which made it better outside, this bridged the gap between the employed and unemployed learners (P 53)*. The classroom was instrumental

in the change from a negative relationship into a positive relationship (refer to paragraph 5.7).

The relationship became better. Firstly, because the unemployed learners started to realise that the employed learners had this fear that they were projecting onto them and that that was the reason for their attitude and that it was not because they had an issue with them as individuals: *That is a normal reaction. We take it from our side. We expected that they were going to react as they did. The company was to blame for this. (P 57).* The unemployed learners, as can be seen in the last comment, did not blame the employed learners anymore, but they blamed the company. The unemployed learners were able to contain the emotions of the employed learners. This was successfully brought about by the facilitators channelling the unemployed learners' reactions to the overflow (moving from the individual into the group) of the employed learners' emotions into the group so that it did not hinder the growth of the group (Ringer, 2002).

Secondly, the employed learners started to realise that their fears were unjustified and would not become a reality and that the unemployed learners did not intend to harm them. The paradoxical unconscious unreality started to become a conscious reality (translation, see paragraph 4.5.2) when they had to deal with the "enemy" face to face and this led to deeper sharing between the groups: *but it changed when they finally realised that their jobs were not at risk (P 50); I realised after some time that they were not a threat. I then tried to associate with them (P 57) and they were able to deal with their emotions: As time went by, they dealt with the emotions, and they started to come round. It became better when they started to understand, they welcomed them (P 53). They thought when we are here the learnership we will take their job but eventually they started to accept us and understand us (P 29).*

The facilitator had been able to communicate the purpose of the structure of the learnership in such a way that it was accepted as the truth by the employed learners: *Then I realised they were not going to take my job but were here to learn new skills for themselves which is good (P 57).* This led to both groups starting to accept each other: *They realised that there was nothing wrong with having us here. We realised that there was nothing wrong with them (P 57).* Kriek (2009) mentioned that the process construct is the construct that indicates the group's growth and development. In this group it was

evident that the group had developed dramatically during emotional tides (Cooper, 2007) and had grown towards being a unique group, becoming productive (Johnson & Johnson, 2006) and performing well (Tuchman as seen in Robbins, 2003) group.

Respect in the relationship

The problem of respect between the two groups was more apparent in the classroom than in the workplace: *Relationship was very bad in class because they don't have respect (P 2)*. The unemployed learners worked faster than the employed learners and when they had finished they became loud and disruptive in the classroom because they were bored. The employed learners battled with the work and were disturbed by the noise: *Sometimes the unemployed student will make an excessive noise when they finished and they don't even want to listen to the facilitator (P 2)*. This was seen as disrespect. Making such an issue about the unemployed learners not respecting the higher authority (facilitators), could have been their way of emphasising their struggle with respect for management in the workplace. This is a form of transference as suggested by Foulkes (paragraph 4.5.2). The unemployed learners also did not want to show the EL respect as they were of the opinion that they did not act in a way that deserved respect. The definition of respect indicates that respect is given if someone is admired or highly regarded (Alswang & Van Rensburg, 1989).

5.3.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Climate influenced the learning process

One of the situational characteristics that influenced the level of motivation was the climate. The negative emotions and tension impacted on the climate/process and was not a contributing motivator towards the learning process and according to Salas (2001) these emotions led to less effective learning (refer to paragraph 3.3.4).

Feeling of fear influenced the learning process

One of the most intense feelings that were revealed by the data was the fear of losing one's job. This is one of the individual characteristics that Salas (2001) had identified as having an influence on the learning process. Jarvis (2004) confirmed this by mentioning that adult learners learn best when they are not under threat. The fear of losing their employment, (as perceived by the employed learners) did influence their learning effectiveness. It is emotions that determine, influence and drive learning and memory

(Boekaerts, 2002). The self-concept (subjective perception of self) is important in the development of oneself. The employed learners feared that they would not be able to learn and this would also have influenced their learning.

Attitude influenced the learning process

One learner mentioned that one's attitude should be positive otherwise it will influence the learning process: *Tell him that he must have a positive attitude. With a negative attitude you will not learn (P 55)*. In Davies and Farquharson (2004b) the Workforce Development Project Performance and Innovation Unit (2001) pointed out that a negative attitude will greatly influence the success or the learning process (refer to paragraph 3.3.2).

5.4. Super Family 3: Communication

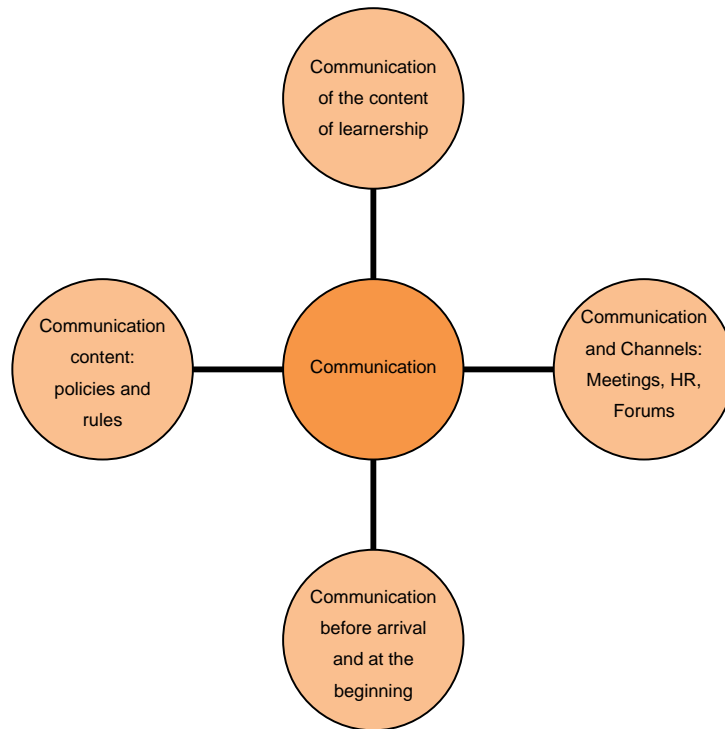


Figure 20: Super Family 3 ~ Communication

Super Family 3: Communication is made up of four families. They are:

- Communication of the content of learnership with 8 codes (23 quotations).
- Communication and Channels: Meetings, HR, Forums with 12 codes (27 quotations).
- Communication before arrival and at the beginning with 13 codes (38 quotations).
- Communication content: policies and rules with 3 codes (5 quotations).

5.4.1. Description

Employed learners went through a screening process to ensure that they would be capable of completing the learnership and they were informed about who would be attending. Why they were tested, what the learnership was about and what they would be taught was not communicated and it was not really a process of individual choice as to whether they wanted to enrol or not: *It is due to the company's failure to introduce the process and the people properly. It was also because we did not know the reason why I should go there (P 56).*

Then one day the unemployed learners arrived at the workplace, without any prior communication to staff or supervisor that they would be coming or why they were there. This situation was made worse due to the fact that the training could not start, and this led to high levels of confusion: *Training that started late, created some confusion as to who these people were (P 55).*

Even after this surprise arrival of total strangers, no formal introduction took place where the company explained why these people were there and how the program would be managed: *They were not properly introduced. You just find them here and introduce yourself. We should have been brought together and given a formal introduction (P 56).*

A lack of a culture of open and honest communication was apparent within the organisation and no process/vehicles for delivering or convening communication was in place. This led to a lack of communication within the learnership system as well: *At first it was difficult because there was no communication (P 29).*

5.4.2. Interpretation

Information is energy and energy is information

By taking some elements of Lewin's force field theory, Agazarian's Systems Centred theory and Kriek's group conceptualisation theory, the following can be said about communication within a group:

Information (communication) is the energy that keeps all the constructs together and it is also the means of creating change within the group (molecule) because by providing information, energy is transferred over boundaries of systems or constructs (atoms) and the whole group (molecule) changes. This energy can move the constructs in different directions. This can be in the desired or undesired direction. The lack of energy can also lead to required changes not taking place.

In this case study this was the case. The necessary communication did not take place: *There are things that need to be addressed especially communication with every worker and the learners in order for the program to go well (P 21); Had more open communication (P 50).* In the recruitment phase the employees were tested, without being informed what the program would be about and what they would learn: *It was also*

because we did not know the reason why I should go there (P 56); In the beginning I did not want to go for the course, because how can they teach me how to drive a car if I have been driving the car for so long? Tell us what it is all about not only saying it is a driving course, but all the other modules (P 56). Not knowing what the course entailed, led to resistance by the employed learner group to form part of the subgroup and the employed learners were attending the classes because they were forced to attend and not of their own free will: *They threatened us, as they said if we do not go we will get into trouble (P 56).* The employed learners did not receive the energy or motivation because they had not been informed how they would benefit from forming part of the subgroup and it was only once they were convinced of the benefits that they joined the program willingly: *I did feel that the company thought I was not good enough but now I know that it was good for me (P 55); We learned what the purpose was for things that we were doing for many years without knowing why we were doing it (P 56).*

The lack of communication led to unrealistic fears and negative attitudes

The surprise arrival of the unemployed learners was the start of the employed learners' fears. The employed learners were not given any information as to who these people were and why they were there: *The permanent employees were not briefed about the arrival of the learners (P 53).* This was even made worse by the fact that the training could not start due to the contractual issues with the SETA and this was also not communicated to the staff. There was much confusion about who these people were and the confusion led to the employees making up their own theories: *There were also certain issues that we had to resolve between the company and the SETA and because of that the SETA did not want to pay the grants. This led to the training being on hold, which led to uncertainty (P 49); The training that started late, created some confusion as to who these people were (P 55).*

The main theory (but unrealistic) that the employees came up with was that the unemployed learners were there to take their jobs and because the employed learners' work was their means for survival, they reacted negatively towards their perceived enemy (unemployed learners): *Yes, when the learnership came in, (strange people) we thought the company wants to get rid of us (P 56).* This fear will be elaborated on later in paragraph 5.8. It is, however, important to note that this could have been prevented if the employed learners had been better prepared by informing them at an earlier stage and by

giving them clear information so that the learnership would have made sense to them: *The company did not give them information or time to get used to the situation (P 57)*. The following was also said: *Management should have talked to the employed staff before the unemployed learners came. This should have explained to them the procedures and assured them that no one would take their job (P 53); We should give them the bigger picture. Give them something that they need which they cannot see (P 56)*. The last comment was made by an unemployed learner and the reason why he felt so strongly about the company having to communicate their arrival to the employed learners was because they were affected by the negative reaction of the employees: *They did not feel welcome. It is due to the company's failure to introduce the process and the people properly (P 56)*.

Separate communication strengthened the separate boundaries of the subgroups

During the program the communication with the employed learners and the unemployed learners was carried out separately. This led to the fears of the employees being more real as they wondered what happened (was said) in these private meetings: *The previous supervisor, he had meetings with the permanents and then with the learners. The permanent employees interpreted this as being "us" and "them" and made them more suspicious (P 53)*. The unemployed learners, in turn, felt that they were not part of the workplace system due to them not being part of the general staff meetings: *We were not invited to the staff meetings once a month (P 53)*. The formal channels, like the availability of the HR office if assistance was needed, were not communicated to the unemployed learners: *Tell learners that they can go to HR if they have problems (P 54)*.

Suggested communication vehicles

A workshop before the arrival of the unemployed learners was suggested: *They should undergo training or a workshop. To tell them how the learnership is structured, how to teach others and that they are not here to take their jobs or their increases (P 54)*. The employed learners also expressed their desire that management should communicate with them and take their opinions seriously: *The company must work hand in hand with us and solve problems with us and not alone. Consult with us before taking decisions. We must be a unit (P 1)*. An introduction between the staff and the unemployed learners at the beginning of the program was also suggested: *We should have been brought together and given a proper introduction (P 56)*. This will help the two groups to start

communicating with one another and will leave less room for misinterpretation about each other: *Make us communicate better and we started to understand one another and we started to work as a team (P 29); Discuss advantages and disadvantages, what can go wrong during sessions at the onset of the program to iron out problems (P 57)*. Focus groups during the process were suggested: *Have workshops during the learnership between the two groups where they can raise their opinions: maybe once a month, Maybe weekly reviews for both parties so that problems can be sorted out as they occur (P 57)*. The unemployed learners suggested that the company work with them to solve the problems. This, however, means that the management must change their culture and adopt a collaborative consultation culture instead of running the show without any consultation at all.

Communication of policies and procedures will assist in integration of boundaries

The communication of the policies and procedures to the unemployed learners should also take place: *Emphasise the policies and procedures (P 53)*. Communication concerning the general rules of the company (system) should be communicated to the unemployed learners when they became temporary members of the system if one expects of them to act according to the group norms. This was not done and subsequently the unemployed learners did not know how they were expected to behave and how to adapt to the culture: *No we did not know it (P 53)*. Not knowing the general rules led the unemployed learners to feel that they were not welcome in the system: *Company policies were not explained (it is important to do so), we did not belong here. If the company had indeed had a good heart for the learners, they would have explained and would have been more open (P 53)*. It also meant that they got themselves into unnecessary trouble: *Sometimes they did not even know that if you were absent that you would be in trouble. If included and taught the rules, we would not have been in trouble (P 54)*.

5.4.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

The lack of communication influenced the learning process

Within an organisation Vince (2002) said that to ignore the impact of poor communication, individuals focus on learning will be influenced. The lack of communication during the learnership without a doubt, took the focus of the learners away from learning. Vince also said that if the emotional dynamics were not taken into account, the learning would be affected. If the company took the learners' and the employees' emotions into account they would have had a culture of open and collaborative communication within the organisation.

The lack of treating adult learners as self-directed, influenced the learning process

When the learnership was planned the process of discussing the proposed program with the employees did not take place and learners were just informed that they need to go and attend the learnership. Brookfield (1995) and Bergh and Theron (2003) believe that adult learners are self-directed and psychologically need to feel that they are in charge of their own learning, including the goals, resources and methods. To overcome the fact that one cannot give the learners too many choices, one should at least communicate in a way that shows that you want them to take up the challenge and not just tell them to do so. This should have been a more consultative process as adult learners want to feel they are treated like adults and want to participate in the learning process (Jarvis, 2004): *We should ask people what they want to do. Let people do what they want to do (P 56).*

5.5. Super Family 4: Planning

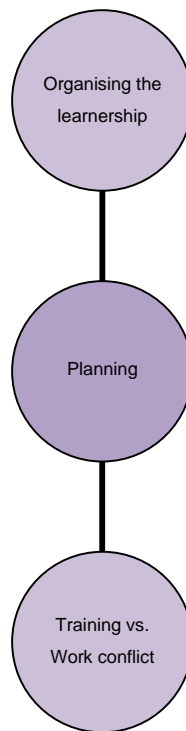


Figure 21: Super Family 4 ~ Planning

Super Family 4: Planning is made up of two families. They are:

- Organising the learnership with 20 codes (44 quotations).
- Training vs. Work conflict with 8 codes (38 quotations).

5.5.1. Description

The learnership program was planned by management, SETA and the provider. This planning was not very successful. Right at the beginning the first issue that arose was that of the contractual complications with the Wholesale and Retail SETA. The SETA did not keep to the contractual arrangements and made different demands (for example wanting to physically count all learners to confirm the numbers) every time that the previous demand had been fulfilled. This led to the training provider halting the delivery of training before it even started. Later on certain agreements were made and the training started but then payment did not come through as promised and training was halted again: *There were also certain issues that we had to resolve between the company and the SETA and because of that the SETA did not want to pay the grants. This led to*

the training being on hold, which led to uncertainty (P 49). The non-payment from the SETA did not only affect the payment of the training provider but also the unemployed learners as no funds were available to pay their stipends (allowance). Later on the company made a payment to the unemployed learners because they felt it was unfair to them, with the hope that the SETA would pay them in time so that they did not run into a cash-flow problem. A project is difficult to manage if the main role players do not keep to deadlines and promises, or if they keep on changing the guidelines. All these changes led to less time for training to be completed which, in turn, affected all the parties involved: *The training that started late had an impact on the starting date of the training which impacted on the schedule as well. We had to push for the training to be completed in a period 3 months shorter than it should have been (P 55).*

Other stakeholders, like supervisors, team leaders and HR were not involved in the planning: *As it was the first time and the introduction was not done correctly, I was not certain of any expectations (P 47).* This led to many practical implications of the program being overlooked. The organisation of the learnership was a nightmare because no preparation or contingency plans were in place and this led to constant conflict between the training provider and the company. When no training took place, there were too many learners standing around because there was not enough work with which to keep them busy. When training took place, not enough staff were available to keep up with the operational requirements: *Not having enough staff during the training (P 52).* The reason for not having enough staff was because only one inexperienced, unemployed learner cannot replace an experienced employed learner because they cannot perform at the same productivity rate: *We must think of the shortage of staff. If we pull out one permanent staff member you must have two learners as they are not as productive (P 55).* The fact that when permanent staff left the employment of the company, they did not fill the positions added to the problem of a shortage of staff: *This means that we end up losing a few permanent staff and we do not replace them (P 55).* This was due to ensuring more work for the learners when no training was taking place, as well as the contractual obligation with the SETA that the company would absorb a certain percentage of the unemployed learners as staff members once the learnership had been completed. All of this could have been planned better, if all the important stakeholders had been involved.

The training provider took decisions such as which employed learner would be in which group and in which week training would take place or not. Due to the fact that the training provider did not know the operational environment, the requirements of or the roles of the employed learners within the workplace, wrong allocations to groups were made: *Very disorganised. From the work perspective it was a disaster. There was little or no planning on sorting who goes when (P 52).* The most ideal weeks were not chosen to schedule the facilitators for training and certain changes to the training schedule were made without consultation, neither were they communicated to the supervisors once the decisions were made: *Staff were taken without replacements. Times were not discussed (P 52).* The supervisors only came to know of these changes in the mornings when they found certain employees not present on the warehouse floor or at the petrol pump: *Please consult with supervisors before compiling and organising groups for training and organising dates after consultation for the next time (P 52).* This led to frustration and difficulties for the supervisors because they were not able to plan ahead to maintain the level of service they had to render: *Working under pressure every day with less staff was not pleasant (P 52); The company has to stay productive to prevent the company from closing down (P 55).*

The employed learners also experienced this conflict between the training and work as they never knew what should take preference: *When my manager put pressure on me as he needed his reports on time while my facilitator needed his class work on time too (P 11).* In the beginning (as mentioned before), they did not want to attend classes, but later on they did not want to miss the training. Employed learners experienced difficulty accepting the following situations:

- When they were pulled out of class to go and work: *There was a pressure during learnership whereby sometimes we were taken out of the class to work not completing the module of the day which was not the agreement (P 8); Sometimes when you were supposed to be in the class, as a driver, I was instructed to go for deliveries. (P 13);* or
- that they needed to return to the workplace after classes had finished in the afternoons instead of going home or staying behind to finish homework: *Company expecting us to do two things in the same time: Like attending the class after that we must leave and go and work (P 3); They told us to not leave before 16:30. If classes finished early then you had to go to the warehouse. (P 4).;* and

- when the schedule changed to only having three days training in a week instead of five and then having to work the other two days: *The difficulty I experienced was when we were told that we are going to learn the whole week and it changed during the learnership. They stop us attending school the whole week and then we attended only three days a week. (P 4).*

The employed learners were concerned about having less time for class and for studying: *This didn't gave us a chance to ask each other or our facilitator further questions because we didn't have enough time (P 15); The first timetable it was good according to have a big time for studying and reading (P 24); We needed time to do homework and prepare for tests, but then we had to go and work after the training in the afternoon (P 55).*

It was not only the employed learners that were upset about the changes in the schedules, but also the unemployed learners. Firstly, these changes added to their doubts about the learnership: *The lack of keeping the dates was part of controversy that led to doubts about learnership. When dates were postponed time and again I felt sorry for myself (P 24).* Secondly, they also felt that these changes left them with less training time: *The worst part of the learnership was when the management changed the program (P 37); It was to learn under restricted time to cover so many things in very short time (P 39); We were in fear (P 54).* One more issue that the unemployed learners had was that they were drawn from the classroom to go and work when employed staff did not report for work: *What I have experience was we were taken out of class during training because of one of permanent staff was absent to work, Taken out of class to do someone else's job. (P 26).*

All these changes in the program were decisions taken by management to ensure that the company did not close down. The fact that the company is within a service industry is an important fact to take into account. Even more important is that the delivery or non delivery of service can lead to life or death situations for patients that need medication. Certain legislative changes were also made that affected the pharmaceutical distribution channels. The main implication for the company was the principle of Single Exit Pricing (SEP) which means that the price of the medication is the same for the pharmacy, irrespective from which distributor they buy. This leaves the company with only one variable to compete on and that is service delivery. Management wanted to have their

people trained so that they could be more productive and add more value, but they also needed to keep the work flowing on a day-to-day basis.

The employed and unemployed learner subgroups interpreted these changes negatively due to the company valuing the actual work more important than the training: *But in turn the employer wants the work done first (P 7)*. The learners resented the company for not planning the program properly from the start and they held them responsible for creating the tension and conflict that they had to cope with: *The difficult situation was when the management put pressure on us and changed the time schedule of the learnership (P 8)*. They also interpreted these changes as an indication that the management was not committed to the program: *This indicated that management was not committed to the training (P 55)*. Even the training provider was not happy with the management for making these changes: *The manager's failure to co-operate. He just decided to stop all training because it was affecting his operations, without notification or consultation (P 49)*.

The consulting company that was paid to arrange the learnership was focused on implementing the training and the operational managers and supervisors were focused on increasing the effectiveness of the operations: as the organisation was financially not where it needed to be to ensure long-term survival. These two stakeholders were not working together in the planning of the learnership and led to two different goals set for these subgroups.

5.5.2. Interpretation

Super system and subsystems influenced system

The high level of influence and the extent of the influence that the super system (SA Skills legislation and Management) and other subsystems (SETA and Training Provider) can have on a system (learnership group) was clearly indicated in paragraph 5.5.1. One of the training organisers commented that these dynamics almost caused the learnership to fail: *The challenges between the learners self, Wholesale and Retail Seta as well as the company almost made the learnership programs unsuccessful (49)*. The unemployed learners felt that this relationship impacted them emotionally: *The management and the service providers must have better communication so that everyone knew what was going on and so that the learners felt more comfortable. The relationship must be better as it makes the learners panic when the relationship is not good (P 54)*.

Communication between system, super system and subsystem

The lack of consultation and communication meant that all the parties took decisions without considering the other systems that would be affected. As a result, one system's decision had negative implications which led to the next decision that led to more negative implications. If all the stakeholders were involved in deliberate and constant input and feedback sessions from the start, many of the problems could have been avoided as many of the influences between and within the other systems would have been considered.

Commitment to agreement from all stakeholders is imperative

The non-payment led to the unemployed learners doubting the feasibility of the program, firstly, due to the training being halted: *The stopping for a month made us suspicious about the learnership (P 31). It is when they are postponing months for us to start the classes (P 34);* and secondly because unemployed learners were not being paid their stipends: *It is when services Seta delayed our money because I started to be hopeless.* The group experienced a loss of security and power to regulate the level of security as Kriek (2009) mentioned that this could happen in groups. The group did not commit to the learnership fully as they wanted to protect themselves from harm if they committed themselves and then things did not work out. It also disturbed them emotionally when they had to wait at home while they were unsure if the program would start again: *Next time you organise a learnership make sure you have settled with or everything before embarking on recruiting people. Don't make learners suffer (P 27).*

Role conflict should be resolved

Role conflict existed for the employed learner between being a student during training and being a working employee. Role conflict is apparent due to the incompatibility between the demands of the two roles that were expected of them within the boundaries of two systems (Johnson & Johnson, 2006) and led to tension because of the pulling energy between the two expectation poles. Such tension should be resolved before the training commences.

Learnership was experienced as being disorganised

Unemployed learners were strongly of the opinion that the learnership was ill organised: *Mismanagement and maladministration by the learnership coordinators (P 23)*. They also felt that many of their negative experiences were as a result of the learnership being disorganised: *My comment is based on the organisation of the learnership. They were not well prepared for the learnership that is why we had so many problems in our learnership (P 41)*. Little or no room really existed to accommodate the learners when no training was taking place. The unemployed learners experienced the lack of space to accommodate them as very traumatic: *At first it was disorganised because there was not space for unemployed learners at the work place but when time went on the situation got better (P 20)*; *At first it was not easy, we have to cope with cold weather standing outside, being ignored. No one wanted to hear from us. At first it was difficult to come and do nothing (P 21)*. Coming into a new system and experiencing that you cannot be accommodated, will definitively cause a person to not feel part of the system, but even worse feeling unwanted. It was these negative feelings that turned the unemployed learners into being so offensive towards the management, even though they were not to blame for all that went wrong.

5.5.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

The lack of planning between the stakeholders influenced the learning process

The lack of communication between stakeholders led to the program being ill-organised and not well planned. This led to the learners' experiencing role conflict between the workplace and the classroom. They also experienced time constraints.

5.6. Super Family 5: Practical learning

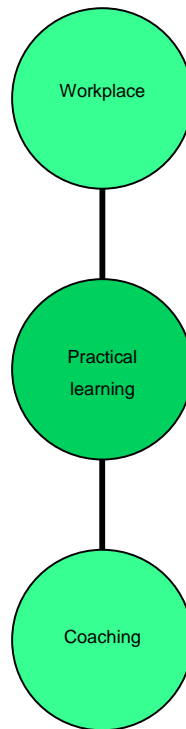


Figure 22: Super Family 5 ~ Practical learning

Super Family 5: Practical learning is made up of two families. They are:

- Workplace with 24 codes (40 quotations).
- Coaching with 12 codes (19 quotations).

5.6.1. Description

The practical learning part makes up 70% of a learnership. The learners that were involved in the Wholesale and Retail learnership worked in the warehouse. The warehouse had three main departments namely Receiving, Picking and Packing. The company had changed their layout and security access to clamp down on theft. Each department was fenced off and given a gate with access control. Each staff member had only programmed access to the department within which he/she worked. The concept of multiskilling was for this reason not practical for the business. The unemployed learners were not happy that they were not being exposed to the different departments: *We were not given the opportunity to work in different departments (P 54).*

Learners in the Professional Driver learnership many a time did not have work to do as only two people could travel in one delivery van, the driver and the co-pilot. In the beginning the unemployed learners were all co-pilots as they did not know the routes nor did they have a driver's licence. The unemployed learner drivers wanted to learn different routes but this was not operationally viable according to the organisation and this led to disappointment.

In the workplace, where the practical learning took place, the employed learners were very comfortable as they were familiar with the environment and already knew how to perform the necessary tasks. The unemployed learners were not comfortable. They were not welcome, there was no space for them and they were usually ignored by the employees in the workplace as they were perceived by them as a threat: *At first it was not easy, we have to cope with cold weather standing outside, being ignored. No one wanted to hear from us. Saying we are going to take their jobs (P 21)*. The unemployed learners also did not know how and what to do to be able to perform adequately. They also make many mistakes: *On deliveries they made many mistakes (P 2)* and were not working fast enough: *If we pull out one permanent staff member you must have two learners as they are not as productive (P 55)*. This led to backlogs and a high number of customer returns. Some of the employees did not want to help them and terrorised them: *Some helped, others were bullies (P 54)*.

Besides not wanting to help, neither the employees nor the supervisors knew how to coach or help the unemployed learners. They were not even informed that they should assist the learners, neither did any training in coaching take place: *All supervisors should be mentors to the learners. They should also be trained (P 54)*. The supervisors did not know how to coach the unemployed learners, nor did they have any idea how to manage them in terms of the day-to-day management, such as absenteeism, coming late, leave, etc.: *As it was the first time that we were involved in a learnership program, supervisors of various departments were uncertain how to manage the learner staff (47)*.

The learnership influenced their operations and the supervisors and staff had to work harder to keep up with the service levels demanded by management: *As we were understaffed in certain departments, absenteeism was critical when our staff went in for training (P 47)*. This led to supervisor and employees resenting the unemployed learners

for being there. They were never consulted in the planning, so they did not take accountability for the implementation and management of the program: *Please consult with supervisor before compiling and organising groups for training and organise dates after consultation for the next time (P 52).*

This led to supervisors having separate ways of managing and communicating with the two subgroups: *A rule must apply to all so that one does not feel neglected (P 54); The previous supervisor, he had meetings with the permanents and then the learners. The permanent employees interpreted this as being “us” and “them” (P 53).*

The workplace was full of animosity, uncertainty and conflict: *We wanted to avoid the workplace because of the conflict (P 57).* The unemployed learners were confronted with conflict in the workplace and what made it worse was that they felt that they did not learn what they should have learned in the workplace: *But in the workplace I didn't enjoy it because I didn't learn everything practically as it was supposed to be (P 39).*

5.6.2. Interpretation

Boundaries

The unemployed learners formed part of the learnership system, but not the organisational system before the program started. They were added as new members to an already established system. The unemployed learners were not invited to staff meetings: *We were not invited to the staff meetings once a month (P 53)* (existing pattern not adjusted). Supervisors held different meetings with them than those with the staff and did not integrate the unemployed learners into their teams. An unemployed learner mentioned the following: *The supervisor did not speak to you but used the permanent staff to convey the message (P 54).* The separate meetings and ineffective communication processes reinforced the boundaries that separated the two groups in the workplace.

This difference led to the employed staff seeing the unemployed learners as the out-group/enemy, in order to mentally explain their negative behaviour towards them (Palmer, 1999:30). The employed learners projected the split-off hostility (stereotyped them as a threat to them, being uncommitted, young) towards the unemployed learners, even though they were not to blame for being there (refer to paragraph 4.9.8.). It happened to such a

degree that the hostility became so intense for the unemployed learners, that they started to stay away from the group. Comments like: *There was a time that we wished we only had to go to class as the environment was better than the workplace and We wanted to avoid the workplace because of the conflict (P 57)* clearly indicate the level of pressure that they had to deal with because of the projected emotions from the employees within the workplace. This led to the unemployed learners not coming to the workplace regularly and when they were there, they did not always deliver what was expected of them. A negative spin-off from this was that this reinforced the negative feelings and perceptions that the employed learners and supervisors had about them which, in turn, led to them to feeling and behaving even more unattached to employed learners and supervisors.

What made this situation even worse was the fact that the unemployed learners did not know how to do the work and due to the negativity that the employed staff felt towards them, the employed learners did not want the unemployed learners to know what to do. The unemployed learners' performance was slow and inaccurate. This added to the negative perception that the staff and the supervisors had of them.

Roles within the group

The formal roles within the learnership were not defined from the beginning. Supervisors and employed learners did not know that they had to play a coaching role towards the unemployed learners, nor did they have the competency to do so. The supervisors also did not know with what authority they had to manage the unemployed learners, nor did they feel accountable for taking up any responsibility as they were not included in the planning of this program. Supervisors then made up their own minds as they went along in terms of managing the unemployed learners, which led to using whatever method suited them best in a particular situation. This led to unemployed learners feeling that they were being exploited in the workplace: when it suited the employer, they were just the same as permanent staff and if it suited them better not to treat them as permanent staff they were then regarded as unemployed learners. The unemployed learners did not know what their roles were within the workplace or how performance would be measured. They felt lost and added to this was a lack of leadership, lack of well defined objectives and a process filled with mistrust, a lack of motivation, high levels of negative emotions and constant conflict. This just made the situation unbearable.

What made an already unbearable situation worse, was that unemployed learners did not get the expected exposure. In the warehouse, they were not given the opportunity to rotate between the departments and on the road the learners were only given one route to work on.

Culture within the organisation

The culture of the organisation as a system is one that did not reinforce positive behaviour or give recognition to those that work hard towards goal achievement. The unemployed learners were expecting the same culture of positive recognition in the workplace as that which was evident within the classroom environment (refer to paragraph 4.9.5.b.). The unemployed learners felt that the two should not be different from each other. One learner said that: *In class we were appreciated but not in the workplace (P 54).*

The negative impact that the exclusion, animosity, feelings of incompetence, uncertainty and disappointment had on the unemployed learners can be seen in the following comment: *We arrived happy and left unhappy (P 54).*

5.6.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Negative experience of workplace influenced the learning process

In the workplace the unemployed learners felt unwelcome: *The experience was not too good as I felt that we were not liked by the permanent drivers as I am a driver. This influenced my learning negatively because it tended to lower my self-esteem and self-confidence a little (P 23).* They indicated that this influenced their learning due to it making them feel insecure about themselves. Vince and Martin (1993) said that the individual learning experience is shaped through group processes and this explains why this unemployed learner felt that his learning was influenced by the group friction, undefined roles and non-integrated boundaries between them, the employed learners and the supervisors.

Culture of workplace influenced the learning process

The lack of positive reward and social recognition within the workplace influenced the learning as was suggested by Bergh and Theron (2003). They said that a healthy balance should exist in order for motivation to learn to be present.

5.7. Super Family 6: Theoretical learning

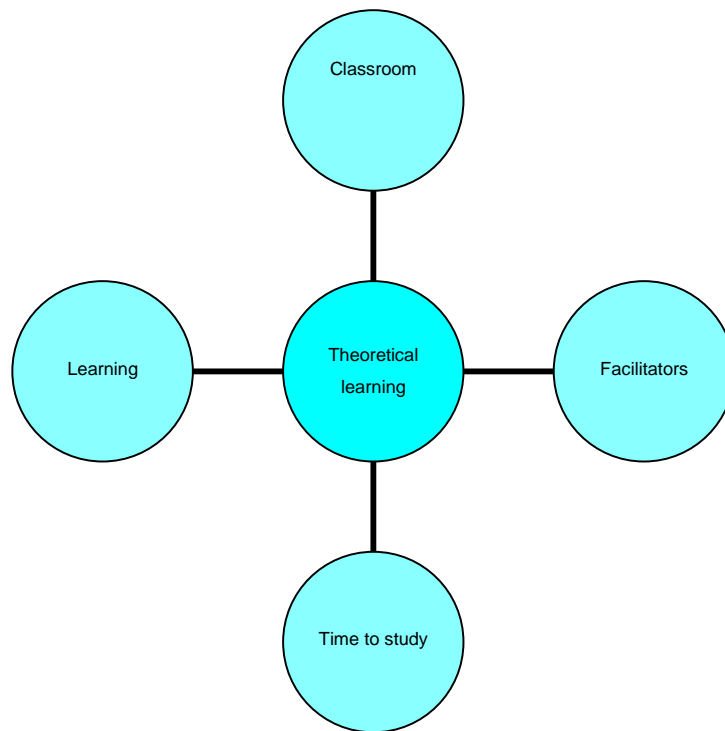


Figure 23: Super Family 6 ~ Theoretical learning

Super Family 6: Theoretical learning is made up of four families. They are:

- Classroom with 23 codes (70 quotations).
- Facilitators with 7 codes (17 quotations).
- Time to study with 4 codes (22 quotations).
- Learning with 10 codes (19 quotations).

5.7.1. Description

At the beginning the employed learners did not want to attend the training: *In the beginning it was only the unemployed in the classroom (P 57)*. The employed learners were scared that they would lose their job by leaving their station or vehicle in the workplace but they went to class because they were forced to go by the organisation: *They threatened us, as they said if we do not go we will get into trouble (P 59)*. When they arrived in the classroom the employed learners did not want to work with the unemployed learners and said that the unemployed learners had a negative relationship

with the employed learners: *Relationships were negative in class because the unemployed learners did not have respect (P 2)*. The employed learners struggled with low self-esteem and felt that the company was insulting them by sending them for training on something that they had been doing for so long: *In the beginning I did not want to go for the course because how can they teach me how to drive a car if I have been driving the car for so long? (P 56)*. They also feared that their level of education would be exposed and that they would be unable to cope in the classroom: *The permanent learners thought that they were going to be exposed (P 53)*. This also made them reluctant to attend the classes: *Employed learners were not in class most of the time (P 26)*.

In the classroom the facilitators, by means of communication, were able to help the employed learners to acknowledge that it was not true that they would be losing their jobs: *We were concerned that they would take our jobs. After the training started and the situation was explained to us, this feeling went away (P 55)*. The facilitators helped them with their work and patiently assisted when they battled to understand things that they needed to master: *Maths was a little bit challenging to me but I tried to adjust my weak point on that by the help of the supervisor I manage to understand (P 24)*. This led to the employed learners realising that they would not be exposed and considered to be incompetent and sent away, but that they would be able to complete the course with the help of the facilitators: *When they came to class and realised that their literacy would not be exposed (P 53)*.

The fact that the facilitators positively reinforced their competence when they had finished certain sections successfully, truly motivated the employed learners to work harder and prove that they were competent: *When the assessor told us we were doing well and he thought all of us we are going to pass and get certificates (P 4)*. This helped their self-esteem to pick up dramatically. This positive rewarding environment started to stand out in contrast to the negative, unappreciative workplace environment and was almost seen as a place to which they can escape to: *In class we were appreciated but not in the workplace (P 54)*. They indicated that the positive feedback of the facilitators was the best part of the learnership. Later on the employed learners wanted to rather be in class than in the workplace; as opposed to the beginning when it was the other way around: *There was a time that we wished we only had to go to class as the environment was better than the workplace (P 57)*.

The facilitator played a role of mediator in the classroom to guide the conversations between the two groups: *We were taught to work together as a team during the learning process (P 8)*. The facilitators ensured that the unrealistic assumptions were cleared up and then the two groups could start building a positive relationship with each other: *This bridged the gap between the employed and unemployed learners and things started to run smoothly (P 53)*. The reason why the facilitators were able to succeed in this role so successfully was because they were seen as neutral outsiders that spoke truthfully. They were highly regarded by the learners: *The facilitators were good (P 7)*; because of their knowledge: *I did pass it because the facilitator was very clear and knew exactly what she was teaching (P 8)*; their openness to share with them was appreciated: *Good facilitators that taught us so much (P 56)*; *The best part of it is whereby the facilitators teach us (P 8)*; as well as the way in which the facilitators treated them: *We get encouragement from the facilitator (P 8)*.

The facilitators treated the employed learners and unemployed learners as one group and with equality: *We were treated equally by the facilitators (P 2)*; *In this part you cannot differentiate who is an employed learner and who is the unemployed learner (P 3)*. They also purposefully divided them into mixed groups when they needed to complete certain assignments: *It happened that we form a group that was made up by a mixture of employed and unemployed people in one group that is why I say we work the same (P 9)*. No communication was apparent in the beginning: *At first it was difficult because there was no communication (P 29)*; but the facilitators motivated them to communicate with each other: *Motivation of the teacher made us communicate better (P 29)*. Due to the group work the members of the two groups started to talk to each other and to share thoughts and ideas: *Make us communicate better and we started to understand one another and we started to work as a team (P 29)*. They acknowledged that they were working towards the same goal and needed to help each other: *Our relationship was very, very important because we were doing the same thing and working together as a group, helping each other while we were studying (P 3)*.

The employed learners really struggled in class: *The difficulties were when you failed to reason and take time to understand a question (P 1)* in relation to the unemployed learners that found it easier to master many of the modules than the employed learners could: *The best part it was when I was doing theory (P 31)*. This was due to them being

fresh out of school and having had better opportunities, opposed to the employed learners that had not been to school for a long time: *The unemployed are young and have just come out of school (P 53)*. The unemployed learners completed tasks faster and then disrupted the class by chatting and telling jokes: *They would play with their cell phones and make a noise (P 56)*; while the employed learners struggled to make sense of things: *The permanent learners had to also concentrate harder in class to be able to understand and not fail (P 53)*. This was a huge frustration and was interpreted by the employed learners as a lack of respect: *Relationship was very bad in class because they do not have respect (P 2)*. Later on when the two groups started to work together this, however, changed because the unemployed learners would not disrupt the class, but rather sit and help the employed learners so that they could understand: *They began to lend a helping hand to each other in the classroom environment (P 50)*.

It is important to note that the learners found it very difficult to find enough time and a proper place to study and work on assignments: *We had little time to finish this learnership (P 4)*. The main reason for the learners having less time later on, than at the beginning, was because of the halting of the training due to the contractual issues and non-compliance to agreed actions between the company and the SETA: *There were also certain issues that we had to resolve between the company and the SETA (P 49)*. The training was postponed for more than two months, yet the learnership still needed to be completed in the set 12 months: *We had to push for training to be completed in a period 3 months shorter than it should have been (P 55)*. This meant that in the classroom, facilitators had to make up for lost time. Making this even worse, the company was not keeping up with the work in the warehouse due to being understaffed, unemployed learners not being diligent in their attendance and also not being as productive as the employed learners that they needed to replace as discussed in paragraph 5.6. To compensate for this, the training weeks were shortened to three days instead of five days: *They had stopped us from attending school the whole week and then we attended only three days a week (P 4)*. Also, in the afternoon when the training was completed, the learners needed to report for duty: *They told us to not leave before 16:30. If class finished early then you must go to the warehouse (P 4)*.

Learners found it difficult to adjust to these changes: *The difficulty I experienced was when we were told that we are going to learn the whole week and it changed (P 4)*. The

first reason why the learners were upset was that now they did not have time to ask questions: *The only difficulties we experienced were really the problem of coming to the class and go back to the warehouse because this did not gave us a chance to ask each other or our facilitator further questions because we did not have enough time (P 15)*. Learners also found it difficult to find time to do homework and prepare for tests: *We needed time to do homework and prepare for tests, but then we had to go and work after the training in the afternoon (P 55); When we don't have enough time to study (P 4)*. They also did not have proper facilities at home to do their work. At home they also had families to attend to which made it very difficult: *It was to be given homework, that was the disadvantage because most of us have family responsibilities at home (P 6)*.

The reasons for the company needing to take the abovementioned actions were not communicated to the learners. This led to them to interpret this as that the company was not committed to the learnership program: *The thing of not keeping the dates was part of the controversy that led to doubts about learnership (P 24)*. They also then blamed the company for placing them under so much stress: *Company expecting us to do two things in the same time (P 3); Company interfered in our learning program because they cut some other days (P 3); The difficult situation was when the management put pressure on us and changed the time schedule of the learnership (P 8)*.

Despite all the unwillingness, rivalry and stress, it is surprising that learning still took place. Learners reported that they learned valuable concepts and facts that would assist them in the workplace: *It was very good because sometimes the modules were teaching me how to deal with customers within the organisation and protect myself and company products while I'm driving and report everything that is working within the company (P 2); I have gained more information in this class which I would not have learned if the learnership was not there, I'm very wise now, I have more things I know now than before (P 2); The best part was when we deal with customers their location and what they prefer. In a business way it was like knowing different cultures norms and morals in a business sector. I can say now business is not about enough cash for services it is more about knowing your target market and their values (P 24)*. They also learned skills: *The best part was communication and how to behave in a professional manner. It teaches us about respect and handling the pressure if you have to talk to employees or the customers (P 7); The best part of it is whereby the facilitator teach us how to do presentations and*

budgets (P 8). They also indicated that they had developed emotionally and had learned about people and life skills: *It had given me the knowledge of understanding and balancing the challenges of life (P 12)* and many of these lessons came as a result of the difficulties: *Bad things made us strong. We knew from the beginning that it was going to be difficult (P 54)*. The unemployed learners did not see the learnership as a total disaster but learned from it: *We are still grateful for the opportunity. We survived. We are better people today (P 54)*.

It was not only the learners that learned things from this learnership. The provider and the organisation also learned many lessons: *It helped us to identify the ways of which certain matters should be handled and dealt with (P 49)*.

5.7.2. Interpretation

Split off and projected unconscious fears onto subgroup

The employed learners unconsciously feared that the unemployed learners would take over their jobs. This led to them perceiving the unemployed learners as the enemy. The employed learners also split off and projected their own incompetency and inadequacy onto the unemployed learners as they did not want to admit these feelings to the unemployed learners. They said that they did not want to be there because of a lack of respect from the unemployed learners and that the unemployed learners did not know anything: *They believed that the unemployed learners knew nothing, they knew better because they have been in this industry for long (P 37)*. This led to the two groups splitting into an in-group and an out-group. The employed learner group then rather fled from the classroom than to deal with the problem.

When they were in class the unemployed learners tried to deal with the pressure that they experienced due to the projections of the employed learners by making jokes to lighten up the atmosphere: *Maybe we joked to get a better learning environment, nothing wrong with that (P 53)*. They projected the employed learners' fears back to the employed learners by being nasty: *Some of them said we were stupid and old (P 57)*. This is called resonance: which is a form of communication (unconscious to unconscious) between groups.

Unconscious fears became conscious

The unconscious fear that they would lose their job became conscious when nothing happened once they had started the training, as well as when the facilitators facilitated communication between the groups that led to sharing. The reality that their fear was an unrealistic fear became apparent to the employed learners as discussed in paragraph 5.2.2.

Communication about unconscious fears led to energy to bring balance in the group constructs

Dealing (through communication strategies of the facilitators) with these unconscious fears that the employed learners had projected onto the unemployed learners led to the employed learners to stop feeling that the unemployed learners were the enemy. The communication/information was the energy that led to changes in the different constructs (according to the integrated model discussed in paragraph 4.9) within the learnership group.

- Core
 - The facilitators were the leaders of the groups in the class, but in the workplace it was the management – leadership.
 - The goal was properly explained by the facilitators – purpose.
- Process
 - The tension was less, the mood was better and the security levels increased.
- Pattern
 - The communication was the same for the two subgroups which resulted in them feeling that they were now one group – direction.
 - The way in which the facilitators communicated was in a manner that indicated that they took the learners seriously – Style.
- Structure
 - The roles changed in the classroom to both groups being learners – status
 - The classroom was also different from the workplace because no other employed staff were around. Only the learners were present – physical environment.
 - The two groups came to terms with their different strengths and weaknesses – competencies
- Performance

- The two groups started working together to achieve the group goal.

The change in the group was thus brought about by communication. The emotions that arose were also contained by the group as discussed in paragraph 5.3. This led to the group developing up to the performing phase within Tuckman's theory. The production that took place was that of learning. If one considers some of the quotes of the learners about what they learned, one can clearly see the value of the learnership.

Culture within classroom in relation to the culture of the workplace

The lack of appreciation in the supra system (organisation) led to a need for recognition within the individual within the system (learnership). This need was fulfilled by the facilitators and this led to the necessary motivation within the system to start behaving in the desired manner (refer to paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**). The learnership also contributed towards strengthening the employed learners' self-esteem: *I have learned more than I thought I could. I can't wait for my certificate (P 10)*. The positive feedback by the facilitators also informed the employed learners that they were delivering the desired outputs in order to reach the set performance (outcomes) (refer to paragraph 4.9.4). The lack of a culture of appreciating individual contribution towards the goal achievement in the organisation in relation to the classroom where they were told that they were doing well, created a division between the two physical elements (classroom and workplace) within the system.

Learning that took place during learnership

The employed learners were really impressed with the content of the learnership. They made many comments on how excited they were in understanding how to treat a customer and why a customer should be treated correctly: *How to treat a customer (P 1); How to deal with customers (P 2)*. These were comments made on what had been the best part of the learnership. This is important as they have been working in the service industry for years and always heard management saying how important it was that they deliver good service to the customers and now they knew more about how to fulfil management's expectations.

Even more important was the growth in maturity of the employed learners and the fact that they could recognise this about themselves: *I know how to be a responsible somebody,*

eye opener to me to respect and be responsible for anything I do (P 1); When they tell me how to behave when I'm working, at home and life in general (P 2).

5.7.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Negative relationships influenced the learning process

The negative relationships, insecurities and attitudes between the management, the training provider and the SETA, as well as between the employed learners, unemployed learners, employed staff and supervisors impacted on the learning effectiveness. *This influenced my learning negatively because it tended to lower my self-esteem and self-confidence a little (P 23).*

Self-confidence influenced the learning process

The employed learners did not have the readiness to learn due to not having the subjective opinion that they were able to master the learnership (refer to paragraph 3.3.4). Jarvis (2004) noted that adult learners bring their own self-confidence and self-esteem to the learning situation, as well as different biographies which can lead to them learning at different rates. The employed learners had to deal with the unemployed learners who made them feel even less confident about their abilities by saying that they were old and stupid, but they were able to convince themselves that they would be able to complete the program and that they would prove the unemployed learners wrong: *The learners that implied that the employed learners were stupid and old separated us. But this did not affect our learning; it motivated us as we did not want to look stupid (P 57).* The self-concept that the employed learners had about themselves (subjective perception) surely influenced the development throughout the learning process (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

The learning about why they do things helped to improve their self-worth and to uplift them. They were able to understand that everyone in the business is important to help the business prosper and that they were significant within the company.

Social constructivism influenced the learning process

Through social processes, the employed learners derived interpersonal knowledge (social constructivism). This program allowed them to interpret different meanings about life through the social experiences that they had to deal with (Fasokun, Katahoire & Oduaran (2005).

5.8. Super Family 7: Us and Them – EL vs. UL

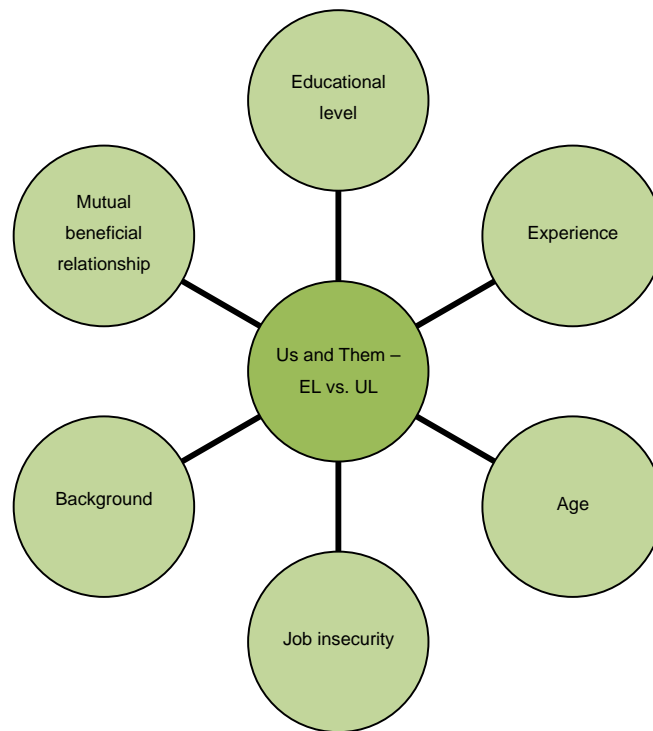


Figure 24: Super Family 7 ~ Us and Them – EL vs. UL

Super Family 7: Us and Them – EL vs. UL is made up of six families. They are:

- Educational level with 10 codes (28 quotations).
- Experience with 11 codes (30 quotations).
- Age with 6 codes (12 quotations).
- Job insecurity with 15 codes (40 quotations).
- Background with 4 codes (7 quotations).
- Mutual beneficial relationship with 15 codes (45 quotations).

5.8.1. Description

Differences

Differences are those things that are noticeable and make a meaningful distinction between objects, people or groups (Alswang & Van Rensburg, 1989). These differences draw boundaries between and within systems. Many differences between the employed and unemployed learners existed and created noticeable boundaries between these two

groups within the learnership group. This led to these groups seeing each other as in and outgroups (subgroups): *You could see that the employed and unemployed learners were divided (P 56); The learners that implied that the employed learners were stupid and old separated us (P 57).*

- Educational level

According to the employed learners the unemployed learners' educational level was noticeably higher than theirs: *Unemployed learners have the advantage because they come from the school and we have gone to school a long time ago (P 1); just came out of school (P 53).* The unemployed learners were also of the opinion that the employed learners were less educated than they were: *Employed learner they were not in class most of the time and they are uneducated people (P 26).* This meant that in class the unemployed learners had to assist the employed learners to cope: *Employed learners they were depending on unemployed learners in terms of explaining other things in the program (P 26).* The unemployed learners were thus more capable in the classroom and the employed learners less capable and thus had to work harder: *The one group had to work harder in class (P 53).*

- Experience

Due to the employed learners' working for the organisation for some time, they had practical experience of how the job should be done that the unemployed learners did not have: *The learnership was about to learn and to do practical so the employed people, I think their advantage was that they were doing this occupation for a long time (P 5); Employed learners had an advantage over the others because some other unit standards we knew about it because we are dealing with it in the workplace (P 3).* This meant that in the workplace the employed learners had to assist the unemployed learners to cope: *Unemployed learners had gained a lot from employed learners (P 13); It influenced my experience to work with a experienced worker (P 30); The employed learners were helpful to us they assisted us with the things we did not understand (P 32).* The employed learners were more capable in the workplace and the unemployed learners less capable and they, in turn, had to work harder: *The one group had to work harder on the road (P 53).*

- Age

The employed learners were mostly older than the unemployed learners. *The*

unemployed learners have the advantage because most of them are young (P 1); Unemployed learners were performing at their best level because they were young (P 6); The unemployed are young (P 53). The employed learners felt threatened by the younger ones because they decided that because the unemployed learners had a better education, the company could use the young ones to replace them: I was also threatened as most of them are younger than me and I thought that they were going to take my job (P 57). The unemployed learners also noticed this difference in age: We are very young, they are older, but the way they treated us, showed that we are older than them (P 54). The unemployed learners, in turn, interpreted the older age to mean that the employed learners were less competent: Old and they did not manage to learn fast (P 34).

Table 4 below summarises the differences between the employed and unemployed learners in correlations with the other group.

	Employed learners	Unemployed learners
Educational level	Lower	Higher
Experience	Higher	Lower
Age	Higher	Lower

Table 4: Summary of differences between employed and unemployed learners

Similarities

Similarities are those things that are alike and resemble each other between objects, people and groups (Alswang & Van Rensburg, 1989). Between the two groups, employed and unemployed learners, certain similarities were apparent. It was when these similarities were recognised that the two groups started to open up towards each other.

- Job security

The employed learners did not experience job security. The first reason for this was because they felt insecure as they did not have any formal qualification: *If I have a certificate I will get the job (P 56)*. They did not have confidence in their own competence: *We thought if they did better than us in class, and they were doing my job, they would take over my job (P 56)*. The fact that they did not trust the management to look out for them led them to believe that the learnership was a conspiracy to get rid of them: *Yes, when the learnership came in (strange*

people) we thought the company wanted to get rid of us (P 56). The young age of the learners also made them feel more insecure: *I was threatened as most of them were younger than I and I thought that they were going to take my job (57)*. They believed that they were difficult to replace by the company because of their experience and felt that if they shared their experience with the unemployed learners, they would then lose this niche (hold on the company): *Yes, we lost some sort of security due to knowing that there is someone that now also knows my route. You need to protect your job (P 56)*. The unemployed learners did not experience job security either. They were only given a contract with clear clauses indicating that after the twelve months had been completed, the company was under no obligation to employ them. The employed learners also made them feel that they were not welcome: *Did not want to welcome them (P 56)*. Comments like: *they say we do not know nothing about this place we going to leave the job (P 19)*, also made them feeling even more insecure.

- Background

All the learners came from the same background and race– *It was a great moment to share with all learners and know more about their background and their lives (P 18); Because all of us we look the same (P 9); I was happy as they were from the location and this was an opportunity for them to do something (P 57)*.

Mutually beneficial relationship because of the differences

Mutual means common to both, shared by two or more people, beneficial means to gain advantage and relationship, means having a connection (Alswang & van Rensburg, 1989). Having a mutually beneficial relationship between the employed learners and unemployed learners is when both groups have an attribute/difference that is to the advantage of the other group that leads to them being connected with one another.

A relationship will only be of value to you if you truly benefit. If you do not find it of any value to you, you will not commit yourself to this relationship. The two groups were aware of the differences as can be seen from their comments that were quoted earlier, yet they were not able to understand the value that these differences could have if they established a relationship based on these differences: *The two groups must be brought together, get to know each other better and it must be explained what the differences between the two groups are and why they are here (P 56)*.

The mutually beneficial relationship that existed was that the employed learners could assist the unemployed learners in the workplace because they have the know-how/experience of the practical work and the unemployed learners could assist the employed learners due to having better abilities to cope within the classroom environment and they could assist the employed learners to understand difficult concepts better: *Employed learners helped unemployed learners at workplace environment and unemployed learners helped employed learners during classes (P 34).*

5.8.2. Interpretation

Experience vs. educational level

The employed learners felt mediocre in relation to the unemployed learners because they feared that they would do better than them in the classroom. The employed learners also felt inferior on account of being older than the unemployed learners. The employed learners feared that the younger ones would be able to do a better job than them because of their age, so it was a fear of being less competent than the unemployed learners. The employed learners felt that the unemployed learners were a threat to their job: *The employed learner felt insecure and threatened by the unemployed learner (P 24).* The employed learners projected their insecurity onto the unemployed learners (sent a message to the unconscious mind) because the fear of losing their job overstimulated the conscious mind (Ringer, 2002): *They do take advantage of us. They say we do not know nothing about this place we going to leave the job (P 19).* The projection of these fears onto the unemployed learners made them seem like the outgroup/enemy: *The learners were seen as the enemy (P 56), that needed to be eliminated: The employed when we come here they would treat us badly because they thought we wanted to take their job (P 19).* They refused to work with the “enemy”: *At first the employed learners didn’t want to cooperate with us because they thought we were here to take their jobs (P 22).*

The experience they had was used as a way of compensating for their feelings of incompetence, and by emphasising their proficiency, they felt better about themselves, even though they were less competent in the classroom: *In the work place the student (unemployed) won’t catch the permanent staff (P 2).*

Focus turned to similarities – moved from Basic assumption group to Workgroup

The similarities that they shared were not important to the learners at first, but as time went by, the fear became less intense and they started to accept the unemployed learners: *They thought when we are here the learnership we will take their job but eventually they started to accept us and understand us (P 29)*. Once the two subgroups realised that they did have some things in common, they could start to build a relationship on this common ground: *At first my moral was down, but I picked up myself by saying that they are my brothers (P 57)*.

Once the two groups realised that the existing beneficial dynamic between them (different competencies due to the structure of the group) would lead to them achieving the group goal and their individual goal: *When the learners realised the importance of the program and that it was to their benefit. They began committing themselves and kept on searching for information that was to make them better employees in the workplace. (P 50)*; They shifted their focus from the unconscious, unrealistic functioning of projection, resonance, transference (Basic Assumption State) to the conscious realistic functioning of helping each other and sharing views in order to complete the task at hand (Work Group). Comments of both groups of learners (see quotes below) indicated that they had come to this realisation and that this gave the breakthrough in getting them to work together:

- *Personally assisted and seen that it was a balanced situation where the employed learners were sharing their workplace experience with the unemployed learners and in the classroom the unemployed learners assisted the employed learners in understanding the theory better (P 50)*.
- *Helpful because we have come from different backgrounds and this was most useful because we were helping each other positively (P 11)*.
- *We did learn a lot from each other (P 57)*.

5.8.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Cognitive maps of learners influenced the learning process

In the learnership structure of the case study the two groups, employed and unemployed, had two very different cognitive maps that needed to be considered. The one group had cognitive maps with a strong background of educational experience and the other had much experience in the job function that related to the learnership. The facilitators seemed to have managed this dynamic fairly well in the classroom, by making the differences apparent to the other groups, as well as emphasising the benefit of embracing these differences.

Benefits of groups influenced the learning process

The company ignored the defensive reaction that the employed learners had towards the unemployed learners and this, according to Vince (2002), took the focus of the learners away from learning. The facilitators guided the two groups through these negative emotions to reach a point where the two groups could work together. Johnson and Johnson (2006) noted that the benefit of using group work in the learning process is because it allows for students to learn together and mutually benefit from one another due to the different cognitive maps that adult learners have. The learning process was therefore less beneficial at the beginning than later on when the two groups started to work together. This is termed co-operative learning.

5.9. Super Family 8: Other Us and Them

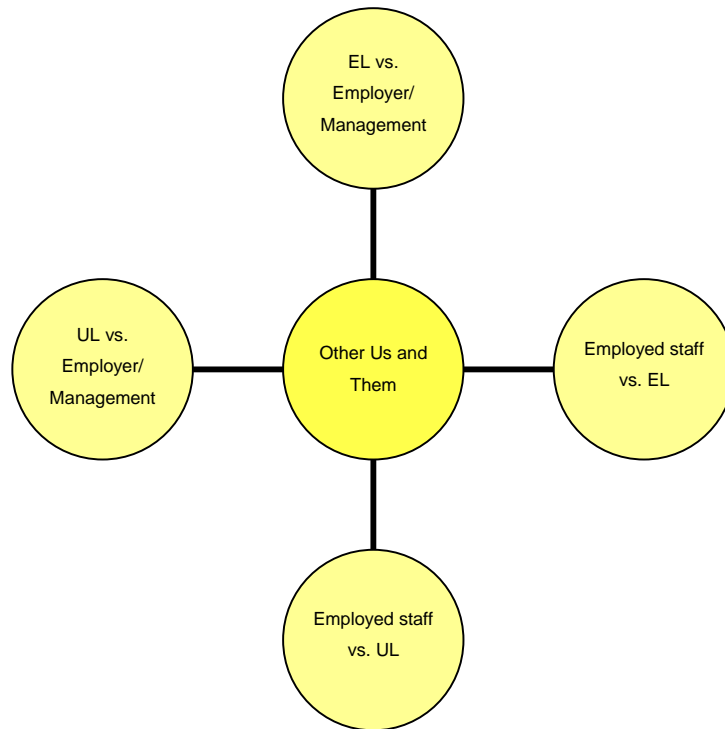


Figure 25: Super Family 8 ~ Other Us and Them

Super Family 8: Other Us and Them is made up of four families. They are:

- EL vs. Employer/Management with 19 codes (33 quotations).
- Employed staff vs. EL with 4 codes (4 quotations).
- Employed staff vs. UL with 5 codes (8 quotations).
- UL vs. Employer/Management with 11 codes (16 quotations).

5.9.1. Description

Many relationships existed between the various systems. All the interactions of these systems influenced the system under discussion: the learnership group: *This it is not just the learnership, but also the past that impacted on the reactions (P 56)*. The relationships and their influences on the learnership group will now be discussed.

EL vs. Employer/Management

In the organisation, of which the learnership was a subgroup, the composition of the group constructs were not ideal and will now be described from the researcher's point of view:

- The leadership within the company was very derogative and did not build self-esteem. The purpose was not communicated to the staff and influenced what they did. They did not understand how they were contributing to the bottom line. They only knew that they had not received proper bonuses and increases for three years in a row. The values of doing business were definitely not those of honesty and integrity.
- The process was known to be dominated by tension, conflict, negative emotions, distrust, lack of motivation, insecurity and a culture of closed communication.
- The performance of the organisation was not very good due to legislative changes as discussed previously. This meant that decisions taken to influence the performance that was not beneficial to the staff. One of these decisions concerned salary cuts a few years before the learnership took place. The verbal communication that was done from the top down was mostly negative.
- The communication pattern was top down and the frequency was very low. The style was instructive and not that of consultation and valuing other people's or employees' inputs.
- The structure was interesting. The demographics determined that only Muslim people were managers, only Indian, White and Coloured people worked in the office and mostly African people were working in the warehouse. The physical environment of the office and that of the warehouse differed dramatically. The office had kitchens and proper bathroom facilities, as well as heaters and air conditioners, whereas the warehouse was extremely cold and the warehouse staff did not have any kitchen facilities and their bathroom facilities were not up to standard.

Employed staff vs. EL

When part of the employed staff was chosen to form part of the learnership (employed learners) and others not, division resulted. The employees that did not form part of the learnership resented their colleagues for leaving them behind in the workplace with the unemployed learners. This was because the unemployed learners did not work as fast and as effectively as their colleagues did, which meant that the employed learners in the

warehouse were left to work harder and did not gain anything from it: *They believed they were suffering in the workplace because the others were in the class. So they resented us (P 56).*

They envied their colleagues for getting the training and that they did not have the opportunity to attend the learnership. They also knew that the colleagues would now be more marketable and would be one step ahead of them due to having a formal qualification. This made them feel deprived: *The employed staff that did not form part of the learnership now has a setback in comparison to the others (P 54).*

Employed staff vs. UL

The employed staff members that were not part of the learnership were also not informed of the learnership, how it was going to work and they were never introduced to the unemployed learners: *The others did not have so much communication with the learners (P 55).* The same fear that the unemployed learners would take their jobs was noticeable by them: *Permanent guys are not comfortable with the unemployed learners (P 53).* They most probably also felt inferior, as did their colleagues that were part of the learnership.

To compensate for the unemployed learners not being as productive as their colleagues that went for the training, they had to work harder: *They said the learners did not know what to do and then they had to work harder (P 56).* This made them angry towards the unemployed learners: *Those that were not part of the learnership were upset (P 56).* What made this worse, is that they had to deal with these fears and work harder, but gained nothing from it. At least their colleagues who were part of the learnership would get a certificate. This led them to not wanting to help the unemployed learners in the workplace: *They did not want to work with the learners and teach them, while we were in class (P 56).*

The employed staff members took advantage of the unemployed learners: *Other employed took advantage over us because they thought they were old employed (P 19).* They deliberately made life difficult for the unemployed learners as they did not want them to succeed: *Discrimination at the loading bay, led to me loading late (P 23).*

UL vs. Employer/Management

The unemployed learners blamed the Management for many of the problems that they encountered during the learnership: *The company was to blame for this (P 57)*. They felt that the management had not planned the learnership well. The mismanagement of the program was interpreted by the unemployed learners as the company not being committed to the program. They then decided that they should have another reason for embarking on the program and came to the conclusion that it was to impress the government: *Due to the fact that sometimes I felt like we were not wanted by the organisation in general I thought it was just made to make the company look good in the eyes of the government (P 23)*.

Due to a lack of communication from management to the unemployed learners, they felt that the company did not want them there either: *If the company indeed had a good heart for the learners, they would have explained and would have been more open (P 53)*. They mentioned that if the company had been willing to work with them, they could have solved many problems: *The company must work hand in hand with us and solve problems with us and not alone (P 1)*.

The supervisors were seen as part of management and the unemployed learners really did not appreciate the way the supervisors treated them and for this reason they did not want to be in the workplace: *The supervisor did not treat them the same and so the learners felt unnoticed and reacted with no commitment (P 56)*; *My worst part when we had a new supervisor the one who was busy stressing all the unemployed learner which led learners to just stay at home without informing any of the directors or supervisors (P 41)*. They felt that the supervisors did not know how to manage them and did whatever suited them best and that left them at a disadvantage every time: *If the management wanted to treat us like employees, they should have involved us in meetings (P 54)*. Supervisors also did not communicate with them. They preferred to avoid them: *The supervisor did not speak to you but used the permanent staff to convey the message (P 54)*. The fact that they did not communicate positively, but only negatively was not appreciated: *If the supervisor appreciated the good and then spoke to you about mistakes it would not have been that bad (P 54)*.

They were scared to approach management with the problems that they encountered because how could they approach them if the employed learners could not even do so?: *We are human beings and can make a mistake. You cannot face management if the permanent staff does not even want to face them and are scared of them (P 54).* They did, however, mention that the company's managers should ensure that they knew why they were embarking on the program and how they were going to manage it: *Where the company is going and what their plans are with the learnership (P 57).*

5.9.2. Interpretation

Negative relationship with employer (organisational culture) influenced the learnership

Lewin said that every event has a meaning but the meaning is formed based on the background (Gershenfeld, 1986:95). The organisation is the background/context within which the learnership took place and had many influences on the subsystem, the learnership. The management style within the organisation provides a great deal of information about why the employed learners behaved and reacted the way they did.

The initial unrealistic reaction of the employed learners that they would lose their jobs to the unemployed learners was because of the lack of trust in the relationship between them and Management: *People in this company do not trust the company anymore (P 56).* This lack of trust led to the misinterpretation of the intentions of decisions: *If the manager says something the staff gets another picture. So what we need is trust (P 56).* *The permanent employees interpreted this as being "us" and "them" and made them more suspicious (P 53).* Management had taken their security (salaries) before, so they could take their jobs too! The employees felt very insecure: *They did not trust decisions made by the management which leave the staff insecure (P 56).* An unemployed learner commented on the employment practices that were not acceptable: *The company did not treat them well (overtime money, new operations manager, less money) (P 53).* The Management was really disliked: *The manager takes people for granted, he can do whatever he wants and that power you feel that he is not appreciating us because he has more money than others (P 56).*

The Management was not known for doing good things for their people. Treating employees fairly was not part of the culture of the organisation. They were perceived to do good things only if the management benefited more from it. They were also not likely to share money with the employees. This made the employees suspicious about the learnership: *They could not believe that this company would give them training free of charge! (P 56)*. When the question was asked as to what they thought the reason was for the company embarking on the learnership program the non-verbal reactions spoke louder than words: *Lots of sarcastic laughing and uneasiness (P 56)*. They thought of many other reasons why the company had embarked on the training, but to develop their skills was not one of the reasons!

The changes that were made to the schedule were blamed on Management by the employed learners, even though it was not all their fault: *The difficult situation it was where the management put pressure on us and changed the time schedule of the learnership (P 8)*. This was because the Management was not perceived as being committed to the program: *But it turned out that the employed wanted the work done first (P 7)* and due to the Management's lack of proper communication.

This relationship had degenerated to such an extent that the employed learners tried to sabotage the employer: *Their thinking is negative; they will mock the company and spread confidential information. They will try and influence everyone negatively. They sometimes made us think that they do not really care about the company (P 54)*. The employed learners had feelings of hostility towards the employer which, through transference, was projected onto the unemployed learners (refer to paragraph 4.5.2).

Employed learners tried to influence unemployed learners

The employed learners tried to influence the unemployed learners negatively so that they would also view the management as the "enemy": *They will try and influence everyone negatively (P 54)*. The unemployed learners were caught up in the fight between the employees and management. The management started using the unemployed learners to do Saturday deliveries when the employed learners, out of spite/malice, refused to do the deliveries. Then the employed learners started to threaten the unemployed learners that if they would report for duty on Saturdays: *When we wanted to work overtime on*

Saturday we were threatened that something would happen to us as they wanted to spite the employer (P 53).

The lack of proper communication (undesired pattern): *The issue is transparency and communication. The company must practice this in everything they do (P 56)* led to the employed learners having their own channels of negative communication by trying to solve things in their own ways. When the unemployed learners wanted to make use of the formal hierarchical channels the employed learners refused: *When we said that the supervisor must come, then they wanted to solve the problem their own way (P 54); If there is a meeting they should comment on the meeting and raise their concerns, but they did not. They will arrange their own meetings in the warehouse and then make comments. They are not working with the company (P 54).*

Employed staff stayed negative throughout the program

The employed staff who were not part of the learnership were rather jealous of their colleagues, the employed learners. They also blamed them for having to work harder. If one considers all the negative influences that the presence of the unemployed learners had on the employed staff members who were not part of the learnership and the fact that nothing good came from it for them, it is understandable that (even at the end) these employees still did not accept the unemployed learners. They continually acted spitefully to try and regain some control.

There was nothing that they could gain from committing themselves to the program. They felt that they were in the least preferred position of all the groups. They really felt negative about the learnership and that it was not a good thing, even after the completion of the learnership: *There are still some that did not attend the learnership who is negative about it, because they did not think it the process was good (P 57).*

5.9.3. Influences on the learning effectiveness

Cognitive map about supra system influenced the learning process

It is through experiences that humans learn and grow and each experience is partially underpinned by the previous experience (Ringer, 2002). It can then be concluded that previous experience influence the effectiveness of learning during the next experience. These experiences are part of the person's cognitive map. In the learnership the

experiences that can be remembered (cognitive map/mindset) by the employed learners within the supra system probably influenced the effectiveness of the learning in a negative way.

Vince (2002) used the term “organisation-in-the-mind” which is an expression of the emotional state of the individual. The fact that the employed learners felt that their role in the organisation were not appreciated nor that they were treated well or fairly, influenced their learning, as well as that of the unemployed learner.

5.10. Conclusion

After exploring conscious and unconscious constructs of the learnership group from a group dynamics perspective, it is clear that it is important to consider all the constructs that form a group to ensure successful group function, as well as effective learning for the learners taking part in a learnership. Problems and experiences of the learners could have been managed better if the group dynamics had been considered. Conclusions concerning certain aspects will be presented in the next chapter, together with suggested guidelines that could assist in the implementation of similar programs.

CHAPTER 6

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

In Chapter 5 the researcher endeavoured to present and comprehensively discuss the exploration of the learners' experiences in a learnership program from a group dynamics' perspective. In Chapter 6 the main conclusions are presented and guidelines, regarding the implementation of a learnership, taking cognisance of the group dynamics, structured to include employed and unemployed learners, are offered so that the learning effectiveness within the program can be maximised. The limitations are subsequently discussed, as well as recommendations for future research.

6.2. Conclusions and guidelines

After a rigorous exploration of the experiences of learners who attended a learnership program structured with employed and unemployed learners, certain insights emerged. These insights will subsequently be discussed and guidelines will be given that will assist in reducing the negative group dynamics and hopefully increase the positive impact that group dynamics can have on the learning experience when implementing a learnership structured to include employed and unemployed learners. The conclusions and guidelines were grouped in accordance to subject and are not presented below in any particular order and they should not be considered for implementation in isolation.

6.2.1. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to goals

a. Conclusions

The goal of the learnership was not properly communicated to the employed learners or to the other stakeholders. This left room for unrealistic goals to develop within the unconscious minds of the learners and to the group functioning within a Basic Assumption state. The management's goal with the learnership was not clearly communicated and remarks and reactions by some of the management's team members portrayed low commitment and created doubts as to management's intentions with the program. The program did not have a single shared goal to which all stakeholders were committed. Not all of them believed the learnership would be beneficial. The absence of a shared goal negatively influenced everyone involved and kept the group from achieving the Workgroup state and from achieving the intended goal in the beginning.

Incompatibility between the perceived group goal and the individual goals of the learners was apparent. The employed learners were not given the choice to attend training or not. This influenced their motivation to attend because they were not treated like adults. They felt insulted and hurt due to them believing that the company was ignoring a part of their self-identity (the learners' cognitive maps) as they were convinced that they had to learn something that they already knew. The employed learners did not deem the learnership of any benefit to them because they were not informed of what they would be learning in the program. The attitude of the employed learners was very negative towards the program and they were not committed. This resulted in the lack of the needed motivation to learn. This, in turn, influenced the achievement of the educational process.

The employed and unemployed learners developed different unconscious goals which led to them sticking together and working towards their separate goals and not towards the goal of the group. The goals of the subgroups seemed to be incompatible and even in opposition to one another at times. This created conflict between the two groups. They became common enemies of one another.

One could, therefore, conclude that when a new group is formed time should be devoted to set clear, mutually (for the group and the individual) beneficial, trustworthy goals to ensure commitment from all parties involved, before anything else is attempted. If this is done properly group work will follow much more easily. This is, especially, true if this is within an adult learning environment where group work is the basis, as the lack of a belief that one will benefit from learning in a group, influences the motivation to learn and work together.

b. Guidelines

- Communicate the learnership in such a way that the employed staff feel that they have a choice, but that it is extremely beneficial to them and that they cannot afford to pass up the opportunity presented to them.
- Explain the content of the program to the employed staff so that the individuals can consider their personal goals and then they can align it with the set group goals.
- Ensure that all the relevant parties including management, supervisors, employed learners, unemployed learners, employed staff, SETA etc. strive towards the same goal right from the start.

6.2.2. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to separate boundaries

a. Conclusions

The company did not communicate the process of the learnership properly nor the structure and reasons for introducing it. The employed learners and staff were not aware or prepared for having to move their boundaries to welcome the unemployed learners into their system. The boundaries between the two groups were not managed at the beginning of the learnership. When the unemployed learners came in as new members, the company was not able to integrate them properly. As most of the stakeholders were also not included in the planning phase and thus the employed learners were not informed or coached in welcoming the unemployed learners. The unemployed learners were not treated as when they were part of the existing group by the company. Separate meetings were held in the workplace and if a general staff meeting was held, the unemployed learners were not included. All this strengthened the perception of the employed learners that the unemployed learners were outsiders or an outgroup and they became suspicious, thinking that the company might have a hidden agenda for running the program – they became suspicious. The lack of integration of boundaries certainly took the learners' focus away from their goal to develop themselves, instead they focused on defending themselves. This group conflict negatively influenced the whole learning experience.

One could, therefore, conclude that if two separate groups need to work together in a learning environment, the integration of the two subgroups' boundaries should be taken seriously so that defensive behaviours are minimised and become manageable. This will help the learners to focus on the learning goal.

b. Guidelines

- Integrate the employed and unemployed learners' right from the start so that the unemployed learners are accepted as part of the system.
- Go to great lengths to ensure that the workplace is ready to integrate the unemployed learners so that there is work for them.
- Do not separate the employed and unemployed when it comes to the day-to-day management.
- Include the unemployed learners in the general personnel meetings.

- Ensure that performance management processes are in place so that progress can be measured and learners are made aware of areas of success and areas of improvement.
- Ensure that the training provider plans the implementation together with the supervisors so that all the operational-related factors can be kept in mind and so that supervisors can take accountability for the learners.
- Make support structures available to the learners.

6.2.3. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to anxieties/fears

a. Conclusions

During the process of the learnership many different forces created anxiety for the employed learners to deal with. They feared that they would lose their jobs to one of the unemployed learners, which they could not afford to do because they had families to support. The unemployed learners became the enemy. This fear was based on experiences in the past within the organisation. Due to them not having a good education and the unemployed learners having a good education, they feared that they would be seen as incompetent and inferior in comparison to the unemployed learners. This created high levels of anxiety for them because if they failed or the unemployed learners performed better in the learnership, it would give the employer even more reason to employ the unemployed learner and get rid of the employed learners. The presence of this fear definitely influenced the effectiveness of the training. The employed learners did not have the desired readiness to learn.

The employed learners projected their fears onto the unemployed learners and saw them as a risk that needed to be abolished. Even though it was not the unemployed learners' fault that they were better educated than the employed learners, or their intention to take their jobs, they were ill-treated, as they were seen as the enemy. The employed learners saw the unemployed learners as spies for the company. This made the experience so unbearable for the unemployed learners that they preferred not to be part of the group which, in turn, made the employed learners feel even more negative towards them. The unemployed learners also formed a group so that they could stand up against the employed learners who then became their common enemy. This took the attention of the learners away from the learning process. Their focus was on fighting the other group,

instead of on mutually benefiting from each other. Both groups developed different cognitive maps due to their previous experiences and opportunities in life.

One could, therefore, conclude that fears and anxieties with regard to security needs, however irrational they might be, could have a real influence on the learning experience and should, therefore, be worked through so that the group could move from the Basic Assumption state to the Workgroup state.

b. Guidelines

- Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the date of arrival of the unemployed learners.
- Have a teamwork session at the beginning of the learnership to introduce all the stakeholders to one another and ensure all the parties' commitment towards one another, as well as to goal of the program.
- Make it very clear to the employed staff that the unemployed learners are not a threat to their employment within the company as the unemployed learners have not been given a commitment that they will be employed after the learnership.
- Ensure that the learners know that if they have passed the assessment, they are deemed capable to complete the program successfully.
- Have continuous one-on-one discussions and workshops with the learners so that any fears and anxieties that might develop, can be brought to the surface and managed.

6.2.4. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to the feelings, emotions and behaviours

a. Conclusions

If one considers all the negative feelings, emotional dilemmas, fears and negative actions between the groups which resulted in the development of negative attitudes towards each other, one could envisage that the emotionally loaded relationships between them could definitely not have been a positive experience for either one of the groups. The one negative behaviour triggered a counternegative behaviour in the other group and so the negative spiral continued. They did not have a positive interpersonal, mutual dependent relationship with each other and the dynamic (glue or connection) that keeps a group together was not strong enough. This negative emotional climate, feelings of fear and negative attitudes influenced their motivation to learn and the effectiveness of the

learnership. The relationship became better when the two groups started to communicate with one another in the classroom. This led to the unemployed learners making sense of the reasons for the employed learners' attitudes and behaviours. They realised that the employed learners actions were actually the management's fault and, therefore they did not feel so hurt anymore. The employed learners were also able to realise that the unemployed learners had no intention of harming them. The truthful communication from the facilitator also made them realise that their fear of losing their employment was not going to become a reality. The employed learners' emotions, feelings and behaviour towards the unemployed learners then changed for the better.

One could, therefore, conclude that all feelings and emotions should be taken seriously and should be worked through otherwise these emotions could lead to negative behaviours and attitudes that would created an undesirable culture that, in turn, could influence the learning experience.

b. Guidelines

- Have change agents that are able to identify when negative feelings and emotions start to develop and they must assist the supervisors, facilitators and management in working through these emotions before negative behaviours and attitudes develop.

6.2.5. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to communication

a. Conclusions

Information is the energy a group needs to align its constructs and is done through communication. This did not take place in the group. As discussed in the previous conclusions, the lack of setting a shared goal, minimising the development of fears and anxieties, as well as assisting in neutralising feelings and emotions that lead to negative behaviours and attitudes, are all important aspects to consider. The vehicle by which these requirements are met is communication. Even if communication does take place, it should be done in the right way, so that it enhances the goal thereof and does not strengthen what one is trying to overcome (separate communication meetings strengthen the setting of separate boundaries).

One could, therefore, conclude that any process, including learning environments where the integration of two subgroups takes place (integration of boundaries), the right communication at the right time (before and during the process) with the correct vehicle all play a vital role in bringing the group constructs into balance.

b. Guidelines

- See to it that effective communication channels are in place so that information can flow to and from all the stakeholders on a regular basis (feedback), for example biweekly focus groups.
- Communicate all the company policies and procedures to the unemployed learners and make available the HR channel to them if they should have any problems or do not know what to do and how to act.
- See to it that management communicates with the unemployed learners as well as the employed learners and employed staff, acknowledging their presence and opinions.
- Resolve problems during the learnership as soon as they arise by means of consultation with all the stakeholders (employed learners, unemployed learners, SETA, union, supervisors, management, human resources, finance, etc.).

6.2.6. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to the workplace and classroom environment and the negativity that was experienced within these two areas

a. Conclusions

The workplace and classroom environment differed in many ways. In the workplace the employed learners had the upper hand because they had a lot of experience in performing the job at hand. The unemployed learners performed slowly and inaccurately which caused the other employees and supervisors to blame the unemployed learners for having to work harder. The employed learners had the benefit of knowing the supervisors and the other employees that were not part of the learnership. They also knew how to act, what to do and what not to do, whereas the unemployed learners were never informed about the policies and procedures that they should follow. The unemployed learners did not have a formal planned space within the workplace, or specific duties, while the employed learners were paid to perform a certain set of duties in a specific area. The unemployed learners were sometimes treated as employees and other times as learners. This created much confusion as to what role they should play within the

workplace. The supervisors and employed staff also experienced role conflict as they were not informed as to what was expected of them with regard to coaching or managing the unemployed learners. The overall experience was negative and the lack of a positive recognition and culture of appreciation made this even worse.

In the classroom the unemployed learners had the upper hand. They were fresh out of school and were able to cope with the formal lessons with much more ease than the employed learners. The unemployed learners annoyed the employed learners when they were done before them, by fooling around and making a noise. They caused much disruption. The employed learners battled to concentrate and make sense of what they had to learn. The unemployed learners tried to lighten the atmosphere but the employed learners interpreted their actions as a lack of respect. The employed learners battled as they did not know which role was more important when they were called to go and work, even though they did not want to miss class. They could not, however, refuse to go and work due to fear of losing their job. This created much tension for the employed learners.

One could, therefore, conclude that the culture of the organisation influenced the motivation to learn and that an organisation, in which a learnership is to be effective, needs to have a healthy, positive culture. The negative experiences and relationships within the workplace and classroom, due to a lack of role clarity, non-integrated boundaries, lack of self-confidence and the lack of proper communication to ensure that all parties were informed, led to the learning experience being experienced negatively.

b. Guidelines

- As far as reasonably possible, try to resolve issues with the employees before commencing with the learnership so that a positive climate can prevail when the program starts.
- Try to assist learners to become self-assured through positive reinforcement before and during the program.
- Ensure role clarity for the learners by clearly defining what is expected of them in the classroom and the workplace and then keeping to these expectations.
- Make learners aware of their strengths and weaknesses and how they can benefit from each other because of their strengths.

- Train supervisors and employed staff on how to coach and mentor the unemployed learners and make it worth their while.
- Ensure that supervisors are informed as to how they should manage the learners on a day-to-day basis as far as the development of policies, procedures and mechanisms are concerned. The guidelines should be designed to treat the unemployed learners in a fair and just way.

6.2.7. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to the role of the facilitator and of communication with process to get the two groups of learners to become a mutually dependent group

a. Conclusions

If the facilitators in the classroom had not played a mediator role between the two groups due to recognising the group dynamics, the program might not have succeeded at all. They acknowledged the different cognitive maps of the employed and unemployed learners. They assisted the unemployed learners to understand the emotions of the employed learners and helped them to work through them so that they could assist in getting the employed learners to acknowledge their unrealistic fears and postulations. This diminished the anxiety the employed learners experienced. The facilitators redirected the energy generated by the anxiety and steered it in the right direction so that it promoted learning in the group. The employed learners, when forced to deal with the “enemy”, came to realise that their unconscious fears would not become a reality because the unemployed did not intend to cause them any harm. The employed learners also realised that they should not blame the unemployed learners, but the company for the lack of proper communication with all the parties involved.

When the facilitators had communicated the reason for the learnership and why it was structured to include employed and unemployed learners, it was accepted by the employed learners as they perceived the facilitators to be more trustworthy than management. The facilitators were respected by the learners because of their knowledge and willingness to share their knowledge with them. The patience and the positive recognition that the learners received from the facilitators when they performed well (which was in contrast to what they experienced in the workplace) was highly appreciated.

The facilitators also assisted in helping the two groups to put aside their differences and to recognise the similarities they shared and how they could benefit from one another. This turnaround was achieved by getting the learners from both groups to communicate during forced group work. The learners differed in terms of level of education, experience and age. They finally realised that they shared similar fears in terms of job security and the fact that they had similar backgrounds made them feel like a family. This created a common ground for the development of a mutually dependent relationship. They were then able to see that age was not a real determiner of success and the differences in education and experience could be of benefit to each other by strengthening each others' weaknesses and working towards achieving their newly found shared goal. Communication created the energy for the changes to happen within the group and its constructs. The group developed from two unconscious basic assumptions state groups, into a unique conscious workgroup, performing the tasks needed to reach the intended goal.

One could, therefore, conclude that the group dynamics should be monitored by competent agents when two subgroups need to be integrated. This is especially true if it is a learning group where they will be dependent on one another's previous experiences to achieve the set goal. Having change agents, who communicate with the newly formed group and who are highly regarded for their knowledge, honesty and passion to help people and who have patience and insight into human behaviour, is imperative. They need to assist in breaking down defensive reactions and bring unrealistic fears to the conscious mind, as well as to shed light on the similarities of the subgroups as well as the benefits in accepting and utilising the differences of the other group members.

b. Guidelines

- Make sure that the training facilitators are well trained and equipped to deal with the group dynamics that can develop in the classroom environment so that they can contribute to the containment of emotions and to alert the company of the events.
- Ensure that change agents are available to monitor and manage these group dynamics.

6.2.8. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to developing into a mutually dependent group

a. Conclusions

The mutually shared goal that was established and the new boundary that was drawn created the learners' new shared group identity. They were able to focus on their similarities and see the benefits of their differences. They realised their mutual dependence on one another and were able to start working together to achieve the shared goal, as well as their individual goals, which now correlated. Their desire to destroy the other group (enemy) ceased. The process (glue) of the group was then much stronger than before and this indicated that the group had grown tremendously.

One could therefore conclude that by working through the fears and emotions that lead to negative behaviours and attitudes with the help of change agents, setting a clear goal and properly integrating the boundaries for the newly formed group, a mutually dependent group can develop, based on their different cognitive maps, and grow into an effective learning group.

b. Guidelines

- Explain the differences and similarities that might exist between the groups and assist the groups to realise their mutually dependent relationship.

6.2.9. Conclusions and guidelines with regard to influences of other systems and supra systems within the system and the negative relationships that were apparent

a. Conclusions

The supra and subsystems of the learnership system, in which the new group had to startup and develop itself, hugely impacted on the effective functioning thereof. All partners in a project should be committed to reaching the same goal and delivering on their promises. This should be pinned down by making use of effective communication processes between the partners within the system, subsystem and super system. These communication processes should also be used to ensure that role conflict issues are resolved. All of this will assist in ensuring that the system is well structured and planned which, in the end, will lead to a less negative emotional experience for the participants in the system.

The contractual issues between the **company and the SETA** led to the training being halted, even before it started. Then once it had started, it was placed on hold again for three months. The unemployed learners also did not get their stipends paid on time. This created more fear and uncertainty for the employed and unemployed learners as to the feasibility of being part of the program. It also led to the need for changes in the training schedule. The learners battled to keep up with the workload between the workplace and the classroom due to changes in the training schedule.

The fact that the **company and the provider** could not come to a proper agreement led to many organisational issues. The unemployed learners, for example, had no space allocated to them within the workplace and the learners that needed to be taken out of class to go and work – to mention a few – created serious problems for the learners. They blamed the company for these dilemmas. The provider also took implementation decisions without consulting the supervisors, which again resulted in operational confusion and disruption.

The **employed learners – management** relationship was negative because of previous events in the employment relationship and this definitely influenced the learner experience. The employed learners believed that management did not appreciate them and that they would only do what was beneficial for them. Management never cared about how they felt or valued their input. Due to this negative relationship the schedule changes were interpreted to be management's fault, even though this was not really the case. The employed learners also tried to influence the unemployed learners to believe that the management was the enemy. The employed learners tried to disrupt operations and did not care much about the company.

The **unemployed – management** relationship was not experienced as positive due to a lack of open communication, lack of collaborative relationships, lack of performance management and lack of recognition for hard work within the workplace. The negativity of the relationship affected the learnership due to the practical training taking place in the same workplace. This negatively influenced the learnership experience, especially, for the unemployed learners. The employed learners were already used to the negativity. The unemployed learners blamed the management for all the difficulties that they experienced during the program as they believed that if management had planned the

learnership program better and if they had been more committed and involved, the learnership would not have been so stressful.

The **supervisors** portrayed an attitude of resentment towards the unemployed learners and ignored them. They did not feel committed as they were left out of the planning as well as the implementation decisions. This influenced the unemployed learners negatively due to the supervisors not taking responsibility for their learning opportunities. The supervisors also did not receive any information as to what was expected of them with regard to managing the unemployed learners or mentoring them. This increased the unemployed learners' negative experience of the workplace environment.

The **employed staff** who were not taking part in the learnership had also not been informed of the learnership or how it would work. They were not asked to, or trained to assist the unemployed learners, nor were they properly introduced to them. The employed staff also had the same fear as the employed learners that the unemployed learners would take their jobs. The unemployed learners were also blamed for not performing faster and more accurately enough but, instead of helping them, they refused to assist the unemployed learners in the workplace. The employed staff took advantage of the unemployed learners and made life difficult for them. The employed staff were upset with their colleagues (employed learners) for leaving them behind to have to deal with the unemployed learners. The unemployed learners were not as productive as the employed learners and this meant that the employed staff had to work harder when their colleagues went for training. The employed staff were also jealous of the other employed learners for having the opportunity to obtain a formal qualification while they did not. It is understandable that they did not commit to the program considering the fact that they did not benefit from it. They just had to work harder. For them it seemed like everyone else benefited, except them.

One could, therefore, conclude that the hierarchy of systems (super and sub) had and will have a definitive influence on the system, as historical events influence the minds of those that form part of the system or current happenings. Communication, planning and commitment of all the parties in these upper and lower systems are important in achieving the goals of the new system. In the case of a learning system, if this is not done, it affects the learning effectiveness.

b. Guidelines

- First and foremost, establish that the learnership program that will be embarked on forms part of the organisation's overall training strategy which, in turn, should be in line with the strategy of the organisation.
- Do a detailed mapping to identify all the stakeholders to be involved in the learnership.
- Involve all the stakeholders identified in the mapping process (including the training provider, SETA representatives, supervisors, managers, employee representatives and trade unions, etc.) from the beginning (planning phase) right until the program is completed – because it is only when they are involved that they will be committed. If they are excluded, they will resist the learnership.
- Ensure that all contracts clearly stipulate what is expected of all the stakeholders and what the timeframes are. Ensure that all stakeholders understand the contracts and the implications if they do not adhere to their part of the deal.
- Clearly set out the goal and obtain buy-in of all the stakeholders/systems through consultation.
- Build relationships with and between all the stakeholders throughout the program.
- Ensure that all stakeholders have role clarity during the program.
- Make sure that the training provider truly understands the organisational system within which the facilitators will be organising the training so that they can enhance the quality of organising and managing the learnership.

6.2.10. Overall conclusions

A learnership program that is structured to include employed and unemployed adult learners is a very good design if you look at the mutually beneficial relationship that the employed and unemployed learners could share with one another. If the learnership is introduced and conducted properly and if group dynamics are kept in mind and steered in the right direction, it can go a long way in upskilling people within South Africa.

Considering the learners' experiences right from the word go is important as this definitely affects the effectiveness of the program and the learning that takes place. Through monitoring the learners and considering the group dynamics throughout the program, one would be able to identify problems arising and solve them as you go along. Understanding and monitoring the integration of this new group into the workplace, it is,

from a group dynamic perspective, important to ensure an emotionally stable experience for all the stakeholders involved.

It is thus important to not only consider organisational and learning principles but also group dynamic principles when managing a learnership as this study indicated that the group dynamics did influence the effectiveness of the learning experience of the learners.

Despite all the difficulties throughout the learnership program, both groups felt that they had developed and learned a lot. The unemployed learners mentioned that it had been an emotionally loaded experience but stated clearly that they had developed during the process. The employed learners' self-confidence grew, as well as their group skills and life skills, such as responsibility and respect. They also indicated that after years of working for the company they now understood why things were done in a certain way and how important it was to keep the customer satisfied. More important, though, is that they accepted the fact that all the employed learners, including themselves, were all important in helping the organisation to succeed.

6.3. Limitations of the study

The data collection was only done after the completion of the learnership. By then the employed learners and the unemployed learners had already dealt with many emotional issues. It is the researcher's opinion that if the data collection was done during the early stages of the learnership, "richer" or more detailed information would have been collected because the emotions would have been more real at that stage. During the focus groups the researcher made comments extreme in order to trigger learners to express their emotions. This tactic worked.

The researcher's limited experience in observing group dynamics (conscious or unconscious) might have resulted in some deeper meaning (nuances of emotions) not being discerned (Smit & Cilliers, 2006), yet a fresh new approach could be of value due to having no preconceived ideas. Due to the assistance of the study leader, and by reading widely about research before the data collection process took place, as well as having a second facilitator present and having certain questions prepared, assisted in minimising the impact of having less experience than an experienced researcher.

The limitations identified above are not detrimental to the point that they render the study of little value, but more experience could merely have enhanced the results thereof.

6.4. Recommendations for further study

It is recommended that similar studies be done in different industries and organisations so that the findings of this case study can be confirmed and verified as applicable in many diverse situations.

It would be interesting to investigate the individual units within the learnership group unit in order to find out what individual dynamics contributed to the dynamics within the group.

Being able to measure the learning effectiveness in learnership programs would add a different flavour to similar research, perhaps developing a program where the dynamics are considered and managed and one where the dynamics are not managed in order to see to what extent group dynamics influenced the success of learning.

6.5. Synthesis

In this chapter the outcomes of the rigorous analysis that was done were set out in a conclusive discussion in accordance to the aim of the study originally established in Chapter 1. The culmination of the conclusions that were made in the first part of each subject grouping led to determining guidelines that need to be considered from a group dynamic's perspective when implementing a learnership structured to include employed and unemployed learners. This study is valuable for practical application within the learnership field. It also endeavours to encourage future studies considering the influence of group dynamics within learning programs.

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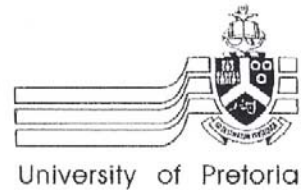
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8. **Appendix A: Declaration Regarding Plagiarism**

ANNEXURE A
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT



Declaration Regarding Plagiarism

The Department of Marketing and Communication Management emphasises integrity and ethical behaviour with regard to the preparation of all written assignments.

Although the lecturer will provide you with information regarding reference techniques, as well as ways to avoid plagiarism, you also have a responsibility to fulfil in this regard. Should you at any time feel unsure about the requirements, you must consult the lecturer concerned before submitting an assignment.

You are guilty of plagiarism whenever you extract information from a book, article, web page or any other information source without acknowledging the source and pretend that it is your own work. This does not only apply to cases where you quote verbatim, but also when you present someone else's work in a somewhat amended (paraphrased) format or when you use someone else's arguments or ideas without the necessary acknowledgement. You are also guilty of plagiarism if you copy and paste information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web site, e-mail message, electronic journal article, or CD ROM), even if you acknowledge the source.

You are not allowed to submit another student's previous work as your own. You are furthermore not allowed to let anyone copy or use your work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own.

Students who are guilty of plagiarism will forfeit all credits for the work concerned. In addition, the matter will be referred to the Committee for Discipline (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the University's regulations and may lead to your suspension from the University. The University's policy regarding plagiarism is available on the Internet at <http://upetd.up.ac.za/authors/create/plagiarism/students.htm>.

For the period that you are a student at the Department of Marketing and Communication Management, the following declaration must accompany **all** written work that is submitted for evaluation. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and is included in the particular assignment.

I (full names and surname):	
Student number:	

Declare the following:

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this assignment is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not copy and paste any information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web page, electronic journal article or CD ROM) into this document.
4. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
5. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.

Signature _____

Date _____

9. **Appendix B: Consent form – Learners**

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

M.Com. Human Resources management

INFORMED CONSENT

Research: THE GROUP DYNAMICS THAT TOOK PLACE DURING THE SETA GRANT LEARNERSHIP PROGRAM @ _____

I agree to take part in a study that looks into the group dynamics that took place during the SETA grant learnership program. I understand that I take part in this study at my own risk, and that the researcher will not be held responsible for any physical or psychological harm that may be done. I also believe that the researcher will ensure that no harm will be done to me intentionally.

I understand that I may be asked to form part of a focus group. I also know that I will be able to (if I wish to do so) obtain general feedback of the overall study, but I will notify the researcher beforehand. Results of the study will only be available at the end of this year (2008). I have a clear understanding that there is no sponsor for this study.

Participation is voluntary; I may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or not answer any questions that may make me feel uncomfortable, with no affect or penalty to me. I am allowed to ask questions concerning the study, both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study. If I do withdraw, I will inform the researcher.

If you have further questions about this study, please contact me, Michelle Ward, 072 611 6647/ mward@_____.com.

I, _____ acknowledge that the purpose of the focus group has been explained to me and that I will participate in the focus group with my full consent.

Signature

Date

Venue

10. **Appendix C: Questionnaire**

Questionnaire

The learnership program 2007 @
_____ Ltd.

I want to find out about your personal experience while being part of the learnership program. Starting a new program with no ready-made recipe leaves room for improvement. The only way positive changes are possible, is to find out what the participants experienced.

Instructions

Please indicate whether you have read and signed the informed consent form before continuing:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Carefully read through all the questions below and try to answer them with as much collaboration and comprehensiveness in the space provided beneath each question. Do remember that spelling and grammatical errors are of no importance, so do not worry about it! There are also no wrong or right answers to the questions, so just be honest. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Personal information

Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Age: _____

Language: _____

In what capacity were you involved in the learnership program @ _____ Ltd in 2007/2008?

Employed learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed learner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organiser	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>

General

1. How did you experience the learnership in general?

2. What, in your opinion, was the best part of the learnership?

3. What, in your opinion, was the worst part of the learnership?

4. Describe the relationship between the employed learners and unemployed learners of the program. How did this relationship influence your learning experience?

5. Do you think one of the groups (employed or unemployed) ever had an advantage over the other group during the program? Please indicate when and why the other group had an advantage over the other group.

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--



6. What difficulties did you experience during the program?

7. Did you at any time feel you did not want to be part of the program? Please explain your answer.

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

General comments:

Thank you for your co-operation and time!

11. Appendix D: Focus group preparation notes

The structured questions that were asked were as follows:

1. What motivated you to form part of the learnership program?
2. Did you know what the goal of the learnership esd when you started?
3. Was the program properly explained to you before and during the process?
4. What more could have been done to explain the program better?
5. What was the best part of the learnership for you?
6. What was the worst part of the learnership for you?
7. What difficulties did you experience during the program?
8. Did you at any time feel you did not want to be part of the program?
9. What do you think were the company's reasons for running the learnership?
10. Did you feel left out at any point during the program? Please indicate when and why you felt left out.
11. Describe the relationship between the employed learners and unemployed learners of the program? How did this make you feel personally?
12. Did you at any time feel vulnerable or threatened by the unemployed or the employed learners? Please indicate when and why you felt vulnerable or threatened.
13. Do you think the employed or unemployed group ever had an advantage over the other one during the program? Please indicate when and why the other group had an advantage over the other group.
14. Why do you think did the relationship improve after the first few months?
15. Why were the unemployed not accepted well (outcasts)?
16. Why did you feel the unemployed learners are coming to take your job/why you think they thought you are coming to take their job?
17. Why were the employed learners not in class at the beginning of the learnership?

The following ideas/emotions/concerns that resulted from the questionnaires were on the preparation sheet of the researcher to use to stimulate discussion in the group:

- Routes – belonged to you.
- Others have more experience.
- Not sure if you will get a job?
- Other group is stupid and old.
- Homework versus family responsibility conflict experienced?
- What was management's attitude towards the training program and the learners?
- Other group not as committed as you?
- Think the one group is more educated / experienced than the other?

12. **Appendix E: Webpage - Learnership**