



**AVETRA 2009**

**Jennifer Miles**

Course Coordinator & Facilitator Dip VET Practice  
Chisholm Institute  
MEd by Research candidate  
BAppS Leisure & Health

### **My aims for today**

- To discuss my research and the ways in which it continues to inform and be informed by my teaching practice
- To seek feedback related to the methodological approach
- To invite suggestions from those experienced in narrative research

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### **The question ...**

In what ways can the process of autobiographical reflection foster perspective transformation among adult learners returning to study?

What it means ...

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### **Autobiographical reflection ...**

- Looking back on one's life to examine the stories and the ways in which they have unfolded over the years
- Identifying the internal and external factors that may have contributed to a limiting sense of self and of greater future potential

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### **Perspective transformation ...**

Can the telling and reflecting on our stories enable us to identify deeply inculcated beliefs and behaviours – some highly constructive, some deeply limiting?

Can reconciliation of this understanding transform our perspective so that we can come to see ourselves as authors of new stories untold?

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### **The transformative journey**

The inquiry draws on what Brookfield calls critical pragmatism, grounded in both critical theory and ideology critique, and explores the individual and collective journey towards personal liberation and empowerment.

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## Literature

*Brookfield, Freire & Bourdieu*

expectation of the future based on past  
experience and cultural norms  
critical theory - examining power  
relationships  
the impact of ruling ideologies and social  
structures on individual agency  
identifying hegemonic assumptions  
reconciling the past  
personal revolution

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## Literature ...

*Mezirow, Cranton, Nelson, Frankl, Rogers*

symbolic and subjective frames of  
reference in interpreting past experience  
disorienting dilemmas  
challenging cultural norms  
meaning-making, authenticity and  
authorship  
identity transformation

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## Qualitative research

class of adults returning to study in a  
Community Services course at TAFE  
introductory workshop on autobiographical  
reflection and storytelling  
reflective storytelling, through writing,  
drawing, narrating  
sample of 8 volunteers  
1:1 interviews and 2 focus groups  
tape recording, notes

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## Anticipated outcomes

professional development for VET  
practitioners  
sessions on autobiographical reflection and  
storytelling across the VET sector  
Improved learning and employment  
outcomes  
further research ...

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