



MONASH University

**eLearning and identity in Adult Education:
A case study of an international Master's program**

Narelle Borzi

Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Development) University of South Australia
Master in Adult Education (Global) Monash University

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2019

Faculty of Education, Monash University

Copyright notice

© Narelle Borzi (2018).

I certify that I have made all reasonable efforts to secure copyright permissions for third-party content included in this thesis and have not knowingly added copyright content to my work without the owner's permission.

Abstract

Education and training programs delivered via the internet (eLearning) have increasingly become common in tertiary education. This study explores how some adult learners studying an eLearning Masters of Education program experienced their eLearning space, focussing on some of the issues that learners faced in regard to the design of the program, the globalised classroom, the eLearning pedagogy and in particular the power relations that ensued in such a space and some ways that the experience of such eLearning spaces can shape the learner's identity

A case study of an eLearning Master of Adult Education program, (known as Adult Learning and Global Change program or ALGC) was used as a base to explore aspects of adult education, identity and the online learning environment. The ALGC is taught collaboratively by four globally distributed universities, forming a global online classroom. A qualitative study was conducted with twelve former program participants. Data sets consisted of semi-structured interviews and reflexive documents produced by participants during the course of the ALGC program were analysed to explore how learners experienced learning in this transnational eLearning space; and how participation and learning in a collaborative transnational eLearning space mediated learners' identity.

This data highlighted the human and non-human networks (Latour, 2005) which were formed via eLearning pedagogies and how these elements, such as laptops, study spaces and online posts, mediated connections and identities which enabled or disabled learning in the eLearning space.

Other issues which emerged were how participants chose to present their 'Self' (Goffman, 1959), how they presented themselves to other participants and how these decisions mediated new and present identities.

The data also showed ways that the ALGC pedagogy was able to construct a global eLearning space reflecting the constant state of change called 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000). However, the participants also reported that norms developed in this eLearning program, evident in the requirements of the course for compulsory posts as well as the expectations and responses from lecturers and tutors, so that the program was also mediated by power relations (Michel Foucault, 1975).

The findings suggest that eLearning spaces are not neutral spaces. Instead they consist of networks and power relations, where learners practice digital identity management within a liquid world to shift and enable new identities. The study has important implications for the field of eLearning, which too

often evaluates the impact of programs in terms of narrowly conceived learning goals or technological practices.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:

Print Name: Narelle Borzi

Date: 22nd September 2019

Acknowledgements

'Thank you' goes out to the following people:

Klaus

My family

The participants in my research

Professor Terri Seddon

My Supervisors – Dr Miriam Faine and Dr Scott Bulfin

Professional accredited editor Mary-Jo O'Rourke AE for proofreading my thesis according to the university endorsed national 'Guidelines for editing research theses' (IPEd 2019)

Table of Contents

Declaration	4
Acknowledgements	5
CHAPTER 1 – Where do I begin?.....	10
1.1 Finding my way to study.....	10
1.2 The Master of Adult Learning and Global Change (ALGC).....	13
1.3 The ALGC curriculum.....	15
1.4 A brief genealogy of the ALGC program.....	18
1.5 Statement of the problem.....	20
1.6 Research questions	22
1.7 Significance of the study	22
1.8 Structure of the thesis	22
CHAPTER 2 – Identity, eLearning, and Adult Education: a literature review	24
2.1 Curriculum	25
2.2 Linking eLearning with adult education.....	27
2.3 Identity	31
2.3.1 Addressing the concept of identity.....	32
2.3.2 Identity, education and technology	33
2.3.3 Digital identity	36
2.3.4 Identity Management Online.....	38
2.4 Issues of power, discipline and normalising techniques in eLearning	40
2.5 Globalisation and eLearning spaces	43
2.5.1 Conceptualising space	43
2.5.2 Transnational Learning Spaces within a Globalised World	44
2.5.3 Globalisation and Education.....	46
2.6 Linking across and within space.....	49
CHAPTER 3 – Research methodology and design	53
3.1 Theoretical framework.....	53
3.2 A case study	55
3.3 Research participants	58
3.3.1 Recruiting participants	58

3.3.2 Participant demographics	59
Table 1 Participant Demographics.....	59
Table 2 Participant employment details	61
3.4 Research Design	62
3.4.1 Documents.....	62
3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews	64
Table 3 Details of interviews and documents provided	67
3.5 Data Analysis.....	68
3.6 Narrative Analysis	69
3.6.1 Presenting the participants' narratives	72
3.7 Ethical Considerations	73
3.7.1 Harm to participants.....	73
3.7.2 Informed consent	74
3.7.3 Invasion of privacy	74
3.7.4 Deception.....	74
3.8 Issues of reliability and validity	74
3.8.1 Descriptive validity	75
3.8.2 Interpretive validity.....	75
3.8.3 Theoretical validity	75
3.8.4 Generalizability	76
3.8.5 Evaluative validity	76
3.9 Self-reflection on methodology	76
Chapter 4 – I am a social-material girl.....	79
4.1 Socio-material understandings of human and non-human networks	80
4.2 The importance of the study space	81
4.3 Connections made via the 24/7 Nature of eLearning.....	83
4.4 Connections made while posting online	86
4.4.1 The permanency of online posts	92
4.5 Connections for learning	93
4.6 The ALGC program as a non-human actor	97
Chapter 5 – How do I appear? Identity and self-presentation in the ALG space	101
5.1 Self-identification and impression management	102
5.2 Presenting our 'real' selves	104
5.3 Being and becoming a 'student' ...again	109
5.4 Idealised impressions and professional identity formation	111
5.5 Identity formation within an eLearning community	113

Chapter 6 – Liquid Lives	117
6.1 Finding voice in liquid lives and workplaces	118
6.2 Liquid identities	121
6.3 Building a community in liquid world.....	123
6.4 Liquid language.....	126
6.5 Liquid standards.....	128
Chapter 7 – Behind the scenes.....	133
7.1 Power exerted via the ALGC curriculum.....	134
7.2 The English language as a source of power.....	141
7.3 Power through ‘norms’ and ‘voice’	144
7.4 Trying to find ‘normal’ within the marking system	146
7.5 Self-regulation within the ALGC	148
7.5.1 Reflection as self-regulation	148
7.5.2 Regulation through time	150
7.5.3 Self-regulation and self-assessment	152
7.6 Is there anybody out there? The power of silence	153
7.7 Surveillance	156
Chapter 8 – Looking back to move forward	159
8.1 In the beginning	159
8.2 Experiencing transnational eLearning programs	161
8.3 Negotiating participation and learning in transnational eLearning spaces.....	163
8.4 Mediating identity in a transnational eLearning space	165
8.5 Looking forward	166
8.6 Concluding Remarks.....	168
References	169
Appendices	184
Appendix #1 Office 365 set up, home page for Fostering Learning in Practice.....	184
Appendix #2 Participant Interview Schedule	185

Appendix #3 Explanatory statement.....	188
Appendix # 4 Consent Form	191
Appendix # 5 Invitation Flyer	192
Appendix # 6 Learning Tasks for Global/Local Learning unit.....	193
Appendix # 7 Promotional material for ALGC program.....	203
Appendix # 8 2010 Handbook entry for ALGC program	206

CHAPTER 1 – Where do I begin?

This study focuses on a case of online learning, also known as eLearning, by presenting a case study of a transnational eLearning program in adult education, known as the Masters of Adult Learning and Global Change (henceforth, ALGC). By eLearning I mean Education and training programs delivered via the internet. The ALGC program is transnational in conception as well as in delivery as it is taught through a single online learning platform by four different universities operating in four different countries. I want to advocate for this program firstly because of its uniqueness and secondly because of my own experience in the course both as a participant and later as a tutor and eLearning advisor. The ALGC program, as I will describe, is unique and has features which make it a good example for eLearning programs.

In this chapter I briefly discuss the critical approach to adult learning that underpins my approach in the study. This chapter also describes the background and context of the study and provides a rationale for conducting research in the areas of online learning and identity in such a transnational educational space. Also described are the aims of the research. I then detail the ALGC program's background including the establishment of the program, the philosophy behind its development, and how it aims to place education within a local/global context.

1.1 Finding my way to study

I initially started this project with the idea that I wanted to discover more about eLearning and how it worked. In 2010 a Google search of 'online', 'Master's' and 'education' had led me to enrol in the Master of Education (Global) program (which was the local name for the ALGC program) offered through Monash University. My previous experience of university study had been through an external course where hard copy material was mailed out to me; I did the work on my own and returned assignments via the post. There was an occasional conference call with the lecturer and other students when an assignment was due but otherwise the study was completed in solitude. I was not at all prepared for the online ALGC program which involved compulsory online participation and feedback, and group work across countries. While wanting to learn, I found myself resisting the requirement to go online and reply, respond, comment, correct and negotiate with other participants in order to learn. Conversely, I found having a full-time job meant that I was not able to participate in the online parts of the course as much as I wanted to and as much as other participants seemed to be doing. There were times when all I could do was the minimum required which resulted in feelings of 'missing out'.

Despite the 'foreignness' of the ALGC learning space and the program's learning processes, I realised that I was learning. By the end of the course I realised that I had undergone changes that I

had not foreseen before commencing and had not noticed during the course. I felt that what I learned and how I had changed was, in large part, the result of all the experiences and conversations I had participated in during the program as well as conversations with work colleagues, friends, and family outside of the formal course but related and connected to it. Through participation in the course, my sense of self had changed. My sense of myself as an adult educator had also been re-confirmed. In addition, I had a better appreciation of the potential of online technologies as a way of learning, and therefore of teaching. The process of eLearning within the ALGC also made me curious because it offered a new direction in terms of my own work, what I knew and could do, and how I identified as a person and as a professional.

These personal insights related to my 'identity' (Gee, 2000-2001), which I believe shifted by the end of the program. While all these experiences were valid for me, at the time I did not know whether other participants in the program had had similar experiences. In addition to this, even though I did feel that I had changed because of my studies, learning online was not an easy experience for me and there were many challenges. I was delighted to be learning but finding time to meet course requirements to respond and comment online, as well as complete assignments, became a full-time job in addition to the actual full-time job I was already doing. For me, the convenience of being in an online space for learning did not seem so different from studying in a more traditional, on-campus university setting. Despite the new technology, this online environment did not seem to allow for the sort of flexibility that is much heralded as a key aspect of eLearning. Bigum and Rowan (2004) discussed how the term 'flexibility' has become 'commonplace in the discourses of higher education' (p. 213) and that this terminology usually relates to firstly the perception that 'flexible delivery is more effective and efficient in terms of getting teaching resources to students' but also that eLearning 'offers possibilities for generating revenue from overseas fee-paying students' (p. 213). The authors questioned what this 'flexibility' means for students and teachers in terms of additional workload to support the flexibility (p. 214). Bryceson (2007) also debated whether eLearning had been adapted for 'cost cutting' reasons rather than a recognition of the technological advances and good educational and pedagogical practice (p. 190).

Furthermore, during the course I was largely unsure of how and when my learning was occurring, and how and when my identity was changing. I was uncertain of whether I was actually learning in the online environment, as a result of the work and online conversations, or as a result of other factors that were less clear. There were also times when I felt that I was 'acting' during my communications with others online. I felt I had to play the 'good student' even when I did not necessarily agree with what others had written in the various forums. If the others in the group all seemed to agree with a particular post, then I felt a certain pressure to also agree even though I might have had a different view. Alternatively, I said nothing and did not post at all to comments or posts in the various forums that I did not agree with. At other times, as I did not have an education

degree, I had to undertake additional research and reading as I felt that I needed more background to many of the topics being studied. I felt different and slightly alien on numerous occasions. I often felt I was outside of the group and always trying to catch up with what was happening online. There seemed to be a group of 'insiders' who had more knowledge and who were much more articulate than I was.

I also recognise that some of the questions raised by my online experience could equally apply to traditional campus learning. That is, was the mode of delivery of the program important? Was my experience based on being an adult learner who had to combine work and study? When I started my research, the focus was on understanding the online experience. To compare the two experiences would involve asking different questions to the ones I did for my research. So I cannot really say what the experience would be like if I had studied a traditional mode or compare the two experiences; and that was not researched in this study. I originally included it as a theme arising from the data collected but rejected it as there was not enough data to discuss or analyse in a substantive way.

The questions that originally led me to this PhD project centred on how eLearning works as an educational tool. During the ALGC I had chosen to study via an online environment but how was that online environment actually contributing to my learning? Harasim (2000) reflected on the 'paradigm shift in attitudes towards online education' which began in the 21st Century due to a 'telecommunications and knowledge revolution' (p. 42). This change was something I had experienced, but I was not completely convinced of the soundness of eLearning as an educational tool. I felt there was an opportunity to explore to better understand exactly what happens within the eLearning space. I was unsure whether learning took place as a result of activities within the ALGC space or because of work I was doing outside of the learning space; that is through completing the required readings and assignments rather than participation in online discussions. I wanted to research these issues more carefully and to use the results to consider the implications for teaching and learning online. I was intrigued by the whole online learning process and the possibilities it presented for adult learning in particular. I had limited knowledge of the online education world and wanted to research both the opportunities and the potential pitfalls further.

Despite the real challenges that I faced as a learner in the program, I also wanted to advocate for the ALGC program; it seemed important to research as to how and why its distinct format seemed to ultimately work so well. Two years after I completed my own Master's in the ALGC, I returned to the ALGC program as a tutor. I was now on the other side of my previous experience. I still found myself questioning how online learning worked and what, if any, are the best ways to help learners in these environments. I wanted to explore online learning much more because I felt it was not enough to simply provide online learning – that does not just make it 'right' as an educational tool. In

particular I wanted to explore the eLearning experience from the perspective of the learner. This became my starting point, the statement of my 'problem'.

1.2 The Master of Adult Learning and Global Change (ALGC)

The ALGC program is an eLearning Master of Education which links four international universities located in Sweden, Canada, South Africa and Australia. In 2015, the year I collected the data for this study, participating universities were Monash University Australia, Linköping University, Sweden, the University of British Columbia, Canada and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. The unique curriculum of the program needs to be understood as it relates directly to the student experience. The developers of the program sought to avoid some of the 'hegemonic features' of university programs developed in one country and exported to another, in addition to wanting to address the issue of learning and teaching in globalised societies. The original concept was to establish an online 'intercontinental' program which avoided the pitfalls of 'models of domination and commodification' of globalised education by negotiating content and delivery among four universities which were considered 'equals' (Boud et al., 2006, p. 609).

The course was developed in response to a changing education marketplace, shaped increasingly by contemporary globalisation. Higher education was becoming an instrument that could be used to increase revenue for universities by attracting foreign students into a country or by taking the university into other countries. Both of these processes were made easier by technological developments and the spread of the internet (Larsson, Boud, Abrandt Dahlgren, Walters, & Sork, 2005). However, the original developers saw the program as portraying 'a positive perspective on change and development, on humans and on the potential inherent in education' (Dahlgren, Larsson, & Walters, 2006, p. 79) and offering 'global perspectives on learning in cross-cultural environments' (Grosjean & Sork, 2007, p. 15). When I first applied for the program, the Monash website stated that as part of the course, learners would examine:

- Contemporary changes in work and learning
- The role adult learning plays in understanding and responding to globalising forces and their impacts on workplaces, communities and the environment
- The forms of adult learning found in different cultural contexts
- Ways of supporting adult learning in conditions of global change. ('Masters in Adult Education (Global)', n.d.).

Initially the four institutions were to deliver the same curriculum but separately. However, the program is now offered as a 'distance learning program in which each of the partner universities take turns teaching the different courses' (Larsson et al., 2005, p. 68). Each class is considered a 'world

class' wherein the students from each of the different universities progress through the course together (Boud et al., 2006; M. Dahlgren et al.; Larsson et al., 2005). Participants in the program are a truly globally diverse group of people. Embedded in this approach was the concept that communication between the participants, situated in different countries, 'should constitute an important ingredient of the program to serve the purpose of learning about global similarities and differences' (Larsson et al., 2005, p. 68).

My own experience with the ALGC program confirmed all these aspects of the program to be true for me. The design of the program ensured that through the range of subjects and assignments, the discussion boards and the 'coffee shop' (an informal student only discussion board), I was given access to a diversity of education histories, policies, ways of learning and, of course, the opinions and beliefs of other students. Assignments focused on reflection not only on individual practice but on different meanings of education and education theory, social justice perspectives, and education policies in all learners' countries. The communication through the discussion forums was equally important as the required readings. Through these discussion forums I was given access to other learners' thoughts on the current topic which helped to either solidify or challenge and change my viewpoint. Outside of the 'learning' discussion boards, the coffee shop was the location where learners were on their own to discuss whatever they wanted to. This was supposed to be a 'lecturer free space' where only students posted. Topics ranged from the current assignment to the reasons behind an upcoming public holiday in a learner's country of origin. Weddings and births were shared and celebrated, and deaths were collectively mourned. Despite the challenges I encountered, there were many times when I did feel part of a global community.

While the program may have been a reaction to the globalisation of higher education, the local still needed to be considered and incorporated into the planning, design and execution of the program. As explained by Larsson et al. (2005):

Each partner institution has its own rules, traditions and convictions about academic rigor; its own bureaucratic structures and accountability frameworks; its own concerns about access and equity; its own terminology, methods and schedules for organising academic work; and its own financial structures and policies (p. 64).

Larsson and colleagues further detailed that the original partners categorised these differences to four areas:

1. Local decision-making processes
2. Systems for examinations and grading
3. Financial conditions
4. Information technology (for example accessing the internet) (p. 65)

These areas of difference led to 'local nuances' being added to the program (Jubas, 2005, p. 86). Larsson et al. (2005) stated that local options constituted 25% of the program. Examples of these differences include the use of percentage grades by one partner university while others reported as pass/fail; the requirement for a thesis or a research project to complete the course in some universities but not others; and elective courses offered by some of the partner universities but not all (p. 65).

As previously mentioned, I would like to advocate for the ALGC program from my own experience as both a student and a tutor. While I believe in the value of the course, the program is a successful one, now in its 18th year. The program has received 2005 Curriculum Innovation Award, awarded by the Commission of Professors of Adult Education of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (Dahlgren, Dahlgren & Grosjean, 2013, p. 44) and also The e-Learning Excellence Award (2015) at the 14th European Conference on E learning, held at Hertfordshire University, UK (The University of British Columbia, 2015). I want to be honest about my own experience however, my analysis of the data I collected does take a critical perspective on some aspects of the program.

1.3 The ALGC curriculum

Larsson et al. (2005), members of the original program development team, maintained that the program was designed to enable the students to:

- Learn and teach globally and use global technologies
- Understand knowledge-based societies and the implications for learning
- Develop an understanding of globalisation discourses and develop cultural sensibilities and sensitivities
- Develop equity perspectives on learning, and engage in reframing their own professional practices
- Establish a global community of adult learning practitioners, and challenge orthodoxies in adult education practice (p. 63)

The aims to provide a global education experience are clearly highlighted in these learning outcomes. The program modules covered a range of topics focusing on global issues concerning education and aimed to introduce the learners to different cultural, teaching and learning perspectives. Grosjean and Sork (2007), who were also involved in the development of the program, revealed that the development process for the ALGC program, as might be expected, entailed 'extensive negotiation of content and delivery methods among the four universities' (p. 15).

Appendices 7 and 8 are examples of the promotional literature and the 2010 Monash handbook entry for the ALGC program.

The research I have undertaken on the course does not reveal what specifically was taken from each university to form the curriculum. Course developers Grosjean and Sork (2007) discuss adapting an existing course to an online format as part of their original work in the development of the ALGC program. Larsson et al. (2005), also course developers, discuss the challenges of negotiating the content of the program. Grosjean and Sork (2007) describe how the partner universities first decided that 'six core courses would be required to cover the program's content' and then they identified which university 'was best equipped to develop which course' (p. 16). For my own experience as a course tutor I know that the Fostering Learning in Practice (FLIP) unit was developed specifically at Monash for the course in e-Learning format. The final six core modules were:

- Locating Oneself in Global Learning
- Adult Learning Contexts and Perspectives
- Work and Learning
- Fostering Learning in Practice
- Global/Local Learning
- Understanding Research ('Masters in Adult Education (Global)', n.d)

All students completed these six core modules and as previously noted, there were some different requirements at the local level in order for students to graduate. There was an additional requirement at a local level for Linköping and UWC (Research Project), UBC (Elective Units) but no additional requirements at Monash.

Each module was specifically designed to meet the learning outcomes of the program. The modules were a mix of required readings, weekly activities and posting to the discussion board, and individual and group assignments. The following is a brief outline of the modules as they were when I completed the ALGC program:

Locating oneself in Global Learning was a 'wrap around' subject. Part One was the first core module of the program and Part Two was the last. The module aimed to introduce students slowly to the process of learning online as part of a global community. The students learned to find their way around the website, find a learning partner and develop a learning plan and other reflective documents, some of which were collected as data for this project (Seddon, 2015, p. 12).

Adult Learning Contexts and Perspectives examined contemporary adult learning theories and perspectives. The unit highlighted the different contexts in which learning can occur and focuses on

social movements, community development and the workplace (Seddon, 2015, p. 12). The unit also examined where adult learning occurs and recent adult learning theories.

Work and Learning highlighted 'education and work in a globalising economy that is unevenly knowledge based. It addressed the implications of this change for lifelong learning, skill formation, workplace learning, and adult education' (Seddon, 2015, p. 36). This module contemplated the workplace as a site of learning and looked at aspects such as informal learning, organisational learning and the learning organisation.

Fostering Learning in Practice tackled '21st century challenges in working life, global contexts, intercultural relations, and ways of leading through learning. It combined theory related to contexts, identities, adult learning, and leadership with a problem-solving process based on critical reflection' (Seddon, 2015, p. 40). This module required students to reflect on their own workplace and to identify issues regarding learning in practice and how it can be fostered.

Global/Local Learning focused 'attention on three significant developments associated with processes of globalisation'. First, how 'the global and the local are interconnected and interdependent'; second, the 'shift in discourse from adult education to adult learning' and third 'the revival of interest in civil society, citizenship and social movements as sites for learning and knowledge production' ('Course Notes, Local Global Learning Module', 2011, p. 2). This unit examined how social movements and civil society can be places of adult learning. It also focused on how adult learning can change communities.

The final core module **Understanding Research** was focused on expanding understanding of how to undertake research projects and read research texts 'in order to understand and evaluate them critically' (Seddon, 2015, p. 46). This unit was perhaps the 'odd one out' amongst a course which focused on adult learning and globalisation. The focus here was on how to conduct research for students who wanted to complete further study, for example go on to complete a PhD, as well as for the students who had a local requirement to complete a research project as part of the course.

Grosjean and Sork (2007) recorded that during the development of the course, once the modules were decided, consideration was then given to the 'content and staging in relation to the order of courses' (p. 17). When the ALGC program commenced the teaching of each module rotated between the universities (Larsson et al., 2005, p. 68). That is, each university took turns to present all the modules. However, by the time I was part of the program both as a student and then later as a tutor, this was no longer the situation. Instead each university had set modules which they presented.

The program aimed to facilitate learning through the creation of a community of practice involving transnational adult educators (Wenger, 1998). Students logged onto the course website where they accessed the readings, discussion forums, individual university forums as well as general course and study information (See Appendix 1). Originally the program was offered via the 'Blackboard' learning management system which featured discussion boards to replicate face-to-face classroom discussion (Grosjean & Sork, 2007). The program has since relocated twice; first to 'its learning' learning management system, and then to where it now operates within Microsoft Office 365.

As with other eLearning programs, participation in the ALGC program required that students were able to access all materials and activities that they required via the online site. However, from personal experience, technical issues sometimes required a direct phone call to the individual university for resolution. It was the responsibility of each student to ensure their personal computers/laptops had the necessary software and capacity to enable them to participate in the ALGC course. Additional software, such as EndNote, was available through the individual universities.

At the time I completed the program, and started this current project, there were no 'live' sessions run as part of the ALGC. That is, no spoken lectures or tutorials were conducted as part of the program. Instead, students had to be actively engaged with the course materials and with each other via the online platform. The readings and course content material were provided to the students by the lecturer and could be downloaded in pdf or word document format and printed out as/if required. Assignments were submitted to the online site by students.

1.4 A brief genealogy of the ALGC program

The original developers of the program were a cross national group of adult education researchers who already had strong professional bonds and a commitment to emancipatory education. Members of this group have written several papers which help explain the concepts behind the program and how it was developed. Larsson et al. (2005) described the program as a way of 'confronting' the globalisation of higher education through a process of online collaboration between four different universities. They detailed the process of planning of the program and highlighted the challenges of setting up the course and in particular provided an understanding of the 'local' versus 'global' issues which arose. These included issues such as decision making processes, systems for examination and grading, financial considerations and the actual technology itself (p. 65).

The paper by Boud et al. (2006), written as a follow up to the one written by Larsson et al. (2005), focused on 'an analysis of the actions of the key actors in the developments that led to the program, rather than on the programme itself' (p. 610). The program was explored using the actor-network

theory to highlight the network/s which developed during the development of the program. Using research and documents which the authors themselves kept, three main aspects of the program were explored: (1) the emergence of the program; (2) an analysis of actors and networks and (3) reflection on the development of distributed global programs (p. 619). Dahlgren et al (2006) moved away from writing about the development of the program to analysing some examples of the discourse produced within the actual program. Their research looked at patterns of communication found in on-line documents, written notes and narratives written by participants in the program. They also detailed issues which arose from using English as the 'lingua franca' of the program (p. 89).

Grosjean and Sork (2007) used the ALGC as a case study for the process of converting a face-to-face course to an eLearning one. The online unit Work and Learning (see Section 1.3) was previously a traditional course entitled Work and Education at the University of British Columbia (p. 15). The authors explained how the process worked and the barriers they came across as they tried to move the unit from offline to online.

I have used some of the journal articles published by the original developers of the ALGC program. They are detailed in the thesis and in the reference pages. I did approach one of the developers for an interview one but received what I felt was a negative response and therefore did not pursue this any further depending instead on their published works. As well as research by the original developers, other papers have been written on the ALGC program. A former participant in the program, Kaela Jubas, wrote 'Seeking Realness in a Virtual World: Dis/illusion and Community in Online Education' which detailed her experience within the program. Jubas (2005) stayed in the program online for one year before transferring to a face to face program (p. 80). Jubas attributed her leaving the program to what she described as 'the limitations to community' in an online setting (p. 80). The paper is a useful critique of the online learning aspect of the ALGC program in terms of whether it is indeed possible to form a virtual community which assists learning.

Hendricks (2012) investigated the experiences of South African participants in the ALGC program to determine whether eLearning 'replicates what goes on in a lecture theatre and/or whether e-learning becomes a passive development tool' (p. 40). Hendricks looked at collaborative learning, control of knowledge and the formation of an e-culture and found that students 'may not have understood the implications of social constructivism in relation to their own learning' (Hendricks, 2012, p. 51)

There are gaps within this small but useful body of existing research, and specifically a need to examine the student experience on the ALGC program more closely. My study therefore aimed to build on this research by collecting data in relation to how the ALGC program might mediate learner identities.

1.5 Statement of the problem

I am interested in exploring eLearning for several reasons. There are still questions relating to the ways in which eLearning is used in higher education. Technology based learning has increased in the 21st Century as a way for universities to both reach more students and remain relevant. Traditional universities have had to adapt the way they do business in order to meet the needs and demands of a more globalised world and potential student market. Education is not only offered on campuses and via distance learning methods but also through platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (known as MOOCs).

The ALGC program differs from a MOOC in several ways. Clarke (2013) wrote that MOOCs evolved from the distance learning capacities of universities and are a 'natural outcome of the increasing accessibility of the digital networked world, with vast quantities of information becoming freely available, and networks forming across geographic boundaries' (pp. 404-405). Most MOOCs are offered free and currently do not lead to a formal qualification.

The ALGC program, on the other hand, was developed as an online example of the traditional university system of classroom-based learning and operates within that framework albeit on a transnational basis involving the four partner universities and within a virtual classroom. Additionally, the ALGC program is not free, although at times the different universities have received government funding to cover student tuition. Importantly it is accredited and does lead to a Master's level that is, post-graduate qualification.

Also, the ALGC approach differs from the competitive way in which universities traditionally operate in the global marketplace wherein one university 'exports' its programs to other countries or where students are physically 'imported' into another country (Larsson et al., 2005). Instead, four separate universities collectively operate the ALGC program from their respective home bases and the students, who are globally dispersed and enrolled at one of the four universities, progress through the course with the same group of international 'classmates'. Both of these aspects also make the ALGC program different from traditional online courses wherein there is usually one university involved and the same group of students do not remain together for the entire program.

An intentional effect of the curriculum is that it builds on the global collaborative construction of knowledge and fosters acts of participation and collaboration that are transnational. The ALGC uses online teaching technology to incorporate the multiple voices, ways of knowing and decision-making structures engendered by transnationalism. Participants work and learn in globally dispersed cohorts where they must navigate through differences in order to complete the required work. Such a

learning space becomes a transnational one, where learners are globally dispersed but work together in eLearning forums to learn and progress through their studies.

I was particularly interested in exploring what brought participants to the ALGC and ways that learning does (or does not) take place within a collaborative eLearning environment. The social context of an eLearning space such as the ALGC is one in which learners have the opportunity to converse and learn with others on a global platform. This has in turn changed the education process and widened the range of contexts within which particular learner identities can be both enabled and disabled.

The final reason for the study is to explore how students learn in an online space from a student perspective. How do students experience such an online learning space? The research explores the narratives of a number of students in the ALGC through both the written records produced while participating in the program and their accounts after completion of the program.

Identity and learning have long been linked in education research. O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007) argue that when learning is occurring identity is 'in the foreground because the new and strange practices force reconsideration of practice and therefore shifts in identity trajectories' (p. 315) (see Section 1.8). Adult learners access education as a means to becoming a certain type of person or to avoid becoming a certain type of person. Through the learning experience they want to change in some way for reasons that are either personal, work-related or a combination of the two. Wenger (1998) contended that learning is about identity because it is a process of a transformation that changes the learner (p. 215). Through the process of learning we are forced to re-evaluate our current behaviours and belief systems in order to find a place for the new learning. How we develop and change our identities, as well as how others perceive us, is significant for 'our understanding of motivations, barriers to learning and the support needs of adult learners' (Askham, 2008, p. 89).

This research aims to shed light on potential approaches in which eLearning pedagogies can be adapted to meet the learner's needs. Hence, my research focuses on the experiences of participants in the ALGC program in order to understand how they negotiate their learning and manage and mediate their identities within this particular transnational learning environment. The study therefore also highlights issues of identity and how these are linked to learning. During my time with the program I felt that I was developing and changing through the process of learning in the online environment. As I highlighted earlier, I was unsure of whether the process was a result of the program itself, for example the pedagogy and the online format; or whether it was simply the process of learning itself. Hence a key theme of the study is the ways in which a learner's identity may be changed, challenged or altered as a result of the eLearning environment.

1.6 Research questions

The main research question driving the study is:

How do learners experience learning in the ALGC transnational eLearning space?

This main research question will be explored by pursuing a number of supplementary questions:

1. What elements of the ALGC transnational eLearning program do learners experience as significant to their participation and learning?
2. How do learners negotiate participation and learning in a collaborative transnational eLearning space such as the ALGC?
3. How does participation and learning in a collaborative transnational eLearning space like the ALGC mediate learners' identities?

1.7 Significance of the study

By exploring how learners in an eLearning program such as the ALGC experience this type of learning, I hope to contribute to the body of work which already exists on eLearning through a different focus: the learner on which there is limited research (see Chapter 2). Additionally, I wish to advocate for programs such as the ALGC which are structured as a transnational program. I am interested in how such programs work well, are limited or can be improved.

The program has been researched by other ex-participants, for example Jubas (2005), February (2007), Hendricks (2012) and Fontana (2016) and I wish to build on this body of research at PhD level in a more substantive process.. This study will therefore extend the current literature regarding eLearning. I hope the study will be of benefit to educators and researchers by encouraging them to have a learner-centric approach to their work. The intention is to also generate theory which can expand our understanding passed discussion of the technology side of eLearning.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 has outlined some context for the project, including my motivations and aims for conducting the research in the areas of identity and eLearning in a transnational space. Chapter 1 also described the ALGC program's background including how it was established, the philosophy behind its development, and how it aims to place education within a local/global context.

Chapter 2 reports some of the literature surrounding three areas which intersect in the project – transnational spaces, identity and adult education. The focus here is on exploring some aspects of the theoretical landscape related to online adult education. Some of the literature in regard to identity

issues in adult education, eLearning and globalisation is surveyed to set the scene for the different ways identities can be mediated in a transnational eLearning space.

In Chapter 3 I introduce the study's methodology and outline the research design chosen for the study – a case study of the ALGC program using interviews and documents from the program. This chapter details how I designed my research study, including the tools, sources and methods of data collection. Also explained are how the research participants were chosen and what countries they reside in. Included is a section of self-reflection on my experience as both past participant of the ALGC and researcher. Issues of validity and ethics are also addressed.

In the next four chapters (chapters 4-7) I report the views of the participants according to four themes which emerged from the data. These chapters relate to the four main aspects of eLearning in the ALGC that were most apparent from the data analysis. Within these four chapters the voices of the participants are used to explain each of these four aspects which are central to the study.

Chapter 4 shows how the world of eLearning exists within certain specific spaces with particular affordances and constraints and the ways that these participants experienced such socio-material aspects of the program, using actor network theory as a framework (Latour, 2005).

Chapter 5 focuses on ways participants constructed and presented their identities online. The methods participants employed to represent themselves while in the ALGC program are discussed. Impression management (Goffman, 1959) and the emergence of their digital identity are highlighted.

Chapter 6 explores the liquid lives (Bauman, 2000) of the participants in reference to identity and globalisation, within a global classroom. Issues discussed include what brought participants to the ALGC, how they found voice, and how their own identities might be thought of as more or less 'liquid'.

Chapter 7 explores the power relations (Foucault, 1998) between the lecturers/tutors and learners, and learners, and amongst the learners themselves, that arose through the structure and course content of the ALGC, and the effects on learner identities and the impact on their learning.

Finally, chapter 8 draws the study to some provisional conclusions and provides a discussion of some of the possible implications resulting for eLearning and transnational education.

CHAPTER 2 – Identity, eLearning, and Adult Education: a literature review

Chapter 2 presents a critical discussion of some of relevant literature concerning the research areas which intersect in this study – identity; new technologies for learning; adult education; and transnational spaces. The chapter surveys the main theoretical and explanatory literature that I used within the research. Useful concepts of voice, identity, power, space, media and technology are framed and developed through a review of this literature in relation to the context of this study. The chapter explains some of the links and complexities between each relevant area of research in the context of my research project and how bringing them together provides a richer and more nuanced analysis of identity within eLearning. Within these topics I also explore some of the theory to find my place within it.

This literature suggests that eLearning affects identity in specific ways, in that learner identities change through the intended curriculum and pedagogy, but also via other aspects of the process of studying in an eLearning space. Digital identity; that is, the need to ‘present’ yourself in an online space, the connections between human and non-human elements, power relations, and the liquid nature of an ever-changing globalised world operate in different ways to mediate learner’s identities when he/she is moving within an eLearning space.

As stated above there are different areas which intersect in this study. They are linked, but separate, areas of study. In this chapter I explain how I see these connections and their importance for my research. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first introduces the notion of curriculum in relation to how it influences the thinking of participants and promotes a specific agenda (see Section 2.1). In the second section I identify and explore some of the links between eLearning and adult education (see Section 2.2). Following this, in the third section, I examine the concept of identity within adult education, with a brief history on how ‘identity’ has been perceived through different eras including digital identity in online spaces (see Section 2.3). I then move on to issues of power and discipline within eLearning (see Section 2.4). Then globalisation and eLearning spaces are defined and discussed (see Section 2.5). The chapter finishes with a review of some research relating to the socio-material aspects of eLearning (see Section 2.6).

Within these topics I also explore some of the theory and to attempt to find my place within it. I utilise concepts from Goffman (1959), Latour (1999) and Foucault (1975) as a frame to analyse the data generated in relation to the environment surrounding new technology and learning. I found that each of these theories can provide insights into the different aspects involved within eLearning. A theory of power (Foucault, 1975) suggested that the eLearning environment is not as open, and democratic as we would hope it to be. Bauman (2000) helped to understand how eLearning discourses and the

collected data indicate a liquid modern world in which we are constantly in a state of change. Latour (1999) and his Actor Network theory highlighted that the connections made between human and non-humans are complicated, not neutral but both potentially productive and problematic.

2.1 Curriculum

In this section, I focus on the notion of curriculum, highlighting the issues of power and politics surrounding curriculum as these relate to the data findings in my study. eLearning students are subject to the curriculum in the same ways that students who attend a campus-based university are. In effect, there is little room for choice or negotiation in how things are done within the program. My experience with the ALGC program as both student and tutor reinforced this belief. The traditional power structures from a real-world classroom situation transfer over into the eLearning classroom. As part of my research I wanted to investigate how this happens and the effect it has on identity. I had thought eLearning would be something different, a place where these limitations and restrictions were not present. However, in my own experience and the data, power and discipline issues developed as a theme. My data shows that curriculum is not negotiated within the ALGC program, but the literature showed that this is not a unique situation.

As discussed earlier, the ALGC program was developed partly in response to changes that were occurring within higher education because of globalisation. The developers of the program wanted to focus on issues of learning and teaching in globalised societies (Boud et al., 2006) and to provide a globalised focus on teaching perspectives (M. Dahlgren et al., 2006). This curriculum of the ALGC program is one of the factors which make this program unique. It is an integral part of everything which is taught but also constructs and represents the essence of the beliefs behind the program.

By curriculum I mean 'what counts as valid knowledge' (Diorio, 1977, p. 103) that is, the curriculum which is chosen for a particular learning program represents a selection of information that is being passed onto students as knowledge. Popkewitz (1997) adds that these forms of knowledge function 'to regulate and discipline the individual' (p. 140). It is this focus on regulation and discipline that interested me regarding researching into the ALGC.

There are differing perspectives on how curriculum should be understood and discussed, although there is not scope in this project to detail the history of curriculum theory. Ditchburn (2012) citing Jackson (1992) wrote that 'curriculum is a contentious and messy field, variously defined and characterised by conflicts and confusion' (p. 348). Burns (2018) agreed, writing that 'curriculum studies finds itself in a paradox' (p. 3). Pinar (2012) argued that politics entered curriculum theory in the 1950's in America and can be traced through to the present day focus on 'Internationalization' which is associated with political movements on the left (Pinar, 2012). This reference to politics

reflects that curriculum within education has become a contested field, and understanding any particular curriculum, means 'questioning how knowledge transmitted in an educational context is selected, valued and organised and how such processes can be understood' (Linné, 2015, p. 31).

Adult education does not take place within a closed off space. Ditchburn (2012) highlighted the political nature of curriculum, stating:

Whatever its purposes, orientation, goals or outcomes, its organisational structure or epistemologies, curriculum provides an overt and tacit indicator of what knowledge is considered important for whom and who should decide. It establishes the demarcation lines of what knowledge is included in the curriculum, what pedagogies are possible and the extent to which a range of voices are tolerated. (p. 350)

I agree with Ditchburn's comments regarding the political nature of curriculum, not from a point of government interference but from the viewpoint of what 'voices are tolerated' (p. 27).

Some studies focused on ways in which the role of the teacher has been eroded within curriculum development, and the role of government increased. For example, Gerrard and Farrell (2014) focused on how standardised systems such as the Australian Curriculum reframe the role and professional practice of teachers. The view that educators are 'marginalised in the curriculum development process' was also explored by Howells (2003, p. 27) wherein the author advocated for 'overcoming the marginalisation of teachers' for the 'interest of the professional standing of teachers and with it good curriculum development' (p. 27).

Using gender and feminist discourse as the focus, Blundell (1992) described how curriculum in adult education favours males and does not help women to achieve equality. Among other things, 'discriminatory policies and practices' as well as the non-encouragement of women to consider 'areas of study and employment which are non-traditional' are seen as stopping women from achieving equality (p. 200). Blundell (1992) believed that adult education curriculums only 'reinforce' a woman's 'subordinate position in the family and workplace (p. 211).

However, as noted by Sork and Newman (2004) 'learning takes place in social and organisational contexts which the learners may be able to change' therefore 'the design of an educational program will become a political endeavour as well' (p. 117) Bohny et al. (2016) used their own experience as doctoral students to show that in their case curriculum was negotiable, and power can be shared. Mayes (2013) reported on involving students in curriculum development, stating that this is not a new concept, but one which dates back to the 1920s through to the 'radical movements' of the 1970s

(p. 62). Power and voice are given to students by allowing certain choices and freedoms within the curriculum.

Agnello (2016) engaged with students in her summer school, using Foucault's theories to understand curriculum as a discourse:

Discourses as mediated systems that exert social, economic, governmental and other forms of control are an important piece of understanding the curriculum as a set of discourses and associated practices that harness and usually act upon the individual. (p. 111)

Students came to see power hidden within the curriculum structures. Agnello (2016) urged us to look at the curriculum through Foucault's prism and to ask questions such as 'What are the discourses of the curriculum? How is power exercised through the curriculum?' and 'How is power exercised through the curriculum individualising and totalising?' (p. 111). By understanding how such theory can be applied to everyday lives, as educators we can 'create the field in which we originate our own theories' and allow students to 'find spaces where they can take action in their workplaces' (p. 124).

2.2 Linking eLearning with adult education

One key aspect of curriculum is pedagogy. In this section, I look at some aspects of eLearning as a pedagogy within the field of adult education. eLearning and adult education are both fields that have been undergoing enormous change and there are increasingly important connections between them. In addition, adult education is itself the subject of the ALGC curriculum, and also provides one contextual framing for formal higher education, especially for programs like the ALGC which acknowledge the crucial role of identity formation within education and which also intend to provide a critical perspective.

The ALGC program, while requiring the participants to be employed in the adult education field, understands itself as something beyond workplace training. Brookfield (1985) distinguishes adult education from training wherein 'the emphasis is on acquiring and demonstrating' skills, knowledge and behaviour 'in as correct a manner as possible' (p. 46). As such, the focus of this research is in adult education. However, as Fenwick and Edwards (2014) state 'making use of knowledge cannot be separated from everyday practices and experiences' (p. 37).

First of all, the importance of adult education has increased with an ever-growing emphasis on the changing nature of work and jobs, the need to keep working to an older age and the various impacts of globalisation and technology on jobs and work (Kelly, 2009). As Brewer and Headlee (2011) stated:

The projected increase in adult participation in both formal and informal educational opportunities paired with the rapid economic and technological changes in our information and communication-based world have elevated lifelong learning from a casual pursuit to one of necessity. (p. 145)

The ways in which adults are educated, both formally and informally, need to adapt to these new paradigms. Merriam (2008) wrote that there are two issues which characterise adult learning in the 21st Century: first 'increased attention to the various contexts where learning takes place' and second that 'learning is a multidimensional phenomenon, not just a cognitive activity' (p. 94). These two issues suggest both that adult learning has been taken out of its traditional home in universities and centres of formal education into different, perhaps more accessible, areas of our lives and they imply that adult learning is more than just a process of thinking but rather an event which has a focus beyond narrow credentialism. Learning always takes place within a context, but it does not necessarily have to be within a traditional classroom or from a textbook.

In 2000 eLearning was described as a 'new paradigm' that was profoundly changing the face of education, with different learning models, a more collaborative learning environment and increased educational opportunities (Harasim, 2000, p. 42). eLearning has since become an important vehicle in both formal and informal educational and business environments and is often viewed as a way of giving choice and flexibility to learners, of opening up opportunities for both organisations and learners, and for reaching learners in different environments.

As an educator in the adult learning field it always seemed to me that eLearning was embraced with too much enthusiasm and too little proper engagement with, and understanding of, the process behind it. That is, it did not seem as if consideration was being given to how learning would occur in the eLearning space. Almost instantly it seemed eLearning was being welcomed as the 'next big thing' which was going to open new worlds for learners and new revenue avenues for educational institutions and business. I was uncomfortable with the process of taking lectures from the 'real world' and simply uploading them to a website. In many cases, the programs being offered were nothing more than an electronic version of a distance learning system. There did not seem to be any considered pedagogical approach behind the methods used to present information online or how to engage learners. I was also concerned that the revenue aspect of eLearning seemed to attract the most focus, rather than the pedagogy.

Many writers have critically questioned how technology is used for education purposes. For example, Selwyn (2011a) advocated taking a more realistic or 'pessimistic', view. That is, to 'look beyond questions of how technology *could* and *should* be used' towards a focus on 'how technology is

actually being used in practice' (p. 715). Selwyn proposed that by taking a more realistic look at educational technology we will be better able to move forward within the field. This aligns with how I was looking at eLearning as a tool when I was an educator of adults within business and education environments as well as when I was a student within the ALGC program.

Some research has been conducted into how technology influences learners' identities as learners. In a classic early study *Life on the screen* Turkle (1995) wrote that the 'holding power' of the computer is a 'phenomenon frequently referred to in terms associated with drug addiction', noting that the term 'user' is most commonly associated with computers and drugs (p. 30). Turkle (1995) also noted that the 'technologies of our lives' change the way we view the world (p. 47). She compared using a computer to stepping through the 'looking glass', Alice in Wonderland style, and on the other side of the looking glass we are able to 'reconstruct our identities' (p. 48). We visit new communities, we make new friends, and we form new lives. Then in *Alone Together*, Turkle (2011) commented on how the 'global reach of connectivity' which the internet affords 'can make the most isolated outpost into a centre of learning and economic activity'. However, within online social media worlds Turkle wrote that the 'years of identity construction are recast in terms of profile production' (pp. 152-153).

Research such as that conducted by Selwyn (2011a; 2011b; 2013) and Turkle (1995; 1999; 2011) suggests that as educators we need to think more deeply about how we use technology. By investigating how eLearning affects the learner's identity I want to continue the questioning and reflection on how eLearning as a resource is incorporated into educational programs. If, as Brookfield (1995) wrote, we teach to change the world (p. 1), we need to critically reflect on our practices to ensure that our teaching is having the desired effect. As educators, we need to ensure that we are using the right pedagogies to reach our students. As Brookfield (1995) further stated:

What we think are democratic, respectful ways of treating people can be experienced by them as oppressive and constraining. One of the hardest things teachers have to learn is that the sincerity of their intentions does not guarantee the purity of their practice. The cultural, psychological, and political complexities of learning and the ways in which power complicates all human relationships (including those between students and teachers) means that teaching can never be innocent. (p. 1)

The imperative is to not simply accept what we are doing as educators (Turkle, 1995; 1999; 2011; Brookfield, 1995) We must ensure that the methods developed to educate learners are actually working to educate learners in practice. Further research and reflection are needed on any pedagogies that we introduce into the learning environment to ensure that we are actually doing what we intended without adverse effects on the learner or their identity. In this study, I question and examine the process of eLearning rather than just accept it as it is presented, for example universities

promote eLearning in terms of flexibility for the learner. Doing this from the learner's perspective allows multiple voices to be heard on how the process works.

The online learner is central to my research project. My project investigates how learners experience the eLearning space. A great deal of research has been conducted on who the eLearner is. Various researchers such as Parker (2009), Schmidt (2009) and Zembylas (2008), have all explored different facets of the online learner, from their emotions to their behaviours online. Parker (2009) profiled the eLearner to explore issues of diversity and motivation for learning. The author concluded that eLearning may require 'proactive communication' between teacher and student in order for the online process to be effective (Parker, 2009, p. 8). Schmidt (2009) investigated exactly which students are taking up eLearning courses, what their motivations are and why some are successful, and others are not. The author believed this line of enquiry is important for eLearning programs to be successful in the long term. The study concluded that there is no 'one' online learner, that is too simplistic a viewpoint of them and that in turn their eLearning experience is also individual (p. 492). Studies such as this help us as educators to understand that we are dealing with individuals and our responses need to be appropriate to each individual.

Zembylas (2008) studied the emotions of a group of adult eLearners to determine how/if emotions play any part in their learning process. The author found a difference between men and women and proposed that these differences need to be addressed in the eLearning process (p. 84). Hartley and Bendixen (2001) sought to understand if, and then how, the characteristics of the learner determine how technology such as eLearning is adopted. They examined the relationship between 'individual differences and performance in new learning environments' and highlighted the importance of 'individual characteristics' such as prior knowledge, cultural background and self-regulation skills (p. 25).

Learners' culture and cultural identity have been researched through numerous lenses. Farmer (2012a) and (2012b) dealt with culture and gender. The author stated that issues surrounding culture become more difficult and 'challenging' in the online environment than in face-to-face teaching (Farmer, 2012a, p. 201). Additionally Farmer (2012a) identified that educational environments, including those in the online space, generally 'reflect the dominant culture'. This situation leads to tension between 'established power and purposeful improvement' (p. 216). It is therefore important that issues of culture are identified and acknowledged rather than being avoided. Also addressing cultural issues, Goold, Craig, and Coldwell (2007) examined ways to accommodate 'culture and cultural diversity in online teaching' (p. 491) and provided a list of Best Practice techniques as a result of their studies (p. 504).

Additionally, studies have investigated the behaviour of the learner online. Orton-Johnson (2007) conducted an auto-ethnographic study into student participation in eLearning programs, categorising the patterns of behaviour as 'lurking, chatting, flaming and joking' (p. 4). A further study by Orton-Johnson (2009) into how technology was utilised by students in an online learning program found 'limited and inconsistent engagement with the resources' made available to them through the program. In order to understand how identity can be affected in an online environment, this study continues the process of listening to the voice of learners. Studies using the learners' voices are important as they help to explain the eLearning experience from a perspective not usually heard.

These studies all indicate that the eLearning is a complex phenomenon. There are multiple aspects of the eLearning process which need to be considered in order to ensure that eLearning 'works' properly. Some of these are multi-layered, not immediately obvious, and may require a more in-depth study. This means further research to ensure the pedagogy used in eLearning environments is both appropriate and effective. However, only a small number of studies have been conducted which include the learner's perspective. As Orton-Johnson (2007) wrote, there has been a 'scarcity' of research from a 'learner voice' (p. 1). Her own auto-ethnographic study was one early attempt to overcome this lack of learner perspective. Orton-Johnson (2007) investigated the use of constructivist models of learning through the perspective of student participation in eLearning activities. The use of online conferencing was examined to see whether this collaborative method was compatible with learning. Orton-Johnson (2007) concluded that while technology does have the potential to enable interaction in eLearning, the use of technology is still an involved and complicated part of the eLearning experience (p. 9). While technology has moved on and is now more user friendly, my research here is intended to look further into the learner's perspective to better understand their eLearning experience.

2.3 Identity

In addressing the study's research questions about learning, I noticed links to the identity formation of the students within the ALGC program. Identity issues within eLearning are considered specifically as these are central to the research. This section of the literature review critically examines some of the huge body of research on identity and education with specific reference to adult education and how these two issues are linked and interwoven. When I listened to the participants' narratives I began to understand how their identities were enable or disabled through the process of learning online. As Watson (2006) states, 'people construct narratives and narratives construct people and our identities emerge through these processes' (p. 510).

2.3.1 Addressing the concept of identity

At face value, the idea of an 'identity' would not seem to be a difficult concept to understand. We understand what makes us 'us'. However Chappell, Farrell, Scheeres, and Solomon (2000) wrote that the concept of identity has had a turbulent life, from being 'labelled a modern fiction' to being considered a 'reflexive re-writing of the self' which is possible because of the 'continuous self-monitoring processes that characterise late modernity' (p. 1). Buckingham (2008) also saw the concept as difficult, stating that 'identity is an ambiguous and slippery term' (p. 1). Buckingham described a paradox between an identity as something we 'uniquely possess' and an identity which on the other hand 'implies a relationship with a broader collective or social group of some kind'. For example: nationality, gender, culture (p. 1).

Gee (2000-2001) agreed, stating that while we have a 'core identity', there are multiple facets to our identities and these are in turn linked to our interactions with others within society, among other things (p. 99). Other people perceive us as a certain type of identity – daughter, friend, teacher – and so our identity will be fixed in their minds while we are with them. We therefore have multiple identities depending on the context in which we find ourselves.

Hall (1996) advocated along similar lines with a view of identity that:

Accepts that identities are never unified, and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured: never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. (p. 4)

Schatz-Oppenheimer and Dvir (2014) agreed, writing:

Post-modern approaches to identity emphasize the multiple identities of the subject that are context-and-culture-dependent. These identities are dynamic and continuous and are constructed and reconstructed throughout life. A person's membership in different cultures leads to confrontation with various significant others and establishments, providing innumerable opportunities for a person's re-examination of identities. (p. 141)

This understanding of identity recognises it as changeable in different contexts in which we find ourselves, that we change our identity to fit the circumstances, that we are in a constant state of becoming (Bauman, 2000) and this is the perspective that I use throughout my research. According to Bauman (2000) we live in a time wherein we are constantly able to change and re-do our identities; we are in a constant state of becoming the person we want to be. We now have countless opportunities as to what we can 'be' which means that our identity is always fluid, that we are always

on the move to the next version of us (p. 62). Bauman (2007b) also believed that our exposure to liquid modernity means that we are now faced with a world where 'competitive attitudes' are valued. Individuals are now pitted against each other as commodities and there is no longer time for 'investment' in interhuman bonds (p. 2). Bauman (2007b) wrote that in a liquid world 'fears prompt us to take defensive action' and this means further changes for our identity (p. 9).

Jørgensen and Keller (2008) also argued for the concept of flexible identities and describe three 'common' ways of viewing identity and identity formation (p. 529). The traditional humanist view – a 'true self' hidden from view because of societal obligations; the sociological view – which emphasises the importance of gender, age, social status, family and work, and which incorporates the view that identity is formed through discourses (p. 530); and the community of practice view – which is based on situated learning and the writings of Lave and Wenger (1991), and which see learning and development as an 'integral part of participating in a community of practice' (p. 530). Through participation with other members, we 'discover what we are able to do and who we are'. Jørgensen and Keller (2008) also described identity as a 'learning process which points to identity as a trajectory that incorporates the past and the future into the meaning of the present' (p. 532). The authors considered learning as a process of negotiating identities within particular contexts. Brown, Reveles, and Kelly (2005) offered a sociocultural view of identity wherein a learner's identity is 'negotiated through discourse, including the antecedent histories, assumptions and cultural knowledge embedded in any interactional exchange' (p. 782).

The picture begins to emerge of a process wherein identity is formed through experiences, including education. Our identity is constructed through the lives that we lead and therefore through the activities we participate in. In addition, we have different identities rather than a single static one. We display different parts of our identity depending on the situations in which we find ourselves. We enable or disable identities as we feel they are required within the different contexts of our lives and in regard to our perceived audience. I return to these points when I consider the data in Chapter 5.

2.3.2 Identity, education and technology

This section examines the links between education and identity construction, focusing on education as one location where our identity is formed. Within the field of education research, Askham (2008), citing Britton and Baxter (1999, p. 179) wrote that 'education has been noted as a 'key site for the construction of identity' for the mature student' (p. 89).

Many studies have examined the link between identity formation and education. Brown et al. (2005) used identity to understand whether students are learning in their study of scientific literacy and discursive identity. Brown et al. (2005) suggested that the use of identity as an analytical framework

'provides a means to examine how issues such as culture, gender and ethnicity intersect with students' willingness to engage with science across multiple timeframes and contexts' (p. 800).

Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that learning occurs through 'legitimate peripheral participation' in 'communities of practice' (COP) (Wenger, 1998, p. 4). That is, learning is not merely 'situated in practice' but 'an integral part of generative social practice in a lived-in world' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35). Wenger (1998) characterised identity as:

- A negotiated experience
- Community membership
- A learning trajectory
- Within memberships in different communities
- A relation between the local and the global (p.149)

Jørgensen and Keller (2008) believed that identity in a COP is a 'process based in the mutual constitution of the community and the person' (p. 530). That is, through our involvement and interaction with other members of the COP we find out who we are. Conversely, we also discover 'what we are not' through non-participation which also enables or disables aspects of our identities (p. 531).

This concept of managing multiple identities is an interesting one, and the manifestation of these different identities in the eLearning world as compared to face to face learning merits further research. There is limited research which directly compares face to face learning with eLearning. Diaz and Entonado (2009) compared the teaching methods involved to determine how both delivery methods could be improved. Academic differences were assessed in a study by Ladyshevsky (2004) and after discussing differences such as age and gender, the study found that on average eLearning had better academic results (p. 317). Pedagogical issues were discussed by Mioduser, Nachmias, Lahav, and Oren (2000) and Sweeney and Ingram (2001) compared the tutorials given within both modes of delivery. Huang (2019) examined the role of the teacher from the learner's perspective and found that the role was perceived to be more important in face to face learning (p. 205). However, the comparison of the two modes of delivery in regard to learner identities is one that requires further research.

Selwyn (2013) also advocated that when examining education and technology the debate should not be 'framed purely in technical terms' (p. 147). Selwyn maintained that:

The coming together of the educational and the digital is a predominantly social affair – based around the struggles over benefit and power, equality and empowerment, structure and agency, inequality and social justice. (p. 147)

eLearning is not free from the issues which occupy educators and learners in the offline world. The social nature of eLearning ensures an environment where personalities mix learning and a digital world. Furthermore, Jäkälä and Berki (2013) wrote that ‘entering cyberspace concerns issues of both *identity* and *identification*’ (author emphasis) (p. 2); that in order to understand any online community it is necessary to understand the meaning of ‘individual and collective identities, in particular how they are built and how they influence interaction and participation’ (p. 2). How an individual identifies him or herself in online communities is their way of managing their identity, of putting forward the identity they want to others in the community to know them by. It may not be a conscious choice on the student’s part; a student may be identified by others through their written text or visual devices. Understanding how this identity formation happens in a learning environment is important to develop the pedagogy surrounding eLearning and the development of better programs which meet students’ needs.

Ching and Foley (2012b) investigated the relationship between ‘influence and agency in the ‘emerging field of technology and identity’, trying to determine how the use of technology ‘creates possibilities and imposes constraints, how individuals make choices and are denied choices, and how identities both shape and are shaped by technology tool and experiences’ (p. 2). Ching and Foley (2012b) defined a digital world as one that:

...encompasses any and all of the environments in which we might locate ourselves (or our selves). With this phrase we indicate not only virtual spaces, but also a physical world that has digital technology embedded within it, surrounding us and becoming increasingly normalized. (p. 10)

Rather than being a ‘unidirectional’ process - technology influencing us - these authors suggest that the power of technology lies in the way we control *it*. We can ‘welcome’ or ‘resist technology’s presence in our culture, our physical and social surroundings, and our personal lives’ (Ching & Foley, 2012b, p. 2). We make choices as to how we will incorporate technology into the spaces of our lives. To Facebook or not to Facebook? Smartphone or iPhone? How much information will I tell my online community about myself? The process of making choices, as well the choices we make, propel us into different spaces. These choices bring into, or exclude, other people in our lives - our space - which in turn affects our identities as we continue to make choices.

The collaborative aspect of eLearning has been the focus of various studies concentrating on the multiplicity and community of online learning. Adams (2013, p. 161) considered that learners are 'one person inhabiting multiple social worlds', with 'complex identities' that 'adapt' for the 'different social situations or communities within which we live'. We are different people across different contexts in our lives. Adams, citing Lave and Wenger (1999), pointed out that learning within 'any domain' is more than a 'formal acquisition of knowledge' with an additional 'strong social element'.

This research shows that education plays a role in forming our identity. Our identity changes through learning processes, including technology. As discussed in the previous section, our identities change as we move into the different environments in which we operate and live our lives. By entering the world of education, we re-configure our identity via the learning process. We leave our known identity and adjust to an environment wherein we may no longer 'know everything'; we go back to being a student, to learning, again. We also change through the acquisition of new knowledge and/or skills through the learning process. The next section expands on the concept of digital identity, and then moves into how this identity is managed in the eLearning world.

2.3.3 Digital identity

The concept of identity formation via discourse within a social context is further developed and refined in education studies, through the concept of a 'digital identity', which has become a theme within education studies in recent years (Adams, 2013; Aresta, Santos, Pedro, & Moreira, 2013; Peachey & Withnail, 2013). Our digital identity is how we represent ourselves in the digital world, in the online communities in which we participate. For some this may be through the use of avatars in both the gaming and education worlds (Peachey & Withnail, 2013) while for others it will simply take the form of how we represent ourselves on Facebook or work based digital use through sites such as LinkedIn or involvement in company profiles. Through our use of technology, we make the choices about the ways we will be represented in the various online forums in which we choose to participate. We manage our identities; we make choices about how we represent ourselves in the digital world. Digital identity management is a complex process and it can go wrong. It means considering what we want to present as 'us' to others online. There are constraints on how we do this; not only imagination but also how much we value the opinions of the others online.

Understanding digital identity becomes important to understanding how we move around eLearning spaces. Williams, Fleming, Lundqvist, and Parslow (2013) defined 'digital identity' as 'the persona an individual presents across all the digital communities that he/she is represented in, and which encompasses the various roles they take on as learners, educators, mentors and so on' (p. 106). Maia and Valente (2013) wrote that digital identity 'relies on information technology as a support for the construction of meanings through practices adopted by the community, of relationships with the

others and based on the sociocultural contexts of the stakeholders' (p. 59). Turkle (2011) stated that our technological devices 'provide space for the emergence of a new state of the self, itself split between then screen and the physical real, wired into existence through technology' (p. 16). A digital identity is therefore that identity which any individual presents within the different digital communities he/she is associated with. It can be similar or different to both their other selves and to each of the different online communities he/she is active within. This links back to the concept of identity as something which is fluid. Our digital identity is also fluid, changing as required to suit the circumstances.

This view of a changing digital identity is supported by Jäkälä and Berki (2013) who questioned whether identities change online and conclude in their study that they do. They proposed that 'different context, contact and content' often require us to change our 'self-representation' (p. 5). That is, our identities change depending on the social context we find ourselves in, who we are dealing with, and what we are doing- this includes online and digital contexts.

In addition, as part of her work investigating the ways in which tutors and learners perceive their identity construction online, Bayne (2005) explored the differences between how each group approached the concepts of multiplicity and online 'metamorphosis'. Bayne (2005) discussed whether our online identities are actually as 'mutable' as they are made out to be. For students Bayne (2005) discovered that there were issues of feeling 'out of control' and a 'danger' in changing from who we are offline (p. 31). Students saw a danger to their real self if they went too far with an online personae which Bayne (2005) explained by the categories 'danger, personality split, deception and perversion' (p. 31). Conversely Bayne (2005) determined that it was 'less problematic' for teachers to construct their identity online and that they use the 'space to construct themselves as authority figures' (p. 38). Chapter 7 explores these concepts further, in analysing issues of power and discipline that emerged from the data.

This literature shows that digital identity is an important part of the eLearning world. It is a way of presenting ourselves to the others online in a way which we think best reflects the person we are within each particular online space. It is not easy to manage, and there are some perceived dangers associated with changing too much. The next section details the concept of identity management in the eLearning environment.

2.3.4 Identity Management Online

Managing identities is therefore part of any online identity. Williams et al. (2013, p. 106) asserted that our digital identity will signify how we are viewed in our online communities and therefore will impact on our work and reputation. Peachey and Withnail (2013) described their experiences of using avatars in an education setting in the virtual world of Second Life. They found that while changes to the physical appearance of their avatars were accepted, changes to their digital identity were not and consistency was valued. The authors found that digital identity was 'closely, but not inextricably linked to, nor is it the same as, an avatar'. Rather they determined that identity is 'compounded in our reputations' (Peachey & Withnail, 2013, p. 221). For eLearning programs such as the ALGC this implies that students might place great importance on how they are perceived within the eLearning space. How this plays out in practice is something that my research explores.

Another view, expressed by Adams (2013), is that eLearning has the 'potential to free us from predefined concepts of who we are' (p. 160). Identity in the real world is often structured around restrictions imposed by 'our physical, situational and social context' (p. 160). This means that an eLearning student does not have the separation between their identities in the world of study and their other non-student identities. In the eLearning world there is also the ability to negotiate new identities, as Adams stated, 'to free us from predefined concepts of who we are' (p. 160). The eLearning process means that we are not in our 'real world' and therefore have the ability to construct a 'digital identity' that may or may not overlap with our 'real world identity'. eLearning students can make decisions about who they are, what they want to tell others about themselves, and basically project the image they want. This concept is taken further by Koole and Parchoma (2013) who asked the question 'to what extent does online interaction contribute to the fragmentation of the self?'. They stated that the digital world can be seen as 'disembodying, allowing unlimited creation of multiple, unrelated identities that may or may not be associated with one's physical life' (p. 17). This raises the concept that, by changing or using different identities, we must determine whether a sense of self is lost.

Well before the digital age, Goffman (1959) argued that individuals 'perform' identity. In constructing an identity based on various layering of contexts we make choices about what parts of ourselves to reveal and what to keep hidden (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's (1959) theories of social interaction suggest ways we can analyse how learners work at their identity through their self-presentation in the eLearning space. Goffman (1959) introduced the notion of self-presentation as a dramaturgical concept, viewing the presentation of self as a kind of theatrical act. Goffman (1959) wrote that 'All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify'. It is not always easy to decipher when someone is presenting their real self, or when they are acting out an identity (p. 78). To emphasise the dramaturgical aspect, Goffman (1959) used terms such as

'front stage' and 'back stage' behaviour, and he referred to the participants in interactions as 'actors'. Goffman did not see these presentations as acts of deception but more as a form of posturing, sometimes carried out in a form of collaboration with the audience; for example when a mistake is made and both the performer and the audience avoid mentioning or referring to it in order to 'save face'. Papacharissi (2002a) referred to this as a process of 'information management' (p. 644) .

While Goffman wrote in a time well before the internet, these theories seem relevant to highlight issues around presentation and identity in a more technological age as authors from differing disciplines have shown (for example: Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013), Hogan (2010), Rettie (2009), Vaast (2007), Amare and St Pierre (2003) and Papacharissi (2002c). Goffman's impression management theory, also referred to as face-to-face management theory, focuses on the ways in which we present and maintain ourselves over time (Amare and St Pierre, 2000). Every day we make choices about how we manage the information about ourselves that is 'presented' to others; the information/impression we 'give out', and the information/impression 'given off'. Goffman (1959) focused on the 'performances' given out in everyday interactions and the ways in which these performances are partly social, formed and shaped by social interaction and by the audience's interpretation of our 'performance'.

Vaast (2007) commented that while originally Goffman was referring to interactions where at least two people were *physically* present, in later studies he wrote that 'presumably, the telephone and the mails provide reduced versions of the primordial real thing' (p. 336). Vaast continued on to state that virtual environments may similarly be considered 'reduced versions' of the 'primordial real thing'. This suggests that eLearning and the various forms of social media technology, as a natural progression from 'the telephone and the mails' and as components of virtual environments, might then be productively analysed through Goffman's theory.

Goffman maintained that telephone conversations and other 'technology-mediated interaction' were 'a departure from the norm' owing to the reduced physical presence of the players during these interactions (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013, p. 102). Miller (1995) agreed, stating however that while electronic communication may be 'more limited and less rich' than when we are physically present in an interaction, technology continues to advance and allow for more 'expressive resources' to become available to us. This is where we currently are with our use of technology; we are at the stage where we now have more resources that allow us to express ourselves in ways that are more similar but still different to when we are physically present in an interaction.

Other writers have applied Goffman's theories to different types of performance. Hogan (2010) expanded Goffman's theory by distinguishing between 'performance spaces' where the actors are present and 'exhibition spaces where individuals submit artefacts to show to each other' (p. 377).

The 'interaction' then occurs when the content is viewed by others. These artefacts live on in the various spaces for others to view if and when they wish. Hogan also highlighted the importance of the interaction situation being 'bounded by time and space' and contends that 'the world, then, is not merely a stage but also a participatory exhibit' (p. 377).

My research continues this conversation in Chapter 5, where I report the experience of the participants in this research project using Goffman's Impression Management theory which allows for closer inspection of the impact of eLearning on identity.

2.4 Issues of power, discipline and normalising techniques in eLearning

During my own study in the ALGC, one of the issues which concerned me was the distance between the student and the teacher as compared to 'normal' classroom situations. There was no face-to-face contact, not even audio contact at the time I was involved with the program. Communication was all text based. I wondered what effect this distance would have on the learning process and how the relationship would develop between student and teacher/tutor. Jørgensen (2017) wrote that 'narratives and stories' can be viewed 'as the practical ways in which power relations are actualized and living in education' (p. 22) and through the participants' narratives I wanted to explore these concepts.

Many studies have touched on the issue of power in eLearning in a critical way. Peach and Bieber (2015) conducted a case study which examined how power was used in online programs 'by and against professors' (p. 26). Bayne (2005) explored issues of 'deceit, desire and control' with respect to learner and teacher identities in cyberspace. Bayne (2005) saw the tensions arising within an eLearning environment as a 'result from new, eLearning cultures emerging from within existing, hierarchical pedagogical frameworks' (p. 39). Foucault's panopticon and biopower theories are used to examine how students are monitored online as well as physically in schools (Hope, 2005, 2010, 2012, 2015b). Hope's comprehensive studies cover different aspects of how students are monitored in modern day school environments, how they resist this monitoring and what rule power and discipline plays in the school environment.

Power has been identified as one of the ethical issues facing online learning and Anderson and Simpson (2007) ask 'to what extent do educators recognise the impact of power in online courses and how much are they prepared or able to work through an ethical responsibility to maximise learning opportunities for all students in the class?' (p. 133). Anderson (2006) quoting Jones (1998) writes that 'just because the spaces with which we are now concerned are electronic there is not a guarantee that they are democratic, egalitarian or accessible (p. 110).

Jäkälä and Berki (2013) stated that while online communities (such as the ALGC program) may not have 'physical borders', within these communities there are 'expression boundaries' which act as the 'norms and rules for behaviour on-line and sometimes off-line' (p. 2). Participants in eLearning programs are 'bound' to follow the rules and behaviours as determined by the group, in a similar way to group behaviour in the physical world. These rules and behaviours are either 'inherited by the structure of a certain e-space or different social media, i.e. discussion forums and social networking websites, or imposed by the designers and users of e-spaces' (Jäkälä & Berki, 2013, p. 2). My study also reveals some ways in which that power configures the eLearning teaching space. I relate the issues of power in eLearning to Foucault's (1988) theories of Technologies of the Self.

Power and its effects have been a 'major theme' in Foucault's work (Dussel, 2010, p. 29). Michel Foucault (1975) stated:

Power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. Furthermore this power is not exercised simply as the obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. (pp. 26-27)

Foucault's analysis led him to believe that 'disciplinary power' has replaced sovereign power – power that is 'exercised by people on others and on themselves in the specific day-to-day practices of their lives' (Brookfield, 2001, p. 2). Foucault rejected the idea that power is a top down feature. He defined power as 'relations, a more-or-less organised, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations' (Foucault, 1980, p. 198). He believed that power works through the decentralised networks of institutions, anywhere 'professionals' have the right to classify individuals such as schools, hospitals and prisons.

Foucault (1979) wrote that 'discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (p. 170). This suggests that we need to closely examine the interactions, structures, and techniques of governance within institutions in order to understand how our identities are affected by relationships of power and discipline.

Foucault (1975) highlighted the importance of 'little things' when examining issues of power and discipline, referring to a 'new micro-physics' of power. He noted that these little things are 'examples of essential techniques that most easily spread from one to another' (p. 139). He described a concept of power in a 'capillary form' where it 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies

and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives (Foucault, 1980, p. 39). Foucault (1980) asked that we investigate via 'meticulous observation' the details, no matter how apparently small and seemingly insignificant, to understand how power and discipline work in our lives and affect our identities (p. 141).

Foucault also argued that through history we can see our current values and assumptions on display and begin to understand them so that by studying events historically we are able to shed light on our values today. Foucault employed the term 'genealogy' for his method of investigating the past in order to find its influence on the present and, perhaps, the future (Ball, 2013; Jardine, 2005). Unlike other historians however, Foucault focused on a problem rather than a period of time (Hope, 2015b). Using this method, in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1975) Foucault analysed the ways in which power and discipline affect our identities. He examined how power works within institutions to advance but also to discipline certain viewpoints, behaviours and ideologies therefore moulding those within into 'suitable people'. For example, he described how punishment changed from a public display by a sovereign power intent on control, to an institutionalised process whereby the 'power to punish' is 'more deeply' inserted in the 'social body' (p. 82).

Foucault argued that the successful operation of power lies in the use of techniques such as observation, punishment and normalising discourses. Hope (2015b) explained that normalisation 'refers to processes whereby certain standards of behaviour become hegemonically accepted as naturally the ones that should be adhered to in society' (p. 542). These 'disciplining forces' work on identity in numerous ways, firstly by 'normalising' the behaviour of the participants (Foucault, 1979). Participants adjust their behaviour to ensure they are considered 'normal', part of the group. Jardine (2005) emphasised that Foucault was interested in disciplining factors such as 'the beliefs, expectations, values, and practices', stating that these 'not only dictate what we should say, do feel, value, and think, but reward or punish us when we fail to comply with the standards build into them' (p. 25). Following Foucault we need to scrutinise where and how such practices exist and who benefits from putting them in place and keeping them there. Jardine (2005) wrote:

Basic to Foucault's approach is the belief that if the existence of a practice/expectation/assumption/goal persists, then someone, somewhere, is benefiting in specific ways and we should investigate until we find out whom this is and how it happens. (p. 33)

Foucault (1975) argued that power structures used in education assist in the formation of who we are, that 'we emerge from school' (p. 194). Dussel (2010) explained that Foucault believed that power is 'some of an analytic grid or logbook that helps us understand how subjects relate to each

other and how institutions are organised' and that, most importantly, 'it is a relationship that can be exercised from outside inside and inside outside' (p. 29).

Brookfield (2001) writing about adult education, believed that Foucault's work is 'crucial in helping us learn to recognise the presence of power in our daily practices'. As adult educators we must recognise and acknowledge the 'false face of apparently beneficent power exercised to help adult learners realise their full potential' (p. 3). To me this is one of the most interesting aspects of Foucault's theories on power and discipline. Determining what power structures were in place and who benefitted, was an important aspect of the data analysis. In Chapter 7 I argue that the ALGC program is not a neutral space for either lecturers or students. I do not see this as a criticism of the program. Instead I want to highlight issues of power and discipline in order to help us, as online educators reflect on our own practice.

2.5 Globalisation and eLearning spaces

Engaging in eLearning moves participants into a 'space'. Most of the time this space is seemingly solitary, involving only the participant and his/her laptop, but, at the same time, linking participants to other spaces where other participants may be sitting doing exactly the same thing. How this space mediates participant identities needs to be further explored, and as these types of spaces cross nation states, issues of transnational space also need to be considered.

2.5.1 Conceptualising space

The concept of 'space' has been examined from several different perspectives. Brooks, Fuller and Waters (2012) agreed with Edwards (2012), writing that in recent years, narrative has moved away from 'an objective understanding of space as a system of organisation or geometry' to where emphasis is now focused on space as constructed and given meaning through 'social processes' (p. 2). 'Space' is no longer viewed empirically or in narrow geographical terms but instead is viewed as having numerous layers and influences on how it is shaped, developed and formed. Edwards (2012) described 'post-humanist and non-representationalist theories' which move away from 'subject-centred' theories of space in which 'human intention and action are assumed and given primacy' to theories in which space is regarded as 'material assemblages of subjects-objects that interrupt and affect, question and promise' (p. 209). The eLearning space needs to be considered as part of a wider, complex world rather than understood as a separate entity.

In order to understand how a learner's identity is affected by his or her participation in this eLearning course, it is necessary to understand the conceptualisation of the ALGC program as a space. As stated by Oblinger (2006, p. 1.1):

Space- whether physical or virtual – can have an impact on learning. It can bring people together; it can encourage exploration, collaboration and discussion. Or, space can carry an unspoken message of silence and disconnectedness.

The ALGC program is not a neutral space. It is instead layered, filled with other people who are learning, with lecturers and tutors, and with all the emotions and stories these people carry with them. This space is linked to the community of learners and, in turn, to their outside communities. All of these elements flow into and within the ALGC eLearning space and affect how learners act and react, how they present themselves and how, eventually, they learn.

eLearning has the capacity to ‘step across boundaries’ into our lives (Adams, 2013). The nature of eLearning means that we can be learning ‘anywhere, anytime’. eLearning spaces provide the opportunity for the learner to be anywhere in the world as they are no longer confined to the physical space of a university campus. This links to another quality of space, that of borders and inflexibilities. Selwyn (2011b) explored the concept of ‘(in)flexibility’ in international distance learning and found that rather than providing a flexible route to education and learning, learners instead had to ‘fit’ their study around other facets of their lives. As a result, the experience of learning online was ‘rather rigid, routinised and inflexible’. According to Selwyn (2011b, p. 381), this highlights the ‘realities’ of distance education which include the ‘self-regulated and ‘self-disciplining nature’ of this form of learning. In addition, Selwyn (2011b) issued a reminder that:

The apparently individualised act of studying at a distance must be seen as being shaped and bounded by wider social relations, not least an individual’s gender, class, age, life course, familial responsibilities and positioning within the workforce. (p. 382)

Within the participants’ contexts, eLearning spaces involve a community consisting of lecturers and learners and should not be analysed in isolation. They need to be considered within the context of the participants’ entire lives, wherein we show different ‘selves’ to people depending on the context in which we find ourselves and the wider social, cultural and political forces that configure them. In the next section I look at the shape of the eLearning space in more detail and take into consideration how this space may be affected by globalisation.

2.5.2 Transnational Learning Spaces within a Globalised World

The ALGC and similar eLearning programs cross national borders. Conole (2012, p. 222) described this as ‘boundary crossing’ and asserted that ‘serendipitous interactions are now possible’. Seddon, Ozga, and Levin (2012) discussed the concept of ‘hotspots’ of change – places where the global and the national ‘touchdown’ and cause a re-configuring of work boundaries. The ALGC program can be understood as such a globalised space. Lecturers and students are globally dispersed and connect

via their laptops to run and undertake the program. This raises many questions around the effects, implications and consequences of globalisation, including questions concerning identity.

Rizvi and Lingard (2009) wrote that globalisation is a 'highly contested notion' which has come to be seen as 'hosting neo-liberal ideas' (p. 22). The authors further stated that globalisation 'affects the ways in which we both interpret and imagine the possibilities of our lives (p. 23). Held and McGrew (2013) believed that globalisation is a set of processes, 'the widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness'.

If we live within a globalised world, on what scale do we identify ourselves? We can consider identifying at the local or the global; state or national. Rembold and Carrier (2011) questioned what happens to identity if 'social relations become increasingly connected on a global scale' (p. 365). As globalisation leads to increasing decentralisation and 'deterritorialisation of states, images and ideas' the authors feel that 'an entirely new approach to place and identity and thus to national identity emerges' (p. 365). The authors stated that while 'modern' identity and identity constructions were grounded in various group memberships, 'postmodern' identity construction is 'inter-relational, reflexive and bound by place'.

Bannier (2016) defined transnational education as that which 'allows students to pursue higher education in other countries without physically relocating' (p. 82). van Der Wende (2003) defined transnational education as 'higher education activities in which the learners are located in a host country different from the one in which the awarding institution is based' (p. 204).

Within a globalised world, eLearning sits as an example of moving across spaces without boundaries. Starke-Meyerring (2010) contended that:

e-learning – situated in a global network of digital technologies – has of course, a complex global dimension that manifests itself in diverse ways in different institutional, disciplinary, national, and other local academic and educational traditions as digital technologies intersect with local educational practices, policies and pedagogies. (p. 127)

Globalisation has changed the education space. The spaces of our lives, including the eLearning ones, are increasingly transnational as a result of globalisation. Vertovec (1999) defined transnationalism as the 'multiple ties and interaction linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states' and further states that transnationalism 'as long-distance networks, certainly preceded 'the nation' (p. 448) where 'new technologies, especially involving telecommunications, serve to connect such networks with increasing speed and efficiency'.

Bannier (2016) also wrote that 'transnational education is the logical growth of eLearning and distance education programs' adding that 'from the humble beginnings of early online and open education initiatives, transnational education has emerged and continues to grow at an unprecedented rate' (p. 80). Adding to this, the author stated that educational institutions are now linking together across borders to collaborate and jointly offer courses to students who may be dispersed throughout the world, as is the case with the ALGC.

In eLearning therefore, the concept of 'transnational' has evolved to mean something wider. The spaces that are created by linking learners across borders are in fact transnational education spaces. The following section examines the links between globalisation and education and discusses some of the effects these two have on each other.

2.5.3 Globalisation and Education

Numerous studies examine globalisation and education through various different theoretical perspectives. Edwards and Usher (1998) examined globalisation in regard to its effect on pedagogy. The authors link this to concepts of identity construction through the process of '(dis)location' which they see as a characteristic of contemporary society (p. 160). According to the authors:

Globalisation is responsible for and responsive to space-time compression where distances, both virtual and actual, can be covered far quicker than in previous times and where people, goods and images are available to each other on an almost instantaneous basis. (p. 161)

Quoting Giddens (1990), Edwards and Usher argue that the claim that we are part of a 'global' world also places emphasis on 'the relativity of place and an assertion of the local and the specific' (1998, p. 161). The 'pressure' of globalisation has increased emphasis for 'local autonomy and identity'. Cooper and Mitsunaga (2010) considered 'strategic alliances' which universities develop as part of their drive to project a 'well-connected university' (p. 69). The authors studied these alliances from a faculty viewpoint and describe the 'nested realities' as faculty become involved at an individual level, a classroom level and at the program level from their international collaborations (p. 70).

Researching adult educators in a globalised world, Seddon (2014) suggested ways that their world is changing and shifting. Globalisation processes "destabilise boundary regimes at all scales, with consequences for their particular anchorings and historical developmental trajectories" at a national and sub-national level, so that the nation state's function is changing 'governing' to 'governance', disturbing established social patterns. Furthermore, globalisation is also disturbing "supra-national diasporic networks, transnational agencies and flows" (Seddon 2014, p. 15). Educational spaces used to be a state level, ordered, organised, disciplined and relaying state power (p. 19). In the 21st

century these spaces have crossed boundaries and teachers are no longer at the centre of the education system. As Seddon (2014) described, a 'remaking of educational spaces' which involves 'political and sociological boundary work' (p. 27) means that both learners and educators now have the ability to move across boundaries and into different spaces where the learner has more control.

Examining how the traditional model of education has changed as a result of the 'democratisation' of 'access to information, ideas and identities in a networked world' Baker (2015) drew upon the concept of 'cosmopolitan learning' as an approach to rethinking education in a more globalised world (pp. 1-2). Baker (2015) believed that we need to understand how the changing transnational social, economic and political forces give rise to 'complex interrelationships between the local, regional and global' (p. 2). As educators, it is vital to not only acknowledge the changes globalisation brings, but in addition to prepare students to both understand and operate within new boundaries.

Bryant (2007) stated that 'the key characteristic of this world is not only the sweeping away of things but doing so continuously and obsessively' (p. 127). Therefore, the way in which we fashion our identities in these spaces becomes an important part of researching identity formation. Bauman's (2009) notions of identity in a modern world, which he labeled a 'liquid modernity', are useful here as a frame for discussing identity within a transnational eLearning space. Bauman's work is concerned with how our identity is shaped in a world that faces continuous challenges such as the rapid rise of new technology and the spread of globalisation. These ideas are relevant in exploring questions of identity in an eLearning space as these spaces are ones which have arisen as part of the modern world of work. Bauman (2009) suggested that 'all social forms are melting faster than new ones can be formed' and further that 'they are not given enough time to solidify, and cannot serve as frame of reference for human actions and long-term strategies' (p. 303).

There are several aspects of this concept of liquidity which can be applied to the ALGC program to understand how it enables specific identities. In relation to Foucault, Bauman (2000) believed that we are in a 'post-Panoptical' time wherein those who control power no longer focus on being present in order to control but have instead moved into 'escape, slippage, elision and avoidance' (p.11). The concept of panopticism was developed by Foucault (1975) based on his research into prisons. According to Hope (2005) 'for Foucault a key element of panopticism is that those on the periphery are never totally sure if they are being observed at any one particular moment' (p. 361). Bauman also felt that 'traveling light, rather than holding tightly to things deemed attractive for their reliability and solidity' has become the 'asset of power' (p.13). According to Bauman these 'powers' are global powers which continuously look to expand or maintain their influence (Bauman, 2000; Lee, 2011). The powers behind what he terms 'liquid modernity' determine how much or how little individuals participate in the modern global economy.

Looking specifically at the topic of education, Bauman (2003) described the challenges that he saw for education in such liquid times. Firstly in a world where permanence is no longer prized or considered important, why would the knowledge learnt in an education system, something which is learnt and meant to be kept a lifetime, something which is meant to be built upon over a lifetime via lifelong learning, be valued? (p. 20). In a liquid modern world having one set of 'assets' or 'one body of knowledge' for an entire lifetime would be considered 'repulsive and frightening' (Bauman 2003, p.19; Best, 2015, p.7).

The second challenge that Bauman identifies is a result of the 'erratic and essentially unpredictable nature of contemporary change'. Education and knowledge are valued as a 'faithful representation of the world' but what happens if that world is in a constant state of change and changing so quickly that previous knowledge no longer applies (p. 20)? This change, Bauman (2009) suggested, has changed our culture into one where there are 'no 'people' to 'cultivate' but rather 'clients to seduce' (p. 158).

For educational institutions, these changes imply that lifelong learning is no longer valued as something important in its own right but must instead be 'sold' to learners as something of benefit. Bauman (2009) felt that 'surfing' has replaced 'sounding' and 'fathoming' (p. 164) where the constant focus of the individual is on consumption-as-identity construction. Liquid modernity has changed education so that it can be provided to learners to 'consume' 'if and when' they 'deem it appropriate' (Best, 2015, p. 6).

Oxenham (2013) coined the term 'liquid education' which he defined as:

The educational philosophy of liquid modernity that dismantles previous higher learning and pursues temporary, tentative and unarranged bits of knowledge and helpful competencies. It is the un-authoritative activity of learners that, lacking cultural purpose and rational framework, operates outside the bounds of structure in the service of the market. (p. 40)

Oxenham (2013) believed that liquid education has two purposes. Firstly to dismantle everything 'old' about education (p. 40) but also to, secondly, to 'create through adaption' (p. 44).

Other studies that have used Bauman as lens for their work include Veck (2014), who analysed the education and care provided to disabled people during times of austerity using Bauman's concept of liquid modernity. Courtney (2016) used Bauman's post-panopticism theory to examine the policies around school inspections in English schools. The author believed that such inspections go beyond what their original intentions were and are now designed to instil fear via its apparatus and mechanisms (p. 628). Busher, James, Piela, and Palmer (2014) conducted research into how

'marginalised adult learner' identities were 'transformed' through constructing their own 'emergent' communities of practice (p. 800). Misson (2012) examined English language teaching and believes that as a result of liquid times it is necessary for English language educators to review their own practices to ensure they are meeting the needs of students. Green and Gary (2016) questioned what pedagogy is suitable for Liquid Times and advocated for one which 'resists fixed meanings' (p. 49) and instead takes 'a central role in elucidating' the changes which are happening. The authors in fact suggested there might be 'some release' for educators if we 'acknowledge that our culture is passing through a liminal zone' and 'clear and distinct categories' are 'breaking down' (p. 53). Green and Gary (2016) called for a 'reformulation of the process of learning that enables creative responsiveness to the emergent nature of our culture'. To the authors this means holding 'meanings provisionally' and enabling a pedagogy which accentuates 'dynamic, process concepts rather than fixed ways of seeing' (p. 53). Tosas (2016) who considered educational leadership in modern liquid times, argues against it being compared with 'business management', that educational management and educational leadership are different things and should not be combined (p. 367).

However, Best (2015) advocated that educational researchers engage with Bauman's works at a more critical level to look more critically at their basis, the 'underlying assumptions about the transition from a solid to a liquid modernity' (p. 2). In Chapter Six, *Liquid Lives*, I return to these concepts to help understand particularities of the ALGC space.

2.6 Linking across and within space

Following on from Bauman (2009) who saw the modern liquid world as a 'network' made up of random connections, I now turn to the concept of a network and network connections. Studying via the ALGC links people through their computer connections. Lecturers and students connect and interact within a very small space. However, within this small space, thousands of different connections may be made during a program such as the ALGC. This space and these connections can be explored through the application of a sociomaterial perspective, drawing on Latour's (2005) Actor-Network theory (ANT) to explore the relationships involved in an online and offline learning space. Fenwick and Edwards (2010) wrote that ANT foregrounds the relationship, the 'associations', between people and things (p. 3). As the authors maintain:

The objective is to understand precisely *how* these things come together – and manage to *hold* together, however temporarily – to form associations that produce agency and other effects: for example, ideas, identities, rules, routines, policies, instruments and reforms (p. 3 emphasis in original).

ANT 'was developed to analyse situations in which it is difficult to separate humans and non-humans, and in which the actors have variable forms and competencies' (Callon, 1999, p. 183). Through this theory Latour (2005) examined connections to the non-human elements in our lives to understand how these connections produce multiple shifting identities.

Latour (2005) questioned how many agents are present when we act (p. 43). He encouraged us to view action as 'a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled' (p. 44). Latour believed that we are 'never alone in carrying out a course of action' (p. 44). Latour linked this to individual agency and questions 'how many people are simultaneously at work in any one individual?' (p. 44). He stated that "whenever you wish to define an entity (an agent, an actor) you have to deploy its attributes, that is, its network" (2011, p. 800). We become who and what we are from the links and interactions with the things around us. By analysing enactments between human and material objects, ANT makes visible the networks that produce us and link us together. Law (1999) stated that ANT is a 'ruthless application of semiotics' in suggesting that entities only take form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities (p. 3).

The notion of 'translation' as used in ANT describes the process which happens when the human and non-human elements come together 'changing one another to form links' (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 9). The various parts of the network are said to be held together by connections through which the translation happens and in which new entities are 'laid down' each time a connection is made (Latour, 2005, p. 220). It is through these connections we can see and understand the movement which transforms actors (Thompson, 2012, p. 96). We can therefore start to understand how these connections produce (or disable) identities, so for this research, this means examining the networks produced in an eLearning environment, following Fenwick's and Edward's questioned:

ANT thus helps us to ask: What are the different kinds of connections and associations created among things? What different kinds and qualities of networks are produced through these connections? What different ends are served through these networks? (p. 2)

In that ANT views 'actor' as a 'patterned network of heterogeneous relations' (Saarinen & Ursin, 2012, p. 150) it gives equal agency to humans and non-humans in any interaction or network. For example, Johannesen, Erstad, and Habib (2012) believed that the concept of a network is 'essential' to understanding the complex relationships between technology and human practices. Sayes (2014) declared ANT a 'controversial social theory' for 'the role it 'gives' to non-humans'. This role involves seeing non-humans, things, as actors who make a 'contribution to social life' (p. 135). He explained four categories in which non-actors work as part of human lives:

1. Non-humans as a condition for the possibility of human society
2. Non-humans as mediators
3. Non-humans as moral and political associations
4. Non-humans as gatherings of actors of different temporal and spatial orders. (p. 135)

Various studies have applied ANT to the research of different aspects of education. Fenwick and Edwards have conducted extensive research using ANT as a framework. Their book *Actor-Network Theory in Education* (2010) examined ANT for the 'potential it offers for fresh and productive interventions within educational issues' and as a way of reframing how 'we might enact and engage' with educational issues (p. 1). Rimpiläinen (2011) investigated how knowledge is enacted by social material practices through the lens of both ANT and Dewey's Pragmatism. According to the author both approaches view knowledge 'as not residing in the human mind, or as being about facts-out-there'. Instead knowledge is viewed as being 'continuously generated in relation to the networked environment, as contextualised, and as warranted, subject to change' (p. 50).

Johannesen et al. (2012) used ANT to investigate how teaching practice is affected by Virtual Learning Environments. The authors wrote that:

When technology is implemented to support pedagogical processes, it affects and is affected by a number of stakeholders that are linked with each other either in the form of a network of aligned interests – or, in some cases, a number of divergent networks. (p. 786)

Saarinen and Ursin (2012) conducted a review of approaches to higher education policy change. They determined there are three main approaches – structural, actor and agency (p. 143). While ANT was 'almost absent' from their research it was one of the emerging approaches in education policy change (p. 150). However because ANT is less well known the authors write that using it 'always had to be justified' and therefore it remains a 'conceptual framework for researchers' rather than a decision making tool (p. 151). Sobe (2015) used both Foucault and ANT to examine educational accountability systems as an 'apparatus' which uses 'pedagogy, curriculum, age-grading and entrance examinations' to 'come into force' (p. 138). Sobe described the elements which form the 'apparatus' as a network which can then be analysed using ANT. Gorur and Koyama (2013) applied ANT to review the use of measuring in educational policy. Following the socio-material approach of ANT the authors utilise 'abstract phenomena such as quality' but also 'policy text' and 'devices such as like-school comparisons, websites and expertise' to show these are also actors in the process (p. 636).

Mulcahy (2013) investigated issues of transfer in learning and used ANT to argue that educators need to move beyond the 'transfer metaphor' (p. 1277). The author cited Law (1992) who

characterises ANT as '*relational materialism* (original emphasis)', as 'non-dualist' where 'materialism and social relations are not naturally different in kind' (p. 1279). Mulcahy believed that 'learning and knowledge do not reside in individuals; they *circulate* (original emphasis) in relationships' which then can 'coalesce; that is, form seemingly fixed points and foundations (e.g. bodies of generalized knowledge that carry intact across context)' (pp. 1280-1281).

For this research, ANT means examining networks as one way to recognise how identities are produced in an eLearning environment. As Turkle (1999) commented: 'in cyberspace, we are learning to live in virtual worlds' and that there is no 'simple way' in which identities change online, but rather that interacting onscreen 'dramatizes and concretizes a range of cultural trends that encourage us to think of identity in terms of multiplicity and flexibility' (p. 643).

In conclusion, the aims of this literature review were to identify some of the previous research within the areas covered by my own study. These areas included identity, power, space, media and technology within adult education. The studies cited here have helped me understand the complex issues which I am researching and guided me in the writing process. While my research questions centred on understanding how learners navigate through the online learning process, as the study progressed, it became evident that the understanding of identity formation through online education was foundational so that this these links are a major theme of my study.

CHAPTER 3 – Research methodology and design

This chapter describes the study's methodological approach and research design. The chapter begins with an explanation of why I chose a case study for the study, followed by a description of the theoretical framework. The research design is explained, followed by a reflective section which highlights some of the ethical issues faced during this project. I explain the tools, sources and methods of data generation and how the research participants were chosen and in line with the global nature of the ALGC program, what countries they resided in. The frameworks I use for presenting findings and analysing data are also explained. In the chapter I also engage with critical ethical questions about the research which centre on my multiple identities within the ALGC – former student, tutor and then researcher and my own positioning as past participant of the ALGC and researcher.

3.1 Theoretical framework

My research project is a qualitative one. Lichtman (2013) reported that finding a definition for qualitative research is problematic, stating that even a Google search brings up a diversity of ideas (p. 7). For the purposes of this study I have used the definition Lichtman (2013) put forward:

Qualitative research is a general term. It is a way of learning in which a researcher gathers, organises, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters. It often involves in-depth interviews and/or observations of humans in natural, online or social settings. It can be contrasted with quantitative research, which relies heavily on hypothesis testing, cause and effect, and statistical analyses. (p. 7)

Detailing the history of qualitative research, Lichtman (2013) noted that the development of this style of research in the field of education was partly due to the concern of some researchers who felt that 'a traditional view of scientific research kept the voices of many silenced' (p. 11). These researchers were interested in 'personal responsibility, multiple voices, and verisimilitude, instead of objectivity and validity' (p. 11). Lichtman (2013) described as one of the critical elements of qualitative research 'the description, understanding and interpretation of human behaviour' (p. 17). This aspect of qualitative research was an important impetus in choosing qualitative over quantitative methods. I wanted to understand eLearning more deeply and in particular, its possible effect on their identity from the perspective of the participants. The use of qualitative methods enabled this process. I did not want to test a hypothesis which might require a more positivist approach to research. The important aspects for me were an understanding of the eLearning process regarding how the participants viewed it, as well as whether and what particular features might enable or disable learners' identities.

Adopting a constructionist ontological framework allowed for a thorough investigation into the changing, social nature of online learning (Bryman, 2008). Doolittle (1999) defined constructivism as a theory of learning wherein the 'learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences' (p. 1). The learner has an 'active role' within their own creation of knowledge and the knowledge created will 'vary in its degree of validity as an accurate representation of reality' (p. 1). Duffy and Jonassen (1992) explained that according to such an ontology, there is not 'one reality', but 'many meanings and perspectives through which to view any event or concept'. This means there is no single 'correct' understanding or 'truth' that we are looking for (p. 3). A constructivist theoretical position implies that there is no 'shared reality' but rather that 'reality is the outcome of constructive processes' (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992, p. 5). That is, we construct our own reality, our own understanding of our experiences. Hence truth is relative to our own experience (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545).

This means it is therefore important to hear the voices of the learners, in order to understand how they experience learning. As Gergen and Gergen (2006) stated:

The communal view of knowledge also represents a major challenge to the presumption of Truth, or the possibility that the accounts of scientists, or any other group, reveal or approach the objective truth about what is the case. In effect, propose the constructionists, no one arrangement of words is necessarily more objective or accurate in its depiction of the world than any other. (p. 462)

Such a constructivist approach allows diverse voices to be heard. However, the analysis of the collected data will always be an interpretation of the participants' responses. Additionally, in Section 3.9 I reflect on my own role within the research project both as a past participant in the ALGC and also as a tutor with regard to the interpretation of the data.

By focusing on the adult learner's perspective, the study highlights the ways in which the processes of learning require the learner to re-evaluate current behaviours, belief systems and ways of knowing in order to integrate new learning. This is one of the aspects of identity production that I was interested in when I began my research. I wanted to understand, through their own narration of their experience within the ALGC program, how this shaped the identity of the participants. Kehily (1995) wrote that 'in self-narration a teller is socially displaying a language that speaks of and constructs identity and which is, simultaneously, creating and presenting a sense of self' (p. 29). The participants' narration is heard through both written and spoken word through the design of this research project. This is supported by Bryceson (2007) who wrote that constructivism 'examines the ways in which learners make meaning from experience' (p. 191). A constructionist view of online learning theory understands learning as occurring through the interactions which take place online.

Furthermore, eLearning creates a social world around the learners. In order to study the ways in which the learners within that world make meaning of their learning and how this learning affected their identity, I employed an interpretive epistemological approach. Bryman (2008) defined Interpretivism as:

Being predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. (p. 16)

In terms of this study, interpretivism means that as the researcher I am endeavouring to make sense of the participants' responses and narratives. As D. Young (2009) confirmed, 'by posing the question "What is the meaning of this?" interpretivists are able to probe beneath the surface' (p. 207). I am concerned with the 'empathic understanding of human action', not whatever might be acting on the behaviour (Bryman, 2008, p. 15). This approach suited the nature of what I was trying to understand. The concepts encompassed within the research do not easily lend themselves to a statistical analysis or a one true answer. As discussed in the previous chapter, identity is fluid and what might enable specific identities in an eLearning environment may be different for each participant.

This need to understand my research questions through the participants' viewpoint is why I chose narrative analysis for the research. This approach is described by Lichtman (2013) as 'a qualitative research approach that relies on stories and narratives for meaning' (p. 324). I return to this subject in more detail in Section 3.4. In the next section I discuss in more detail why I chose the case study format for my research.

3.2 A case study

In order to research eLearning identity formation, I chose to carry out a case study within a particular transnational eLearning environment, that is, the ALGC Master's program. The case study of the ALGC was conceived to understand the issues surrounding eLearning and identity formation. At the time of completing my Master's, the ALGC program was the only experience I had had with eLearning. I was only starting to understand that other eLearning programs did not have the same format. Additionally, through speaking with colleagues in the ALGC program who were involved in the adult learning sector within Australia, I was learning how important eLearning was becoming with the Australian education system. The idea of using the ALGC program as a case study began to develop through conversations with my then Supervisor, Professor Terri Seddon, who encouraged my desire to better understand how eLearning 'works'. The ALGC program did amaze me. Being able to learn with and from people around the world was a wonderful and challenging experience for me and I was very interested in understanding how education and learning occurred within such a

space. The specificity of the case study casts light on some identity changes which occur during eLearning which therefore might, or might not, be transferrable to other contexts of eLearning spaces both within education and business environments. I believed the case study to be a traditional but also very exciting way to look more closely at the issues I was interested in.

A case study is typically defined as an 'in-depth exploration of a particular issue' (Bryman, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Freebody, 2003; Lichtman, 2013; Ruddin, 2006). For the purpose of this project I followed the definition put forward by Yin (2013):

The classic case study consists of an in-depth inquiry into a specific and complex phenomenon (the 'case'), set within its real-world context. To arrive at a sound understanding of the case, a case study should not be limited to the case in isolation but should examine the likely interaction between the case and its context. (p. 321)

Baxter and Jack (2008) quoted Yin (2003) who contended that the case study should be employed as a research methodology when seeking to answer 'how' and 'why' questions and when there are contextual conditions which are 'relevant to the phenomenon under study' (p. 545). Harling (2012) asserted that case studies involve research which 'focuses on the uniqueness of individual situations' (p. 4) which pertains to the ALGC program in that it is an eLearning transnational program whose borders are well defined.

Rather than present figures and statistics about eLearning that may cause a reader's eyes to glaze over, presenting information via 'real people in real situations' through the use of a case study will present the information in such a way that I hope makes it real and relevant. A case study can 'establish cause and effect', information which can be used by educational institutions and business organisations to refine their own approaches to eLearning (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002, p. 181). Cohen et al. (2002) citing Nisbet and Watt (1984, P. 72) wrote that 'a case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle' (p. 181). The authors further stated that a case study 'provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles' (p. 181). The voices of the participants are the focus that I wanted for my research. I felt the best way to understand identity and eLearning was through these voices. Their experience was my way in. The cause and effect were what I was looking for.

Bryman (2008) wrote that one of the common criticisms concerning case studies is findings from them cannot be generalised (p. 57). The view that you cannot generalise from one case study, or that there are problems associated with doing so, is still common within research fields (Bryman, 2008; Lichtman, 2013). Flyvbjerg (2006) described this as one of five misunderstandings concerning

case studies and puts forward a 'critical case' argument in which he states that a well-chosen case study can in fact be used to generalise. Flyvbjerg (2006) referenced Karl Popper's (1959) 'falsification' argument which uses the 'black swan' example (p. 227). That is, the statement 'All swans are white' can be proven false by just one sighting of a black swan. Flyvbjerg (2006) developed the argument for case studies by stating that case studies are 'well suited for identifying "black swans" because of its in-depth approach: What appears to be "white" often turns out on closer examination to be "black"' (p. 228).

Ruddin (2006) noted that these five misunderstandings 'indicate that it is theory, reliability, and validity that are at issue' – in other words, the very status of the case studies as a scientific method. The author therefore proposed, citing Flyvbjerg (2001) and Mitchell (2000), that in order to avoid this confusion we should not confuse 'case inference with statistical inference' (p. 800). Ruddin (2006) further argued that 'we do not infer things "from" a case study; we impose a construction, a pattern on meaning, 'onto' the case' (p. 800).

In this study I provide specific insights about the phenomenon which may or may not be relevant in other contexts. The case study format allowed for this process to occur as we are exploring what happened in a particular case – the ALGC program. The implications that arise may, or may not, then be used in other contexts as the reader/s find relevant. It is not my intention to provide inductive research or to test a hypothesis. Bakker (2010) wrote that by focusing on a particular case we are able to examine that case in detail thereby allowing us to 'fully grasp human meaning' (p. 487). It is not important for case studies to make any claims regarding the generalisability of the findings but instead the focus should be on the use made of them by others (Ruddin, 2006; Stake, 1982). That is, this viewpoint moves the focus from the 'researcher towards the reader' (Ruddin, 2006, p. 804). It becomes the researcher's role to provide enough information for the reader to decide the applicability of the case to other situations.

Having acknowledged that, I also take note of Yin (2013) who wrote of 'analytic generalization' (p. 325). The definition given by Yin (2013) of this concept is:

The extraction of a more abstract level of ideas from a set of case study findings – ideas that nevertheless can pertain to newer situations other than the case(s) in the original case study (p. 325).

Perhaps in the future it will be possible to use some of the research presented here for newer situations. For example Cohen et al. (2002) stated that 'case studies can establish cause and effect' (p. 181). My own experience of analysing and understanding this data has led me to be more conscious of my own behaviour as an eLearning tutor. I am more conscious of issue of power and

presentation than I was before I undertook this study. Additional data may be required however to go beyond this particular case.

3.3 Research participants

The following section details the participant recruitment process, their demographics, and the ethical considerations involved in the research. This section gives an overview of the participants in order to understand their diversity which contributes to the uniqueness of the ALGC program.

3.3.1 Recruiting participants

The requirements for participation in the research were the completion of the necessary course documents and the willingness to be interviewed via Skype. I wanted to cast the net as wide as possible for past ALGC students who might be willing to be involved in the project so different avenues were used to reach out to potential subjects – both current ALGC students and ALGC graduates.

In order to contact previous students, I used two approaches. First, at the end of my own ALGC studies my cohort had assembled a list of contact details consisting of those who voluntarily contributed their information for future email or other social media contacts. I emailed an Explanatory Statement to this group of people (See Appendix 3). To those who replied I then forwarded a more detailed email and Consent Form (See Appendix 4), detailing the documents I was asking for and more information about the nature of the semi-structured interview to be conducted.

The second method was to contact past ALGC students through the use of the social media platform LinkedIn. I contacted a LinkedIn group of ALGC Alumni and requested permission to post information about my research project on their website. Permission was granted, and I then posted the Explanatory Statement and again followed up with more detailed information and the Consent Form to those who responded to the initial post.

To reach current students I contacted the other universities involved in the ALGC program via the course management committee and it was agreed that I develop an informational flyer which would be posted on the program website for all current students (See Appendix 5).

Once potential participants had information regarding what would be required of them a process of self-selection took place. There were some people who were willing to participate but were unable to find the documents I required due to computer issues and/or the length of time that had passed since they completed the course. Others were unable to find a time for the interview which suited them due to work and family commitments. Finally, there were personal issues which prevented

people who had originally committed to the project from actually following through with their participation. I began the recruitment process at the beginning of August 2014 and it was completed February 2015. It overlapped with the start of the Skype interviews as I was still attempting to find participants from South Africa.

3.3.2 Participant demographics

The universities involved in the ALGC program are located on different continents. It was pleasing that the final twelve research participants are reflective of transnational education and are also geographically dispersed. The Skype interviews were conducted in January 2015.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the participants by gender, university and nationality. It is still a disappointment to me that I was not able to include any participants from the University of the Western Cape. There were two past ALGC students from this university who originally agreed to talk with me, but both withdrew at the last-minute due to personal reasons. At this stage I felt it was too late to try and find new participants as I had already started my interviews. I hoped that I would hear from someone new as the information about my study was still out in there in the various forums, but no one came forward.

Table 1 Participant Demographics

Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Male • 9 Female
University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monash University – Australia: 4 participants • Linköping University – Sweden: 3 participants • University of Western Cape – South Africa: 0 participants • University of British Columbia – Canada: 5 participants
Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealander – 1 participant • Australian – 3 participants • American – 1 participant • Canadian – 5 participants • Swedish – 1 participant • Ghanaian – 1 participant

In hindsight, I believe the format chosen for the interviews, Skype, may have inadvertently disadvantaged the participants from South Africa. I received only three 'yes' replies to participate from the South African region. One student was enrolled through Linköping and the other two via the

University of the Western Cape. In the end, only one of these was able to participate, with the other two withdrawing because of changed personal circumstances. When I participated in the ALGC program I was aware that there were serious problems regarding connectivity with the African cohort of students. But it was only during this research that I realised just how serious some of the issues were, for example, the expense of internet use and the poor reliability of internet connections.

The participants were all involved professionally in adult education, which was a prerequisite of enrolling in the ALGC program. The types of industry varied greatly however, as did the level and type of employment – casual, part time or full time. Table 2 below gives a breakdown of employment details for the participants. The information has been de-personalised as much as possible to avoid identifying the participants.

Table 2 **Participant employment details**

Pseudonym	Industry	Job title	Type of employment
Julie	Vocational Education	Department Head	Full time
Thomas	NGO - Education	Teacher	Contract work
Claire	Government	Employee training and development	Full time
James	Higher Education	Teacher Supervisor	Full Time
Alice	Indigenous Education	Teacher	Full time
Michelle	NGO – Education	Teacher	Contract work
Lisa	Medical	Educator and practising Dental Hygienist	Part time in both
Mary	International Development	Project Management and Educator	Full time; then took leave of absence to complete ALGC full time
Susan	Medical	Adult education practitioner	Full time
Richard	International Business	Corporate trainer	Full time
Louise	Municipal Labor Market Department	Manager and Principal (Labor market, Refugee reception and Adult learning)	Full time
Joan	Higher Education – International Office	Student Interface	Full time

The table highlights the diversity of students within the research, with a range of experience and industries. I had found this to be true of my own ALGC cohort. This diversity was something that I found both interesting and helpful through the course. The professional diversity meant different experiences, different ways of learning and knowing, and I feel this helped to both bond and at the same time, divide students. Some of these issues arose during the research and are discussed in Chapters 4 – 7. I did not ask age as part of my research but from the information the participants

provided, Michelle was the youngest, being in her late twenties, and Alice was the oldest, estimated at mid-sixties at the time of the interviews for this research.

In the next section I discuss the research design in more detail to show what data was collected and the process involved in the analysis of the collected data.

3.4 Research Design

Here I explain the research design, data collection methods and analytic frameworks in detail. The development of the study started with some research questions. I commenced research into the best way for me to answer the questions I had around eLearning. Initially the questions centred on how eLearning 'works' but with the help and direction of my original supervisor, Professor Terri Seddon, these questions developed into issues of identity production within the eLearning space. The idea to use the ALGC as a case study also developed from conversations I had with Professor Seddon, as well as my own experience within the program. Further research moved this thinking forward. The identity issues became linked to self-presentation; matters of power and discipline were identified; and the notion of managing identity within a liquid world were developed as I thought through the data analysis.

Once the case study of the ALGC had been settled in my mind, I then started to look at what tools could be used to best answer the research questions. I explored different data collection options, applying them to the ALGC program and considering which ones would be viable and allowable within the program, and which would be likely to give the most information.

In seeking to understand and analyse the learners' experience in the ALGC course, it was necessary to provide insights into the experience *from* the learners' viewpoint. To ensure the best information was collected a two-pronged approach to collecting data was taken. I undertook document collection and semi-structured interviews to obtain the data used within this study. Hence, this data consists of:

- 1) documents produced by the participants during the ALGC course
- 2) semi-structured interviews conducted after participants had completed the course

3.4.1 Documents

The first source of data used was documents produced by learners during the ALGC program. The particular documents chosen originate from an ALGC course module entitled 'Locating oneself in Global Learning'. This module was structured to be taught in two parts which were book-ended at the beginning and end of the Master's program with an aim to 'assist students to orient themselves and integrate the diverse experiences which they will have in the other units' (Grosjean, 2010, p. 1).

These documents were reflective, self-assessment activities carried out by the participants at the beginning and the end of the ALGC course. Learners in the ALGC program were asked to first plan what they hoped to achieve (learn) through undertaking the program, and then at the end, detail what they had actually achieved (learnt).

The assignment at the commencement of the course, required development of a learning plan and a self-assessment evaluation in regard to the program's objectives. The final assessment involved two papers designed to elicit from the participants what they felt they had learned over the course of the program:

- 1) Reflection and self-assessment
- 2) Portrayal of learning outcomes

Throughout the course participants were encouraged to keep these documents in mind, to keep a journal (digitally or otherwise) and to update both regularly as we progressed through the course and learning occurred. The documents provided valuable insight into the participants' experiences.

I felt these documents would be appropriate for data analysis as for participants in the ALGC program these written assignments were a form of self-reflection used to help them to analyse their experiences. Kuper and Mustanski (2014) wrote that 'the content of identity development narratives often reflects an individual's recollection of, and reflection on, key experiences related to their sense of self. Low and high points convey the tone of the narrative' (p. 505). The documents formed part of the participants' discursive way of making sense of their worlds; of trying to understand through their own narrative, which provides clarifications and assessments, what they experienced during the timeframe of studying in an eLearning environment.

Luke (1995) wrote that we use texts, which he defines as 'language in use', to 'make sense' of the world and 'to construct social actions and relations required in the labor of everyday life' (p. 13). Simultaneously, 'texts position and construct individuals, making available various meanings, ideas and versions of the world' (p. 13). Luke contended that by analysing text we are able to examine how people 'make sense' of their worlds. These understandings helped me select which documents to analyse.

However, as the documents were assessment items within the ALGC program, they were written with that perspective in mind. Bryman (2008) contended that it is important to view documents in context, that is, with consideration as to what was the author's intention when writing them, and who were they written for, as well as the social world as backdrop (p. 527). In light of this, the documents from the ALGC course need to be considered in context firstly as assessment items. This implies

that they were written with the lecturer and possibly the end 'grade' or 'mark' in mind. This is a challenge I found in using the written documents collected for this research. Hargreaves (2004) noted that 'the imperative to do well academically discourages students from engaging in honest and open reflection' (p. 196). Hargreaves (2004) noted that while reflection is a worthwhile activity using it for academic purposes forces 'students to choose' between 'reflections that fall within a professionally acceptable frame, or to fictionalise events' (p. 200).

I cannot know this from the participants' perspective as it is a question I did not ask during the interviews. But I know from my own perspective that as a student of the course I wrote these documents with an understanding that it was better to highlight all the 'good' aspects of my learning experience, rather than anything that confused me or anything that I avoided thinking about or doing during the program. At first, I tried to keep this in mind when I read through the participants' written documents. Originally, when reading the documents prior to the interviews, I was looking for issues of 'identity' and how the participants felt about the learning process. At that stage themes were only starting to emerge. After the interviews, I read the documents again and again, focused on finding links to the themes which seemed to be coming through from the interviews. I avoided making judgments about whether the documents were written with the final result in mind, but I was aware of it as an issue. It is also perhaps the reason the written documents do not feature as much as the interview data in the analysis included here.

This leads to another issue with all texts, including written documents: it is never possible to interpret a written document the way the writer intended. The inferences and conclusions reached in analysing documents involve the researchers' own interpretation of that data (Bryman, 2008). In hindsight, I would have asked the participants for more of their time to allow for me to ask additional questions once the themes had become more evident from the data. In this way, I could have checked my understanding of the written documents to ensure it was correct. A second follow up interview might have revealed more detailed and specific information in regard to the themes, once they had emerged. However, in any case, according to my interpretivist epistemological framework, I recognise that all data analysis is partial and situated.

The next section details the interview process used for data collection.

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

The second stage of data collection involved semi-structured interviews which were conducted to follow-up on information obtained from the document analysis. An interview schedule was prepared after the initial document analysis was carried out based on themes that were starting to emerge during the initial document analysis. All participants from the document analysis agreed to take part

in the interview process. The interviews were recorded and conducted via Skype due to the participants and researcher living in different parts of the world.

The purpose of the interviews was to further explore and clarify issues of identity formation, power, self-presentation and socio-material alliances from the viewpoint of the participants and to allow room for exploration of issues that the participants themselves may raise. Interview questions centred on the experience of eLearning and how the participants felt their identity may have developed over the course of the program (See Appendix 2). As the interviews were semi-structured, the researcher had the opportunity to follow up on issues raised as the interviews progressed. Additionally, at the end of each interview I asked interviewees specific questions which directly related to their written documents. These were often to clarify a point or to ask the participants to expand on their writings and were therefore specific to each individual.

Conducting interviews allowed for collection of data from the participants' viewpoints. For Lichtman (2013) the purpose of research interviewing is to gather information from participants about the topic under review in order better understand what the interviewee thinks, feels, intends and comprehends (p. 190). The semi-structured approach was chosen because of the flexibility it allows for the interviewer to concentrate on the participant's point of view (Bryman, 2008).

There were times during the research process where I felt this flexibility more acutely than others. During the Skype interviews, I found that although I had sent the questions beforehand, I did not always ask them exactly as I had written them. At times, I felt the need to explain a question in more detail if the participant seemed to miss the point of the question or asked for further clarification. However, for the most part I tried to let participants interpret the question, so they could answer how they wanted. Therefore, some answers to the same question went in different directions, depending on how the participant understood the question.

The questions were not always asked in the order they appear on the interview schedule. The semi-structured nature of the interview meant I was able to move between questions and link them to a particular response from the participant. I tried to ask the same additional questions to all participants but this was not always possible, again because of their semi-structured nature and the fact that participants did not answer always the same question the same way. If there was an additional question which I felt it was relevant and applicable, I tried to include it in subsequent interviews.

Sometimes I felt I was too 'present' in the interviews, that I was talking too much. For example, I felt I had to make comments to help interviewees feel more comfortable and 'normal' about their words. I would say 'other people have said that also' or 'you are not the first one to think/say that' in order to both settle the interviewee but also in the hope he/she would keep talking. When talking with

participants from my own cohort, I was curious about what they thought of me during the course. Listening to the interviews later, I felt I said things to justify my behaviour during the course. This is a strange aspect which links to my own identity and how I felt when I was studying via eLearning. At times, it feels as if you are studying in isolation. But when involved in group assignments or when posting online, I found it was an important consideration to me how the other students might perceive me. I did not want to be seen as not smart enough to be there. I return to this theme in Chapter 5.

Always conscious of the time I was taking, sometimes I did not ask all the questions because I thought the interview might be taking too long. Listening later to the recorded interviews it sometimes sounds to me as if I moved on abruptly and did not adequately follow up on a topic the participants may have raised. This is something I regret but cannot change. In hindsight, the interviews required longer time commitments to fully explore the issues I wanted to. In some cases, I did send follow up emails but the moment, and potentially good data, were lost.

The interviews were recorded to allow for transcribing and analysis. Bryman (2008) contended that while time consuming, transcribing is essential in that it allows for comprehensive analysis of what the interviewee has said. Transcription allows the researcher to examine the interviews as often as necessary and allows for 'the natural limitations' of memory (p. 451). Transcribing allows the participants words to be as close to possible to what the participant actually said. I tried very hard to capture the actual intention of the participants' words. This was not always possible. Sometimes it was hard to make out actual sentences, where they started and finished. It was difficult to know sometimes where to put the emphasis on words, and it was difficult to include the many unspoken aspects of an interview, such as 'thinking' pauses. In transcribing the interviews, I also felt that sometimes I was interjecting myself into the participants' meanings. That is, I would find words for them if they were 'stuck' searching for words. However, it is inevitable that there will be some of my own interpretation of what I heard. This is in line with Watson (2006) who explained:

All transcription is a translation. Speech and writing are related but are not equivalent and there is no simple and transparent way in which to render speech into writing. (p. 513)

I forwarded the transcriptions to participants for review and further clarification as required. Only three participants chose to make changes to their transcripts. One participant who held a sensitive position within a government department asked for two responses to be removed as she feared she might be identified. The other two participants extended one or two of their responses to make their meaning clearer. Transcribing also forced me to listen closely to what each participant had to say in order to make sure I was transcribing their words correctly. This helped to actually hear their words more intensely, to acknowledge the richness of each contribution. Everyone had something different to contribute. With each person I was learning, seeing another view point of the program.

Table 3 details the length of the interview per participant. The exception is Richard, as we were unable to connect over the internet because of the arrival of his fourth child. However, Richard did want to participate in the research and therefore he offered to complete his interview in writing, which he then forwarded via email. Table 3 also details which documents were received and their word length. As the participants were from different ALGC cohorts, completing the program in different years, there is a difference regarding the title of the documents. However, I was able to find the data I needed within these documents. I have used the titles the participants gave their documents. There was a total of 13 hours, 73 minutes of recorded interviews and 66594 words across 24 documents.

Table 3 Details of interviews and documents provided

Participant	Length of Interviews	Documents	Length in words
James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 minutes 56 seconds • 16 seconds • 1 hour 3 minutes 56 seconds • 6 mins 7 seconds (The internet connection between us kept dropping out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating oneself in global learning II – Reflection and self-assessment • Locating oneself in global learning II: Portrayal of learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1545 • 928
Alice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours 5 minutes 5 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capstone Statement and Portrayal of Learning Outcomes • Initial self-assessment • Overall learning statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1801 • 1164 • 963
Michelle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 minutes 42 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayal of my Learning Outcomes • Reflections on Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4412 • 11205
Lisa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57 minutes 2 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Learning Plan • Locating Oneself in Global Learning II – Portrayal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 683 • 1991
Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 7 minutes 56 seconds • 7 minutes 57 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayal of Learning Achievements • Self-Assessment of Capabilities • Self-Assessment Schedule for Reflection of Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3224 • 985 • 3547
Susan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours 15 minutes 3 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability Self-assessment • Portrayal of Learning Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2085 • 1230
Richard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to connect via Skype due to the arrival of Richard's fourth baby. Richard therefore completed the interview schedule in writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Learning Outcomes • Reflections on my learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 916 • 4235

Louise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 minutes 36 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Plan • Portrayal of Learning Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 850 • 2300
Joan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 6 minutes 32 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Plan • Self-Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4400 • 8613
Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 28 minutes 43 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment • Portrayal statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2134 • 912
Claire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 19 minutes 7 seconds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayal of Learning Outcomes • Self-Assessment of Capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2591 • 3880
Julie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 minutes 25 seconds • 40 minutes 20 seconds <p>Julie was on a broadband connection which kept dropping out. We talked over two consecutive days. There were 18 attempts to talk over these two days as the connection kept dropping out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment of capabilities • Portrayal of learning outcomes • Reflection and self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 868 • 4947 • 3222

It is interesting now to consider the differing lengths of the Skype interviews. This difference perhaps can be attributed to the diversity of the participants. Some were engaged and willing to speak at length, while others wanted to just answer the questions as I had sent them.

3.5 Data Analysis

The aim of the data analysis was to interpret from the participants texts how they navigated their way through the program in terms of their identity and how the experience shaped their identity.

After transcribing each Skype interview, I grouped the data obtained from the participants' interviews into themes. I did the same with the participants written assignments. I looked for themes rather than key words within the data. Each participant explained their experience in their own unique way, so it became easier to match themes which were emerging rather than key words. I returned again and again to the interviews and assignments once several themes had been identified to try to find 'better' or more 'relevant' examples. This was done on an ongoing basis as new themes emerged from each review of the data. Word documents were created around each theme, some of which later turned into thesis chapters. There was a richness of data and it simply could not all be used given the constraints of a thesis. Although I wanted to use all the data, it was impossible and therefore some themes were put aside if there seemed to be only one instance of it, not for reliability reasons but due to expediency for this study. In some cases, the data I had was insufficient, so I could not explore the themes further and I did not pursue them in this study. Some examples of the potential themes

which were set aside include issues regarding gender, online learning versus normal campus learning and styles of communication. These would be fruitful to investigate in future studies.

The next stage in analysing the data was to recognise the participants' stories about their experiences that were in the interviews and documents. By analysing the stories that the participants constructed from and around their personal experiences of the ALGC program, I could begin to understand how they learnt within an eLearning global space, and how it shaped their identity.

I used a basic excel spreadsheet and lots of post-it-notes to make notes on the topics which were coming through from the data. This was a process of reading and re-reading the documents, as well as listening to the recordings and reading and re-reading the transcripts. Once initial themes became more obvious, I started to group similar quotes from the data together under each initial theme. For example, as I read participants comments around the use of English in the program, I then copied and pasted these into a separate document for easy access and comparison. This was an iterative process and I found myself constantly moving the comments around to ensure they were in the correct place. The themes which emerged were a genuine surprise to me: issues of power and discipline (e.g. Foucault, 1975), presentation of self (e.g. Goffman, 1959). as well as an understanding of the world as 'liquid' (Bauman, 2000). How these can affect learning and mediate specific identities became the central themes for my analysis. Developing these themes further required more research into the literature.

During this process I had to decide which themes to continue with and include in my thesis and which to let go of, at least in terms of the scope of the thesis. There was a great deal of data collected from the participants and I wanted as much as possible to pay tribute to their experiences. This again was a continual back and forth to determine whether and how the selected themes, data and commentary fitted within the theoretical frameworks.

3.6 Narrative Analysis

In order to provide generative insights into the research questions, I looked for data that conveyed the participants' experience through their own telling of it; that is, narratives. This kind of analysis is based on the 'narrated personal 'experience'' (Squire, 2013, p. 47) of the participants. I did not focus on *how* the words were said, but *what* was said, the content of the narratives, in order to gain an understanding. According to Squire (2013) this type of narrative 'focuses on first-person storytelling, regardless of its structure' (p. 48). The author stated that this type of research can be expanded into related non-oral materials (p. 50).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explained narrative as 'both the phenomenon and method' (p. 2). The authors expounded on this by writing that 'narrative names the structured quality of the experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study' (p. 2). Furthermore, they wrote:

We say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describes such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p. 2)

Narratives allow us as individuals to project an image of ourselves that we believe and want other people to believe. Narratives not only report events but additionally 'give a teller's perspective on their meaning, relevance and importance' (Cortazzi, 2001, p. 4). Lichtman (2013) stated:

Narrative research inquiry is a group of approaches that rely on the written or spoken words or visual representations of individuals. The distinguishing characteristic of the narrative is that personal storytelling is involved. (p. 95)

This personal story telling was important to me in order to understand the participants' experience. Identity formation through narrative is how individuals and groups experience the world and how we view ourselves within the world. Huber, Caine, Huber, and Steeves (2013) wrote that 'our very identities as human beings are inextricably linked to the stories we tell ourselves, both to ourselves and with one another' (p. 214). For example, telling professional stories contributes to identity formation 'by allowing the storyteller to understand, interpret, and generalize situations' (p. 141). Riessman (1990) stated that:

We are forever composing impression of ourselves, projecting a definition of who we are, and making claims about ourselves and the world that we test and negotiate in social interaction. (p. 1195)

This is supported by Somers (1994) who wrote:

People construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; that 'experience' is constituted through narratives; that people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting by assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives. (p. 614)

These authors highlighted the importance of narrative as a part of identity formation. Being able to tell our stories allows us to develop into the people we are. We use narrative to think through the events in our lives, to make sense of ourselves and what is happening around us.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argued that narrative analysis is useful for education research because 'humans are storytelling organisms, who individually and socially lead storied lives' (p. 2). We make sense and find meaning of the events that occur in our lives through our telling of them, through explaining our 'stories'. I used narrative analysis to 'listen' to the stories of the participants through their spoken as well as written words, to understand how they experienced the ALGC program and what they felt was important to their own identities as educators. Using narrative as part of my research process enabled me to understand the participants through the social and personal stories they told.

By 'endlessly telling and retelling stories' about ourselves, we 'make meaning of experience' and 'both refigure the past and create purpose in the future' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, p. 385). We 'claim our identities through stories' and these stories are not told in isolation, but through a 'complex web of influences, bring together individual, society, and culture; inner and outer worlds' (Spector-Mersel, 2011, p. 173). Huber et al. (2013) provided a brief history of storytelling in different communities worldwide, explaining how each story teller 'reveals how narrative transcends temporal, contextual, cultural and social boundaries' (p. 216). The stories we tell not only describe our experience and action as humans, but they also 'shape the meaning and quality of our lives at every stage and crossroad' (Oliver, 1998, p. 254).

The participants in my research told their stories of their experience within the online learning world. This brought together their private individual lives with not only the individual lives of other students but also to the experience of learning online. By seeking to understand the narratives of this experience I was looking to understand the ways in which particular identities might be enabled or disabled in the ALGC course.

I used both written and spoken narratives in what Squire (2013, p. 48) termed an experience-centred narrative approach. Squire (2013) wrote that the experience-centred narrative 'increasingly addresses written materials' as well as speech (p. 49). Squire (2013) explained that 'experience-centred narrative research' focuses on all types of narrative (p. 48), rather than 'event-centred narrative research' which refers to 'spoken recounting of particular past events that happened to the narrator' (author emphasis) (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 5). The data collection therefore centred on experience-centred narrative, rather than event-centred. The documents the participants supplied were based on their experience of the ALGC program, highlighting what they felt they achieved and learnt during their studies. The interviews were designed to understand the

experience of eLearning from the participants' viewpoint. Narratives emerged not just in the spoken word but also in written documents. Both spoken and written narratives serve as devices to tell stories about our lives.

Narrative analysis has a 'long, strong and contested tradition' (Riley & Hawe, 2005, p. 227). Cortazzi (2001) warned that there may be a certain amount of performance associated with a spoken narrative as well as being a 'presentation of memory' (p. 13). Using this type of research relies on the narrator as well as the researcher's interpretation of the narration. The analysis of the participants' words involves interpreting them. This brings a certain amount of complexity to the research. Schatz-Oppenheimer and Dvir (2014) agreed, quoting Riessman (2008) by stating that 'stories reflect reality while they form and construct it' (p. 142). The authors also felt that 'the story is a reflection of the teller's identity' (p. 142). For my research this is precisely what I am looking for, the participants' identity and what happens to it within the eLearning space.

Narratives as 'stories' also raises the issue of how do you know if your participant is telling the truth (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 169). As Atkinson and Delamont (2006) stated this issue has previously been treated as part of the 'reliability of data' aspect of research but they question whether 'truth' is a quality to be 'treated as an issue in the quality-control of information' (p. 169). In my research, the point of collecting the narratives was to hear the participants viewpoint of their experience within eLearning. It was not a matter of seeking 'truth' but rather of trying to understand what the participants believed happened to them.

Watson (2009) believed that by placing the focus on 'narratives that individuals both create and are influenced by' we are able to understand both the 'internal and the external aspects of identity-making' (p. 427). The author further states that narratives do not only exist in the minds of the story tellers but that they are 'all around us 'out there' in the socially constructed realities of our societies' (p. 430). These were the stories which I wanted to discover from the participants in my research to understand their experience within the ALGC program through the stories the participants recounted. It was important not only to hear the participants' own stories, but to listen to what external aspects influenced them and therefore may have enabled or disabled specific identities.

3.6.1 Presenting the participants' narratives

Clandinin and Connelly (1986) highlighted that:

When we think of life as whole we tend to think narratively. We tell stories about ourselves that are historical, explanatory, and foretelling of the future (p. 377).

From the beginning of my research I wanted to focus on the participants' experience in the eLearning process. For me this was my means of understanding how eLearning enabled and possibly disabled particular identities. That is, I wanted to research the influences on identity formation in eLearning and to understand what helps or hinders identity formation in an eLearning space. The format of my thesis reflects this focus. To present the findings, for each theme the participants' own words are used and then followed with analysis. I have opted for 'topic' chapters which cover both findings and analysis rather than a format which separates these two. This happened in an organic way when I started using the theoretical frameworks to show how particular identities are enabled and disabled within the eLearning space. I have used longer narratives from the participants as this approach 'assumes interviewees structure their replies in the ways they do for strategic reasons – to effectively communicate 'what happened' (Riessman, 1990, p. 1195). The longer text provides more meaning and context for the participants' words.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical protocols required by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). In addition to these requirements, Diener and Crandall (1978) quoted in Bryman (2008, p. 118) identified four main areas that reflect ethical principles. Below I have addressed each of these areas in regard to my research project.

3.7.1 Harm to participants

Information obtained from participants was treated as strictly confidential at all times and not shared with anyone outside of the project. When writing up the results, names or any other markers which might have identified the participants were not used. I invited the participants to share their stories with me for the purposes of my research. As a consequence of this I had an obligation to avoid embarrassing them in any way. Pseudonyms have been used as and when required.

In addition, as the project crossed the borders of various nation states, I have an obligation to be aware of cultural and political issues which may influence all those involved, including myself. I was very conscious of this through the interview process and made all efforts not to ask questions that might express privilege of one culture over another or endanger participants in any way.

Finally, once the transcriptions were completed and before the data analysis process began, the participants were sent a copy of the interview transcripts in order to ensure the transcript reflected their words and thoughts. Some changes were then made to the transcripts. Names mentioned have been changed. Places mentioned and aspects of jobs have been changed. Any words which might identify people have been changed.

3.7.2 Informed consent

Participation in the research was on a voluntary basis. Potential participants were given all the information necessary for them to make a decision about their participation. Those who agreed to participate were asked to complete a consent form. Information was provided as to the nature and purpose of the project, first via the invitation (See Appendix # 5). When potential applicants responded, further details were provided via the explanatory statement (See Appendix # 3). Finally, consent forms were sent to participants via email (See Appendix # 4).

3.7.3 Invasion of privacy

Everything was done to ensure the confidentiality and therefore the privacy of the participants involved in the research. Participants were not compelled to answer any questions which they personally felt may invade their privacy. When quoting participants written or spoken words within the thesis pseudonyms are used. No identification is made using the country or university to which the participants belong.

The transcripts were sent to the participants for final checking and some were returned with requests for changes. Three participants were worried about being 'too casual' but did not request any changes. In another two cases, there were words which the participants felt could identify them and they asked for these not to be included. Small changes to the transcripts were requested, and these were completed in accordance with the participants' requests. Specifically, these changes related to removing work references for two participants and a personal reference for a third participant. The changes did not affect the overall content of the transcripts.

3.7.4 Deception

The aims of my research were explained fully and truthfully to the participants, and I did not misrepresent myself or the information I collected or the participants in any way. I explained the purpose for which the collected data was to be used in order to obtain permission from participants. All participants were also informed of my background as a past ALGC student and tutor, in order not to deceive them in any way on a personal level.

3.8 Issues of reliability and validity

Cohen (2007) asserted that 'threats' concerning validity and reliability will 'never be erased completely' and therefore attention should be paid to issues of reliability and validity 'throughout a piece of research' (p. 133). Using this approach, I have tried to ensure the reliability and validity of the data as well as being conscious of the choice of information included from the collected data.

However with qualitative research there is the additional dimension - what exactly are the criteria for evaluating validity and therefore reliability? Lichtman (2013) summarised that the 'criteria for judging and evaluating qualitative research are varied' (p. 304). There is not one set 'standard' for qualitative research and Lichtman (2013) detailed her efforts to obtain information on acceptable criteria from the editors of qualitative journals. The responses were not in agreement, with most reporting they did not have a 'list of static criteria' (p. 304). This increases the difficulty of ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research and these notions are perhaps not relevant for qualitative research such as this project.

Following Maxwell (1992) I have approached the concept of 'validity' as referring to 'accounts' not to data or methods (p. 283). Maxwell cited Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p. 191) in believing that 'data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them' (p. 283). Maxwell (1992) breaks validity down into five categories of 'understanding' – descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalizability and evaluative validity (pp. 284-285). These are the criteria I have tried to incorporate into my research.

3.8.1 Descriptive validity

This criterion concerns factual accuracy of an account (Maxwell, 1992, p. 285). To ensure this, I sent the transcribed copies of the Skype interview to the participants for review. This gave the participants the opportunity to indicate any areas where they believed I did not accurately represent their words.

This criterion also refers to 'omission as well as commission' (Maxwell, 1992, p. 287) I have acknowledged that it is not possible to use all the data collected. I have tried to focus on themes which emerged from more than three participants to ensure I am including the most common information.

3.8.2 Interpretive validity

Maxwell (1992) explained this criterion as how the researcher develops the accounts of the participants based on their own words and meanings and the inclusion of any conscious as well as 'unconscious intentions, beliefs, concepts and values of these participants' (p. 290). As mentioned above, forwarding the transcribed interviews to the participants helped to overcome this issue.

3.8.3 Theoretical validity

This criterion 'refers to an account's validity as a *theory* (author emphasis) of some phenomenon' (Maxwell, 1992, p. 291). Maxwell (1992) stated that the previous two criteria refer to the 'facts' while

this criterion refers to the implication of the application of those facts (p. 292). To avoid this issue, I have tried to ensure any theories discussed emerged from the data collected.

3.8.4 Generalizability

Maxwell (1992) defined this concept as 'the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times or settings than those directly studied' (p. 293). He divided this criterion into 'internal and external generalizability'. I have tried to avoid making external generalisations about my data. I have tried to ensure a measure of internal generalizability by including participants from different cohorts as well as different universities.

3.8.5 Evaluative validity

In writing up the analysis of the data, I have attempted making any value judgements about the participants or the data collected. I have attempted not to imply 'right' or 'wrong' in my analysis but rather to give my analysis of the words of the participants as they relate to the theory.

3.9 Self-reflection on methodology

Burbules, Bridges, Griffiths, and Smeyers (2015) wrote that:

All research traditions acknowledge that researchers do not embark on their research as blanks whose ideas and understanding are shaped exclusively by the data that they collect, unaffected by any previous experience or presuppositions. (p. 8)

Qualitative research such as this study will always be subject to the researcher's interpretation and that 'there is no 'getting it right' because there could be many 'rights' (Lichtman, 2013, p. 21). Lichtman (2013) wrote that criteria developed in the 21st Century for evaluating research emphasises the role of the researcher (p. 292). Lichtman believed this is important in qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, because the researcher should not try to remain objective. The researcher is 'critical to the work' (p. 295). Lichtman (2013) also advocated that objectivity 'should not be considered something bad' and that the role of the researcher and his or her belief system be acknowledged (p. 25).

As a graduate from the AGLC program, conducting research with past and current students, some of whom were part of my cohort, I did not come to this research project without prior knowledge and experience. My beliefs, assumptions and my own experience in the program (and elsewhere!) have influenced my interpretation of the data collected. Additionally, working as a tutor on the program

also enriched my knowledge and experience of how the ALGC program 'works' which in turn had an impact on my interpretation of the data.

Gee (2000-2001) defined identity as 'being recognised as a certain "kind of person" in a given context as recognised by others (p. 99). As our surroundings change so do our identities. My own identity is flexible, connected to my past experiences and adjusts with the different contexts in which I find myself (Gee, 2000-2001). I am a product of my time and place (Younge, 2010). I am me, wife, daughter, teacher, student, global citizen, traveller, Australian. I was born in Australia to first generation Australian parents of Italian descent. During my lifetime television, computers, mobile phones, email and Skype have all changed the way I live, work and study. Work and marriage mean I have lived and worked in four countries other than my own. Movement between cities and countries has meant that I have changed direction from my original career path - hospitality and tourism - to move firstly into human resources and training, then into adult education.

Who I am perceived to be changes with the environment and the contexts in which I find myself. While I may not choose these identities as things I wish to be identified by, others may recognise me in these ways thereby enabling those identities. Living in China I was identified as a foreigner, yet I felt very much at home. The Chinese people I worked and lived amongst did not see me as 'one of them'. I did not speak like them or look like them. However, I loved everything about China and very rarely thought about my 'foreignness'. Similarly, my recorded age on a government document is not the same age I identify myself with. The way I self-identify, who I see myself as, does not always match the categories that others fit me into. According to Goffman (1959):

Sometimes the traditions of an individual's role will lead him to give a well-designed impression of a particular kind and yet he may be neither consciously nor unconsciously disposed to create such an impression (p. 18).

I can be identified by others based on the contexts or the roles they associate with me, which is not always how I identify myself. For example: occupying the role of a 'teacher' leads others to associate their own interpretations and experiences of the teacher role to me, whether these are good or bad or otherwise.

Some aspects of my identity were not called into question by my participation in the ALGC program, such as female or Australian. However, the program did make me consider how I was being perceived within that space, and how I perceived other students. I started to think about what was happening to me as I went through the course in a 'before and after' way. This train of thought led to my wanting to look at the program in a more in-depth way. Identity is a key lens and my own identity is a key part of that. I had returned to study because I was living in China and initially, I had

difficulty finding employment in adult education. I was offered work the same month as I was accepted into the program and I began a life filled with mainly work and study. My own reflection during my time as an ALGC student led me to continue my studies beyond the program to enrol in a PhD. Through my research work and with the help of my supervisors, I was offered work as a tutor on the ALGC program. This work enabled me to view the program from the 'other' side which I believe has enriched my research.

Knowing about the program and how it operated helped me to define the questions I needed to ask. I believe my experience within the program helped with both writing and preparing the semi-structured questions. During the interviews, my own experience as a student made it easier to make connections with the participants as I understood their experience and the type of events or online discussions they were referring to. The participants gave me an enormous amount of rich data to work with and I am really grateful for their time and contribution to my project. With all participants, there was a genuine affection for the ALGC program and the contribution it had made to their own lives.

In this chapter I have provided an explanation as to how my thesis took shape, the research design and the methodology used. The chapter highlighted the importance of the participant voices as well as details about the participants, their occupations and geographical locations. I also explained the methods of data collection and identified possible ethical issues and how I made decisions and put in place strategies to avoid these.

In the next four chapters I provide an analysis of the data collected during the project. Chapters Four to Seven present the data from the interviews and written documents, together with analysis and findings which address my research questions.

Chapter 4 – I am a social-material girl

When I first entered the world of online study, I found I was spending a lot of time in front of a computer screen. My life became a process of logging on and off, moving through pages of websites, searching for information, responding to posts, downloading and filing away information and research. There were times when this was an enjoyable process, when things were going well. There were many more times however when things were not going so well and the thought of logging onto a university website brought a sick feeling to my stomach. The connection to the computer started to become a real 'thing'. Somehow it started to feel like I was avoiding something more concrete than just a computer screen. The computer became a part of my life; it became a presence. I found this was also true when I worked as an eLearning tutor. The work was centred around what was being posted online by the students, what you needed to be posting as a tutor, what study materials have been supplied online by the lecturers and the other tutors. There were times when I did not want to open emails for fear of what I might find or when I was despondent because no-one had posted anything for days and I felt like I was talking to myself.

This chapter highlights how a 'world' formed around the participants in the ALGC program and produced connections both online and in the 'real' world. The socio-material aspects of the networks became important as they enabled new identity formation and learning. In this chapter I discuss the relationship between these various socio-material aspects of the ALGC learning environment. Online learning is an involved process. At its most basic, it is a student who has a computer wanting to learn. This is however too simplistic a way of understanding the process and the various socio-material elements involved. Looking more closely it also involves a team of lecturers, administrators, computer technicians and program designers who work to facilitate the learning process, interactions and relationships. There are also the other students and their worlds which you somehow become part of during the eLearning process, whether through group work or their online posts. These various 'human' agents or actors account for some of the elements involved. Also implicated are the 'non-human' elements – the computer or laptop, the internet connection, the study space, the readings and assignments, the online discussion board and the university infrastructure and policies. All these elements need to be considered in combination with one another to determine how they work to negotiate identity formation in the online space.

This chapter has six sections. The first section (4.1) outlines briefly some of the conceptual ideas used in the chapter, in particular the notion of socio-material networks. The following section details how the human and non-human actors combine to mediate identities. Section 4.2 considers the study space, Section 4.3 looks at the 24/7 nature of eLearning, Section 4.4 explores connections made via online posts, Section 4.5 looks at connections for learning, Section 4.6 reports how important internet connections can be and the final section, 4.6 looks at the ALGC itself as a non-human actor.

4.1 Socio-material understandings of human and non-human networks

Latour (1999) defined a 'network' not in the sense of the word as it is typically used in everyday settings to describe a 'transport device' but as 'a series of transformations - translations, transductions - which could not be captured by any of the traditional terms of social theory' (p. 16). Latour (2011) explained that a network does not 'designate things in the world that have the shape of a net' but rather designates 'a mode of inquiry that learns to list, at the occasion of a trial, the unexpected beings necessary for any entity to exist'. ANT questions 'when we act, who else is acting?' (Latour, 2005, p. 43). Latour (2005) stated that we are never alone in carrying out an action (p. 44). Latour compared this understanding of networks to 'what you record through a Geiger counter that clicks every time a new element, invisible before, has been made visible to the inquirer' (p. 799). Fenwick and Edwards (2010) further explained:

In ANT-ish terms, a network is an assemblage of materials brought together and linked through processes of translation that perform a particular function. A network can continue to extend itself as more entities become connected to it. It often stabilizes dynamic events and negotiations into a black box that becomes durable. (p. 12)

Latour (2011) further explained the elements within a network in these terms:

I'd say that network is defined by the series of little jolts that allow the inquirer to register around any given substance the vast deployment of its attributes. Or, rather, what takes any substance that had seemed at first self-contained (that's what the word means after all) and transforms it into what it needs to subsist through a complex ecology of tributaries, allies, accomplices, and helpers. (p. 798)

Latour (2005) described 'a good ANT account' as a 'narrative or a description or a proposition where all the actors *do something* (author emphasis) and don't just sit there' (p. 128). An actor, whether human or non-human, becomes part of the process of transforming other actors through the network. The non-human elements can act as mediators wherein they are modifying relations between the actors (Latour, 1999). Sayes (2014) wrote that 'within the Actor–Network corpus, the term 'nonhuman' functions as an umbrella term that is used to encompass a wide but ultimately limited range of entities' (p. 136). What is excluded from this terminology according to Sayes (2014) is 'humans', who are hence considered 'entities that are entirely symbolic in nature', 'entities that are supernatural' and 'entities that exist at such a scale that they are literally composed of humans and nonhumans' (p. 136).

The notion of non-human elements as mediators (Latour, 1999) (that is, as enablers of identity) is one that I wanted to explore with my research. The non-human elements of the ALGC program

played a large part in my own eLearning experience. To me it felt as if this concept explained the experience I had with the ALGC program. eLearning can be a solitary pursuit. However, within the eLearning environment I found I was connected to people, places and things via the eLearning connection. The understanding from ANT that things exist within a network rather than having self-contained and fixed meanings of the data helped to underline the importance of these non-human elements. What is classed as 'human' or 'non-human' should not be the focus; instead we should be focused on how objects can 'compel activity' (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010, p. 7). Law (1999) states that 'much ink has indeed been spilled over the importance or otherwise of the distinction between human and non-human' (p. 4). Latour (2005) confirms this by maintaining 'the type of agencies participating in interaction seems to remain wide open' (p. 22) Law described the relationship between the human and non-human elements as 'it's a kind of dance, a form of choreography. Everything is related to everything else. And gets itself assembled, one way or another' (Law & Singleton, 2013, p. 491).

Within the ALGC program there are myriad connections. These connections include the study space a student establishes, the online connection, online postings and the connection to the ALGC program itself. The ALGC program itself connects four separate universities conducting one program. It forms networks as students move through the program in the same cohort, make and respond to compulsory postings, take part in group work, respond to the social justice perspective of the course.

The following sections report some data where participants tell their stories and explain their experience in regard to the ALGC program, focussing on how the non-human elements work to build identities in these networks.

4.2 The importance of the study space

The first non-human element of online study is the physical study space itself – perhaps in a home office, or on the couch in front of the television, a desk or table, a computer and monitor screen, tablet or phone, keyboard, mouse, chair, books, papers, pens and other common 'study' materials. Where participants choose to study played a role in determining how they interacted with the material aspects of eLearning. The technology itself determines the type of environment the participants built around them for their study. There were two ways the study space was approached. Firstly, students needed a space to work in that was their own; a space they could go to for study purposes. This was usually a place where they had set up the technology and other elements required for study – files, internet, computer/laptop and modem if required. But the participants also talked of how their study 'overflowed' into different spaces in their lives. The study space was sometimes a flexible one which moved with them. This meant that some participants set up a 'space' wherever they could work, in

order to keep up with the requirements of their study. These two different approaches were not mutually exclusive because of the 24/7 nature of eLearning. Participants who set up a 'special place' for their study also found that they were doing their online work wherever and whenever they could. Julie and Alice explained their approaches:

I've got a study, so I really set that up as my office where I did all my work. Yes, this was important for me. That's where all the technology was. And I had access to other resources there, and it's a quiet zone, and I'm a person who needs quiet. (Julie)

It was important for me to have a space to go to, and kind of a funny thing is after supper, after dinner, I'd say to my husband 'Well, I'm going to work now' and an hour or two later he'd come to the door of my room and he'd go 'I thought you were going back to work?' and I'd say 'I am working' and he would assume that I was physically going back to my place of employment (laughs). (Alice)

In these instances, we can see a 'world' starting to form around the participants as they established a space where they could go to undertake their study. Part of the process which enabled them to study was to set aside an area which could be theirs alone. Their comments indicate the importance of these spaces in developing their identity. To be a 'student', a study space was needed, which was different from 'work'. Clair however had a different approach. Her work involved a good deal of travel, so her study space moved with her.

Where ever I could get it done. Airports. Hotel rooms. Once I worked two nights through at this hotel room in (names city) just to get an assignment in by midnight. I remember I didn't even sleep for those two days. I don't know how I worked. (Claire)

For Claire, the connection to a study space was still important, but it was a mobile space which needed to fit in around her work schedule. Lisa used a combination of these methods. Being an adult learner meant that she had additional responsibilities that could not be ignored, and she found herself fitting in her study time wherever she could.

My office is upstairs, but I felt guilty being here and not with the dog who was downstairs. So, I would set myself up on the kitchen table and do most of it there. Because I had a laptop it would come with me so I would get up in the morning, first thing in the morning at 5, and check my emails and check my course site and check if there were any postings. I would touch base on my lunch hour at the office, at the dental office, and if I really had to focus on something I would stay after work at the office where there was no dog, no children, no house

to take me away from what I needed to really focus on and I would set myself up in a private office there for a few hours. (Lisa)

Susan talked about trying to “contain” her study to one area and shows again how a “world” starts to form. She talked about the room where she did her study as a ‘separate place’ away from the rest of her home which she could keep the ‘mess’ separate:

And my office is downstairs where the rest of the house is upstairs, and I decided that all of my study would be done in my home office. This was where the files were, this was where all the papers and mess was. Sometimes it flowed into the living room upstairs when I was reading in particular because I wanted to lounge on the couch. But mostly I wanted the study to be contained down here so that the rest of my house was my home. And I went to it. I might be thinking but I didn’t have the mess in those spaces. It was important for me so that I could go to parts of the house which were settled and calm and a home. And that when I came into my office this was the space that could be in a constant mess with paper everywhere and that I could put up post-its and stickies and write things on boards on the walls, and that it a kind of a space where active work happened. (Susan)

Identity here is shown to be shaped in an interesting way; by reading the online posts, participants made decisions about the authors of the posts. While the authors would have been largely unaware of these decisions at this stage, the participants were deciding who to continue reading and who to ignore. Feedback to the authors, either positive or negative, in response to the posts would further have shaped the identity of the authors. Fenwick and Edwards (2010) write of the importance of examining ‘what dynamics, what elements, enable some enactments of particular objects of knowledge and constrain others? (p. 37). In their opinion this is important for ‘considering subjectivities, how certain identities are constrained by educative practices and approaches to knowledge and other possible enabled’(p. 37). The online posts enabled certain identities to come forward, while restraining others.

4.3 Connections made via the 24/7 Nature of eLearning

A laptop or computer is an essential part of eLearning. The connection to the internet is always there. That is, the internet is accessible any time of the day or night. Through this connection, others are made. These new and different connections meant that by participating in eLearning students found they had to ‘give up’ or put ‘on hold’ some other connections in their lives to find the space or room for study. Julie, Lisa and Alice explained the connections they felt they lost or had to give up while studying:

Predominately sacrificed any private life, you know, social life. I would, from time to time I would read information on buses, public transport on my way to work. Look I used to do a lot of that than I'd go to my class, come home, get online. Even in my lunch breaks I would get online and do a little bit of work. The big sacrifice was to my personal life really, you know, social life. I didn't have one. (Julie)

So, in terms of changes...I kept my workload the same, I slept a little less, my boyfriend does a lot of travelling and my son spent time at his father's place. So I found that when I was alone at home was the time when I could just sit down and focus on my class work. So there were no meetings out with the girls, or movies out with the girls, that type of thing. Cutting the extra-circulars. (Lisa)

The whole life of being a student was that there's all that adjustment but as far as work, no. I went and did my job the same. The only difference while I was at work I normally didn't take a lunch. And I would take lunch to go in to keep on top of the forms so that at least one part of that was done at the end of my day. Cos I started my day usually at 5 or 6 in the morning and came online, and then would go on at lunch time, then would be back online and/or doing work from about 6 in the evening till 11, 12, 1 or 2 in the morning. So I was probably putting in about 6 to 8 hours a day on my Master's as well working full time. (Alice)

Studying via eLearning meant that other identities had to be set aside until there was more time. Participants' worlds were in some ways narrowed to a particular space. The need to be online reduced the participants' activities outside of study. To focus in on what was happening in their online study world required participants to focus on finding time to study within their lives. They talked of giving up social activities, of blocking out everything else, and of trying to bring their study into the everyday life as much as they could. Michelle described her experience:

So specially that it covers so many time zones you wake up and there's tons of messages because not everybody was sleeping at the same time as I was so people were continuing to contribute on the forum so I felt that I always had to catch up. Depending on the class of course but in some classes I would eat breakfast while reading the posts and trying to contribute, then at lunch I would read my readings and again try to catch up on some posts and after work as well so I felt that there was never a break. So it was very tiring. (Michelle)

These adjustments meant that new and/or different connections were enabled in their lives, while others were disabled. There was now the opportunity to link with different people from different parts of the world via their online study. The focus moved from the physical world to the online world. For example, when Michelle and Alice described checking what was happening online first thing in the

morning, at lunch time and in other breaks in order to keep on top of what was happening. Susan gave an example of how her connections to other things were arranged to allow for her study:

The first thing I did was I decided I was going to get a house cleaner. Because I knew that was something I didn't need to do and I'd hate it if all that time I was studying the house was a real mess. That would clutter my head and I'd hate it. So a really practical thing. The second thing was I found a local provider of freshly cooked food and I bought my meals mostly at that place every week and that was my meals for the week. I didn't mind cooking but I hated cleaning up and I didn't want to waste time on that sort of thing. So that was another freeing up time thing. The third thing was that I took a very structured approach to my week. So I was basically working every day, all the time, when we were studying and I minimized my social life. So it was all about creating time where I had perceived before there was no time. And I just told everybody, you know family and friends, that this would be my priority for the two years that I was studying and that I would lift my head again at the end of it. (Susan)

Susan put in place strategies which controlled the other human and non-human elements in her life in order to focus on her study; to create 'time where I had perceived before there was no time'. In order to study online Susan realised that some other connections in her life would have to change to find the time for her study. Susan analysed where she could 'find time' by moving her connections around.

In this data, the participants show how they enabled aspects of their identity while disabling others, to allow a space for learning. Meal times were spent checking what was happening online, social lives were put on hold. Space was created for study by moving connections around. By doing this the participants allowed new connections to form in their lives via their eLearning study worlds. They were now connecting with tutors, other students, and with and through non-human elements such as their study spaces and the learning management platform (LMP), as Sayes (2014) wrote:

Nonhumans, while certainly viewed as actors in their own right, are seen as gathering actors from other times and other spaces. This much is, in fact, suggested by the very notion of an actor-network: the assembling together of a network of actors of variable ontologies, of variable times, and of variable spaces. Any actor – which, of course, includes nonhuman actors – is seen as necessarily a part of a more or less structured network. (p. 140)

The ALGC program assembled the human and non-human actors in a network in order for learning to occur. By studying in an eLearning environment, the participants' identities were disabled in regard to their social lives. For the length of time they were studying, they felt they sacrificed that part of

their identity so that the student identity could take precedence. The next section examines the connections made through posting online via the eLearning platform.

4.4 Connections made while posting online

Law and Singleton (2013) stated that it might be better to consider ANT not as a theory but as:

A sensibility to the *materiality, relationality* and *uncertainty* of practices, as a way of asking *how* it is that people and animals and objects get assembled in those practices, and as a way of *mapping* the relations of practice. (p. 491) (author emphasis).

In the eLearning world, the process of 'gathering' actors also occurs via online posts. With the ALGC program, this mapping process involves looking relations of practices within the online world – that is, predominantly writing and responding to online posts. eLearning programs such as the ALGC are designed so that students must make regular posts to various online discussion boards as well to as work together in groups or pairs to complete assignments. These practices enable connections to be made through the interactions of the students with and through both the human and the nonhuman elements of the online world.

Two aspects of the ALGC program enhanced this process. Firstly, the participants in the ALGC program progress through the course together as a 'cohort' as they complete the various units. The connections they develop are formed through their online posts and the group work involved in some units. This enabled them to make connections which might last into the future. Secondly the participants were globally dispersed. These connections not only enabled the students to learn but also enabled identity work. Louise and Mary both spoke of how they experienced these connections made through the online posts and as part of a global learning place:

Oh, I think I learned a lot and I also think that that was a drive to me to learn about others. And very interesting to get together with people from other continents. And also as I said in the beginning here, also from other professions. So, in our cohort I was one of two maybe three so called traditional teachers. The others they came from very different professions. And that was very interesting. (Louise)

I learnt more from other people. The readings and the assignments were, you know, covered the theoretical or historical body of knowledge around education but it was how that intersected with people's lives. And everybody came from different, were on different planes, with regards to education. I really learned from reading other people's work and working with

them and seeing how they were adapting the learning from the program to the realities of their life. (Mary)

Louise and Mary's narratives describe how the connection to the non-human elements of their online study enhanced their own identity and understanding of themselves. The non-human aspects linked the human participants further their own understanding through a series of transformations (Latour, 1999). Alice referred to this process via the online university website as moving through different areas, of 'going' places:

So I went in, sometimes there were groups that were specific to the university, sometimes they were specific to whatever, and as long as we were told that it was okay to go other places than where you were sitting, I would go other places and I would make comments. (Alice)

In going 'other places' in the eLearning forums, Alice seemed to be exploring the possibilities for making new connections, striking up interesting conversations by making comments on other posts. For Alice the connections made between her eLearning world and her 'real' world were one of the most important things she learnt from the program. Her learning helped her with work, and she felt she was in a position to apply what she learnt:

I think it (the ALGC program) gave me more depth of knowledge about relationships and all kinds of relationships not just within the course, but relationships with community, with family, with learners inside the course and with the learners I was facilitating learning with at the Adult Centre that I worked at, and relationships beyond people relationships. Relationships with the environment. So, there's an understanding in the culture that I live in that everything's connected and I think because of the type of learning, the type of reflection that was just paramount in this Master's, there was just much reflection I felt. (Alice)

Susan also explained how the engagement with others in the online posts enabled her own thinking and learning:

I did like reading the posts on the boards, and what I liked about reading the posts on the boards was that it really did feel like a space where we could brainstorm and put half thoughts and work at thinking and I liked that opportunity to engage with other people that could happen regardless of the hour of the night or day, that there was always somebody who was putting something there that I could have a look at and it helped my own thinking. So, I found that valuable. I found posting to the board valuable to support my thinking, to open up other thinking and that was good. (Susan)

In the online posts, many participants worked out who within their cohort they could identify with, forming connections between them. Susan explained how this worked for her:

So, to that extent it then came down to individual people and who responded to me and I responded to them. So, there were a few people that I knew that if I posted something they would respond. They would write something that would advance the conversation. And in some ways, it was about similarity of thinking, similarity of approach, and in some cases there was just a cultural understanding about how you did things. (Susan)

There were other students who when I saw their names appear, I'd think Oh my God that will be a really long post, couldn't they please post something that's more succinct, I might be more likely to read it. There were other people who as soon as I saw their names it was Oh gosh I'm always interested in their thoughts, let's open it up and see what they've got to say, what questions they have. So, there were people that I tracked and followed and responded to and knew that if I posted they would respond as well. (Susan)

These narratives show the non-human elements acting as a mediator for the human elements (Latour, 2011). Identity is being shaped in an interesting way; by reading the online posts, participants made decisions about the authors of the posts. While the authors would have been largely unaware of these decisions at this stage, the participants were deciding who to continue reading and who to ignore. Feedback to the authors, either positive or negative, in response to the posts would further have shaped the identity of the authors.

Thomas and Julie described their networks, where the non-human elements were once again acting as the mediator for the human elements:

Looking back, I don't feel like I clicked with anyone in particular, but the ones who wrote well and posted well, I learnt to respect and appreciate and looked forward to what they might say on a topic. I might have clicked over the ones who I felt sort of weren't going to be that useful. But there were some who I'd regularly go 'Right, listen to what they are going to say'. (Thomas)

You have so much more access to information at your fingertips in an online environment. I'm not sure whether I would have communicated in the same way if I studied on-campus. I think the online environment forces you to communicate with your peers. I mean, people express their opinions online in the postings, and you kind of find yourself feeling compelled to respond, because you want them to feel that their opinions are valued. (Julie)

Julie stated that in a campus environment she might not have communicated as much as she did in the eLearning environment. But seeing the online posts made her want to respond, to give feedback to other students. Thomas used the posts to sort the ones he wanted to read, and those he did not.

Thomas compared his eLearning experience in the ALGC course to a previous on campus study experience. He noted that the online posts created an interaction that he felt was missing from his on-campus experience:

I guess what I really enjoyed was the fact that we were interacting between people and surprisingly I had more interaction with fellow students than when I did my commerce degree on campus. So, commerce is something which is 500 students in a lecture theatre. You go in and you go out. You do a little tutorial once a week, but you don't really talk to anyone in it. So, this was far more interactive way of learning than on campus. Surprisingly. And I did enjoy that. I enjoyed being able to hear how other people approached the questions. Sometimes I was sort of like shocked at the difference (laughs) and sometimes I was kind of thinking 'Wow, that's very enlightening'. I just think that there was interaction and it was so slow interaction because it was written. So, people can write, you can read it, you can re-read it, you can look back over it, you can write a comment, and everyone's commenting and writing. Whereas there wasn't an opportunity in the commerce degree for all that interaction. It was very sausage machine. (Thomas)

While some participants saw these interactions in some instances as forced, because of the compulsory requirements to post and respond, they still enabled connections between participants and the technology, albeit a 'slow' one in Thomas's words. In effect, having to wait, and to think about what was happening, and then to post enabled identity work. Alice and Michelle described how this affected their learning:

So, it was good to have structure and say you have to put up two postings and comment to two other people because then I'd have to go and find, you know, two people, and find reasons to comment. It forced me. Yeah, like I said – especially, when there was mandatory postings, I said what I thought needed to be said to get the marks. You know, you need to post stuff, OK I need two posts, OK, let's think of two things to talk about kind of deal. (Alice)

I remember I think one of the things that was written that you can't just show up, you actually have to participate. Whereas in a classroom, if you say one comment, the teacher knows you and you have a good rapport with the teacher and you have good assignments, you don't really have to talk about much in class I find. But online that's the only way that people will

know who you are if you contribute and you just be present in the forums. So I did have to push myself a lot more. (Michelle)

The interactions and the special nature of the ALGC program did establish a sense of belonging and community amongst group members. Thomas explained this experience:

I think it's just you've got a community that's learning with you and they're struggling and you're struggling at times, and you're doing it in a sense together. And I think there was a strong sense of "We're in it together, let's help each other get through it together". There wasn't a sense of competition that I picked up. There was a sense of 'No, we're all brothers and sisters' sort of fighting the fight and let's help each other get through. (Thomas)

While formed networks can keep expanding, networks can break down once the connections are lost (Fenwick & Edwards, 2011, p. 2). Many of the participants spoke of a 'lost' feeling when their studies finished, and their online connections were broken. Joan and Lisa described how once the course was finished, when the university platform was no longer accessible, connections were lost:

But I do feel it's too bad that those connections, especially with the international classmates didn't persist. But I think we were so dependent on the platform to make that happen that once the platform disappeared those connections also got lost. And at one point, very early on, someone had made an attempt to create a Facebook group. But at the time the instructors had asked that we don't do that because they wanted to contain all of the interactions within the platform. And I think if they had allowed that to happen and to kind of grow more organically maybe we would have retained some of those connections, somehow. Maybe not. I don't know. (Joan)

I found there quite a letdown at the end of the program, it was sort of your online community becomes exactly that, because I found we're not out socialising and we're constantly in contact with this online family or community, I found the first two weeks almost like a, I don't want to say depressing, but certainly a very down time in that I would be like "Okay I'm going to go online and see if anybody's got anything there' and there's no messages, and you're like "Oh, where did everybody go?" (laughs). So, I found that interesting. But I don't know if anybody else has shared that experience with you, but I did go like "Wow, that's it? Where'd everybody go?". You develop a relationship, almost and oh, they're gone! (Lisa)

While some participants did report that they had stayed in contact with some of their cohorts, this contact was made on other social media platforms as they were no longer able to connect via the ALGC learning management system.

Highlighting a different notion of connection as part of this analysis of the ALGC connection networks, in West Africa, some of James's internet connections were not as reliable as for other participants:

You know, Internet connectivity in Ghana is very, very expensive. It is relatively expensive to use the internet in Ghana. That is one, And two, elsewhere in the world you go to everywhere and there are spots where you have wifi, where you can connect your device and just use it. Even on buses. But it's not like that in Ghana. In Ghana you have to pay and it's quite expensive. And the connection sometimes is also very bad. You can go off for like two days, three days, and you'll be needing this internet to really work on your assignments, post your discussion, your responses and stuff and you're not getting it. And there are some parts of the country where...you know most of the internet services we have are being provided from these telephone network operators. So you only get internet where they are connecting or have coverage. If you go to a village or another community where the network you are on doesn't cover that area than it means you can't have internet in that area.

In his situation, problems with the internet – costs and reliability – led James to focus more on the assignments and posting responses rather than making additional contributions to the program. That is, he felt he had less time to post as much as he would like to. When his connection worked, the cost of being connected meant time restrictions for him:

Where I found it a challenge and so maybe not identify with is with my internet connectivity and having to navigate my way. I sometimes for a very long time forgot to update my personal profile. Because whatever time I got, I was using it to do an assignment or post a response. So, that was the challenge. (James)

As mentioned previously connections can be broken. How important the non-human elements in this online space are to identity work can be judged by how much their absence affected the participants. James's experience highlights this:

There was a period when I was offline for like one week because I had to travel outside my present residence. And where I went to was quite a remote area, it was very rural, and there was no internet connection. So I could not participate in our discussions. Fortunately for me the assignment that we were to submit was two weeks, so I made time to cover what I had lost in that one week. (James)

Thompson (2012) wrote that it is important to 'tease out the *specificities* (author emphasis) of entanglements between people and technologies' in order to better understand the complexities of such relationships (p. 94). By doing this we can then understand how they work together and enable

or disable specific identities. This section has 'teased out' how important the connections between human and non-human elements, which come in different forms, were to the identity of these eLearners. The non-human elements acted as mediators, showing the connections between human and non-human elements (Latour, 2011).

This section also raises questions of asynchronous v synchronous communication which could be explored in further research. This was one of the themes I had to leave aside because of space restrictions in the thesis. The next section looks at how these connections were affected by the online posts being permanent.

4.4.1 The permanency of online posts

The participants perceived that online posts had a permanent nature. Connections made via the online posts were strengthened by the permanent nature of the posts. This permanency produced a type of flexibility to their study which enabled participants to think and reflect on posts and then to shape their own response. This meant they were continuously reviewing the work which had been posted, rethinking and reshaping their own posts and reviewing previous posts. The participants felt that as they could go back to read and re-read the posts, it helped to formulate their thoughts but also made them careful about what they posted. Susan and Joan explained this process:

I like to think, and I like to reflect. And what I could do was I could read something on the discussion board and mull it over and then go back and respond. Whereas when you're in conversation face to face you do it on the hoof and you often think later, gosh, really, this is what I think about that, or this is the question I've got about that, but the conversation's moved on. So, you don't have the opportunity to come back to it. Whereas on the discussion board you could because you could pick up a piece of someone else's conversation, it might have been two days before, and ask a question about it or elaborate on it. And I thought to be able to cogitate on something and then come back to it, actually this works really well for me. (Susan)

I think we were talking before about the conversation in class (on campus) is very ephemeral. You know you have it in class and that's it. Obviously, you remember it and you process it and you think critically about it but actually it was really helpful to have a conversation documented and being able to go back. You know the fact that it was documented also made it intimidating to put up posts. But the fact that it was there to reference back for me in particular that was helpful. Because sometimes you have to come back to a concept, or what someone wrote, a few times to sort of grasp what they were trying to say. And I think the fact that it was online and written really helped move that along. (Joan)

That participants were able to return to the posts again and again, to print them out if they wanted to, made for stronger connections between human and non-human elements. The need to continually read and review what was happening strengthened the connections between these actors. As previously mentioned, issues of synchronous and asynchronous communication arise through this data. However, I did not ask questions from the participants which would help me take this discussion further. I believe this is a complex issue which deserves further research.

Fenwick and Edwards (2011) highlighted that ANT focuses on what actors do, not on what they mean (p. 3). Reading and re reading the online posts were a key element in the learning and the identity work. The non-human elements played a major role by being permanent and readily available. They were a source that participants could use to formulate their own learning. Latour (2005) asserts that 'objects are nowhere to be said and everywhere to be felt. They exist naturally, but they are never given a thought, a social thought' (p. 73). The online posts were a way to connect with other participants. The ability to view the thoughts of others online enabled the participants to both connect and work through their own thoughts.

4.5 Connections for learning

It is important to identify some examples of the specific aspects of eLearning were involved in enabling learning: 'if an actor makes no difference, it's not an actor' (Latour, 2005, p. 130) Fenwick and Edwards (2014) found that the 'authorisations of knowledge are more precarious than may be assumed' (p. 37).

The data confirms which aspects of the program enabled learning: firstly, Julie talked of being online simultaneously with team members in other countries working on an assignment:

We did a fair bit of work and X then followed through and the next morning when I woke up and got online it was in real time and you had someone in Germany typing stuff in and I went "oh my gosh this is fantastic!" and suddenly the time difference didn't matter and I mean you are co-contributing as you were writing. Someone was writing there and someone else said 'we could put this in there' and it was really an awesome group effort. It was the best way in which I think we approached a group assignment. It's a bit like Google docs you can do it in real time. I guess the terminology today is 'it's gone viral' because everybody was into it, and X was saying 'we can put that in there' and you could watch it on your screen, you didn't even have to type or contribute. You are watching it being typed up. It was amazing. It's great. (Julie)

Another example is when Louise described learning with people from different professions, while all

within the education sphere, enabled her to understand the concept of informal as well as workplace learning, from her background as a 'traditional teacher':

I think it was that I liked the way that they expressed themselves. And they seemed to be very clever. And also, they came from different areas with different professions. Which I thought was very interesting. Because also I came to understand that I had come to be a very traditional teacher, thinking about learning as something you do as formal learning. I had at that time from when I started work, I had only worked with formal learning. Then we were also discussing informal learning and I came to realise that we are all learning all the time. And everywhere. And at every workplace. That was what I thought was very interesting. To get to know how people reflected on learning. (Louise)

The identities of the other learners helped Louise to understand where her own educational profession fits into the 'bigger picture' of education and workplace learning. This in turn helped her to understand different ways of learning. Her own identity changed in regard to how she viewed her work, and the work of other education professionals.

Mary and Susan focused on the communication necessary in an eLearning environment:

It kind of blew my mind that I was in a classroom in Sweden (laughs). What do I remember? Ease of use. Constant communication. I think those are the main things. You know, communication. The enjoyment that I got out of learning, having the information right there. Having access to information, having access to learning. Having access to professionals around the world. People who are well learned people. But I think that when you're in an online environment and you're seeing other people's writing and you're doing that direct comparison with your own and you're getting that direct feedback on your writing and getting reinforcement that you are able to articulate your ideas in a very clear well organised way. I mean it was a skill that I developed over those two years and it's certainly been a benefit to me. (Mary)

And I didn't expect that it would be as rich a learning environment online. I found it the opposite way around. Whereas in the past when I did my undergrad degree, when I did my post grad diploma, I would sit in a classroom with people and we might talk to one another. In the online program you had to talk to one another. Survival was about talking to one another and I think I learnt more about other peoples' thinking and they probably learnt more about my thinking, because that was our only way, it was without context, it was without seeing people, it was without them in the room and we had to engage with one another to be able to advance things. It was both the design of the program and also the fact that it was

online. It felt that I had insights into other people's thinking to a greater depth and level than I ever had in the face to face classroom, so I would absolutely enrol in online again. (Susan)

Working online requires constant communication between the human elements and non-human elements. The network is formed via the interactions happening within it. This is line with Law and Singleton (2013) who, when explaining how the network works, wrote:

A web of relations; an actor-web; or an actor-network; or a rhizome. The metaphor doesn't need to be pinned down and fixed. What's important is that the relations also define or characterize the 'actors' caught up in that unfolding web. The shape they take depends on all the webby relations. And this explains the third move too: the unfolding and uncertain character of the world. Because if the web holds steady, so do the 'actors' in it. (p. 490)

Susan also found that it was the interactive nature of posts from the tutors and lecturers that played a large part in her learning, by clarifying and challenging:

It advanced my thinking to engage with other students on the discussion board to a level. It stretched my thinking in a different way to have the tutors and the lecturers, which is why I needed their engagement and why I felt at a loss with one of the lecturers from XYZ university. It stretched my thinking in a different way to have the framing up of the questions from the lecturers and tutors because they were asking questions that were about advancing my thinking as opposed to clarifying their own. Other students were seeking to clarify their own as was I. Tutors and lecturers weren't seeking to clarify their own thinking. Their questions, when they were done well, were about advancing our thinking and getting us to reflect on something different that they'd noticed we'd missed. (Susan)

Thomas and James described going to the discussion board when they were having difficulties with a reading or an assignment. The human elements of the network, that is the students, used the non-human discussion board as a sounding board for their ideas:

As I said, you know, there were very experienced people who already had knowledge or experience in some of the courses, or in some of the issues, we were talking about. So, we bring up an issue and you look at the way the discussion is going, the way they are postings, you can pick one or two things from them. I always get in touch with them and as I said I was always getting some clues from our peers. So, for me that is the whole experience for me that was very fascinating. But then of course I also got some information from the readings and the assignments. (James)

I remember looking forward to what people would say about topics; their little pictures pop up and the words they have to say, and I'd look forward to different people commenting. So, that was quite good. Especially if I'd read a difficult paper, and I was like 'Woo, this is hard to pinpoint' I'd look forward to getting help from the other students in the forums. (Thomas)

These examples show how participants engaged with constantly changing networks within the ALGC eLearning environment to enable learning. Latour implores us not to take networks as stable forces but rather see them as constantly changing as they encounter other sociometrical objects. Fenwick and Edwards (2014) explained networks as a 'sociometrical enactments that perform knowledge as well as activity' (p. 38). The authors described Latour's networks as 'not flat linear chains but webs of association amongst heterogenous things and forces that grow and become extended as more connections become added (p. 38).

The learning connections were not necessarily a comfortable experience for all participants. Alice had difficulty with what she saw as the impersonal nature of the online text-based interactions. She talked of her own work as an adult educator and how she 'worked' hard at making participants relax, trust her and come out of their shells in order for her training sessions to be successful. She felt that she did not feel comfortable enough in the eLearning environment and worried about making herself 'look silly'. However, she did acknowledge that the eLearning world and her work in the ALGC increased her capacity to work on her learning and therefore to become more comfortable in that world. This contrasts with Joan who found herself thriving in the eLearning world:

That I really actually felt like it was a good environment for me. Surprisingly. For myself I liked the freedom of being able to engage in the course whenever I wanted. That flexibility. That was really something that worked really well for my learning style. And I actually kind of really liked expressing myself in writing. I'm one of the people that in a class room setting I would not necessarily be raising my hand. I'm not one of the outspoken people in class. But it's different in an online discussion forum. For one, they ask you, you are required to comment. But I think that bit of anonymity at least for me gave me more freedom. (Joan)

Interestingly it's one of the points that I made earlier about some of my anxiety about posting my perceptions and reflections and opinions online. It was also that exercise which has given me more confidence because I had to put myself out there. I needed to position myself and to provide credible evidence of that and that exercise has given me a lot of confidence. The ability to structure my online information and to navigate those processes with people that I had never met before and that I'll will never meet has been really helpful for me with the fact that I continue to work online. And it's also that the online environment gave me the permission to learn at a time when I thought that I couldn't step out of the world of work and

take on debt and go back to school. Unlike in a classroom, I could work on my writing before I posted it. And because words don't come easily to me and I might not be quick on my feet in a debate, that online environment allowed me to work at my own pace. The clarity in my thought comes through writing, it doesn't come through speaking. (Alice)

4.6 The ALGC program as a non-human actor

Through this analysis the connections which are made within the ALGC eLearning network started to become 'visible'. When analysing the data, I found it became important to look at the ALGC program *itself* as a non-human actor in the learning process. The nature, structure and makeup of the program is a mediator within the network which makes other actors 'do things': ANT is interested in 'mediators *making* (author emphasis) other mediators *do* (author emphasis) things' (p. 217).

There are number of features which show the underpinning pedagogy of the ALGC program as an actor in the process of learning:

1. Students move through the program with the same cohort
2. There are compulsory postings
3. Online group work is conducted wherein the students are globally linked
4. There is a strong social justice perspective to the course.
5. There are four separate universities conducting one Master's program

In analysing the data, I found that some of the participants felt the program was 'special' because of these aspects. These aspects of the program 'made' the human actors act in various ways (Latour, 1999) and gives scope to view the ALGC program itself as a non-human element. For example, Mary detailed how after going through the program with the same people she had made some connections which remained:

I mean, after spending two years with people online, I'm connected to some of the people through LinkedIn and through Facebook and so still do stay in touch. I think it's a very powerful thing to be online for that length of time compared to other online or distance education courses where you're going to be together for just a few months. And I do identify as being an Alumni for UBC and ALGC and the ALGC community, it's interesting you know when you run into people that are with that program that there's this broader ALGC community. (Mary)

Mary's identity was shaped by the relationships she formed within the program. By completing the program, she felt that she was part of a community which she could identify with.

The uniqueness of four universities working together was highlighted by Julie:

I think it was the highlight of the course. It was so unique. I mean, who would have thought that the fact you have four universities collaborate is even more special. That really sold the program to me. I mean, here you are, you are actually doing an intercontinental online Master's degree involving four universities, that's pretty special. And I don't think there's anything quite like it still in the world today. (Julie)

This aspect of the program allowed participants to communicate with and learn from students who were globally dispersed, from different cultures and within different areas of the education industry. Participants expanded their identity in ways that would not have been possible in other eLearning programs, through being part of global cohort.

Alice related to how working with the same group of people kept the balance of power within the cohort at an even level:

I liked the fact that the learning groups, when we were going through, would stay together for several different projects. If it had only been a one-off project then definitely there was an imbalance of power to the amount of work that wasn't necessarily equal that the participants were putting in and that happens in small group experience anyways right? But what I found was because we would do two, or three, or four group projects with the same people that balanced out over time. Because maybe somebody was sick at the first paper and they just, they might not have been able to do what they said they were going to do, or maybe they didn't say anything, and they just didn't do much (laughs). But maybe there was a reason why that happened. But by the time that the same group had worked on three or four assignments it had all balanced out, that it felt fair and equal by the end. So I liked the fact that you stayed, even if there were some idiosyncrasies or what have you, it was good to stay in that group and learn from that process and also give an opportunity for that equal time, equal participation to feel like that by the end. (Alice)

As a non-human element which mediated the human elements, the pedagogy of the course was also mentioned by the participants. Julie explained how she felt that the pedagogy enabled learning:

I think for an online learning environment you have to be able to collaborate. The learning can be much more enriched when learning from your online classmates; I mean it's a very different forum and I think definitely the ALGC proved to me that this is the methodology

behind very successful online learning environments. I think it's probably critically one of the most important environments. I remember, what I mostly remember, is the pedagogy behind this particular online environment. I don't think they are all the same. I know they're not.

I believe the pedagogy is the most appropriate for the course. My comment would be that it's all designed to teach you, how to, I guess, how it's constructed, we were living the construction. Does that make sense? As we were studying. (Julie)

The curriculum of the ALGC program, viewed through the pedagogy involved, was a non-human element of the network, mediating the identity of the learners, as Johannesen et al. (2012) wrote:

Framing ANT as a learning theory assumes that learning takes place between people and materials as part of social practices, which are networked together, acting as one. When a tool or another type of artefact is designed, its properties play an active role in the negotiation of practice. (p. 787)

The pedagogy of the ALGC program provided the social practice (Johannesen et al., 2012, p. 787) which united the tutors with students, and students with each other. The pedagogy helped to mediate the participants' identity laying the groundwork to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in order to both pass the program successfully but also to improve as adult educators.

Another important aspect of the ALGC program was the unit curriculum. Julie acknowledged the importance of the social justice aspects of the program:

I think it certainly that drew that out of my core. I understand when it probably came to the fore, that was when I did Fostering Learning in the Workplace, I had to do that critical reflection around a Hot Issue. I know where my social justice conscious came from. I always had it, I just never acknowledged it as deeply as I have. In particular about wanting, having opportunity to learn. I've always been a believer that education paves the way for learning and leading people out of an improvised lifestyle. You know I believe all that and I guess it's becoming more important. You know I think I had, in some ways, a privileged upbringing compared to others, and maybe that's my calling. I don't know. (Julie)

Participants were encouraged to take a strong social justice perspective through the ALGC program. This aspect of the ALGC program is discussed further in Chapter 7, again in regard to issues of power and discipline. Here it is examined as a means for enabling and perhaps disabling identity.

Susan commented on how the units taught, combined with the global nature of the cohort, emphasised the whole experience of how the ALGC acts holistically across the eLearning connections:

For me it was, the thematic framing for the program and the conceptual framing for the program was global change and globalisation and the cultural dimension was part of that. And by learning in a global class I felt not only were we learning about globalisation and global change and about cultural diversity, we were learning within that context. So, it was hardwired into the program by sheer dint of learning with students from across the globe and students posting their stories, each of us about our world, our context, our experiences, policies in our countries and our thinking in response to that. And I thought it's an immersive experience, so we're learning about and we're learning in practice globalisation and the impacts of it. (Susan)

The relevance of the units taught also appealed to the participants:

I used, particularly the Work and Learning, some of the work we were doing in Work and Learning I used that at that particular time because I was needing to restructure the work that we were doing and I drew a lot from that program in terms learning, learning models, areas that we needed to be focusing on and I drew on the material from the paper a lot for the work I was doing at the time. And we are still using that. (Susan)

So even though it was so incredibly hard to do an online Master's and work, I could learn something in the morning and use it in the afternoon. Or I could add something into what I already knew, or what I already practice, something like a tool, whatever that tool was, I could add into my practice immediately. (Alice)

In this chapter, we have explored aspects of the networks and connections formed within the ALGC, tracing 'negotiations' within the network and determining their effects (Fenwick & Edwards, 2011, p. 3). A focus on the 'social and material practices in assemblages enables material enactments of identities ('learner' identities and otherwise) to emerge' via their associations or networks (Aberton, 2012, p. 114). Aberton (2012) further stated that the 'learner and identity are co-produced or enacted into being in socio-material practices' (p. 115). In the next chapter, I focus more specifically on identity formation.

Chapter 5 – How do I appear? Identity and self-presentation in the ALGC space

In Chapter 2 I introduced the concept of a digital identity as ‘the persona’ that an individual adopts to represent him/her self in the online world (Williams et al., 2013, p. 106). It will be different based on the individual contexts or roles that a person plays while online. In eLearning, this could be as simple or as broad as a ‘student’ identity. However, an individual might want to portray themselves as a specific type of student – smart, witty, willing to help others, academic. As part of digital identity formation, ‘individuals may also develop multiple identities which they enact strategically depending on their goals and the context’ (Koole & Parchoma, 2013, p. 15).

In this chapter I focus on how the participants represented themselves online within the spaces where they ‘met’ and interact with each other and how they made decisions or ‘managed’ such representation. It seemed that through the act of ‘writing to relate to themselves and others’, individuals were working out ‘how to manage their daily actions and interactions within the context of the complex techno-social hybrid realities they live in, constantly navigating their public appearance and their relation to self and others’ (Sauter, 2014, p. 824). The spaces where these interactions occurred, and the management of their digital identities, included the online forums via discussion threads which were related to actual subject matter; participants’ online profiles; and informal discussion in ‘casual’ threads contained within the lecturer-free zone called The Coffee Shop. Managing their identities also took place through the assessment tasks and the other writing required through the ALGC program. This correlates to Wenger (1998), who defines identity as ‘a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other’ (p. 151). As we encounter others, ‘these layers build upon each other to produce our identity as a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reificative projections’ (p. 151).

Goffman (1959) suggested that one of the first things that an individual does when he/she enters the presence of others is either to seek information about that person or starts to assess the situation and/or others present with information previously acquired (p. 13). In order to interact with others, we require some knowledge of them, some information, to help us define and understand the person we are interacting with. The aim of each person in an interaction is (usually) to present themselves in the best possible light. Miller (1995) described this concern as wanting to present ourselves as an ‘acceptable person: one who is entitled to certain kinds of consideration, who has certain kinds of expertise, who is morally relatively unblemished, and so on’ (p. 1). Goffman (1959) referred to this daily game of impression management in theatrical terms, describing them as ‘performances’ in which all parties to the interaction have a role to play. In this chapter I will use these terms and

Goffman's theory of presentation to understand some ways the participants managed their identities in an eLearning environment.

This chapter also explores some ways that the ALGC program mediated their identities. As Watson (2009) asserted this link between management of identity and learning is important because 'of the assumption that who we think we are influences what we do' (p. 510). The data suggests the specific ways that the ALGC environment manifests processes of identity formation within a context where interactions between students can only occur in a virtual space. The data presented in this chapter shows ways that 'evidence of identity formation will emerge from the 'voices' in the discussion forum posts' (Delahunty, 2012, p. 409). Secondly, the data suggests that opportunities for interaction through which identities can be developed (Gee, 2011) are increased because the pedagogy of the ALGC program requires participants to go online and communicate with each other.

While Chapter 4 focused on connections made within the ALGC program and the relationship between the human and non-human elements, Chapter 5 looks specifically at ways in which the individual participants managed their identities, which in turn helped to shape their identities.

Chapter 5 is divided into five sections. Section 5.1 examines the participants use of impression management in terms of their self-identification. Section 5.2 details the way in which participants made decisions about presenting their 'real' selves in their eLearning environment. Section 5.3 looks at the concept of self-identification as a student, and how the participants managed this aspect of their lives when they returned to study. Section 5.4 examines how the participants tried to live up to what they perceived as the image they should have. The final section, 5.5, looks at how the participants shaped their identities through their presentation management.

5.1 Self-identification and impression management

To begin with, in order to understand how the participants viewed themselves at the beginning of the program, I asked two questions in order to focus on this topic:

1. What three words would you have used to describe yourself before the course?
2. How did you identify yourself (during the program)?

In answering the first question the participants focused on how they felt in relation to the ALGC program. There was a certain amount of nervousness at the thought of going back to study and apprehension about studying online which for most people was the first time they had undertaken this form of learning. For example, James described himself as a 'total novice when it came to online work':

That was my first experience with any kind of online interaction. So, I would say I had no clue about how to, you know, navigate my way through any online program. And so, to be very honest, it was quite a challenge for me for the one and a half months. (James)

In addition, perhaps because most participants had an education-based disciplinary study and employment background, there was an awareness or sensitivity that they were moving into a different position within that world – from teacher to learner. Similarly, those without an education background had doubts about whether they would cope with the education-focused course. There was also a link to the reasons they had decided to go back to or in some cases to continue studying. The decision to enrol in a Master's program was usually based on where the participants were in their working lives. There was often either a need generated from within their current position or for potential job opportunities including moving into different positions and/or different organisations. The participants felt a need to upgrade their skills and to enhance their current qualifications. Therefore, there was a strong element of this factor of both wanting and needing to learn. Julie, Lisa and Mary described how they felt at the start of their studies in the ALGC program. Their answers underline their nervousness but also their need to learn:

I was, in terms of my knowledge, I was quite ignorant to the issues of a globalised world and education as a global identity. I guess I would say I was also aware that when we learn we become a bit more insecure in our knowledge so I was more than ready to learn more. (Lisa)

Intimidated, Anxious, Doubtful, Motivated. (Mary)

Towards the end of each interview, in addition to this 'before' question, the participants were asked for three words to describe themselves after completing their studies. These two questions proved to be the most difficult questions in the interviews. Four of the participants asked if we could return to the question later, and in some instances, I suggested participants could email their answers after they had given it some thought. One participant eventually decided he did not want to answer either question. Initially this confused me as I had not thought that these particular questions would cause problems. Additionally, I had sent all participants a copy of the questions beforehand, so that they had a chance to review them before we began our session. As the interviewer I wondered about what the participants might be reluctant to say and why they were reluctant to say it. Gee (2014) contended that 'not saying something – staying silent about it – can be a way of privileging what you do say, since you leave unsaid information that might make the listener or reader think differently about your viewpoint' (p. 147).

Through their slight reluctance and hesitation to answer these questions, it seems that the participants were displaying their concern that their answers may give an impression that was not 'compatible or consistent' with the impression of themselves that they wanted to put forward, even to their researcher. With further reading and analysis of this issue, perhaps the participants were undertaking a form of impression management in regards to how they would answer this question. The need to manage their words to ensure that I did not misread any of them and therefore have the wrong impression shows ubiquity of the act of impression management. Goffman (1959) proposed that the performer's need to maintain 'excessive control' over his or her performance is necessary to ensure that any minor missteps that occur during a performance are conveyed as 'either no impression or an impression that is compatible and consistent with the over-all definition of the situation that is being fostered' (p. 59). Goffman (1959) noted that as the audience to a performance 'it is natural for us to feel that the impression the performer seeks to give may be true or false, genuine or spurious, valid or phony' (p. 66). The participants were trying to avoid being inconsistent in the image they were presenting.

Goffman (1959) differentiated between the impression we ourselves 'give off', and impressions 'given off' (p. 14). That is, he established a difference between information about ourselves that we manage in some way, and information about ourselves that 'leaks through' without intention (Miller, 1995, p. 2). In most face-to-face encounters the impression that we give off can be incidental to the actual purpose of the interaction because these unintentional impressions are most often conveyed through nonverbal contexts. In the ALGC program, all communication was text based. Therefore the impression participants 'gave off' (Goffman, 1959) was portrayed through their writings. For example, the management of their identities was most evident in the way the participants approached posting their profiles onto the ALGC website and this issue is explored in the next section.

5.2 Presenting our 'real' selves

One of the activities required of participants in the ALGC program was to develop and post an online profile of themselves at the beginning of the program, before there was any formal interaction or learning activities. This activity proved to be the first instance of online impression management for the participants; the first time they had to think how about they were going to present themselves to the others in their group. Using text to convey an impression is not an easy task for most people, as 'it is difficult to establish yourself as a whole person through a self-description: it feels like an extended lonely-hearts advert' (p. 4). However, Papacharissi (2002b) asserted that 'the anonymous and textural nature of cyberspace allows one to overcome identity fixes, such as gender, looks and disabilities' and that while the lack of nonverbal may make interactions 'less rich', at the same time it 'allows individuals to be more inventive with self-presentation' (p. 645). Both of these views are relevant to the participants in the ALGC as they constructed their online profiles. Some found the

process difficult while others welcomed the anonymity and openness of the space in terms of providing the freedom of not to be judged on the aspects of their identity which they did not think were relevant to their identity as a learner. Alice highlighted this when she commented:

When you're online a lot of those perceptions fall to the wayside, especially if you're not video chatting or what have you. You don't really see age, you might not even know sex, or gender, you don't necessarily know religion. All those things kind of fall to the side in the online learning environment for the most part, which is very cool. You don't know if I'm sitting in a wheelchair. (Alice)

The requirement to present an online profile generated differing responses from the participants concerning how the task should be approached and what information should be revealed. Some of the participants chose a conservative approach to their profiles, worrying about how they would be perceived by the others. Others reported being open and honest, withholding nothing, putting themselves honestly into the profile. However, all the participants made conscious decisions about what they would include in their profiles and what they would leave out. While they were willing to participate, they were mindful of what information they would put forward as their first introduction to their cohort. Claire referred to posting an 'abbreviated me' while Julie talked about being 'careful' about what she posted. While the participants used different words for their choice of the impression they wanted to portray, they were all concerned with being 'judged' based on what they wrote.

So, I looked at what other people wrote (laughs) and I thought 'That looks alright' and it's, you know, I wanted to not be so personal and all of that. I didn't want to, you know, a whole lot of, I mean, even on Facebook I'm careful as well. (Julie)

It was me, but an abbreviated me. It's the way I want them to see me. You don't know these people, and you don't want them to judge you based on three paragraphs. So you think, Ok less is more and let them slowly get to know me. There are some things I'm happy for people to know. It's the same in life, as it is in work, as it was in the course, there's a certain personae that you want to put out. And there's some things that people just shouldn't know. (Claire)

The participants all made decisions to manage their online profile, to control the way they were viewed by others in their cohort and therefore the impression they were giving off:

It wasn't difficult I don't think but, I was again, I think, conservative in what I said. And I didn't say too much. I just said a few basic things and again, I was conservative. (Thomas)

At this early stage of the program, participants did not know each other or how the information they put forward would be used, so there was a tendency towards caution in their management of the impression they wanted to put forward into the public arena. Claire equated this with the way she behaved in 'life', the real world, implying that her way of managing her identity was the same in both worlds. Papacharissi (2002b) wrote that we are still 'compelled to enrich self-presentation online', that we still try 'to manage impressions given and given off in a manner that simulates offline interactions, so as to make this online performance more convincing and more satisfying' (pp. 645-646).

Participants chose the words they wanted to portray themselves with and the audience had no way of verifying the identities presented. Walker (2000) wrote that 'internet identity statements differ from traditional face-to-face statements in significant ways' (p. 100). The participants in the interaction are not in the same room, therefore 'audiences have no way to verify misrepresentations and fabrications' (p. 100). As a result of this 'no direct response to the presentation is guaranteed' and therefore 'those creating the statements have greater freedom to reveal and hide information' (p. 100).

The need to consider their audience and the impression they wanted to give off may have led to the participants adjusting their words in both negative and positive ways. By feeling the need to consider their audience, the participants may have given an impression that was indeed an idealised one (Goffman, 1959). Participants made decisions about their online profile based on who they imagined their audience to be. They either included or excluded information based on the role they believed both they and their audience would be playing within the ALGC online learning space. By performing impression management in this way, the participants were shaping their own identities. They were making decisions which enabled or disabled parts of their identities, to match their perception of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

When I commenced the course, I had a belief that I was the only one who had not participated in eLearning previously, and that I was the only one who did not have a background of education studies. I assumed that the role of a student in a Master's program had a 'particular front' already established, one that I alone was lacking and leaving me with feelings of being a fraud. However, Mary echoed my feelings, talking of feeling of being an imposter and constantly seeking reassurance that she was allowed to be in the course studying at that level:

Before registering to the ALGC programme, I did travel to UBC to meet with the programme coordinator. Because I had been out of the academic community for over ten years, I had a Bachelor of Fine Arts, so a very different degree, so I wanted to make sure I was a good fit. And so, I kind of went and interviewed the program coordinator (laughs). I had a lot of anxiety

about going back to school, going back into a programme that was different from my first degree, so I went into that. (Mary)

Because I *did* feel like maybe they've made a mistake and you know they had a low number of applicants and they accepted me into the programme just to fill an extra box. (Mary)

However, Goffman (1959) also suggested that when we take on an 'established social role' there is usually a 'particular' front that has already been established for it (p. 37). So, it may be that the participants need not have worried too much about the impression they would give off. As students in a Master's program, there was already a certain 'front' associated with their new roles which may have induced others in their cohort to assume a certain type of identity already present in each participant.

When questioned more specifically as to whether they felt they were being their 'real selves' when they posted their opinions, thoughts and feedback the participants admitted to 'holding back' and to being conservative in their postings, thereby displaying again that they were managing the impressions they gave out to the each other. Participants were concerned about being misunderstood, given the text-based nature of eLearning. They talked of an initial lack of confidence in putting themselves 'out there' for others to judge. However, as they progressed through the course, their confidence in themselves, their opinions and therefore what they were posting online increased. Thomas discussed how he managed to walk this fine line:

Yes, I felt like I could [...be real self]. I mean, you can be misunderstood online, and from a distance, so my real self but within constraints. So, you don't want to throw things out there that can be misunderstood at all or read as a bit unusual. So what I did was real, but within constraints. (Thomas)

Julie described how she held back at first but as her confidence built, she was able to relax a little, but her shyness remained:

I made enough comments, I would say I held back, but once I become more confident, a lot of that was confidence, and developing my own confidence, to contribute. So you know, I possibly took a lot more care, I think I was conscious all the way through, but I think I was very shy. (Julie)

James explained that he felt he brought a different perspective to the discussions:

Initially I would say I wasn't too confident in coming up with or posting an opinion. But later I realised although I was handicapped in some ways compared to my other cohorts, I also felt special because I always had a different dimension to the way people viewed things. And for me it made me unique amongst our peers. (James)

Thomas further clarified his need to be mindful of what he was writing online by stating:

I think you have to be careful if you want to preserve, you know, preserve a sense of, I'm not sure what I want to say, but preserve a sense of normalcy. Because things can be misread and misunderstood online. And so, you have to be a little bit sensible. But also, words, once they're out there, they're kind of tied to you, potentially forever, once they're on social media. Some words that might in fact be very hurtful to someone else, and when you put them out to the world, you have to realise that's your audience. And so you have to recognise that when you are speaking to the world, it's very different to what you might say for example in the confines of your home, or to close friends. And that there's a difference in what you can and can't say. (Thomas)

These examples show how important their self-image, and the correct presentation of that image, was to the students. They show the careful intent with which the participants thought about their online posts in order not to give the 'wrong' impression of themselves. McAdams (1996) describes the 'storied self' where in 'people offer different stories about themselves in different contexts' (p. 307). McAdams (1996) expands on this by stating:

The modern self has enough solidity that it does not typically change dramatically from day to day, but it is supple enough to undergo remarkable transformation over time. The modern self includes both those private narrative musings about "who I really am" and those public narrative manoeuvrings that are strongly driven by role and situational demands. In principle, neither the private musing nor the public manoeuvring is any more real or authentic than the other. (p. 307)

This implies that even though the participants were thinking carefully about what 'self' they presented, this public self is not more or less real than their private self.

This section discussed how the participants felt about presenting their 'real' self-online in the ALGC program. The participants had a sense of who their 'audience' was and were wary of presenting an

image that might be judged as not fitting in with both the audience and the audience's expectations. In the next section I investigate how the participants felt specifically about their 'student' identity.

5.3 Being and becoming a 'student'...again

In regard to how they identified during their studies as adults in an eLearning environment all of the participants indicated multiple roles with which they identified. They were never 'just' a student. In fact, Claire objected to the word 'student', connecting this word to her high school days, and admitted feeling inadequate due to the pressures of her working life which prevented her from being a 'student' in the same way she felt others online were. James also made a reference to his previous on-campus study where he felt like more of a 'student' as did Michelle when she talked of not being in a 'physical learning environment'.

The participants saw themselves as more than 'students' although this was the role they were performing while completing their Master's in this eLearning space. They recognised that their own identities were more complex and could not be covered by the term 'student'.

The confusion with how they should identify themselves was affected by the nature of eLearning because eLearning does not take the form of a traditional classroom which all the participants had previously experienced. Only one of the participants had prior experience with eLearning. Online, there were no formal boundaries to their classroom. Their daily lives of work and family blended into and sometimes collided with their lives as 'students' in ways that they had not experienced before. As adults who were now learning there were other commitments which still needed to be considered and taken care of. Their lives outside the program did not simply disappear during the period they were involved in their studies. As James observes, he was a student when he was studying; all other times he was working or participating in family life. He had to 'usher' himself into 'student life':

I considered myself a lifelong learner. Not a student. I only saw myself to be a student between like 8pm to 12pm. Because that is when I ushered myself into the student mode. But then after that, you know throughout the day, from morning to evening when I come home it is work, work, work. And the pressures of the work were so overwhelming, so you tend to forget about, you know, you being a student. So, kind of like in between. (James)

Julie and Lisa had similar responses. They were students, but they were other 'things' as well:

I guess I identified first as I was Julie, [job title], that was my identity. But also, I saw myself as a student in an online learning community. You know, the study load was proof of that, the work we had to do. (Julie)

Mother/student. Yes. Always a mother first. (Lisa)

It definitely felt like I was studying. But I would identify myself not so much as a student but as someone who was working in development in [country name]. (Thomas)

This data shows that the participants, while understanding that they were studying, felt that as adults they could never be just a 'student'. There was too much in their lives for them to narrowly define themselves in this way. The nature of an eLearning program means that participants do not physically go to a campus to study, so their everyday lives are usually very much present when they are studying. Claire's response below highlights this. She felt the pressure of having to work and study as well, but also did not identify firstly with being a 'student':

I was not a student. The word 'student' reminds me of days in high school where, you know, you had breaks and stuff like that. My identity was a bit blurred in that way, cos I work long hours. And I was really quite envious and very frustrated at the people who were lucky enough to have time to do all the things I wasn't able to do. Like you know they would log on every day and read everything and post and I was like, I'm just exhausted, and where do you find the time to do? It would make me feel inadequate. Even though my results were not inadequate. Being a full-time student seemed to be who some people were. Whereas I was not a student. I was a full-time employee studying on the side. (Claire)

Adams (2013) wrote that the 'physical, temporal and social psychological contexts can seriously impact on a student's identity, their ability to learn and reform their identity' (p. 160). Adams goes on to state (2013) that in the face-to-face environments learners:

... can detach their student identity from other identities through physically separating them. 'I'm at university now so I'm a student, I'm at work now so I'm an employee, I'm home now so I'm a daughter/son/mother/father'. (p. 160)

As eLearners, the participants in the ALGC program did not have the luxury of being able to separate their lives in this manner. This makes the process of trying to establish an online identity, more complex as the learners have to 'balance and merge multiple identities with their real world identities' (Adams, 2013, p. 160). Michelle explains this as a process of having to remind herself that she was a student:

I was studying by myself and not in a physical learning environment, so I often had to remind myself that I was a student, that I was doing a Master's. (Michelle)

As performers when we act out the roles that are required of us as part of the role we are playing however, we are never simply that role (Goffman, 1959). Our identity is made up of more than the role or performance we are giving. This was true for the participants of the ALGC program. They were performing their roles as students, while trying to maintain their lives outside of the online space on both professional and personal levels. The process of creating an online professional identity is explored further in the next section. However, this is not necessarily a 'bad' thing. Gee (2000-2001) writes that 'the fast pace of change, thanks to modern science and technology, that keeps outdating some identities and offering ever more opportunities for the creation of new ones (p. 114). According to Gee (2000-2001) this enables people to 'communicate with (and get recognized by) other people like them across the globe, thanks to modern travel and modern communications. They can come to feel that they share more with people far from them than they do with people closer by' (p. 114). The process of creating an online professional identity is explored further in the next section.

5.4 Idealised impressions and professional identity formation

Through their online interaction in the ALGC space, the participants were negotiating both their online identity through the learning process, but they also had to maintain their professional offline identity.

The need to present as a certain type of person was linked to the professional identities of the ALGC participants. Adams (2013) asserted that to 'operate' within the different domains that exist within the different communities of practice in which we live and work, involves more than 'learning the rules of what to do in the different groups' (p. 162). Adams (1981) claimed that what is necessary is 'negotiation of an identity and reformation of that identity' and that this process may cause disruptions to other aspects of our identities. eLearning is a 'difficult process' as it necessitates the learner having to 'balance and merge multiple digital identities with their real world identities while all are in constant flux through the learning process' (p. 160). Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) held the view that a professional identity 'develops over time and rather than being coherent and stable is more likely to be fragmented and prone to change' (p. 747). As with the other identities we claim, our professional identity is constantly in flux particularly when we are immersed in an online environment (Jenson & de Castell, 2012)

Durante (2011) noted that 'the construction of personal identity is always the result of competition' between 'what is disclosed and what is hidden about us and furthermore that this identity formation is not taking place from scratch but occurs in a situated context (p. 596). The participants in the program were concerned with trying to match the impression they gave out with what they believe their cohort expected them to be like, therefore avoiding the 'wrong' impression being given. As Riessman (1990) explained, in 'narrative retelling in interviews "...a particular self is constituted

through those narratives, occasioned by the presence of a listener, her questions and comments. Typically, the moral character of the protagonist is sustained.” (p. 1195). The ‘right’ impression seemed to be of a confident professional, sure of their words, able to contribute meaningfully to online discussions and who was not afraid to post their thoughts online. Michelle talked of wanting her profile to show details that were relevant to her academic identity while Richard described a fear of being judged and being seen as not as cool as the others.

The need to project a professional identity surfaced in different ways. Alice, who talked of having formed lifelong online friendship through the ALGC program, described very personal events that occurred within her offline community which she ‘didn’t bring to the program’ because she did not want people to think she was looking for sympathy. Claire mentioned her feelings that she is an ‘imposter’ and should not even be in the program but again, she does not mention this online until she has established that others seemed to feel the same way and then she only shared some of her feelings.

I was convinced of failure and convinced that nothing that I could contribute online would be of value and interest. I was aware of the ‘imposter syndrome’. I had almost always dismissed any recognition in my work and at this time the acceptance into the ALGC program as pure luck, timing and maybe even fooling others of my capabilities. Starting the program only intensified the vague feelings of self-doubt and angst. (Claire)

As a participant in the ALGC program myself, I felt that I could not display too much emotion or talk about personal issues even within the forums specifically designed and set up for these non-academic, lecturer-free discussions. I felt that if I wrote about self-doubts or feeling out of my depth, that I would be seen as unprofessional and not an academic. For me, this was a constant through the program. Michelle also admitted to limiting her online posts only to course work:

My interactions online were almost only regarding assignments or class-related subjects. I didn’t really have personal conversations with other students, other than my learning buddy, and even with her, those discussions were limited. (Michelle)

Goffman (1959) referred to the ways in which we offer ‘idealized’ impressions of ourselves (p. 44). That is, we try to present ourselves as better than we are. We consider what society expects of us in a certain role and try to match or exceed that expectation in the impressions that we give off even though we might not be that impression, that person, in reality. Furthermore, Goffman (1959) highlighted that if we aim to give off the idealised impression, the one that society expects of us in a certain role, then we have to ‘forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards’ (p. 50). Rosenberg and Egbert (2011), citing Snyder (1974), defined this feature of impression

management as 'self-monitoring', writing that self-monitoring is 'the process whereby individuals regulate their own behaviour to showcase traits that are desirable and perceived favourably by others' (p. 4).

These trepidations around inadvertent disclosure of personal or 'non-academic' information are not without merit. Within the ALGC program the requirements to continuously post thoughts and opinions and add to the online discussion meant that participants felt they *had to* show that they understood the content and that they were learning and therefore that their professional identity was developing and forming. Additionally, the ALGC program involved a great deal of self-reflection as an integral part of the learning process which again compelled the participants to show that they were changing because of the course.

5.5 Identity formation within an eLearning community

eLearning was new to the majority of the participants and therefore they had to learn new skills in order to progress through the online course. Within the ALGC program there are both expectations and compulsory requirements regarding the amount of online participation required of learners. Interaction online is an integral part of the program. Participants are expected to not only post their own discussion threads but to respond and provide feedback to other participants' posts. Developers of the course Larsson et al. (2005) explained that:

The core of the pedagogical practice of the program emphasises intercontinental group work among students using examples from their everyday life as educational content for analysis and to make comparisons between different contexts. Each course within the program includes tasks in which students collaborate across countries, and activities that draw extensively on resources from the different settings in which students operate. (p. 63)

Some courses state specifically how many posts are to be made (two, three) and/or what form these posts will take (feedback, group work, individual comment). This meant the design of the ALGC curriculum requires learners to have, or to quickly learn, and then adapt and re-adapt, the skills required for studying online.

Communication is non-verbal and text based and while there is some opportunity to socialise, socialising outside of the ALGC space is actively discouraged (to be examined further in Chapter 7). However, participants frequently spoke of 'having to talk to one another'. Interaction online is an integral part of the program. Participants are expected to not only post their own discussion threads but to respond and provide feedback to other participants' posts. The process of being in an online learning environment - giving feedback to others, participating in online chats and posting their

opinions - did not come naturally to all of the participants.

Participants reported feeling a 'lack of confidence' both within themselves and others, and at the end of their studies, the recognition that they had learnt some interpersonal skills that were not part of the course curriculum. Some reported initial unease in expressing their opinions openly while others described 'doing what they had to do' in that some of the subjects had posting requirements indicating they did what they had to do to meet those requirements and no more. All participants wanted to write thoughtful and original posts. Claire discussed her previous campus-based studies and the differences she found in online learning:

My previous studies had been local and face to face allowing me to form friendships with people who I connected with, joked with, studied with and then the learning came from a place of trust. Now with this situation I had to deal with students from other universities and other countries, nothing was face to face and all my coping mechanism of relying on my gut to guide me were gone. This was an entirely different experience and I was not prepared for the difficulty. (Claire)

Susan felt that the design of eLearning forced students to communicate:

In the online program, you had to talk to one another. Survival was about talking to one another and I think I learnt more about other peoples' thinking and they probably learnt more about my thinking, because that was our only way, it was without context, it was without seeing people, it was without them in the room and we had to engage with one another to be able to advance things. It was both the design of the program and also the fact that it was online. (Susan)

Thomas discussed trying to balance course requirements with his own personal style and need to present himself in the best light – thoughtful and original was his aim:

Really, you are a bit nervous because you are putting yourself out there. And cautious. And I often did it because I had to, to get my group participation marks, so they'd say 'Two posts for this subject' or something? And I'd do my two posts. But I also wanted to write something original each time. And thoughtful. So I didn't always have something to say that was original or thoughtful but I tried to have something thoughtful. But concise. I was minimalistic in that sense that if there was two, then I'd do two. Or three, or whatever it was. (Thomas)

As with their online profile, the participants wanted to manage how they were viewed by the other participants and were conscious of this in their postings. James mentioned how his uniqueness made

him feel more comfortable to give his opinion while others, like Alice who although she felt comfortable from the beginning also felt a conscious need to be careful about what she wrote in case she offended others within the cohort:

I felt fairly comfortable. And I was also very, you know I would really think about my language before I would post something. I would never want to offend anyone and I wasn't making really strong statements and normally my statements were just to encourage people and say what an interesting viewpoint. (Alice)

Richard however enjoyed the process and echoed Alice's previous comments that in the eLearning space they were not being judged on appearance but on the quality of their work.

I loved it! It is so much safer to offer your opinion on various matters in an online discussion. Nobody judges you based on your appearance, voice, social status, etc. You really learn how to write concisely and express your ideas clearly. However, initially I was hesitant to participate in the discussions and it took some time to come out of my hole. (Richard)

Presenting ourselves as other than we are requires the audience to believe we are that person (Goffman, 1959, p. 28). Online in the ALGC program there is no other way to discern whether the participants are what they say they are. If a person fails to live up to the image they have presented, then the image would be broken. Perhaps more involvement with participants, in group work for example, might lead to a better understanding of individual characteristics. Fejes and Köpsén (2014) write that:

Learning is an inseparable process of identity formation in which the newcomer gradually develops his or her capability to participate, as well as developing the shared repertoire of the community of practice. Identity formation is about acquiring the knowledge and competencies needed to understand and carry out the common goals of the specific community of practice – knowing how to solve work tasks, what tasks are more important than others, how to communicate with each other and so on. (p. 168)

Within the ALGC community the participants enacted this process of identity formation through their online posts and work on the discussion boards.

Gender differences in presentation of self was one of the themes that I decided not to follow up on as there was not enough evidence to focus on gender in the responses. There was an imbalance of male verses female participants but also there was not enough information to indicate that a response was a 'male' or 'female' issue. I was disappointed that I could not discuss this more in my research and this presents an opportunity for further research.

In this chapter, I have highlighted some ways in which the participants in the ALGC program managed how they were viewed by their classmates and tutors through their online participation in the various online forums and through their online profiles. The findings here show that the participants did feel they needed to present the best image of themselves to their online peers. As stated by Delahunty (2012) these issues might not be unique to eLearning. Issues of self-presentation arise in offline learning communities as well, however the findings here show how the participants felt they would be 'judged' on their words. In effect, this disabled some aspects of their identity which they were reluctant to share.

Chapter 6 – Liquid Lives

The ALGC program is designed around the concept of a ‘global classroom’ so that students who are globally dispersed work together across time zones to complete individual and group assignments, post ideas and opinions on eLearning and develop their arguments in a group forum. This chapter explores the ALGC program as a transnational eLearning space to understand how learning in this space mediated identities.

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the data showed some of the practices the participants employed in order to manage their identities. This chapter continues to examine aspects of identity within the globalised ALGC eLearning space. The data highlighted the ALGC program as an effective example of transnationalism in an eLearning space. The students who participated in this study felt this affected them greatly, although this may not be true for every ALGC student. Dahlgren et al. (2013) acknowledged ‘high dropout out rates’ in some units (p. 45) and Grosjean (2015) detailed some of the challenges associated with the program. However, for my participants, the links made in this eLearning space united people across time and space in a world where learning was the focus. However, the act of crossing national borders for education raised specific questions around what happens to our identity in these transnational spaces.

Bauman (2000) coined the phrase ‘liquid modernity’ to refer to the period of time we now live in and in which we have seen some of the challenging effects of globalisation. He defined this period of time as one of constant change in which ‘change is *the only* permanence, and uncertainty *the only* certainty (original emphasis) (p. viii). Bauman (2000) believed that the world, its structures and institutions are changing so quickly that there is no way to keep identity intact, that we are always in a process of ‘becoming’. Lee (2011) explained ‘Liquid Modernity’ as a phase of modernity in which ‘all brakes on individual freedom seem to have been released and the resulting condition is lightness, fluidity, choice and disengagement’ (p. 652). The data from my study suggests that such features of liquid modernity can be found within the ALGC program.

Bauman (2005) believed that the changes which are occurring because of a globalised world, which is a ‘volatile and constantly changing’ environment ‘place the responsibility for resolving the quandaries’ (p. 305) ‘onto the shoulders of individuals, who are now expected to be ‘free choosers’ and to bear the consequences of their choices’ (p. 305). The data shows that participants did feel pressure from the effects of globalisation in their workplaces and a certain amount of responsibility to make changes in order to ‘keep up’. There were other ‘liquid’ (Bauman, 2000) issues identified around finding a sense of community within an eLearning environment and trying to understand differing standards between the four involved universities.

This chapter is divided into five parts. Section 6.1 reviews how globalisation has affected the workplace and lives of the participants by applying pressure to keep ahead of a continuing changing workplace. Then the data reports how participants tried to find their voice in a liquid world (Bauman, 2000). In Section 6.2, liquid identities are discussed. Section 6.3 looks at the concept of community within the ALGC. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 look at some specific elements of the ALGC program, including the use of English as the main language, together with the involvement of four separate universities to show how these reflect a liquid world (Bauman, 2000).

6.1 Finding voice in liquid lives and workplaces

Some of the participants in the study reported that they had returned to study due to pressure from within their workplaces to keep up, to keep ahead, or to 'keep relevant'. In the private sector, increasing competition due to globalisation meant some of the participants were now competing for their jobs on an international level. As a result, many participants employed in the government sector were faced with government policy changes which had led to funding shortages which, in turn, meant increased job insecurity. Participants were looking for ways to 'future proof' their careers. For some, the recognition of the need for a formal qualification, which would help their careers, was a driving motivation for enrolment in the course. Julie explained her reason for returning to study, showing how she felt the changing environment was pushing her to study:

In terms of my professional role I would say I was anxious. I was motivated. And the word I'm trying to look for, but perhaps, I want to say a feeling of left behind, but I'm not sure what word I can use to describe that. I was really looking for something to do that was going to place me in a strong position in my current role in (name of organisation). (Julie)

Susan and Mary also explained how they recognised the need for a formal qualification in their job markets:

And so, I'd probably got as far as I could get in my career, with the qualifications I had and that I needed to have a Master's qualification. So, it's my future proofing career really, to get that. (Susan)

And I needed to have a formal training in that area to enable me to effectively compete for positions. But it was important for me to have the accreditation because in Canada I'm finding in the workforce if I want to gain, for example the position that I have right now, the only way I could have that is if I had a Master's. If I didn't have that accreditation I wouldn't have been able to throw my resume into the hat. (Mary)

Bauman (2005) described how the changes brought about by globalisation are putting the responsibility to change back onto the individual (p. 305). The examples here show that ways in which was the case for the participants. They had each taken on the responsibility to find a way to stay relevant in their changing environments. Their identity as educators required that they kept relevant and ahead of their peers. This aspect of globalisation is perhaps not unique to education, but the data shows that it has resulted in educators from such different fields as the participants in the program needing to consider their options for future employment very carefully.

In addition to the need to stay relevant, participants also discussed finding their voice within the eLearning world. Finding our voice is an important part of identity work. Not only is it a way of explaining who we are but it also helps us think through who we are. The ALGC program provided the participants with the opportunity to have their voice heard and therefore the chance to develop identities. However, this was not always easy. Expressing voice is much more complex, nuanced and problematic than might seem to be the case. Voice becomes more difficult in the online world where 'online relations are equipped with 'delete' and 'spam' keys that protect against the cumbersome (above all, time-consuming) consequences of in-depth interaction' (Bauman, 2010a, p. 15).

The introduction of eLearning in business and educational institutions was bringing changes to their workplaces that participants felt they needed to keep ahead of. Therefore, through their own experience of working online some of the participants felt they would be 'ahead of the game' in regard to future jobs. In a liquid world, eLearning helped the participants find their voice in different ways. Some participants felt it would give them a voice in their own workplaces which they felt they were lacking. Julie explained:

I felt that because things were shifting and to such a degree I wanted to experience what it would be like for students potentially. I thought it would give me an advantage to be able to keep up to date with the technological changes. In fact, a lot of things were starting to move in (name of organisation) towards an online environment. (Julie)

By undertaking further study, Julie felt she would be able to make a more active role in her workplace. She was looking towards future promotions and undertaking this study would give her more authority and voice in her workplace. Other participants reported that learning online would enable them to be more empathetic to their own future students who might be studying online. Having the eLearning experience and the Master's certificate meant their opinion was more likely to be listened to, Louise stated that her study acted as a base for the job she has now and that:

And also, I got valuable knowledge about being a distance student. And I think that is also something that is good now for me as the principal of our learning centre as that is also something we are trying to start, to be flexible, to meet the students' needs and try to organise courses that they can apply for to be distance students, and to do it through distance learning. (Louise)

In contrast to the data reported in the previous chapter, participants sometimes regarded the online forum as 'safe' and felt that their voice could be heard without being distracted by their physical presence. Working online enabled the participants to work on their thoughts, to form opinions and develop their voice, both academic and personal. Being able to think before they posted online helped some participants to focus their thoughts and therefore enabled them to find their voice within the eLearning spaces of the ALGC program.

Mary, a visual person who had a great deal of anxiety not only about returning to study but also about doing so in an online environment, described how the process helped her:

It was also that exercise (of having to post online) which has given me more confidence because I had to put myself out there. I needed to position myself and to provide credible evidence of that and that exercise has given me a lot of confidence. And it's also that the online environment gave me the permission to learn at a time when I thought that I couldn't step out of the world of work and take on debt and go back to school. (Mary)

Unlike in a classroom, I could work on my writing before I posted it. And because words don't come easily to me and I might not be quick on my feet in a debate, that online environment allowed me to work at my own pace. The clarity in my thought comes through writing, it doesn't come through speaking. The online environment also allowed me to see, to be part of the discussion but to see what other people were writing about, how they're formulating their ideas, what their perspective was and for me as a visual person as well, when I'm meeting and talking to somebody I have to write everything down. (Mary)

The ALGC eLearning environment provided a safe space for these participants to find and express their voice. The participants may have felt the need for this space more keenly because of the environments they were working in. As Bauman (2009) stated:

In a volatile world of liquid modernity, in which hardly any form keeps its shape long enough to warrant trust and gel into a long-term reliability (at any rate, there is no telling when and whether it will gel and little likelihood that it ever will), walking is better than sitting, running is better than walking and surfing is better yet than running. (p. 160)

The ALGC space 'kept its shape' (Bauman, 2009) long enough to help shape the participants' identities. Richard's comments below, in which he described how he used the online process to work through his thoughts and opinions, are a good example of how in his case, the ALGC produced identity work:

In fact, I developed a better image of myself thanks to the ALGC – a more confident and reflective self, less judgemental too. It is so much safer to offer your opinion on various matters in an online discussion. Nobody judges you based on your appearance, voice, social status, etc. You really learn how to write concisely and express your ideas clearly. (Richard)

6.2 Liquid identities

The online nature of the program meant the respondents were not primarily concerned about the actual country they were in, nor for the most part did they identify as being of a particular nationality, e.g. Australian or Swedish. There was a tendency to think, like Alice below, that it did not matter what country they were living in or what country they were from:

I don't know if I identified with being a Canadian on a good day, but I was definitely identified as a Canadian (laughs). So other people identified Canadians as Canadians. And I know, but blonde and Canadian is just not identity with how I would identify myself as. But I think being online from home, I don't think it made any difference really. Nor did the country that I was in, that's the beauty of online learning. (Alice)

James felt the uniqueness of his position, being the only person from his home country (Ghana) in the program. As the program progressed James came to see this as an advantage for him in that being from a third world country, he was in the position to speak on issues from a different viewpoint than the others in his cohort. Where initially he was worried that he might only be able to contribute 'negative' details he realised that these 'negatives' were in fact just differences which added 'another dimension to the discussion':

Initially I would say I wasn't too confident in coming up with or posting an opinion. But later I realised although I was handicapped in some ways compared to my other cohorts, I also felt special because I always had a different dimension to the way people viewed things. And for me it made me unique amongst our peers. (James)

Interestingly, James saw himself as being a representative of a 'third world country' as well as being Ghanaian:

And it made me be able to come up with more of my opinion to share. More so, initially I felt I did not have any good or interesting points to share. For me it was always a negative or a bad issue to share because of the circumstances of my background, you know, being from a third world country. So you know when people are sharing things that looking forward or positive, my experiences served to kind of counter or negate whatever someone would have said. But later there was another dimension to the discussion. (James)

Rembold and Carrier (2011) referred to 'post-modern notions of identity' which are 'inter-relational, reflective and bound by place', rather than 'a membership defined by negation in relation to other ethnic groups' (p. 366). Referencing Campbell and Rew (1999, p. 10), they stated that when national identity 'as a reference point diminishes, other more situationally defined identities take on greater significance' (p. 361). The participants, in this truly global classroom, did not necessarily consider their nationality as the most significant part of their identity. Rather, they tended to focus on local issues of identity – issues concerning where they lived, what organisation they worked for, what jobs they did or simply something they believed in. In regard to *who* they identified with during the course of the program, participants firstly moved towards people whom they felt were similar to themselves in regard to aspects such as culture, family situation, work and lifestyle choices. While Michelle identified with people from cultures she felt were 'closer' to her own because it was 'easier to connect with people who grew up in a similar environment', Lisa identified with people who were juggling family life, work and study as she herself was doing. Mary talked of participants with 'a sense of shared personal and professional values'.

In Bauman and Vecchi (2004), Bauman spoke of two kinds of community, citing Siegfried Kracauer (1963):

There are communities of life and fate whose members (according to Siegfried Kracauer's formula) 'live together in an indissoluble attachment' and communities that are 'welded together solely by ideas or various principles' (p. 11).

Within the ALGC eLearning environment the participants felt the first type of community (nationality) was almost irrelevant and that they were part of the second type of community, formed around ideas or similarities other than nationality. As they progressed through the program, participants further expanded their choices to people they worked with in groups, and who they therefore became better acquainted with, but also people whose online work – postings, writings, comments, feedback – they came to respect and admire. As mentioned previously the perceived quality of other people's work was the attraction. When asked why she felt she identified with certain people rather than others Alice responded that she responded to people online in the same way she did in her 'day-to-day' life:

I think it would be the presentation of ideas, and ideas that either fit or expanded on ideas that I have. I'm sure that would be, for me, that's how I just day to day that's how I connect with people. If they say something that, something I've never thought about and I think 'Oh, now that's something that's interesting' or align with thoughts that I do have, for me that's an attraction, yes. (Alice)

Bauman and Vecchi (2004) added that we do not question our identity until our identity, our belonging to a nation, is questioned (p. 12). We then realise that our identity is negotiable, and that the decisions and action we take are 'crucial' to identity formation (p. 11). The ALGC program encouraged participants to move beyond their nationality as their prime identity to focus on a different type of community in which their identity was linked to other aspects of their lives.

6.3 Building a community in a liquid world

The concept of community was explored with the participants within the ALGC program. As participants were part of a global classroom, they could access a diversity of people, cultures, education policy and national histories. Participants valued these and learnt from them. Boehm, Kurthen, and Aniola-Jedrzejek (2010) wrote that in order to 'fully understand globalisation issues' learners 'must grapple with them in a way that connects to their everyday lives, and develop an ability to recognise and expand intercultural awareness and competency as well as overcome cultural stereotypes' (p. 133). James referred to a 'united nations type thing' with learners working together and helping each other. All participants felt the diversity of their cohorts added a richness to the program through being able to access different thoughts, ideas and cultures.

The ALGC program contained elements which enabled a community of practice: as Wenger (1998) describes, the practice of building a community involves 'what is said and what is unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed' (p. 47). This can include items such as 'language, documents, procedures' but also 'implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb' and 'underlying assumptions and shared world views (p. 47).

Being transnational in nature also meant the course was open to adult educators from a broad spectrum of industries. This enabled the participants to examine adult education from multiple perspectives other than their own. Several participants highlighted how these elements worked for them:

It was good. It offered insight into how other people, other countries, other education systems work. Even watching how people write was interesting. The jobs that they did. (Claire)

Oh, I think I learned a lot and I also think that that was a drive to me to learn about others. And very interesting to get together with people from other continents. And also, as I said in the beginning here, also from other professions. So, in our cohort I was two maybe three so called traditional teachers. The others they came from very different professions. And that was very interesting. (Louise)

The international/global element of the program was wonderful! This enriched the discussions and learning that occurred in the ALGC. The experience was enlightening. (Richard)

I was very limited in my knowledge of the world. You know we can read the local paper and it tells us what's going on in our local area, we read what the local controls want us to read/learn. And so, I believe having a globalised view really does take our blinders off and opens up our eyes and our minds to what's really going on out there. And in a course like this where you have interaction between educators, but more specifically students, you're getting the real stuff. You're hearing what's really happening out there in their lives, what they're doing and their personal experiences. So, I found I was a bit blown away by what is really happening out there. (Lisa)

Participation in a program such as the ALGC which involved cross-national border work allowed the participants access to information and knowledge that they previously would not have had access to. This new knowledge in turn opened up an increased awareness of their current place and space: the local. Edwards and Usher (1998) wrote that the 'consciousness of the globe as one place is the very consciousness which heightens a sense of the relativity and value of particular location(s)' (p. 163). Through gaining knowledge and understanding of other cultures and places we start to understand and perhaps appreciate not only other cultures but also our own culture and place better. ALGC is an example of what Edwards and Usher (1998) referred to: 'education practices therefore come both to service and contribute to the intensifying processes of globalisation' (p. 164).

Bauman (2010b) believed that the previous ways of 'dealing with difference, the policy of assimilation to the dominant culture' is no longer possible in a liquid world (p. 400). Our 'communities of belonging', that is the communities we were born into, are no longer the structure that can support us and shape our identity as they used to. Bauman (2010b), citing de Singly (2004), used the metaphors of casting and drawing of anchors to theorise identity in liquid modernity, believing that it portrays 'the intertwining of *continuity* and *discontinuity* (author emphasis)' in contemporary identities.

Just like ships anchoring successively or intermittently in various ports of call, so the selves in the 'communities of reference' to which they seek admission during their lifelong search of recognition and confirmation have their credentials checked and approved at every successive stop; each 'community of reference' sets its own requirements for the kind of papers to be submitted. (p. 401)

Such a sense of a community was acknowledged by some of the ALGC participants. James, unable to access the required text books in his country, detailed how he was sent the books by another student in his cohort. He mentioned that several other students offered the same favour:

With that book buying experience...let me say the person who eventually bought the book for me was not the only person who volunteered. There were three people who actually volunteered to buy the book and ship for me. So I was like 'Oh, I have a family in this course' and it made me feel like you know, I'm part of a community who really care about the others. And I'm very grateful. (James)

Both the curriculum and the design of the course - that students move through the whole course as one cohort also instilled a sense of community for some participants. Julie, Thomas and Mary explained the different aspects of the course which reinforced this concept for them:

I think it really became evident, I mean our first assignments when we did learning theories. But I think it really hit when I did Work and Learning. You know, I didn't want to fail, it was really important to me and I think I realised that's where my activity was, and I probably got some significant feedback from my peers in learning and that probably helped me find my legs, so to speak. (Julie)

Yes. I think, in the café, I really enjoyed the café. Some of the people that helped it were people who wrote a lot, like Y, who just wrote and wrote and wrote; who was everyone's mother, and worrier and whatever else she was. But she and those others who actually did put it all out there, unlike myself, they're the ones that made it a community. (Thomas)

I mean, after spending two years with people online I'm connected to some of the people through LinkedIn and through Facebook and so still do stay in touch. I think it's a very powerful thing to be online for that length of time compared to other online or distance education courses where you're going to be together for just a few months. (Mary)

It seems that once within a space such as the ALGC program, the participants felt a sense of community similar to belonging to a church or a temple, through their purpose for being there – to

learn. 'Being inside' creates 'a true community of believers, unified by the end and means alike, by the values they cherish and the logic of conduct they follow' (Bauman, 2000, p. 100).

However, although some participants stated that they had kept in touch with members of their cohort once they had completed the course, most had not. The relationships which were created were liquid, based on being in the same cohort. Without the structure of the program the relationships either did not last or changed to become based on other shared similarities, as Bauman (2010a) stated:

Things and bonds are expected to serve for a fixed term only and to be decomposed, shredded or otherwise disposed of once they outlive their usefulness – which they must do sooner or later (p. 92).

In the offline world relationships cannot be 'deleted or disconnected at the slightest sign of dissatisfaction' (Silva, 2018, p. 119). In the ALGC program there is a need to create a community in order to achieve the objectives of the course. Therefore, participants work towards that, rather than focusing on characteristics of others which might, in the real world, annoy them. If there are issues between members of a cohort, the participants reported that they tended not to speak up in order for the work to move forward without conflict. However, this was not a direct question that I asked during my research. In my own experience as an ALGC student, there was only one time in which there was conflict between two members of the cohort. Everyone left it to the two people involved to sort it out. No-one took sides, or commented, while their discussion carried on and eventually settled itself. Silva (2018), reflecting on Bauman, wrote that Bauman believed that, in order for them to survive, online relationships have to be tested in the same way that offline relationships are. Therefore, it seems the online relationships, the online community, are liquid and hence are not tested as they would be in the real world in order to perhaps survive for a longer period of time.

6.4 Liquid language

It is not possible to consider the transnational aspects of the ALGC program without again highlighting the importance of the English language throughout the program. For example when asked about the use of English, those learners who had English as their native language tended to sympathise with and be conscious of learners who did not. Bannier (2016) wrote that 'widespread use of the English language in transnational higher education programs is a culturally complex matter' and adds that some universities have overcome this problem by offering courses in up to four different languages but also comments that is 'not always practical' (p. 82). As Alice and Mary commented, this was an issue that most of the participants were aware of:

There was always a lack of confidence by a fair number of people if English wasn't their first language and they hadn't had years of English training. I felt that uncomfortableness and just always felt like I needed to reassure them that, you know, doesn't matter about spelling mistakes or anything, your English is very good, so don't worry about it. But it was discomfoting for some people definitely and I felt that discomfort. (Alice)

But I did really feel a bit of the angst of the fact that everything was in English. That, you know, it ends up being the predominant language of learning. And you could see that on the Blackboard there were chat rooms in Afrikaans, or Swedish, which I couldn't participate, which was fine. I really felt the extra burden for people that were working in another language, not necessarily even their second language. (Mary)

Bannier (2016) also wrote that 'scholars are far from consensus as to whether teaching and learning in a non-native language serves as a barrier to making meaning in a constructivist environment' such as the ALGC program pedagogy (p. 82). Canagarajah (2013) argued that 'translocal' spaces are not 'neutral' and that mobility within such intercultural spaces is tempered by the 'values and statues to the codes that people take with them' (p. 204). That is, we move within transnational spaces with our own culture dominant. We do not leave behind our belief systems which has assigned certain values to cultural artefacts such as language. This affects the way we view others within a space as we tend to view them through the prism of our own culture and values.

Canagarajah (2013), citing Blommaert (2010), also stated that these social spaces are 'ordered according to power differences' (p. 205) and that one of these differences is language. The ordering is determined by a scale, identified by Blommaert, which gives higher value to 'prestige languages of the West (i.e. English)' and lower value to languages from 'underdeveloped communities' (p. 206). One implication of this scale and ordering, is that the 'powerless' have no agency and have to adapt to the norms of the 'powerful' (p. 207). Canagarajah (2013) argued against this, stating that norms are often negotiated in each situation; often differences in cultural aspects such as language no longer matter much in a globalised world. Canagarajah (2013) suggested linguistic norms are 'situational' (p. 212) and that a variety of English language forms can exist within a translocal space. Such spaces are 'polyaccented, multilingual, and plural' (p. 212). I return to this discussion in Chapter 7.

In the ALGC community the language used sometimes depended on which group you were talking to. Within the home countries' universities, local languages were sometimes used. Within the whole group, English was used. Similar to what students might experience in the real world, they moved between English and their native language as required.

There were occasions within the ALGC community where the differences did cause people to retreat back to what they knew, whether this was based on a similar language or as discussed earlier, other characteristics such as being a mother. So while there was a blended community called a cohort, within this cohort there were also smaller groups based on the differences which drew them together.

Bauman (2000) believed that 'the ability to live with differences, let alone to enjoy such living and to benefit from it, does not come easily and certainly not under its own impetus' (p. 106). The author wrote that if we do not accept our differences, if we try to ignore them or continue to classify in order to 'eliminate differences' then 'the more difficult it is to feel at home in the face of strangers' (p. 106). We also run the risk of hiding away from difference by moving to what we know and recognise, making for a more monotonous and uniform society.

6.5 Liquid standards

Silva (2018) stated that education is now a continuous process which is 'acquired throughout life (p. 124). One of the challenges for education in a liquid world is that previously knowledge 'was valued for its faithful representation of the world' (Bauman, 2003, p. 20). But, Bauman (2003) asked, what happens if the world is changing so quickly 'in a way that continuously defies the truth of extant knowledge, constantly taking even the 'best informed' people by surprise (p. 20)? Bauman (2011) used the metaphor for traditional education as 'as a ballistic missile' with one purpose - heading in a specific direction (p. 15). In liquid times this seems no longer the case. eLearning is one of the areas in which the traditional way of learning is being displaced or perhaps rearranged. One of the areas in which these changes were evident in the class, is through the different pedagogies and standards which each of the four universities applied.

When asked to describe their experiences with lecturers and tutors from universities other than the one they were enrolled in, participants based their answers on individual experiences or events which occurred during the program. Some used these experiences to look at and evaluate the pedagogy behind the program, while others talked about how they were treated personally by the different lecturers. All participants mentioned different levels of communication that they experienced, with some of the lecturers and tutors being described as more 'hands on' than others. Mary scrutinised the differences between the different universities:

I was intrigued because I had never been in an online environment before and I think that because I thought that perhaps at some time I might want to facilitate online learning, I'm not sure, I wanted to see how they were engaging and how they were facilitating a group, bringing consensus together, how were they motivating people and presenting their information. So I was certainly intrigued enough to take note of it between each of the four countries. (Mary)

Claire expressed her frustration at both communication styles and communication modes and described how she tried to find her own way to connect with the lecturers:

Depends. Some were really great. Where, you know, there was constant contact and an email. Some it was like I really had to try hard to get on there. It felt like I was pulling teeth just asking a question. There were some of the tutors who were more active. Some I was fortunate enough to strike up a conversation with in the background. Because for my personal self I had to instigate those individual messages. In the classroom situation you can put your hand up and go 'Hey! Miss, does this look right? Is this structure right? Am I on the right pathway?' And I didn't necessarily want to do that in an open forum. I did it through the back door, and emailed them directly. And often you'd get feedback. Some instructors would be more detailed and some would be 'Looks good'. (Claire)

Kim (2001) stated that one of the premises that underlie social constructivist theory is that learning is a social process (p. 2). It does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours that is shaped by external forces. Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. This way of learning required the participants to adjust:

It was fine. Other than the difference in personalities, no issue, no issue whatsoever. It was a good back and forth. Some people, and I can't even equate any my concerns to it being different nationalities, just different people. You know, different people communicate differently. Some teachers are a bit slower, some are right on the ball. Though I think it's actually more of a personality question, rather than a nationality question. (Lisa)

While the ALGC program purported to put the learners at the centre of their own learning, in a liquid world we can no longer rely on 'an underlying order' and that we need to 'forge our identities in a world of uncertainty and constant movement (becoming)' (Misson, 2012, p. 29). Bauman (2011) wrote that 'nothing in that world is bound to last, let alone last forever' (p. 20). In their constant state of 'becoming', some lecturers and the participants in the ALGC program were not comfortable with the 'old' ways of doing things but also still not comfortable with the 'new'. It became apparent to participants that certain lecturers had viewpoints which needed to be considered when writing assignments. The participants noticed that if they gave the 'wrong' answer in a discussion board forum they would receive a comment from lecturers which would indicate that they were either headed in the wrong direction, or they were giving the 'wrong' opinion. Claire, Alice and Michelle felt that different styles of communication were a problem:

No, anything that was there I would just put it down to being human nature, that some people can just, you're in an online environment so, because body language is what - 70% of communication? - That it's a given that some things can be misinterpreted and some things can sound really abrupt. (Alice)

Well, I had a few issues that really frustrated me. And I don't know, I don't really think it matters where they were from, it was just that the communication was very, very poor. So I can't say if it was due to being from another country or just my expectations were different, maybe. But yeah, I did have some difficulties. (Michelle)

As highlighted by these examples the different communication styles and methods of being online between the universities lead to some confusion and frustration for participants. While this behaviour tended to be seen as an individual trait the participants began to associate certain behaviours such as 'being present' with some universities and not with others.

These differences extended to the way in which lecturers moved through the various forums within the platform. The Coffee Shop is an example of this. Officially the Coffee Shop was set up as an online forum for the students to vent and talk to each other. Unofficially some lecturers would check in to see what the students were talking about and in some instances post comments. Susan noted these differences and the 'pushback' which happened in her cohort when lecturers moved into the Coffee Shop forum:

Well, different universities had different views. For instance, the café, one of the other tutors, went onto the café and was responding to things that were on café and there was huge pushback about that, because several students felt that the café was theirs. Whereas other universities, didn't even look at the café, said that wasn't their business, wasn't their place. So different universities had different approaches to the board, the café and the assignments. (Susan)

The responses also indicated some resistance to the constructivist approach to teaching and learning which is at the centre of the ALGC program. This was common across all cultures represented by the participants. There was a realisation point that all students needed to reach, in order to fully understand the pedagogy of the program, which was that participants are expected to learn individually and from each other - to discover information for themselves - rather than be handed knowledge from a lecturer or tutor:

But I mean they are all good, you just have to get used to it. And I understood the reasoning behind the way different instruction so I didn't find it terribly unsettling. But the knowledge structure was really shared. You are learning from your colleagues. I think it wasn't a teacher

centred approach, it was learner centred in the sense that teachers, tutors were very much in the background and that hasn't been a terribly practiced way, that centre, teachers are there to support the students, you never let students have to work it out amongst themselves as much as you do in this teacher pedagogical practice. (Julie)

Bauman (2000) contended that we are in a state of flux, where meaning, categories and frames of reference are not settled, that there is nothing which stays the same and change is constant. As a result of this, Green and Gary (2016) suggested that 'pedagogies that are directed towards finding, accepting, or imposing meaning come up short' (p. 48). The data suggests that this is the case within the ALGC program for the participants. The differences in communication styles between the different universities indicates that traditional ways of teaching do not 'fit' with eLearning. Bauman (2005) had sympathy for educators in this instance stating:

In a liquid-modern setting, centres of teaching and learning are subjected to a 'de-institutionalizing' pressure and prompted to surrender their loyalty to 'canons of knowledge' (whose very existence, not to mention utility, is increasingly cast in doubt), thus putting the value of flexibility above the surmised inner logic of scholarly disciplines. (p. 316)

Bauman (2005) stated that how educators respond to today's challenges, what strategies they put in place to overcome them, will 'remain a paramount concern of pedagogical science for a long time to come' (p. 317). The differences between the universities, highlighted by the participants, shows that this discussion is happening at both student and lecturer/tutor level. These examples also show how the differences worked to enable and disable certain identities. For example, Claire's comments show how she was frustrated by the differences and how they did not suit her personal style of learning.

This line of questioning and the responses given led on to an additional question being introduced to all the participants late in the data collection phase. The participants were adult educators studying in an adult education Master's program, so I was interested to learn whether during the program the participants had been assessing the lecturers and tutors involved from their own personal lecturer/teacher identity viewpoint. The responses show that the participants found it hard to separate their work identity from their adult learner identity. This led to some frustrations when it was perceived that lecturers or tutors were not doing the right thing. This is in line with Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant, and Yates (2003) who wrote:

The real skill of the learners is to find spaces for 'self creation' among the contested meanings of experience bound to emerge from the different perspectives of the employers, teacher and learner. Thus the learners needs to be able to critique the discourse of experiential learning

while paradoxically adopting this discourse i.e. to maintain a sceptical and questioning attitude to the various ways in which the learner is positioned and experience is reconstituted as learning. (p. 19)

James explained how he could not separate the two aspects of his identity:

Yes, Yes. In my supervisory role I was always assessing and analysing the teachers who were teaching the children. So I also assumed that role in the course. And with my previous experience as a teacher and also as student, if a teacher is teaching and he is good you already can tell that he is good. So I was constantly assessing or analysing what was being taught by the teachers. (James)

Michelle highlighted the frustration she sometimes felt:

I found it very frustrating that in a program that's supposed to train adult educators that the actual educators of the program are sometimes doing a poor job. So I found that with some, and I'm not generalising at all, but for the few bad experiences that I had, I think that since we kind of know what we're talking about and what should be done when the teachers and tutors are not doing that, it's even more frustrating. (Michelle)

One of the interesting findings is the recognition of perceived different standards between the partner universities in the ALGC program. Participants also talked about what they perceived as different standards in regard to the marking of assignments between the different universities. I return to this point in the next chapter. This might be a phenomenon which is unique to the ALGC because it combines four different universities teaching the one course. However, as this amalgamation is integral to the uniqueness of the program it is an issue which requires further investigation and discussion.

The data and analysis here show some ways in which liquid modernity in the ALGC played out by enabling new identities. A more volatile workplace meant that participants were looking for ways to future proof their careers. Returning to study was one method chosen to try to secure their futures in a liquid world. It was a way of finding their voice. However, the changing nature of their worlds meant that the participants were unsure of how and what they identified with. Building an online community, while deemed important, was complex because of shifting alliances within the program.

Chapter 7 – Behind the scenes

In this final chapter, the focus turns to participants' responses to the curriculum, both overt and hidden; to English as the chosen language and to issues of power and discipline, to show the ways in which these worked to mediate learning in a transnational eLearning space.

Young (1988) wrote that 'curriculum is always a selection and organisation of the knowledge available at a particular time (p. 12) and 'those in positions of power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge by a society (p. 14). Curriculum development is therefore the task of organising knowledge within a given but dynamic context.

Sork and Newman (2004) stated that:

Program development takes places within a context, and so the educator must take notice of, adjust to, react to, or make use of that context. The contexts are many and most are interrelated. They are political, economic, social, organisational, aesthetic, moral, spiritual and historical. In some cases, the context severely limits the choices available to the educator, while in other cases the context presents a rich variety of possibilities. It is important to understand that the context is dynamic, can be acted upon by the educator, and is a key factor in the development of programs. (p.101)

This chapter shows the ALGC eLearning program is not a neutral space – indeed, no curriculum is ever disinterested. While studying in the ALGC program and during my time as a tutor I understood that the curriculum was an integral part of the program, as it should be. However, I also felt that as students we were given one side of an argument in each of the units. That is, I felt that the lecturers had a certain world view and that we were expected to express the same viewpoint when completing assignments. Although the unit descriptions are not hidden, the content and the social perspective we as students and tutors were encouraged to follow was not immediately evident. It became clearer as you moved through each unit by undertaking the required readings and by completing the assignments. I use understandings of organisational power and discipline proposed by Michel Foucault (1975) to further examine this issue.

The chapter is divided into seven sections. The curriculum is discussed in Section 7.1 while the use of English as the language for eLearning is covered in Section 7.2. Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 examine some of the procedures such as marking, reflection and self-regulation which regulated power. Section 7.6 looks at how silence is used and Section 7.7 investigates the panopticon effect (Michel Foucault, 1975) within the ALGC.

7.1 Power exerted via the ALGC curriculum

As Brookfield (2001) wrote 'anyone who claims that adult education is about empowering adult learners (in my experience a majority of those who identify themselves as adult educators) can benefit from engaging with Foucault' (p. 3). Michel Foucault (1975) helped highlight issues of power and discipline that are present in education. Brookfield (2001) continued on to state:

Without an appreciation of Foucault's ideas, we adult educators often end up with an incomplete and naive understanding of how power manifests itself in adult educational processes. His work is crucial in helping us learn to recognize the presence of power in our daily practices, particularly the false face of apparently beneficent power exercised to help adult learners realize their full potential. (p. 3)

The idea that eLearning exerts power and discipline (as do other forms of learning) arose during the data analysis for this research. It is not something that I had previously considered. While I do not suggest that the issues of power and discipline which have been highlighted in this chapter are deliberate acts of oppression on anyone's part, I think it is important, as Brookfield (2001) urged us in the quotes above, to recognise how power is present in our daily practices. This chapter identifies practices of power and discipline such as the curriculum and the norms which developed during the ALGC program which mediated participants' identities. Foucault not only directed his efforts towards examination of knowledge and power regimes but also 'toward understanding how one forms their own self-identity while nonetheless being affected by such systems and regimes' (p. 16). Jardine (2005) stated:

Foucault focuses on those forms of knowledge and techniques of power that serve to discipline and train human beings and, in doing so, turns them into the sorts of objects which society needs. (p. 24)

Martin (1976) employed the terminology 'curriculum proper' and 'hidden curriculum', stating that the 'contrast is between what it openly intended that students learn' and what they actually learn 'although not openly intended' (p. 136). Martin (1976) further explained that 'a hidden curriculum consists of some of the outcomes or by-products of schools or non-school settings' (p. 137) and that 'hidden curriculum is always *of* (original emphasis) some setting' so that we should not assume that two settings will have the same hidden curriculum (p. 138). The curriculum of an eLearning education program such as the ALGC can be examined from these viewpoints to determine how power and discipline operate, in the 'curriculum proper' and in a 'hidden curriculum'. Through 'the proper curriculum', power and discipline also play a role within the ALGC program and issues of power and discipline enable specific learning and in turn, identities (Martin, 1976).

While eLearning was originally proclaimed as a new and possibly more student centred way of teaching (e.g. Harasim, 2000), my data shows that the hierarchical nature of teaching and the power that lecturers and tutors command, remained an issue in the AGLC program. For example, the ALGC program requires students to post their own opinions and to provide feedback to other students as part of their course requirements. Online posts cover writings such as summaries of and opinions on the required readings, discussion on topics raised, feedback on drafts of assignments as well as work on group assignments. The participants' responses also showed that the structure, course content and practices and interactions between lecturers and students, and between students and students, within the ALGC program, produced and were produced by power relations between the lecturers and learners as well as amongst the learners themselves.

For some modules, participants were also required to peer review the posts of other students in order to provide feedback and direction as well as to show their own understanding. Through these methods of communication and assessment various issues of power and discipline surfaced which affected how the students acted and how they viewed themselves as they moved through the program.

The data shows ways that disciplinary power emerges through the smallest and sometimes most mundane practices. Michel Foucault (1980) referred to this as power in its 'capillary form' (p. 39) and urged us to examine how this form of power reaches into our everyday lives. Foucault does not necessarily regard this as a negative aspect of power. Rather he views it as something that as adult educators we need to be aware of. The data also showed that the capillaries of power were not restricted to lecturers and tutors but flowed between the students as well.

Burns (2018) highlighted the importance of examining power stating:

Power, or rather the exercise of power through specialized disciplinary knowledges produced by modern institutions, remains poorly understood and dangerously obscure. ... Power thus functions at the level of the body, both the individual and the social, and while always an important phenomenon of study, power, conceptualized as the embodiment of practices historically produced through disciplinary techniques, assumes even greater significance in the context of the existential crises created and manipulated through neoliberal globalization, resurgent authoritarianism, and militarism. (p. 1)

When I started my research, I had not given much, if any, thought to the curriculum. I was interested from a student's point of view to know the units I would be studying. But despite the information provided by Monash university on its website, I really did not understand the issues which would be covered. At the start of my studies I did not realise exactly what the curriculum would involve and

how exactly the choice of topics and readings would operate as power and disciplinary technologies, and the data show this was typical of my participants.

The data in this chapter shows ways the curriculum for the ALGC program acted to impact a certain world viewpoint and values to the participants through the ALGC curriculum proper (Martin, 1976) and the choice of learning materials such as the prescribed readings. The course aims to instil in the participants an understanding of education from a global perspective. As Hope (2015b) wrote that 'if curriculum and pedagogy are interpreted as discourse' then this causes issues and questions to arise around 'what counts as "normalised" knowledge and practice, who gets to define this and how' (p. 543).

These viewpoints and values are apparent by closely reading the 'Information for Perspective Students' published online by the University of British Columbia state which stated that on completion participants would be able to:

- Critically analyze dominant and alternative theories and discourses of "globalization."
- Identify the various ways context shapes adult learning and relevant public policy.
- Discuss why and ways learners resist or embrace "education."
- Analyze relationships nested in successful attempts to foster change through learning.
- Plan learning interventions that help adults increase their influence over the direction and pace of local and global change. (2016, p. 1)

To achieve these goals each university, all of which had similar promotional statements, chose readings which related to debates around education and work in their own national or local context (See Appendix # 6).

Each module with its required readings had definite objectives designed to ensure the aims of the program were achieved and notably to instil a sense of social justice in the participants. The values of the program filtered down from the lecturers to the curriculum and students and affected the interaction between all three elements. Through the subjects and readings chosen (see Appendix # 6) there was a world view being communicated to the students which had a strong social justice perspective. Richard summarised how he understood the values of the program:

I have gained an understanding of the changing relationship between education, work and social cohesion under conditions of globalisation and the diminishing role of the nation-state. I have learnt to critically analyse education and labour policy discourses and interpret the contested interests that shape them, particularly with respect to 'the knowledge society' and implications for skills development, national qualifications frameworks, workplace learning,

employability, socio-economic inequalities and the purpose of education. (Richard, written documents)

In the ALGC program, discourses of social justice, globalisation and education were promoted according to the developers' viewpoints. The impact of globalisation was critically analysed at economic, cultural, social and environmental levels. This was not lost on the participants who understood, or came to understand through their studies, that they were being shown a specific world view that may have differed from their own previous ones. The choice of modules, their subject matter, the required readings and the assignments were designed with what Susan described as a 'social justice' perspective. Richard stated that he had learnt about the 'neoliberal discourse influences' on adult education policy. The course is designed to make learners view adult education through these perspectives. As Susan commented:

I think the lecturers at that university had such a strong cultural dimension to the framing of the program and it was so oriented to their context and it's such a different world to mine and that I thought all the time I'm trying to get the cultural context, the political frame, I'm trying to understand that at the same time I'm trying to understand the Holst article and the readings and it was just, I had to really spend a lot of time readings those articles because I thought there's not enough in my own world that I can draw on to know and understand the concept.
(Susan)

While not actually 'telling' students what approaches they should adopt from the readings, responses from lecturers and tutors online and as part of assessment feedback led the participants in certain directions. There was an implicit and sometimes even explicit critique of neoliberal and market driven models of globalisation dispersed through the chosen readings, the curriculum and lecturer responses to online posts.

As a student, you were encouraged to 'think globally, act locally' in all units. The readings looked at big picture globalisation issues and then to issues within the host countries of the universities. The impact and implications of globalisation are not necessarily viewed as positive forces and the readings and subsequent comments and feedback from lecturers on the discussion board encouraged students to think deeply in this direction and how education can be used as a tool for social justice.

Both Richard and Mary acknowledged in their comments above that there was a social justice element to the ALGC program. In particular, the data from the self-assessment plan, revised at the end of the program shows that this exercise in reflection became a form of identity work for the students as they progressed through learning what was required of them to participate fully as a

'competent' student. Mary explained how she learnt about social justice issues within her ALGC studies:

My paper in Global/Local Learning on the development of a Canadian-based social movement (the Raging Grannies) allowed me to explore the historical context of this social justice movement and to learn more about how their daily, local actions continue to reflect global developments. (Mary, written documents)

As part of her self-assessment plan, revised at the end of the program, Susan highlighted the changes she wanted to make in her life based on her studies within the program:

- Become a volunteer in a civil society organisation in my local community, i.e. apply and continue my learning
- Plan my next career move and clarify what meaningful work is for me now (Susan, written documents)

These examples reflect that the 'curriculum is a set of discourses and associated practices that harness and usually act upon the individual' (Foucault, 1980, p. 140).

The consequences were evident in participants' comments. For example, Mary when she writes of the social justice aspects of the program and their effect on her:

In the online and classroom discussions and in my research, I have developed a deeper understanding of current developments in creating a more socially just world. I continue to be even more conscious of how local community actions, in Canada and abroad, can affect social justice issues at a global level. This has enabled me to be a stronger member of my community. (Mary, Written Documents)

The participants' responses show that they were reacting to the curriculum and how certain identities were enabled and performed. Richard believed that two of the most important things he learnt from the program were 'the great extent to which neoliberal discourse influences adult education policy and workplace learning' and 'a strong sense of social justice'. Susan also acknowledged that she now viewed policy within her current job through a different perspective. She said:

I think the neo-liberal framing of policy in my own country was a big learning for me. So that I got a different conceptual frame for critiquing policy, expectations, requirements of me at work. I have a different conceptual frame for that now so I ask a different set of value questions of myself and of policy. (Susan)

For the most part, these consequences of this not-so-hidden curriculum were viewed as positive by the participants who reported that studying online gave them skills and confidence in areas they had not foreseen. For example, the units which dealt with examining their own practice tended to encourage the participants to not only look at their own practice, but to incorporate changes immediately into their practice. Mary and Claire both acknowledged this aspect of their online experience:

My fellow learners, whether online or in person, pushed me to reflect on my own assumptions, values and understandings and encouraged me to extend my own thinking and to validate my understandings in a substantive way. (Mary, Written documents)

In my conclusion to FLIP (Fostering Learning in Practice) assignment one I wrote: 'Challenging the assumptions that we hold, the words we use and the positions we place ourselves in, often brings about othering. If we seek to bring forward our assumptions to the surface and also are conscious of these factors we have towards devaluing others, then we can work towards being better people, trainers and members of society'. Still today I reflect on this and I ask myself, if I am operating under the premise of is this a 'new thing or habit'. And as Brookfield (1995) posed, 'who wants to clarify and question assumptions she or he has lived by for a substantial period of time, only to find that they don't make sense' (p.5). That has been the key in my journey through this program. I am not the same person I was when I started this program 4 years ago. (Claire, Written documents)

Martin (1976) contended that the hidden curriculum is not something 'one just finds' but instead 'one must go hunting for it' (p.139). For example, participants also spoke of what they learnt 'outside' of the course aims and objectives. Several extracts from Alice's responses indicate what she felt she learnt 'outside' of the curriculum:

It (studying) kind of reaffirmed I guess that I was on the right track with what I was doing and it was what I wanted to be doing but I didn't learn something like what you're doing is wrong and you should do it this way. I learned that what I was doing in my practice even though it wasn't a book read understanding were very much a part of adult learning theories, so that was kind of cool.

So I think that was one of the biggest learnings for me in the ALGC was that you can have a positive learning experience with small groups and small groups are a really good way of sharing and building ideas and relationships with other people.

You learn how to jump through hoops of fire to get a piece of paper that shows that you learnt how to jump through hoops of fire (laughs). (Alice)

Alice was highlighting that she moved into places in the ALGC eLearning program where she was felt she also learnt. Alice also indicated that she learnt how to work in small groups, and to work hard to achieve the 'piece of paper'. These are learnings outside of the curriculum's stated purposes and show hidden effects of the curriculum. Michelle also felt that what she was learning was 'outside' of the stated course objectives and the curriculum:

On the academic side I did learn a lot and I think it is something that I learned and it is very valuable so I don't want to diminish the academic learnings that I had, but at the same time I really that it's more of a personal experience and that I was able to work a lot on self-discipline and personal aptitudes so that, you know, I learnt, I think it sounds cliché but I learnt a lot about myself and I proved to myself that I was able to have discipline and motivation and time management. Yeah, so I think I learned more about that than I think theories and stuff. (Michelle)

A certain part of Michelle's identity was enabled through what she described as her 'personal experience'. Michelle felt that she had gained an understanding of herself, her motivations and what she is capable of through her eLearning experience. Mark felt that the ALGC program increased his ability to communicate with people from different cultures:

And it has taught me how to interact with other people. Immediately after this course, I had the chance to also take part in a course that also involved people from 30 different countries in the world. We took part in a program in Israel. You know, people were coming from Samoa, people were coming from Ecuador, people were coming from Peru, Brazil, Kenya, and all parts. And I found it very easy you know to integrate and interact with these people with the experience I had in this course. (Mark)

This data shows how the curriculum, both implicit and explicit, reflect, but also construct, power relations. Jardine (2005) wrote that Foucault:

...focuses on those forms of knowledge and techniques of power that serve to discipline and train human beings, and in doing so, turns them into the sorts of objects which society needs. (p. 24)

The participants' words show that they were indeed being turned into 'objects which society needs'. Michel Foucault (1980) further emphasised that the 'the exercise of power perpetually creates

knowledge, and, conversely, knowledge induces effects of power' (p. 52). The knowledge created by the students working their way through the curriculum produces new knowledge and new power relationships. Leask (2012) noted that in Foucault's work, power is also given to the individual; that individuals are themselves a force of power, 'involved in an ongoing network of strategies and relations that help constitute, define and organise themselves' (p. 64). Through the use of the curriculum the lecturers were seeking to turn the ALGC students into the type of people they believed society needed. Participants were in turn using their own power and knowledge gained from their experiences to focus on their own learning, on developing their identities through their learning.

In discussing this aspect of the program, I am not making a judgement on the design of the course. I agree with Popkewitz (1997) when he stated the idea of regulation through curriculum 'is not meant to ascribe good/bad or moral/evil distinctions' but rather to 'recognise the sociological premise that all social situations have historically embedded restraints and constraints' (p. 144). Further, I agree with Diorio (1977) when he wrote:

The kinds of knowledge included in a curriculum and the ways in which they are organised both involve the exercise of social control over individuals. There is an ethical dimension to determining the validity or justification of any application of such power (p. 103).

The aspects of the curriculum discussed here highlight how it exerts power and discipline (Michel Foucault, 1975) that work to shape a learner's identity.

7.2 The English language as a source of power

In spite of their commitment to social justice, the original developers of the program were aware of potential problems relating to the use of English as the language of instruction. The four universities involved in the ALGC program all use English as the language of instruction for online posts and assignments. Some participants felt this disadvantaged some of their cohort because although everyone could speak English, it was not everyone's first language. As Grosjean and Sork (2007) explained:

The decision to conduct the program using English forced us to recognise that the ability to assign meanings to concepts and discussions would require translation in many cases, and this created its own constraints and power structures. (p. 16)

These constraints and power structures persist within the ALGC program. The first instance where this becomes apparent is with the required readings. These readings are, as would be expected, complex academic texts, incorporating peer reviewed journals and academic text books as well as

international reports on education with complex subject matter challenging even for an English background student. Susan expressed her view:

There were a lot of students in the beginning, particularly from (name of university) that I saw really struggling with the program because it was being taught in English and because the language of instruction was English. And quite a few of them dropped out. And I looked at the papers we were given to read, particularly those in Adult Learning Perspectives and Context, but it was dense, they were long, they were conceptually quite challenging pieces. And I kept reading it thinking English is my first language, I'm a competent reader and I'm a competent writer and I'm struggling with this. And it's taking me a long time. How on earth are those people for whom English is not their first language, how are they doing this? How are they managing this? It must be desperate to be getting through that. So, when some of them dropped out I wasn't in the least bit surprised because I thought I'm holding on by my fingernails in some of these pieces, managing my world and doing everything. And I don't know how they're coping. (Susan)

Additionally students had to produce online posts and their assignments in English. M. Dahlgren et al. (2006) acknowledged this issue and described two ways in which language skills did in fact become a power issue within the ALGC. The first illustration they indicated was between lecturers and participants where 'production of immaculate texts' is regarded as competence as a student (M. Dahlgren et al., 2006, p. 84). This was a theme that arose during my research. There were problems with the standard of written English from the non-native speakers and the need to present their work at an academic level of writing. Michelle described how she interpreted one particular team member's problems with English:

But for that one lady that I think was from Sweden, English was clearly not her first language, and so I remember she didn't contribute as much just because she had more difficulties writing, just writing in English. (Michelle)

The second instance occurred amongst students themselves where there was an 'obvious advantage' for students who were more fluent in English; that they were 'more influential in the communicative process and the work with the assignments' (M. Dahlgren et al., 2006, p. 84). Within group assignments and team work, some group members realised that in order to achieve a 'good grade', the final editing and organising of their group assignments would need to be conducted by a student who was fluent in English. Thomas explained this type of situation from his point of view:

There was one lady who I did one or two assignments with, and then we did one with two who were quite weak students, and then her and me and a couple of weaker ones. Again,

what I tried to do, she'd got in our discussions, in our group, the final editing power of the assignment into her hands. And I was just subtly trying to do that, and fortunately she was happy to do that and the others were happy for that to happen. But that's what I was trying to do in one group, because I knew she was very good. So we got a very good grade. But I was delicate, delicate trying to do that without people feeling offended in seeing that. I remember the marker said, "Well navigated" (laughs) in that group. He said, "That was a great assignment and well navigated". I felt because he'd followed our postings in our discussion and we had to navigate a couple of students who what they were writing was not that great, but we managed to do it and pull together something good. (Thomas)

Richard saw this process more as an opportunity for students to assist each other within their learning:

Some participants had weak English writing skills, but stronger participants assisted them, above all in group writing projects, and this led to considerable improvement in non-natives' use of the language. (Richard, written document)

Mary stated that she had empathy for people whose English was not as good but also admitted to being a person who 'jumped' in, stating that being fluent in the language allowed her to understand the readings and what was required more quickly:

I really felt the extra burden for people that were working in another language, not necessarily even their second language. But I didn't have any problems, although later on I think that, when we touched on some of the challenges of working online, I felt that because English was my first language I might have been inadvertently leaping into things a little too quickly. And being positioned to just sort of start that discussion right away. (Mary)

The use and power of English structured relations amongst the group members themselves. Perhaps because their English was better, or perhaps because they simply took on the 'leader' role within the teams, participants felt an imbalance in the relationships amongst team members. Those students who had English as their first language had an advantage over the other students, as Michel Foucault (1980) wrote:

Power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. (p. 39)

This was considered with some anxiety by the participants on both sides of the language spectrum. Firstly, James who as a participant who did not have English as his first language, felt that it was there was some 'domination' from those who did:

When we had to do group assignments, I felt some of our peers, you know, maybe in a bid to make sure this thing was done and done on time, I always felt some members were taking charge and controlling the affairs. Positively though. It never occurred or happened to me that I could take that initiative. So that imbalance for me at a point was there. You know people kind of like a bit domineering in certain areas. But it wasn't too averse or too negative. (James)

There was also the issue of how the level of English of each participant had affected the way they posted on the discussion boards:

English is an additional language. French is my 1st language but grow up with English also. Sometimes in the forums it took longer for me to write because I wanted to sound smart. (Michelle)

Not really, because both my parents are from non-English speaking backgrounds, so I'm kind of used to 'simplifying' my points. I'm OK with that. (Claire)

The language we speak is part of our identity. For learners within the ALGC program who did not have English as their first language having to use written English text for all communication meant power 'touched their bodies' by changing their very discourse, as well as group relations (Michel Foucault, 1980, p. 39)

7.3 Power through 'norms' and 'voice'

The discussion above about the choice of English for instruction within the ALGC suggests that students within the ALGC had to learn the 'norms' of their online program in order to successfully complete the program. Foucault (1980) argued that there are various techniques which serve as disciplinary methods and which affect identities by shaping behaviour. These techniques are the 'beliefs, expectations, values and practices which not only dictate what we should say, do feel, value and thing, but reward and punish us when we fail to comply with the standards built into them' (Jardine, 2005, p. 25). These techniques or norms develop over time within a community such as the ALGC program. The norms within the ALGC program need to be examined to make them transparent and reflect on them to highlight to educators how they can work more reflexively to affect

learning and identity. There are some techniques, or practices, which are used by educators in both online and offline learning situations which we believe enable learning but might well be just habit.

An example of these norms is that within the ALGC, lecturers often determined the required number of posts per reading or per activity. For example, each student may be required to respond to three or four other students' posts as well as posting their own thoughts and analysis of a particular reading. This requirement pressured participants to 'find' something to respond to. In some cases, this meant finding something to post which was 'acceptable'. In some instances, the participants stated they wrote what they felt would help them pass. Claire acknowledged this point:

Yeah, like I said – especially, when there was mandatory postings, I said what I thought needed to be said to get the marks. You know, you need to post stuff, OK I need two posts, OK, let's think of two things to talk about kind of deal. (Claire)

Participants felt the words of others helped them articulate their own thoughts. The posts to the discussion board were used by participants to help with their own work. Mark and Claire referred to this aspect of eLearning:

Then also the Discussion Boards, you know, where you had to read a lot of opinions on issues that was posted with regards to some topics. I think a lot of information from there also helped with my other assignments. (Mark)

Being able to print off what everyone has said about their experiences and being able to refer to them at a later time. That was incredible. To have access to that. If you go to a classroom what is said at that point, it is said and forgotten. Unless you're like me and you take a million notes. However, to have that record that you can reflect on six weeks down the track, was invaluable. So that's a really good thing about online. (Claire)

These rules and restrictions on numbers of posts, forced all the students to communicate in addition to making them more conscious of what they were saying online. They also served as 'normalising' in that both lecturers and students compared their written words to others' and made adjustments to their online behaviour. As Michel Foucault (1975) wrote:

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them (p. 187).

In effect, compulsory postings also provided a method of ‘examination’ by lecturers (Foucault, 1975, p.187) where a lecturer or tutor’s response to the online posts – the number of them, the length, whether they start and/or maintain a conversation formed a process of examination designed to establish online norms and hence normalise each student. As mentioned previously, I do not think this exercise of power was a deliberate or malevolent choice on the part of either the developers of the program or the subsequent lecturers and tutors. I believe the exercise of power here was inevitable as a consequence of the procedures designed to encourage students to engage with the material and each other.

7.4 Trying to find ‘normal’ within the marking system

The data analysis showed that it was sometimes difficult for the participants to work out what was considered ‘normal’ in the ALGC program. Not only did they have to negotiate the online world, they had to move between four different universities with their own norms and ways of doing things. Julie told of the trauma she experienced when she was asked to re-submit an assignment. She was not given any guidelines as to what was needed to improve it and pass, just that she had to resubmit:

And it was when I got my assignment back and I had to resubmit and I nearly fell off my chair. And I thought I was a failure at that point and I didn’t want anybody to know. (Julie)

Similarly, Susan gave an extended narrative of her distress at not being able to have an assignment re-assessed:

And what I did was I asked if I could have a review. And what that triggered was really interesting in that to the lecturer and the tutor, I had clearly caused offence. Even in asking if it could be reviewed. And I wrote to (different Lecturer name) and said Dear God, I thought the assignment was worth more, I’ve asked for a review, I’m clearly not going to get a review based on the responses I’ve had, is this not something that is acceptable? I mean in (home country name), if you ask for a review people would say Ooh OK, we have those review mechanisms, we’ll review it, it might not change your mark, but we’ll review it. But clearly this is not, it is a cultural thing, is it a program thing? It feels as though it’s a cultural thing, it feels as though I’ve caused offence. And (Lecturer’s name) response was one of the most memorable that I think I’ve ever had as a learner. She framed her response around cultural difference and framed it around for a lot of the students on the program, they would experience this a lot, where they would think that what they had written deserved a lot more than it got, but because English was not their first language they were always at a disadvantage because they were being graded mostly by people who were either strong in English or English was their first language. And she encouraged me to see this as a learning opportunity about cultural difference and about how it is to operate in a global world

where there are language differences and the language of instruction, the language of commerce is English. (Susan)

These differences between the lecturers from different universities may have been cultural in nature but also present as issues of power. As an example: asking a lecturer to re-assess a mark is not unusual within Australian universities. Most institutions have procedures in place to allow for this. While teaching on the ALGC program, one of my students felt I had marked his final assignment unfairly and he was given the opportunity to have his assignments re-assessed. As a teacher, it may be upsetting and a little confronting to have your work questioned in this way, but it is something that is routine and acceptable in some contexts. However, there are differences between how the different universities treated this issue of re-submission.

In most contexts, there is no reason not to re-assess a student paper. To frame it as a learning experience in different cultures distracts from the power that lecturers have to make decisions about re-assessing marks. The power to re-assess an assignment lies with the lecturer, rather than any formal set of procedures. It should be a simple act to either re-read an assignment or to provide additional information to help a student understand his/her result. Instead it seems to have been seen as a questioning of the lecturer's power and framed as a learning experience for the student. This implies that the lesson to learn is not to question rather than finding ways to improve their work. As Bayne (2005) ascertained, for teachers the online space can become 'a place in which old hierarchies can be re-asserted and traditional, "teacherly", authoritarian identities re-cast' (p. 39). Deciding not to respond immediately to an email or online post request or to not reassess an assignment are decisions that show ways that power lies in the lecturers' hands. This data, except for my own narratives, is all provided by former students, not teachers involved in the ALGC. As a tutor in the program I can personally see the other side of the discussion, for example the insistence from students that they deserve a higher mark and the amount of time it takes to remark. However, it is beyond the scope of this work to give both sides of this argument.

The participants noted that there was a difference amongst the four universities in regard to standards for assessment marking. Some attributed this to differing personality styles. Others saw it as a cultural difference in regard to student expectations of lecturers and their own individual previous experience with ways of learning. Students felt that some universities marked 'harder' than others and that it was 'easier' to achieve a good grade from certain universities. Alice and Thomas described this realisation:

Again I'm pretty sure a couple of my papers from (name of university) from any of the courses that were there were marked lower. And you know, I didn't fuss about it or anything. But it was just something that I noticed that it seemed that we were marked tougher, or for whatever

reason, I think some of the, I don't know how many of the courses were actually from (name of country), but I kind of thought wow! I'm really getting marked in a different way from here than I am, noticeably, from (name of university) or (name of university). (Alice)

I was surprised how easy it was to get good marks with some of the other countries, and then with (name of country) it was hard to get good marks. I felt like sometimes I handed assignments in that I thought were pretty rubbish and got good marks. And then other times with (name of country) I worked pretty hard and didn't get as good a mark. So I figured there might be different expectations in different countries. I can't really remember particular issues related to it, but I do remember there was a difference between lecturers in terms of interaction and involvement, and I don't know whether it was culture or personality along the way. (Thomas)

These differences made it sometimes difficult for students to understand what standard was required of them in their assignment writing. One consequence of the power imbalance meant that participants in the ALGC program were often stressed and spent unnecessary time trying to understand what was 'normal' for each unit and for each university. Participants felt they were not given clear direction on a consistent basis from all universities.

The following sections explore some other issues of power and discipline (Michel Foucault (1975). Specifically, they look at how participants were regulated through the requirements to reflect within the program, how time regulated the participants and how participants self-regulated.

7.5 Self-regulation within the ALGC

Following Foucault, the process of learning online within the ALGC can also be understood as a process of self-regulation. Within the ALGC, some participants felt and commented on the way power was exerted through processes of self-regulation. Simon (2005), explaining Foucault's panopticon metaphor, wrote that the power lies in 'the sign of presence of the supervisor and not his actual material presence that matters' (p. 6). Those who feel they are being observed start to behave as if they actually are being observed. They understand the 'rules' and want to 'behave'. This leads to self-regulation, or self-policing, in order to avoid punishment. The author believes that 'the more one knows about how one is supposed to behave the more one is able to conform, but by the same token one is also more able to feign conformity' (Simon, 2005, p. 8). That is, we may believe we are being watched and monitored, and we have the ability to both conform and pretend to conform.

7.5.1 Reflection as self-regulation

Several of the ALGC modules involve time spent on personal reflection. For example, 'Locating Oneself in Global Learning' Parts 1 and 2 involve students reflecting on their individual goals and

plans at the start of the course and then further reflection on achievements at the end of the course. In addition, 'Fostering Learning in the Workplace' requires students to reflect on their personal practice in the workplace. Data for this project includes documents produced as part of these required reflection activities.

Students were encouraged to regard their reflection as an ongoing process through the program and were encouraged to review their goals and plans on a regular basis with their learning partner to update and change them as required. In reality, for many participants, this rarely happened. Participants in my research reported returning to their plans only when required to by an assessment task. However, the reflection in the unit 'Fostering Learning in the Workplace' is built into the unit through readings each week and the assessment events. Alice described how she regarded the reflection process:

So I think the reflective aspect, just being able to put names on things that I hadn't never known that those existed and having, not that I had lots of time but you had to make the time to reflect, and I would never have made the time to reflect if I hadn't been in a program that forced me to do that reflection. That was really an amazing process to go through and it certainly informs, it's informed every day since I've done that program. Not that I didn't have that reflection before but it set aside that time to do that reflection and to actually not only reflect but then to put the web together. The web of theories, the web of practice, my own understanding of life and the world and learning, to put that into kind of a matrix. So it was pretty cool for that. (Alice)

The process of having to reflect on a regular basis was not something that concerned Alice. It enabled her to 'put together' what she was learning, to apply it to her working life. However, this notion of reflection as part of learning is 'grounded in a humanist discourse of a "true" or "central" self which can be revealed, understood, recorded, improved or liberated through the process of writing about thoughts and experiences' (Ross, 2011, p. 115). Ross (2011) felt that reflective practices 'always produce certain subject positions and power relations, which are too often ignored or overlooked' (p. 114) and that reflective practices used in eLearning are 'imported wholly from their offline counterparts without acknowledgement of the difference being online makes' and that 'they serve to normalise surveillance of students' emotional and developmental expression' (Ross, 2011, p. 113). Hope (2010) also stated that 'the processes of reflection, clarification, identification and articulation of personal elements can be seen as engendering self-surveillance' (p. 322). Furthermore, Hargreaves (2004) stated that the 'critical incident' method, as used in some ALGC self-reflection assessment activities (for example in FLIP), is 'not an absolutely accurate account of the person's thoughts, feelings and actions' but 'an exemplar illustrating a shared understanding of acceptable professional behaviour, or the dilemmas faced in practice' (p. 201).

The reflection in the ALGC program was part of both a normalisation process and a self-surveillance tool. Students were encouraged to compare their own behaviour and practice with 'accepted' behaviours and practice. Ross (2011) further categorised reflection into informal, extra-curricular, low stakes and high stakes. For the ALGC program, reflection is assessable and takes the form of assignments which have to be completed to pass the modules. The high stakes reflection classification illustrates the ALGC reflection process. This type of reflection is 'summatively assessed' or 'serves as a gatekeeping function in terms of entry, progression or continued membership of profession or professional body' (Ross, 2011, p. 116).

The participants in my research project not only reflected on their own practice but on the practice of their lecturers and tutors. Perhaps because they were all involved in adult education there was tendency to reflect and evaluate how lecturers and tutors within the ALGC program were functioning. Brookfield (1995) referred to this process as 'prescriptive assumptions' wherein we make assumptions about what we 'think ought to be happening in a particular situation (p. 3). These assumptions arise when we start to examine 'how we think teachers should behave, what good educational process should look like, and what obligations students and teachers owe to each other' (Brookfield, 1995, p. 3).

The requirement for reflection worked to shape the identities of the participants. Alice's example shows how having to reflect helped her to link her learning to her work, in her case to things she was already doing but perhaps was not aware of how her practices fit into other education methods. The following section continues to examine the concept of regulation, looking at how time enforces a type of regulation on the participants.

7.5.2 Regulation through time

Another form of self-discipline was through the amount of time participants spent online. One of the advantages constantly attributed to eLearning is flexibility; the ability to learn 'anywhere, anytime'. Rather than having flexibility, participants found they had to be extremely disciplined in their approach to learning. The participants felt this 'flexibility' as an oppressive constraint rather than a positive feature of their studies. Louise described using all her spare time to study, of studying all the time she could get. She also wondered about the 'inflexibility' of online programs:

I also have heard when the program has been advertised that you can do this whenever you want to, wherever you are and such. But I wonder if that works for most students? That is what I think but maybe I am a bit old-fashioned. You can't sit down at a café and just write. You have to think and reflect. (Louise)

While access to laptops meant the participants could study 'anywhere', this turned into an added pressure. Participants felt the need to take the laptops with them and check their online world on a regular basis. In Chapter 4, Section 4.2 Lisa and Michelle described how the 24/7 nature of eLearning affected their lives. Additionally, because the program involved different time zones participants felt that they had to check the program's website on a more regular basis in order to keep up with what was happening online. This was especially the case if there was group work to be completed. Michelle discussed the way in which studying online was always present in her life:

And I think one of the things that I noticed about online learning is I felt I spent much more time doing school stuff than maybe if I was in a classroom environment. Because I always felt that when you know you take an in class class (laughs), you go for let's say three hour class then maybe you have a one hour tutorial per week and then you have your work that you have to do at home but it's very much structured whereas the online, it's 24/7 (Michelle)

Richard described how he had to find a place for learning in his life:

As a married father of three working full time, there were major adjustments needed, e.g. many weekends were spent online or writing papers for the ALGC. Having said that, I frequently used time at work to complete ALGC tasks – I did not care about the arguably unethical implications of doing this; the ALGC tasks were just so engaging and so much more meaningful than some of my work tasks! (Richard)

When asked what they 'gave up' in order to fit in study the overriding opinion of many of the participants was that their social lives suffered as a result of their eLearning in the ALGC. While this may be true for any study undertaken as adults, the fact that their study was ever present because of its online 'anytime, anywhere', as well as its globalised nature, seemed to increase the invasive nature of the program. (See also Claire, Julie and Lisa's comments underscored this point as they detailed the reality of online study for them in Chapter 4, Section 4.3).

By choosing to study online, some participants felt they became smaller versions of themselves. Parts of their identity were disabled as something had to be given up in order to fit study in. The nature of ALGC program, where collaboration is expected, monitored and assessed, may in some ways create the opposite effect of the program intention because it takes the power of choice away from participants regarding where, when and how often they study. The need to post to a discussion board and review the posts of others as well as group work, meant these online students needed to be constantly monitor their computers. They did not experience the flexibility that is supposed to be associated with online learning.

My research interviews included a question in regard to the participants' motivations for using online study as opposed to campus learning. This question was included in the questionnaire used for the interviews, a copy of which makes up Appendix #2. The reasons for the choice were different for each participant so it would be hard to make a definitive statement. There was not enough data collected regarding motivation and this is an area for further research.

7.5.3 Self-regulation and self-assessment

In previous chapters the online posts were discussed through the lens of self-presentation (see Section 5.2) and as a way of finding voice (see Section 6.1). In this section I look at how the online posts were a form of self-regulation and self-assessment; that is, the way students assessed their own words before they posted them in the discussion forums were the students disciplining and regulating themselves.

The way students assessed their own words before they posted them in the discussion forums was evidence of another form of self-discipline. Susan described the way in which she waited before posting, then would compose her posts in another form before posting to the ALGC Discussion Boards.

I didn't post anything for a few days and I read what other people posted because I wasn't sure what the rules were. At the beginning I would actually type on my computer in a word document what I was going to post to the board and then I would write it in the board. So I had my prepared response before I did it as opposed to the straight off the top of the head.
(Susan)

Joan also detailed composing and editing her own words before posting:

At the beginning I remember very carefully crafting my response because I wasn't there in person to deliver it so I was very careful to write in a way that would represent my intent. And then as the programme went on I became a little bit more and more relaxed. But I would say that I still, like I wasn't ever able to truly let go and be one of those people that just sort of off the cuff writes a response and just kind of has the freedom of writing. I still was a little bit restrained. And I felt like I needed to kind of edit it. I always would edit my response in Word and then post it. (Joan)

The 'punishment' being avoided was saying the wrong thing in front of their cohort and being viewed as 'different' or as struggling. They posted the words they felt best suited what was already there or which would be best accepted by the rest of the cohort. Through this process the participants were self-regulating in order to meet the norms of the course. They were also self-regulating for fear of

not meeting the requirements of those who they felt had the power, the lecturers and tutors. They adjusted their voice to suit the conversation already in place online. This meant watching what others were writing and adjusting their own comments to what they felt was the norm. Some students waited for others to post first in order to understand what the expectations were. Participants referred to other students whose words they believed were valued and which selected the posts they would respond to or ignore. Richard and Julie identified that they needed to watch and read before they posted their own thoughts:

I felt a fear of being judged by my peers; I would describe it a bit like the first day of school when you think you won't be as "cool" as the others. (Richard, written document)

I think it forces you to be very succinct with your communication. (Julie)

These examples show that the 'fear of being judged' made the participants careful about what they wrote online. Kitto (2003) claimed that eLearning software 'has the potential to operate as a powerful panoptic technique for observing, classifying and normalizing the individual and the collective' (p. 5). As a student on the ALGC program I was always conscious that 'someone' could be 'watching'. I was very aware that the words I typed would be judged not only by lecturers but also by my fellow students.

It seems that the self-regulation which occurred within the ALGC, meant that the participants were not only regulated by the confines of the eLearning environment, but also by their own behaviour. The following section looks at the peculiar role that the operation of silence plays to regulate.

7.6 Is there anybody out there? The power of silence

As discussed in Section 7.4 above, students tended to self-regulate their engagement and postings on the forums in a range of ways and for a range of reasons. However, the judgment which exerted power and asserted discipline over the students was often carried out in or through silence. As with voice, silence also took various forms within the ALGC program and the data shows that it came to hold power and assert discipline over the students. That is, as an eLearning student much of the time posts are made in the hope that there will be a reply. But the reply does not always come.

Participants spoke of lecturers not replying to their emails, of not receiving enough feedback and direction from teaching staff, of assessment marks not being explained and a general feeling of lecturers not being 'present' online. eLearning is heavily dependent on text-based communication. If there is no text, no written communication on screen, just silence, a vacuum is created. There was

also a difference observed by participants between the different universities. Louise expressed how the students in her cohort reacted to the silence:

Maybe that the (name of country) were more absent as I remember it. And I also remember that other students they were a bit upset about that, that when the courses were from (name of university) that they were wondering where are the lecturers and where are the tutors? (Louise)

For Louise, who described the lecturers as 'absent' and students as a 'bit upset' by that absence, there was a sense that the lecturers and tutors were not engaged and focused, or in the right place. Like Louise, Richard tended to view the silence of teaching staff as a sign that certain lecturers from particular universities were lax. He noted:

It felt like the (university name) tutors understood that isolation very, very well and cared about the participants, and that the participants received a deep learning experience. Similarly, (name of university) tutors were very lax in that they simply gave us the learning tasks and then disappeared for several weeks, resurfacing when the due dates were approaching. (Richard)

Mary, perhaps being more pragmatic, interpreted the silence of lecturers as highlighting that she was on her own with some units while studying via eLearning:

When I took a class through the (country name) institution it was like distance education. Here's your information, and your assignments and the reading and the deadline to submit your paper is on this page (laughs). I heard nothing. (Mary)

It is important to highlight that not all the participating universities had the same arrangements with their lecturers and tutors. It is outside the scope of this research project but in some instances the ALGC program was an 'add on' to the full-time work load of lecturers and tutors. This may be a reason for the lack of online presence from lecturers at some of the universities. When I returned to the ALGC program to work as a tutor, I was working in the online environment part time and working on campus part time. Therefore, I considered both these worlds to be my 'job'. I had the advantage of being able to view the online tutoring as a 'job', not an add on to full time work. There is also the issue of how fixed hours of work for sessional tutors limited the amount of time tutors had to spend online. These two issues are perhaps better suited to a separate discussion as they require further research. I include them here to indicate that there are two sides to this complex issue.

At the same time, I was teaching online with another university where it was part of our employment contract that we could not go longer than 48 hours without logging on to the website and communicating with our students. I found I brought these behaviours across with me to the ALGC.

Also, as an eLearning researcher, I was aware of the importance of communication from a student's viewpoint through my own experience as a student and from the fact that I had already conducted my interviews with the participants in the research. I therefore knew that my own thoughts and experience regarding the lack of online communication were echoed by the research participants.

Some participants believed their lecturers were not really 'absent' or 'silent' but were in fact silently watching them. The panopticon effect (Michel Foucault, 1975) was that the students continued to post on the discussion boards believing that they were being watched in some manner, by someone. Applying the panopticon effect to our modern lives, we take the belief that we are being watched and we discipline ourselves. We imagine that we are being watched even when we are not. As stated by Hope (2005) as 'the rational individual seeking to avoid punishment' acts 'as if they are the object of current surveillance' (p. 361). Foucault argued that nobody 'holds' power but rather that the lines of power become infolded in our very sense of ourselves.

Louise explained her reaction when talking about the online presence and absence of a particular university. Her cohort began to imagine that perhaps they were the subjects of research by the lecturers:

And also when we wrote, when we had a topic to discuss, they were not there compared to, in so many postings, compared to when we had the course as I remember it from (university and tutor name) she was there all the time (Laughs). But where were the (country name) ones? And maybe also, there was a little thought, that maybe they were researching on us. So a little thought now and then maybe they are there, but they don't show. They could read but they didn't show us that they had read what we had posted. So a little thought now and then. (Louise)

Foucault explained the panopticon as not simply a 'technique of control' but a 'machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals...to try out pedagogical experiments' (p. 3). As Simon (2005) explained this panopticon makes:

...one visible but it also hides the operations (the motives, ethics, practices and ethics) of the supposed viewer. To know one is being seen without being able to see carries with it an uncertainty that becomes a source of anxiety, discomfort and terror...Who is watching? Why are they watching? What will they do? (p. 4).

The eLearning platform allowed lecturers to 'watch' the students in different ways without them knowing. The software package enabled lecturers to track students in terms of number of posts, how often and when they logged onto the platform.

Following from Foucault's belief that for a practice to exist it must be of benefit to someone for it to continue to exist (p. 33) we can recognise the absences and silences from lecturers in the ALGC as an exertion of power; perhaps lecturers have the opportunity to hide away from students in the online world, which is missing from the real world?

7.7 Surveillance

Hope (2010) building on the work of Kupchik and Monahan (2006) used the term 'surveillance curriculum' to describe the observational practices and technologies which are used within education environments to 'control' student behaviour (p. 319). These structures include the curriculum, physical observation, attendance registers and examinations (p. 322). Within the ALGC there were also certain structures and procedures applied by lecturers which attempted to restrict and control the movement of the students both physically in the 'real world' and within the eLearning environment. Michel Foucault (1980) believed that a 'dominant group does not set out to create a set of mechanisms of control' but instead that there is a gradual realisation that certain procedures, policies or structures could be advantageous to them (p. 101). This section discusses this form of power and discipline within the ALGC.

Firstly, the design of the program means that students were encouraged to learn from each other in a collaborative manner. However, as mentioned previously, students were encouraged to do this on the learning platform provided rather than in other online spaces or by physically meeting up. Linking up via other types of communication such as Skype or Facebook were initially discouraged as were physical meetings between group members except as part of the program or Alumni functions. As Alice's example showed, most participants found this restriction difficult to understand and even harder to obey.

I never took things personally except for one situation and that was when, I don't know what his last name is, (name given) was the head coordinator at the time, and he was with (name of university) I think, and I was coming to Vancouver so in the BC, the smaller grouping for the UBC students I just put in there "Hey I'm coming to Vancouver, does anybody want to meet?" and, it might have been in the coffee shop I'm not sure, but it was an informal part of Blackboard and he came in and he said "That's not what this is about. This is an online learning environment and you shouldn't be promoting trying to get people together. There's people that will never be able to afford to meet other people and blah blah blah blah". And I thought "Oh my God how odd." (laughs). It was really terse and really, really inappropriate I thought. And I thought if any of us have an opportunity to meet in person why would we not take an opportunity to meet in person? I don't have lots of money either but I

was going to Vancouver and some of the people in the programme were in Vancouver and it was part of the Blackboard that really he really didn't even need to be in. So I didn't appreciate that, but I got over it and I meet up with people and we ignored him anyways, so. (Alice)

By placing restrictions on their movement, it seemed to participants that lecturers were attempting to keep control of the participants and their learning. The rationale was that the ALGC program was designed to be an *online* collaborative learning experience. Meeting in the physical world would change the dynamics that the developers sought to create in the online world. But it seemed to some participants that meeting outside the ALGC website took control away from the lecturers.

The restrictions have relaxed a little over the years but within my own cohort meeting in person was still only encouraged as a community of practice within the confines of the learning platform provided, rather than encouraging students to contact each other elsewhere. However, as with Alice's example, within my cohort, students who were closest in physical terms tended to meet up for coffee or celebratory drinks. For example, students in Melbourne, Australia or Vancouver, Canada would meet and then post photos of the meetings in the Coffee Shop. Participants also began to meet up outside the program on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. While these links were initially study related, they did move into personal Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

During my work as a tutor on the ALGC program a student asked if she could speak to me on Skype to clarify an assignment's requirements. I was happy to do so but checked with my supervisor who in turn checked with the Program Manager. The answer came back that no, this would not be appropriate, and I was not to meet the student via Skype, only via the program platform. This basically meant text communication via the site or emails. There were two reasons given. Firstly, that the student was demanding more attention than others and this seemed to be frowned upon. Secondly, I was informed that to meet in this fashion, would disadvantage other students who did not have the same access due to technological issues. This meant that I could not talk face to face with the student, which is perhaps what the student's learning style required. By this time in my research I had already conducted interviews and heard stories from participants about wanting to speak to 'someone' face to face, to speak rather than read.

This experience was extremely difficult for me as I felt that it was something I should be able to do. I wanted to be inclusive of all students whatever their learning styles. I felt somehow that this was both a use of power and discipline on the part of the Program Manager towards myself as a tutor and towards the students. As mentioned previously, there may be valid reasons for wanting students to stay within the university structures. However, this research did not investigate these issues from the point of view of either the university or the lecturers. The data was collected from the participants

of the program and it is their view I am discussing. There would be no differences allowed for. Was it because surveillance was not possible outside of the program?

The ALGC program incorporates surveillance methods such as deadlines for not only assignments, but additionally for online posts and for quantity of posts. These requirements had the effect that students in the program felt they were being 'watched' and measured. Surveillance can take different forms such as deadlines which must be met, posts which must be responded to and contact which must be made on a regular basis (Boshier & Wilson, 1998, p. 82). Boshier and Wilson (1998) described the effect as 'to give the learners the uncomfortable feeling they are being watched, their every move measured against an unknown standard' (p. 2). Finally, surveillance took forms which were not panoptic.

Exploring issues of power and discipline within an eLearning space such as the ALGC should not be viewed as critical of such programs. As mentioned previously I want to advocate for the ALGC program. The intention here is to examine the data as a reflective process for lecturers, tutors and developers of such programs, to highlight issues of pedagogy which might be open to development. The knowledge produced by the data is not meant to cause discomfort, as using Foucault's work can sometimes do (Leask, 2012, p. 58). Dussel (2010) wrote that 'power is not a zero-sum game' and that 'we all have some kind of power, not necessarily comparable to others' (p. 29). The author also stated that 'power obliges, but also incites, mobilizes' (p. 29). Michel Foucault (1980) himself believed that power was not so much 'repressive' as a productive force which produces 'effects at the level of desire' (p. 59). As educators, we assume that we are being helpful when we impose deadlines or describe 'appropriate' or 'acceptable' behaviour. The aim here is to explore issues of power and discipline, as Brookfield (2001) emphasised, to understand ways in which power and discipline can present in education and help 'avoid a naïve understanding' of how these forces can operate (p. 1).

Chapter 8 – Looking back to move forward

Education and training programs delivered via the internet (eLearning) have increasingly become common in tertiary education. The purpose of this study was to better understand how the learners experienced such a space, how they move around the space, deal with norms and differences, and find their way; and some ways that the experience of such eLearning spaces can shape the learner's identity.

This study has explored how some adult learners studying in the ALGC experienced their eLearning space, focussing on some of the issues that learners faced in regard to the design of the program, the globalised classroom, the eLearning pedagogy, and in particular the power relations that ensued in this space. In chapters one to three, I outlined the shape of this thesis. Chapter one described the ALGC, then I identified why I wanted to focus on the ALGC for this research and presented the research questions. Chapter two explored aspects of the very extensive literature regarding the fields which intersect in this project – adult education, eLearning, identity and transnational learning spaces. Chapter three explained the methodology and research design and provided details of the participants, how they were chosen, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

In chapters four to seven I used the data collected via the participant interviews and written documents to understand the ways the participants experienced this eLearning course, ALGC. Using the theories of Latour (2005), Bauman (2000), Goffman (1959) and Foucault (1988) as frameworks for the data analysis helped me to unveil some of the complexities of eLearning.

This concluding chapter consolidates the various threads of this study to draw some provisional conclusions and provide a discussion of some of the possible implications resulting from the analysis. After revisiting the research questions I asked in Chapter One, I then summarise the main findings related to the original research questions, and I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the implications of the study.

8.1 In the beginning

When I started my Master of Education (Global) my intention was to obtain further qualifications in the field of adult education. The ALGC program suited where I was in my life, both personally and professionally. I had decided that I wanted to return to study to gain qualifications in adult education. Living in China I had limited access to campus-based universities, so I began to google online programs offered from Australia. I found the ALGC program offered through Monash, sent several emails to ask questions, had all my identity paperwork certified and I was in. I do not know the process behind the scene with Monash but apart from needing all my certificates to be certified at the Australian Embassy in Shanghai, it was a relatively straightforward process for me.

eLearning was a completely new experience for me. My previous university studies had been either on campus or via long distance education. It had been approximately 10 years since I had studied at university. I knew through my work in training and development as well as adult education that eLearning was becoming more commonplace in the education field. But at the time I commenced my Master's I was at the periphery of these changes. I really had little concept of what was involved in learning or teaching in an eLearning environment and the issues associated with such initiatives. I felt as though I had stumbled into this world. There was no real conscious planning which led me to where I am today.

The process of learning online through the ALGC made me think more deeply about adult education and how it works. The ALGC program expanded my knowledge of what was possible with eLearning. At the time, I did not realise that it was different from other eLearning programs. The uniqueness of the program only become clear to me when I started my research. Some of the first journal articles I read as part of my research were those written by the developers of the program. These helped me to understand not only the importance of the design of the program but also to start to consider aspects of identity formation within an eLearning space.

The participants shared their stories of their time in the ALGC program via semi-structured interviews as well as written documents which were produced as part of their coursework. All participants gave very generously of their time and their experience. I hope that I have done their stories justice with my analysis. Talking to the participants was the best part of this research project. All participants, with the exception of Claire, enjoyed the program as much as I did. I enjoyed the process of hearing their stories and sharing their experience of the ALGC program.

The research questions for this project developed out of my own experience in the ALGC program. As an adult educator, I wanted to better understand the process of eLearning. My aim at the start of the project was to address the general question:

How do learners experience learning in a transnational eLearning space?

In addition to this main question, a number of supplementary questions have been useful to the inquiry:

1. What elements of a particular transnational eLearning program do learners' experience as significant to their participation and learning?
2. How do learners negotiate participation and learning in a collaborative transnational eLearning space?

3. How does participation and learning in a collaborative transnational eLearning space mediate learners' identities?

In the three sections that follow, I briefly discuss how this study has addressed each of my original research questions, to respond to the general question of how learners experience learning in a transnational eLearning space.

8.2 Experiencing transnational eLearning programs

What elements of a particular transnational eLearning program do learners experience as significant to their participation and learning?

This question sought to understand what characteristics of the ALGC program were important to the participants in respect to their participation and learning. As with all the questions I asked, I did not have any preconceived ideas of the findings.

The first element which emerged as key for participants was the compulsory nature of the online posts required as part of participation in the course. Students were required to either post a certain number of times, and/or respond to other students' posts on a regular basis. Participants felt that this was an important element of the course and therefore they regarded the necessity to post as tedious but ultimately effective as a means to ensure communication between the course. Michelle summarised this feeling when she commented on how students could not 'just show up', that they had to participate. Susan also referred to 'survival' being about talking to one another. Paradoxically, in a campus-based university course with face-to-face teaching, there may be less need to talk to other students. This eLearning program, however, *requires* that students communicate in order to complete the requirements of the course.

A second significant finding was the students' personal goals and reasons each participant had for returning to study. The participants as global professionals found themselves occupying a 'liquid world' (Bauman, 2005) and this played a role in their decision to return to study. All the participants described 'liquid workplaces' wherein they felt the need to upgrade their skills and try to future proof themselves and their careers. These reasons for returning to study were motivating and sustaining forces for the participants as they progressed through the course.

The online posts were a particular kind of writing practice within a particular community and context. Their permanent nature firstly enabled review long after posting, and secondly enacted complex pressures to shape posts in particular ways, which helped the participants to think through their learning as well as find their voice. It aided the students to find a stronger sense of their voices as students and professionals. Being able to read what other people wrote, then have time to prepare

their own thoughts, helped not only in the preparation of assignments, but also in the way students came to think of themselves. Joan highlighted this when she talked about reading posts on the discussion board, 'mulling' them over and then going back to respond and Mark referred to how he used the posts of others to help him focus his thoughts and even give him direction for his assignment. This was an interesting aspect and one that I had not initially considered but in hindsight, as a student in the course myself, it was important to me also to have the posts to refer to as well. If a weekly reading was particularly challenging, I would read the post of a student in my cohort who I trusted to help with my understanding.

Finding or establishing their voices through the ALGC space enabled the participants to feel more grounded in a liquid world. Participants felt that by learning they were moving forward in their lives, where many had previously felt stuck or blocked, concerned about the changes that were happening in their workplaces. Richard reported how he used aspects of the program curriculum to work out his thoughts which gave him more confidence, and Claire spoke of how she feels 'the piece of paper' (her Master's certificate) gives her ideas and suggestions more weight with her colleagues. The participants also discussed how the eLearning experience has helped them to empathise with present and future students of their own. There was a general feeling that they would be moving towards online teaching in their own lives and that their own online experience as a student would help them.

Finally, the connections and relationships made between students in the course were highly significant for participants. Being able to link up with other learners, communicate and complete assignments helped to move the participants through their course and helped them feel part of a group of global professionals supporting each other and learning from each other. The interactive nature of the ALGC program meant that there was always someone posting online, and all students had access to these posts. Many participants described the deep engagement they experienced engaging with the ideas and experiences of others in the course. Some became colleagues and friends and have kept in touch with each other through various networks. Alice, James and Mary all described how some of the relationships they had formed during their eLearning studies had continued after the program had finished. Other participants reported joining the ALGC alumni in order to remain part of the eLearning community which had built up around their studies.

There were also restrictive aspects of the ALGC which were collectively worked around in order for learning to occur. For example, when James could not access the text book, other students found a way to get a copy to him. When units had a requirement for compulsory postings, participants viewed it as a way of communicating in order to complete their work. Again, there are also significant implications here in terms of identity negotiation.

Latour (1999) and the Actor Network Theory helped me to understand how these identities, connections and relationships shifted and were mediated through eLearning. It seemed that there were two levels of learning happening throughout the ALGC program. There was the set 'proper' curriculum (Martin, 1976), whereby the overt discourse of the program was passed onto the participants. But there was also the learning which occurred outside of that framework where the participants were able to make decisions about what was important to them such as social justice, or a sense of community. Both types of learning enabled learner identities.

8.3 Negotiating participation and learning in transnational eLearning spaces

How do learners negotiate participation and learning in a transnational eLearning space?

This question asked how the participants traversed an eLearning course and how they approached learning in this format. The intention was to understand the participants' reasons for being there; what strategies they put in place to undertake and complete their learning; how learners found their way into the different forums of a transnational eLearning space such as the ALGC program and how they progressed through the course

There was a diverse range of individual responses which reflect the balancing act of returning to study as an adult. This was a key finding - that studying via eLearning was a balancing act for all the participants. Online learning is viewed as a flexible form of learning which allows learners to work at their own pace, whenever they want to. These participants found that there was additional pressure added to their lives because they could go online whenever they wanted to; it meant that they felt they had to check what was happening to ensure they were up to date, and nothing was missed. The 24/7 'always on' nature of eLearning also works to form identity as discussed in Chapter 4. All participants reported that some aspect of their lives had to 'move aside' to make way for study and that rather than offering 'flexibility' into how study was managed around other aspects of life, engagement in the course became consuming. This was reinforced by Julie (see Section 4.3) who sacrificed her private life and by Michelle who spent more time doing 'school stuff' when studying online as compared to her campus-based studies. Michelle felt that with campus studies she could 'leave them' but with online learning, the laptop was always there, waiting. The need to find a space for study also played into the concept of liquid lives – participants attempted to find a bounded space to make themselves stable, if only temporarily, in a liquid world.

It also seemed that negotiating participation and learning in the ALGC involved the development of digital identities and required online impression management (Goffman, 1959). The data indicated that participants did feel they had to put their best 'self' forward. Many were concerned about how they would be viewed by lecturers and students and tried to write 'thoughtful' posts as part of their

digital impression management. Claire described feeling like an 'imposter' but also feeling that she could not share or show feelings of doubt or inadequacy to other students. This need to present themselves in the best light meant that the participants were balancing their different identities. They were one person in the online world and another in the 'real' world. Online they felt they could not share all aspects of themselves. However, being online, not being 'seen', was also a freeing experience for most of the participants, giving them the opportunity to present a different self – a digital self – one that expressed alternative elements of their identity. As Alice stated, no one 'sees' age, or sex, or gender' and that these characteristics had played out differently in an eLearning environment.

Chapter 7 identified some issues of power related to the ALGC program. One of these was the differing standards between the partner universities within the ALGC program. Thomas felt marks were 'easier' to get from some universities, and harder from others. Others felt there were differences in communication from the partners. These differences sometimes led to frustration as the participants themselves were adult educators and the data showed that they were also evaluating and analysing the lecturers and tutors as they went through the course. This meant that the participants were constantly trying to find 'normal' within the program. There was some uncertainty as to what was expected of them as the participants tried to find their way.

The data also identified that the use of English as the language of choice led to some issues of power within the ALGC program (see Section 7.3). The differing levels of English led to native English speakers 'jumping in' and in some cases taking over group assignments in order to both avoid embarrassing the non-native speakers and also to ensure a good mark. This was a process of negotiation through the course.

The participants in the ALGC program were aware of the constant change happening around them and looked for ways to 'get ahead' of them. Within the ALGC environment however they found that not everything was 'solid' either. There were examples of power and discipline within the ALGC which shaped their experience and their learning. This data shows the actual, but unintended effects of set procedures on the participants' lives.

Merchant also suggested that we respond to our imagined audience more than we realise and that the choices we make are 'complex' and 'interesting' but also 'problematic' (p. 239). Merchant believes that 'the ideas of audience, readership and community are indispensable' when discussing how identities are enabled or disabled in an eLearning environment (p. 240) The participants managed their digital identities within the ALGC program. They made decisions about what they would say online and what parts of themselves they would share. The small, micro interactions that happen between individuals that show how our identity forms in social contexts (Goffman, 1959;

Foucault, 1999). Overall, the participants' interaction and process of managing their identities assisted their learning.

8.4 Mediating identity in a transnational eLearning space

How does participation and learning in a transnational eLearning space mediate learners' identity?

This question examined specific elements or characteristics of the ALGC which enabled or disabled learner identities. I wanted to understand what elements of online participation and learning affected identity and the kinds of effects participants could identify.

Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of connections made while studying online. The connections between human and non-human elements was a feature of eLearning in the ALGC. Not only are long hours spent sitting in front of a computer or laptop, which creates a private 'world' for the learner, but this connection then enables other connections such as links to the online posts and discussion, the study space itself and connections to learning. The data clearly shows that the participants were able to connect via the non-human elements of the ALGC to form relationships and networks, to complete assignments and to engage on a global level.

Another aspect of the ALGC space which mediated identity was the curriculum and framework of the program itself. One key element of this was the constructivist pedagogy where, to successfully engage with online learning, participants needed to take responsibility for their own learning. The participants recognised this as they moved through the course as members of a cohort and as they completed the required activities and assignments. Some of the participants also linked the required readings and assignments to the constructivist nature of the program. This was highlighted by Julie when she said, 'it is designed to teach you'. Participants in the ALGC not only learnt from the materials, but also from the structure and design of the program.

However, the data also revealed ways that power was exerted through the curriculum in terms of the subject matter and readings, which had a sometimes very explicit ideological focus, and also a hidden curriculum. Communication was supposed to happen only through the Discussion Boards on the LMS. Participants also experienced self-regulation which led to a certain amount of restraint on the part of the participants who sometimes they felt that they were being 'watched' and assessed. This led to them being careful about their wording and reactions to the posts of other students. They assessed their own words before they posted them on the Discussion Boards. The data showed that they self-censored in order to avoid conflict with other students.

Power also showed through the silence which sometimes came back from the lecturers and tutors. This however is a trickier area, as there may be many reasons for 'silence'. While some participants viewed it as Richard did, feeling that some lecturers were 'lax', others felt they were on their own for much of the course. It is also important to remember here that not all the partner universities had the same arrangements with their lecturers and tutors in regard to their own requirements, regulations and payments. These issues of power and discipline played a role in how the learners managed their own identities within the program. Some participants felt they required more of the lecturers' and tutors' time and found ways of contacting them to achieve this. Others felt they were on their own and adapted to this form of study by working more closely with other students.

In terms of identity negotiation, being able to relate what they were learning to their own working lives helped the participants feel that they were not only learning but changing as a result of the learning. Participants felt enabled to apply the information they were learning and reading in some cases instantaneously. The differences and changes that the participants identified helped them to understand that they were learning and changing as part of their studies. In particular, the before-and-after written self-assessment tasks which the participants provided also showed how hindsight and reflection helped the participants understand how their learning had changed them. The documents were completed at the start of their studies and then revised and reflected upon at the end of the course. The documents show that participants reflected on how far they had come from the start of their studies. They were able to identify areas in which they found they had learnt and stated that they were able to apply what they had learnt to their workplaces.

At the end of the program, the participants felt they were leaving something behind. The liquid nature of the ALGC program meant that most of the connections they had made in that moment of time would be broken. Some participants reported staying in contact with some of their cohort via social media and some reported attending alumni events. But for the most part connections were broken, and people moved on. This highlighted the liquid nature the online environment. The community that was built only survived for the length of the course.

8.5 Looking forward

In exploring how learners experience learning in a transnational eLearning (research question 1) the study developed a conceptual focus on learner's identity in an eLearning space. I chose the ALGC program as a case study because it is a program that I not only knew but that I believed from my own experience 'worked' and not just for me but for many others. There are instead some recommendations I would like to make based on the findings from this research.

The requirements for compulsory posting within each module should be extended and encouraged. This would help to build community through diverse forms of writing and participation. For students to learn from each other, there needs to be some way of ensuring communication happens on a regular and ongoing basis. While this could be viewed as tedious by students, the data shows that it brought participants back to the discussion board. (I currently work in an eLearning environment where posts are not compulsory. Weeks can go by before a student posts in the Discussion Board. The atmosphere of a community does not exist as it did within the ALGC program.) It is a paradox within a program based firmly in constructivism, but it seems the kind of network and identity work identified here cannot happen without making online posts compulsory.

There would also be value for enriching the student experience by ensuring a better balance between feeling part of a supportive group/community, and having individual needs met. The connections made through eLearning are extremely important. The connection to the lecturer and tutor is just as important as those made with fellow students. Participants discussed how they felt some of their lecturers were more absent than others. They made adjustments in order to study online but noted that there were feeling that they were on their own. Therefore, more frequent and more direct communication between all those involved should be considered, although I recognise the cost-implications.

My research has led me to believe there is room for further analysis, firstly using the Interaction Ritual theory put forward by Goffman (1967). Although Goffman intend this theory for face-to-face encounters, there is scope to apply it to the interactions which occur in an eLearning environment. In addition, issues of power and discipline deployed via curriculum can be further explored particularly understandings of eLearning in terms of technologies of the Self (M Foucault et al., 1988).

It would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study on the ALGC. To assist the development of eLearning theory, a study of how the course has changed over time, would provide additional information which could be reviewed to determine the what remains constant and what changes. Menard (2002) wrote:

Longitudinal research serves two primary purposes: to describe patterns of change and to establish the direction (positive or negative and from Y to X or from X to Y) and magnitude (a relationship of magnitude zero indicating the absence of a causal relationship) of causal relationships. Change is typically measured with reference to one of two continua: chronological time (hereafter simply time) or age. (p. 2)

A study of this nature would allow the opportunity to track the effects of eLearning on identity over time, as viewed from the ALGC eLearning environment.

8.6 Concluding Remarks

The ALGC is still being offered in its 18th year of operation and the program continues to evolve, as it should. Grosjean (2015) describes the importance of student feedback to this process and highlights the introduction of the 'stop-out' as a way of mitigating the number of drop outs from the program, which is often a feature of online learning (p. 48). Students are now able to defer without penalty. Grosjean (2015) reports that this change has led to a decrease in the number of students leaving for personal reasons and not returning (p. 48).

Dahlgren et al (2013) acknowledge that one of the challenges for the future 'is to build sustainability into the program' (p. 63). The introduction of tuition fees by the Swedish partner, the need to begin succession planning to ensure the next generation of faculty and new university partners, are in place are some of the issues identified by the authors (p. 63). Dahlgren et al (2013) also indicate that work is being undertaken to improve and enhance the way technology is used as part of the program, within the limitations faced by the South African students. The program management committee is working to recruit an Asian partner in order to expand more globally (p. 64).

The findings of this study indicate that eLearning within the ALGC works well in many ways to facilitate learning and participation in a collaborative transnational eLearning space, which worked to mediate learners' identities. However, they also suggest that eLearning spaces are not neutral spaces. Instead they consist of networks and power relations, where learners practice digital identity management within a liquid world to shift and enable new identities.

The study has important implications for the field of eLearning, which too often evaluates the impact of programs in terms of narrowly conceived learning goals or technological practices. Universities and other tertiary institutions are increasingly looking to expand models of 'flexible' learning and teaching. The principles and ideas I have outlined here need to be applied to other instances of tertiary learning, and the ALGC model of eLearning needs to be promoted as an effective alternative to MOOCs and to other reduced forms of online learning.

References

- Aberton, H. (2012). Material enactments of identities and learning in everyday community practices: implications for pedagogy. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 20(1), 113-136. doi:10.1080/14681366.2012.649418
- Adams, A. (2013). Situated e-learning: empowerment and barriers to identity changes. In S. Warburton & S. Hatzipanagos (Eds.), *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 159-175). UK: IGI Global. Retrieved from <http://services.igi-global.com/resolvedoi/resolve.aspx?doi=10.4018/978-1-4666-1915-9.ch012>. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-1915-9.ch012
- Agnello, M. F. (2016). *'Finding foucault': Contextualising power in the curriculum through reflections on students' dialoguing about foucauldian discourses*.
- Amare, N., & St Pierre, S. (2003, 21-24 Sept. 2003). *Application of Goffman's social interaction theories to the technical communicator/engineer relationship*. Paper presented at the Professional Communication Conference, 2003. IPCC 2003. Proceedings. IEEE International.
- Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2013). Introduction: What is narrative research? In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing Narrative Research* (2nd ed.). Glasgow: Sage Publications Inc.
- Aresta, M., Santos, C., Pedro, L., & Moreira, A. (2013). Higher Education Institutions and Digital Identity: New Needs, New Skills? In *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 176-191): IGI Global.
- Askham, P. (2008). Context and identity: exploring adult learners' experiences of higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 32(1), 85-97. doi:10.1080/03098770701781481
- Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2006). Rescuing narrative from qualitative research. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 164-172.
- Baker, J. (2015). Imagining the cosmopolitan classroom: education in transnational spaces. Retrieved from Centre for Educational Enterprise Melbourne Girls Grammar website: <http://cee.mggs.vic.edu.au/images/flipbook/Education%20in%20Transnational%20Spaces.pdf>
- Bakker, J. I. (2010). Interpretivism. Encyclopedia of Case Study Research. SAGE Publications, Inc. In (pp. 487-494). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397>. doi:doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397>
- Ball, S. J. (2013). *Foucault, Power and Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Bannier, B. J. (2016). Global Trends in Transnational Education. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 6(1), 80-84. doi:10.7763/IJET.2016.V6.663
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2003). Educational Challenges of the Liquid-Modern Era. *Diogenes*, 50(1), 15-26. doi:10.1177/039219210305000103

- Bauman, Z. (2005). Education in Liquid Modernity. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 27(4), 303-317. doi:10.1080/10714410500338873
- Bauman, Z. (2007a). Liquid Arts. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(1), 117-126. doi:10.1177/0263276407071579
- Bauman, Z. (2007b). *Liquid Times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2009). Education in the Liquid-Modern Setting. *Power and Education*, 1(2), 157-166. doi:10.2304/power.2009.1.2.157
- Bauman, Z. (2010a). *44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2010b). Education in a World of Diasporas. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(3&4), 398-407.
- Bauman, Z. (2011). *Liquid Modern Challenges to Education* Paper presented at the The Coimbra Group Annual Conference, Padova. <http://www.padovauniversitypress.it/>
- Bauman, Z., & Vecchi, B. (2004). *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. United Kingdom: Polity.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13, 544+.
- Bayne, S. (2005). Deceit, desire and control: the identities of learners and teachers in cyberspace. In R. Landand & S. Bayne (Eds.), *Education in Cyberspace* (pp. 26-42). London: RoutledgeFarmer.
- Best, S. (2015). Education in the interregnum: an evaluation of Zygmunt Bauman's liquid-turn writing on education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1-18. doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1073103
- Bigum, C., & Rowan, L. (2004). Flexible learning in teacher education: myths, muddles and models. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(3), 213-226. doi:10.1080/1359866042000295389
- Blundell, S. (1992). Gender and the curriculum of adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 11(3), 199-216. doi:10.1080/0260137920110304
- Boehm, D., Kurthen, H., & Aniola-Jedrzejek. (2010). Do international online collaborative learning projects impact ethnocentrism? *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 7(2), 133-146. Retrieved from E-Learning and Digital Media website: http://www.worldwords.co.uk/pdf/validate.asp?i=elea&vol=7&issue=2&year=2010&article=2_Boehm_ELEA_7_2_web
- Bohny, B., Taylor, M., Clark, S.-Q. S., D'Elia, S., Lobato-Creekmur, G., Tarnowski, S. B., & Wasserman, S. (2016). What Happens in Vegas Doesn't Always Stay in Vegas: Negotiating the Curriculum Leads to Agency and Change. *Studying Teacher Education*, 12(3), 284-301. doi:10.1080/17425964.2016.1237352
- Boshier, R., & Wilson, M. (1998). *Panoptic variations: surveillance and discipline in web courses*. Paper presented at the Adult Education Research Conference No.39, San Antonio, TX.
- Boud, D., Dahlgren, L. O., Dahlgren, M. A., Larsson, S., Sork, T. J., & Walters, S. (2006). Creating a 'world class' programme: reciprocity and constraint in networked global collaboration. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 25(6), 609-622. doi:10.1080/02601370600989327

- Brewer, E. W., & Headlee, N. S. (2011). Adapting Adult Learning Theories for Online Learning. In *Encyclopedia of Information Communication Technologies and Adult Education Integration* (pp. 135-153): IGI Global.
- Britton, C., & Baxter, A. (1999). Becoming a mature student: Gendered narratives of the self. *Gender and Education, 11*(2), 179-193.
- Brookfield, S. (1985). A Critical Definition of Adult Education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 44-49. doi:10.1177/0001848185036001005
- Brookfield, S. (1995). What it means to be a critically reflective teacher In *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (pp. 1-27): Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. (2001). Unmasking power: Foucault and adult learning. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 15*(1), 1-23.
- Brooks, R., Fuller, A., & Waters, J. (2012). Changing spaces of education: an introduction. In R. Brooks, A. Fuller, & J. Waters (Eds.), *Changing spaces of education: New perspectives on the nature of learning* (pp. 1-17). London: Routledge.
- Brown, B. A., Reveles, J. M., & Kelly, G. J. (2005). Scientific literacy and discursive identity: A theoretical framework for understanding science learning. *Science Education, 89*(5), 779-802. doi:10.1002/sce.20069
- Bryant, A. (2007). Liquid Modernity, Complexity and Turbulence. *Theory, Culture & Society, 24*(1), 127-135. doi:10.1177/0263276407071580
- Bryceson, K. (2007). The online learning environment—A new model using social constructivism and the concept of ‘Ba’ as a theoretical framework. *Learning Environments Research, 10*(3), 189-206. doi:10.1007/s10984-007-9028-x
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods* (3 ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing identity. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity and digital media* The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (pp. 1-24). USA: The MIT press. doi:10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.001
- Bullingham, L., & Vasconcelos, A. C. (2013). ‘The presentation of self in the online world’: Goffman and the study of online identities. *Journal of Information Science, 39*(1), 101-112. doi:10.1177/0165551512470051
- Burbules, N. C., Bridges, D., Griffiths, M., & Smeyers, P. (2015). Varieties of Interpretation in Educational Research: How we frame the project. In P. Smeyers, D. Bridges, N. C. Burbules, & M. Griffiths (Eds.), *International Handbook of Interpretation in Educational Research* Springer International Handbooks of Education (pp. 3-16): Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-94-017-9282-0>. doi:10.1007/978-94-017-9282-0

- Burns, J. P. (2018). Power, Curriculum, and Embodiment. In J. P. Burns (Ed.), *Power, Curriculum, and Embodiment: Re-thinking Curriculum as Counter-Conduct and Counter-Politics* (pp. 1-23). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Busher, H., James, N., Piela, A., & Palmer, A.-M. (2014). Transforming marginalised adult learners' views of themselves: Access to Higher Education courses in England. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(5), 800-817. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.919842
- Callon, M. (1999). Actor-network theory—the market test. *The Sociological Review*, 47(S1), 181-195. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1999.tb03488.x
- Canagarajah, S. (2013). Agency and power in intercultural communication: negotiating English in translocal spaces. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 13(2), 202-224. doi:10.1080/14708477.2013/770867
- Chappell, C., Farrell, L., Scheeres, H., & Solomon, N. (2000). The Organization of Identity: Four Cases. In C. Symes & J. MyIntyre (Eds.), *Working Knowledge: The New Vocationalism and Higher Education*: Open University Press, Milton Keynes.
- Chappell, C., Rhodes, C., Solomon, N., Tennant, M., & Yates, L. (2003). *Reconstructing the lifelong learner*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Ching, C. C., & Foley, B. J. (2012a). Constructing the Self in a Digital World. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139027656>
- Ching, C. C., & Foley, B. J. (2012b). Introduction - Connecting conversation about technology, learning and identity. In C. C. Ching & B. J. Foley (Eds.), *Constructing the Self in a Digital World* (pp. 1-13): Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://ebooks.cambridge.org/>. doi:9781139027656
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1986). Rhythms in teaching: The narrative study of teachers' personal practical knowledge of classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 2(4), 377-387. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(86\)90030-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(86)90030-2)
- Clarke, T. (2013). The advance of the MOOCs (massive open online courses): The impending globalisation of business education? *Education + Training*, Vol. 55 Iss: 4/5, pp.403 - 413 - See more at: 55(4/5), 403-413. Retrieved from Emerald Education + Training website: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/journals.htm?articleid=17090875&show=abstract#sthash.OwJEzrLG.dpuf> doi:10.1108/00400911311326036
- Cohen, L. (2007). Validity and reliability [Chapter 6]. In L. Manion & K. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in Education* (6th ed., pp. 133-164). England: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2002). Case Studies. In *Research Methods in Education* (5 ed., pp. 181-190). Hoboken: Taylor and Francis. Retrieved from <http://MONASH.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=170477>.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14. doi:10.3102/0013189x019005002

- Conole, G. (2012). Learning in an open world. In R. Brooks, A. Fuller, & J. Waters (Eds.), *Changing Spaces of Education: New perspectives on the nature of learning* (pp. 219-243). London: Routledge.
- Cooper, J., & Mitsunaga, R. (2010). Faculty perspectives on international education: The nested realities of faculty collaborations. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2010(150), 69-81. doi:10.1002/he.391
- Cortazzi, M. (2001). Narrative Analysis in Ethnography. . In *Handbook of Ethnography* (pp. 384-395). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Coryell, J. E., Spencer, B. J., & Sehin, O. (2014). Cosmopolitan Adult Education and Global Citizenship: Perceptions From a European Itinerant Graduate Professional Study Abroad Program. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64(2), 145-164. doi:10.1177/0741713613515067
- Course Notes, Local Global Learning Module. (2011). In. Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change.
- Courtney, S. J. (2016). Post-panopticism and school inspection in England. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(4), 623-642. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.965806
- Dahlgren, M., Larsson, S., & Walters, S. (2006). Making the Invisible Visible. On Participation and Communication in a Global, Web-based Master's Programme. *Higher Education*, 52(1), 69-93. doi:10.1007/s10734-004-5784-z
- Dahlgren, M. A., Dahlgren, L. O., & Grosjean, G. (2013). Intercontinental Master's Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change. In K. Johansson, G. Lassbo, & E. Nehls (Eds.), *Inside the New University : Prerequisites for a Contemporary Knowledge Production*. Sharjah, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Bentham Science Publishers.
- Delahunty, J. (2012). 'Who am I?': Exploring identity in online discussion forums. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 53(0), 407-420. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2012.05.005>
- Diaz, L. A., & Entonado, F. B. (2009). Are the functions of teachers in e-learning and face-to-face learning environments really different? *Educational Technology & Society*, 12, 331+.
- Diorio, J. A. (1977). Knowledge, Truth and Power in the Curriculum. *Educational Theory*, 27(2), 103-110. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.1977.tb00758.x
- Ditchburn, G. M. (2012). The Australian curriculum: finding the hidden narrative? *Critical Studies in Education*, 53(3), 347-360. doi:10.1080/17508487.2012.703137
- Doolittle, P. (1999). Constructivism and online education. Retrieved from <https://www.itslearning.com/Main.aspx?CourseID=2297>
- Duffy, T. M., & Jonassen, D. H. (1992). Constructivism: New Implications for Instructional Technology. In T. M. Duffy & D. H. Jonassen (Eds.), *Constructivism and the technology of instruction: a conversation* (pp. 1-16). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Durante, M. (2011). The Online Construction of Personal Identity Through Trust and Privacy. *Information*, 2(4), 594-620.
- Dussel, I. (2010). Foucault and education. *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education*. Retrieved from <http://MONASH.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=465314>.

- Edwards, R. (2012). (Im)mobilities and (dis)locating practices in cyber-education. In R. Brooks, A. Fuller, & J. Waters (Eds.), *Changing Spaces of Education: New perspectives on the nature of learning* (pp. 205-218). London: Routledge.
- Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (1998). "Moving" Experiences: globalisation, pedagogy and experiential learning. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 20(2), 159-174. doi:10.1080/0158037980200204
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550. doi:10.2307/258557
- Farmer, L. S. J. (2012a). Addressing cultures in online teaching. In *Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies* (pp. 201-218): IGI Global.
- Farmer, L. S. J. (2012b). Gender issues in online education. In *Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies* (pp. 105-121): IGI Global.
- Fejes, A., & Köpsén, S. (2014). Vocational teachers' identity formation through boundary crossing. *Journal of Education and Work*, 27(3), 265-283. doi:10.1080/13639080.2012.742181
- Fenwick, T. (2011). Reading Educational Reform with Actor Network Theory: Fluid spaces, otherings, and ambivalences. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(sup1), 114-134. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2009.00609.x
- Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2010). *Actor-Network Theory in Education*. USA: Routledge.
- Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2011). Introduction: Reclaiming and Renewing Actor Network Theory for Educational Research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(sup1), 1-14. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00667.x
- Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2014). Networks of knowledge, matters of learning, and criticality in higher education. *Higher Education*, 67(1), 35-50. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9639-3>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245. doi:10.1177/1077800405284363
- Fontana, A. (2016). *Witnessing the extraordinary: investigating the accomplishments of the ALGC program* (Master of Art - MA), University of British Columbia., Canada. Retrieved from <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/24/items/1.0300309>
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd ed.). New York: Vintage Book.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the Self (Chapter Two). In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). America: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M., Martin, L. H., Gutman, H., & Hutton, P. H. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

- Freebody, P. R. (2003). Methods and Methodologies: Ethnography, Case Study and Action Research. . In P. R. Freebody (Ed.), *Qualitative Research in Education* (pp. 74-90). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gee, J. P. (2000-2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 99-125.
- Gee, J. P. (2011). *An Introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit* (2nd ed.). England: Routledge.
- Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2006). Narratives in action. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 112-121.
- Gerrard, J., & Farrell, L. (2014). Remaking the professional teacher: authority and curriculum reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 46(5), 634-655. doi:10.1080/00220272.2013.854410
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. England: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: essays on face-to-face behavior*. New York: Pantheon.
- Goold, A., Craig, A., & Coldwell, J. (2007). Accommodating culture and cultural diversity in online teaching. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 23(4), 490 -507.
- Gorur, R., & Koyama, J. P. (2013). The struggle to technicise in education policy. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 40(5), 633-648. doi:10.1007/s13384-013-0125-9
- Green, L., & Gary, K. (2016). Pedagogy for a Liquid Time. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 35(1), 47-62. doi:10.1007/s11217-015-9470-7
- Grosjean, G. (2010). Detailed Course Description. Retrieved from <https://www3.student.liu.se>
- Grosjean, G. (2015). Intercontinental Masters' Program in Adult Learning and Global Change: An e-Learning Case History. In D. Remenyi (Ed.), *e-learning Excellence Awards 2015 An anthology of case histories* (pp. 39-52). United Kingdom: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.sg/books?id=OZlmCwAAQBAJ&printsec=copyright&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- Grosjean, G., & Sork, T. J. (2007). Going online: Uploading learning to the virtual classroom. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2007(113), 13-24. doi:10.1002/ace.243
- Hall, S. (1996). Who need 'identity'? Introduction. In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-17). Britain: SAGE Publishing.
- Harasim, L. (2000). Shift happens: online education as a new paradigm in learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 3(1-2), 41-61. doi:10.1016/s1096-7516(00)00032-4
- Hargreaves, J. (2004). So how do you feel about that? Assessing reflective practice. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(3), 196-201. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2003.11.008>
- Harling, K. (2012). An overview of case study. *Social Science Research Network*. Retrieved from Social Science Research Network website: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2141476> doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2141476>

- Hartley, K., & Bendixen, L. D. (2001). Educational research in the internet age: examining the role of individual characteristics. *Educational Researcher*, 30(9), 22-22.
- Held, D., & McGrew, A. (2013). Globalization Entry for Oxford Companion to politics. Retrieved from Global Transformations website: www.polity.co.uk/global/globalization-oxford
- Hendricks, N. (2012). An E-Learning Collaborative Environment: Learning within a Masters in Education. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 11(1), 39-53.
- Hogan, B. (2010). The presentation of self in the age of social media: distinguishing performances and exhibitions online. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30(6), 377-386. doi:10.1177/0270467610385893
- Hope, A. (2005). Panopticism, Play and the Resistance of Surveillance: Case Studies of the Observation of Student Internet Use in UK Schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(3), 359-373.
- Hope, A. (2010). Student resistance to the surveillance curriculum. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 20(4), 319-334. doi:10.1080/09620214.2010.530857
- Hope, A. (2012). Schools and schooling in the digital age: a critical analysis. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 18(1), 99-100. doi:10.1080/13803611.2011.643353
- Hope, A. (2015a). Biopower and school surveillance technologies 2.0. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1-20. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.1001060
- Hope, A. (2015b). Foucault's toolbox: critical insights for education and technology researchers. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 40(4), 536-549. doi:10.1080/17439884.2014.953546
- Howells, H. (2003). Teacher professionalism and curriculum power: A cautionary tale. *English in Australia*(136), 27-39.
- Huang, Q. (2019). Comparing teacher's roles of F2f learning and online learning in a blended English course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 32(3), 190-209. doi:10.1080/09588221.2018.1540434
- Huber, J., Caine, V., Huber, M., & Steeves, P. (2013). Narrative Inquiry as Pedagogy in Education: The Extraordinary Potential of Living, Telling, Retelling, and Reliving Stories of Experience. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 212-242. doi:10.3102/0091732x12458885
- Information for Perspective Students. (2016). 1-3. Retrieved from <http://edst.educ.ubc.ca/programs/adult-learning-and-global-change/>
- Jäkälä, M., & Berki, E. (2013). Communities, communication, and online identities. In S. Warburton & S. Hatzipanagos (Eds.), *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 1-13). Hershey, PA, USA: IGI Global.
- Jardine, G. M. (2005). *Foucault & Education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Jenson, J., & de Castell, S. (2012). New Epistemologies? Rethinking ways of knowing in a digital culture. In P. Pericles Trifonas (Ed.), *Learning the virtual life* (pp. 15-30). New York: Routledge.
- Johannesen, M., Erstad, O., & Habib, L. (2012). Virtual learning environments as sociomaterial agents in the network of teaching practice. *Computers & Education*, 59(2), 785-792. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.03.023>

- Jørgensen, K. M., & Keller, H. D. (2008). The contribution of communities of practice to human resource development: learning as negotiating identity. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(4), 525-540. doi:10.1177/1523422308320374
- Jubas, K. (2005). Seeking Realness in a Virtual World: Dis/illusion and Community in Online Education. *Workplace: A Journal of Academic Labor*, 7(1 (November)), 80-94.
- Kehily, M. J. (1995). Self-narration, Autobiography and Identity Construction. *Gender and Education*, 7(1), 23-32. doi:10.1080/713668459
- Kelly, A. (2009). Globalisation and education: a review of conflicting perspectives and their effect on policy and professional practice in the UK. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 7(1), 51-68. doi:10.1080/14767720802677333
- Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism. *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*. Retrieved from <http://maaz.ihmc.us/rid=1N5QXBJZF-20SG67F-32D4/Kim%20Social%20constructivism.pdf>
- Kitto, S. (2003). Translating an Eletronic Panopticon Educational technology and the re-articulation of lecturer-student relations in online learning. *Information, Communication & Society*, 6(1), 1-23. doi:10.1080/1369118032000068796
- Koole, M., & Parchoma, G. (2013). The Web of Identity: A Model of Digital Identity Formation in Networked Learning Environments. In S. Warburton & S. Hatzipanagos (Eds.), *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 14-28). Hershey, PA, USA: IGI Global.
- Kupchik, A., & Monahan, T. (2006). The New American School: Preparation for Post-Industrial Discipline. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27(5), 617-631.
- Kuper, L. E., & Mustanski, B. S. (2014). Using Narrative Analysis to Identify Patterns of Internet Influence on the Identity Development of Same-Sex Attracted Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(4), 499-532. doi:10.1177/0743558414528975
- Ladyshevsky, R. K. (2004). E-learning compared with face to face: differences in the academic achievement of postgraduate business students. [This article is an expanded and revised version of a previously published article entitled 'Online learning versus face to face learning: What is the difference?' In Seeking Educational Excellence. Proceedings of the Teaching and Learning Forum (13th: 2004: Murdoch University, Perth).]. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 20(3), 316-336. doi:10.14742/ajet.1350
- Larsson, S., Boud, D., Abrandt Dahlgren, M., Walters, S., & Sork, T. (2005). Confronting globalisation: learning from intercontinental collaboration. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 42(1), 61-71.
- Latour, B. (1999). On recalling ANT. *The Sociological Review*, 47(S1), 15-25. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1999.tb03480.x
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social An introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. USA: Oxford University Press.

- Latour, B. (2011). Networks, Societies, Spheres: Reflections of an Actor-Network Theorist. *International Journal of Communication (19328036)*, 5, 796-810.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated Learning. In: Cambridge University Press.
- Law, J. (1999). After ANT: complexity, naming and topology. *The Sociological Review*, 47(S1), 1-14. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1999.tb03479.x
- Law, J., & Singleton, V. (2013). ANT and Politics: Working in and on the World. *Qualitative Sociology*, 36(4), 485-502. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-013-9263-7>
- Leask, I. A. N. (2012). Beyond Subjection: Notes on the later Foucault and education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(sup1), 57-73. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2011.00774.x
- Lee, R. L. M. (2011). Modernity, Solidity and Agency: Liquidity Reconsidered. *Sociology*, 45(4), 650-664.
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education : a user's guide* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Linné, A. (2015). Curriculum theory and didactics – towards a theoretical rethinking. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 2015(1), 27002. doi:10.3402/nstep.v1.27002
- Luke, A. (1995). Text and Discourse in Education: An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 3-48. doi:10.2307/1167278
- Maia, I. F., & Valente, J. A. (2013). Digital identity built on a cooperative relationship. In *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 58-73): IGI Global.
- Martin, J. R. (1976). What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One? *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(2), 135-151. doi:10.2307/1179759
- Masters in Adult Education (Global). (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://monash.edu/education/events/master-in-adult-education-global/>
- Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(3), 279-300.
- Mayes, E. (2013). Negotiating the hidden curriculum: Power and affect in negotiated classrooms [online]. *English in Australia*, 48(3), 62-71.
- McAdams, D. P. (1996). Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self: A Contemporary Framework for Studying Persons. *Psychological Inquiry*, 7(4), 295-321.
- Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal Research* (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Merchant, G. (2006). Identity, social networks and online communication *E-LEARNING*, 3(2), 235-244.
- Merriam, S. B. (2008). Adult learning theory for the twenty-first century. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2008(119), 93-98. doi:10.1002/ace.309
- Miller, H. (1995). *The presentation of self in electronic life: Goffman on the internet*. Paper presented at the Embodied knowledge and virtual space London.

- Mioduser, D., Nachmias, R., Lahav, O., & Oren, A. (2000). Web-Based Learning Environments: Current Pedagogical and Technological State. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 33(1), 55-76. doi:10.1080/08886504.2000.10782300
- Misson, R. (2012). Understanding about water in liquid modernity: Critical imperatives for English Teaching. *English in Australia*, 47(1), 27-35.
- Mulcahy, M. D. (2013). Turning Around the Question of 'Transfer' in Education: Tracing the sociomaterial. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 45(12), 1276-1289. doi:10.1080/00131857.2013.763592
- O'Donnell, V. L., & Tobbell, J. (2007). The transition of adult students to higher education: legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57(4), 312-328. doi:10.1177/0741713607302686
- Oliver, K. L. (1998). A Journey Into Narrative Analysis: A Methodology for Discovering Meanings. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 17(2), 244.
- Orton-Johnson, K. (2007). The online student: lurking, chatting, flaming and joking. *Sociological Research Online*, 12(6), 3.
- Orton-Johnson, K. (2009). 'I've stuck to the path I'm afraid': exploring student non-use of blended learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(5), 837-847. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2008.00860.x
- Oxenham, M. (2013). *Higher Education in Liquid Modernity*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002a). The presentation of self in virtual life: Characteristics of personal home pages. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79(3), 643-660.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002b). The Presentation of Self in Virtual Life: Characteristics of Personal Home Pages. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79(3), 643-660. doi:10.1177/107769900207900307
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002c). The self online: the utility of personal home pages. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 46(3), 346-368. doi:10.1207/s15506878jobem4603_3
- Parker, J. (2009). The online adult learner: profiles and practices. In *Handbook of Research on E-Learning Applications for Career and Technical Education: Technologies for Vocational Training* (pp. 737-746): IGI Global.
- Peach, H. G., & Bieber, J. P. (2015). Faculty and online education as a mechanism of power. *Distance Education*, 36(1), 26-40. doi:10.1080/01587919.2015.1019971
- Peachey, A., & Withnail, G. (2013). A sociocultural perspective on negotiating digital identities in a community of learners. In S. Warburton & S. Hatzipanagos (Eds.), *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 210-224). UK: IGI Global. Retrieved from <http://services.igi-global.com/resolvedoi/resolve.aspx?doi=10.4018/978-1-4666-1915-9.ch015>. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-1915-9.ch015
- Pinar, W. F. (2012). Curriculum Theory Since 1950. In F. M. Connelly, M. F. He, & J. Phillion (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (pp. 491-513). Thousand Oaks, UNITED STATES: SAGE

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/monash/detail.action?docID=996458>.

- Popkewitz, T. S. (1997). The production of reason and power: Curriculum history and intellectual traditions. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 29(2), 131-164. doi:10.1080/002202797184107
- Rembold, E., & Carrier, P. (2011). Space and identity: constructions of national identities in an age of globalisation. *National Identities*, 13(4), 361-377. doi:10.1080/14608944.2011.629425
- Rettie, R. (2009). Mobile phone communication: extending Goffman to mediated interaction. *Sociology*, 43(3), 421-438. doi:10.1177/0038038509103197
- Riessman, C. K. (1990). Strategic uses of narrative in the presentation of self and illness: A research note. *Social Science & Medicine*, 30(11), 1195-1200. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(90\)90259-U](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(90)90259-U)
- Riley, T., & Hawe, P. (2005). Researching practice: the methodological case for narrative inquiry. *Health Education Research*, 20(2), 226-236. doi:10.1093/her/cyg122
- Rimpiläinen, S. (2011). Knowledge in Networks: Knowing in Transactions? *International Journal of Actor-Network Theory and Technological Innovation (IJANTTI)*, 2(3), 46-56. doi:10.4018/jantti.2011040104
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2009). *Globalizing Education Policy*. In. Retrieved from <http://MONASH.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=465373>
- Rosenberg, J., & Egbert, N. (2011). Online Impression Management: Personality Traits and Concerns for Secondary Goals as Predictors of Self-Presentation Tactics on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(1), 1-18. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2011.01560.x
- Ross, J. (2011). Traces of self: online reflective practices and performances in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(1), 113-126. doi:10.1080/13562517.2011.530753
- Ruddin, L. P. (2006). You Can Generalize Stupid! Social Scientists, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Case Study Methodology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(4), 797-812. doi:10.1177/1077800406288622
- Saarienen, T., & Ursin, J. (2012). Dominant and emerging approaches in the study of higher education policy change. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(2), 143-156. doi:10.1080/03075079.2010.538472
- Sauter, T. (2014). 'What's on your mind?' Writing on Facebook as a tool for self-formation. *New Media & Society*, 16(5), 823-839. doi:10.1177/1461444813495160
- Sayes, E. (2014). Actor–Network Theory and methodology: Just what does it mean to say that nonhumans have agency? *Social Studies of Science*, 44(1), 134-149. doi:10.1177/0306312713511867
- Schatz-Oppenheimer, O., & Dvir, N. (2014). From ugly duckling to swan: Stories of novice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 37(0), 140-149. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.10.011>
- Schmidt, S. W. (2009). Understanding the online learner. In *Handbook of Research on E-Learning Applications for Career and Technical Education: Technologies for Vocational Training* (pp. 482-494): IGI Global.
- Seddon, T. (2014). Making educational spaces through boundary work: territorialisation and 'boundarying'. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12(1), 10-31. doi:10.1080/14767724.2013.858396

- Seddon, T. (2015). *New Course Proposal Masters of Global Learning and Leadership*. Retrieved from Melbourne, Australia:
- Seddon, T., Ozga, J., & Levin, J. S. (2012). Global transitions and educational professionalism: Trajectories of occupational boundary work in the politics of professionalization. In *Routledge World Yearbook of Education*
- Selwyn, N. (2011a). Editorial: In praise of pessimism—the need for negativity in educational technology. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 42(5), 713-718. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2011.01215.x
- Selwyn, N. (2011b). 'Finding an appropriate fit for me': examining the (in)flexibilities of international distance learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 30(3), 367-383. doi:10.1080/02601370.2011.570873
- Selwyn, N. (2013). *Education in a digital world*. UK: Routledge.
- Silva, R. B. (2018). Friendship, Difference and Education: reflections from Zygmunt Bauman. *Educacao & Realidade*, 43(1), 115-128.
- Simon, B. (2005). The return of Panopticism: supervision, subjection, and the new surveillance. *Surveillance & Society*, 3(1), 1-20.
- Sobe, N. W. (2015). All that is global is not world culture: accountability systems and educational apparatuses. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 13(1), 135-148. doi:10.1080/14767724.2014.967501
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach. *Theory and Society*, 23(5), 605-649. doi:10.2307/658090
- Sork, T. J., & Newman, M. (2004). Program Development in Adult Education and Training. In G. Foley (Ed.), *Dimensions of Adult Learning : Adult Education and Training in a Global Era* (pp. 96-117). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=108285&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Spector-Mersel, G. (2011). Mechanisms of Selection in Claiming Narrative Identities: A Model for Interpreting Narratives. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(2), 172-185. doi:10.1177/1077800410393885
- Squire, C. (2013). From experience- centred to socioculturally oriented approaches to narrative. In *Doing Narrative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 46-71). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Stake, R. (1982). Naturalistic generalization. *Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science*, 7, 1-12.
- Starke-Meyerring, D. (2010). Globally networked learning environments: reshaping the intersections of globalization and e-learning in higher education. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 7(2), 127-132. Retrieved from doi:10.2304/elea.2010.7.2.127
- Sutherland, L., & Markauskaite, L. (2012). Examining the role of authenticity in supporting the development of professional identity: an example from teacher education. *Higher Education*, 64, 747+.

- Sweeney, J. C., & Ingram, D. (2001). A Comparison of Traditional and Web-Based Tutorials in Marketing Education: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 23(1), 55-62. doi:10.1177/0273475301231007
- Thompson, T. L. (2012). I'm deleting as fast as I can: negotiating learning practices in cyberspace. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 20(1), 93-112. doi:10.1080/14681366.2012.649417
- Tosas, M. R. (2016). Educational Leadership Reconsidered: Arendt, Agamben, and Bauman. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 35(4), 353-369. doi:10.1007/s11217-015-9474-3
- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen*. USA: Simon & Schuster.
- Turkle, S. (1999). Cyberspace and Identity. *Contemporary Sociology*, 28(6), 643-648. doi:10.2307/2655534
- Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone Together*. USA: Basic Books.
- The University of British Columbia. (2015). Retrieved from <https://edst.educ.ubc.ca/algc-award/>
- Vaast, E. (2007). Playing with masks. *Information Technology & People*, 20(4), 334-351. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09593840710839789>
- van Der Wende, M. C. (2003). Globalisation and Access to Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7(2), 193-206. doi:10.1177/1028315303007002006
- Veck, W. (2014). Disability and inclusive education in times of austerity. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(5), 777-799. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.919845
- Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 447-462. doi:10.1080/014198799329558
- Walker, K. (2000). "It's Difficult to Hide It": The Presentation of Self on Internet Home Pages. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23(1), 99-120. doi:10.1023/A:1005407717409
- Watson, C. (2006). Narratives of practice and the construction of identity in teaching. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 12(5), 506-526.
- Watson, T. (2009). Narrative, life story and manager identity: A case study in autobiographical identity work. *Human Relations*, 62(3), 425-452. doi:10.1177/0018726708101044
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity*. America: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, S., Fleming, S., Lundqvist, K., & Parslow, P. (2013). This Is me: digital identity and reputation on the internet. In *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 104-117): IGI Global.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 321-332. doi:10.1177/1356389013497081
- Young, D. (2009). Interpretivism and Education Law Research: A Natural Fit. *Education Law Journal*, 18(3), 203-219.
- Young, M. F. D. (1998). *The Curriculum of the Future : From the 'New Sociology of Education' to a Critical Theory of Learning*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge.
- Younge, G. (2010). *Who are we? And Should It Matter in the 21st Century?* England: Penguin.

Zembylas, M. (2008). Adult learners' emotions in online learning. *Distance Education*, 29(1, May 2008), 71-87.

Appendices

Appendix #1 Office 365 set up, home page for Fostering Learning in Practice

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the SharePoint site for 'Fostering Learning in Practice'. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://liuonline.sharepoint.com/sites/ks32/LIVLE2-2016VT/Pages/default.aspx>. The top navigation bar includes 'Office 365' and 'SharePoint' links, along with the 'L.I.U. LINCOLN UNIVERSITY' logo and a user profile for 'Narelle Borzi'. Below the navigation bar, the page title 'Fostering Learning in Practice' is prominently displayed. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with links such as 'Home', 'FUP evaluation', 'Announcements', 'Any questions?', 'Coffee shop', 'Schedule and other general course information', 'Readings and course learning materials', 'Submissions', 'Members and groups', and a section for 'BLOCK ONE CONTEXTS' with links for 'Week 1' and 'Week 2'. The main content area is divided into several sections. The 'Announcements' section features a list of posts, including 'Week 10 reflection' by Terri Seddon (6/21/2016 2:21 PM) and 'Week 9 Reflection' by Terri Seddon (6/15/2016 1:59 PM). The 'Welcome!' section includes a collage of three images: a koala, a possum, and a kangaroo. Below the images, text explains that this is a dedicated space for collaboration and lists the types of content included: Home page, Announcements, Schedule, Readings, and Submissions. The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system clock indicating 9:55 AM on 28/06/2016.

Appendix #2 Participant Interview Schedule

Section 1: Background to participant's identity

1. What were your reasons for studying?
2. What were your reasons for choosing an online program?
3. Is English your first language? If answer is no: What issues, if any, arose because of English not being your first language? How did you feel? Regarding these issues do you feel that you were able to obtain help? How did you feel about having to ask for help? Who did you approach for help? If answer is yes, did you have any issues with others?
4. Where were you living when you were doing the course? How did where you lived during the course make any difference to how you were involved / how you participated in the program? Do you identify with the country you currently live in?

Section 2: Online experience

5. Before commencing the ALGC course, what three words would you have used to describe yourself?
6. While participating in the ALGC program, were you employed? If yes: On what basis were you employed?
7. To participate in online learning, what changes/adjustments, if any, did you have to make in your life?
8. How did you identify yourself: Did you consider yourself/feel like a student?
9. Describe the space where you did most of your study/learning for the ALGC course. Did you have a separate, dedicated space for study? Was this important for you?
10. What parts of the ALGC program did you most identify with? What are your thoughts on why you identified with these parts of the program? Why do you feel these are important to you?
11. Who did you identify with the most?
 - People from your home country _____
 - Your various study groups _____
 - People in the 'coffee shop' _____
 - People from the same university _____

- Your learning partner _____
- Other (please explain) _____

12. What are your thoughts on why you identified with some people more than others?
13. While studying in the program, did you experience any problems with technology, either on your home system or the universities'? If yes, please give details.
14. How would you describe your experience with lecturers and tutors from universities other than one you enrolled through?
15. What were the aspects of the ALGC program that you could not identify with?
16. Within your working groups did you feel the balance of power was equal amongst all participants? If no, in what ways did you experience the balance of power to be unequal amongst participants? Examples?
17. How did you feel about putting forward your opinion online in the discussion forums, or the Coffee Shop, or during group work?
18. Do you feel you were your 'real self' in online discussion forums? Explain your answer.
19. Regarding the personal profile that you had to compose at the beginning of the course to put online, how did you feel about doing this? Did you have any difficulty in deciding what you would tell people about yourself?
20. The nature of this particular course means that you are studying with people from other countries. What do you think about this? How do you think it affected the program/ the learning/ activities? What was this experience like for you?
21. At any time during the course did you feel you were part of a learning community? If yes: can you describe when and how you felt this? If no: can you think of why you felt separate?
22. Were there any times you felt you were 'out of your depth' during your study? Was this to do with your knowledge/ personal life/ something else? Can you elaborate on your feelings and experience at that particular times/s? How did you get out of this feeling? What helped the situation?

Section 3: Post study

23. When you think about the ALGC program now, how would you describe your experience with the ALGC program? (Examples if needed: Challenging; Rewarding; A mistake)
24. Looking back, how did you feel about studying in an online environment? What are the things you remember about studying online?
25. What was the most important thing you learnt from the ALGC course?
26. How did you feel about the design of the course? (For example: Course content, Sequence of subjects, Readings provided, technology used)
27. Would you recommend elearning to other people? Why/why not?
28. Reflecting back on your experience of the ALGC program, what three words would you use to describe the overall experience?
29. What do you feel were the main benefits to you of doing this program?
30. What three words would you use to describe yourself now?
31. In what ways do you feel that being in an online environment helped you to learn?
32. Do you feel that studying online made any difference to you, or would the experience have been the same if you attended a university campus?
33. While you were studying via elearning, do you feel that you learnt more from other people or when you study the readings and assignments?
34. How do you feel you were viewed by other participants?
35. What opinions did you form of other participants?
36. Have you been able to use anything you learnt during the program in your work or personal life?
37. There will be some questions relating specifically to each individual participant based on the analysis of their documents and artefacts from the ALGC program.

Appendix #3 Explanatory statement

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

ALGC Cohorts

Project: Is it me? An investigation into identity formation through eLearning in transnational spaces.

Chief Investigator's name

Dr Miriam Faine

Department of Education

Phone: +61 3 9905 2781

email:

Miriam.Faine@education.monash.edu

Student's name

Narelle Borzi

Phone : +65 8457 8422

email: nebor1@student.monash.edu

Co-Investigator

Dr Scott Bulfin

Department of Education

Phone: +61 3 990 59067

Email: Scott.Bulfin@monash.edu

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researcher via the phone number or email address listed above.

Aims

My name is Narelle Borzi and I am conducting research towards a PhD with Monash University. The research project aims to explore the concepts of transnational spaces and the ways in which a learner's identity may be changed, challenged or altered as a result of his/her interactions in an elearning environment.

Why were you chosen for this research?

You have been asked to participate in this research based on your enrolment in the ALGC program.

What does the research involve?

In Stage 1 of the project I am interested in conducting a document analysis on selected writings that you prepared during the ALGC program.

The documents I would like for my research are the following:

1. Self assessment task completed for Locating Oneself in Global Learning I, Block 3, Task 2.
This is the initial self assessment completed at the commencement of the program
2. Reflection and Self Assessment completed for Locating Oneself in Global Learning II, Block 5. This is the review conducted at the end of the program.
3. Portrayal of Learning Statement completed for Locating Oneself in Global Learning II, Block 6.

In Stage 2 I would like to take the research further by conducting semi-structured interviews to clarify information obtained from the document analysis. The interviews would take place via Skype and take approximately 1 hour. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. A follow-up interview may be required which would take approximately 30 minutes.

As a participant you can choose to take part in Stage 1 of the project but opt out of Stage 2.

[Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research](#)

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you consent to participation in the research project please sign and return the consent form to the researcher via the following email address:
nebor1@student.monash.au

If you consent, you retain the right to withdraw from further participation at any stage, without having to give a reason and without implications. Any data you have forwarded up to the point of withdrawal will not be used without your consent. Taking part in this research is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation.

Benefits

This project will contribute new knowledge to the ways in which learning and participation in a transnational space can affect learner identity. This information may be used by organisations to improve their elearning programs.

Inconvenience/Discomfort

No physical or psychological harm/discomfort is foreseen in participating in this study. If you do experience stress because of your participation you can withdraw at any stage.

Payments

No payments will be made to participants who are involved in this research project.

Confidentiality

I understand that by asking you to share your assignments and further participate in interviews I am requesting personal and perhaps sensitive information. Any information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential at all times and only myself and my supervisors will have access to it.

When writing up the results, names or any other markers which may identify any of the participants will not be used. All information will be anonymised before being documented for publication purposes. Alternative names will be used as and when required, for example for direct quotes. You will be identified by a false name, gender and your university will be allocated a letter or similar identifier. For example:

Peter, 25, University B

I will do everything I can to ensure the confidentiality and therefore the privacy of the participants involved in my research.

Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, in a locked filing cabinet and/or secure computer. The data will be stored in de-identified format electronically for five years, after which it will be destroyed. No third parties will have access to this data. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)

Room 111, Building 3e

Research Office

Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3
9905 3831

Thank you for your time.

Appendix # 4 Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

ALGC Cohorts

PROJECT: IS IT ME? AN INVESTIGATION INTO IDENTITY FORMATION THROUGH ELEARNING.

Chief Researcher: Narelle Borzi
Email: nebor1@student.monash.edu

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
I agree to provide my ALGC written assignments and artefacts as data for research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview which will be audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to participate in further follow-up interviews if required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussion, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that anonymised extracts from my writing and interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant's Name:

Participant's Email:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix # 5 Invitation Flyer

Seeking expressions of interest in my Research Project:

Is it me? An investigation into identity formation through eLearning in transnational spaces.



I am a past student of the ALGC program (Cohort 10), currently working on my PhD. I am looking for volunteers for my research project that is based on our experiences through ALGC program.

The research involves providing some of the assignments and artefacts that were developed by you during the program.

Follow-up research will be conducted via a Skype interview.

If you are interested in participating and would like further details of what is involved please email me at:

NARELLE BORZI

Email: nebor1@student.monash.edu

Mobile: +65 8457 8422

Appendix # 6 Learning Tasks for Global/Local Learning unit

Please note: As this document was downloaded from the website the fonts have changed in some places.

Step 1: Introduction

15 August – 28 August 2011

Part 1: Describe an example of ‘global/local learning’

15 August – 21 August 2011

Describe an example from your own experience that, in your view, illustrates ‘global/local learning’. Your example might be taken from your own experience as an adult learner/educator, or from the popular media, internet, academic journals or any other source. Post your illustrative example of global/local learning of around 200 words on the group discussion board. Remember, each illustrative example makes an important contribution to building a collective understanding and resource. So, please recognise that it is critical that everyone contributes at least one example. The posting will count towards your participation mark.

Part 2: Read the short commentary on ‘global/local learning’

22 August – 28 August 2011

In designing this course, it became clear that while there may not be texts that define ‘global/local learning’ in exactly these terms, there are adult education texts and traditions that speak to the issues. So, this commentary is written to open up the dialogue about the notion global/local learning. We invite you to enter this exploratory space and engage with these ideas and concerns. You will find the commentary in *course readings* for Step 1.

In your groups discuss:

1. What was your immediate reaction to the commentary?
2. How did the reading alter your previous thoughts on local/global as a concept?

Group Task – due 28th August 2011

Select the common elements to emerge from your group’s examples and which you think best characterise

‘global/local learning’. Post your group’s submission in the forum provided which is called ‘group postings’.

Step 2: Adult education/learning in civil society organisations, including social movements

29 August – 25 September 2011

The activities in this section continue to explore the meaning of local/global learning in the context of civil society organisations, including social movements. They support the writing of your second assignment -an analytical paper in which you identify and investigate some of the learning practices in a civil society organisation or social movement of your choice in order to elaborate the concept 'global/local learning'.

Introduction

In Step 1 of this course we briefly introduced the concept 'global/local learning', drawing mainly from your own experiences. In Step 2 we explore 'local/global learning' within civil society and social movement contexts. In doing this we also probe the social purposes of adult education/learning and extend some of the issues raised in Step 1. Adult education/learning within civil society has a long and rich tradition and will provide us with the conceptual tools and examples for our further explorations of the meaning of global/local learning. All of us are members of civil society and while we may not be involved explicitly as adult educators or trainers in this arena, we are likely to have experience of it through our family life, community organisations, voluntary associations, religious bodies, political parties, trade unions or social movements. Learning in civil society takes a variety of forms. Often it is incidental or informal learning which occurs in the course of people's everyday lives. At other times it is more consciously organized in the form of skills training, consciousness-raising workshops, or short courses, also referred to as non-formal education and continuing education. It can also be formal, longer term educational activity which is certificated. The distinction between informal / non-formal / formal education has been critiqued as there is, for example, much informal learning within formal education. The boundaries are far more porous than the classification may suggest. In this step the learning activities draw on a set of readings which include case studies and which analyse, from various perspectives, the connections between the learning, political and organisational aspects of adult education/learning in civil society organisations or social movements working for social change. These texts also discuss the nature and social purposes of adult education in response to the contemporary socio-economic, political, environmental, cultural challenges.

Part 1: (29 August – 4 September 2011)

There are 2 readings to be read and discussed within your groups.

Reading 1: Dan Gallin "*Civil society – a contested territory*", paper presented to Euro-WEA Seminar on Workers Education and Civil Society, Budapest, June 16-17 2000

In your group, discuss and exchange responses to the following questions:

1. What are your immediate reactions to the article? How has the article altered your initial understanding of the concept?

2. What are the contestations relating to the concept and how have they shifted over time?
3. Are you, or have you been, involved in any civil society organisations – which ones? What purposes do they serve for you and the broader society?

Reading 2: Budd L. Hall and Darlene E. Clover “*Social Movement Learning*”, paper, presented, University of Victoria, Canada (a later version is published in Leona English 2005 International Encyclopedia of Adult Education, Palgrave MacMillan NY)

In your group, discuss and exchange responses to the following questions:

1. What are your immediate reactions to the article? How has the article altered your initial understanding of the concept?
2. Are you, or have you been, involved in any social movements – which ones? What purposes do they serve?
3. What is the significance of ‘social movement learning’?

Part 2: (approximately 5 September – 8 September 2011)

There are four readings in this part, but you only need to read one of them. Select a reading and join the relevant group.

Group 1 – Marshall

Marshall J. (2009) Learning democracy from North-South worker exchanges in Cooper L. and Walters S. (ed) *Learning/Work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*, Cape Town, HSRC Press. (252-269).

Group 2 - Brown

Brown, T. (2009) The desire for something better: Learning and organizing in the new world of work, in Cooper L. and Walters S. (Ed) *Learning/work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*, Cape Town, HSRC Press. (270-283).

Group 3 - Bhattacharjee

Bhattacharjee A. (2009) Migration and organising: between periphery and centre, in Cooper L. and Walters S. (Ed) *Learning/Work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*, Cape Town, H SRC Press. (142-153)

Group 4 – Von Kotze

Von Kotze A. (2009) But what shall we eat? Research questions and priorities for work and learning in Cooper L. and Walters S. (Ed) *Learning/Work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*, Cape Town, HSRC Press. (16-29)

In your group discuss and exchange responses to the following questions:

- What are your immediate reactions to the article?
- What are the crucial social, political and economic contextual factors, and how does the author see these shaping the particular education and training approaches under discussion?
- How did your reading alter your understandings of adult education/learning within civil society?
- What insights are there for local/global learning?

Part 3: (approximately 9 – 14 September 2011)

This task requires you to read and discuss this one chapter in preparation for the next task.

Reading:

Walters S. & Manicom L. (1996) Introduction, in Walters S. & Manicom, L. (Eds) *Gender in Popular Education: Methods for Empowerment*, Cape Town: CACE Publications and Zed Books.

Read the 'Introduction' to *Gender in Popular Education: Methods for Empowerment* (1996), by Shirley Walters and Linzi Manicom. The book focuses particularly on feminist popular educational activities around the world. It highlights how local popular education which is conducted by a range of groups in civil societies, in many different locations, has a lot in common.

As you are reading address questions such as:

- What are your immediate reactions to the article and how did your reading alter your previous understandings?
- What are the key elements of feminist popular education?
- What are the relationships between the learning (or educational) practices, the organizational strategies and dynamics, and the macro and micro political contexts?
- Why are the commonalities in popular education practices across such diverse local settings?
- What additional dimensions would you add when thinking about feminist popular education today?
- Did your reading of the article alter your understandings of adult education/learning within civil society? How and why?

Part 4: (Approximately 15 – 21 September 2011)

In your original group, read one of two case studies and discuss the questions that accompany the case study.

The case studies are:

Case Study 1

Ismail S. (2009) Popular pedagogy and the changing political landscape: a case study of women's housing movement in South Africa, in *Studies in Continuing Education*, Volume 31, No. 3. 281-295.

In your group discuss and exchange responses to the following questions:

- What are your immediate reactions to the article and how did your reading alter your previous understandings?
- What are the crucial social, political and economic contextual factors, and how does the author see these shaping the particular education and training approaches under discussion?
- What forms of adult learning, adult education and training are discussed in the paper? Are they transformative? In what ways?
- What is particular about `popular education` as used in this chapter?
- What insights are there for transformative adult education/learning within civil society?
- Are there any new insights for understanding local/global learning?

Case Study 2

Larsson, S. (2001) Study Circles as Democratic Utopia: A Swedish Perspective, in Bron, A.& Schemmann, M. (eds) 2001 *Civil Society, Citizenship and Learning*. Bochum Studies in International Adult Education, vol. 2. Transaction Publishers, USA/UK.

In your group discuss and exchange responses to the following questions:

- What are your immediate reactions to the article and how did your reading alter your previous understandings?
- What are the crucial social, political and economic contextual factors, and how does the author see these shaping the particular education and training approaches under discussion?
- What forms of adult learning / adult education / training are discussed in the chapter? Are they transformative? In what ways?
- What is particular about `popular education` as used in this chapter?
- What insights are there for transformative adult education within civil society?
- Are there any new insights for understanding local/global learning?

Part 5 (22 – 25 September 2011):

This is a time to reflect on your developing understanding of local/global learning within civil society organisations. How has your understanding of local/global learning shifted and changed through the stages of this part of the course? What new insights have you developed on `transformative adult learning/education`?

There is also the opportunity to discuss the writing of **your second assignment which is due on 25 September 2011.**

Assignment 2: Topic

Write a paper in which you identify and investigate some of the learning practices in a civil society organisation or social movement of your choice in order to elaborate the concept 'global/local learning'. Your paper needs to include consideration of the following:

- A contextualisation of the case you have chosen within the set of issues and theoretical concepts that are being highlighted in this block.
- An indication of which learning practices will be the focus of your case and what line of argument you will follow in your paper.
- A critical examination of three aspects of the relationships between learning, politics and organisation in civil society organisations or social movements drawing on the readings, case study material and discussion exchanges.

Assignment 2: Assessment criteria

- Contextualisation of your case study.
- Critical examination of the relationships between learning, politics and organisation in a civil society organisation or social movement.
- Is your analysis clear, coherent and supported with references to the relevant literature and case study evidence?

Step 3: Globalisation, Social Change and Adult Education

26 September-23 October 2011

Part 1: (26 September – 14 October 2011)

Part 1 focuses on Holst's perspectives on globalisation and social change, his ideas on the developments around 'nation-state' and the emergence of the notion 'global/local' in a globalising world.

Readings:

Tabb (1997) "Globalisation is An Issue, The Power of Capital is The Issue" *Monthly Review* Vol.49, No.2
Holst (2007) "The Politics and Economics of Globalisation and Social Change in Radical Adult Education: A Critical Review of Recent Literature" *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, Vol.5 No.1

Nation-state and adult education in the North and the South (26 September – 2 October)

Experiences of the role of the nation-state in respect of education for adults

Write a paragraph in which you describe an instance 'in a society of your choice' that reveals whether the nation-state is demonstrating a greater or lesser commitment in respect of education for adults. Your contributions will form the basis for the next discussions.

(Choose one of these two groups)

Strong version of globalisation/civil sociitarian perspective of adult education

From the perspective of a strong version of globalisation/civil sociitarian perspective of adult education, Holst argues that the role of the nation-state in respect of education for adults in the North is declining. Study your collective descriptions of 'instances in a society of your choice', and

- Respond to a co-student who has presented 'an instance' which is similar to yours.
- Respond to a co-student who has presented 'an instance' that is different to yours.

Longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education

From the perspective of a longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education, Holst argues that the role of the nation-state in respect of education for adults in the South is increasing. Study your collective descriptions of 'instances in a society of your choice', and

- Respond to a co-student who has presented 'an instance' which is similar to yours.
- Respond to a co-student who has presented 'an instance' that is different to yours.

(For the next discussion, choose a group, and focus on a different perspective of globalisation to the one selected for the previous discussion)

Nation-state, globalisation and social change (3-9 October)

Strong version of globalisation

Holst uses a 'strong version' of globalisation to explain the role of the nation-state in the kind of social change which has occurred under conditions of globalisation. Read Holst, study your collective descriptions of 'instances in a society of your choice' and write a paragraph in which you agree, or disagree with him, from the premise of his arguments, and your collective experiences as described earlier. Ensure that you focus on the following aspects in your paragraph:

- Main arguments of the strong version of globalisation which explain the kind of social change which has occurred under conditions of globalisation.
- What has happened to the nation-state
- What role does the nation-state play in respect of globalisation
- Your collective experiences

Longer version of globalisation

Holst uses a longer version of globalisation to explain the role of the nation-state in the kind of social change which has occurred under conditions of globalisation. Read Holst, study your collective descriptions of 'instances in a society of your choice' and write a paragraph in which you agree, or disagree with him, from the premise of his arguments, and your collective experiences as described earlier. Ensure that you focus on the following aspects in your paragraph:

- Main arguments of the longer version of globalisation which explain the kind of social change which has occurred under conditions of globalisation.

- What has happened to the nation-state
- What role does the nation-state play in respect of globalisation
- Your collective experiences

(Choose any group)

The global/local complex (10-14 October)

'Global/local' in the context of a longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education

Discuss the relevance of 'global/local' as it is portrayed by Holst from a longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education for analysing the global/local complex in respect of adult education in a 'society of your choice'.

Global/local in the context of a strong version of globalisation/civil societal perspective of adult education

Discuss the relevance of 'global/local' as it is portrayed by Holst from a strong version of globalisation/civil societal perspective of adult education for analysing the global/local complex in respect of adult education in a 'society of your choice'.

Part 2: Inequality, Globalisation, Social Transformation and Adult Education in South Africa: Global and local agendas

Developments in South Africa over the past 20 years provide an interesting example of global and local developments that have shaped the government's responses to inequalities in adult basic education in South Africa.

Read Rule, P. (2006) "The time is burning": The right of adults to basic education in South Africa. *Journal of Education*, 39 and **one reading** which you can select from the list of readings, below and participate in the discussions

List of readings

Aitchison, J. (2004) "Lifelong learning in South Africa: Dreams and delusions." *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 23(6)

Aitchison, J. and Harley, A. (2006) "South African illiteracy statistics and the case of the magically growing number of literacy and ABET learners" *Journal of Education*, 39

Department of Education (2009) Kha Ri Gude South Africa Literacy Campaign. Where are we now? Kha Ri Gude National Office, Pretoria

Groener, Z. (2000a) "The political and economic contexts of adult education and training in South Africa." In Indabawa, S. Oduaran, A. Walters, S (Ed.), *The state of adult and continuing education in Africa*. University of Namibia, Windhoek.

Groener, Z. (2000b) "Researching Adult Education Policy in the Context of an Emerging Global Political Economy: The Case of South Africa" *Monograph Vol. 1* University of Georgia.

Walters, S. (2006) "Adult learning within lifelong learning: a different lens, a different light" *Journal of Education*, 39

In your original groups discuss

- Identify and discuss the local needs related to apartheid race and gender inequalities in adult education which the post-1994 governments aimed to redress.
- Identify and discuss the intentions of the policies and plans of the post-1994 governments to redress the local needs related to apartheid race and gender inequalities in adult education.
- Discuss the successes and failures of the South African government's initiatives to redress local needs related to apartheid race and gender inequalities in adult education since 1994.
- Discuss the local conditions which authors attribute to the failure of the South African government's initiatives.
- Discuss the global conditions which authors attribute to the failure of the South African government's initiatives.
- Comment on the interplay between the local and global conditions which authors attribute to the failure of the South African government's initiatives

Part 3 (21-23 October 2011)

This is a time to reflect on your developing understanding of local/global learning since Step One. How has your understanding of local/global learning shifted and changed through the stages of the course?

What new insights have you developed?

Part 4: Assignment 3

This assignment has two sections

Section 1:

Using Holst's perspectives, write an essay in which you analyse critically global and local developments which have shaped a government's responses to adult education 'in a society of your choice' under conditions of globalisation. Make some comparisons with government's responses to adult education in post-1994 South Africa under conditions of globalisation.

Draw on the literature, in particular Holst's analysis of a longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education or a strong version of globalisation/civil societal perspective on adult education, and ideas which you have developed during this part of the course.

Holst's critique of both perspectives in adult education raises weaknesses for analyses of adult education under conditions of globalisation and calls for 'a new conceptualisation of the politics of radical adult education that goes beyond the two broad perspectives of civil societal and Marxist orientations' (Holst, 2007: 7). With reference to the latter, discuss the academic challenges which may be required to develop a new conceptualisation of the politics of radical adult education.

Section 2:

Prepare a short statement of what you have learned about the meaning and usefulness of the concept 'global/local learning' and of what you would suggest as being its essential elements.

Assignment 3: Assessment Criteria

- Broad understanding of global and local socio-economic and political developments which have shaped the developments in adult education under conditions of globalisation.
- Understanding of government initiatives in adult education in under conditions of globalisation.
- Understanding and knowledge of Holst's longer version of globalisation/Marxist political economy perspective of adult education.
- Understanding and knowledge of Holst's strong version of globalisation/civil societal perspective on adult education.
- Understanding and knowledge of Holst's analysis of 'global/local' from different perspectives.
- Understanding of some comparisons between your analysis of government's initiatives in a 'society of your choice' and the South African government initiatives in respect of redressing inequalities in adult basic education under conditions of globalisation.
- Understanding of the kind of academic exploration which could be required to develop a new conceptualisation of the politics of radical adult education.
- Arguments must be well-formulated and substantiated with references to the literature and case studies.
- Coherence of argument throughout the essay.
- Critical analysis must be evident.
- Discussion of the meaning and usefulness of the concept 'global/local learning' drawing on readings, case study material and discussion exchanges.

Appendix # 7 Promotional material for ALGC program

Please note: As this document was downloaded from the website the fonts have changed in some places.

Master in Adult Education (Global)

Providing a true global learning experience.

: sixth in the world according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2013.

Monash University's Faculty of Education presents the Master in Adult Education (Global) – an innovative online coursework-only program. We run this program in collaboration with the University of British Columbia (Canada), Linköping University (Sweden), and the University of the Western Cape (South Africa).

In the Master of Adult Education (Global), you will explore cultural differences and diverse teaching and learning approaches - and will share in a true global learning experience.

Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) are available for 2014 intake.

Program Features

This is a 100 per cent online coursework-only program – you won't need to attend any meetings or courses on campus.

You will work with individuals from different backgrounds located worldwide for a truly global experience.

Eligibility

This innovative intercontinental course is suited to self motivated learners who are interested in learning about adult education from a globalised perspective. We have designed the program for people who work in:

Formal educational settings

Business and industry

Activist organisations

Government and nongovernmental organisations

Health care and community groups.

We have designed it so that those with full-time professional responsibilities can participate.

What you will learn

You will examine:

Contemporary changes in work and learning

The role adult learning plays in understanding and responding to globalising forces and their impacts on workplaces, communities and the environment

The forms of adult learning found in different cultural contexts

Ways of supporting adult learning in conditions of global change.

You will:

Draw on your own experiences

Engage in discussions

Work on collaborative projects with students from other countries.

This program encourages the development of critical perspectives on adult learning and how people in different parts of the world understand these.

Career opportunities

This web-based professional master's degree will benefit those working in various settings, where experiences of globalisation are changing the way people live their lives, and undertaking their learning and work. Professional opportunities in this unique program will also facilitate valuable international networks.

Course structure

The course comprises of six units (totalling 72 credit points), including:

Locating oneself in global learning

Adult learning: Perspectives and contexts

Work and learning

Fostering learning in practice

Global/local learning

Understanding research

For more information on the course structure, visit the [course map](#) page.

How is the program delivered?

As this course is offered in collaboration with northern hemisphere universities, it does not run in traditional Australian semesters. Classes commence on 18 August 2014. You will need to apply by 14 May 2014.

Entry Requirements

[View a detailed list of entry requirements.](#)

Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP)

2014 will be the last year that CSP are available for this program. The student contribution amount is (AUD) \$6,044* (CSP) – normally (AUD) \$17,800* full fee.

* This fee represents the average cost of full-time study for one year, based on 48 credit points.

Jan McCarthy, graduate



“I was working full-time and needed a program that could fit around that. The freedom to be able to post questions, regardless of the hour, day or night, knowing that someone would be online and ready to engage really helped. Exposure to the diversity of culture, experience, views and language within the learning context has helped expand my thinking.”

Mike Adamson, graduate



“The program is very relevant and provides a good look into the future. The online delivery ties into aspects of our organisation’s strategies, so my participation has made me aware of how our clients will react to learning online.”

How to Apply

Applications for this course have now closed. Please visit the [Course Finder entry](#) for more information.

Presentation

[View a presentation provided at an information session held on Tuesday 25 March \(pdf 1MB\).](#)

If you have any queries regarding this course please contact 1800 MONASH (1800 666 274), or view the [C](#)

Ref: <http://www.monash.edu/education/events/master-in-adult-education-global/>

Appendix # 8 2010 Handbook entry for ALGC program

Please note: As this document was downloaded from the website the fonts have changed in some places.

Monash University Handbook 2010 **Postgraduate – Course**

3733 - Master in Adult Education (Global)

This course entry should be read in conjunction with information provided in the 'Faculty information' section of this Handbook by the Faculty of Education

Managing faculty	Education
Abbreviated title	MAdultEd(Global)
Total credit points required	72
Standard duration of study (years)	1.5 years PT
Study mode and location	Off-campus (Clayton)
Contact details	Ms Jodie Vickers, Telephone: +61 3 9905 8646; email Jodie.vickers@education.monash.edu.au
Course coordinator	Professor Terri Seddon

Notes

- This course is not available to international student visa holders.
- Part-time study only available.

Description

The Master in Adult Education (Global) is a web-based, coursework-only professional Master's degree that will benefit persons working in formal educational settings, business and industry, activist organisations, government, non-governmental organisations, health care, community and other settings, where various discourses about globalisation are changing the way lives are lived and learning and work are undertaken. This is a collaborative program involving University of British Columbia (Canada), Linköping University (Sweden), University of the Western Cape (South Africa) and Monash University.

Objectives

After completing this program it is expected that students will be able to:

- critically analyse dominant and alternative theories and discourses of 'globalisation'
- identify the various ways context shapes adult learning and related policy
- intelligently discuss why and the ways in which learners resist or embrace education and
- analyse attempts to foster change through learning and plan effective learning interventions that help adults increase their influence over the direction and pace of local and global change.

Structure

Students must complete six 12-point core units.

Requirements

Students complete the following:

- [EDF6860](#) Locating oneself in global learning
- [EDF6861](#) Adult learning: Perspectives and contexts
- [EDF6862](#) Global/local learning
- [EDF6863](#) Fostering learning in practice
- [EDF6864](#) Work and learning
- [EDF6865](#) Understanding research

Award(s)

Master in Adult Education (Global)

Ref: <http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/2010handbooks/courses/3733.html>

Please note: As this document was downloaded from the website the fonts have changed in some places.

