PLAYING THE EMPOWERMENT GAME

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1. INTRODUCTION

When analysing the concept of empowerment, Payne (2005:295) is of the opinion that empowerment seeks to help a client to gain power of decision and action over their own lives by reducing the effect of social or personal blocks to exercising existing power, increasing capacity and self-confidence to use power and transferring power from the groups and individuals. Clients of social workers are in many instances trapped by poverty and experience feelings of powerlessness. In order to help them, the social worker should use his skills and knowledge to help them to take back the power that they have lost or maybe never had. Techniques that reduce the effect of social or personal blocks should be used in order to help them improve their capacity and self-confidence. This is especially important when planning and implementing sustainable development projects.

The purpose of this paper is to show and describe how the use of experiential learning and adventurous activities can be used to empower people and especially the poor so that they can adapt better to their environment and in that way become well-adjusted, well-motivated citizens. The programme under discussion is a life-skills programme which employs the experiential learning theory in the form of cooperative games, problem-solving, communication, and trust activities which are not very expensive and is helpful in the fight against poverty as these techniques could be used in order to build human potential.

2. RETHINKING POVERTY

Poverty isn't new to South Africa. In 2001 the unemployment rate was 29.4% and in 2006 it came down to 25.5% (Statistics South Africa, 2006:10). This indicates that the government and private sector have made a large contribution towards attending to this problem. Although progress has been made, there are still many poor and unemployed people in South Africa. This is clear from the results of the labour force survey that was finalised in

September 2006. This report shows that the labour market comprised 30,006 000 persons aged between 15–65 years; of which 12,800 000 persons were unemployed, and 4,391 000 persons were unemployed in accordance to the official definition. This means that they are unemployed but would take up work within two weeks after taking part in this survey. Another 12,815 000 people were not economically active; 17,191 000 were in the labour force or economically active and 3,217 000 people were discouraged work seekers (Statistics South Africa, 2006:24).

Discouraged work seekers are seen as people who say that they would like to work: they are able to work, but do not make any attempts to find a job (Statistics South Africa, 2006:2). The question could be asked why these people are not willing to even try to find a job: What is keeping them from seeking work? There might be a variety[1]array of reasons, including the lack of emotional energy to look for a job, laziness, a lack of life skills, or it may even be that they or someone close to them have an income in the form of a grant.

According to the Department of Social Development (2006:2), most people receiving disability and child support grants are not motivated to join the workforce. Because of this, the Department of Social Development (2006) has published a discussion document pertaining to the linking of social grants beneficiaries to poverty alleviation and economic activity. In this document it is estimated that 36% of beneficiaries of disability grants have disabilities that do not necessarily render them unable to obtain gainful employment. It further mentions that over 65% of caregivers receiving a child support grant are single parents and 94% of them are African. More than 11% of the caregivers have never received any formal education, while 71,5% underwent 1–11 years of education. Over 85% of these caregivers are unemployed (Department of Social Development, 2006:3–5). This means that there are many people that could contribute to the economic growth of this country; they just need to be activated to do so. It seems that this Department is aware of the fact that these people need to be empowered to take the leap to the next level. That is why they suggest that the potential productive population should be mobilised and empowered in order to enjoy the dignity of work. This empowerment should take the form of a holistic approach that concentrates on (1) encouraging sustainable development, reducing poverty and enabling individuals; (2) programmes should focus on the individual and be concerned with human capital development; and (3) the welfare caseload should be reduced by the development of skills and career development (Department of Social Development, 2006:6–7). This implies that programmes should not just pay attention to the creation of jobs, but also to helping people to be effective and motivated in order to make a success of their work.

Other departments in the South African government have also identified the need for creating work opportunities and the development of life skills. One of the very successful programmes that were started is the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This programme was started because of the magnitude of South Africa's structural unemployment crisis. The government's strategy with this programme is to reduce unemployment by increasing economic growth (Philips, 2004:2). It is important that the Public Works Programmes should be meaningful. It should deliver a good quality and needed service, not just to contribute to the economic growth of the country, but also to uplift the people involved in the process. They should feel that they are also making a contribution towards the upliftment of the country. When analysing the fourth quarterly report of the Expanded Public Works Programme (2006) it is apparent that this programme also realised that the development of life skills as part of this programme is necessary for its success and that the focus should not primarily be on the creation of jobs.

It is important to understand that poverty isn't just a need for work, clothes, food and housing (absolute poverty); many poor people also experience what I like to call *emotional poverty*. This type of poverty is seen as a lack of, amongst others, self-confidence, self-reliance and a personal vision. Swanepoel & De Beer (1996:24) add to this by saying that people do not only have concrete needs; they also have abstract needs, referring to self-reliance, happiness and human dignity and that these needs could not be separated.

Therefore I conclude that, in order to really have an impact on absolute poverty, development needs to become more than economic development. It has to focus on the enrichment of human lives and on the empowerment of the individual, the eradication of emotional poverty. People should be helped with the development of their self-concept, motivation, social skills, self-awareness and self-regulation. This could be done through playing the empowerment game by using adventure programmes that will now be discussed.

3. ADVENTURE PROGRAMMES

Adventure is a *way of doing* and not necessarily *what* you do. When the term *adventure* is used, people tend to think about activities in nature, adrenalin, physical risks and huge costs. Rafting, rock-climbing and wilderness expeditions are seen in the mind's eye. Adventure counselling doesn't need to include all of this. Rather think about adventure as *a way of doing* and not *what you do*. If you use this frame of mind, any environment could potentially be adventurous, especially if it consists of the elements of surprise; activities that motivate

participants to go beyond their normal limits; and to do things that they thought were impossible. There is adventure when there is participation and this leads to unique experiences and the discovery of new information that is relevant to the situation of the client. Adventure means to take "risks" that will take the participant to the brink of success or failure. They might simultaneously be successful as well as unsuccessful. Risks form the basis of adventure. The risk isn't just physical in nature but also emotional. It also includes perceived danger where the participant is in fact very safe – if the facilitator knows what he is doing. It is very important that a person participating in an adventure programme feels that it is emotionally safe to share his/her feelings with others in the group.

In the next part of this presentation a general orientation will be done in order to describe the basics of adventure-orientated programmes. The model of Project Adventure, a USA-based organization that has been doing this kind of work for the past 30 years, will be used.

3.1 The basics of adventure-based developmental programmes

Miles & Priest (1990:01) show that adventure is an activity that takes place when the unknown is entered. For the adventurer this could mean risks and it might even be dangerous. It seems that the aim of a person's normal daily routine is to minimize adventure and reduce risk in order to improve the prospect for success. People thus have a natural need to protect themselves against danger and risks at different levels of their existence (physical, financial, social, intellectual and spiritual).

As a person will naturally try to avoid danger and risks, it seems that it would be a novel experience for most people when they are put in an adventure situation. This would take the person out of his/her homeostasis. In the process of rectifying homeostasis, growth and development will take place. It has to be mentioned that some people do like to put themselves into situations where they will experience danger and uncertainty, but it seems that this isn't the norm.

Adventure-based developmental programmes make use of a group therapeutic model that utilizes finely selected activities within the framework of experiential learning. The combination of this is then used to bring about change in the group and in the life of the individual participating in the group. Many of the activities are also used in education and recreational programmes (Schoel & Maizell, 2002:ix). This programme focuses on the difference between adventure education (adventure-based developmental programmes) and adventure recreation is that , changing behaviour and positively influencing a client's life.

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This change is created when the client is put in a situation where he experiences some psychological and physical stress in order to grow. During this the participants will be confronted by new ideas, emotions and interaction, which form a part of the activities. The process used for the effective planning of the intervention is seen by Nadler (1993:60) as, "the client experiences a state of disequilibrium by being placed in a novel setting and a cooperative environment while being presented with unique problem-solving situations that lead to feelings of accomplishment which are augmented by processing the experience which promotes generalization and transfer to future endeavours" (Nadler, 1993:60).

According to Schoel et al. (1988:24–25), a typical session will last between one and two hours, during which attention will be given to tasks (behaviourist perspective), thoughts (cognitive psychological perspective) and feelings (affective perspective). It is thus a holistic approach towards the development of the client.

Project Adventure (2002:5 & 8) builds their programme on this holistic approach as well as three basic concepts, namely challenge by choice, the full-value contract and the experiential learning process. Using this in an integrated manner gives the facilitator a unique tool to help clients to develop and grow to their full potential.

3.1.1   Challenge by choice

The concept of challenge by choice seeks to put the learner in a situation that feels a bit uncomfortable in order for growth to take place. The adventure activities try to put the learner in a safe environment that is marked by surprise, challenges and fun. In this context challenge by choice gives the participant the opportunity to try potentially difficult and sometimes terrifying activities in an environment of trust, support and caring for one another. The participant has the opportunity to stand back from the activity when it becomes too frightening and s/he does not have enough self-confidence. The learner knows that at a later stage s/he will have the opportunity to try again and push the personal limits even further. It is important for the learner to understand that trying and pushing oneself is more important than the end product. The last important idea to keep in mind is that the learner should understand that there should be respect for one another's different ideas and choices. (Project Adventure, 2002:5). This concept gives the learner the opportunity to make his own decisions in an environment of support. During the process each individual has to be helped to identify and work on his/her own opportunities of growth. The group process is used in such a way that positive peer pressure is utilized to facilitate change. The full-value contract is used to facilitate and enforce this. The participants get the opportunity to develop self-

confidence in the management of the peer group, feelings and emotions. The client develops a positive self-image and learns that the end result isn't always the indicator of success but rather the process of achieving the end result. In this whole process the emotional intelligence (EQ) of the participant is enhanced.

The fact that the client receives the opportunity to identify his/her own challenges and decides how far he wants to push the boundaries in order to achieve the set challenges does not mean that the opportunity exists to cut himself from the group on a physical or emotional level. It is expected of each group member to contribute and take part in the process. It does mean that the participant would, for example, only share on the emotional level as far as s/he feels comfortable and on the physical level he will help to safeguard the other participants during the activity. As the participant grows during the process and develops greater self-confidence, the participation levels increase.

3.1.2   The full-value contract

The full-value contract forms the second pillar of the Project Adventure Programme. This does not only form part of the unique spirit of adventure-based programmes, but it is also seen as a very important part of group work in general (Toseland & Rivas, 1998:164 and Zastrow, 2001:356). A good contract should, according to Project Adventure (2002:6), focus on the following:

1. Group members have to identify safe behaviour and respectful norms within which the group will function.
2. All group members should commit themselves to those norms and behaviour.
3. The members should take shared responsibility for the enforcement of the contract during the process of ABC.

According to Schoel et al. (1988:95) and Gilles (1995:2–3) the full-value contract asks for the following commitments:

1. An agreement among group members to work together to achieve both the individual goals and the goals of the group that were identified at the initial stages of the process.
2. An agreement to adhere to certain safety and group behaviour guidelines. Remember that these guidelines should be discussed with the group as well as agreed upon; if not, it would be meaningless.
3. An agreement to give and receive honest feedback. This means that group members agree to be confronted when their behaviours do not match the identified goals

and/or values and norms that were decided on in the beginning. The confrontation should be done in a caring and respectful manner.

4. The last commitment is about an increase in one's own awareness of devaluing or discounting behaviour towards other group members. Group members should become aware of how they react towards other members and change their behaviour so that it is acceptable and that it would help all the group members to grow.

From this it is evident that the contract will help the facilitator to achieve optimal results in terms of the development of emotional intelligence and personal empowerment as it focuses on Goleman's (1999:318) five basic emotional and social competencies (cf. 4.4).

The participants will work together in the writing of the contract. This is done in their own words and own unique way. Different ways could be used to present the contract. The group may use a flag, pictures from magazines, or a poster. It is important to remember that the younger the group, the more concrete it should be. Additions to the contract are made on a continuous basis, so keep it close!

It is important that group members should take shared ownership of their emotional and physical safety. As the group members decide what is acceptable and unacceptable in the group, the group will be partly responsible for the control during the group process. When group members become co-responsible for the enforcing of group norms, they are put in a position of power where they are empowered to take control of their own situation. At the beginning of the process the facilitator will have total control. However, as the process develops, this control will become less and the group members will become more empowered to determine the focus of the group. This then also helps with the development of the inter- and intra-personal skills.

3.1.3   Experiential learning process

The last important concept to take note of is the use of the experiential learning model (cf. figure 1). According to Gass (1993:4) most experiential learning programmes are founded on the belief that learning or behavioural change must focus on including a direct experience in the process of growth. It is further said that, in order to change, there should be a form of experience that triggers this change. This means that the closer a learner could be placed to the origin of chance, the higher the transmission of knowledge would be. Experiential learning further instils a sense of ownership over what has been learned and this also contributes towards the transfer of learning (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:3–4). The use of this

process could contribute to learning and behavioural change in poor people. The experiential learning process, as developed by David Kolb (Osland, Kolb & Rubin (2001:43), and used by Jamison (2007), will be used to explain how learning and empowerment could be facilitated.

The first part of the experiential theory consists of performing an activity (Jamison, 2007). This forms the doing part of the process and the activity or game forms the concrete experience that is needed to set the process in motion.

The second phase of the process is called observation and reflection (Burnard, 1993:9) or share and process (Jamison, 2007). During this first part of the reflection phase the participants have to share the results of the activity, the reactions of group members and their general observations publicly. This narrative of the experience gives the participants the opportunity to remember what has happened and to become aware of things that happened that they didn't notice when taking part in the activity.
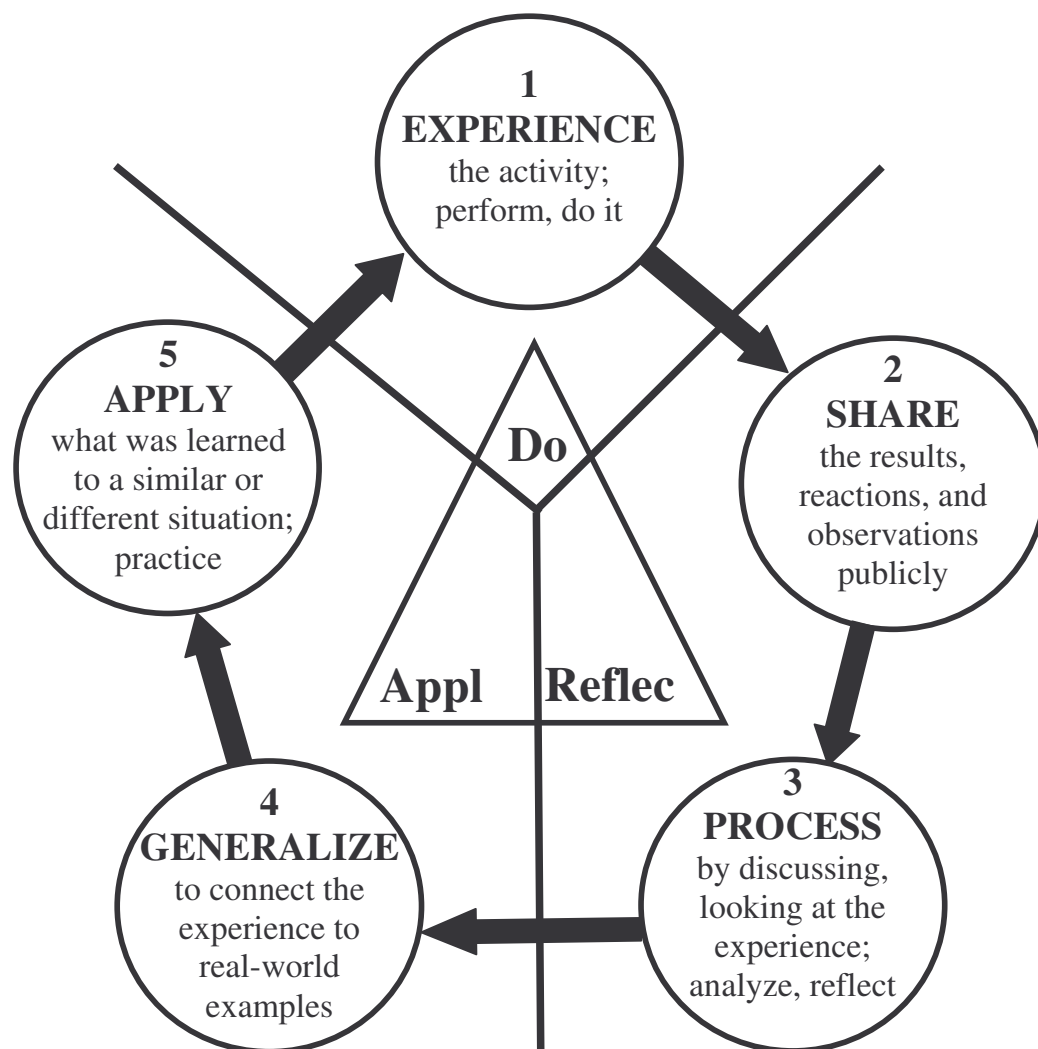

Figure 1: The experiential learning model (Jamison, 2007)

During the next phase (3) the participants are asked to discuss the positive and enriching as well as negative and degrading behaviour that serviced during the activity. They have to discuss, analyse and reflect in order to process their learning.

The second last phase (4) starts when the group members have to connect the experience to real-life examples. In this phase the participant has to start to identify where they have experienced the identified behaviour or results of the activity in the real world. The influence of this behaviour should be discussed so that generalizations could be made. This will then lead to the next phase of the experiential learning process.

The last phase (5) of the process starts when you begin to plan how to apply this newly-acquired knowledge in new situations. The question is asked how they think they could use this new knowledge in their day-to-day life. This is where the real transfer of learning takes place.

The use of the experiential learning theory has the advantage that it uses simple adventure games and activities as well as other activities such as role play, psychodrama and brainstorming to help participants see things in their own lives differently (Schoel, et al., 1988:280–293 and Burnard, 1993:18–28). If games are played and activities performed without an effective debriefing, it means nothing. Using this theory as a basis for debriefing encourages the participants to look deeper into what has happened and to discover new solutions for old problems. They are also helped to identify strengths that they have never been aware of.

4. THE PROCESS OF ADVENTURE EMPOWERMENT

As indicated in the introduction, empowerment in this paper is about helping poor community members to gain power in order to make their own decisions and take control of their own lives by reducing the effect of social or personal blocks that is limiting their growth by increasing capacity and self-confidence (Payne, 2005:295).

In order to ensure that growth does take place, it is necessary for the facilitator to use his skills, knowledge and a positive attitude to create change. In order to promote this change, Luckner & Nadler (1997:28) is of the opinion that disequilibrium should be created. This is done through adventurous activities and the use of the experiential learning process. When disequilibrium is created during the first and second phases of the mentioned process the

facilitator should be willing and ready to facilitate learning and change. This is where empowerment begins, as the clients are helped to gain power of decision and action over their own lives. The effect of social or personal blocks is reduced and capacity and self-confidence is increased (Payne, 2005:295).

Before learning really takes place the comfort zones of the participants should be challenged. As the disequilibrium increases they will become aware of different, in some instances, uncomfortable feelings. This is what Luckner & Nadler (1997:29) call *working at the edge*. This is where the realm of possibilities is and new territory could be explored. In the next part attention will be paid to what happens before the success, how to facilitate this and what the basic components are that form part this so-called edgework.

4.1   What happens at the edge?

As people get closer to the unknown, their sense of disequilibrium increases and they start to feel uncertainty. Their feelings intensify; they may become fearful, anxious, confused, excited, or feel alone. Their physical symptoms change, palms sweat, hearts race, respiration quickens, etc. Their internal conversation will also start to get louder, they will start saying things to themselves like: "I can't do this", "I'll fail", and "I must do this perfectly" (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:29). The person is now at the so-called "edge" and has to make a decision: "Do I go on and hopefully experience success or do I retreat to a save and comfortable environment without the exhilarating feeling of success?"

This usually happens during the participation in the activity – phase 1 of the experiential learning process. I agree with Luckner & Nadler (1997:30) when they say that a wealth of valuable information gets lost if the facilitator waits for phase 2 and 3 of the experiential learning process before processing what is happening. If the facilitator waits too long before processing the feelings experienced, it may be lost. This means that a facilitator should be attentive to what is happening in the group during the activity and be prepared to stop the activity for a few minutes in order to examine the feelings, patterns, beliefs, and conversations of the group.

4.2   Processing

In order to improve the impact of the activity, good processing is needed. The facilitator would try and slow down or freeze the moments before the success or the retreat, so that individual thoughts, feelings and actions that make up their strengths and/or weaknesses

become conscious and both internally and externally communicated (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:31). The person should become emotionally aware of his inner self and that which happens to other people, as this is also part of the development of their emotional intelligence (Le Roux & De Klerk, 2001:12). The facilitator would like to know what happened just before a leap was taken towards success or a safe environment and that could only be done if the participants are made aware of what has happened.

When processing, the first thing that the participants should be made aware of is what had happened just before the decision for progress or retreat was made. How did they personally sabotage or aid their efforts? Next, attention is given to the responsibility level. They have to own their patterns of conversation, feelings and actions; they should also identify their own typical responses. The participants will then have to be motivated to experiment with new behaviours and strategies. Finally, with generalization and transference, the participants can predict how they'll respond when they encounter new edges at home or at work (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:32–35).

In order to be effective in processing, the facilitator should be aware of the edge components. These are the things that you would make the group aware of during the processing and eventually alter or refine to help them become more empowered beings.

4.3   Edge components

It is important to recognize that many of the edge components that will be discussed overlap and influence each other. For the purposes of this discussion defences and typical patterns, feelings, physiology, beliefs, conversation, support and metaphors will be discussed separately (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:36–44). The facilitator should note that these components contribute towards the development of a person's self concept, one of the overall aims of adventure-based work (Schoel, Prouty & Radcliffe, 1988:12)

4.3.1   Defences and typical patterns

People use different defence mechanisms in order to protect them against anxiety and fear of hurt and rejection. Zastrow (2001:136) mentions that a defence mechanism is a psychological attempt to avoid or escape painful conditions such as anxiety, frustration, hurt and guilt. He further states that an individual's defence mechanisms are usually activated when he faces information that conflicts with his self-image. Defence mechanisms preserve

the self-concept and self-esteem and soften the blows of failure, deprivation or guilt. Some of these defence mechanisms include rationalization, projection, denial, fantasy, isolation, etc.

During an activity a participant feeling anxious about what is happening could thus start to use a defence mechanism to protect himself from feeling inadequate. In many cases these defence mechanisms have become part of the person's being and he is not always even aware of what he is doing. The facilitator should make the group member aware of this behaviour and encourage him to experiment with new behaviour and patterns that are more productive.

4.3.2   Feelings

According to Le Roux & De Klerk (2001:18), a feeling is an internal physical reaction to something you experience. The stimulus can be something you perceive through your senses and which you interpret. Many people have learned not to feel and cannot manage feelings, and sometimes just tolerate uncomfortable, unfamiliar and negative feelings (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:36).

The higher the disequilibrium becomes during the activity the more intense these feelings will become. In order to be able to manage these feelings, it is important to be aware of them and to take the responsibility for them. Being able to manage feelings in a proper, uplifting manner is one of the indications of a higher emotional intelligence, as it shows a higher emotional awareness (Le Roux & De Klerk, 2001:10).

4.3.3   Physiology

Specific physical symptoms may be associated with a particular feeling of discomfort. These symptoms could also be seen as internal clues such as heart racing, sweat, face flushing, sweating, hollow feeling in stomach, muscle contractions, and cold hands and feet (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:38 and Le Roux & De Klerk, 2001:22).

If participants are aware of these physical symptoms and what they represent with regard to feelings, they could be helped to go beyond these roadblocks and develop new strategies to cope with these feelings. When the facilitator helps the participants to identify the named physical symptoms and connect that with their feelings, it could become easier for them to continue and make one or another breakthrough. It could be helpful to explain a few stress-

management techniques to them such as improving the posture, breathing and positive self talk (Davidson, 1999:235, 264 & 279).

4.3.4 Beliefs

Beliefs usually start to develop very early in a person's life. People receive feedback from others with regard to what they are doing or sometimes not doing. Long-term inspirational or degrading feedback leads to the formation of a personal belief. This gives a person a "map" according to which he will behave. These beliefs will not feel good to the individual and could be self-limiting. Some of these core beliefs may include: "Something is wrong with me", "I can't", "I'm stupid" and "I don't know" (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:39).

It would be the task of the facilitator to help the participant and the group to identify these self-limiting beliefs as this could hamper breaking through to the next level. It would be important to acknowledge personal achievements as well as motivating the group to be receptive, encouraging and supportive to the individual. Breaking this self-limiting behaviour will contribute to the empowerment of group members.

4.3.5 Conversation

The beliefs that a person has about himself are supported by his inner conversations. A person will have an inner dialogue with himself and in the process sustain the "scripts" that he has created for himself. These conversations will be used to plan, confirm or refute the map that he has about himself (Luckner & Nadler, 1997:40).

As indicated in the previous part, the facilitator will help the group members to become aware of their inner conversations and then focus their efforts to change this to positive self-talk.

4.3.6 Support

Luckner & Nadler (1997:41) mention that a person's actions and choices are usually viewed as serving a positive purpose for them. Most people will choose a support that is either self-nurturing, or self-protective, or both. Qualities of these support systems include: (a) consistency, (b) security, (c) safety, (d) tension relief, (e) nourishment, (f) trustworthiness and (g) encouragement. In the light of this a person may depend on things like drugs, food, work, a particular relationship, or a group to provide support. Personal experience has shown that many people have difficulty in directly asking for support and/or help.

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Participants in an experiential activity could be helped to explore the type of support they have used in the past and experiment with new constructive ways of asking and getting support from the group. In this process they learn to identify and use resources while at the edge. When in other situations where they encounter edge situations they will be prepared to ask and use other, more constructive support.

4.3.7 Metaphors

"I am on top of the world" and "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel" are examples of metaphors. As seen from these examples, metaphors are very effective in communicating experiences. It is an idea, object, or description that is identical in form and structure – but not necessarily in composition or function – to another idea, object or description. The creation of metaphors is a natural and sometimes unconscious process human beings use in thinking and communicating. Metaphors can also be used to create patterns that connect the learning experience with the office, school, or home environment (Priest & Gass, 1997:210, Luckner & Nadler, 1997:42).

The facilitator should help the group with the forming of their own metaphors. They should be helped to connect their learning to other areas of life such as work and school. As they start to develop their own metaphors, it becomes easier to reconnect specific learning that has taken place at a later stage. The group could be asked to form their own "pictures" of what is happening at that stage. These "pictures" could at a later stage be confirmed or changed, whatever is applicable.

As seen in the previous discussions, it is necessary for the facilitator to make the group members aware of their defences, feelings, physical changes, beliefs, communication, support and metaphors. Being aware of this will lead to an improved self-awareness that could contribute to higher emotional intelligence. As a high emotional intelligence is seen as a contributing factor to personal success, attention will shortly[2] be given to this phenomenon.

4.4 Developing emotional intelligence as part of the empowerment process

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a relatively new and growing area of behavioural investigation with researchers working hard towards understanding the nature of EI. There is a great diversity of theories and definitions of EI, which can be problematic in scientific study (Zeidler

et al., 2003:69,70). As this paper isn't an evaluation of different theories, the theory of Mayer & Salovey will be used as a basis for discussion. Mayer & Salovey (1997:10) regards emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. From this definition it is evident that emotional intelligence includes cognitive and emotional features.

Goleman (1999:317) accepted the theory of Mayer & Salovey and refined it. They defined emotional intelligence within the workplace as the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in our relationships and ourselves. Three important elements of emotional intelligence emerge from this. They are the recognition of feelings, personal motivation and the management of emotions in relationships.

Using the above definition, Goleman (1999:318) identified five basic emotional and social competencies. They are:

- Self-awareness – Knowing what you feel at any specific moment, and using that to guide decision making as well as having a realistic assessment of your own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.
- Self-regulation – Handling emotions so that they facilitate and not interfere with the task at hand, being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals and recovering well from emotional distress.
- Motivation – Using your preferences to move and guide you towards your goals, to help you to initiate and strive for improvement and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations.
- Empathy – Sensing what people are feeling, being able to take their perspective and cultivating rapport and harmonise with a broad diversity of people.
- Social skills – Handling emotions in relationships well and accurately; reading social situations and networks; integrating smoothly; and using these skills to persuade and lead, negotiate and settle disputes for co-operation and teamwork.

The question could be asked if there is a difference between emotional intelligence and emotional competencies. Blom (2000:54) shows that emotional intelligence shows the potential of capacity that the individual has in terms of certain components that consists of specific knowledge, ability and skills in terms of emotional aspects. On the other hand, emotional competence shows the emotional competency of a person in terms of his/her

ability to use his/her knowledge, ability and skills in this regard. A person that is emotionally capable has learned and is using emotions and emotional content. This then also means that emotional intelligence can be learnt and isn't something that cannot change.

From the above definitions and the basic competencies of Goleman it seems that emotional intelligence affects many aspects of an individuals mental and physical well-being. A high emotional intelligence will also facilitate the ability to get along with other people, to make sensible life choices, and to succeed in school, careers, community life, etc.

According to Abramoviz (2001:14), studies have shown that programmes aimed at the prevention of violence, teen smoking, drug abuse, pregnancy, and dropping out of school are most effective when they address the elements of emotional intelligence. Experts are also of the opinion that developing emotional intelligence can help to avoid both short-term injury risks and long-term illnesses such as heart disease, liver disease, and some cancers. These hazards are often a result of substance abuse and other dangerous lifestyle choices that go hand-in-hand with out-of-control emotional stress (Abramoviz, 2001:14). The success of prevention programmes related to HIV and Aids could also be enhanced if emotional intelligence is improved.

The development of the emotional intelligence of clients of social workers (individuals, groups and communities) could thus have a positive effect on them as they sometimes suffer from problems pertaining to violence, drug abuse, low motivation, out-of-control emotions, etc.

In order to empower the poor, life-skills programmes should thus be promoted which, amongst others, focus on the development of adaptability; inter-personal and intra-personal skills; how to function effectively within a group; and skills related to the ability to influence others; in other words, the development of emotional intelligence (cf. Ebersohn & Eloff, 2003:46–48). This could be done effectively with the use of experiential learning that uses adventure-based activities as described in previous parts of this paper.

5. Conclusion

The use of experiential learning and adventure to teach people new skills isn't a new concept. Some of the cornerstones of adventure-based work, such as the use of a contract in a therapeutic setting, are also not new. In order to have an adventure experience, participants do not need a rush of adrenalin; they need an environment where they could

learn new and exciting behaviour with the help of motivating and caring group members and a well-trained facilitator.

The focus of adventure-based work falls on the identification and mobilization of that inner potential which every person has. People are motivated to take control of their lives and realize their potential and power. Furthermore, it focuses on the expansion of positive life values such as integrity, respect, love, loyalty, etc. Children experiencing difficult circumstances are encouraged to make choices in order to direct their lives within a framework of positive values.

Lastly, an important principle of adventure-based work is to motivate participants to do things that they would not normally do. They must leave the "safe" world to which they are accustomed for a new challenge. In this way unique outcomes are generated and people grow. This then leads to the empowerment of participants so that they can adapt better to their environment and in that way become well-adjusted, well-motivated citizens, people that could successfully carry the burden for creating a better South Africa.

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