



Bricolage of Recognition on Prior Learning Evaluation of Lifelong Skills of Emerging Farmers' Farm Practices towards Agricultural Qualifications

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ABSTRACT

Part of the colonial mandate of the education of the apartheid system in the thoughts and minds of an authentic African scholar was to discourage learning. In the South African context, emerging farmers fall within the group of previously disadvantaged groups with low literacy levels. The government addresses the disconnect between knowledge or skills and appropriate qualifications by recognising prior learning programs. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) supports the principle of lifelong learning by encouraging individuals to improve their skills continuously. This intellectual piece aims to critically evaluate the perspectives of emerging farmers on the facilitation methods employed during RPL assessments. Two hundred (200) emerging farmers in the Free State province of South Africa participated in an RPL assessment session to be recognised for two agricultural courses. The data was generated following assessment sessions conducted in a classroom setting for three months. The text and talks were processed and analysed using critical discourse analysis to expose hidden meanings and discursive practices. Emerging farmers prefer a learning environment where they are viewed as active participants in the teaching and learning process during assessments and can demonstrate their power. The findings of this study support the evaluation process that observes the adult learning principles to create an environment where emerging farmers realise their power during assessment sessions.

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INTRODUCTION

The late Professor Sechaba Geoffrey Mahlomaholo dedicated his late career life to the advancement and development of the scholarship of Sustainable Learning Environment. He did that as his contribution to the attempt to reverse the injustices of the colonial past by troubling the elements of power and dominance that perpetuate in the educational discourses. His work involved dismantling the legacy of apartheid that had over the years cemented its existence in the neocolonial democratic dispensation. In the realisation that the instruments of power and dominance assure the *status quo* of oppression and exclusion based on race within the agricultural education discourse of South Africa. The situation led to labelling African farmers as backward and with learning disabilities. Mahlomaholo in his wisdom pointed directed the researcher to refer to good research material on the works of Lévi-

Strauss, Kincheloe and Denzin and Lincoln among others.¹ The researcher began to develop curiosities surrounding the question of the effects of coloniality on the educational process of the formerly oppressed people and how the colonial teaching methods impact the learning progress leading to an understanding of the discouragement towards education that came with the apartheid education system as a system of power and dominance to oppress and exclude people based on race. The apartheid government's lifespan lasted for forty years in South Africa, which resulted in black people receiving little or inferior education.² The intention of the RPL of the emerging farmers in South Africa was part of the transformation agenda to develop and improve the quality of agricultural education. Transformation is termed as a drastic change to the culture, mindset and behaviour; it embodies human growth, ultimate peace of mind, and self-actualisation.³ RPL in the agriculture context seeks to recognise and acknowledge the diverse learning agricultural experiences of an individual to provide an opportunity for lifelong experience to be accredited.⁴ It provides the opportunity for people who have not studied for a long time to obtain a qualification or to gain credits towards obtaining a qualification.⁵ This is done to redress the injustices of the exclusion of previously disadvantaged individuals from higher education during the apartheid era.⁶

Agricultural education has not been able to provide eminent solutions to the challenges in the formal and non-formal training of emerging farmers in South Africa.⁷ The training conducted seems to be responsive on a small scale based on each emerging farmer's resources. Training for the acquisition of agricultural skills follows a neat, unilinear process where aspirations of individual agricultural trainers or educators are expressed in isolation and with no elements of complexity.⁸ The calls for decolonised and transformation in education have been louder and stronger in recent years.⁹ Agricultural training praxis follows the positivistic stand in progress, emerging farmers are still viewed as passive receivers rather than active creators of knowledge.¹⁰ Emerging farmers are exposed to comprehensive teaching methods, where they are made to sit in a classroom and listen to the educator all day.¹¹ It is for these reasons that similar to the sentiments of Mahlomaholo that the researcher in this study proposes the principles of educator bricoleur to underpin the agricultural education in the formal and non-formal training of emerging farmers, grounded in adult education.¹² His work on a

¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale II* (Plon, 2014); Joe L. Kincheloe, "On to the Next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the Bricolage," *Qualitative Inquiry* 11, no. 3 (June 1, 2005): 323–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405275056>; Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (sage, 2011).

² Aimee Brenner et al., "From Prior Learning Assessment to Specialised Pedagogy: Facilitating Student Transition through RPL Assessment and Selection," *Studies in Continuing Education* 44, no. 3 (September 2, 2022): 425–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2021.1874333>.

³ Marici Snyman and Geesje van den Berg, "The Significance of the Learner Profile in Recognition of Prior Learning," *Adult Education Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (February 21, 2018): 24–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713617731809>.

⁴ Marta C. Miguel, José H. Ornelas, and João P. Maroco, "Recognition of Prior Learning: The Participants' Perspective," *Studies in Continuing Education* 38, no. 2 (May 3, 2016): 179–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2015.1061491>.

⁵ SAQA Act, *Saqa Qualification Act of 1995*. (Pretoria: Department of Education, 1995).

⁶ Marici Snyman and Geesje van den Berg, "Experiences of Nontraditional Students and Academics of the Recognition of Prior Learning Process for Admission to Graduate Studies: A South African Case Study in Open Distance Learning," *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education* 70, no. 2 (May 4, 2022): 71–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2020.1861577>.

⁷ T Teele, M M Nkoane, and M G Mahlomaholo, "Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers," *Gender and Behaviour* 18, no. 1 (2020): 14749–60.

⁸ Teele, Nkoane, and Mahlomaholo, "Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers"; T. Teele and M.M. Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective," *South African Journal of Agricultural Extension (SAJAE)* 52, no. 3 (September 2, 2024): 16–35, <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3221/2024/v52n3a13288>.

⁹ Mzolisi Payi and Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Education for Sustainable Development in the Era of Decolonisation and Transformation," *Perspectives in Education* 35, no. 2 (2017): vii–xi.

¹⁰ Teele, Nkoane, and Mahlomaholo, "Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers"; Tshepo Teele and Molebatsi M Nkoane, "Critical Reflections of Emerging Farmers' Individual Perspective towards Assessments in Recognition of Prior Learning for Unit Standards Credit of Agricultural Courses," *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, September 27, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14779714241287327>.

¹¹ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

¹² Sechaba Mahlomaholo and Vhonani Netshandama, "Post-Apartheid Organic Intellectual and Knowledge Creation.," *At the Interface/Probing the Boundaries* 78 (2012); Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

sustainable learning environment (SuLE) over the years has cemented our understanding of simplicity, inclusivity, and complexity in the educational environment.¹³ The work of SuLE walks the talk of transformation, Africanisation, and decolonisation of education in South Africa.¹⁴ This is needed to correct the social injustice in the pedagogical praxis of agricultural education in South Africa.¹⁵

Properly understood educational course content can make it possible for emerging farmers to go through processes of diffusion and transmission of knowledge needed to understand and process new information.¹⁶ Improved optimal agricultural productivity is achieved through proper education of the emerging farmers to understand and accept the complex scientific changes. Teele and Nkoane are convinced that research evidence is key to the attainment of a positive relationship between education and farmer efficiency.¹⁷ The ability of emerging farmers to develop and acquire necessary skills within agricultural expertise allows for sound farm management practices.¹⁸ The emerging farmer's understanding and knowledge are driven by the particular psychological paradigm that is informed by lifelong learning of experience and non-formal teachings in the working space through observations and practice. Research has revealed that for the main type of learning environment, the educator plays an important role in the understanding of the learner.¹⁹ The emerging farmers have mostly learned farming skills over the years from lifelong observation of their parents and attending non-formal learning programs. There is a need for more research on emerging farmers' learning functions and how they learn in formal and non-formal educational programs.

The RPL process in an agricultural context evaluates the agricultural competencies and skills that the emerging farmers will have acquired through lifelong experiences toward the credit of an agricultural qualification.²⁰ It includes providing access to education and training and facilitating redress of former unfair discrimination.²¹ RPL emphasises and supports the principle of lifelong learning by encouraging individuals to continuously improve their skills.²² The knowledge of emerging farmers is evaluated through a series of summative assessments for a particular qualification that the emerging farmer is evaluated for.²³ However, this leads to academic knowledge is often

¹³ Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Indigenous Research and Sustainable Learning," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 5, no. 3 (2013): 317–22; Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Education Researchers as Bricoleurs in the Creation of Sustainable Learning Environments," *Perspectives in Education* 32, no. 4 (2014): 171–83; Payi and Mahlomaholo, "Education for Sustainable Development in the Era of Decolonisation and Transformation"; Makeresemese R Mahlomaholo and Sechaba M G Mahlomaholo, "Formative Virtual Assessment towards Sustainable Foundation Phase Teacher Education Learning Environments," *Assessment through Digital Platforms within Higher Education Studies*, 2022, 65; Makeresemese Rosy Mahlomaholo, Hilda Israel, and Sechaba M G Mahlomaholo, "Relationally Enhancing Teacher Education in Early Childhood Learning Environments towards Sustainability," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 5, no. 2 (2023): 56–68; Bekithemba Dube et al., "Creating Sustainable Learning Environments in the Era of the Posthuman: Towards Borderless Curriculum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 5, no. 1 (2023): i–x.

¹⁴ Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Critical Emancipatory Research and Academic Identity," *Africa Education Review* 6, no. 2 (2009): 224–37; Payi and Mahlomaholo, "Education for Sustainable Development in the Era of Decolonisation and Transformation"; Dube et al., "Creating Sustainable Learning Environments in the Era of the Posthuman: Towards Borderless Curriculum."

¹⁵ Teele and Nkoane, "Critical Reflections of Emerging Farmers' Individual Perspective towards Assessments in Recognition of Prior Learning for Unit Standards Credit of Agricultural Courses"; Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

¹⁶ H. Solomon, K. Malkamu, and W. Biru, "The Effect of Farmers Education on Farm Productivity: Evidence from Small-Scale Maize Producing Farmers in North Bench District, Bench Maji Zone.," *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 9, no. 17 (2019).

¹⁷ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

¹⁸ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

¹⁹ T. Teele, "Technological Skills Transfer Framework amongst Emerging Farmers: An Adult Education Perspective" (University of the Free State, South Africa, 2018).

²⁰ Teele and Nkoane, "Critical Reflections of Emerging Farmers' Individual Perspective towards Assessments in Recognition of Prior Learning for Unit Standards Credit of Agricultural Courses."

²¹ Nomathemba B. Mothokoa and Jeanette Maritz, "Recognition of Prior Learning Candidates' Experiences in a Nurse Training Programme," *Health SA Gesondheid* 23 (June 20, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hsag.v23i0.1080>.

²² Moeketsi Letseka and Victor Pitsoe, "The Challenges and Prospects of Access to Higher Education at UNISA," *Studies in Higher Education* 39, no. 10 (2014): 1942–54.

²³ M. Snyman, "The Influence of the Learner Profile on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment" (Unisa, 2013).

organised around the dominant and prescriptive view of knowledge.²⁴ The mismatch between the emerging farmers' lifelong skills and knowledge and academic knowledge, the candidates' practice skills, and expected professional skills. Prior learning assessments in the context of this study, refer to the combination of sessions facilitated by the assessor in a classroom and demonstrations performed by emerging farmers in the farms. The type of facilitation is the one in which the assessor explains each question in the assessment for the emerging farmers to understand each question.

Farm practices are a very crucial aspect that ensures farm production towards economic and sustainable farming. It deals with the emerging farmers' efficacy and efficiency in making decisions and solving problems on the farm.²⁵ How emerging farmers understand and practice intended farming skills will determine the efficiency and success of producing farm products of the expected quality in the market. Whether intended or not, RPL for emerging farmers achieves two important functions. It achieves the requirements for completion of qualification, the completion of required assessments and the teaching and learning of the content of the course.²⁶ The sessions for emerging farmers' recognition of prior learning, when facilitated using adult education methods rather than traditional methods, become a teaching and learning environment where they circulate their knowledge with each other.²⁷ RPL is meant to provide opportunities for emerging farmers who do not have an agricultural education certificate or equivalent to obtain recognition for learning acquired in informal and non-formal contexts of learning.²⁸ This paper critically assessed the awareness and understanding of the course content and learning method by emerging farmers who have gone through RPL assessments of two agricultural courses and qualitatively assessed their perspectives on the learning experience.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The philosophical framing of an Agricultural Bricoleur (AB) was used as the guiding theory of this study.²⁹ The AB framework is an extension of the theoretical framework of Bricolage, underpinned by constructivism and constructionism. Agricultural Bricoleur is dedicated to investigating eclecticism, focusing on the current approaches employed and seeking to participate in the genealogy/archaeology of the existing situation. The features of AB include deflection, play, means of non-professional, limited means, and unlimited tasks.³⁰ AB leans toward the notion that theory is not an explanation of the world but a justification for relating to the world, which allows different people to construct different meanings in various ways.³¹ The epistemology of AB helps us to respond to the questions about the reality of the people as opposed to false realities based on inadequate information.³² AB seeks to understand reality from an individual perspective by focusing on everyone's understanding of the world.³³ This means that AB examines processes from various, and sometimes opposing theoretical and methodological perceptions.³⁴ AB also identifies fellow research participants as equals and terms

²⁴ Linda Cooper, Alan Ralphs, and Judy Harris, "Recognition of Prior Learning: The Tensions between Its Inclusive Intentions and Constraints on Its Implementation," *Studies in Continuing Education* 39, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 197–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2016.1273893>.

²⁵ Rinoanus E. Jenaman, Kadek A. Wibawa, and I G. A. P. A. Wulandari, "Developing a Realistic Mathematics Education Based Learning Module on Sets Subject in Junior High School," 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211229.042>.

²⁶ R. Osman, "The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): An Emergent Field of Enquiry in South Africa" (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, 2003).

²⁷ Austen Ashfield, Conall Mullan, and Claire Jack, "Encouraging Farmer Participation in Agricultural Education and Training: A Northern Ireland Perspective," *International Journal of Agricultural Management* 9 (2020): 96–106.

²⁸ Snyman, "The Influence of the Learner Profile on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment."

²⁹ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

³⁰ Muhammad Anwar and Thomas Clauß, "Personality Traits and Bricolage as Drivers of Sustainable Social Responsibility in Family SMEs: A COVID-19 Perspective," *Business and Society Review* 126, no. 1 (March 2021): 37–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/basr.12222>.

³¹ Shaker A Zahra, "The Resource-Based View, Resourcefulness, and Resource Management in Startup Firms: A Proposed Research Agenda," *Journal of Management* 47, no. 7 (2021): 1841–60.

³² Teele, "Technological Skills Transfer Framework amongst Emerging Farmers: An Adult Education Perspective."

³³ Alessandra Lotteri et al., "The Holistic Bricolage Research Approach and Disaster-Risk Reduction," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 97 (October 2023): 104031, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.104031>.

³⁴ Lotteri et al., "The Holistic Bricolage Research Approach and Disaster-Risk Reduction."

them as co-researchers, treating them as knowledgeable individuals who possess immense knowledge and experience in their field of practice.

AB on the other hand assumes a critical philosophical stand that hints at fairness and expresses confidence. Values of transparency and democracy represent the working environment of the AB. AB activities are guided by the post-colonial, post-structuralist, post-modernist, constructivist, and explanatory perspectives.³⁵ AB displays a great deal of knowledge of the concepts of diversity, evolving design, flexibility, and plurality.³⁶ AB assumes a multi-perspectival and multimethodological approach, bringing a better understanding of a social phenomenon into the research discourse.³⁷ AB operates from five types of approaches that include the narrative, political, theoretical, methodological, and interpretive bricoleur.³⁸ The AB is not concerned with the realism praxis of the positivist approach.³⁹ The idea is to deepen the involvement of the co-researchers in the process of understanding and shaping their reality.⁴⁰

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) was a qualitative research approach used to gain in-depth knowledge about the RPL assessment of the two hundred emerging farmers in the Free State province in South Africa. The information to strengthen RPL evaluation of the emerging farmers in South Africa. The engagement sessions were held at the end of the assessment period at every RPL assessment site to generate data that was used for this study.

Data Collection

PLA is a participatory methodology that is based on triangulation while embracing the diversity of thoughts based on learning and a group of individuals as stipulated by Nelson and was originally known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).⁴¹ This methodology is flexible, novice and adaptable to changing environments.⁴² The data-generating approach is multi-methodological using video and tape recording, notes, minutes etc. PLA encourages people to engage with each other in a free manner, free from fear of making mistakes and that is non-judgemental.⁴³ The assessor or researcher in PLA acts as a catalyst and not as a teacher or trainer.⁴⁴ It enables and empowers people to share, analyse

³⁵ Ahmad Beltagui, Achilleas Sesis, and Nikolaos Stylos, "A Bricolage Perspective on Democratising Innovation: The Case of 3D Printing in Makerspaces," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 163 (February 2021): 120453, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120453>.

³⁶ Rohit Bhardwaj et al., "Toward a Typology of Entrepreneurial Bricolage and Its Capabilities," *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies* 16, no. 6 (November 19, 2024): 1453–80, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-07-2022-0205>.

³⁷ Lucas Kleine-Stegemann et al., "Are Bricoleurs More Satisfied? How Bricolage Affects Entrepreneur Job Satisfaction among Experienced versus Novice Entrepreneurs," *Journal of Small Business Management* 62, no. 3 (May 3, 2024): 1347–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2022.2140159>.

³⁸ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

³⁹ Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Learning Environments through Socially Inclusive Research" (A Research report submitted to the discipline of Psychology, Faculty of the ..., 2013); Teele and Nkoane, "Critical Reflections of Emerging Farmers' Individual Perspective towards Assessments in Recognition of Prior Learning for Unit Standards Credit of Agricultural Courses."

⁴⁰ Teele and Nkoane, "Reimagining Agricultural Advisors and Educators as Agricultural Bricoleurs Towards Enhanced Skills Transfer: An Adult Learning Perspective."

⁴¹ Tenneisha Nelson, "Participatory Learning and Action," in *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives* (Springer, 2023), 365–69.

⁴² Proshant Chakraborty et al., "Using Participatory Learning and Action in a Community-Based Intervention to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in Mumbai's Informal Settlements," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (2020): 1609406920972234.

⁴³ Fransiskus Panca Juniawan et al., "Pembuatan Desain Kemasan Produk Untuk Pemberdayaan Industri Rumah Tangga Dengan Metode Participatory Learning and Action," *Wikrama Parahita: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 7, no. 1 (2023): 11–20; Nelson, "Participatory Learning and Action."

⁴⁴ Abhisek Mishra et al., "Understanding Community Participation in Rural Health Care: A Participatory Learning and Action Approach," *Frontiers in Public Health* 10 (2022): 860792.

and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect.⁴⁵ It allows for the use of the language and concepts of the people on whom the research is focused.⁴⁶ PLA seeks to voice out the opinions, aspirations and feelings of the marginalised groups.⁴⁷ The use of PLA in this study is executed at the evaluation stage of the RPL assessment project to emphasise the reversals in power relations between emerging farmers and assessors or researchers. It emphasises the need for an assessor or researcher to learn about situations from the emerging farmers.

Data Analysis

The spoken words in the voice and video recordings were transcribed into text and analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to expose the discursive practice and hidden meanings.⁴⁸

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Generated data was analysed from the philosophical position of the adult education and bricolage theories to expose the functions of dominance and power in the spoken words during RPL assessment sessions. The ten assessment sites were in Tweespruit, Thaba Nchu, Jagarsfontein, Trompsburg, Welkom, Kroonstad, Steynstrus, Parys, Frankfort, and Bethlehem of Free State Province. The engagements were scheduled on the last day of every session at each assessment site following the PRL assessment session amongst the co-researchers who participated willingly in the discourses throughout the study. The participants selected two appropriate themes from the conversations. The analysis and interpretation of the text by the co-researchers are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1 Research findings from the discussions of the study.

Participants	Contributions
1. Preparation and design of course material	
Co-researcher 1	<i>“During the design of course materials for prior learning, try coming to us [emerging farmers] and experience our working situations”</i>
Co-researcher 2	<i>“Course materials can be general but have to reflect the practical challenges that we experience”</i>
Co-researcher 3	<i>“the short duration of the course assures me that I do not waste too much time sitting here”</i>
2. Emerging farmers' perspective on assessment sessions	
Co-researcher 4	<i>“I feel comfortable when I am not treated as a child, I do not want to be controlled like a child”</i>
Co-researcher 5	<i>“your style of conducting sessions is accommodating”</i>
Co-researcher 6	<i>“I enjoyed hearing other people's experiences, it showed me that some of our problems are similar and I learned a lot from them”</i>
Co-researcher 7	<i>“the information that we share in the class is what happens in the farms, we become aware of some other things that other people are doing”</i>
Co-researcher 8	<i>“your teaching method allows us to share our knowledge and hear what others think about what we share, this makes me feel that what I said matters”</i>

⁴⁵ Nirmala Nair et al., “Community Mobilisation to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in Eastern India through Participatory Learning and Action with Women’s Groups Facilitated by Accredited Social Health Activists: A before-and-after Pilot Study,” *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 20 (2020): 1–12.

⁴⁶ Nelson, “Participatory Learning and Action.”

⁴⁷ Zoya Javed et al., “Cow Dung Extract Mediated Green Synthesis of Zinc Oxide Nanoparticles for Agricultural Applications,” *Scientific Reports* 12, no. 1 (2022): 20371.

⁴⁸ Xiaoyan Fan, “The Research and Application of Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 10, no. 5 (September 1, 2019): 1041, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1005.17>.

1. Preparation and design of course material

Co-researcher 1 said “..., *try coming to us...*” It shows that emerging farmers feel that they are excluded from the planning and design of the course materials. This shows that emerging farmers are aware that there is a disconnect between the content of the course materials and their practical situations. The exclusion of emerging farmers from the planning and design of their learning preparation and design is contradictory to the participatory approach and principles of adult learning.⁴⁹ The perception of the emerging farmers about the relevance of course materials that they are subjected to has the potential to either motivate or build a negative perception of the presented course during RPL assessments.

When they continue and say “... *and experience our working situations*” it reveals that they are cognisant of the presented course materials inability to respond to the daily challenges that they face in the working environment. The adult learning principles provide that the planning of the teaching and learning of adults must respond to their working environment.⁵⁰ Assefa's findings found that the daily activities of adult learners are what must direct their teaching and learning.⁵¹ Adult learners develop an interest in the presented course when the content of the course addresses the challenges, they face daily. There is a need to take into consideration the conditions of an adult learner when planning and designing the learning content for RPL assessment tools. When Co-researcher 2 said “*can be general ...have to reflect practical challenges...*” they are aware of the disconnect between course content and the practical situations they face in their farms.⁵² This indicates a plea from emerging farmers for self-directed learning where they are evaluating their lifelong skills and where it involves their learning experiences. Benavot et al. demonstrated the training of adults should encourage diversity of thoughts.⁵³ This should be seen as how adults have to be exposed to a learning environment where they are free to engage with each other.⁵⁴

Co-researcher 3 said “..., *short duration ... assures me*”, it indicates the acceptance of sessions that are not lengthy and tiring for the emerging farmers sitting for long hours in the classroom. Adults in the learning environment have to be assured that the learning activities or program does not waste their time. Teele found that emerging farmers prefer to engage in the learning activities in their farms than in the classrooms.⁵⁵ The productivity and economic activities within the content of the presented course assessment of the emerging farmers are key to the positive attitude and motivation towards the educational program.⁵⁶

2. Emerging farmers' perspective on assessment sessions

Co-researcher 4 said “... *when I am not treated like a child...*” and Co-researcher 5 said “..., *your style... is accommodating*”, these submissions indicate that emerging farmers do not prefer to be treated as passive receivers of knowledge. They would rather prefer to be viewed as active contributors to the information for teaching and learning. The andragogic praxis principles within adult education highlight the way adults learn, specifically that adults should be viewed as active participants in the

⁴⁹ Samuel Zinabu Desta and Mulugeta Awayehu Gugssa, “The Implementation of Andragogy in the Adult Education Program in Ethiopia,” *Education Research International* 2022 (March 10, 2022): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/2028248>; Mahlomaholo and Mahlomaholo, “Formative Virtual Assessment towards Sustainable Foundation Phase Teacher Education Learning Environments.”

⁵⁰ Teele, Nkoane, and Mahlomaholo, “Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers.”

⁵¹ Yalalem Assefa, “Towards Learner-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation in Adult Education Program: A Vital Approach to Ensure Adult Learners’ Learning Needs,” *Education Research International* 2021 (April 22, 2021): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/6663700>.

⁵² Buket Aslandağ, “Evaluating the Adult Education Applications in Turkey from an Andragogical Aspect,” *European Journal of Education Studies*, 2018.

⁵³ Aaron Benavot et al., “Reimagining Adult Education and Lifelong Learning for All: Historical and Critical Perspectives,” *International Review of Education* 68, no. 2 (April 30, 2022): 165–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-022-09955-9>.

⁵⁴ Teele, Nkoane, and Mahlomaholo, “Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers.”

⁵⁵ Teele, “Technological Skills Transfer Framework amongst Emerging Farmers: An Adult Education Perspective.”

⁵⁶ Richard Desjardins, “Economics and the Political Economy of Adult Education,” in *The Palgrave International Handbook on Adult and Lifelong Education and Learning* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 211–26, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55783-4_12.

educational process.⁵⁷ The study by Teele found that emerging farmers are made to sit in classrooms during training and listen to the trainer throughout presentations and only participate when they are asked questions.⁵⁸ Teele et al. concluded that agricultural training courses and extension approaches are founded based on power and dominance, making learning difficult for emerging farmers who view these approaches as oppressive.⁵⁹

Co-researcher 6 said “... *I enjoyed hearing... and I learned a lot from them*”, this shows that the emerging farmers as adult learners, do not only learn from what they are taught in classrooms, but they also learn from engaging amongst each other. Adult education guides that adults learn by circulating the information among themselves. This finding speaks to the same point that agricultural trainers need to be grounded on adult education principles.⁶⁰ Co-researcher 7 said, “*the information ... is what happens in the farms, we become aware ... are doing ...*”, indicating that the emerging farmers validate that the information they share is their reality and they relate to what is said in these sessions by fellow emerging farmers. The information about the physical conditions and situations of the emerging farmers has to be well understood and the RPL assessment content of each unit standard for a particular course must be informed by these conditions. This has to be done if we are serious about providing a fair and realistic RPL programme in South Africa.

Co-researcher 8 said “*your teaching method allows us to share our knowledge ...*”, the emerging farmers reflect on the accommodative nature of the facilitation approach during the RPL assessment sessions. This exposes how they feel about the method that guides the facilitation approach of the trainers or assessors during assessment sessions. Emerging farmers during RPL evaluations as adult learners. Co-researcher 8 continues to say “... *this makes me feel that what I said matters*”, indicating that emerging farmers prefer to be listened to, they need to be shown that things they say enjoy a fair chance in the teaching and learning of their RPL assessment.

DISCUSSION

The core elements of bricolage are first to actively deal with challenges or be action-oriented, second, to gather and recycle resources for new purposes and third, to use available or existing resources to complete a task. Liu et al.'s research results, similar to the findings of this study, revealed the importance of course materials that are responsive to the practical situations of emerging farmers.⁶¹ Similarly, to the findings of this study, Chen and Liu suggested the use of assessment materials need to reflect the daily activities on the farms.⁶² Bricolage empowers the RPL assessment process to consider the knowledge of emerging farmers as the learning and evaluation resources that should be used to complete the assessment process. Consistent with the findings of this study, Erath et al. conclude that emerging farmers must be involved in the planning and design of the course materials.⁶³ Yan et al. and Zhao et al. attest that bricolage enables quick and flexible responses to change and helps to overcome resource constraints.⁶⁴ Epler and Leach submit that bricolage tends to enhance

⁵⁷ Liudmyla Tymchuk et al., “Andragogy: Theory and Practice of Adult Education Development in Ukraine,” *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala* 13, no. 2 (July 2, 2021): 185–205, <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/13.2/417>.

⁵⁸ Teele, “Technological Skills Transfer Framework amongst Emerging Farmers: An Adult Education Perspective.”

⁵⁹ Teele, Nkoane, and Mahlomaholo, “Corollaries of Pedagogic Praxis on Technological Skills Transfer for Emerging Farmers.”

⁶⁰ Virginia Brown, “Infusing Adult Education Principles into a Health Insurance Literacy Program,” *Health Promotion Practice* 19, no. 2 (2018): 240–45.

⁶¹ Jianxu Liu et al., “Addressing Rural–Urban Income Gap in China through Farmers’ Education and Agricultural Productivity Growth via Mediation and Interaction Effects,” *Agriculture* 12, no. 11 (November 15, 2022): 1920, <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture12111920>.

⁶² Yan Liu, Ling Li, and Chen Huang, “To What Extent Is Shared Instructional Leadership Related to Teacher Self-Efficacy and Student Academic Performance in China?,” *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 33, no. 3 (July 3, 2022): 381–402, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2022.2029746>.

⁶³ Tyler G Erath et al., “Enhancing the Training Integrity of Human Service Staff Using Pyramidal Behavioral Skills Training,” *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 53, no. 1 (2020): 449–64.

⁶⁴ Shuai Yan et al., “Top Management Team Boundary-Spanning Behaviour, Bricolage, and Business Model Innovation,” *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 32, no. 5 (2020): 561–73; Yu Zhao, Ana María Pinto Llorente, and María Cruz Sánchez Gómez, “Digital Competence in Higher Education Research: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Computers & Education* 168 (July 2021): 104212, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104212>.

performance in uncertain environments.⁶⁵ The natural environment where emerging farmers farm is uncertain and depends on climatic conditions. Their performance in these environments depends mostly on their ability to adapt and plan for the worst scenario. The educational space of the emerging farmers has to take into account these conditions; the flexibility and adaptability of bricolage allow for the education process to deviate from a structured form of assessment to accommodate the practical situation of the emerging farmers during RPL assessments. The strategic activity of bricolage of action-oriented by integrating available resources at hand for solving novel problems and pursuing new opportunities. In the RPL assessment situation, bricolage could empower trainers to actively deal with existing challenges in every agricultural situation.

Aslandag make similar suggestion that the assessment tool must be designed by the emerging farmers.⁶⁶ The tendency to gather and recycle resources of bricolage as demonstrated by An et al. makes it possible for emerging farmers in an RPL assessment session to gather and recycle the information the way they understand it or through reflecting on their daily activities.⁶⁷ Emerging farmers as adults must be treated as contributors to the RPL evaluation process, not as small children.⁶⁸ Akintolu and Letseka's rightfully point to the self-directedness, independence, and autonomy of the emerging farmers during the RPL assessment as a requirement for adult learning.⁶⁹ The emerging farmers' desire to be treated as adults during assessment sessions is a requirement and policy position of adult education. An agricultural trainer as a bricoleur transforms to a theoretical bricolage approach specified in Lotteria et al.'s research, reflecting the knowledge grounded in adult learning theories.⁷⁰ This will help the RPL assessment process occur smoothly without any disconnect between assessment content and the practical situations of the emerging farmers. The assessors or trainers will have to be familiar with bricolage approaches described by Lotteria et al., making it possible for them to be guided by bricolage approaches throughout the RPL assessment process. in their learning.⁷¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognising prior learning is essential for addressing the injustices of the apartheid era, which hindered the educational growth of emerging farmers in South Africa. This initiative plays a crucial role in boosting the educational development and pride of these farmers as contributors to the agricultural sector. The bricoleur agricultural trainer embodies the wisdom and awareness aligned with adult learning principles. This study suggests that agricultural trainers should be grounded in theoretical or philosophical foundations, enabling a shared balance of power that encourages both unlearning and learning. Trainers must also be aware of the cultural and traditional aspects of the farming communities they serve. During recognition of prior learning assessments, agricultural trainers should foster an environment in which emerging farmers can recognise their own strengths. To achieve this, it is recommended that trainers embrace diverse perspectives, allowing emerging farmers to showcase and articulate their lifelong skills and knowledge in addressing their farming challenges throughout the sessions. Real-life farming experiences of emerging farmers should be integrated into the recognition of prior learning content and context utilised for assessments.

⁶⁵ Rhett T Epler and Mark P Leach, "An Examination of Salesperson Bricolage during a Critical Sales Disruption: Selling during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Industrial Marketing Management* 95 (2021): 114–27.

⁶⁶ Aslandağ, "Evaluating the Adult Education Applications in Turkey from an Andragogical Aspect."

⁶⁷ Wenwen An et al., "How Bricolage Drives Corporate Entrepreneurship: The Roles of Opportunity Identification and Learning Orientation," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 35, no. 1 (2018): 49–65.

⁶⁸ Teele and Nkoane, "Critical Reflections of Emerging Farmers' Individual Perspective towards Assessments in Recognition of Prior Learning for Unit Standards Credit of Agricultural Courses."

⁶⁹ Morakinyo Akintolu and Moeketsi Letseka, "The Andragogical Value of Content Knowledge Method: The Case of an Adult Education Programme in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province of South Africa," *Heliyon* 7, no. 9 (September 2021): e07929, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07929>.

⁷⁰ Lotteri et al., "The Holistic Bricolage Research Approach and Disaster-Risk Reduction."

⁷¹ Lotteri et al., "The Holistic Bricolage Research Approach and Disaster-Risk Reduction."

CONCLUSION

The RPL assessment sessions occur in a resource-constrained environment, and the bricolage approach proves to be a coping mechanism. In many cases, classrooms are the only assessment environment in which emerging farmers are exposed to demonstrate their lifelong skills and the skills that they have acquired without formal education. This exposes the emerging farmers to old traditional facilitation methods that treat them as passive receivers of information. Bricolage provides an environment where emerging farmers realise their power. Ideally, in an RPL assessment situation, the knowledge that emerging farmers acquired through demonstration and observation they are expected to write it down, responding to scientific questions of the assessments. This study suggests that the exploration of the bricolage approach, as highlighted by Prof. Mahlomaholo will improve the facilitation techniques and acceptance of RPL evaluation by the emerging farmers. Through the bricolage approach, the emerging will be viewed as active contributors to knowledge.

Limitations

The participation in the engagements during these sessions was minimal, the findings might not be the case with other people in other regions. There is a lack of interest and reluctant participation by the emerging farmers, meaning the views of other participants might not be included. More research is needed to study the root causes of this lack of participation.

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