AN INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The impetus for this study is contextualised within social work teaching and learning and arose from the emergence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of social work students. The researcher had become increasingly interested in the ways in which these ACEs impacted on students in social work classrooms and felt compelled to enquire what the responses of teaching and learning in social work should be. The rationale for the study was further established by the dearth of research in this focal area.

The research goal was to gain an understanding of the experiences of third-year students and the perspectives of social work teachers with regard to the role of adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities and to recommend meaningful teaching practices. There were seven research objectives that focused on obtaining theoretical perspectives from the literature and on exploring and describing the adverse childhood experiences of students within the context of teaching and learning in social work.

The research objectives generated the central research question: What are the learning experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university with regard to the role of their own adverse childhood experiences? A qualitative approach and case study design was deemed the most appropriate research philosophy and method to address the study's objectives and central research question. The case study design was used to explore how individuals (third-year social work students at the University of the Western Cape) experienced a particular phenomenon (in this case adverse childhood experiences) in relation to teaching and learning within a social work context. To provide credence to the two purposes of this research, namely exploring and describing, two methods and two sources of data were utilised: (i) a reflective assignment in a specific social work third-year module from which 20 assignments were selected using purposive sampling; and (ii) individual interviews with ten student participants (derived from the sample of assignments) and two teaching staff participants.

Three overarching topics emerged from the findings, namely the adverse childhood experiences of student participants; the after-effects of adverse childhood experiences in the context of

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teaching and learning in social work; and suggestions by participants for social work teaching and learning in the context of adverse childhood experiences. Each topic was delineated further into themes, sub-themes, and categories.

The conclusions are that there was compelling evidence showing students to have endured formidable adverse childhood experiences; that students experienced overwhelming emotional reactions and responses during teaching and learning that exposed vicarious traumatisation; and that gaps present in current teaching and learning practices in social work render these practices insufficient to meet the learning needs of students.

Three core recommendations relating to teaching and learning are offered: To develop the content of professional learning in the social work curriculum regarding the professional use of self, self-awareness and virtue ethics; to reconstruct and reaffirm the signature pedagogy regarding teaching and learning approaches and methods in social work; and to align fieldwork and placement learning with student profiles while also focusing on lecturer attentiveness and responsiveness.

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OPSOMMING

Die impetus vir hierdie studie is vervat in die onderrig en leer in maatskaplike werk van maatskaplike werk studente wat afbrekende kindertydse ervarings (AKE's) deurgemaak het. Die navorser, wie se belangstelling al hoe meer geprikkel is deur die wyse waarop hierdie AKE's studente in maatskaplike werk in die lesingsaal beïnvloed, is genoodsaak om inligting in te win oor wat die reaksie op onderrig en leer in maatskaplike werk behoort te wees. Die rasionaal vir die studie is verder deur die gebrek aan navorsing in hierdie fokusarea versterk.

Die doel van die navorsings was om begrip vir die ervarings van derdejaarstudente en die perspektiewe van maatskaplikewerkdosente te ontwikkel oor die rol van AKE's tydens onderrig- en leeraktiwiteite, en om betekenisvolle onderrigpraktyke aan te beveel. Die fokus van die sewe navorsingsdoelwitte was die inwin van teoretiese perspektiewe, asook die eksplorering en beskrywing van studente se AKE's binne die konteks van die onderrig en leer van maatskaplike werk.

Die navorsingsdoelwitte het die sentrale navorsingsvraag gegenereer: Hoe ervaar derdejaarstudente hul eie afbrekende kindertydse ervarings in maatskaplike werk aan 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit? n Kwalitatiewe benadering en gevallestudiemetode is as geskikte metodes beskou om die studie se doelwitte en sentrale navorsingsvraag te ondersoek. Die gevallestudiemetode is gebruik om na te vors hoe individue (derdejaarstudente in maatskaplike werk aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland) 'n spesifieke fenomeen (in hierdie geval AKE's) ten opsigte van onderrig en leer binne die konteks van maatskaplike werk ervaar. Om geloofwaardigheid te verleen aan die twee doelwitte van hierdie navorsing, naamlik 'n verkennings ondersoek en beskrywing, is van twee metodes en twee databronne gebruik gemaak: (i) 'n Reflektiewe taak in 'n spesifieke derdejaarmodule in maatskaplike werk waaruit 20 take met behulp van 'n doelbewuste steekproef gekies is; en (ii) individuele onderhoude met tien deelnemende studente (gekies uit die steekproef van take), en twee deelnemende dosente.

Drie oorkoepelende onderwerpe het uit die bevindinge na vore gekom, naamlik die AKE's van studentedeelnemers; die nagevolge van afbrekende kindertydse ervarings binne die konteks van

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die onderrig en leer van maatskaplike werk; en voorstelle van deelnemers vir onderrig en leer van maatskaplike werk binne die konteks van AKE's. Elke onderwerp word verder in temas, subtemas en kategorieë weergegee.

Die gevolgtrekking is dat oortuigende bewyse bestaan wat toon dat studente ontsaglik AKE's deurgemaak het; dat studente oorweldigende emosionele reaksies en response ervaar tydens onderrig en leer wat tot indirekte traumatisering lei; en dat daar tekortkominge is in die huidige onderrig- en leermetodes vir maatskaplike werk wat nie genoegsaam aandag gee aan die leerbehoeftes van studente nie.

Daar is drie kernaanbevelings rakende onderrig en leer: Om die omvang van professionele leer ten opsigte van die professionele gebruik van die self, selfbewustheid en deugsaamheid in die maatskaplike werk-kurrikulum te ontwikkel; om maatskaplike werk se kenmerkende pedagogie oor onderrig- en leerbenaderings en metodes te rekonstrueer en te herbevestig; en om praktiese plasing en leer tydens plasing met die profiel van 'n student te belyn, terwyl die fokus ook op die oplettendheid en reaksie van die dosent moet wees.

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"You're blessed when you're content with who you are - no more, no less.
That's the moment you find yourself a proud owner of everything that can't be bought."

The Beatitudes in The Message Bible:
Matt. 5:5

To my beautiful daughter, Courtney-Jayne, who inspires and affirms me every day.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Education is not immune from the many theories that abound in the attempt to explain its many facets and significance. Malan (2000) defined education in terms of transforming the individual, his/her disposition, and belief system. Brookfield (1995), in providing an overview of adult learning, then already determined that in order to understand adult learning teachers needed to know the connections with the learning experiences in childhood and adolescence. He declared that the interaction between emotions and cognition in adult learning should be further researched. Engstrom (2008:7) called this interaction the "affective dimension of learning".

The assumption many people may have about learning is that it is mainly a theoretical, cerebral activity (called cold cognition) (Roseman & Read, 2007; Brand, 1987). Perry (2006), however, states that learning incorporates both cerebral and visceral activities because learning is influenced by other (often emotional) responses to past events. He links struggles in adult learning to adverse experiences in childhood (also see Dirkx, 2008; Majer *et al*., 2010; Ross, 2006; Sheckley & Bell, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Wolf, 2006). These authors contend that many adult learners diffuse the learning experience with the adverse experiences of their childhood. The consequence for learning is that students may have difficulty in separating their personal experiences from teaching and learning activities.

Larkin (2009) asserts that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more often linked to struggles within family life. Family life, in turn, is affected by larger social systems, for example the community or cultural context, or broader social issues such as poverty, violence or even civil war. The common elements in ACEs encompass negative, often traumatic incidents during childhood, particularly before age 18 years. These incidents could include the following: physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been substance abusers, involved in

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criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or under poverty-stricken circumstances and/or in such surroundings (Brown *et al*., 2010; Dykes, 2011; Ness, 2009).

Yet some people do 'bounce back' or develop resilience from enduring traumatic or adverse experiences. Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000:543) defined resilience as being "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (see also Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990; Rutter, 1999; Saleebey, 2002).

In view of the resilience shown by some people, there are authors who are sceptical about the role of ACEs of students in education and question whether this should be a consideration in the teaching and learning process (Ecclestone, Hayes & Furedi, 2005). Kasworm (2008), however, asserts that adult learners are complex but also vulnerable individuals occupying and executing multiple life roles which would inevitably infuse the learning process.

In reacting to a detached learning environment, Hunt and West (2009) refer to the rescuing of the self in adult learning purporting to re-emphasise the humanist elements of the learner within the process of education (called hot cognition) (Roseman & Read, 2007; Brand, 1987). In this vein, Dirkx (2008) and Cartney and Rouse (2006) contend that the traditional view of the role of emotions is busy changing from being seen as barriers to learning to being more transformative and inclusive ways of learning about the world and ourselves as role players in the teaching and learning process. Generalised negative feelings may be acute, time-limited expressions, but in certain instances curricula content may evoke strong emotions relating to students' personal histories (Dirkx, 2008). For this reason, Brookfield (Dirkx, 2008:10) called the learning environment a "psychodynamic battlefield".

Gravett (2004) avers that being aware of students' learning experiences can enhance teaching practices. In her endeavour to personalise and document the learning experience, Haggis (2002) concluded that student learning is unique and this uniqueness should be appreciated, rather than solely focusing on adult learners as a homogenous group (also see Merrill, 2001). Haggis (2002) asserts that some factors that may influence students' learning experiences may be submerged. She suggests that new ways must be sought to reframe adult learning experiences to determine

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factors that positively influence teaching and learning. The consequences, she says, of not making space for individual learning needs could devalue the learning experience.

Social work teaching and learning focuses strongly on the integration of theory and practice. Moulding (2010) asserts that educating social workers is a complex process requiring the integration of social work knowledge with knowledge, for example, of the social sciences (such as sociology and psychology), together with professional ethics and practice education (see Chapter 3). Within this integration, Wrenn and Wrenn (2009) stress the development of self-awareness and critical thinking in teaching and learning activities (see Chapter 4). Responsibility for self-awareness had been identified by Hancock (1997) as a key principle in the social work profession. Hancock further emphasised the use of self as core instrument in professional helping. Dimensions of the self include thinking, feeling, acting, and social aspects in relation to others. Self-awareness is also identified as one of the personal attributes necessary for social work practice (Kirst-Ashman, 2013; Segal, Gerdes & Steiner, 2013; Zastrow, 2010).

There is a dearth of studies that have been undertaken to research the learning experiences of social work students with adverse childhood experiences. What was common in international studies (Black, Jeffreys & Hartley, 1993; Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Olson, 2006; Olson & Royse, 2006) and South African studies (Earle, 2008; Schenck, 2008, 2009) was the high incidence of adverse living experiences (not necessarily childhood experiences only) by social work student participants. For example, in the South African studies, socio-economic struggles were more prominent findings. In addition to cognitive aspects to learning, the SA authors (Earle, 2008; Schenck, 2008, 2009) also expressed concern about the role of students' personal circumstances in their learning. Cartney and Rouse (2006) stressed that universities struggle to harness the potential of these students because of the impact of students' personal circumstances on their ability to learn and complete their studies.

Within the context of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), students are drawn mainly from historically disadvantaged areas. It is assumed that they mirror the social history and experiences of the communities from which they stem. To some extent this was confirmed by a

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study with first-year social work students at UWC during 2009 during which the ACEs of social work students were explored (Dykes, 2011).

These students reported personal childhood incidences including rape, child abuse and exploitation, neglect, hunger and poverty, physical violence from parents and primary caregivers (Dykes, 2011). Areas of concern emerged which motivated this present study. These centred on the students' classroom feelings and responses to discussions on social issues. As a lecturer, the researcher pondered how the classroom interrogations of the various family and social issues had impacted on the teaching and learning experience and learning outcome. Schenck (2008, 2009) also raised concern about teaching students to work with persons who were going through similar personal difficulties to their own. In Earle's (2008) study, educators who were interviewed stressed the importance of students dealing with their own personal difficulties before they could competently deal with the difficulties of others.

Gibbons *et al*. (2007) identified two factors of importance when assessing qualities or competencies of a social worker. Firstly, students needed to demonstrate resolution of personal life experiences (also see Tam, Coleman & Boey, 2011) and, secondly, the absence of narcissism (defined as viewing client's problems and their professional role from a self-centred perspective).

Further motivation for this research stemmed from the researcher's teaching interaction with the same cohort (Dykes, 2011) in their third year of study. In personal communication some students revealed their stress, which they said was evoked by the content in a module taught on family wellbeing. The third-year level is the initiation into the senior level of the BSW degree. Students complete four theory modules (40 credits) and 400 hours of fieldwork experience (40 credits) supervised by social work practitioners (a practice perspective) and academic staff (integration of theory and practice perspective). Students are expected to undertake fieldwork at all three levels of intervention (micro, meso and macro). Learning areas are child, youth and family intervention and obstacles to wellbeing, particularly HIV/AIDS and social exclusion.

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The identified gap in the literature was the limited research undertaken to describe the role of ACEs in the learning experiences of social work students. Only the SA studies (Earle, 2008; Schenck, 2008, 2009) have linked students' adverse circumstances to poor academic achievement because of financial constraints to purchasing books, for example, or having to deal with family troubles at home before they could pay attention to their studies. The gap in existing research is that these authors focused on general circumstances and also did not offer any explanations for how these students experienced learning, or expounded on meaningful teaching practices.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND FOCUS

South African studies (Dykes, 2011; Earle, 2008; Schenck, 2008, 2009) have pointed to the negative role adverse or traumatic family or community incidents can play in the learning experiences of students in social work education. This study was focused on adverse experiences in childhood because of the limited number of studies done on social work students' adverse childhood experiences generally, and on the role of adverse childhood experiences of students in teaching and learning within social work education in South Africa in particular. The research focus was on the perceptions of students and staff about how students' adverse childhood experiences might or do affect teaching and learning in social work education.

1.3 GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The research goal was to gain an understanding of the experiences of third-year students and the perspectives of social work teachers with regard to the role of adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities in order to recommend meaningful teaching practices.

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The research objectives were to explore and describe:

1) Teaching and learning within the context of Outcomes-based Education in higher educational institutions.
2) Teaching and learning peculiar to the discipline of social work.
3) The adverse childhood experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university.
4) The role of adverse childhood experiences in teaching and learning in social work.
5) The coping measures of third-year social work students.
6) The teaching and learning experiences of third-year-level social work teachers and students.
7) Teaching practices with regard to the role of ACEs of students in social work education.

The central research question was the following: What are the learning experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university with regard to the role of their own adverse childhood experiences? The sub-questions were formulated as follows:

1) What are the adverse childhood experiences endured by third-year social work students at a South African university?
2) How do social work students with adverse childhood experiences interpret, experience and cope with teaching and learning of social work theory and practice related traumatic incidents similar to incidents experienced by them?
3) What are the experiences of social work teaching staff of the role of adverse childhood experiences in students' engagement with their learning?
4) What are the recommendations from social work students and teaching staff at third-year level on teaching and learning practices in the social work curriculum with regard to adverse childhood experiences of students?

Research objectives and research questions develop the outcomes of a study. In the next section, the central theoretical aspects pivotal to the study are discussed.

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1.4 THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Msila (2007:146) says that education "is always about identity formation". He further asserts that learning is likely to have occurred when the learner's background, history and community are taken into account. This research is informed by three educational approaches, namely the constructivist approach to education, Outcomes-based Education (OBE), and professional learning in social work.

1.4.1 THE CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH

In constructivism, knowledge is made (constructed) in the minds and reality of the learner as a result of the many social experiences and settings inhabited (Bellefeuille, Martin & Buck, 2005; Blunt, 2008; Collins & Van Breda, 2010; Hendry, Frommer & Walker, 1999; Van Harmelen, 1999) (see Chapter 2). If knowledge is individualised in this way, Ramsden (1992) advocated, then teachers must know who their students are and how they learn. Students' prior knowledge is thus an important function and principle as a jumping-off point from which to initiate understanding and to build new knowledge. The role of the teacher is to support the construction of knowledge (Bellefeuille *et al*., 2005; Yang & Wilson, 2006).

1.4.2 OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

OBE was focused on because the structure and nature of the current social work curricula in South Africa is based on OBE principles. The key reason for OBE in the SA context was the transformation principles which proponents believed would change an unequal and fragmented system based on race to an integrated and high-performing system for all (Allais, 2003, 2007; Botha, 2002; Chisholm, 2007; Ensor, 2003; Msila, 2007; Wood, 2005). Integration in education means an avoidance of oppositional approaches, for example, theory vs practice or knowledge vs skills (Ensor, 2003).

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William Spady, a sociologist and regarded as a leading proponent of OBE, defined OBE as a "comprehensive approach to organising and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student" (Malan, 2000:23). The roots of OBE can be located in five educational approaches, namely the educational objectives movement; the competency-based movement; the mastery learning movement; the criterion-referenced instruction and assessment; and integrating educational approaches (Malan, 2000) (see Chapter 2). These form the principles upon which OBE is based.

In practice, OBE signalled the change from rote, passive learning to creative, participatory learning (egalitarian pedagogy) (Msila, 2007). In OBE, the learning areas are contained in preset outcomes to be achieved at the conclusion of the learning endeavour. In setting these outcomes, Allais (2003) draws our attention to three types of outcomes when designing curricula, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values (already pre-requisites for social work education and supervision in pre-OBE years).

Social work education embraced the ideas and philosophy of OBE with the establishment and registration of the social work Standards Generating Body (SGB) on 12 April 2001, which resulted in the transformation of social work curricula (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The Bachelor of Social Work course followed the format of 'whole qualifications' rather than 'unit standards' (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). Whole qualifications denote the knowledge and skills of the learner at the end of the learning period when the qualification has been achieved (at the exit level). These learning outcomes are thus known as exit level outcomes.

These attempts at standardisation of the SA social work curriculum have been criticised as being modernist, technical-positivist rationality. However, there are several advantages, least of all an attempt to redress historical socio-educational imbalances, as well as making explicit the learning requirements of the qualification (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). Exit level outcomes structured the BSW degree to extend over 27 exit level outcomes over the wide range of social work knowledge and understanding, skills and ethics (Hochfeld, 2010).

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1.4.3 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning signifies the professional and educational learning processes that enable future professionals to think, perform and act like professionals, which takes place through typical teaching and learning approaches (called signature pedagogy) and professional socialisation (encompassing professional identity construction) (Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufman, 2006; Shulman, 2005).

Social work education may challenge many students to re-assess previously-held beliefs and opinions about themselves and the world they inhabit (Hancock, 1997). Courses are thus designed to include learning about diverse peoples, cultures and social traditions and behaviour which may be very different from their own. Hancock (1997) states that, in learning about themselves as social work students, the key principle of self-awareness is assessed according to three dimensions, which are illustrated as follows (Figure 1.1):

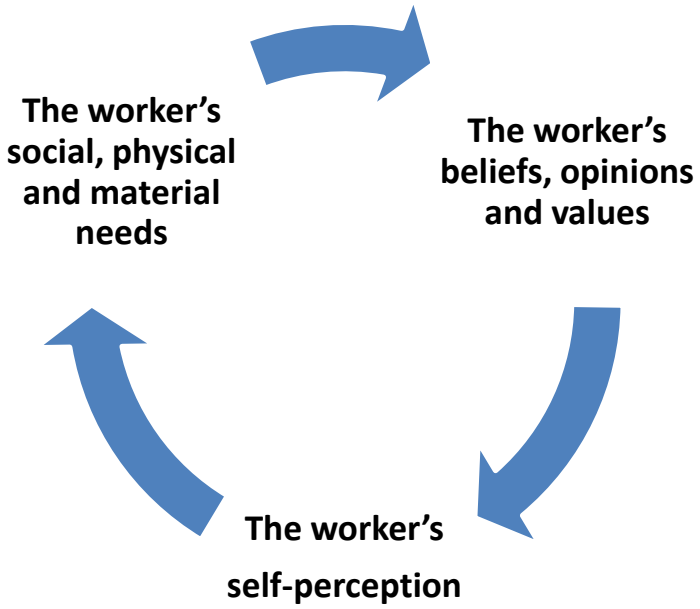

Figure 1.1: Three dimensions of self-awareness
Source: Hancock, 1997

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Figure 1.1 shows the three dimensions in developing the self-awareness of social work students. These dimensions also have various effects on the worker (or the student), as presented in Figure 1.2.

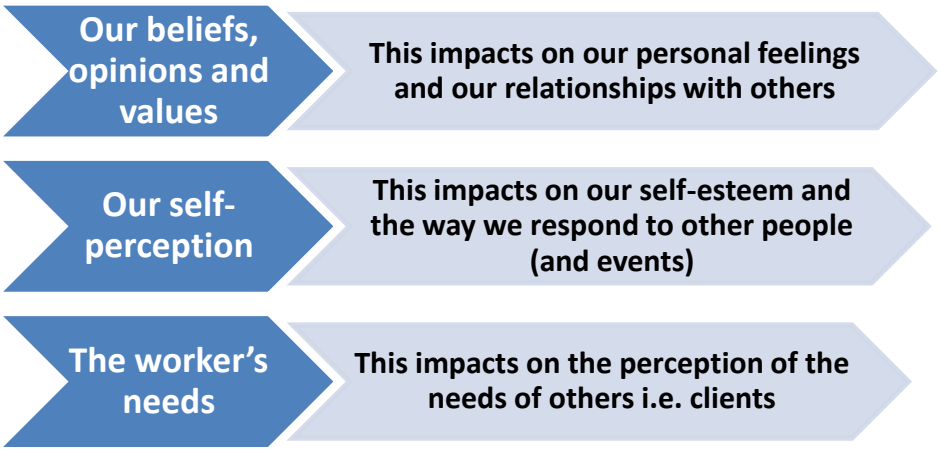

Figure 1.2: The effects of self-awareness on the worker or student
Source: Hancock, 1997

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the relationship amongst the three dimensions of self-awareness and their unique effects upon the self. One's self-perception also has two important aspects that are vital to the study. These are: the influence of childhood experiences (and the issue of counter-transference) and the sanction of expression of feelings.

The researcher used the three theoretical frameworks for design of data collection strategies and analysis of findings. In the next section the research approach and design are explained.

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The researcher selected the qualitative research approach because, in terms of the purpose of this research, a problem needed to be explored and thus would link strongly with the research questions and objectives of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). According to Creswell (2009:4), "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (also see Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Qualitative

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research begins with a worldview or paradigm. The current research is related to the social constructivist paradigm because an understanding of the world people live and work in was sought (Creswell, 2007). Peoples' subjective realities were the focus of the research and the goal was to derive multiple and complex viewpoints of a given situation. In social constructivism, persons' subjective meanings are derived socially and therefore meanings and interpretations are formed with others through events which impacted on their lives. This research is ontological as it "aims to generate knowledge about the social world" (Mouton, 2006:46). This research was also empirical in nature, as human actions and events constituted the research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

1.5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The researcher selected the case study research design as an appropriate means of achieving the research goal and objectives. Case study research consists of the study of an issue by means of one or more cases within a particular context (i.e. a South African university) (Creswell, 2013, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Fouché & Schurink, 2007). Individuals formed the unit of analysis (third-year social work students) and the point of focus was on orientations, for example attitudes, beliefs, values, prejudices and predispositions (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

1.5.2 SAMPLING

The researcher selected participants from among students and staff in the social work department. Student participants were drawn from a particular theory module focusing on family wellbeing. A reflective assignment asking that students reflect on the kinds of experiences they had during their childhood and their learning experiences in the module was used as part of a formative assignment. The class consisted of approximately 80 students and volunteers were requested for assignments to be analysed in this research. The researcher limited this sample to approximately 20 student participants.

Purposive sampling was appropriate for selecting students who would form part of the interviewing phase because only those who would be of benefit to the study were to be included

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in the individual interviews (Strydom & Delport, 2011). Thus, the criteria for inclusion to the individual interview encompassed students who had experienced incidents of at least two of the elements in the definition of ACEs. The researcher looked for a variation of incidents as explicated in the definition. Furthermore, the researcher included those student participants who could describe their learning experiences.

Staff members who teach on the third-year level were drawn into the study, for example, one theory lecturer who teaches a theory module focusing on intervention and child and youth wellbeing in the first semester. This module was selected as it relates to a module focusing on intervention and family wellbeing which the researcher teaches, and is also taught in the first semester. One fieldwork educator who facilitates the practical module on the year level was also drawn into the study as she had experience of the practical work of the students and their personal circumstances.

1.5.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection strategies included the following: Textual data (i.e. the writing of a formative task in a module) requesting that students volunteer their assignments (Annexure A). A maximum of ten individual interviews were undertaken using interview schedules for student participants to expand on their ACEs and learning experiences (depending on the saturation of the data) (Annexure F). The criteria for inclusion in the interview encompassed the following: student participants who could describe their learning experiences in relation to enduring at least two elements of ACEs, as described (see further in Chapter 4). Individual interviews were conducted with two social work staff to obtain data regarding their teaching activities and experiences with students who might have endured challenging circumstances (Annexure G).

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1.6 INFORMED CONSENT

All participants were required to complete informed consent agreements (see Annexures B - D). Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the research; the procedures that were to be followed; information that would be required from them; and their general role in the research process (see Annexure A). According to Strydom (2007:59), the information conveyed has to be "accurate and complete" to enable the participants to make informed decisions.

Anonymity implies that the information provided cannot be traced to individual participants whereas confidentiality means that the information provided will not be divulged to other parties, without the written consent of the participants. Confidentiality was assured by identification numbers rather than the names on the written tasks and interview schedules and creating a master identification file that linked the numbers to names, so that missing or contradictory information could be followed up. The researcher is the only person who had access to this file. The researcher used an audio recorder to record all data collection strategies and consent was obtained from the participants for this to be done (see Annexures B – D).

In this research, the participants would be reliving aspects of their past and this could have evoked negative or traumatic experiences. It was incumbent on the researcher to thoroughly prepare the participants for the kinds of information and experiences that they would be recalling. If required, students were also offered debriefing sessions where needed.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was approved by both research ethical committees of the Universities of Stellenbosch and Western Cape, so that the research could be undertaken within ethical parameters. The following ethical considerations were enforced (see further in Chapter 5) (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Strydom, 2007):

(i) Prevention of harm to participants: The researcher had to thoroughly prepare students for the type of research study, for example concerning what would be required of them as participants

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and the possible effects it would bring about as a result of the evocative nature of the study. The participants would be referred for debriefing where deemed necessary.

(ii) Protection from researcher bias: The researcher having been both the lecturer of student participants and the researcher, these roles could have posed a conflict of interest. Data verification steps were pertinent to offset discrimination or inconsistency, for example, member checking (asking participants to check accuracy of themes) and triangulation (using more than one data collection method so that data could be cross-checked).

(iii) Protecting the privacy of participants: The privacy of participants were protected through maintaining their anonymity by not using their names at all, as well as preserving confidentiality by protecting the sacredness of the information provided to the researcher.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS

According to De Vos (2007:333), "data analysis is…the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data". De Vos further states that it is "a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data". Tesch (1990) has identified three approaches to qualitative data analysis (cited in Ritchie & Lewis, 2005:201). The researcher used the descriptive and interpretative approach that reports on the opinions and the socio-cultural events in the lives of respondents. This was an important choice as it linked with the main focus of the research, which was to understand and report on the adverse childhood experiences and coping strategies of student participants. In order to explicate the data, thematic analysis was used, as advocated by Creswell (2013, 2007).

The data analysis process promoted by Creswell (2013, 2007), De Vos (2007) and Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011) was used. The steps involve: planning data recording ; data collection and preliminary analysis; managing or organising the data; reading and writing memos; generating categories, patterns and themes; coding the data; testing the emergent understandings; searching for alternative explanations; and representing and visualising (writing the report) (see Chapter 5). Within a multiple-case context, data analysis takes the format of a thematic analysis across cases called cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007; Khan & Van Wynsberghe, 2008).

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1.9 DATA VALIDATION

Data validation of the qualitative data was undertaken through the following measures (Creswell, 2014, 2009):

(i) Triangulation, which involves using more than one data collection method, and from various data locations (see Chapter 5 section 5.7.4);
(ii) Member checking, by asking the participants if the themes appear to be accurate (see Annexure H);
(iii) Rich, thick descriptions in conveying research findings by reporting many viewpoints of a theme (see Chapters 6 and 7); and
(iv) Reflexivity by the researcher on the possible impact of the researcher's background on the interpretations of the research findings (see Annexure I).

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The nature of the study, its scope and objectives culminated in the following limitations:

- The study was undertaken in one Higher Educational Institution, namely the University of the Western Cape, in one province, the Western Cape. The findings cannot be generalised to other universities and provinces in South Africa.
- One cohort of students participated in the study pertaining to one professional programme, namely social work. The findings cannot be generalised to other students and other programmes.

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1.11 CONTENT OF RESEARCH REPORT

The following chapters represent the structure and content of the research report (Table 1.1):

Table 1.1: Chapter outlay

CHAPTER	TITLE OF CHAPTER
1	INTRODUCTION
2	TEACHING AND LEARNING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OBE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
3	TEACHING AND LEARNING PECULIAR TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
4	ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND COPING MEASURES IN THE CONTEXT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
5	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
6	RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS
7	RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING
8	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research report contains three literature chapters focusing on teaching and learning in OBE (Chapter 2) and particular teaching and learning in social work (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 explores the construct and occurrence of adverse childhood experiences and applicable coping measures in social work professional learning. Two chapters are focused on the research findings, first, the research findings of the adverse childhood experiences of student participants (Chapter 6) and, second, the research findings of the after-effects of adverse childhood experiences in terms of teaching and learning in social work, as well as suggestions from participants (Chapter 7). The last chapter (Chapter 8) contains the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the research. In the next chapter the first of the literature chapters is discussed.

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1.12 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

In addition to research goals, the academic goal of this study was to contribute meaningfully to the scholarship of social work teaching and learning. This was to be achieved through exploring social work teaching and learning approaches and methods that may enable students particularly hampered by past trauma to appropriately position their own experiences in relation to those of others within a learning context and thereby positively impacting on retention and throughput. There is a dearth of literature and publications on these aspects and this report may challenge the traditional notion that social workers are only drawn from conservative or stable home environments, showing that they may come from all social backgrounds.

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CHAPTER 2

TEACHING AND LEARNING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

> Education is aimed at creating teaching and learning environments that would bring about desired changes in learners, whether to be more knowledgeable, better skilled or to influence their attitudes and values positively (Malan, 2000:22).

Education can mean different things to different people, depending on the context and the meaning or value people ascribe to the knowledge and skills gained. Malan's (2000) perspective on education is transformative as it focuses on effecting change in the student, be it in terms of knowledge and skills gained or, significantly, in terms of positive changes to students' attitudes and values. Likewise, Msila (2007) and Bramming (2006) respectively equate education to identity formation and transformation. Msila (2007:146) asserts that education is not an impartial and apolitical endeavour and thus, in South Africa, education was used as a tool to purposeful "construct" a particular identity among learners. Bramming argues that, though we all have identity, our identity can be transformed or changed through education. Malan (2000) further avers that education can effect transformation but is hinged on a favourable learning environment. Wenger (Roth & Lee, 2007:215) says that, "[d]uring the pursuit of the (learning) [sic] object, subjects not only produce outcomes but also produce/reproduce themselves".

This chapter focuses on the first research objective (see Chapter 1), to explore and describe teaching and learning in the context of OBE in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This objective centres on OBE as the approach used as a philosophy and premise in HEIs in SA (Alexander & November, 2010; Bitzer, 2001; Cooper, 2007). Social work education, as an aspect of higher education, thus has been structured along OBE principles (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The focus of this study was to explore and describe the ACEs of social work student participants and the impact thereof on the teaching and learning experiences of students. This data would

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provide a platform for recommendations towards facilitating critical and progressive teaching practices appropriate to the learning profile of social work students at UWC. The nature of this study compels an explication of OBE as it is the philosophy and framework for social work education and structure.

The chapter has been structured into three parts: Part I explores and discusses constructivism and its intellectual roots of individual and social constructivism, and, vitally, the teaching and learning components of constructivism; Part II explicates its academic origins and components to understand its functioning and application; and Part III explores the extent of OBE implementation in SA and certain of the criticisms that arose as a consequence of its implementation.

PART I: THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASE OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION: THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PHILOSOPHY

The aim of Part I is to explicate the constructivist education theory because it is commonly noted as the philosophy and approach at the base of OBE. It forms the foundation of the chapter and takes up the lion's share of the discussion, as it also links with the implementation of OBE (as the philosophy underpinning it). Two theoretical perspectives spearheaded constructivism, namely Individual and Social Constructivism, credited to Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, respectively. Particular teaching and learning methods attributed to constructivism are expounded.

2.2 THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PHILOSOPHY

Constructivism is identified as the philosophical base of OBE (Alexander & November, 2010; Bitzer, 2001; Cooper, 2007), that consists of a range of principles of learning theories collectively known as constructivism (Cooper, 2007). The constructivist philosophy developed along the lines of a continuum – starting with individual constructivism focusing on meaning making within the person, thereafter social constructivism focusing on meaning making among

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people, converging into what is generally known as constructivism (Kaufman, 2004; Lowenthal & Muth, 2008; Palincsar, 1998). This process is graphically represented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: The development of Constructivist Theory
Source: Lowenthal & Muth, 2008; Palincsar, 1998

This diagram shows the continuous process of the development of constructivism, starting with the ideas of Jean Piaget, which informed his model. Lev Vygotsky built on Piaget's ideas and extended individual learning to the sociocultural context within which learning takes place. These theories gave rise to the popular educational theory known as constructivism.

2.1.1.1 INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Individual constructivism emanated from cognitive psychology which was an antithesis to the behavioural psychology of John Watson (1878-1958), which emphasised that only observable behaviours are valuable in the research and learning process and that the inner world of the learner was too subjective (Liu & Matthews, 2005; Lowenthal & Muth, 2008; Van Harmelen, 1999). Individual constructivism has also sprouted theories such as student-centred learning (SCL), self-directed and autonomous learning (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Van Harmelen, 1999). A focus on SCL provides an orientation to the learner's knowledge, understanding, and competencies that encourage active learning and are attentive to the learner's profile (Botha, 2002; Cretchley & Castle, 2001; Liu & Matthews, 2005). SCL is rooted in humanistic principles

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of education and emphasises the learner as a holistic person (Cretchley & Castle, 200l). These beliefs are juxtaposed with the traditional role of the teacher being the sole and primary transmitter of knowledge, which emanated from input-based or content-based curricula where students were passive and bored (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Individual constructivism first emerged from the work of Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) (Cooper, 2007; Johnson, 2003; Kaufman, 2004; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Lowenthal & Muth, 2008; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005). Piaget is renowned for his studies on child development and learning (Lutz & Huitt, 2004). For Piaget "human enquiry is embedded within the individual child who constructs knowledge through his/her actions on the environment" (Pass, 2007:277).

2.1.2 THE COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING MODEL OF PIAGET

Piaget's model is conceptualised around meaning making based on an individual's lived experiences (his/her own reality and context) and prior knowledge (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008). Pass (2007) asserted that Jean Piaget viewed the individual as central to learning and confirmed that his theory was based on the learning that emerged through knowledge gained as a result of an individual's interactions with, and actions on, the environment.

The learning process is based on prior learning or scaffolding (see section 2.2.5). According to Piaget, learning is akin to growth and development (Kolb, 1984). Piaget asserted that humans, through the development from babyhood to adulthood, progressed from "a concrete phenomenal view of the world to an abstract constructionist view, from an active egocentric view to a reflective internalized mode of knowing" (Kolb, 1984:23). Thus, from a Piagetian viewpoint, as humans move through established developmental stages, learning occurs correspondingly: ranging from viewing experiences as singular and tangible (concrete) to theoretical and interpretive (abstract); to viewing experiences as functional and individualistic (active), contributing to introspection and insight (reflective). The learning process, as identified by Piaget, is linked to four stages on a continuum that develops from birth to adolescence, as depicted in Figure 2.2 (Feldman, 2004; Kolb, 1984:23-25):

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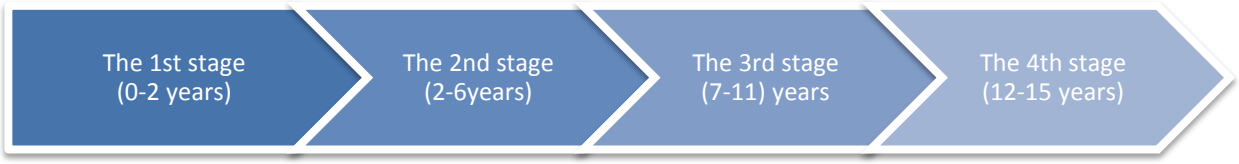

Figure 2.2: Piaget's cognitive development stages
Source: Kolb, 1984

Figure 2.2 illustrates the processional stages of human development that corresponds with the learning capabilities of individuals. There are four stages that set the stage for the most dramatic learning as asserted by Piaget in the following way.

(i) The first stage (0-2 years): This stage is characterised by the child being "mostly concrete and active" and is called the "sensory-motor stage". This means that learning is gained through "feeling, touching and handling". The child's learning viewpoint is accommodative because the child has no previous experiences and representations and thus the source of learning is "stimulus-response".

(ii) The second state (2-6 years): The child remains in the concrete phase but an introspection (reflective) stance starts to emerge as experiences and events are assimilated, transforming these into pictures called the representational stage. The child begins to deviate from the absorption in concrete and existing encounters to controlling her/his own views or representations of the world. Thus, the child's main worldview is divergent as the child's unique reflections are revealed.

(iii) The third stage (7-11 years): This stage is characterised by the focused development of "abstract symbolic power" (Kolb, 1984). Piaget called the first stage in this development "concrete operations". It is ruled by the structure and rationality of categories and associations. From this point, the child becomes more liberated from her/his world of concrete experiences and starts to learn inductive skills as the she/he learns to interpret and construe from broad generalisations. The child thus becomes assimilative in learning. Kolb (1984:24) asserts the child "relies on concepts and theories to select and give shape to his experiences".

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(iv) The fourth stage (12-15 years): This stage is characterised by the start of adolescence. Together with the upheaval and destabilisation of the emotional state, the child's learning also undergoes a change. This stage is called "formal operations" by Piaget. It signifies that the child is able to use symbolic thinking based on figurative reasoning. Although the child resumes an active stance it becomes revised through reflection and abstract skills (in third stage). These symbolic abilities allow the child to use hypothetical and deductive analysis, which means the child will be able to infer and reason using logic. The child's learning style is deemed convergent as the child learns to assimilate many viewpoints.

Growth, development and learning appear to be inextricably linked. Learning and growth are closely aligned and learning, according to Piaget's model, cannot take place and advance without the human developmental stage as catalyst. In terms of the learning context, the lecturer or teacher does not hinder or obstruct this maturation process but rather is the guide and facilitator, as the process of learning is dependent on the learner's readiness (Daniels & Shumow, 2003; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Piaget contended that there are two reciprocal and interactional processes that are crucial to learning, namely the process of assimilation, which means the integration of experiences and incidents with established ideas and representations (which is assumed to be an innate skill), and the process of accommodation, which means the adaptation of ideas and representations to life experiences (assumed to be a learned skill) (Feldman, 2004; Kolb, 1984; Lutz & Huitt, 2004). Piaget viewed learning as "intelligent adaptation" that is the outcome from a balanced conflict between accommodation and assimilation processes that enable individuals to transcend to higher developmental stages (Kolb, 1984:23; Lutz & Huitt, 2004).

In summary, individual constructivism sets the individual as pivotal to learning in terms of the individual human developmental stage as precursor to learning. The child learns through interacting with his/her surroundings to use his/her mental and physical abilities to learn that which is possible in accordance with his/her developmental capacities.

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In the next section the individual as primary in learning serves as platform for the individual's sociocultural environment as source of learning.

2.2.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism emanated from the tenets of individual constructivism and the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a well-known Russian educational psychologist, who viewed the social and cultural context as central for knowledge construction (Liu & Matthews, 2005; Lowenthal & Muth, 2008). Vygotsky wrote extensively on teaching and learning theory. He was referred to as being a social cognitivist or social constructivist. His theory was also referred to interchangeably as sociocultural or sociohistorical (Gredler, 2009).

Learning does not occur in isolation from a wider context but in a sociocultural environment where learning is connected to the lived experiences and reality of the learner. Palincsar (1998:345) views social constructivism as focusing "on the social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge". Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008:326) define social constructivism as a "psychological and philosophical perspective contending that individuals form or construct much of what they learn and understand through individual and social activity". In summary, social constructivists believe that learning occurs in a socio-cultural environment where learners are active builders of their own knowledge and where learning is dependent on the social context within which learning takes place.

2.2.2.1 The Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky

According to Vygotsky, the social component of our mental functioning takes precedence over the individual component where learning involves largely situation- or context-specific activities (Daniels & Shumow, 2003; Liu & Matthews, 2005). Vygotsky used the construct of dialectical materialism based on the ideas of Hegel, Spinoza, Marx and Engels to underlie his explanation of the complexity of cognitive development (Gredler, 2009). Dialectical materialism concerns viewing the world as comprising multifaceted and systematic processes which undergo a continuous and transitory transformation of existence (Sewell, 2002). By using this explanation, Vygotsky portrayed cognitive development as (i) a complex and variable rational (dialectical)

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process; (ii) transformative learning through control (mastery) over mental processes, and (iii) critical thinking or deep learning as based on historical development (prior learning or scaffolding) (Gredler, 2009).

Vygotsky believed that activity expanded one's mental capacity. In addition to the specifics of the learning activity, Vygotsky asserted, the purpose or the motivation for learning also became important (Yang & Wilson, 2006). Why should students learn the particular fact or theory or do an activity or exercise? The usual reasons may be learning for a test or as a building block for new knowledge. Yang and Wilson (2006) explain that the purpose of learning determines what students will focus on and how they will go about learning. These authors assert that, though the teacher has a vital role to play in creating a learning environment conducive to the learning purpose, the student still needs to accept the purpose of the learning activity.

James Wertsch (Professor, Sociocultural Anthropology) asserts that three characteristics that emanate from Vygotsky's writings explicate the relationship between the individual and social dimensions in learning (Graue, 1993; Palincsar, 1998; Tappan, 2001; Wertsch, 2014; Wertsch, 1993):

(i) The interdependence between learning and development: Vygotsky contended that individual development is derived from social interactions that influence the individual's personality. In his writings, Vygotsky particularly focused on the interdependence between learning and development. He also contended that learning was the prerequisite for various developmental functions and thus these two processes were not disparate. This is differentiated from Piaget's theory of child development (in which development must take place before learning can occur). Vygotsky's theory asserts that learning is a prerequisite for development.

In this vein, Vygotsky noted that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organised, specifically human, psychological functions" (Palincsar, 1998:352). In clarifying the interdependence between learning and development, Vygotsky differentiated between a person's actual developmental level and the person's potential developmental level that he/she could achieve. The area in between Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (discussed further in section 2.2.5.3).

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(ii) The use of tools and signs (called semiotics) in human action: Semiotics would include language, systems of counting, artworks, writing, diagrams, and maps (amongst others). These symbols and tools are used in the co-creation of knowledge. Through the constant use of these symbols and tools they become assimilated internally to support later independent functioning.

(iii) The use of historical analysis to study human development: Vygotsky emphasised the use of historical analysis to learn the characteristics and elements of another being. There are four types of interrelated historical analyses:

- Phylogenetic analysis: this analysis is focused on the differences between humans and other animals, especially in the human use of psychological symbols and tools, particularly language.
- Cultural/historical analysis: this analysis looks at diverse cultural practices of particular cultures and development of cultural practices and of groups over time.
- Antogenetic analysis: this analysis focuses on individual characteristics, for example age, temperament, physical or mental difficulties, and the impact of historical factors on development.
- Microgenetic analysis: this analysis focuses on the specific relationship between the individual and the environment. Thus the roles of individual, interpersonal and social/cultural factors simultaneously acting with and against one another are vital.

The contribution and implications of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory lies in the emphasis of the learning that the individual gains from the social and cultural environment and connections. The significance also lies in the learning as a premise for development, in contrast to Piaget. The use of cultural symbols highlights the value, especially of language, in the social learning process.

The individual and social constructivist views of learning respectively proposed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky have laid the foundation for the constructivist learning theory. The relationship between a child's developmental stages and consequent cognitive development is distilled from individual constructivism. From social constructivism, what is distilled is the social nature of learning.

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2.2.3 CONSTRUCTIVISM AS LEARNING THEORY

Yang and Wilson (2006:365) define constructivism as "a psycholinguistic explanation for how learning can be fostered effectively through interactive pedagogical practices". Vygotsky stressed that the significance of language acquisition and development was vital in learning as well as participatory teaching practices. In constructivism, language and language use are important conduits through which learning is attained and transformed within a social context.

Van Harmelen (1999:80) confirmed that "knowledge is largely a reflection of the relationship that exists between culture and language". The implication of social constructivism is that knowledge is viewed as socially constructed, whereby language and communication become important means to understand reality (Hendry, Frommer & Walker, 1999; Van Harmelen, 1999). We "individually or socially negotiate or renegotiate" the way we understand our world (Van Harmelen, 1999:81). In this view, knowledge is not stable but is contested as we continue to build and rebuild our knowledge as a consequence of our individual or collective experiences and as our understanding is extended. Procuring and developing knowledge are not partitioned, nor does this operate on a continuum; rather it is an interdependent and repetitive process (Van Harmelen, 1999).

The implications for learning is that language (any language, including sign) is a vital cultural symbol for communication and constructing, exchanging, and sharing ideas, opinions, and viewpoints with others. The components of constructivism will be explicated to provide credence and structure to constructivism.

2.2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Constructivism is premised upon three important concepts, namely knowledge, knowing and learning (Entwistle, Entwistle & Tait, 1993; Lowenthal & Muth, 2008; Von Glasersfeld, 1995). The centrality of the learning activity mediates knowledge and knowing that gives rise to actual learning (Radford, 2013). Figure 2.3 illustrates the interrelatedness of these constructs.

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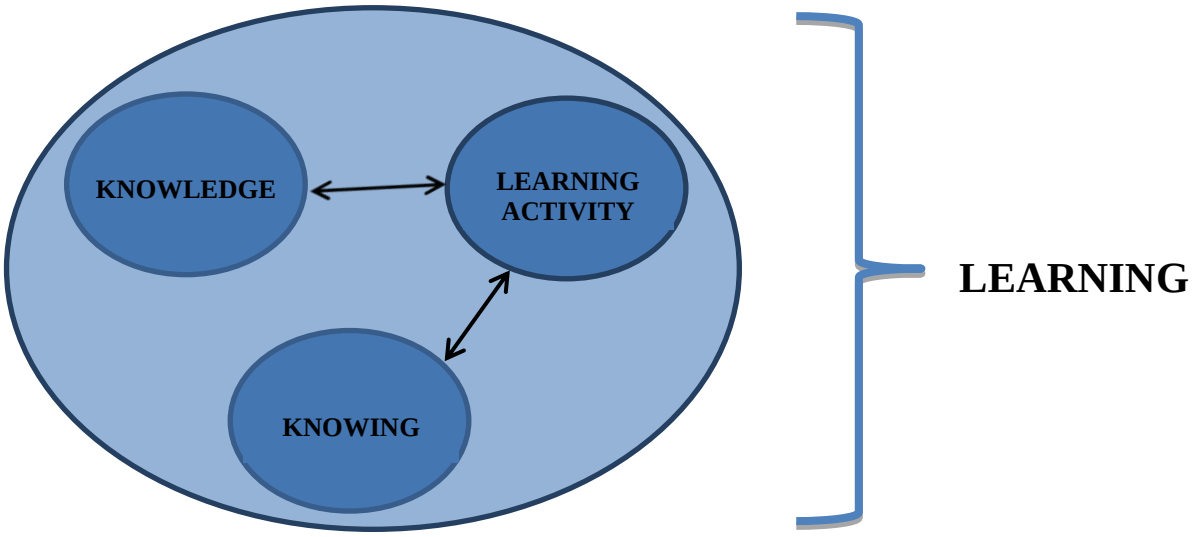

Figure 2.3: The interrelated components of constructivism
Source: Radford, 2013

Figure 2.3 illustrates the relationship between knowledge and knowing as being mediated through a learning activity, and the learning that is achieved as a result of the associations amongst these concepts.

2.2.4.1 Knowledge

According to Piaget, knowledge consists of processes of transformations that incrementally become more suitable (viable) (Entwistle *et al*., 1993). Radford (2013) refers to knowledge as possibility that can only be realised through activity. The activity actualises knowledge (and meaning). Knowledge is defined as a dynamic process of culturally organised forms of doing, thinking and reflecting (Radford, 2013).

Schunk *et al*. (2008) therefore affirm that learners attain meaning by choosing information and integrating it with their prior knowledge. The level of complexity of some knowledge will depend on the students' prior experiences, both as a context and as a starting block (scaffold) from which to build further or new knowledge. Students' prior knowledge is thus an important function and principle as a jumping off point from which to initiate understanding and to build new knowledge.

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Knowledge, as we have seen, is the primary component of what constitutes teaching and learning. The eternal question is 'what must the learner know in order to do or to understand?' In constructivism, gaining knowledge is not merely providing content information but assumes a dynamic and active energy encompassing the learner, her/his prior knowledge and experiences, and the learner's interpretation. Importantly, it needs mental effort to gain knowledge.

In the next section, the second component of constructivism, namely knowing as symbiotically intertwined with knowledge, is discussed.

2.2.4.2 Knowing

Knowing is understood as the process and outcome of the concretisation (actualisation) of knowledge (Radford, 2013). This concretisation of knowledge is mediated through an activity (Radford, 2013). Therefore one cannot presume to 'know' without demonstrating, through an action or activity, otherwise it remains knowledge. Demonstrating knowing only through changed behaviour is akin to behaviourist notions of learning (Ertmer & Newby, 1993). However, the actualisation of knowing can also be shown through intrinsic changes such as attitudes, understanding and values that cannot always be observed (Ertmer & Newby, 1993).

2.2.4.3 Learning

The process of building new, or extending, knowledge is through the deconstruction of existing knowledge (prior experiences) and its reconstruction with incorporated new knowledge (Hendry *et al*., 1999; Van Harmelen, 1999). Thus knowledge cannot be given to others (received passively) it is constructed from within individuals in their interaction with their world (Hendry *et al*., 1999). Radford (2013) confirms that learning is a conscious and purposeful interaction with socio-cultural symbols of thinking and doing. The process of learning is also a physical, mental and emotional exertion for which the individual will need energy that is expressed as mental effort (Hendry *et al*., 1999). Mental effort, in turn, is linked to levels of feelings and physical arousal (exertion), motivation or energy. If the student does not understand the knowledge and is interested and motivated to know more, then this requires increased physical arousal in order to increase mental effort. Hendry *et al*. (1999) argue that mental effort and

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minimal anxiety impact on the person's self-efficacy (how one views one's ability to complete a task successfully), which also impacts on mental effort. Thus these authors assert that mental effort is determined both by our state of arousal and levels of anxiety. Students who have high levels of self-efficacy will usually learn at a greater pace than students with less confidence.

In this aforementioned premise one key concept, says Vygotsky, is self-regulation or self-mastery (Gredler, 2009), which is also a core principle in cognitive development. According to Vygotsky the outcome of cognitive development (childhood and adolescence) is "voluntary (self-organised) attention, categorical perception, thinking in concepts and logical memory" representing self-mastery, which is a prerequisite for self-regulation (Gredler, 2009:8). Accordingly, self-regulation in learning also reflects an individual's emotional, motivational and behavioural regulatory mechanisms (Gredler, 2009; Zimmerman, 2002).

The main learning principles associated with constructivism can be summarised as follows (Bellefeuille *et al*., 2005):

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Table 2.1: Main constructivist principles, interpretation and application

Summarising principles	Interpretation	Application
1. Learning is not stimulus-response activity	▪ Learning takes place in accordance with the learner's own development and readiness and within their own context.	▪ The teacher must be knowledgeable about the developmental stage of the learners, provide readiness tasks for prior assessments, and understand the role of their socio-cultural contexts.
2. Learning is achieved through active learning	▪ Learning is undertaken with the active participation of the learner, sharing their ideas in conjunction with their peers and the teacher (facilitator).	▪ The teacher designs tasks that will enable learners to be active in their learning, such as individual and group projects, problem-based and research-based tasks.
3. Learning is a generative process (it is cumulative)	▪ Learning builds on the (formal and informal) learning that has taken place before the actual task. It does not take place in a vacuum and without context and is a continuum.	▪ Curriculum design must be integrated and scaffolded so that year-level and within-module learning complements and supplements their existing learning.
4. Learning requires self-regulation	▪ Learning is a self-directed process that requires proactivity and self-control of the learner in pursuing the learning task and this in itself is a skill that must be enabled.	▪ Learning tasks should routinely have the following self-regulatory phases and skills: *Forethought phase* (analysing what the task requires, self-motivation); *Performance phase* (self-discipline and monitoring); *Self-reflection phase* (self-judgment and affect) (Zimmerman, 2002).
5. Learning involves the construction of conceptual structures	▪ The building blocks of learning involve the learning of concepts as a foundation for cognitive development.	▪ Curricula and module design must incorporate and integrate learning foundational constructs and theories as building blocks for further learning in classroom activities (such as concept mapping) and formative tasks.

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6. Learning involves reflection and abstraction	▪ Reflection allows learners to connect aspects of their learning to constructs and for extrapolation to other constructs, discourses and implications far broader and deeper than the original learning task.	▪ All learning tasks should incorporate opportunities for reflection on various levels such as educational, societal, and self domains. ▪ The learner must be enabled to become reflective as part of learning.
7. Learners relate to new information to what they already know	▪ Prior learning and knowledge serve as a base upon which new learning and tasks are founded.	▪ Learning tasks to be designed so that students think about and extract their prior learning from a number of sources to find connections and associations between previous knowledge and new learning.

Source*: *Bellefeuille et al., 2005

Knowledge, knowing and learning are important constructs for understanding constructivism. In knowing, the learner's prior knowledge (drawing from Piagetian constructs of learning) and social interactions in various contexts (drawing from Vygotsky) are key themes. Constructivist learning requires mental effort and active engagement, as learning is not a passive activity. Thus, self-control (self-mastery in Vygotsky) is a necessary characteristic of the learner in the learning process.

This principle has significant implications for student participants who experienced childhood adversity in terms of their emotions, reactions and responses that would possibly pose challenges for self-regulation (see Chapter 6, Theme 3), and the impact on their self-efficacy and self-confidence (see Chapter 7, Themes 1 and 3).

In the next section, the influence of knowing and learning can be discerned in the practice principles of constructivist teaching and learning.

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2.2.5 PRACTICE PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING AND LEARNING

Streitwieser and Light (2010) emphasised that learner-centred teaching practices are a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. Effective teaching and learning practices are linked to what Ramsden (1992) identified as deep learning (cf. Hanusch, Obijiofor & Volcic, 2009; Streitwieser & Light, 2010). Deep learning is promoted by participatory and inclusive teaching practices with an acknowledgement of students as co-constructors of knowledge and surface learning is associated with traditional transmission practices with students being passive recipients of knowledge (Hanusch *et al*., 2009; Streitwieser & Light, 2010). Ramsden (1992:45) described surface learning as "quantity without quality", and deep learning as "quality and quantity". In addition to good teaching practices, creating a teaching environment conducive to gaining knowledge is another factor in promoting deep learning, which includes the curriculum and assessment processes (Hanusch *et al*., 2009). Course (module) processes are linked with fostering deep and surface learning depending on the following characteristics (Table 2.2) (Rust, 2002:149):

Table 2.2: Course determinants for effective learning

SURFACE LEARNING DETERMINANTS:	DEEP LEARNING DETERMINANTS
•Heavy workload •High class contact hours •Large amount of course content •Insufficient time for in-depth content study •Highly structured programme with little choice •Assessment system eliciting fear and angst	•Promoting motivation for learning •Inclusive learning activities •Participation and interaction with others •A structured and holistic knowledge base

Source: Rust, 2002

Deep learning is promoted through particular teaching and learning methods as proposed by constructivist theory (Davies, Welch & Hargies, 2008; Palincsar, 1998). These methods are: dialogue, scaffolding, and the zone of proximal development.

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2.2.5.1 Dialogue

Vygotsky asserted that learning takes place through dialogue. Dialogue first takes place incrementally between teacher and students, amongst students, and between text and reader (called intermental). Thereafter, the student makes sense of the knowledge by reconstructing the ideas and information in their own minds (called intramental) (Rey, 2009; Robbins, 2007; Yang & Wilson, 2006). Palincsar (1998:349) confirms that when one explains one's thoughts and opinions to others it leads to "deeper cognitive processing". Davies *et al*. (2008:3) define Vygotskyan dialogues as being "the examination of opinions or ideas logically by question and answer". This is based on German philosopher Georg Hegel's (1770-1831) dialectical process which includes three components:

Figure 2.4: The dialectical process of dialogue
Source: Davies et al., 2008

Figure 2.4 represents Hegel's process of logical reasoning that enables students to gain skills in explicating their argument through practising or exercises following the above process. The role of teacher is as facilitator of opportunities for students to acquire the skill of dialogue which includes logical reasoning and argument. This skill can assist students to argue and reason based predominantly on logic and process rather than being solely emotionally based.

Dialogue, scaffolding and ZPD are practice principles to facilitate deep learning, especially of critical thinking and reflecting skills (higher order thinking), with learning tasks designed to support their learning. Both scaffolding and ZPD are curriculum and course design factors.

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2.2.5.2 Scaffolding

The role of the teacher is to facilitate and support the construction of knowledge (Bellefeuille *et al*., 2005; Yang & Wilson, 2006). Here, Vygotsky proposed the principle of scaffolding. Scaffolding means to create a learning base as support for new or higher-order learning. In scaffolding, teachers design learning activities that require students to reach above their present ability (mental effort) (Yang & Wilson, 2006). Schunk *et al*. (2008:138) explain scaffolding as "teachers and peers provid[ing] scaffolding (assistance) that helps support learners until they become competent and it can be removed". Teachers thus must also create supportive mechanisms to make it possible for students to perform academically at this new level, without which it would not be possible. The implication for teachers would, for example, be to provide clear and informative guidelines and instructions for learning activities and tasks until students are able to work independently. To be effective, scaffolding should take place within a module, a year level, and across year levels within a given programme.

2.2.5.3 Zone of Proximal Development

Scaffolding is also related to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Gredler (2009) states that, though ZPD is the most recognisable of Vygotsky's concepts (especially in the USA), Vygotsky wrote minimally on this concept. ZPD is interpreted to mean the area (zone) between the student's current level of functioning and the elevated level of learning that the student can achieve with scaffolded learning. Schunk *et al*. (2008:138) assert that the relationship between scaffolding and the ZPD is that it is "the amount of learning possible by a student given proper instructional support". The application of the principle of ZPD presupposes that the teacher gets to know the learning profile of students as individuals and as a collective class in order to use ZPD to appropriately design exercises and tasks. This principle would require time and effort that some may feel impossible to undertake.

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2.2.6 TEACHING STRATEGIES

Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005:22) contend that "while constructivism is a well-documented theory of knowing it is not yet a well-documented theory of teaching". Teachers need extensive skill in assessing and using students' ZPD to challenge them to reach higher levels of learning (Palincsar, 1998; Yang & Wilson, 2006). If this is not done, then the teacher and teaching methods would not keep pace with the development and learning needs of the learner.

Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) and Van Harmelen (1999) proposed the following seven strategies tied to the teacher's role:

2.2.6.1 Active Learning

Active learning reflects the principle of student-centred learning. "Meaningful understanding occurs when students develop effective ways to resolve problematic situations" (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:19). Teachers must therefore offer students appropriate types of problems or issues that have various solution pathways which the student must try to solve independently. These problem-solving tasks reflect discovery learning through the use of two principles of constructing knowledge, namely 'Without the Information Given' (WIG) and 'Beyond the Information Given' (BIG) (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:19). These principles can be used to scaffold learning and to propel students beyond their knowledge thresholds into their ZPD to higher-level thinking. Useful learning tools to promote active learning include: multimedia, Socratic dialogues, coaching and scaffolding, role playing, simulations, storytelling structures and case studies. Socratic dialogue is explained by Nordquist (2012) as a discussion exercise to reach general consensus (through question and answer) to increase acuity and insight, as well as to uncover hidden beliefs.

2.2.6.2 Authentic Learning

Authentic learning is achieved when teachers use real-world issues as a basis for learning and analysis (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:20). Students are thus exposed to the common professional practices and tools (used by the profession of social work, for example) to represent authentic learning situations. Students are coached to use knowledge which increases the value

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of (and motivation for) the learning in given situations. Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) recommend that students be placed in learning situations where they will not be limited by a superficial learning setting. Learning occurs in a context where that context determines the acquisition and use of knowledge. This is called situated cognition. Alongside this principle is anchored instruction, which involves the knowledge and skills occurring in authentic situations. As an example, part of the training of social work students occurs in social work organisations where students are placed to learn how social work is done in real-life situations (situated cognition) and where the social workers are anchored instructors. These placements are called cognitive apprenticeships and the learning is primarily focused on "teaching the processes that experts use to handle complex tasks" (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:20). In this way, apprenticeships form part of scaffolding.

2.2.6.3 Multiple Perspectives

Multiple perspectives involve the inclusion and acceptance of many viewpoints on a given topic. This creates a rich learning environment consisting of "multiple learning styles and multiple representations of knowledge from different conceptual and case perspectives" (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:20). The authors contend that the opposite of multiple perspectives occurs when knowledge is partitioned and leads to passive and surface learning. Thus they argue that conceptual associations and varied content must be emphasised (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:21).

2.2.6.4 Collaborative Learning

This strategy encourages students to create, contrast and appreciate many perspectives on a topic emanating from their peers (fellow students) (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:21). Students learn to offer their opinions and viewpoints and to defend their positions. They learn to engage with others and to articulate their arguments and be convincing. In addition, they also learn to listen to others and to concede valid points of others and to assimilate and incorporate new learning from their peers (Davies *et al*., 2008). Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) thus aver that knowledge becomes clear, usable, and understandable through collaborative learning.

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2.2.6.5 Cooperative Small Groups

In cooperative small groups learners derive deeper knowledge from many viewpoints and capabilities from their peers. Palincsar (1998) avers that these teaching and learning activities are similar to the interactions between teachers and learners, but here the role of teacher, guide and facilitator occurs interchangeably amongst participants. This type of engagement generates deeper knowledge for learners, which emanates from the common life experiences and viewpoints of the learners, other than those shared with teachers (Palincsar, 1998). Peers, though, had to be actively involved in the problem-solving activities and not be mere observers.

2.2.6.6 Collaborative / Team Teaching

In this strategy the teacher is not the sole transmitter of knowledge. Clark and Kinuthia (2009) assert that team teaching is the shared and collective efforts of teachers focused on common teaching goals. Furthermore, its underlying assumptions and values involve modelling, sharing authority, reflecting, and experiential (heuristic) teaching. The benefits for students encompass facilitating students' knowledge from a variety of viewpoints and creating an active and engaging environment for student learning (Hanusch *et al*., 2009). The benefits of student learning involve broadened teaching knowledge; modelling cooperativeness; providing in-depth task feedback through peer review, contributing to quality assurance and, ultimately, to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Lester and Evans (2009) identified significant learning benefits for students but conceded that team teaching did require much more effort and time.

2.2.6.7 Peer Teaching

In this strategy learners take turns to present work to class or to lead small-group learning (tutoring groups). Lester and Evans (2009:373) define peer teaching as learners being granted "opportunities to actively participate in the joint construction of knowledge". Davies *et al*. (2008) stress that students who are involved in this way learn better and achieve a higher level of understanding. Streitwieser and Light (2010:347) add that this method will require the concerted involvement of teachers to support students' teaching (tutoring) role and provide extra tuition and preparation.

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These seven teaching strategies have highlighted progressive ways in which to facilitate deep learning emphasising high-order thinking. The challenges in the implementation of these strategies lie in the impact on the teacher / lecturer in terms of time, energy and workload.

2.3 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST PHILOSOPHY

Part I represented a large body of knowledge, serving to contextualise and explicate constructivism as the philosophical basis of OBE. Constructivism in itself is an independent theory (as opposed to thinking it exists only in relation to OBE and thus not as a separate entity). However, its inclusion here is in relation to OBE. It is an enlightening and progressive theory, representing a radical departure from traditional, rote learning to dynamic, participatory teaching and learning methods. The contributions of Piaget and Vygotsky are crucial and have established the intellectual grounding of constructivism.

In Part II, the focus is on OBE and explicating the components and intellectual roots of OBE.

PART II: THE DECONSTRUCTION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

The aim of Part II is to set out the structure and interrelatedness of the components of OBE. The layout consists, firstly, of the origins of OBE, which is explicated in the various components and constructs now readily associated with OBE. The organising principles of OBE are presented as regarding their significance in curricula and course design. Key concepts of OBE are learning outcomes, competency and assessment, which are also the building blocks of any module and curriculum. These sections provide clarity and insight into OBE as an educational approach and model.

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2.4 THE NATURE AND FORM OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Outcomes-based education (OBE) originated in the USA in the early 1990s as a result of concern regarding the limited numbers of graduating learners skilled in maths, science and technology, as well as basic literacy (Botha, 2002). As its name suggests, the primary construct of OBE is outcomes. Educational systems and programmes using the OBE approach are aligned with outcomes that learners must achieve at the end of the learning process.

William Spady, a sociologist and central figure in OBE, conceded that outcomes-based educational models were not new. According to Spady (1994:1), OBE "means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences" (cf. Alexander & November, 2010). The key focus of OBE is on what learners are learning as opposed to what they are taught (Botha, 2002). This approach heralded a dramatic change from the traditional teaching and learning approach of teacher-centred and content-driven to learner-centred and participatory learning strategies. OBE is identified as a learner-centred approach because the centrality of the learner is paramount as to their learning needs; prior knowledge and new knowledge required; practical learning tasks; and outcomes (Botha, 2002; Cretchley & Castle, 2001; Fakier & Waghid, 2004; Spady, 1994).

Three types of OBE that educational systems could follow have been formulated, namely traditional, transitional and transformational (Fakier & Waghid, 2004; Spady & Marshall, 1991). The different elements of each OBE type are set out in Table 2.3 below:

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Table 2.3: Types of OBE

TRADITIONAL	TRANSITIONAL	TRANSFORMATIONAL
Traditional OBE centres on instructional objectives based on the knowledge and skills in conventional subjects. It is content-focused and stresses understanding. Teaching staff has complete control of the curriculum and learning.	Transitional OBE is in between traditional and transformational types. It departs from a conventional curriculum and focuses on curricula and assessments that are geared towards exit outcomes that generate critical thinking, metacognitive skills and affective competencies (higher order skills) that intersect all subjects.	Transformational OBE is the most progressive system advancing collaborative (with students and external role players), flexible, trans-disciplinary and empowerment oriented learning. It does not adhere to individual subjects (modules). Learning also centres on exit outcomes in terms of role performances for societal requirements.

Source: Fakier & Waghid, 2004; Spady & Marshall, 1991

Table 2.3 explicates the three types of OBE in order to view their differences and applicability, especially in the South African higher educational system and particular programmes within HEIs. The BSW degree in South Africa, for example, appears to have strong similarities with the traditional OBE, since the internal control and design rests with teaching staff and instructional objectives do feature strongly, but it also has links with transitional OBE as it follows pre-specified exit level outcomes that do transcend individual modules.

The most progressive OBE type and the one that educational systems would find challenging to follow would be the transformational OBE type. It is challenging because of the revolutionary changes brought to longstanding and traditional stances on teaching and learning such as didactic teaching, passive learning, and an undemocratic learning process of the teacher as the acknowledged expert and transmitter of knowledge and learners the submissive recipients (Fakier & Waghid, 2004; Malan, 2000). In terms of OBE philosophy, Table 2.4 explicates the characteristics of both the constructivist and transformational OBE types in relation to each other (Imenda, 2005; Malan, 2000):

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Table 2.4: The constructivist and transformational characteristics of OBE

Constructivist Approach	Transformational OBE
▪ Learner-centred approach in teaching where teachers are facilitators	▪ Facilitative teaching: Learners are guided through knowledge construction / reconstruction rather than pushed through content assimilation. ▪ Specified learning outcomes: Learners are informed beforehand of the learning outcomes that must be achieved by the end of the learning programme.
▪ Assessment and feedback occurs on a continuous basis	▪ Criterion assessment: Learning outcomes are assessed in accordance with competence at specified levels, rather than by a traditional mark or grading. ▪ Credits for performance: Advancement after demonstrating competency in learning outcomes through continuous assessment.
▪ Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action as underlying logic of learning	▪ The facilitation of higher order thinking skills is implicit in transformational OBE.
▪ Not aligned to behavioural principles	▪ Advancement to fulfil ultimate learning outcomes: Learning outcomes set the basis for application of knowledge, skills and attitudes progressively achieving set outcomes (scaffolding)
▪ Integration of knowledges	▪ Integrating conceptual frameworks in curricula design: Curricula design geared towards holistic learning.
▪ Learning is relevant and linked to real-life situations	▪ Learning is flexible and not limited to disciplinary knowledge but to relevant knowledge.
▪ Learners become self-regulatory	▪ Learning is empowerment-oriented so tat he learner becomes independent and self-regulatory.
▪ Learner-centred approach used for example Montessori approaches	▪ Inclusive definition of success: Learners progress according to individual competencies rather than normative notions but specified in learning outcomes.
▪ Learners work at own pace within flexible time frames (learning is individualised)	▪ Broadened and flexible learning opportunities: Learning is not restricted to class time but is flexible and open-ended.
▪ Active learning is emphasised	▪ Cooperative and active learning methods: Learners learn to cooperate with others and temper their individualistic tendency for competitiveness for the greater good.
▪ Community inputs into curriculum	▪ Establishing collaborative structures: The curriculum is democratised, which allows for stakeholder contribution.

Source: Imenda, 2005; Malan, 2000

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Table 2.4 provides the essential qualities of the constructivist approach in relation to the qualities of the transformational OBE type. It is clear that there are strong elements of commonality between constructivism and the transformational OBE type. Constructivism as underlying philosophy of OBE would not necessarily hold (completely) true for the other OBE types. However, the transitional OBE type may share some elements of constructivism, especially with regard to teaching strategies and being largely student-centred in its approach, although divergent in terms of OBE's emphasis on behaviourist notions of learning.

2.4.1 THE ROOTS AND COMPONENTS OF OBE

The roots of OBE can be located in four educational approaches which form the working principles upon which OBE is based and provide the driving force for implementation (Malan, 2000):

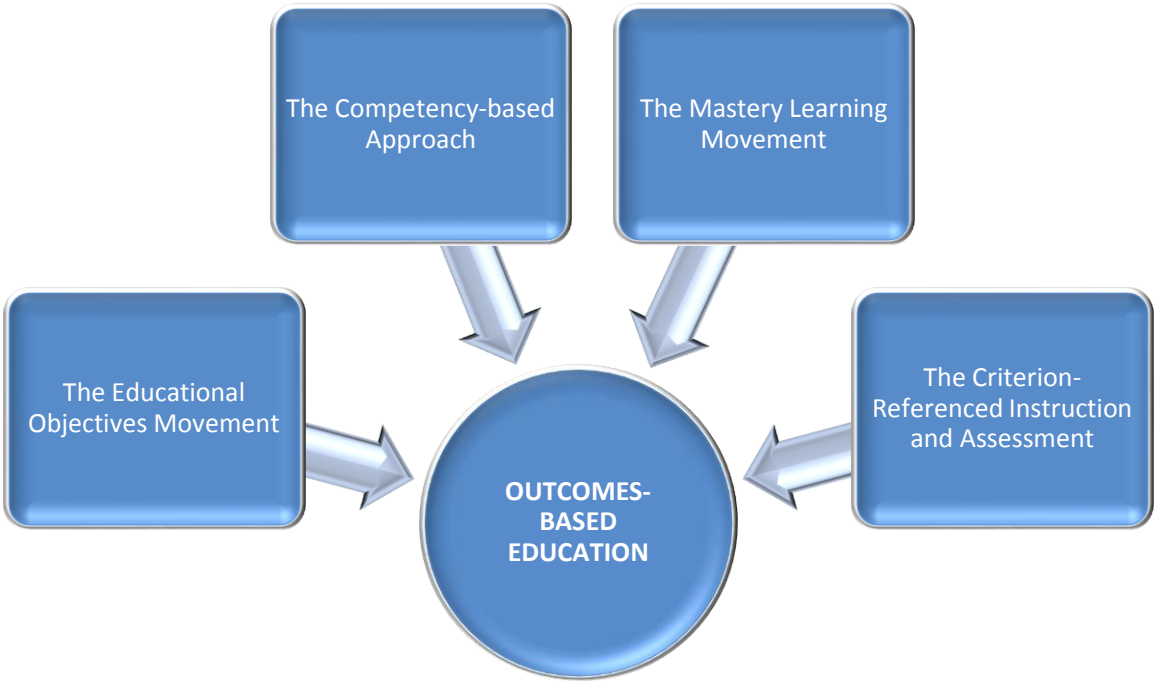

Figure 2.5: The intellectual roots of OBE
Source: Malan, 2000

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Figure 2.5 outlines the approaches that first emerged and would eventually lead to OBE. It is clear in the next discussion how these four early educational models influenced the components and principles of OBE.

2.4.1.1 The Educational Objectives Movement

The setting of educational objectives emerged as a result of the schism between what was being taught by teachers and what was being learned by students. The following briefly sets out how educational objectives developed (Table 2.5) (Cismas, 2002; Malan, 2000):

Table 2.5: Historical development of the Educational Objectives Movement

1860 →	**1924** →	**1924** →	**1966** →
***Herbert Spencer** (1829-1903): first to use objectives	***Johan Herbart** (1776-1841): used objectives and first with scaffolding	***Franklin Bobbit** (1876-1956): used a scientific curriculum design & objectives	***Hilda Taba** (1902-1967): designed inductive thinking curriculum (higher order thinking) design with alignment of objectives
1949 →	**1956** →	1962 →	1999 →
***Ralph Tyler** (1902-1994): used linear product (end) oriented curriculum design with benchmarks for learning and assessment criteria	***Benjamin Bloom** (1913-1999): used structured objectives called taxonomy for educational objectives	***Robert Mager**: created Instructional Design with learning outcomes, context and expected performance and benchmarks for assessment of behaviour in overt terms	***David Biggs**: designed model of constructive alignment emphasising the link between outcomes, learning activities and assessment

Source: Cismas, 2002; Malan, 2000

Table 2.5 sets out the timeline of the development of the Educational Objectives Movement incorporating the first use of learning outcomes and assessment within a more formalised curriculum design. These were all innovative methods of the initial use of aligning outcomes with assessment. In the next development, assessing competency becomes more prominent.

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2.4.1.2 The Competency-based Approach

This approach arose during the 1960s in the USA out of gaps between what was being taught at school level and the life skills learners needed after graduating (also a concern in SA). The basic premise of the competency-based approach has informed the practice of OBE, namely: Explicit learning outcomes for which students are required to show or demonstrate their skills within a flexible time frame. These outcomes direct learning activities and assessment is criterion-referenced.

2.4.1.3 The Mastery Learning Movement

This model is derived from Bloom's Learning for Mastery model which uses group instructional techniques incorporating both specific instructions and time to meet individual learning needs (Fakier & Waghid, 2004; King & Evans, 1991). Additionally, it is also based on intervention for those students who experience mild learning difficulties and those deemed to be at risk in mainstream schools.

2.4.1.4 The Criterion-referenced Instruction and Assessment

Criterion-referenced assessment forms the backbone of OBE assessment. Robert Glaser (King & Evans, 1991:73) first described criterion-referenced assessment (in 1966) as locating "a student's test behaviour on a continuum from 'no proficiency to perfect performance'". To assess and locate a student on this continuum, students undertake various tasks in which "an acceptable level of performance" must be demonstrated. Glaser asserts that this continuum indicates clearly what the student can and cannot do (King & Evans, 1991). This kind of assessment is based on objectives being explicitly formulated and the learner's competency being assessed and evaluated against the criteria set in these objectives. Thus there is a predetermined assessment benchmark (standard) against which competency is constantly assessed. Importantly, the assessment grading is minimised significantly to "competent" (learner meets the requirements for showing competency in terms of the criteria) and "not yet competent" (learner does not meet the requirements as stipulated). In the latter category, supplemental assistance has to be prescribed so that the learner can be re-assessed for competency.

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The following principles can be distilled from each of the four source approaches that have contributed to the essence of OBE (Cismas, 2002; Fakier & Waghid, 2004; King & Evans, 1991; Malan, 2000) (Table 2.6):

Table 2.6: General principles of OBE emanating from its roots

	The Educational Objectives Movement	**The Competency-based Approach**	**The Mastery Learning Movement**	**The Criterion-referenced Instruction and Assessment**
1.	*The setting of learning outcomes that learners must achieve at the end of the teaching and learning process *The establishment of curriculum design with learning outcomes as primacy *Using a hierarchy of objectives for particular levels of learning (Bloom's taxonomy) *Learning outcomes formulated in a highly specified manner focusing on observable behaviour and using specific verbs to delineate behaviour.	Clearly formulated learning outcomes explicating required skills and competencies (setting standards for assessment)	The emphasis on prior learning in terms of knowledge and skills	Learning outcomes (objectives) are clearly and unambiguously specified
2.	Establishing benchmarking (standardisation) for learning and assessment criteria	Criterion-referenced assessment of the learning outcomes		*Formulating criterion-referenced assessments *Assessment grading or levels is limited to 'competent' and 'not yet competent'

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3		Learners must show or demonstrate their competency in terms of what they have learnt or achieved are pivotal to achievements being awarded	*Mastering prerequisite skills before advancing to higher levels *Providing feedback after formative assessments for students to learn and develop and for teachers to improve teaching practices	Predetermined assessment benchmarking (standardising) according to which competency is assessed
4.		A flexible period to achieve these competencies and accumulate credits	Flexible time frames for achieving outcomes	
5.		Diverse teaching and learning methods to facilitate learning	Using various learning materials to construct inspiring learning environments	

Key:	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
	Learning outcomes	***Assessment***	***Competency***	***Flexibility***	***Teaching methods***

Table 2.5 has explicated the common principles of the four approaches that provided the spring board for the establishment of OBE. The table discerns three main principles that are common amongst the four approaches as learning outcomes, assessment and competency. Two principles have found favour in two approaches: flexibility and teaching methods. The historical timeline that gave rise to the OBE of today is further informed by key organising principles.

2.4.2 ORGANISING PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

There are four organising principles of OBE that educational systems and programmes should follow when designing curricula, outcomes and learning activities that serve to promote synthesis and alignment (Lawson & Askell-Williams, 2007; Norman, 2006; Spady, 1994). These four organising principles are as follows:

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2.4.2.1 Clarity of Focus

Students must be clearly informed of learning outcomes, learning activities and requirements beforehand and how these inform the focus of learning. This is an empowering principle as it provides all information to students prior to the learning that, conventionally, should be contained in a course outline or guide.

2.4.2.2 Expanded Opportunities

Students are different, with different learning needs and requirements, and therefore meet their academic obligations differently. This principle underscores the individual learning needs of students and reflects that students may require different time scheduling for task completion as well as a variable number of attempts to achieve the outcome. This requires a radical change to module design, and formative task and lecture planning.

2.4.2.3 Designing Back

The alignment of learning objectives, outcomes, learning activities and assessments starts from the end result. This means that general (exit) outcomes are first designed and then used as a top-down designing principle to arrive at the beginning. Through this principle, the alignment is strengthened specifically within and across all modules in a curriculum or programme.

2.4.2.4 High Expectations

High expectations presuppose common beliefs that all students are capable and can achieve on a high level and that challenging tasks can be set for all to work through and achieve with the appropriate resources and support.

These four organising principles direct the curriculum or course designer to the specific design framework for OBE. Ultimately, the learning outcomes, teaching practices and strategies, as well as assessment, must meet the requirements of these principles. Then it can be identified as OBE. Together with the organising principles in OBE design, the key components underlying OBE will be expounded in the next section.

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2.4.3 KEY COMPONENTS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

The main features of OBE (gleaned from Table 2.5) for a curriculum design appears to be learning outcomes, competency, and assessment. These components feature strongly in the literature as pertaining to OBE curriculum, programme or lesson design (Meyers & Nulty, 2009). Figure 2.6 illustrates the conceptual framework of OBE curriculum design.

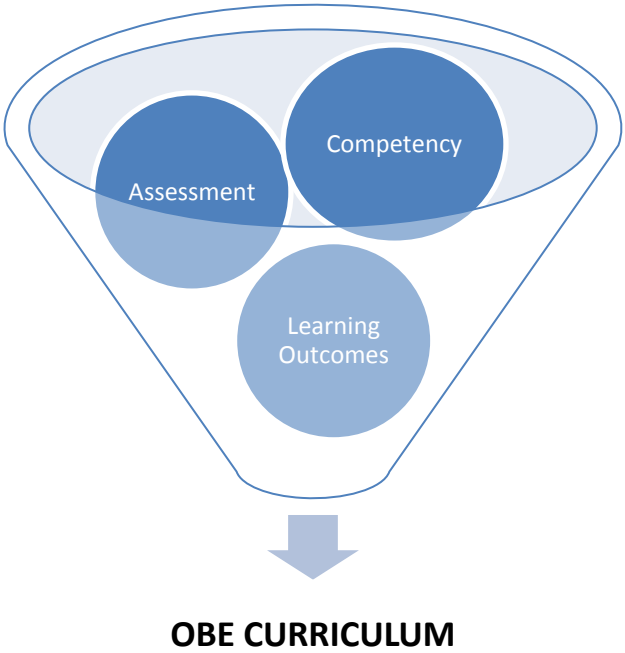

Figure 2.6: The key components of OBE

This diagram shows the purpose of each of the components that are funnelled into the overall OBE curricula design. Each principle will be discussed in turn in the following section.

2.4.3.1 Learning Outcomes

From a designing back viewpoint, Bodenstein (1999:4) defined outcomes in the SA context as being "the result that students must achieve as a result of learning opportunities in terms of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes". These learning opportunities should end in "expected and describable results (outcomes)" and are "measurable (assessable)" (Bodenstein, 1999:4). The outcome must be demonstrable or observed in the learner's behaviour or,

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importantly, be discernible in personal development. In SA, two distinct outcomes were identified:

(i) Specific Outcomes: These outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and competencies that are applicable to a particular programme. Bodenstein (1999) contends that, within a university context, outcomes should not only be viewed as observable behaviour ("person-external") in terms of what the learner can do; but outcomes should also be viewed cognitively ("person-internal") in terms of theoretical skills and competencies. Thus Bloom's taxonomy is recommended as it sets out a variety of cognitive skills that can be focused on: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

(ii) Critical Cross-field Outcomes: These describe outcomes which are corporate as they are common across various academic programmes and disciplines. These encompass broad and overarching skills and competencies. These eight outcomes are as follows: problem solving through critical and creative thinking; group work and cooperative learning; accepting responsibility; research skills; communication skills; technological and environmental literacy; and the development of a macro outlook. These outcomes "should purposefully be integrated with the module content" (Bodenstein, 1999:5).

Learning outcomes are an integral part of any lesson, module, and curriculum, as it establishes the end result of the learning endeavour. As such, the responsibility of designing and establishing these outcomes is the first task of the designer or lecturer and from these the other components will flow. Assessment and assessment tasks are the follow-up responsibilities.

2.4.3.2 Assessment

Boud (1990) already contended that more prominence continue to be awarded to assessment testing memory and rote learning within punishing time limitations. Boud also argued that there was a disparity between what teachers wanted students to focus on and what constituted "meaningful learning", and for meaningful learning to occur he recommended that the student must actively engage with the learning material (Boud, 1990:102). Gibbs (2006) confirmed that assessment enveloped learning and thus formed learning activities and learning performance.

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Butcher, Davies and Highton (2006) stress the relationship between teacher and student in a partnership of learning. In this regard, Ramsden (1992:182) asserted that assessment "concerns the quality of teaching as well as the quality of learning". Assessment involves measuring student learning and is about improved teaching, but, as Rust (2002) noted, for assessment to be valid, students must be prepared for assessment. This would involve discussing the assessment criteria with students, as well as including assessment strategies such as self- and peer-assessments, which would then expose students to assessment expectations.

The process of assessment is explained as "a feedback loop by which we gain understanding about the effectiveness of our own teaching and as a consequence modify our practices" (Butcher *et al*., 2006:103). Two main purposes of assessment were identified: (i) To improve the quality of learning where teachers give encouragement, response and feedback (i.e. formative assessment or "assessment learning"); and (ii) To certify students' achievements which is the awarding of knowledge or performance with a degree, certificate or diploma (summative assessment or "assessment for the record") (Boud, 1990:102-103).

Butcher *et al*. (2006) proposed the following framework for developing as assessment strategy:

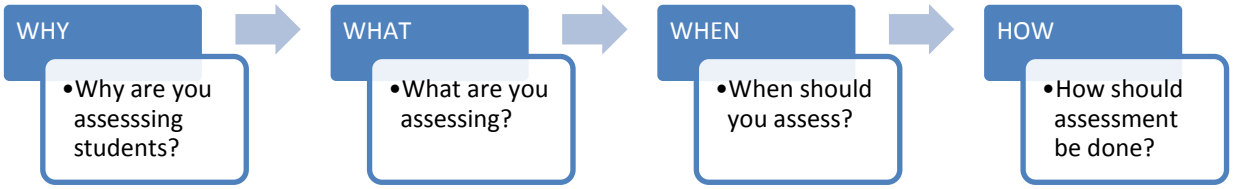

Figure 2.7: Framework for assessment strategy
Source: Butcher et al., 2006

Figure 2.7 illustrates the process and focus of assessment and is explained as follows:

- **WHY?** This question encompasses the purpose of assessment for students, staff and the institution, for example, to support learning, to judge performance (internally for students and externally for publishing results), and to assure quality. Here consideration should also be given to the types of assessment that will be used: diagnostic, formative and summative.

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- **WHAT?** This question focuses on what, in the course or learning content, will be assessed. What will be assessed also depends on whether the course design ultimately promotes deep or surface learning.
- **WHEN?** This question addresses the scheduling of assessments – when during the module must it be done? Assessments should not be planned in isolation and the commitments of other subjects / modules should be considered as this could leave to overloading. Timing also relates to the types of assessments mentioned above, namely diagnosis (before programme); formative (during programme); and summative (end of programme).
- **HOW?** This question addresses the issue of how one assesses students' work and get to a judgment as to the level of performance. The how is related to constructing assessment criteria which link to the level outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of the course. These are undertaken through designing rubrics.

These four questions are pertinent in establishing a clear and concise framework and criteria for assessment. Assessment goes hand-in-hand with feedback (Butcher *et al*., 2006). The authors identified the following feedback determinants: timeliness, quantity and quality, and effectiveness. Feedback effectiveness includes these principles: diagnosis and guidance; constructive criticism; balanced positive and negative comments related to assessment criteria.

2.4.3.3 Competency

Competency can be an elusive concept to define. Damron-Rodriquez (2008) defines it in terms of the ability to show or demonstrate knowledge and skills with the requisite integration into practice. Competence refers to the way in which learners activate their personal resources (such as cognitive, emotional, and social), either singularly or collectively, to show their task resolution or completion (Tiano, Moya & Luengo, 2011). Three qualities are involved in competency, namely the combining of abilities (knowledge, skills and values); the impetus of motivation (the energy for action); and the perspective of context (different abilities for different settings) (Tiano *et al*., 2011). Importantly, competence must be shown through action and not only through passive reflection.

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Competency and learning outcomes are closely aligned. Harden, Crosby, Davis and Friedman (1999) proposed the following three-circle model to determine learning outcomes but based on competencies of professional practice (for medical doctors) which is a useful framework for social work practice as well (Figure 2.7).

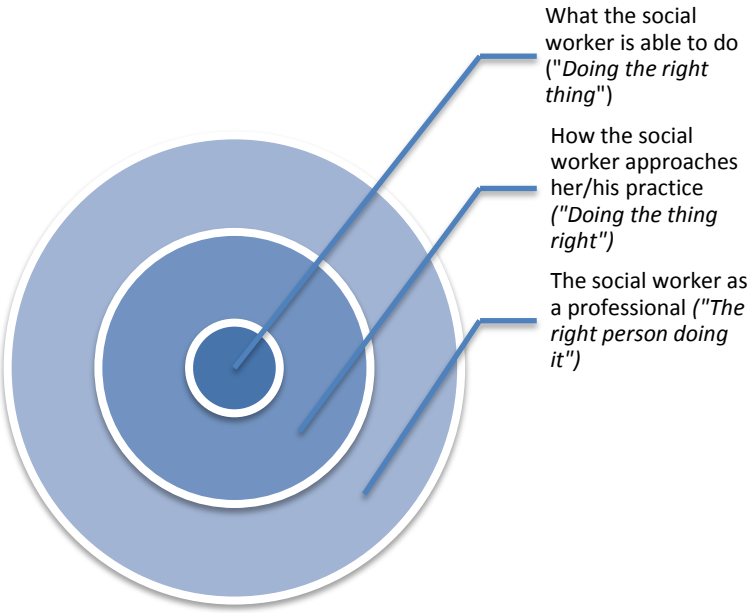

Figure 2.8: The three-circle method of professional competencies
Source: Harden et al., 1999

Figure 2.8 illustrates the three-circle model and is explained as follows:

- The inner circle depicts what the social worker is able to do, which epitomises technical competencies.
- The middle circle depicts the social worker's approach to the task emerging from the inner circle characterised by understanding and insight, ethical behaviour, appropriate decisions and interventions. These denote academic, emotional, analytical and creative competencies.
- The outer circle depicts the use of personal attributes of the person, which embodies the personal competencies of the social worker.

Competency is a complex concept and component of OBE. It appears that the teacher doing the assessment must be knowledgeable about subject-content and assessment criteria. Competency must also be clearly defined, both in theoretical and practical terms.

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Learning outcomes, assessment and competency have been noted as recurring in the literature and in the origins of OBE as essential components in the structuring of OBE curricula. Without the inclusion of these components the curriculum would be unstructured and nebulous. Student learning would be haphazard and students would feel quite uncontained.

2.5 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

OBE has a strong pedigree that has informed the underpinning of the approach. Although OBE has its critics, it nonetheless has been implemented in many (mostly Westernised) countries, including South Africa. As an educational approach, OBE has brought many significant constructs that are universally utilised although it may not be part of constructivism, such as learning outcomes, competency, and assessment. The organising principles are unique to OBE and provide clarity as to its functioning. As an approach, OBE is a viable option theoretically, but the challenges remain in its implementation – knowledge of OBE, training and resources.

PART III: THE PECULIARITIES OF OBE IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The aim of Part III is to explore the implementation of OBE in the South African educational landscape. Its implementation, of necessity, had its own internal transformation as an approach, as it became altered in order to adapt to the specific South African circumstances. Part III thus explores these peculiarities in terms of the processes of OBE implementation. Emerging from these processes have been extraordinary amounts of criticism levelled against its implementation as well as its aftermath. There have been positive consequences, though, which are also emphasised. There are three sections focusing on clarifying the South African conditions that provided fertile ground for a transformation in the educational system, and the explication of OBE implementation in SA and, ultimately, OBE in the higher educational context.

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2.6 SOUTH AFRICA AS CONTEXT

The main characteristics of the educational system in South Africa during apartheid were unequal access to schools and provision of resources. In addition, inappropriate and ideologically skewed syllabi focused on rote learning, and content-driven and uncreative teaching methods (Alexander & November, 2010; Allais, 2007; Botha, 2002). Inequality and fragmentation were the result of the existence of 14 different educational departments seeing to the needs of people who were divided according to their various racial and ethnic memberships (Alexander & November, 2010; Botha, 2002). "All facets of education were arranged according to the dictates of the system of apartheid, so this meant that people of the different race groups were provided for in terms of their racial identities" (Botha, 2002:362). Allais (2007) importantly noted that, in addition to inequality and fragmentation, the educational system then was also viewed as illegitimate by the majority of people in SA.

The consequences of this inequality on South African society were high drop-out and failure rates (Botha, 2002). Thus the educational system needed to be urgently transformed and reformed (post 1994) and was high on the agenda of the first democratically elected government.

SA needed an educational system that would be "geared towards developing critical, creative and responsible citizens" (Alexander & November, 2010). Particular focus would be on problem-solving skills, which was a specific requirement for SA learners (Botha, 2002). Allais (2007:529) confirmed that there was general consensus amongst labour and industry that "the low levels of education and skills of the workforce in South Africa were hampering the development of the economy". South Africa at the time needed to re-enter the global marketplace and be competitive in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude (i.e. self-belief or self-efficacy). These requirements set the stage for the acceptance of OBE for the SA educational system (Alexander & November, 2010; Allais, 2007). SA took the route of placing OBE as central to the entire educational system, i.e. in both basic and higher educational contexts, which contrasted with the implementation by most other countries of OBE in vocational training only (Allais, 2003).

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2.7 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The central reason for OBE in the SA context was the transformation principles which proponents believed would change an unequal and fragmented system based on race to an integrated and high performing system for all (Allais, 2003, 2007; Botha, 2002; Chisholm, 2007; Ensor, 2003; Msila, 2007; Wood, 2005). Ensor (2003:327) confirmed that the SA educational system then had "required substantial overhauling" and that integration was needed to transform a system organised according to racist policies. On a macro scale, integration means cohesion amongst the various education departments as well as educational approaches. On a micro scale, integration in education also means addressing oppositional approaches, for example, theory vs practice or knowledge vs skills (also see Roth & Lee, 2007). These oppositional approaches were particularly noted by the Department of Education (1995) to have characterised teaching and learning and contributed to the continued existence of class and occupational divisions (Ensor, 2003).

2.7.1 SAQA AND THE NQF POST 1995

In 1995, the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act came into being bringing in the first education and training legislation and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) into operation. SAQA was the entity responsible for the development and implementation of the NQF (Allais, 2003, 2007; Botha, 2002; Chisholm, 2007; Van Harmelen, 1999). In SA, the NQF framed all standards, qualifications and learning programmes and sanctioned the use of OBE as teaching and learning approach. Key objectives of SAQA included the following: broadening access to (and mobility and progression within) education and training institutions; to ensure quality education; and to redress past injustice in education and training opportunities (Allais, 2003; Luckett, 2001).

The NQF is a credit accumulation and transfer (called CAT) system (Ensor, 2003). Key objectives were to provide workers with credits in accordance with their work competencies and in this way operationalise access to further education and training (Ensor, 2003). The NQF was

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initially established for the industrial training sector but was broadened to include all education and training sectors.

In the implementation of the NQF, SA used national standards, which Ensor (2003:328) calls its "building blocks", that have defined its function and structure. Ensor (2003) confirms that SA has a hybrid system of unit standards and whole qualifications. Explicating the content of national standards necessitated the involvement of stakeholders within a particular organising field (organising field number 05, for example, is Education, Training and Development). The stakeholders agreed on appropriate learning achievements relevant to that field, where stakeholder participation was structured into entities called National Standards Bodies (NSBs).

These fields were further structured into specific sectors with their own stakeholders (for example social work) who, in turn, agreed on specific and benchmarked standards. These sector specific entities were called Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs). Depending on the sector, these standards translated into unit standards, which Allais (2003) confirms were the smallest unit of educational achievement for credits and certification. Unit standards and whole qualifications were structured in a matrix with the organising field (12 in total) on the one side and the different levels of competency (8 in total) on the other side (see Table 2.7).

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Table 2.7: The matrix depicting the location of the BSW on the NQF

SANQF ORGANISING FIELD

THE NQF LEVEL		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
	8					**BSW; PhD**							
	7					**THE BSW DEGREE**							
	6												
	5												
	4												
	3												
	2												
	1												

Source: Ensor, 2003

Table 2.7 shows the matrix indicating the organising fields and the NQF levels. For example, as depicted for social work, the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree is shown from NQF level 5 to 7 and postgraduate in NQF level 8 in the organising field 05 (Education, Training and Development). Unit standards and whole qualifications were registered in accordance with the structure depicted in Table 2.7. The practicality of unit standards was that achieving credits was not restricted to space and time. Unit standards presupposed flexibility and self-regulation. Thus defining learning outcomes across programmes and curricula gave impetus to this logic, but did not prescribe learning content (Allais, 2003; Chisholm, 2007; Imenda, 2005).

The initial phase of SAQA and the NQF as structural heads of OBE had good intentions but were cumbersome and bureaucratised, which hampered the implementation of OBE in the manner in which it had been envisioned. The vision did not filter down to the implementers on grassroots level, which left an insurmountable gap. There was an attempt to rectify the gaps in the system as is explained in the following discussion.

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2.7.2 THE NQF POST-2008

There were many concerns regarding the initial implementation of OBE in the original SAQA framework. The NQF Act 67 of 2008 replaced SAQA Act 58 of 1995 and brought specific changes, for example:

- SAQAs role was dramatically reduced and viewed as consultative in the implementation of the NQF, notably in terms of standards development;
- The number of qualification levels changed from 8 to 10 levels (also see Republic of South Africa, 2011);
- Quality assurance and standards development were streamlined into three quality councils (QCs) to oversee the standards development of the different sectors, i.e. Umalusi (school system); QC on Trades and Occupations (QCTO); and the Council on Higher Education (CHE). These councils thus replaced SGBs.

These changes were in response to the criticism levelled at the initial implementation. The Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (2007) applied a "nested approach to qualifications design" (Republic of South Africa, 2007:7), which can be depicted as follows:

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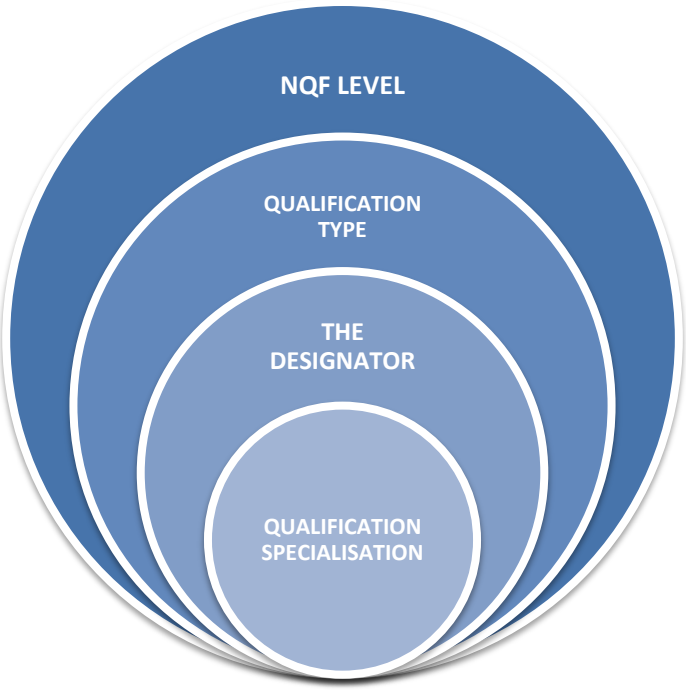

Figure 2.9: The nested approach to qualifications design
Source: Republic of South Africa, 2011

Figure 2.9 can be explained as follows:

- The *NQF Level* represents the outer layer and is the most generic description in terms of level descriptors.
- The *Qualification Type* is defined at each level, for example, diploma, certificate or degree. Qualification descriptors stipulate the exit level of the qualification type, its minimum credits, its purpose and characteristics.
- The *Designator* within the qualification type, for example, Bachelor of Social Work, explains the generic field of study and outcomes and associated assessment criteria.
- *Qualification Specialisation* describes specialised learning outcomes related to the field of study, for example, Masters in Social Work.

The CHE (Republic of South Africa, 2011) contends that the HEQF does not reproduce the organising fields which were dominant in SAQA. The council asserts that this omission makes standards development considerably less cumbersome, but that an efficient system must be developed since organising fields is a vital component in qualifications design and has developed

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certain recommendations for a framework for developing standards in higher education along the lines of a continuum (see Figure 2.10):

Figure 2.10: Proposed framework for developing standards
Source: Republic of South Africa, 2011

Figure 2.10 shows the alternative framework for developing standards along a continuum. The continuum is explained in the following way:

- A benchmark or standard for determining this framework is the amount of learning that occurs in the institution juxtaposed with the learning that occurs in the workplace.
- On the one side of a continuum lie qualifications that inhabit particular "trades and occupations in which procedural knowledge and work-based skills" are vital (Republic of South Africa, 2011:13). This is known as Work-integrated Learning (WIL) and occurs mainly in the workplace and produces vocational qualifications.
- At the other end of the continuum lie qualifications which are housed in "formative" and "general" programmes and where "curriculum and outcomes" accentuate "declarative and conceptual knowledge" (Republic of South Africa, 2011:13). Little attention is paid to workplace learning.
- In between these extremes are progressions determined by their focus on procedural knowledge or declarative knowledge.

The CHE (Republic of South Africa, 2011) recommends that the more task-specific the competency (proficiency), the more *contextually relevant and coherent* the curriculum design should be, and the more knowledge-specialised the competency, the more *conceptually relevant and coherent* the curriculum should be designed. Relevance and coherence are two principles that should underscore both contextual and conceptual principles, albeit in various proportions dependent on the location on the continuum (see Figure 2.10). This is further specified in a matrix of qualification pathways, namely: vocational, professional and general (see Table 2.8):

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Table 2.8: Matrix depicting qualification pathways

TRADE / VOCATIONAL / OCCUPATIONAL PATHWAY	PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY	GENERAL PATHWAY
•**NQF LEVELS 5-6** •CONTEXTUAL (Workplace Orientation)	•**NQF 7-10** •CONTEXTUAL / CONCEPTUAL (Combining Workplace and Theoretical Learning)	•**NQF 7-10** •CONCEPTUAL (Theoretical Orientation)

Source: Republic of South Africa, 2011

Table 2.8 shows the three routes to plot occupational, professional and general pathways with NQF levels as well as the juxtaposition of the classroom and work learning within each pathway that would be applicable to each pathway. In the next section, the OBE is discussed in connection with the NQF.

2.7.3 THE NQF AND OBE

The impetus for the initial acceptance of OBE to drive the transformation of the educational system was the overwhelming acceptance by the educational fraternity in SA of two fundamental principles, namely (i) the premise of the learner being at the centre of the teaching and learning process, and (ii) the basis of creative and participatory teaching and learning approaches (Allais, 2003). OBE was seen as the means through which educational reform and quality education were to be accomplished through the following goals (Botha, 2002; Imenda, 2005):

- Assuring educational achievements for all learners
- Promoting ownership through curriculum in regions (decentralisation)
- Ensuring accountability and responsibility of schools in effective school management

In OBE, the learning areas are contained in preconceived outcomes to be achieved at the conclusion of the learning endeavour. In 1999, SAQA placed outcomes as central to all curricula and learning programmes and thus also as the driving force behind assessment practices

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(Chisholm, 2007). Allais (2007:524) avers that "[t]he essence of the outcomes-led qualifications framework model is that educational standards must be nationally 'set' by defining learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria". The positive aspects to SAQA's enforcement of the OBE approach on higher education is that academics were compelled to formulate and specify what they were going to teach and how they were going to assess learning outcomes.

The use of outcomes differed in the various education sectors. For example, the industry training sector assumed competency-based unit standards as their preferred assessment model. The schools sector adopted an outcomes-based whole qualification model. In higher education, OBE and outcomes were highly contentious and thus adopted in a fragmentary fashion (Chisholm, 2007).

In SA, outcomes have a specific focus to enable learners (basic education) and students (higher education) to have a problem-solving outlook and to be empowered to contribute to building a new South Africa (Alexander & November, 2010). In this regard, SAQA imposed three curricular changes to education (Luckett, 2001:52):

(i) All qualifications consist of three types of learning:

- Fundamental learning (relating to basic skills and knowledge that is required for further curricular learning)
- Core learning (relating to professional learning content)
- Elective learning (relating to learner's own interests or additional specialisation)

(ii) All qualifications and all levels are infused with critical cross-field outcomes which relate to generic and complementary skills (see learning types above) that are learnt alongside the central programme outcomes (see section 2.4.3.1. Being generic, these outcomes are meant to cut across multi curricula and programmes (Alexander & November, 2010). These outcomes are assessed through the use of integrated assessment tasks.

(iii) Learning and assessment tasks must provide opportunities to show their competencies through three competency types:

- Foundational competence (knowing *that*)
- Practical competence (knowing *how*)

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- Reflective competence (knowing how you know *that and how*)

In addition to these curricular changes, Allais (2003) confirmed the differentiation of learning content into three areas when designing curricula, namely, knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values (already pre-requisites for social work education and supervision in pre-OBE years).

The implementation of OBE in the post-Apartheid educational terrain was positively accepted at first as a viable approach to herald in a new and transformational educational system to South Africa. However, as has been explicated, the implementation of OBE brought about severe problems particularly impacting on the standard (quality) of education that learners ultimately received. The NQF Act (2008) brought many positive changes, but the backlog and implementation on grassroots level remain a concern as South African learners continue to lag behind their international peers.

The introduction of OBE in the higher education sector was not without similar implementation issues, as can be seen in the next section.

2.8 THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Luckett (2001:49) asserted that, "[i]t is well known in curriculum studies that curriculum changes occur(s) [sic] most readily in response to major social change or crisis – i.e. to changes in the milieu or context in which a curriculum occurs." Hence the need in South Africa was established for a different educational system which also necessitated changes in higher education post 1994. The major change in the context of higher education was the compelling of the academy and the workplace into a closer working relationship in terms of knowledge production, research and workplace skills. In this new context, HEIs would then be responsible for teaching generic and transferable skills and the workplace would focus on specific technical, functional skills (Luckett, 2001).

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However, this change was also not without its challenges and criticisms (Luckett, 2001):

- Knowledge and skills are discipline- or domain-specific and are socio-culturally derived.
- Complex skills (for example communication, problem-solving and evaluation) are taught within particular knowledge contexts.
- These complex skills involve acquiring higher-order skills (for example flexibility, adaptability, context sensitivity, meta-cognition, meta-knowledge and epistemic cognition) so that learners can competently transfer these skills from a familiar learning context to a new and different context.
- Local/indigenous knowledges viewed as subjugated in contrast or competition with dominant, universal/global forms of knowledge (see Chapter 3).
- The enforced changing of open-ended curricula in HEIs to programmatic curricula to meet the needs of the economy and society.

The above difficulties also have to be seen in the context of traditional or classic models of universities that have been based on Plato's vision of the purpose of education. These models have been differentiated into the following types of knowledge production in universities world-wide. The following table depicts the classic models juxtaposed with model types that have emerged in SA post 1994 (Table 2.8) (Imenda, 2005:145):

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Table 2.8: University model types in SA

Classic Model	Knowledge Production	South African Model	Knowledge Production	Common to all SA Universities
Athens model	Pursuing knowledge for its own sake	University model	▪ Developing an educated and wise citizen ▪ Research in basic disciplines	▪ Cross-disciplinary research ▪ Addressing and solving community problems ▪ Promoting access, redress and equity
Berlin model	Integrating knowledge of research and teaching within academic freedom and autonomy	Comprehensive model	▪ Comprehensive humanist education including professional qualifications ▪ Balancing research and teaching ▪ Research in applied and basic research	
Calcutta model	Linking university education to real-life community problems which university educational programmes and curricula address to find solutions			
New York model	Emphasising entrepreneurial and market-driven qualifications	University of Technology	▪ Professional and career education ▪ Focusing on applied research	

Source: Imenda, 2005

Table 2.8 showcases the main HEI models found globally with different emphases on knowledge production. For example, most universities in South Africa would be located in the comprehensive model (a blend of the Berlin and Calcutta models). UWC, in particular, would be strongly linked with the Calcutta model in terms of its historical focus on community and socio-political needs.

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From the key goals of the 1998 White Paper of Higher Education, the linkages between these goals and university types within the SA context is easily discernible (Gultig, 2000):

- Increasing participation in HEIs, especially from previously disadvantaged groups
- Responding to societal interests and needs
- Emphasising career-oriented qualifications
- Initiating a flexible teaching and qualifications system
- Expanding post-graduate enrolments

Luckett (2001) argued that however well OBE was meant, it had made higher education curricula vulnerable to functionalist-oriented knowledge and the commercialisation of knowledge. This, she says, is contrary to the ethos of a university as a "site of intellectual endeavour where non-instrumental and non-commercial values and concerns can be fore-grounded and developed" (Luckett, 2001:53). In this regard, a good curriculum should be able to provide learning opportunities for theory-practice integration (praxis) and for students to be operationally and ethically conscious of their decisions.

Luckett (2001:53) contends that the institutionalisation of OBE into HEIs was "a rational response to massification" of higher education. The present Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande, in the Minister's Preface in the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2012) asserted that about three million young people (18-24 years) were outside of the education and training sector as well as the labour market, in 2007. In the 2011 enrolments at universities in SA there were 899 120, which reflected a 16% participation rate. His department's objective was for 23% participation (1.5 million students). He argued that SA universities were in "general characterised by low success rates and therefore low throughput rates" and, most importantly, contended that there were many universities that did "not see student support as part of their core role" (2012:11).

The relationship between OBE and HEIs (especially universities) has been typified by mistrust and hostility. For many, OBE represented a threat to academic freedom and to others it was a mechanism to streamline and regularise the unevenness of HEIs across South Africa as a means

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for 'massification' of tertiary education in terms of access and throughput. In the next section the complex implementation will be elucidated.

2.8.1 CENSURE AND CRITICISM OF OBE

Much has been written about the dissatisfaction of OBE as an educational approach in higher education (Allais, 2003, 2007; Ensor, 2003; Jansen, 2002; Jansen & Christie, 1999; Luckett, 2005). Four key contentious issues that emerged from the literature are discussed in the next sections, for example: Cumbersome structures and procedures; poor implementation strategy (including a lack of resources and insufficient teacher training); impact on university and academic autonomy; and epistemological issues.

2.8.1.1 Cumbersome Structures and Procedures

Universities particularly contested the 'one size fits all' approach of the NQF, as well as the convoluted organisational structures (Ensor, 2003): The NQF was organised and structured around unit standards with stakeholder participation in standards setting. It also established different structures for the implementation of OBE (for example NSBs, SGBs). In addition, the persistence with eight levels meant that Honours, Master's and Doctoral degrees all formed part of the same level. Boundaries have also been quite disputed as to responsibilities and tasks in relation to standards setting. This consisted of overlapping of authority and power struggles with stakeholders. These structures were not synchronised with the way that universities operated (Allais, 2003, 2007; Chisholm, 2007; Ensor, 2003; Imenda, 2005; Luckett, 2005). Mason (1999) confirmed that the implementation of OBE in South Africa over-emphasised procedural knowledge that contributed to teacher overload and overall inefficiency. More time and energy was spent with processes, procedures and portfolio development than with actual teaching tasks (Mason, 1999).

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2.8.1.2 Poor Implementation Strategy

A poor implementation plan would include tasks such as resource planning and provision; thorough teacher preparation and training; and an all-encompassing implementation plan. Michael Young (a UK educational consultant) was commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) [and the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Union (EU) on the basis of their support for the implementation of the NQF in SA] to undertake research in SA regarding the implementation of the NQF (Chisholm, 2007). Pertinent points were raised:

- There were tensions around the NQF as assessment-driven rather than a framework for provision in terms of learning resources applicable for the SA context.
- Credit accumulation and transportability of credits did not occur as a result of the cumbersome structures.
- Credit accumulation also did not result in quicker progression in careers of previously disadvantaged workers on the basis of acquired knowledge and qualifications.
- The NQF also could not surmount historical inequalities and educational differences.

The issues raised by Young (Chisholm, 2007) centred on implementation issues regarding the insufficient provision of resources and the lack of planning regarding the functioning and administration of credit accumulation and transferability. The efficiency of the system that prevented the credit accumulation and career progression as envisioned was also called into question (also see section 2.8.1.1 regarding structural constraints).

2.8.1.3 Impact on University and Academic Autonomy

Universities were opposed to preconceived standards and outcomes because these were contrary to the university ethos of autonomy and excellence (as in relation to conceptions of standardisation, generalisations and aggregation) (Ensor, 2003; Imenda, 2000; Luckett, 2005). Universities specifically felt that their right to set outcomes, standards, content, and assessment criteria was being infringed and that this compromised the inherent character of universities as being liberal-humanist and viewing individuals as self-determining and independent (Ensor, 2003; Luckett, 2005).

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2.8.1.4 Epistemological Concerns

Epistemological concerns centred on the preconceived standards setting being alienated from curriculum design as both are linked in a repetitive and contextual process. Imenda (2005) asserted that there was a risk of over-accentuating inputs and processes and negating the knowledge and content that must also be learnt. He contends that an over-emphasis on the process could result in surface learning (Imenda, 2005). Another concern was that universities could not connect with learning outcomes that focused on observable competencies, since many educational goals could not be observed. Thus, it was contended that OBE is based on an archaic behaviourist philosophy which (incorrectly) presumes that human behaviour is standard and inevitable (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Luckett, 2005).

The four criticisms levelled against OBE revealed the insufficient planning and resource provision of the policy makers that impacted severely on the successful implementation of OBE as an educational approach. Furthermore, policy makers and implementers did not pertinently consider the university culture and ethos in juxtaposition with the essence of what OBE would entail for HEIs. Mason (1999) argued that a less pedantic form of OBE where teachers integrate different kinds of knowledge with professional autonomy would better address the teaching and learning needs of post-Apartheid South Africa.

2.9 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Part III explicated the distinctiveness of OBE as implemented for the SA context. The peculiarity or distinctiveness played out in terms of the specific social and educational needs of the SA population as just emerging (at the time of its implementation) from the devastation wrought by apartheid. Against this background, OBE was viewed as the transformative approach that would fulfil the ideals of South African society and overcome the harmful effects of apartheid education for the majority of people. It was thus seen that this goal of OBE was not achieved and many obstacles were laid in its path; least of all was in its implementation processes. The constraints to university and academic freedoms were decried, as it was felt that OBE reduced university

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education to mechanical and pedantic processes. South Africa would be better served by an educational approach that focused more on teaching and learning within a diverse student population with myriad basic and complex needs that facilitates and nurtures self-efficacy and self-confidence in becoming the best that they could be.

2.10 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

OBE focuses on demonstrable outcomes which has extensive behaviourist underpinnings. This is out of date with modern educational approaches and practices that focus on generating different types of knowledge and skills and where learning can be reflected differently. The behaviourist principles run counter to the ethos and culture of universities (Allais, 2003, 2007; Chisholm, 2007; Ensor, 2003; Imenda, 2005; Luckett, 2005). Luckett (2005) says that OBE presupposes sameness and stability in human behaviour, which is also in contrast to constructivism and the underpinnings of Vygotskyism, which is based on dialectical materialism that asserts the "logic of motion" (Sewell, 2002:2).

It also appears that OBE has utilised selective theoretical aspects of constructivism which present as anomalies. Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) argue that setting learning outcomes are in contrast with constructivism that says all learning is negotiated by learners in a specific context and thus not predetermined. If learning and knowledge construction are individualised like this, it poses a threat to the highly structured and constraining pre-determined learning outcomes characterised by OBE. Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005:22) confirm that learning in constructivism is 'bottom-up', but in OBE learning is 'top-down' through the structures of unit standards and learning outcomes. In addition, constructivist assessment "emerges naturally from authentic tasks and measures learning gained but not mastery of a predetermined set of skills (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005:22).

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In higher education, particularly in the university context in SA, Luckett (2000) says, academics traditionally reflected their pedagogy and accountability through research and publications. OBE requires that academics make explicit their educational practices, learning and assessment tasks linked to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

It is not difficult to see why OBE has been highly contested and criticised from a university and traditional perspective.

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CHAPTER 3

TEACHING AND LEARNING PECULIAR TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

> Becoming a social worker is no easy task. Social work students attempt to take on an identity that is neither clearly defined nor always respected. They have no standard uniform or unique props to aid them in gaining professional recognition; they must often deal with negative audience reactions to their low status; and they must negotiate the somewhat ambiguous script of helping. (Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011:103)

The above is often the lament of social workers, students and outside opinion. There are many reasons why this may be so, and it is worthwhile to explore the many constructions of what makes social work a worthy profession.

In certain instances social work does battle with negative perceptions and this may have certain consequences. Hall (2008), for example, claims that the generalist approach in social work is viewed as an impediment to its acceptance into the broader 'scientific' professional world. Reid and Edwards (2006) argue that social work is particularly susceptible to budget cuts as a consequence of not having prominence within HEIs, or may be shunted with other related disciplines and lose its professional integrity and uniqueness during restructuring. Hall (2008) furthermore contends that social work will attract academically sound students and staff, which will further its posterity, if it has a strong practice foundation. Adams, Matto and LeCroy (2009) aver that endeavours to give the profession a more scientific outlook was endorsed by academia. These endorsements have resulted in the inclusion of alternative approaches into social work practice such as cognitive-behavioural, modernist, and post-modernist approaches (cf. Healy, 2005). Hall (2008) argued that it is vital that social work garners and sustains positive public perception as it may be an ancillary gauge of possible backing (or funding) for social work programmes.

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In terms of garnering and sustaining positive public perceptions, it would be worthwhile to consider what makes social work a unique profession. Osteen (2011) refers, for example, to the value base of social work which differentiates it from other professions, but Kirst-Ashman (2013) identifies added peculiarities, summarised as:-

- Social workers have to accept and address any problems or issues that the client may present regardless of the feelings or opinions that the clients may evoke. Thus social workers may not refuse or refer the client to another service provider on the basis of personal or biased opinions, for example.
- Social workers may focus on the environment (of the client) for change efforts and not necessarily on the client per se.
- Social workers are attentive to the value of self-determination and the principle of partnership in the helping process.

Thus, the challenge for social work educators is to convey this uniqueness in their teaching and learning methods. In this chapter the research objective of describing teaching and learning peculiar to the discipline of social work will be explicated. This chapter focuses not only on teaching and learning practices, but also on exploring the essential components of social work education, globally, as well as within the South African context. This discussion is pivotal to the study because the essence of the research is focused on teaching and learning in social work in South Africa and this chapter contextualises and positions South African social work education and practice.

The chapter is structured into three parts to delineate particular sections of social work knowledge: Part I establishes the global or universal components of social work; Part II explores and describes specific general teaching and learning approaches prominent in social work currently; and Part III establishes the historical development of social work and social work education from African and South African perspectives.

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PART 1: SOCIAL WORK: GLOBAL AND RELEVANT COMPONENTS

The aim of Part I is to explicate the components or structure of social work within issues of universalism (international commonalities) as opposed to localised foci. The relevance of this part is to establish the components of social work to expose the possibility of undue impact that the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of students may have on their social work practice and professionalism.

Universal social work is defined as "a form of social work that transcends national boundaries and which gives social work a global face such that there are commonalities in theory and practice across widely divergent contexts" (Gray & Fook, 2004:628). The acceptance of international (global or universal) social work was advanced by the ratification of the Global Standards for the Education and Training of Social Workers adopted in 2004 by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) at the General Assemblies in Adelaide, Australia (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2009). However, a global or universal social work was not endorsed from all quarters, and a number of concerns were raised about the feasibility and applicability of universal social work across all (socio-political and cultural) contexts (Midgley, 2001). Yip (2004) raised the point that the strict regulation of social work education may not be attentive enough regarding the variations in many contexts, especially since the IFSW reports that social work member organisations / countries have reached over 100 (International Federation of Social Work, 2012). Key concerns are summarised and depicted below (Table 3.1) (Gray & Fook, 2004; Sewpaul & Jones, 2005):

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Table 3.1: Key concerns about the universalisation of social work

The Globalisation-Localisation debate	•Enactment of professional imperialism onto local needs
The Westernisation-Indigenisation debate	•Subjugation of indigenous knowledge by Western knowledge
The Multicultural-Universalisation debate	•Dominance of social work values over traditional values and beliefs
The Universal-Local standards debate	•Applicability of universal standards to local contexts

Source: Gray & Fook, 2004; Sewpaul & Jones, 2005

Table 3.1 illustrates the primary concerns which appear to centre on the subjugation of tradition, indigenous knowledge, culture and values. These concerns prevented the wholesale acceptance of global social work and many social workers still need to be convinced. Some view 'universal' social work as 'Western' social work, and equate globalisation with Westernisation and Americanisation (Gray & Fook, 2004). Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie (2011:139) confirm that social work is viewed "as a technology transfer by way of colonization and globalization", which, they say, has led in certain instances to the "destruction of local cultures, wisdom, knowledge and morals". But they say that social work is a notion of helping that can be adapted to many cultures and contexts. Midgley (2001:21) confirms that there is an awakening of "global consciousness" and that social workers are beginning to value their role "within a complex, worldwide system of human activity". In this way, social work can be universal but must be "operationally different" (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011:139).

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Despite these significant concerns, four elements that are deemed common or universal make social work international or global (Hepworth *et al.*, 2013). These four elements have been used to structure Part I to explicate the basis of the contention that these elements are universal or common to social work in the international context. These four elements are illustrated as follows (Figure 3.1):

Figure 3.1: The four universal elements of social work
Source: Hepworth et al., 2013

Figure 3.1 shows the four elements that serve as commonalities in International Social Work. The following sections will elucidate these elements, which will structure Part I. The purpose and goal of the profession (section 3.2) focus on the significance of the existence of the profession in the present world. The ethical philosophy of social work (section 3.3) reflects its values and principles and the standards for the ethical conduct of social workers. The knowledge base of direct social work practice (section 3.4) explicates three knowledge components: formal knowledge, social work knowledge, and social work curricula knowledge. Methods and processes in social work (section 3.5) focus on the traditional methods in assessment and intervention in the helping process. These four elements appear to be fundamental; yet it must be asked whether these elements serve as conduits for the unique contexts across the global arena in which social work is practised.

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3.2 PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The first element centres on the profession's purpose and goals. Purpose and goals are not synonymous; purpose is the *raison d'être* of the social work profession and goals are the specific means of achieving the profession's purpose (Risler, Lowe & Nackerud, 2003). Bisman (2004:120) offers a more nuanced aspect of the purpose of social work, specifying individual and social wellbeing and the primary role of the social worker in helping to create a society where people can thrive. Hepworth *et al.* (2013) contend that the purpose of social work is centred on advocating for social change, together with the empowerment and liberation of people to advance human wellbeing.

Hepworth *et al.'s* (2002) assertion regarding this purpose dovetails strongly with the acceptance on 21 January 2014 of the IASSW (International Association of Schools of Social Work) Board's global definition of social work that is shortened as follows: Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. The twin pillars of a practice-based profession and an academic discipline set these two in a partnership to achieve the overall purpose of the profession. To further the empowerment and liberation of people an appropriate inclusion is indigenous knowledges to enhance wellbeing.

Emanating from the establishment of global standards for social work education and training, Sewpaul and Jones (2005) elicited thirteen core purposes of social work. Four dominant themes can be summarised and illustrated as follows (Table 3.2):

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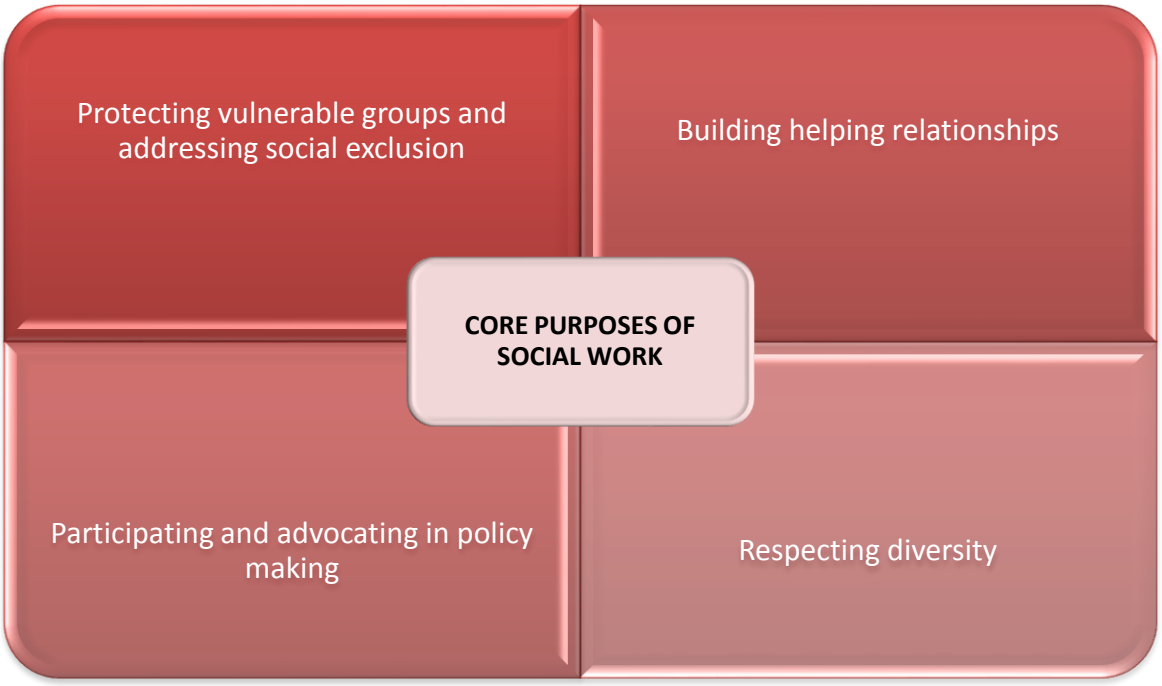
Table 3.2: Core purposes of Global Social Work



Source: Sewpaul & Jones, 2005

Table 3.2 represents the core purposes of social work that encompass actions such as protection, addressing, building, participating, advocating and respecting. The purpose of these actions is to achieve the wellbeing of people. Goals are set to incrementally achieve these purposes (Risler *et al.*, 2003). Greene (2005) argues that the purpose of social work is not always consistent with societal aspirations that cause discord with regard to the social work vision and purpose (mission).

This section has established the core purposes of global social work as directed towards the enhancement of people. The goals are established afterwards to meet the purpose. Associated with the activities for meeting the core social work purposes, the behaviour, actions and decisions of the social worker involved will be governed by the ethical philosophy of social work discussed in the next section.

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3.3 ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK

The second element of uniting social work across contexts relates to the ethical philosophy of social work. Generally, the prevailing ethical philosophy in social work is based on the liberal individualist approach mainly originating from two philosophers (Clark, 2006; Nathanson, Giffords & Calderon, 2011; Wilks, 2005): Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German philosopher, who wrote on moral reasoning and moral duty contained in universal moral laws, and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), a British philosopher and individualist who authored the book, *On Liberty*, to address the tyranny of the collective over the individual (Rohlf, 2010; Wilson, 2007).

Liberal individualism sees the self as paramount and as having the capacity for decision making without due notice of the social context (Carle, 2005). Liberal individualism in social work therefore means that the individual is primarily responsible for their own welfare needs and that people seek the help of social workers as "a recourse to be sought when some special contingency perhaps temporarily overwhelms the capacity of the individual" (Clark, 2006:75). This philosophy reflects a conservative and traditional approach to social welfare provision (McBeath & Webb, 2002). The outcome of liberal individualism was the over-emphasis on rules and obligations manifesting in social work through accountability, control and risk management. This situation reduced the possibility of social workers applying virtues such as fairness, reflection, discretion, courage and restraint which contribute to social workers becoming self-actualising (McBeath & Webb, 2002).

The criticism of liberal individualism is that it does not adequately consider the social context of human development and human motivations (Carle, 2005). In this way the practice of social work endorses its purpose of enhancing human wellbeing by focusing on both the individual and the collective (Bisman, 2004). Downie and Telfer (Bisman, 2004) argue that the purpose of social work is essentially about empowering and supporting the kind of life that a person should live in society. Thus Bisman (2004) says that values and mission are important to the profession of social work and that it is values, not the knowledge base, that must guide practice in achieving its purpose. Bisman (2004:120) thereby argues that values must direct the pursuit for knowledge,

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but it also simultaneously drives the social worker's actions, responses and decisions (see Figure 3.2).

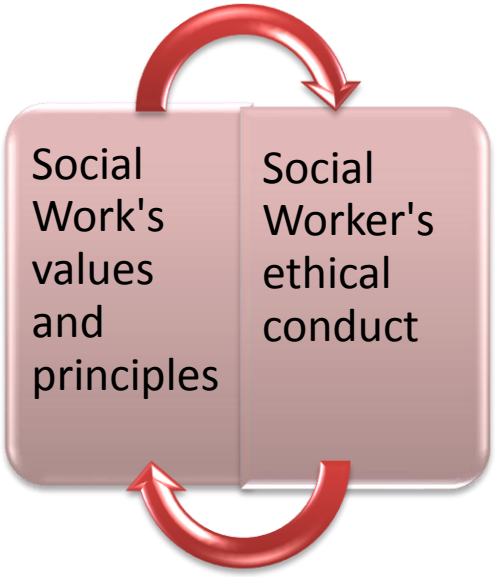

Figure 3.2: Components of Ethical Philosophy of the profession
Source: Bisman, 2004

Figure 3.2 illustrates the interrelationship between social work values and principles in relation to the social worker's ethical conduct within the ambit of the profession's ethical philosophy. The discussion therefore comprises two parts, values and principles, and ethical conduct, to differentiate the values and principles attached to the practice of social work, and the ethical (professional) conduct of the social worker her/himself.

3.3.1 VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Certain universal values and principles are pertinent and shared by most, if not all, international social work programmes (Bernstein & Gray, 1997; Hancock, 1997; Hepworth *et al*., 2013; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2013; Potgieter, 1998). Social work is based on values (D'Aprix, Dunlap, Abel & Edwards, 2004; Osteen, 2011). Galambos (2009) confirms that Barlett's 1965 seminal work stressed the significance of values in determining professional behaviour in practice and thus bound social work to democratic principles.

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In the nineties, South African authors Potgieter (1998) and Bernstein and Gray (1997) provided values and principles in particular ways that is attentive to the various social work contexts, practices and interactions (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Exposition of social work values

	Potgieter, 1998			Bernstein and Gray, 1997	
	Values as ways to perceive people	**Values as ways to interact with people**	**Values as ideals**	**Self-respect**	**Social Justice**
RELATIONAL VALUES	Worth and dignity; Capacity to grow; Need to belong; Responsibility to self and others.	Individualisation; Acceptance; Controlled emotional involvement; Non-judgemental attitude; Self-determination; Accountability.		Self-determination; Non-judgemental attitude; Acceptance; Objectivity and impartiality	
RESPECT FOR PERSONS	Diversity and uniqueness;			Tolerance and accepting diversity; Avoiding labelling; Confidentiality and informed consent;	
VALUES OF SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP			Equity; Democracy; Social justice.		Democracy; Access to resources; Freedom; Non-discrimination; Equality and equity; Community; Collective responsibility; Social change.

Source: Bernstein & Gray, 1997; Potgieter, 1998

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Table 3.3 reflects the range of social work values and principles as provided by South African authors Bernstein and Gray (1997) and Potgieter (1998). Potgieter's (1998) structured values are very useful as they stipulate what values are pertinent for a given situation, although these in a practical sense would be used interchangeably. It is clear that Bernstein and Gray (1997) gave serious consideration to the context (of South Africa) when reflecting on professional values that were appropriate. Upon comparing these two sets of composite values, three clusters of values were discerned, namely, relational values, respect for persons, and social citizenship. These clusters are common in social work literature reflecting the social work commitment to upholding individual and group values when interacting with others, as well as overall social citizenship (Reamer, 2013).

There is strong correlation amongst western regions on core social work values, namely human dignity and worth, social justice, service, integrity, and competence. These values are echoed in countries such as Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa, amongst others (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2002; British Association of Social Workers, 2012; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005; Hepworth *et al*., 2013; Osteen, 2011; Segal *et al*., 2013; South African Council of Social Service Professions, 2004). The South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) has one additional value, namely professional responsibility which is an acknowledgement of the ethics of care approach where responsibility and accountability of the caregiver are key principles (South African Council of Social Service Professions, 2004).

Social work traditionally works with those in society who are the most disempowered. It therefore becomes imperative that social workers become aware and perceptive of their use of power and control. Thus social workers are routinely juggling competing values (Beckett & Maynard, 2013; Dolgoff, Harrington & Loewenberg, 2012). In their judgement, social workers should not only be guided by their personal values, but also their professional values. Because the decision to enter social work lies more with personal reasons rather than any other (see Chapter 7 Theme 1), it is imperative that social workers become aware of such personal values and from where they emanate (Beckett & Maynard, 2013; Dolgoff *et al*., 2012). This point is

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important for this study in view of the ACEs of student participants. In the next section, the ethical conduct of the social worker regarding appropriate standards of behaviour is expounded.

3.3.2 ETHICAL CONDUCT

Values underlie the pursuit of knowledge, as well as the conduct, decision making and reactions of individual social workers (Bisman, 2004). Professional and ethical conduct promotes accountability, responsibility, public protection and respecting (personal and professional) boundaries (Davidson, 2005). Ethical conduct consists of (normative) professional ethics (based on standards) and virtue ethics (based on personal characteristics), as depicted in Figure 3.3.

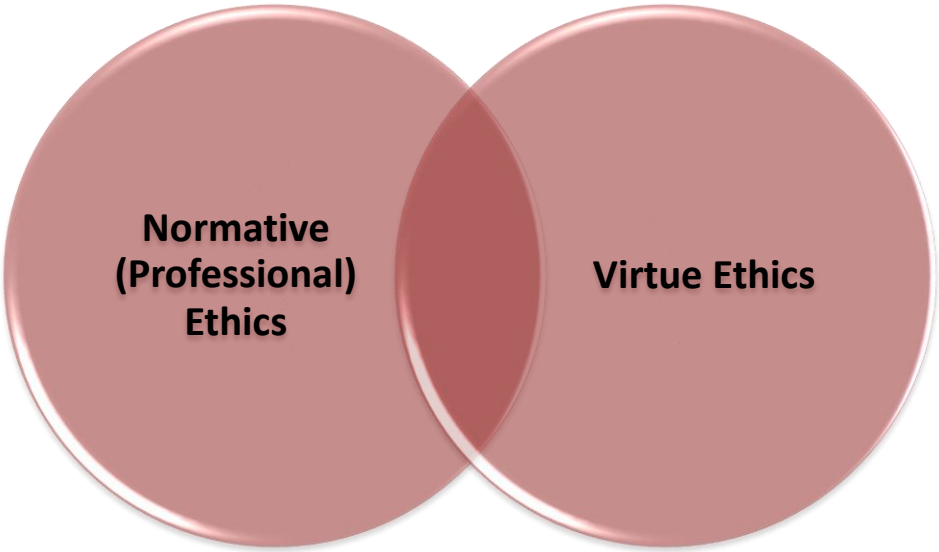

Figure 3.3: Facets of Ethical Conduct

Figure 3.3 illustrates the two facets of ethical conduct that arise when considering professional and ethical conduct. Ethics is a complex construct and can be interpreted and understood in various ways in terms of theoretical orientations, actions, and decision making. Normative (professional) and virtue ethics are two ways in which ethical conduct can be understood.

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3.3.2.1 Normative and Professional Ethics

Levy (Nathanson *et al.*, 2011) defined normative (professional) ethics as "standards of behaviour in relation to others that derive from obligations" and that the extent of these obligations is determined by professional social work tasks. Hepworth, Rooney and Larsen (2002:13) assert that a code of ethics "specifies rules of conduct to which members must adhere to remain in good standing within a professional organisation" (cf. Corey, Corey & Callanan, 2011). A code of ethics is promulgated in order to protect service users, as well as to guide the ethical behaviour of professional practitioners especially in the helping professions (Corey *et al*., 2011). The professional's behaviour is thus governed by specific rules of behaviour rather than solely relying on the character of the practitioner in terms of self-governance. In the following section, virtue ethics, where the virtues or character of the person is dominant, is explored.

3.3.2.2 Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics emphasise moral character traits that are embedded or personalised to the individual as opposed to normative (professional) ethics that refer to standardised rule-based behaviour (Crisp, 2010; Hursthouse, 2012; Swanton, 2003). Banks (2009:59) argues that social work education must make the shift from viewing 'professional ethics' as subject study to "ethics in professional life". This, she says, implies that, in addition to the ambit of ethical codes and behaviour, we need to include "commitment, character and context". The three elements of ethics in professional life are discussed as explicated by Banks (2009:60) (Table 3.4):

Table 3.4: Elements of professional life

ELEMENTS IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE		
COMMITMENT: Being committed to intrinsic values of personal, professional and societal	**CHARACTER:** Being focused on the person rather than their behaviour	**CONTEXT:** Being aware of context and the role of politics, policy and organisation

Source: Banks, 2009

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Table 3.4 shows the elements of professional life that social workers ought to consider in their daily interactions with their service users. These elements suggest that the social worker does not act without careful consideration and thought about her/his actions and choices. In some instances, the social worker's action might well be out of character. The more the individual social worker considers these elements, the more these elements become assimilated. These elements are challenging, but the process of assimilation will contribute to a more authentic and integrated value system of the social worker.

Clark (2006) argues that social workers need to be individual advocates of the values that they embrace professionally and they have to be obligated to values and lifestyles beyond their organisational requirements. Social workers, in their work with children and families, for example, experience conflict between their personal beliefs of good or bad families while under obligation to submit assessments in accordance with formal and organisational standards and practices. Clark (2006) says that this, then, is a facade. Thus Banks (2009:59) presents a compelling argument for including approaches from "moral philosophy that stress the situated nature of ethics, such as virtue ethics, care and moral phenomenology (including moral perception, imagination, and empathy)" which would help to bridge this gap.

Hugman (2003:1027) concurs that (in terms of the postmodernist perspective), "ethics is regarded as the pursuit of morality found in the will not to deceive, starting with a refusal to deceive oneself". He recommends the practice of introspection for moral development as opposed to egocentricity or self-absorption (narcissism). Hugman (2003:1027) also supports the approach of virtue ethics which originates from the work of Aristotle, who viewed virtue ethics as "habits of the soul" (cf. Clark, 2006). Virtue ethics signify the degree to which a person may be sensitive and answerable to oneself, which opposes the standards and rights-based content to ethics characteristic of liberal approaches. Virtue ethics emphasise the character of the social worker "rather than whether an action conforms to abstract moral rules" (Clark, 2006:76). Through virtue ethics, it is argued that the worker as an individual is foregrounded in terms of personal qualities and mental abilities and, importantly, as a worker who is able to see differences among people and act upon them (McBeath & Webb, in Clark, 2006). In this way,

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Clark (2006) contends that it is impossible for social workers to maintain neutrality in the light of the clients' lifestyles or choices that may be deemed as harmful.

Wilks (2005:7) asserts that the social formation of identity is the springboard for virtue ethics. Furthermore, feminist ethicists argue that our moral identities are formed through our caring interactions. These interactions and relations occur within a set social context that is reciprocal. On the other hand, Wilks (2005) says that conventional ethics takes place within an independent lens disengaged from a social context and are contaminated by social assumptions and constructs. This, therefore, reflects "the reductive nature of principlism which had weakened the autonomy of social work" (Wilks, 2005:9).

Two postmodern theorists were prominent in the emergence of virtue ethics: Paul-Michel Foucault (1926-1984), a French philosopher who critically reviewed social institutions and wrote on power, knowledge and discourse; and Zygmunt Bauman, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Leeds (born 1925), a Polish sociologist who wrote on ethics and political philosophy. Bauman particularly argued that modernity (which he called solid modernity as opposed to post modernity, which he called liquid modernity) involved removing uncertainties from human life and necessitating more control over nature and social institutions (Garrett, 2012; Gutting, 2008). Both argued that liberal approaches to ethics led to ethical dogma (Hugman, 2003). They advocated that ethics must focus on means of communication between people and not a means for prescribing how individuals should think or behave.

Thus, Foucault and Bauman (Hugman, 2003) were critical of the prevailing ethical framework of professions such as social work; firstly because the emergence of the disciplines (professional fields with organisation and structure) and disciplinary (meaning corrective and punitive) that aim to control human existence (being) and behaviour. Subjects that were particularly criticised were psychology, psychiatry, criminology, teaching, and social work; and, secondly, because of the balance between care versus control and between knowledge versus power that is reflected in the actions and interactions of the social worker (Hugman, 2003). Thus, the challenge for the profession of social work and its sustainability is the transference of its values and ethics to

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students. In the next section, the focus is on the teaching and learning or transference of values and ethics to students.

3.3.3 TEACHING VALUES AND ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK

A social work programme must create the opportunity for intense and rigorous discussion on the elucidation of social work values (Galambos, 2009). In terms of virtue ethics (and ethics of care), Banks (2009) recommends the following ways in which these can be taught in social work classrooms (Table 3.5):

Table 3.5: Recommended methods for teaching ethics

Teaching Methods	Implementation examples
Seeing ethics everywhere	Social work curriculum design should emphasise ethics as entrenched in all social work learning, rather than piecemeal, or partitioning ethics as a separate area of study.
Working with contextualised living stories / narratives	Social work teachers should use their own personal challenges or difficulties of their everyday life to provide discussion points for real-life dilemmas or difficult decision making. This refers to lecturer self-disclosure (See Chapter 7 Theme 4 Part I).
Balancing logic (analysis) with passion (feelings, emotions, imagination)	Offsetting teaching students the logic and reasoning behind decisions and judgments against teaching students to be morally insightful and benevolent. This also refers to student self-awareness and mindfulness (See Chapter 7 Theme 3 Sub-theme 6 Part II).
Use of constructivist teaching methods (role plays, simulations, literature, poetry, drama)	Social work teachers should use participatory and interactive teaching and learning practices to enable students to practically engage and critically review social work ethics. (See Chapter 2 section 2.2.6).
Developing the capacity to do ethics work	Social work teachers should develop the capacity of students to be considerate and empathetic, especially in situations where these reactions would not be the usual response (for example work in prisons with clients who have been found guilty of child abuse or murder).

Source: Banks, 2009

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Table 3.5 contains recommended teaching methods advocated by Banks (2009) regarding the teaching of ethics in social work. These recommendations pertain to both curriculum and lecture planning. These methods would also inadvertently trigger personal feelings arising from personal circumstances. These feelings would be broadened to include three elements: firstly, perceiving the moral elements within the situation; secondly, being aware of the political context and the worker's own professional power (reflexivity); and, thirdly, the moral difficulties in being a good social worker. Banks (2009:62) says that the third element involves "the moral distress that comes from seeing what ought to be done but not being able to do it" and, furthermore, that being and doing good "involves the moral qualities of courage and professional wisdom".

According to Banks (2009), these teaching and learning recommendations are meant to move ethics from logic and principle-based conduct to including the socio-emotional dimension of personal qualities (virtues). These recommendations should then also form part of the knowledge base of social work, as well as linking with the focus of this study regarding the possible impact of students' socio-emotional experiences on students' virtue ethics.

3.4 THE KNOWLEDGE BASE OF DIRECT SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The third element in universal social work is its knowledge base. Trevithick (2008) contends that there is much confusion as to what the content of the knowledge base of social work must be. This is vital, she says, since "social work practice is a highly skilled activity and one that calls for an extensive knowledge base and considerable intellectual abilities" (Trevithick, 2008:1212; Bell, 2012). Bell (2012) laments the lack of a robust and elucidated ontological base in social work. She stresses that social work is too entrenched in the traditional positivistic paradigm that have focused on absolute and biomedical conceptions and explanations of human existence. Therefore Bell (2012:409) argues the importance of social work having a theoretical framework that includes "a range of formal theory, practice wisdom and the experiential knowledge of clients". This would mean that social work has to expound on its philosophy regarding its ontological base (its worldview) and epistemological base (ways of knowing).

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Furthermore, social work educators need to know the difference between theory (the notion of explaining) and knowledge (the notion of understanding). Trevithick (2008) asserts that the notion of understanding (others in particular) is often a primary concern in social work. Doing this competently involves a level of self-awareness regarding one's relationships with others and how others perceive us. In exploring and comprehending these divisions and variations in experiences, social work will be enabled to conceptualise its knowledge base.

The structure of this section follows the construction of social work knowledge which, firstly, emanates from formal knowledge (divided into three worldviews) and, secondly, from social work-specific knowledge (divided into theoretical, factual and practice / personal knowledge). The origin of all knowledge, from which the conceptualisation of social work knowledge stems, is explicated below using Babbie and Mouton (2007) and Mouton (1996).

3.4.1 FORMAL KNOWLEDGE BASE OF SOCIAL WORK

Babbie and Mouton (2007) and Mouton (1996) contend that there are three paradigms or worldviews of knowledge that delineate the sources of all knowledge that we use in various ways, for the formal and for the everyday:

Figure 3.4: Sources of formal knowledge
Source: Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Mouton, 1996

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This Venn diagram shows the overlapping connections of the various knowledges depicting the foundational relationship of World I knowledge to World II, and that World III, in turn, is based on World II knowledge.

3.4.1.1 WORLD I: The world of everyday and lay knowledge

The knowledge of the everyday refers to the fount of knowledge that we use routinely in our daily life. Mouton (1996:18) asserts that we procure knowledge "through learning, experience and self-experience". A person deemed knowledgeable would know ways of acting and the manner in which it must be executed. This is called practical wisdom (see discussion in section 3.4.2.3). Mouton (2006) emphasises that this type of knowledge is essentially for improving our quality of living and can be referred to as existential or pragmatic (Greek word meaning 'to do') interest. Bell (2012:415) reproduces Thompson's 2005 construct to conceptualise everyday experiences as "'ontological choreography' to capture how humans negotiate and experience the world in multiple, self-determined ways". Bell (2012) says that this concept is useful for social work since it infers energy, reciprocity, and collaboration. World I knowledge is imperative for this study as it defines the arena for the type of knowledge gained from students' ACEs.

3.4.1.2 WORLD II: The World of Science

The experiences, events and incidents occurring in World I are used by scientists as foci of investigation and research in World II. The sciences are delineated into the following types (Mouton, 2006) (Table 3.6):

Table 3.6: Types of sciences in World II knowledge

WORLD II: THE WORLD OF SCIENCE			
NATURAL SCIENCE Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy	FORMAL SCIENCES Mathematics, Logic	SOCIAL SCIENCES Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Political Science, Social Work	HUMANITIES History, Philosophy, Linguistics

Source: Mouton, 2006

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Table 3.6 shows the types of sciences and where social work is located as part of World II knowledge. The aim of science is "to generate truthful models and theories of the world" (Mouton, 2006:9). This search for truth is referred to as epistemological interest (from the Greek word episteme meaning 'genuine' or 'true knowledge'). This focus underscores the arena for World II knowledge production. The knowledge for the practice of social work is positioned here.

3.4.1.3 WORLD III: The World of Metascience

The phenomena in World II become objects of inquiry in World III. Mouton (2006) asserts that deliberations on the characteristics and complexities of science have produced particular academic disciplines (such as philosophy, research methodology, sociology and history of science). These disciplines thus focus on World II for study and research.

In summary, formal knowledge has established the foundation for all other forms of knowledge, social work knowledge being one. Social work is set in World II knowledge but World I is the area of inquiry which contextualises this research study.

The following section explicates the construction of social work knowledge, which also sets the foundation for the signature pedagogy of social work.

3.4.2 SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE

Kirst-Ashman (2013:21) contends that theoretical approaches "provide ways of organising information and looking at the world". Trevithick (2008) recommends the following knowledge framework for social work consisting of theoretical, factual and practice knowledge (Figure 3.5).

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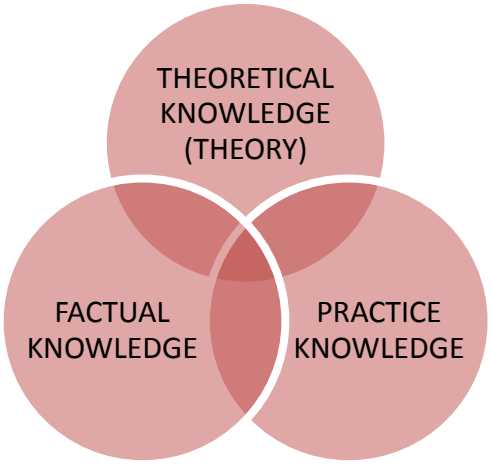

Figure 3.5: The knowledge framework of social work
Source: Trevithick, 2008

This Venn diagram shows overlapping and connective relationships between the three areas of social work knowledge in that they are not isolated parts of a whole but have shared features or are drawn from one another. These three knowledge areas are expounded below.

3.4.2.1 Theoretical knowledge

Theories are imperative as they provide a platform for social work practice. The three main sources of theories are as follows (Table 3.7) (Trevithick, 2008):

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Table 3.7: Theories for social work practice

Theories of understanding	• These theories clarify our understanding of people, situations and events. The content of this type of knowledge is drawn largely from other disciplines and sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, medicine, political science (amongst others). Particular to the SA context, most of the knowledge is founded on Western and Euro-centric assumptions about human well-being and behaviour (D'Cruz, 2008; Gair, Miles &Thompson, 2005; Trevithick, 2008).
Theories of ideology	• These theories analyse the role, task and purpose of social work, for example problem-solving approach; Systems theories; Strengths perspective; Critical social work theories; and Post-modernism (Healy, 2005). The purpose of social work is impacted by ideological shifts that have frequently taken place throughout the profession's history (Trevithick, 2008: 1220).
Theories of intervention	• These theories relate to direct practice and can be referred to as fields of practice (for example child and family care) or methods of intervention (for example cognitive-behaviour, client-centred, task-centred, and solution-focused) (Healy, 2005; Trevithick, 2008).

Source: Trevithick, 2008

Table 3.7 illustrates the types of theories utilised in the knowledge and practice of social work and the applicability in social work education.

Theoretical knowledge in social work has clarified the evolved nature of the knowledge of the profession that provides a comprehensive base for practice. In the following section, the focus is on the role and sources of factual knowledge.

3.4.2.2 Factual Knowledge

Factual knowledge consists of indisputable factual information necessary for social work practice. Factual knowledge and information include data, statistics, figures, records, research findings, substantiated with evidence and proof. These include the following dimensions (Table 3.8) (Trevithick, 2008):

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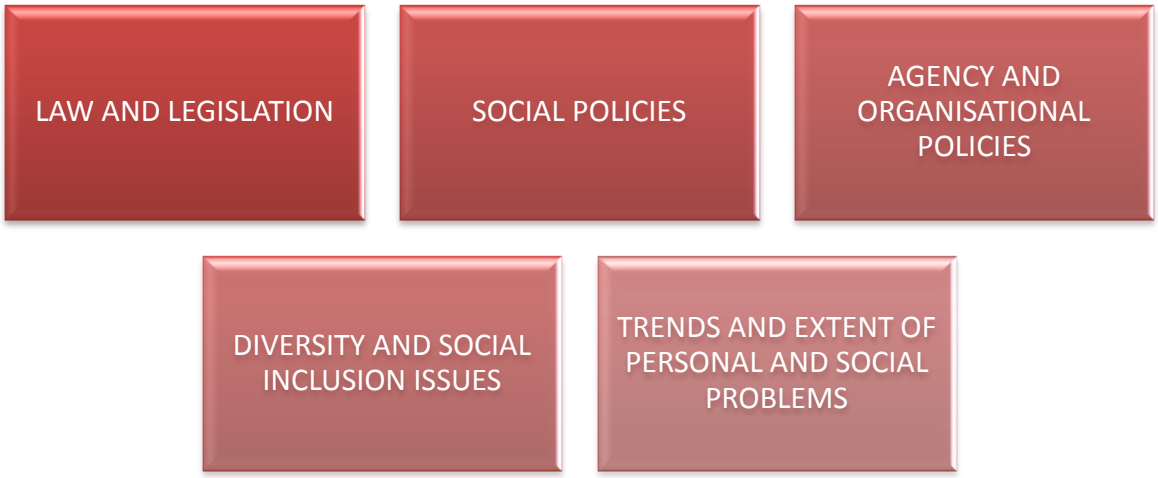
Table 3.8: Factual knowledge for social work practice



Source: Trevithick, 2008

Table 3.8 illustrates the five different sources of factual knowledge necessary for social analysis and evaluation for policy and direct practice. In the next section, practice knowledge is expounded.

3.4.2.3 Practice Knowledge

Practice knowledge explains the application of knowledge within the context of social work practice. It explicates the use of theoretical or factual knowledge that underpin practice. Trevithick (2008:1227) contends that it is "the way that 'book knowledge' is transformed and made relevant and useable". Practice knowledge is assessed in accordance with three related aspects:

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Table 3.9: Practice knowledge

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION	KNOWLEDGE USE	KNOWLEDGE CREATION
•The knowledge that we obtain must be relevant and appropriate to be used in social work situations. Trevithick (2008) asserts that only through knowledge application can we reliably assert that knowledge was acquired.	•Knowledge must be germane and arranged in a structure that can be used. The type of knowledge used in social work practice and by social workers is knowledge that is available and ready for use, for example, agency or organisational policy and procedural documentation (that comprises factual information).	•Social workers can create new knowledge as a result of their professional experiences and interactions with diverse people and situations.

Source: Trevithick, 2008

Table 3.9 shows the interconnectivity of the three aspects of personal or practice knowledge where certain elements are shared but certain unique elements are also present.

Knowledge that is obtained through personal and practice experiences is known as practice wisdom (Adams, Matto & LeCroy, 2009; Trevithick, 2008). This concept is derived from Aristotle, who discussed the sources of knowledge in his book *Nicomachean Ethics Book VI*, 1797–1808 (Back, 2002; Breier, 2007; Dykes, 2012). Aristotle distinguished between theoretical and practical knowledge and in the latter further differentiated between *techne* (skill) and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). The following diagram (Figure 3.6) depicts the concept of practical wisdom in a hierarchical relationship to *techne* and *phronesis*.

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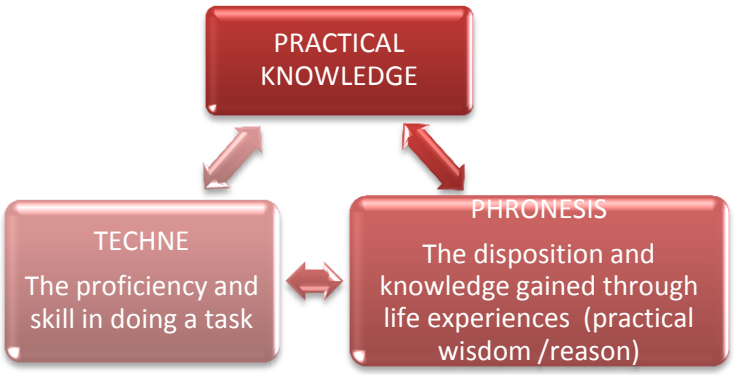

Figure 3.6: Aristotle's concept of practical knowledge
Source: Back, 2002

In relating practical wisdom to social work, practice wisdom is not structured in a way that a particular knowledge structure can be discerned or can be distinguished from notions of general knowledge. There is a need to determine how practice wisdom underpins knowledge creation and thus practice effectiveness. Indigenous knowledge has a significant role to play in formulating practice wisdom (in addition to the life experiences of students / practitioners). Here indigenous knowledges will provide the authentic modes of local knowledge and traditional methods of helping (Gray, Coates & Yellow Bird, 2010). In this way social work can optimise its potential to create knowledge (Chu & Tsui, 2008). Trevithick (2008) confirms that the potential for social workers to create knowledge is under-utilised.

The overview of formal and social work knowledges has set a foundation from which social work curricula can be designed and constructed.

3.4.3 THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL WORK CURRICULA

The structure of social work curricula is a contentious issue among social work educators and practitioners regarding the comparative value that should be awarded to core parts (modules) of the social work curriculum. According to Segal *et al*. (2013), social work curricula generally use similar components in the curriculum (Figure 3.7):

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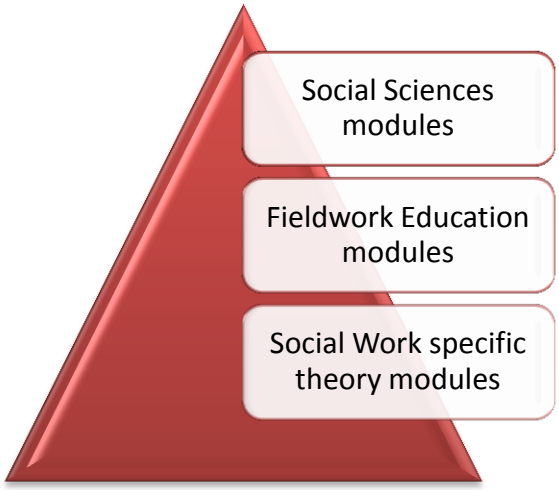

Figure 3.7: The structure of social work curricula
Source: Segal et al., 2013

Figure 3.7 elucidates the three main and common aspects of social work curricula that appear to be universal components of social work education (Segal *et al*., 2013). Tuchman and Lalane (2011) argue that social work curricula is separated into discrete components, noticeably theory (policy, research and theoretical approaches) and practice (field learning) which, they say, simulates silos and perpetuates the dichotomous view of knowledge versus skills. Thus Greene (2005) calls for a "more explicit link between education and practice".

In terms of fieldwork education, Greene (2005:42) emphasises the "apprenticeship model" that has become entrenched as part of the social work curricula. In the USA context, social work students spend 400 hours in fieldwork practice as part of the social work undergraduate degree (Segal *et al*., 2013). In the English context, students are required to complete 1500 hours in fieldwork practice, and in the Canadian system, students complete 700 hours (Spolander, Pullen-Sansfacon, Brown & Engelbrecht, 2011). In SA, at UWC for example, over the four years of the Bachelor of Social Work degree, 1350 hours are stipulated for fieldwork practice.[1] Staying with UWC as example, juxtaposed with the fieldwork practice hours, the notional learning hours for social work theory modules amount to 1500 hours over four years (UWC Calendar part 8, 2012). This reflects a 53-47% theory-practice balance.

[1] *It should be noted that direct fieldwork internship does not utilise all these hours, and not on all year levels, especially on the first-year level in the UWC context.*

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There is a balancing act between the values awarded to theory and fieldwork practice components in social work curricula. While there is strong similarity amongst theoretical components in social work, there still appears to be huge discrepancies amongst social work programmes as to the required number of hours appropriate for students to spend in clinical training.

The knowledge base of social work has been shown to have its roots in formal (classical) knowledge areas as well as possessing its own unique knowledge based on theory and practice. Of significance is the role of practice wisdom, particularly the place of indigenous knowledge.

Within social work curricula, methods and processes (and skills) become the focus of attention as these determine the practice readiness of students.

3.5 SOCIAL WORK METHODS AND PROCESSES

The fourth element consists of social work methods and processes. Throughout the historical development of social work what evolved was primarily case-centred social work focusing on individual pathology, as well as family services within the traditional fields, which still dominates the professional landscape in social work (Hepworth *et al*., 2013). This has prevailed despite the acceptance of group and community work and social policy as methods of social work intervention (Gray & Fook, 2004).

Criticisms against these methods were that they did not address broader social issues and left the problems of whole communities untouched and intact. There were clear indications that the needs of people were not met "through narrowly defined remedial (therapeutic) efforts of the casework and group work methods" (Hepworth *et al*., 2013:23). The profession needed to urgently broaden their services. Two important events were crucial to the development of social work (Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Greene, 2005; Hepworth *et al*., 2013; Ramsay, 2001, 2003):

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- The 1958 working definition of social work practice was developed by a sub-committee of the NASW Commission on Practice (in the USA) which was chaired by Harriet Bartlett (1897-1987). This working definition was founded on five key components: purpose, values, sanction, knowledge, and method. Together these concepts replicated the entirety of social work and its services.
- In 1959, the Boehm Curriculum Study completed its study on a national social work curriculum on behalf of the Council on Social Work Education (also in the USA), headed by Dr Werner Boehm (1913-2011). The study identified 'social functioning' as the discerning feature of social work and delineated the main focus of social work as being the social interface between people and their environments.

Social work educational programmes responded and designed curricula that exemplified a universal knowledge base for social work practice (Hepworth *et al*., 2013). Globally, this generalist approach has informed social work methods and processes, called generic social work. Definitions generally follow similar viewpoints: It is a heterogeneous and wide-ranging knowledge base consisting of methods, skills and techniques for any given situation (Hall, 2008; Hepworth *et al*., 2013; Kirst-Ashman, 2013; Potgieter, 1998). It allows for the social worker to be able to "define, assess and identify the most appropriate intervention for the desired outcome" (Hall, 2008:391). The rationale for using this approach is so that social problems can be viewed holistically and intervention should target multiple levels (that is micro, meso and macro).

Hepworth *et al*. (2013) identified three phases in the helping process depicting sequential steps in the process as follows (Table 3.10):

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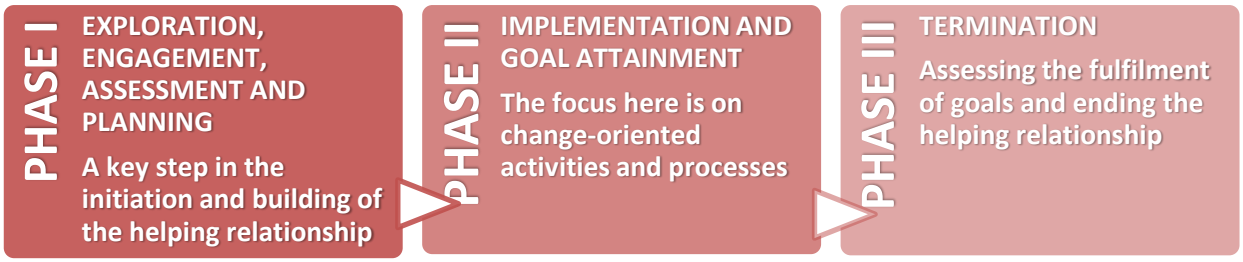
Table 3.10: Phases in the helping process



Source: Hepworth et al., 2013

These three phases demand the use of knowledge and competence in a range of knowledge and skills. Munford and Sanders (2011) assert that the start of the helping process in social work is contingent upon the social worker taking time to make links between client and place (meaning their places of origin and current residence) and between client and people (meaning the people they are connected to within generational contexts). These linkages form the base upon which interventions will be founded, if not linked, clients are at risk of feeling "isolated from the contextual and relational elements" of the intervention (Munford & Sanders, 2011:65). The social worker, too, would be alienated from important elements in the client's life. These competencies thus relate to establishing the basis of a helping relationship and are components of phase I (the exploring, engaging , assessing and planning) for the intervention which would take place in Phase II (the working phase of implementing the plan and striving towards achieving the agreed-upon goals).

Relationships and context are two key ingredients in the helping process. The first ingredient is the all-encompassing helping relationship between the social worker and client, known as the "therapeutic alliance" (Adams *et al*., 2009:172; Munford & Sanders, 2011:64). Building this 'therapeutic alliance' involves two core elements: supporting and valuing a client's experience, and showing genuineness and sincerity in their regard for and belief in the client (Hepworth *et al*., 2013; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2002; Munford & Sanders, 2011). Adams *et al*., 2009:169) confirm that, in the helping, the emphasis is not on problem solving but on forming "a therapeutic relationship, identifying needs, goals, and resources as well as emphasizing mutuality in the relational context".

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Understanding context is the other ingredient and consists of the socio-cultural setting of the client and client system (Munford & Sanders, 2011). According to these authors, social workers who work in diverse contexts should develop regard for how "cultural frameworks and meaning systems" impact on relationship and identity formation (Munford & Sanders, 2011:64).

Social work methods and processes emphasise a generic orientation to intervention which have become synonymous with social work practice. Nevertheless there is concerted criticism against these conventional methods regarding their impact on large-scale social issues that prevail where social workers are most needed.

3.6 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK WITHIN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Four significant components of social work have been identified as global or universal. These components are by no means completely universal but each one should be appropriate to the particular context in which social work is practised. Continuous debate, reflection and critical thinking of the applicability to context in social work are vital.

PART 11: THE SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL WORK

In Part I (Social work within a global context) there was a concerted focus on the universal components of social work curricula despite the contentious issues around globalisation, universalism and indigenisation. The aim in Part II is to showcase particular teaching and learning approaches used in social work education, specific learning methods and formative social work assessment tasks used by social work educators.

Professional learning consists of two components, for example professional teaching and learning (called signature pedagogies) and professional identity construction (see further Chapter 4 Part II) (Hall, 2005; Osteen, 2011; Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006; Shulman, 2005; Sims,

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2011; Taylor & Cheung, 2010). Larrison and Korr's (2013) criticism of fieldwork as the signature pedagogy of social work is endorsed because it is rather the combination of the development of the professional self and the distinguishing features of teaching and learning that constitute this signature pedagogy.

From the literature, three approaches to teaching and learning in social work that are particularly favoured by social work educators are identified, namely: constructive alignment, experiential learning theory and transformative learning theory; these will be expounded on in this section.

3.7 CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT

The first learning approach is Constructive Alignment, which has been mostly associated with John Biggs. According to Biggs (1996) there are two (progressive) schools of thought that characterise higher education: firstly, constructivist learning theory and, secondly, the instructional design (ID) approach (meaning systematic teaching) (see Figure 3.8).

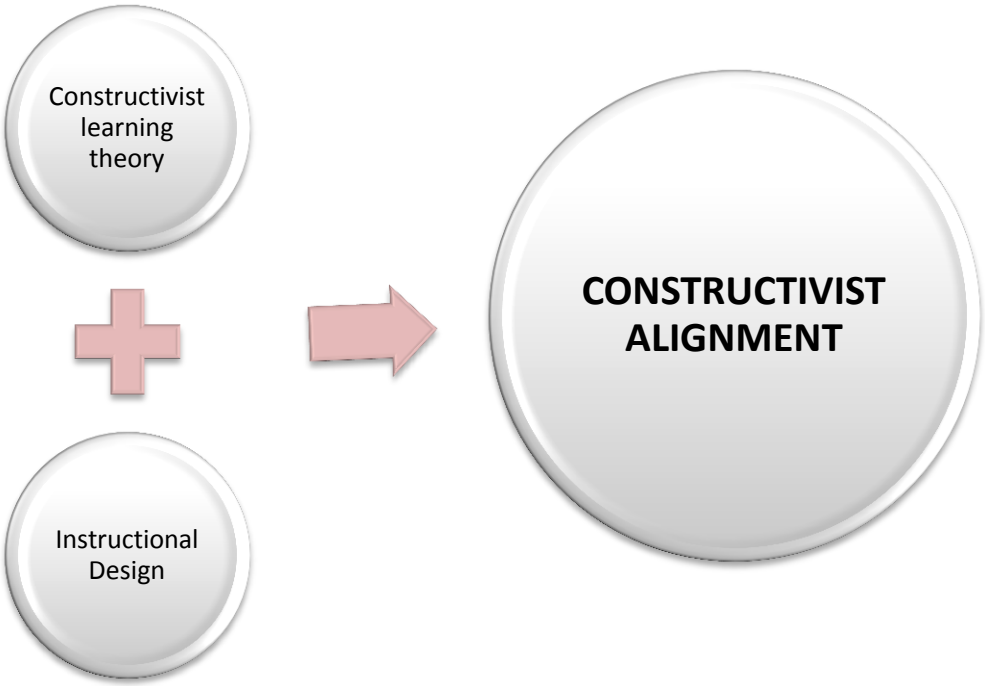

Figure 3.8: The composition of Constructivist Alignment
Source: Biggs, 1996

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Figure 3.8 illustrates the components of Constructivist Alignment and their interrelatedness. The constructive component refers to the constructivist educational approach and concomitant teaching and learning methods (see Chapter 2). Biggs (1996:347) confirms that constructivism "comprises a family of theories but all have in common the centrality of the learner's activities in creating meaning". Alignment emanates from instructional design and refers to "creating a learning environment where the learning outcomes are specified and dictate the type of teaching methods and activities needed to ensure the outcomes are achieved by the end of the module" (Teater, 2011:573; Biggs, 1996).

3.7.1 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Instructional Design is defined as "a process that can guide educational planning and management" (Hardre, 2005:166). It offers a structure for the preparation and organisation of teaching activities. Hardre (2005) argues that ID promotes learning because it consists of planned and theoretically based teaching activities because it uses a methodical process. The teaching activities and process must be synchronised (aligned) otherwise it can lead to inconsistencies. The methodical process consists of the five key elements (Hardre, 2005) of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation (ADDIE) (Table 3.11):

Table 3.11: The ADDIE process of module alignment

Analysis	Design	Development	Implementation	Evaluating
• Investigating and specifying the need and goals	• Aligning the teaching and learning activities to specific objectives	• Constructing teaching and learning materials	• Putting into practice the instructional design	• Conducting formative and summative assessment tasks

Source: Hardre, 2005

From the aforementioned ADDIE elements it is clear that the process of ID brings a logic to module planning in starting with the analysis of the learning need and goals and concluding with formative and summative assessments. Constructive alignment embodies pairing of the two

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educational approaches in that, when "curriculum and assessment are aligned the results of instruction are massively improved" (Biggs, 1996:350).

3.7.1 CONSTRUCTIVIST ALIGNMENT IN RELATION TO OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Constructivist Alignment underscores OBE in terms constructivist educational principles and the use of OBE learning outcomes as the teaching methods, learning activities and assessment tasks all flow from the learning outcomes. In this way, Constructivist Alignment links more emphatically with OBE than the mismatch between the principles of free-form learning in constructivism and the specificity of predetermined learning outcomes OBE (see Chapter 2 section 2.8.1) (Biggs, 1996). The following circular steps emerging from the ADDIE elements should be contemplated when commencing with Constructivist Alignment (Teater, 2011) (Figure 3.9):

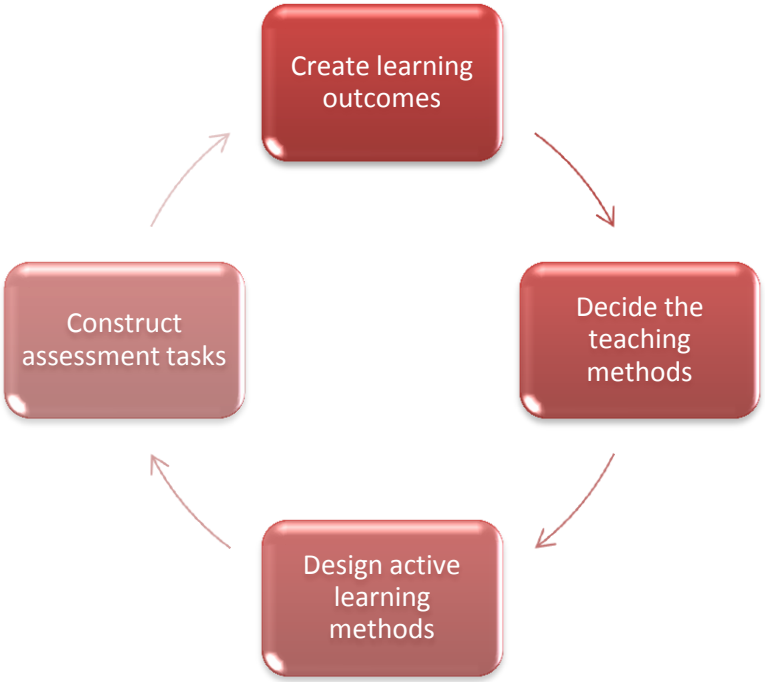

Figure 3.9: The Constructive Alignment planning process
Source: Teater, 2011

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The circular steps in module planning are illustrated in Figure 3.9. Underlying each step are interlinking feedback and evaluation which are used to effect changes which may be needed. The first and last steps are vital components, namely to establish the learning outcomes for the specific module, and to design assessment tasks. The relationship between learning outcomes, Bloom's 1956 Taxonomy (also see Chapter 2 section 2.4.1 in terms of the roots of OBE) and assessment are illustrated in Table 3.12 below (Teater, 2011). Bloom's taxonomy assists with the formulation of outcomes.

Table 3.12: Constructing learning outcomes using Bloom's Taxonomy

Categories	Clarifying	Suggested verbs:	Action
Knowledge	Remembering important information	Define, recall, list	**MU / DU**
Comprehension	Explaining important information	Discuss, describe, explain, identify	**MU / DU / IU**
Application	Tackling closed-ended dilemmas	Apply, practice, illustrate, use	**IU / EU**
Analysis	Tackling open-ended dilemmas	Analyse, compare, contrast, debate	**IU / EU**
Synthesis	Developing own responses to dilemmas	Design, construct, compose, formulate	**EU**
Evaluation	Undertaking a critical review and response	Judge, appraise, evaluate, assess	**EU**

Source: Teater, 2011

Table 3.12 shows the use of Bloom's Taxonomy as a template for the use of designing learning outcomes for a module or curriculum. The taxonomy ensures that the outcome of the learning process is comprehensively covered. The key explaining the assessment rubric is below.

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•The student reflects key information and is able to memorise or identify.	**MINIMAL UNDERSTANDING (MU)**
•The student displays knowledge about a number of issues and is able to describe or list.	**DESCRIPTIVE UNDERSTANDING (DU)**
•The student relates and links certain facts together and shows basic understanding. The student is able to integrate, analyse or explain.	**INTEGRATIVE UNDERSTANDING (IU)**
•The student shows critical and creative thinking and is able to apply knowledge to new or different situations.	**EXTENDED UNDERSTANDING (EU)**

These four levels can thus be used as the foundation when constructing assessment rubrics and variations can be used. It provides a basis for enhancing consistency and fair judgement across the criteria and all assessed work. It does not promise complete objectivity, however. In the following section Experiential Learning is explored.

Constructivist Alignment is strongly linked to OBE as it matches the structure and standardisation that is a requirement of OBE. Constructivist methods, though, provide the interactive and participatory teaching methods that are flexible in meeting the particular needs of social work students.

3.8 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The second learning theory to emerge from the literature is Experiential Learning. Wehbi (2011) proposed that social work educators adopt experiential learning as an educational approach. According to Wehbi (2011:494), "experiential learning can be defined as a process by which students learn by being actively involved in their own experiences" and as focusing on the "development of critical thinking skills and the value of peer interaction". Sieminski and Seden (2011) also argued for a student-centred, experiential approach to learning in social work – an approach where teaching and learning methods include role play, case studies, group exercises and personal reflective activities. These methods allow opportunities for students to use their own experiences and infuse these with the knowledge of others.

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David Kolb is associated with the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and has defined learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984:38; Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 1999). Kolb called his theory 'Experiential', firstly to stress the pivotal function of experience in the learning process, and secondly, to link its academic origins to the work of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, which forms a triad for the foundation of Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984; Kolb *et al*., 1999). Kolb (1984:37) thus, in developing his theory of understanding knowledge and learning, came to believe that "to understand knowledge, we must understand the psychology of the learning process, and to understand learning we must understand epistemology (the origins, nature, methods, and limits of knowledge)". Kolb viewed ELT as two modes of learning and development: firstly as an integrative learning process and secondly as multilevel processes of adult development; "both of which are consistent with how people learn, grow and develop" (Kolb *et al*., 1999:2). The following figure depicts Kolb's learning model:

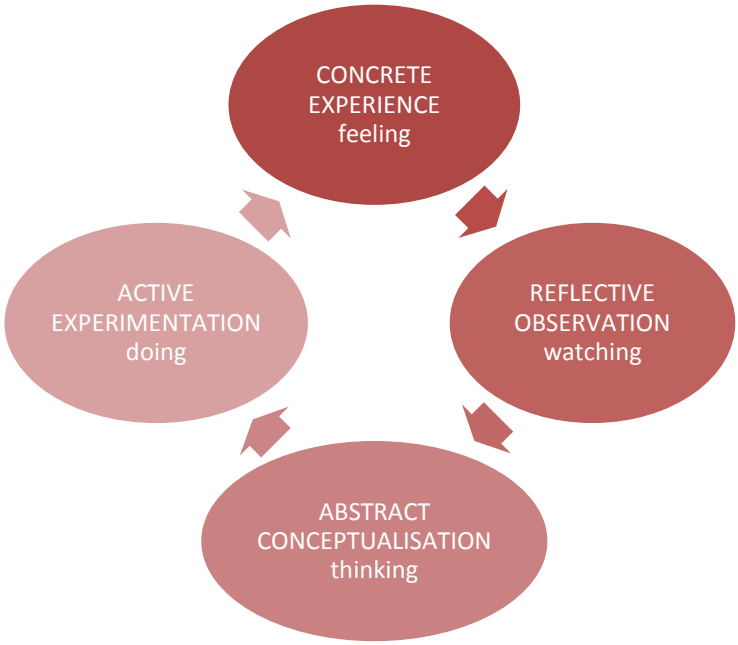

Figure 3.10: Kolb's learning cycle
Source: Kolb et al., 1999

The diagram shows the stages of Kolb's learning cycle in a continuing sequence in circular flow, where concrete experience means experiencing (feeling) an actual or tangible learning incident; reflective observation means watching and studying the incident; abstract conceptualisation

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means intellectual or theoretical thinking about the incident and what it signifies for further actions; and active experimentation means testing newfound knowledge (Kolb *et al*., 1999). A strong characteristic of ELT emanating from his learning cycle is that learning is a process (not a product or outcomes) grounded in the experiences of the learner (Kolb, 1984). An integral part of learning in ELT is the delineation of learning styles of students (Figure 3.11):

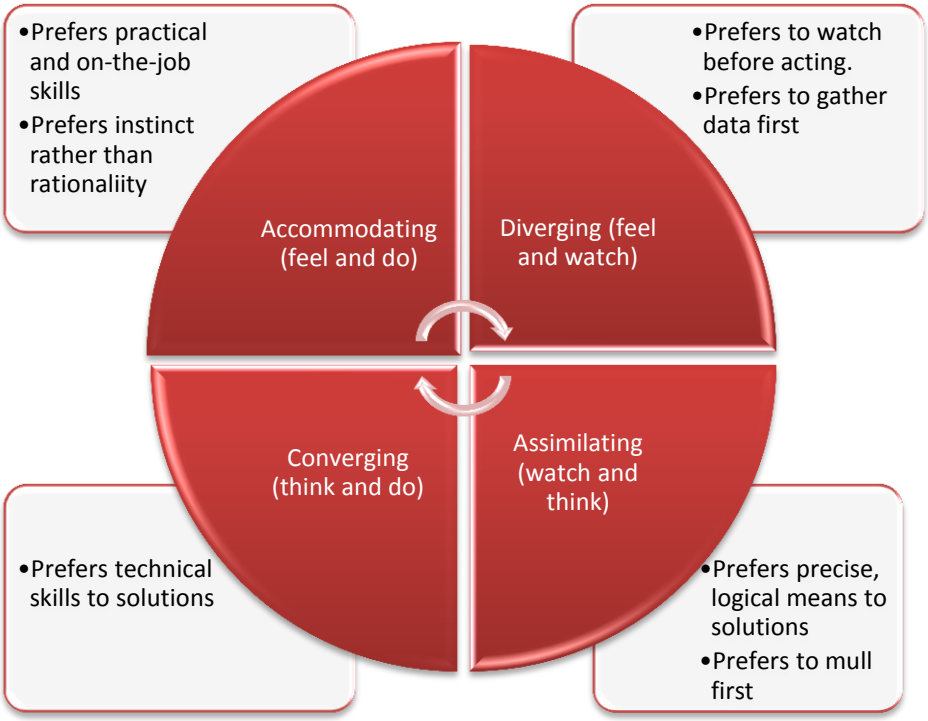

Figure 3.11: Learning styles of ELT
Source: Kolb et al., 1992

Figure 3.11 shows Kolb's learning styles model (Kolb *et al*., 1992). An individual may have a strong preference for one style but, depending on the learning situation, may use a combination of learning styles.

When designing leaning activities, educators should consider the learning styles of students. ELT has the potential to enhance practice skills through modelling, which means students must see lecturers demonstrate techniques and skills in the classroom context. Gitterman (2004) (in Wehbi, 2011:498) avers that "learning is 'caught' not 'taught'". Thus, in the ELT classroom,

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learning activities must be created so that students can become familiar with specific and common situations occurring in the field and can practise possible responses in terms of social work skills and techniques. In arguing for ELT, Wehbi (2011:501) states that the social work classroom "provides a relatively safe space within which to experiment with different ways of being and acting", as opposed to being pressured in the field to act correctly. In terms of learning styles, students learn in their own individualised ways. The new way of teaching thus changes the traditional, passive (and somewhat quiet) classroom to a vocal and active one where students are encouraged to engage, act and voice their opinion.

Experiential learning is particularly suited to social work because of its focus on learning by doing. Since social work is a juxtaposition of theory and practice, learning by doing is especially used in fieldwork education, but also in theory classes for students to be practically involved in their own learning.

3.9 TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

The third theory emerging from social work theory is Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), which is most often associated with Jack Mezirow (Emeritus professor of adult education, Columbia University). TLT has been influenced by two paradigms (Bolton, 2005; Dirkx, 1998, 2000; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1993). This is depicted as follows (Table 3.13):

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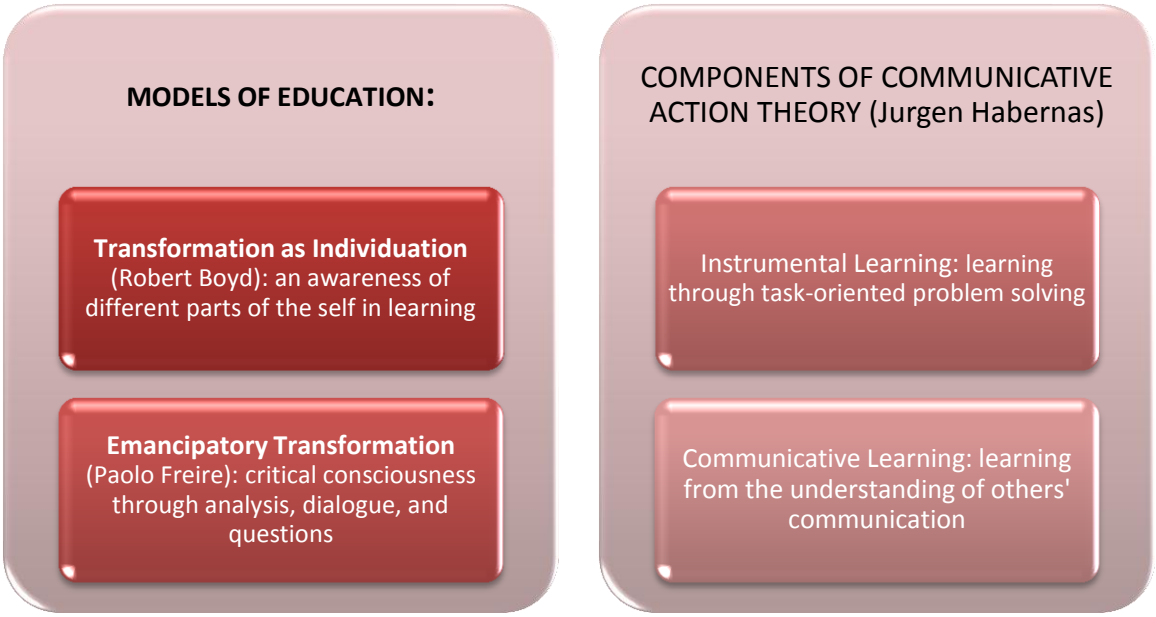
Table 3.13: The influencing paradigms of Transformative learning theory (TLT)



Source: Bolton, 2005; Dirkx, 1998, 2000; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1993

Table 3.13 illustrates the paradigms that have influenced the development of TLT in terms of the transformative characteristics derived from Robert Boyd and Paolo Freire's transformation theories focusing on the self and consciousness (awareness). The learning aspects were derived from communicative action theory emphasising activities and the engagement and communication with others. Mezirow (1997:5) confirms that transformative learning "is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference". Frames of reference describe our reality reflecting the essence of our experiences, for example, our thoughts and feelings, as well as our usual responses and reactions. Mezirow (1997:5) asserts that frames of reference "are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences" and experiences consist of mental (cognitive), action (driven by impulse, desire or resolve) and affective (emotion) parts. Frames of reference are mainly constituted from our social and cultural interactions driven by our primary caregivers.

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There are two dimensions to frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1993) (Table 3.14):

Table 3.14: Dimensions of frames of references

HABITS OF MIND	POINT OF VIEW
• This reflects our routine and customary ways of thinking, feeling and acting that comprise a system of codes and are based on our socio-cultural , emotional and learning environment . • Our habits of mind are more enduring than our points of view.	• The habits of mind we express in a specific point of view which is a collection of our "beliefs, values, judgment, attitude and feeling" that inform our opinions. • Points of view are continually changing as these are dependent on a particular context or events or changeable feelings.

Source: Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1993

Table 3.14 shows the two influences of our frames of reference. Mezirow (1997) argues that we achieve transformative learning when we critically reflect on suppositions or conjectures that underlie our frames of reference. Mezirow (1997:7) importantly contends that "we do not make transformative changes in the way we learn as long as what we learn fits comfortably in our existing frames of reference". Mezirow expounded on two components to reflect on when designing teaching and learning methods, namely, to take into consideration the characteristics of TLT (Table 3.15), and creating an environment conducive to learning. A third component included the learner's responsibility in the learning process (Taylor, 1993).

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Table 3.15: The exposition of the characteristics and roles in TLT

Characteristics of TLT

- **The centrality of experience**: Experience is gained through social interaction.
- **Critical reflection**: Interrogating the authenticity of suppositions that originate from previous experiences.
- **Rational discourse**: This is used when we have need to query the understanding, veracity or relevancy (relating to norms) or genuineness (relating to feelings) underlying the conversation or discussion.

The educator's role

- Have all necessary information for learning
- Not to be pressured to learn and to produce
- Allowing equal opportunity to participate and offer their opinions and viewpoints

The learner's role

- Learning to use their imagination: to be able to delineate problems from diverse viewpoints, to be critically reflective, as well as to be able to fathom the best possible solution in given situation
- Participating in discourse: discourse with others is essential to substantiate the core of one's perception and decision making,

Sources: Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1993.

Table 3.15 shows the transformative qualities of learning in TLT through the roles of the educator and learner juxtaposed with the characteristics of TLT. Mezirow (1997:10) confirms that transformative learning is "learner-centred, participatory and interactive". Proposed classroom teaching methods include learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies and simulations; learning activities include critical incidents, metaphor analysis, concept mapping, consciousness raising, life histories, repertory grids, and participation in social action. The educator functions as a "facilitator and provocateur rather than as an authority on subject matter". Mezirow has provided clear examples of teaching and learning activities and methods that an educator can use in the classroom as well as the facilitative role of the educator.

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However, there are two distinct learning methods in the next section which encapsulate the suggestions for learning methods that have been made in the foregoing discussion on the three teaching approaches.

3.10 SPECIFIC LEARNING METHODS

The learning methods of the aforementioned three approaches converged in the following teaching and learning methods in social work proposed by Sieminski and Seden (2011), which include role play, case studies, group exercises and personal reflective activities. These methods allow opportunities for students to use their own experiences and infuse them with the knowledge of others, in line with Tuchman and Lalane (2011:330), who have argued for "innovative approaches that engage students in active learning to promote critical thinking and the development of skills to analyse and problem solve". Thus, critical and reflective methods, as well as problem-based learning methods, do engage students in 'active learning' and do 'promote critical thinking', as will be seen in the next sections. These two methods have been repeatedly cited as significant in the three teaching and learning approaches discussed in previous sections.

3.10.1 CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE METHODS

Critical and reflective thinking skills underpin all three educational approaches. Krumer-Nevo, Weiss-Gal, and Monnickendam (2009:234) argue that teaching methods and educational programmes must be structured to provide opportunities for students "to comprehend their personal and social privilege (if this is so), to examine their own life experiences, to express their individual and professional ideological standpoints, and to examine the correlation between them and between policies and practice" (cf. Greene, 2005). Osmond and Darlington (2005) aver that reflective thinking emphasises skills that enable a conversation with oneself and with others. It requires being attentive to both the emotional and cerebral aspects of experience. Gould (in Osmond & Darlington, 2005:7-8) contends that "imaginative thought" must be activated in reflection where "linguistic and pictorial images are media through which our individual and collective sense of reality is constructed".

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In their study with social work students on the use of reflective thinking to help students to link theory with their practice, Sieminski and Seden (2011) identified an important learning barrier, namely individual perception of reflectivity. This barrier involves perceiving reflective thinking as self-disclosure and as exposing individual weaknesses. Fook (Sieminski & Seden, 2011) also raised concern about the cultural dimension of critical thinking for some students in terms of cultural taboos on perceptions of self-disclosures in public domain. Emanating from their research, Sieminski and Seden (2011:804) suggest that, in using reflective practice, one should start with interrogating the assessment and intervention followed in the practice by using 'what if' questions as probes. Through this process students "engage with reflection with a degree of detachment …in a non-threatening way" (Sieminski & Seden, 2011:804). Through reflection students learn to scrutinise habitual practices and learn new ways of practice and the supporting theory. Galambos (2009:344) argues that "a successful approach to the enhancement of critical thinking is the creation of a classroom environment that encourages non-judgmental discussion and debate". Osmond & Darlington (2005) suggest three techniques that are helpful for stimulating critical reflection (Table 3.16):

Table 3.16: Techniques for critical reflection

THINKING ALOUD	OBSERVATION	REFLECTIVE RECALL
• The verbal articulation of processes and theoretical perspectives of value	• Using a singular case study of a learning incident for maximum learning	• Recorded practice incidents to provoke classroom discussion

Source: Osmond & Darlington, 2005

Table 3.16 illustrates techniques to encourage critical thinking that are beneficial in learning social work practice and skills, especially in reviewing learning experiences from both a personal and a professional viewpoint. In the next section, the discussion is focused on another method of teaching and learning in social work.

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3.10.2 PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

The second teaching and learning method is problem-based learning (PBL) or enquiry-based learning that has been prevalent in social work classrooms (Teater, 2011). PBL was started as a method in the medical school at McMaster University (Canada) by H.L. Barrows in 1968 (Altshuler & Bosch, 2003; Hartsell & Parker, 2008; Lam *et al.*, 2006; Sable, Larrivee & Gayer, 2001). PBL is linked to the educational philosophy of John Dewey in the 1930s (Hartsell & Parker, 2008; Lam *et al*., 2006) and is also linked to the case study method used in social work, with reference here to Mary Richmond (Hartsell & Parker, 2008; Sable *et al*., 2001). Teater (2011:576) confirms that various social work programmes worldwide are using a mixture of conventional teaching and PBL methods.

The case or scenario is pivotal to PBL and is a means of igniting learning (Lam *et al.*, 2006). Its use in social work is structured around typical incidents in practice (Sable *et al*., 2001; Teater, 2011). PBL cases replicate actual life events by designing unstructured and inconclusive case scenarios which would elicit theoretical knowledge and practice skills (Altshuler & Bosch, 2003; Sable *et al*., 2001). Unstructured case scenarios reflect the following elements:

- Flexible for changing as the case evolves and new data is revealed
- Permitting various viewpoints and beliefs for analysis
- Having a variety of possible solutions

Unstructured case scenarios thus allow students to use existing and new knowledge to fill in the gaps in the case scenarios. Lam *et al*. (2006:105) agree that PBL assists students to "learn how to learn" and "to develop a learning habit that is taken as a key component for lifelong learning". Students work in cooperative small groups and examine the case scenario using their current knowledge base (Lam *et al.*, 2006). Through this method, students become cognisant of their learning needs and where they need to improve in order to be competent. This method also transforms the role of the educator from "lecturer" to "facilitator and supporter" where the "role of expert" is diminished (Lam *et al*., 2006:105). Students develop into autonomous learners with creative, problem solving skills (Altshuler & Bosch, 2003).

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We have reviewed both the critical, reflective and problem-based methods as current in social work education and in concert with the constructivist educational philosophy as exemplified by the three teaching approaches of constructive alignment, experiential learning and transformative learning theories. The ultimate step in the teaching and learning process is assessment and feedback.

3.11 SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT TASKS

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning (Cartney, 2010; Crisp & Lister, 2002). Black (Cartney, 2010) contends that assessment has three main purposes: to support learning; to report achievements; and to fulfil the requirements of public accountability (for example to students, parents, the educational institution, legislators, state educational departments, and accreditation councils or boards) (also see Buchan *et al.*, 2004).

Crisp and Lister (2002) argue that the difficulty experienced in social work teaching and learning is in devising assessment tasks that enhance the skills of reflective and critical learning, as well as show and validate students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Cartney (2010:142) argues though that bias is present "in relation to all methods of assessment".

Crisp and Lister (2002:260) and Cartney (2010) identified common assessment methods used by social work educators (Table 3.17):

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Table 3.17: Assessment tasks undertaken by educators

TASKS	BENEFITS	CRITICISMS
Reflective Tasks	These tasks help students to deal with difficulties in practice to enhance insight and uncover different approaches and options, examples are journals and self-assessments.	Reflective tasks can be time-consuming as they require students to take time to mull over their learning.
Research Tasks	These tasks often are home-based, research-orientated projects which include reviews, autobiographical writing, interviews, executive summaries, proposals and presentations.	Students can be heavily assisted by others and the lecturer may not be aware of the actual learning that took place.
Case Studies	Case studies enhance theory and practice integration as a variety of curricula topics is included in an integrative manner.	Marking can be a challenge because of the lack of consistency (standardisation) of responses.
Written Tasks	Essays mostly assess theoretical learning and the challenge is assessing the affective and behavioural outputs of learning.	Essays are viewed as highly subjective assessments amongst markers. The issue of plagiarism is particularly common in essay writing.
Portfolios / Presentations	Portfolios are used to record students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in the module. Students assess their "strengths, opportunities, obstacles and challenges" (Crisp & Lister, 2002:264) and reflect a summary of their learning.	A drawback also reported here is the poor consistency of assessment results amongst markers; obscure instructions that lead to cumbersome portfolios; and it is a time-consuming task.
Examinations (or class tests)	These are used as formative rather than summative tasks. The focus is on testing acquired knowledge but not necessarily of problem-solving skills or practice knowledge.	These assessments are often based on rote learning and regurgitate material.

Examples of assessments largely led by educators are described in Table 3.17. Students are included in their own assessment.

Crisp and Lister (2002:265) aver that self-assessment enhances "students' capacities to assess themselves to make judgements about their learning and to evaluate what they have learnt". Facilitating this type of learning may involve using structured measures developed by social work lecturers themselves or less formal measures such as reflective diaries, journals or learning logs. Through self-assessment activities, students develop metacognitive abilities through

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becoming more attentive to their own thoughts. However, self-assessments may either form part of a bigger task assessed by the lecturer or may be a task where the lecturer has to review all self-assessments in order to formalise the mark and it bring in line with the assessment criteria and university assessment policies. A distinct area of concern also occurs regarding the level of reliability of self-assessment. The student's high or low self-esteem may determine the estimation of competence rather than competency in itself.

Self-assessment requires careful planning and preparation, though, as well as ongoing monitoring. The following are pertinent considerations (Cartney, 2010; Crisp & Lister, 2002) (Figure 3.12):

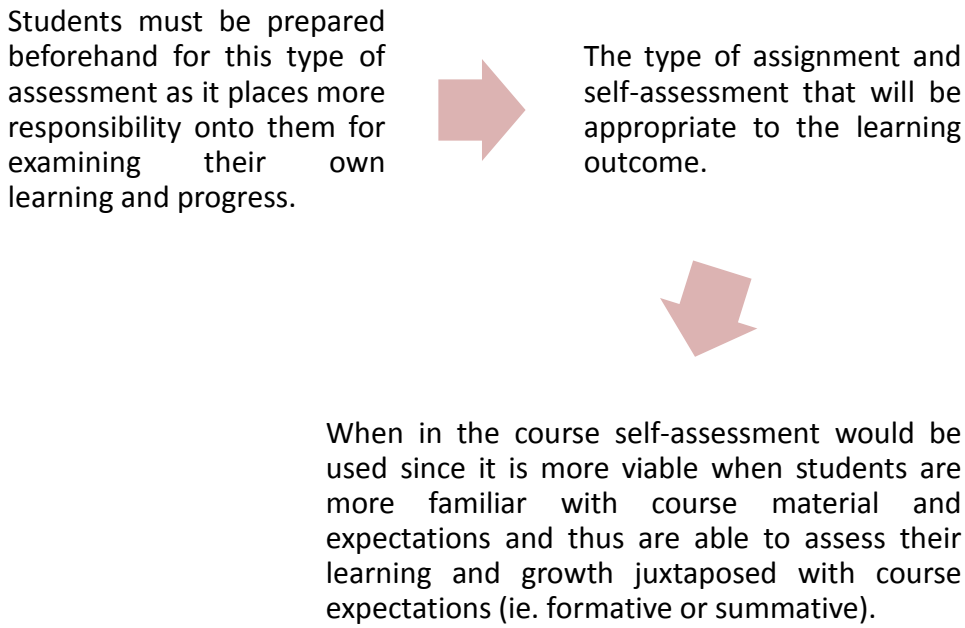

Figure 3.12: Considerations for student self-assessment
Source: Cartney, 2010; Crisp & Lister, 2002

These considerations ensure the implementation of student self-assessment. Student-led assessment is relatively new to higher education and thus an extensive body of knowledge has not yet been established. It is clear that there is a place for both assessment types in student learning.

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3.12 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL WORK

Part II explicated an overview of specific educational approaches deemed pertinent for social work teaching and learning. Constructive alignment was seen as particularly appropriate for the SA context in view of current OBE application in higher education. Experiential and transformative learning theories provide progressive teaching and learning methods for the classroom context. Critical, reflective and problem-based methods emanated from these theories. Lastly, this part has presented the assessment in use by social work educators.

In Part III the focus shifts to the context of South Africa and the development and current practices within social work education in SA specifically.

PART 111: SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Parts I and II established the context for social work in SA, following universal social work components to general social work education. The aim of Part III is to narrow the focal lens onto social work education in South Africa in keeping with the overall objective of the chapter. Part III illustrates the development of social work and social work education on the African continent, to compare and contrast it with the development of social work in SA. The particular purpose of this sequence is to highlight South Africa's link with the continent and not to perpetuate the disconnection between SA and the continent. The *University of the Western Cape* is also showcased as an exemplar of apartheid educational policy, and to contextualise this research study.

3.13 SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

The establishment and development of social work in South Africa kick started the development of social work in other countries in Africa. Colonialism played a huge role in both the origin of social work and in social work education in Africa (Mwansa, 2011; Rwomire and Raditlhokwa, 1996). The negative consequences of colonialisation, such as economic exploitation; the

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destruction of natural resources; and the annihilation of cultural and social traditions have been discussed sufficiently (Gair *et al*., 2005). The (inadvertent) role of missionaries in colonialisation in terms of exposing the wealth and vulnerabilities of the people with whom they were involved to their home countries is the negative side of the coin. The positive side is their role in initiating some forms of social welfare service, such as "schools, training institutions, clinics and hospitals" (Mwansa, 2011:5). The establishment of schools of social work in Africa is depicted in the following manner (Healy & Link, 2012; Mwansa, 2011) (Figure 3.13):

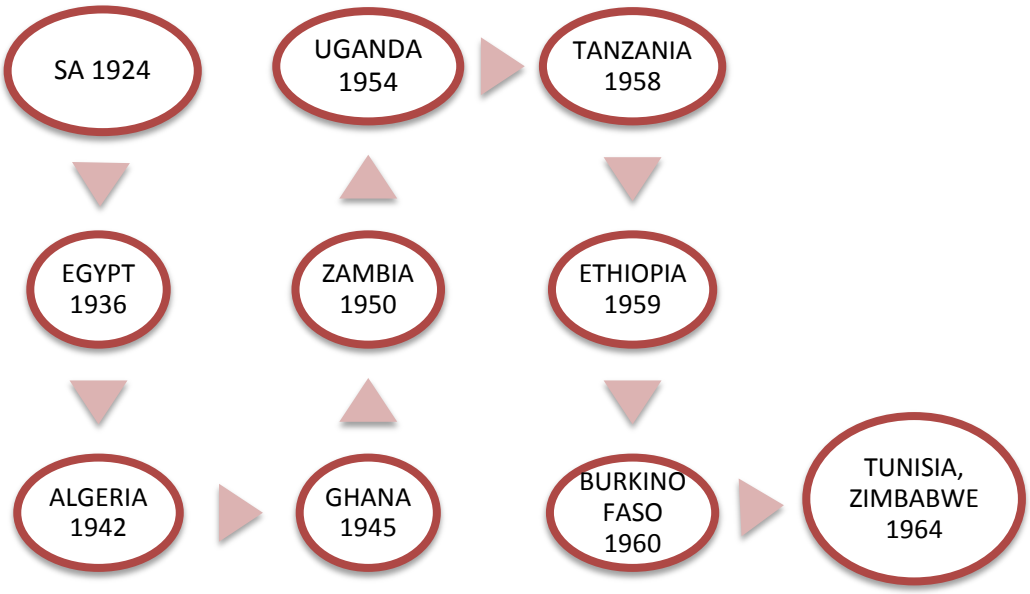

Figure 3.13: The emergence of schools of social work in Africa
Source: Healy & Link, 2012; Mwansa, 2011

Figure 3.13 illustrates the development of the early schools of social work, starting with South Africa in 1924. The establishment of social work and schools of social work was hampered by two factors in particular: firstly, inadequate infrastructure to fulfil the demands of increasing urbanisation and modernisation; and secondly, social work and social work education were extraneous to African traditions and lifestyle, like the notion of Batho Pele, (meaning informal help to others by others). Mwansa (2011:12) explicates the traditional beliefs in the following way:

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> In the African concept of community, the group or collective is emphasized using resources such as 'sangomas' (witchdoctors), diviners, herbalists, traditional healers, uncles, tribal leaders, rainmakers, priests, political party leaders.

African social work education became entrenched in Western beliefs and philosophy, with a strong focus on the individual (Mwansa, 2011; Rwomire & Raditlhokwa, 1996). This anomaly also occurred in Australia (for example), where social workers had advocated for transformed curricula and approaches where "indigenous Australians are more visible" (Gair *et al*., 2005:180). Their experiences of colonialisation mirror the experiences of indigenous (first nations) peoples across the world. Thus Mupedziswa (2001:285) avers that, from the 1970s "a clarion call has continuously sounded" for social work in Africa to remove its curative mode and adopt contextually relevant intervention in order to focus on the needs of masses of people on the continent. A good place to start is with social work education. Increasing indigenous knowledge in social work education will necessitate the following key activities (Gair *et al*., 2005:180):

- Re-examining the values, principles, and focus on individualisation, self-determination, self-help, and issues of confidentiality, as these exclude cultural and community values and beliefs.
- The valuing of traditional resources and helping activities and processes.

Research is thus vital to establish indigenous and appropriate ways to address the abject poverty, violence and war characterising most African countries. Many local interventions are not researched, captured and debated, as a consequence of low research output. Funded research is prescribed by donor objectives that do not necessarily relate to localised needs (Mwansa, 2011). In addition to research focusing on indigenous knowledges, this point further underscores the value of the current study's focus on the particular learning needs of social work students. The specific development of social work education in South Africa is explicated in the next section.

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3.14 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Colonisation (meaning settler communities or trading posts) and colonialisation (meaning the ruling of indigenous peoples) forged deep footprints in the development of social work in Africa. Social work in SA has had similar historical pathways, with the distinctive difference wrought firstly by racial segregation and discrimination (through colonialisation) and then through legislative segregation (through apartheid) in 1948. Thus we see that social welfare and social work were established from the 1920s as a result of poverty experienced in white communities in South Africa (Brown & Neku, 2005; Drower, 2002; Gray & Mazibuko, 2002; Potgieter, 1998; Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2009). To advance this discussion, historical events leading to the establishment of social work in SA (UWC is emphasised in this regard), and the early development of social work training are explored.

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) confirm that the establishment of South African universities mirrored the institutionalisation of colonialism and apartheid of entrenching social engineering. Thus social work initially was a white profession in terms of apartheid legislation of education and job reservation. A limited number of Coloured and Black students who wished to study social work were compelled, as a result of apartheid policy, to study under a special permit at white educational institutions (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000). This changed in 1959 through the Extension of University Education Act, which enabled the National Party government to create “separate universities along racial lines” (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2011:194; Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The first school of social work for Black students was in 1945 at the Jan Hofmeyr School in Johannesburg (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002; Mwansa, 2011). The establishment of UWC for Coloured students occurred in 1960.

3.14.1 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE IN CONTEXT

The University of the Western Cape (a Historically Black University) used to be at the receiving end of negative comments regarding its academic status and reputation stemming from being called “bush college” by proponents of the established white universities (Mamphiswana &

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Noyoo, 2000). The timeline for the establishment of social work at UWC is shown as follows (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000; UWC history, undated) (Figure 3.14):

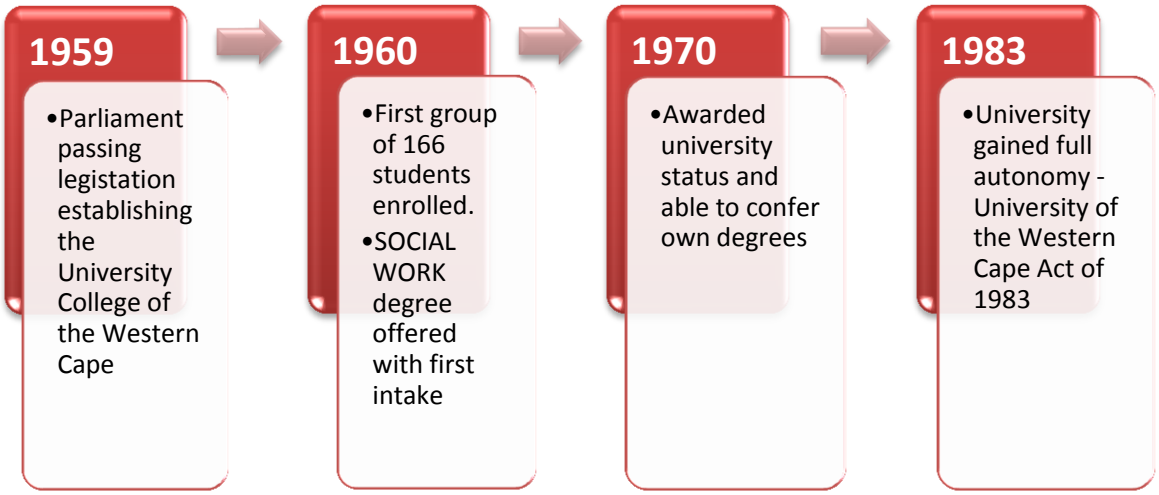

Figure 3.14: Timeline for establishment of social work at UWC

The timeline shows the twin establishments of both the University and the social work programme simultaneously. The political underpinning of the university's existence is clear to see, being at the time an Apartheid creation for Coloured people.

3.14.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK COURSE

The Carnegie Commission and the Afrikaans Women's Movement spearheaded the establishment of social work education in the 1920s for white students only. The first Diploma in social work was offered in SA in 1924 (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002). The first social work training school developed from the child guidance clinic at the Transvaal University College (called this from 1906-1910; then called the University of Witwatersrand; now the University of Johannesburg). The time frame for the establishment of other schools is as follows (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002:198) (Figure 3.15):

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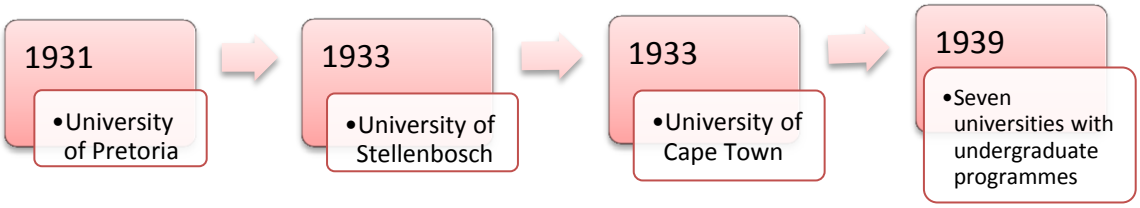

Figure 3.15: The establishment of schools of social work
Source: Gray & Mazibuko, 2002

From Figure 3.16 it is clear that ten universities were established in quick succession up to 1939. Two national conferences that took place further entrenched the place of social work education in South Africa (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002) (Figure 3.16):

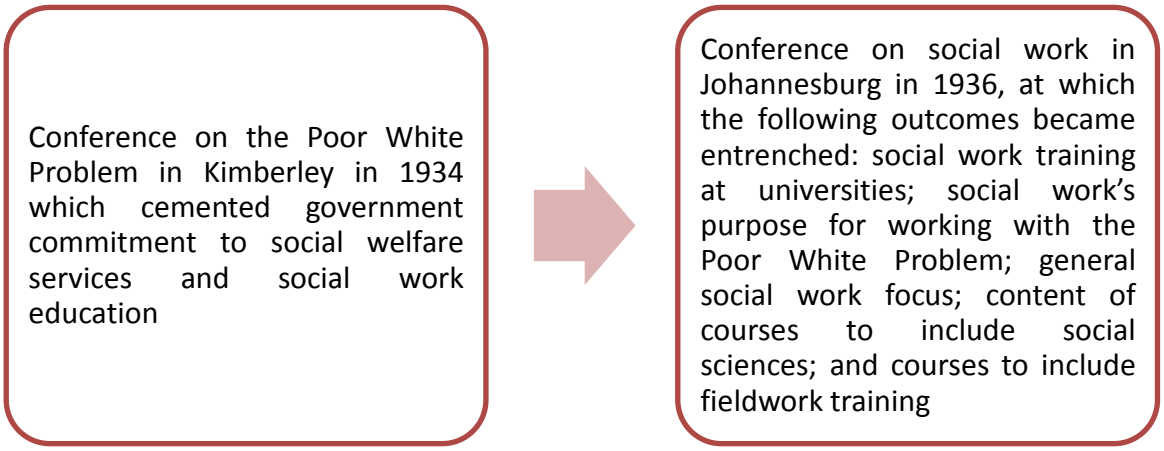

Figure 3.16: Significant conferences entrenching social work education in South Africa
Source: Gray & Mazibuko, 2002

The first social work school for black South Africans was the Jan Hofmeyr School in Johannesburg, which opened its doors on 15 January 1945 under the leadership of Rev. Ray Philips. The School was funded by the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and Jan Hofmeyr, an Afrikaner philanthropist who had been the Minister of Finance and Education under Jan Smuts as South African Prime Minister in 1939. This school was compelled to close in 1960 as a result of African homeland policy and the black homeland universities such as the Fort Hare University came into being (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002). By the late 1960s, social work schools were established in 21 HEIs, but access was restricted in accordance with racist guidelines in the

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stipulations of apartheid policy; possible exceptions were the Universities of Cape Town, Fort Hare, the Western Cape, Natal, and Witwatersrand (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002).

Mwansa (2011) contends that social work in SA was significant as a regulatory means to maintain the dominant social order. According to Mckendrick (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2011; Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004; Hochfeld, 2010), 1965 heralded the occurrence of two events that impacted on the further development of social work education in SA.

Firstly, a study undertaken by Annette Muller into social work education produced several key findings that had long-term implications for social work in South Africa:

- Professional education was generic in nature but strongly emphasised casework;
- Graduates prepared for remedial and restorative work.
- South African standards coincided with the standards of education in Britain and the Netherlands, which then opened up serious concerns for its appropriateness for the SA context. (See also Smith, 2008).
- It was recommended that the social work degree be extended from three to four years.

Secondly, the National Welfare Act came into existence in 1965 and impacted on social work education in two ways (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004) (Table 3.18):

Table 3.18: The impact of the National Welfare Act (1965) on social work

The Act required all social workers and social work educators to be registered, thus enabling the term 'registered social worker' to be legislated and protected.	The Act legislated that social work candidates had to complete prescribed courses in social work, sociology and psychology.

Source: Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000:24) have argued that the content of social work curricula in SA was completely focused on preparing students to be "highly skilled therapists" in order to intervene in "first world types of social problems". Thus social workers were trained to work

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mostly on an individual basis (case workers) and to be managers. In keeping with these outcomes, the (continued) inclusion of elective modules such as psychology and sociology maintained this narrow and traditional approach to addressing social problems (cf. Drower, 2002). Drower (2002:9) especially noted that "a dogged commitment to psychotherapeutic intervention characterised social work in SA during the 1980s and were reflected in the disunity, immobilization and disorientation of the profession at that time".

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) contend that the apartheid government structures did not take full responsibility for its black citizens (only when the family could not do so, government would step in), which was in contrast with government's support of white citizens. Adjacent to the established formal social welfare and social work services, other necessary services were being organised and developed from grassroots level to fill the gap left by formalised and remedial services (Bak, 2004; Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000). The best known self-help organisation was the *stokvel*, a form of support containing elements of a credit union where women contributed to a common fund. In addition, many burial societies emerged that, in addition to seeing to burials, were also forms of support through subscription (Brown & Neku, 2005; Potgieter, 1998).

These historical events were pivotal to the emergence of social work practice and training. Further historic events unfolded after the fall of apartheid and the advent of freedom for the majority of South Africans in 1994.

3.15 SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION POST 1994

Social work in South Africa cannot be separated from colonialism and apartheid and the legacy of these two historical events (Spolander *et al*., 2011; Smith, 2008); even though apartheid laws have been removed from statutes, South Africans continue to experience the aftermath. Smith (2008) has noted that South Africa was still characterised by extreme inequality and racial bias, with poverty still afflicting the majority of the black population, living in abject poverty under harsh and depleted living conditions while the majority white population still enjoying first-world conditions with high standards of living (Bak, 2004; Drower, 2002; Mamphiswana &

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Noyoo, 2000). This section has two components pivotal to social work education post 1994, namely developmental social work, and the structure of social work training programmes.

3.15.1 DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WORK

Sewpaul and Lombard, (2004) contend that the White Paper for Social Welfare in 1997 linked social work education with democratic principles and unified public goals. Bak (2004) confirms that SA adopted the developmental approach and that it was appropriate for prevailing structural poverty and large-scale unemployment. In addition, the fiscal implications for adopting an institutional welfare approach were prohibitive. The White Paper derived much from SA-born James Midgley, who initiated the notion of developmental social welfare as a mechanism of social development (Bak, 2002; Gray & Mazibuko, 2002). The relevance for the SA context is that social development links the support of human wellbeing to economic development.

Developmental social welfare involves a synthesis of socio-economic interventions and responsive social policies fundamental to achieving intrinsic transformation in lifestyles and conditions under which people live (Mamphisa & Noyoo, 2000). These authors emphasise that a responsive social work service would only emerge from education strongly rooted in South African values and the traditions of its diverse cultures and beliefs. In concert with this notion, the White Paper has embedded the use of *Ubuntu* ('people are people through other people') which extols mutuality and reciprocity on all levels (Mamphisa & Noyoo, 2000). The developmental approach views welfare provision as investing in human potential as opposed to sapping available capital (Potgieter, 1998) and can be defined as follows: The developmental approach endorses a people-centred philosophy promoting active participation in planning and service delivery with equal and equitable access and distribution of resources addressed by intersectoral teamwork and intervention (Potgieter, 1998). This approach "led to profound changes for the social work profession, not least its position within a developmental social welfare system" (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002:191).

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A criticism, though, was that the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) was not specific about how developmental social welfare and social work should be implemented (Bak, 2004). Government did not award sufficient funds for the implementation of this new system of welfare. According to Bak (2004), 90% of the national social welfare budget in SA is spent on social security, with the remaining 10% designated for social welfare programmes and institutions. This has left development social welfare, particularly in the NGO sector, floundering financially and hamstrung in the implementation of their mission. In the next sub-section the structure of the social work curriculum is discussed.

3.15.2 THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Social work education embraced the ideas and philosophy of OBE and the NQF with the establishment and registration of the social work Standards Generating Body (SGB) on 12 April 2001, which resulted in the transformation of social work curricula (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The SGB for social work submitted five qualifications for registration with the NQF, namely the Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work; the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW); Structured Master of Social Work; Research Master of Social Work; and Doctor of Social Work (Hochfeld, 2010).

The Bachelor of Social Work course followed the format of ‘whole qualifications’, rather than ‘unit standards’, which would promote “holistic and coherent learning” (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004:549). Whole qualifications denote the knowledge and skills of the learner at the end of the learning period when the qualification has been achieved (at the exit level). These learning outcomes are thus known as exit level outcomes. Exit level outcomes structured the BSW degree to extend over 27 exit level outcomes over the wide range of social work knowledge and understanding, skills and ethics (Hochfeld, 2010). These attempts at standardisation of the SA social work curriculum have been criticised as reflecting modernist, technical-positivist rationality. There are several advantages to it, however, most of all it represents an attempt to redress historical socio-educational imbalances and makes explicit the learning requirements of the qualification (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004).

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The content of the BSW became standardised across all HEIs offering social work qualifications. All social work qualifications have theory and fieldwork components across the four-year degree. The 27 ELOs have been summarised by Hochfeld (2010) to indicate the key focus areas Table 3.19):

Table 3.19: Key focus areas in the social work curriculum post 1994

SOCIAL WORK SKILLS	SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	SOCIAL WORK VALUES AND ETHICS
• Social work helping process • Social work research • Social work supervision and administration	• Structural oppression, exclusion and other social issues • Human behaviour and human needs • Social welfare policies and other legislation	• Human diversity • Application of values in the helping process

Table 3.19 provides the exposition of the key components of the South African social work curriculum after 1994. The 27 exit level outcomes cover most, if not all, the content that a social work programme should cover, but the implementation, according to Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000), has revealed a number of anomalies which contradict developmental social work and government's poverty reduction strategies (Table 3.20):

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Table 3.20: Gaps and deficiencies in the social work curriculum

FIELDWORK PLACEMENTS	• Placements are urban-biased • Insufficient exposure to rural poverty
SOCIAL WORKERS' ROLE IN SUPERVISION	• The reluctance of social workers to undertake student supervision • Social workers do not value the contribution of students
COMMUNITY WORK	• Insufficient focus on community work in social work education • Indifference of social workers towards community work
STRUCTURAL ISSUES	• Insufficient focus on dealing with structural issues e.g. mass poverty, poor housing, and malnutrition

Source: Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000

Table 3.20 highlights the deficiencies in the social work curriculum in relation to developmental social work. The four areas remain relevant and all point to the key role of sourcing appropriate social work agencies for fieldwork training. The last two areas may take place in the class, but the gap is in finding commensurate fieldwork placements.

Post 1994 saw many positive changes to the structure of the social work curriculum, such as streamlining the curricula across the many social work schools in South Africa and enabling all programmes to construct their curricula in accordance with the 27 exit level outcomes. The criticism against social work not linking more strongly with developmental social work is both a theoretical and practicum issue.

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3.16 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Prior to 1994, social work was managed along racial lines in line with the Apartheid policy of racial segregation. The establishment of UWC occurred within this context, and so did social work at UWC, whose students were mainly drawn from the then Coloured communities with mainly disadvantaged backgrounds. Post 1994, all institutions and social work programmes were compelled to transform. The UWC social work curriculum was transformed in accordance with the requisite 27 exit level outcomes and its student population was still drawn largely from socio-economically disadvantaged conditions. While the South African social work curriculum forms part of the global social work community and in this way is relevant, concerted gaps remain in terms of its overall pertinence to South African conditions.

3.17 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

Social work is a complex profession with diverse interpretations of its vision, mission (purpose), values and ethics, knowledge base, methods and practice. Although all these form part of the cadre of common features, it is by no means uncontested, hence the debate around the feasibility of globalisation and universalism in social work. The debate is juxtaposed with the notions of 'professional imperialism' and indigenisation. There is general consensus that a balance between indigenous and the more Westernised approaches to social work education and practice would be appropriate. Falling into this 'balance' would be the kinds of knowledge, methods and curricula that would be relevant for localised needs and that could co-exist with other forms of knowledge.

To assuage the feelings of social workers may have about the underrated and under-appreciated status of social work, it is worthwhile to explore (and reconfirm) the roots of social work in terms of the worldviews of knowledge espoused by Babbie and Mouton (2007) and Mouton (1996), locating social work in World I and II in particular. The further rooting of social work in an established knowledge framework has created a recognisable knowledge base rooted in science.

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The knowledge base should then inform the content of social work curricula alongside local and indigenous knowledges and needs. This progressive stance presupposes the 'unlearning' of traditional teaching methods and embracing more constructivist teaching and learning practices. Experiential and transformative learning theories and constructive alignment are from the stable of constructivist educational approaches. Constructive alignment, as proposed by Biggs (1984), is designed to meet the requirements of OBE in SA (but was criticised particularly in Chapter 2 as it did not support learning outcomes, standardisation and predetermined learning).

SA supported the OBE approach (Chapter Two) and the long and difficult path to democracy and freedom and, thus, the path to OBE, was reviewed. The apartheid legacy of abject poverty and extensive unemployment are focus areas of social work education and practice. It is evident that social work education has a role to play in developmental social work and in providing impetus and value to its implementation. If not, the ethos of the White Paper is negated and the Bill of Rights in the SA Constitution is not given sufficient credence.

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CHAPTER 4

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: COPING MEASURES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1. INTRODUCTION

> Social workers who do not feel valued, or perceive that the profession itself is somewhat not valued by society, may be potentially at risk of experiencing negative emotional reactions as part of the countertransference they experience in their helping relationships with traumatised service users. Social workers are often attached to social work as a result of their own unresolved personal conflicts and a need to resolve these through actively helping others.
>
> (Gibbons, Murphy & Joseph, 2011:22)

Gibbons *et al*. (2011) reveal important factors impacting on social workers and their reactions within the helping relationship. Social workers who feel personally devalued often enter the profession (or social work studies) having experienced childhood adversity. These experiences act as catalyst to their emotional reactions and may form the basis for countertransference behaviours in their interventions with their clients.

Olson and Royse (2006) confirm that social work students report high prevalence of early-life adverse circumstances, particularly in family life. Research has also found that social work students tend to be more prone than other students to view their past adverse experiences as key to their choice of profession. During the 1980s, these emotional reactions and countertransference behaviours gave rise to the 'wounded healer' notion, which suggests that "mental health professions generally attract individuals who are seeking to resolve their own personal needs or distress" (Olson & Royse, 2006:32). The converse of this is also true, in that the wounded healer notion also denotes a benevolent view. In terms of this view, previous adverse experiences can also enlighten and prepare the helper for the depth of the issue. This view highlights two characteristics, namely (elevated) understanding and compassion (for others).

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The purpose of this chapter is to explicate and discuss adverse childhood experiences and coping strategies in professional learning particularly, and in teaching and learning in social work, generally. This discussion is vital to the study as the investigation revolved around adverse childhood experiences of social work students; professional learning experiences; and their coping strategies.

The chapter is structured into three main parts to delineate essential parts of the discussion: Part I deconstructs the descriptive elements of adverse childhood experiences and explores the inadvertent and positive spinoff that individuals may gain having endured these challenging experiences; Part II scrutinises the context of professional learning, focusing specifically on the helper and the helping; and Part III uncovers specific learning areas necessary for professional identity and competency.

PART 1: ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND COPING MEASURES

Childhood and adolescence are viewed as the most developmentally sensitive or vulnerable phases during the life cycle. Adverse experiences that may occur during these phases therefore are particularly harrowing and long lasting for individuals. Part I consists of two sections: the first involves deconstructing adverse childhood experiences (ACES) (section 4.2) in the form of explicating its descriptive elements and exploring the impact on the wellbeing of persons who have had adverse experiences; and the second focuses on reviewing coping measures in the form of promotive and protective factors (section 4.3) commonly used by those who have confronted or endured ACEs. These two sections are vital in understanding the role of ACEs as it scaffolds the discussion on the role that ACEs could play in social work teaching and learning (Part III).

4.2 DECONSTRUCTING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

This study hinges on the adverse childhood experiences of social work students. It is thus vital that the notion of adverse childhood experiences be deconstructed, so that the elements can be clarified for later analysis and comparison with research findings. This deconstruction will take

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place in terms of assessing the descriptive elements and the positive outcomes that often do occur as a result of enduring adverse experiences.

4.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Hinnen, Sanderman and Sprangers (2009) contend that positive childhood attachment is essential for positive adult adjustment. They assert that persons assimilate childhood experiences that revolve around their connections with primary caregivers and give rise to emotional and perceptual images (mental models) which inform the person's "expectations, perceptions and behaviors throughout life" (Hinnen *et al*., 2009:11). These images represent the self in association with others and inform the internal working model which is assumed to be the means through which the effect of childhood experiences persists into adulthood.

Personal struggles in one's adult years often reveal adverse experiences that occurred during childhood. Adverse experiences refer to negative incidents that have occurred and are experienced by the individual as negative or traumatising, depending on the severity of the particular incident and the impact felt by the individual (based on the study on ACEs in Dube *et al*., 2003). Thus, the event need not be viewed by others as particularly harrowing or disastrous enough to have a traumatic effect on the person, because trauma is a personal judgment (Wade & Schenck, 2012). The impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on adults in later life is a major research area (Majer *et al*., 2010; Schilling, Aseltine & Gore, 2007). ACEs such as recurrent child abuse or exposure to family violence have an insidious effect on children. Even though these kinds of incidents are often kept secret, they nonetheless wreak havoc on the child's emotional state and neural pathways as a result of "fight or flight responses" (Anda *et al*., 2006:180; Dirkx, 2008; Perry, 2006).

In an endeavour to bridge the gap between childhood adversity and negative consequences in later life, the ACEs study, a monumental research project with 17 000 participants, was undertaken by Felitti and Anda (both medical doctors) from 1995-1997 (Brown *et al*., 2010). According to Felitti and Anda, adverse childhood experiences include any of the conditions in

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the family (household) before age 18 years (Anda *et al.*, 2006; Brown *et al.*, 2010; Ness, 2009) that are indicated in Figure 4.1:

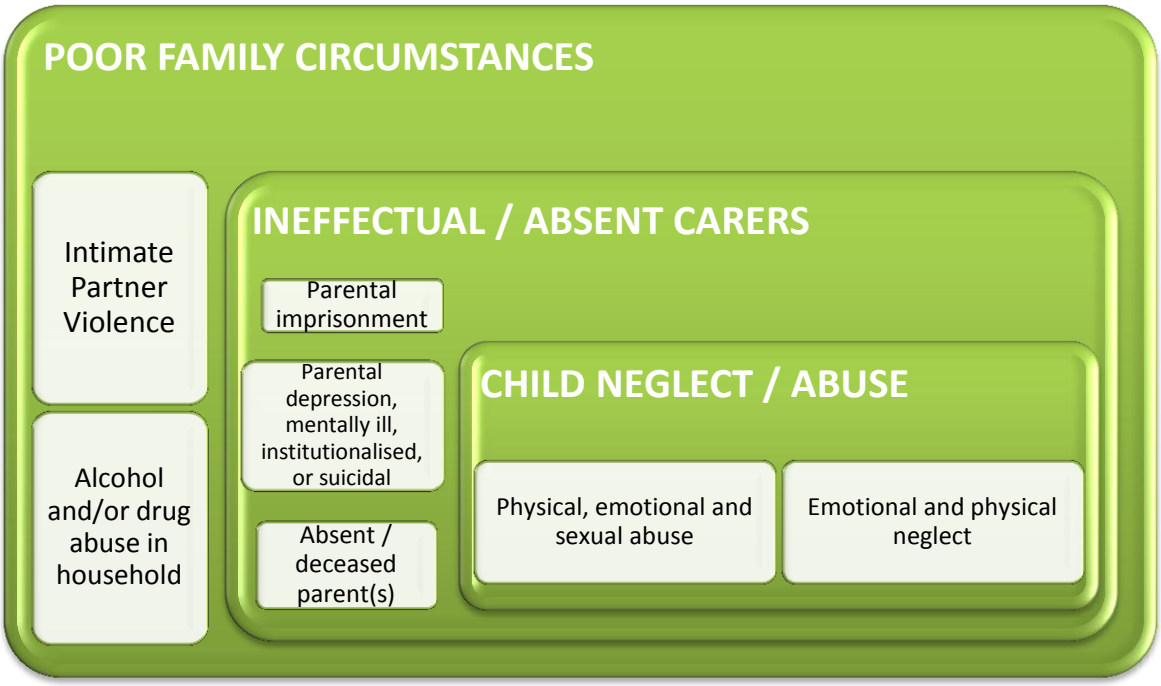

Figure 4.1: Description of ACEs
Sources: Anda et al., 2006; Brown et al., 2010; Ness, 2009

Figure 4.1 describes the three main factors in ACEs as identified in the study by Anda and Felitti (Anda *et al.*, 2006; Brown *et al.*, 2010; Ness, 2009). These factors focused on family and household incidents and did not focus on adverse conditions within the environment (community). In the South African context, this is a necessary and vital component because South Africa has a huge poverty problem, with ever increasing unemployment, violence and crime (Clowes, Lazarus & Ratele, 2010; Harmse, Blaauw & Schenck, 2009). The negative consequences on family wellbeing are well documented (see section 4.2.1.2 below). A more comprehensive and relevant description is therefore proffered (Table 4.1):

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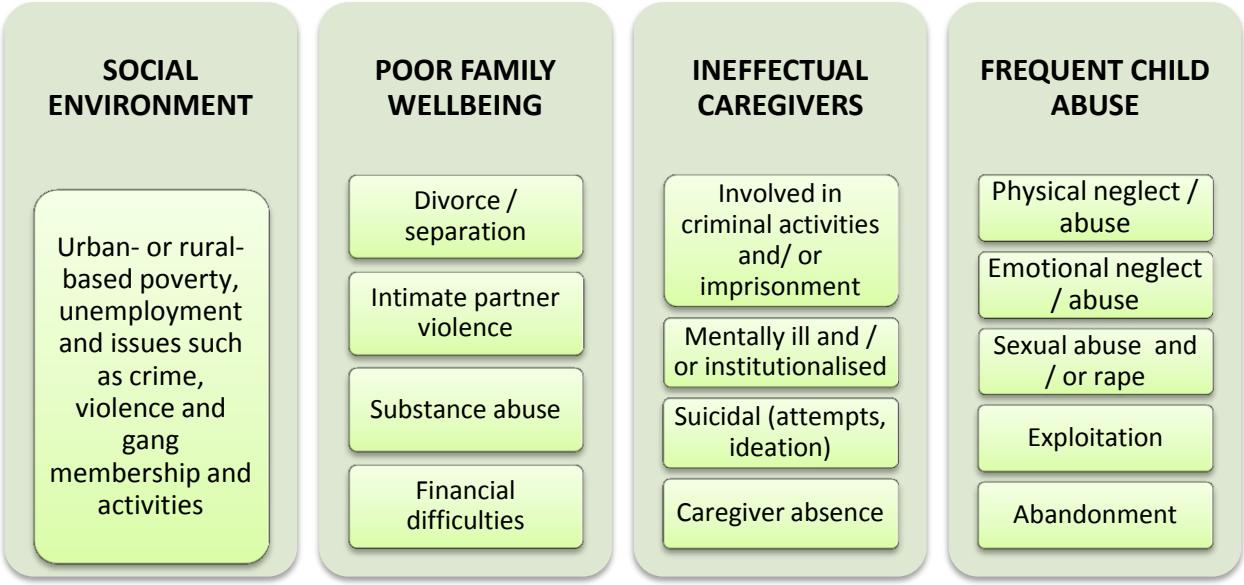
Table 4.1: Relevant descriptive elements of ACEs



Source: Brown et al., 2010; Dykes, 2012; Ness, 2009; Schilling et al., 2007; Taylor, 2010

Table 4.1 illustrates four main factors and elements of ACEs that provide a holistic description of the difficult home and social circumstances that individuals may experience which are especially relevant to the context of South Africa, based on the original description by Felitti and Anda. The inclusion of the social environment becomes more relevant to the impact of the broader structural and socio-political context in which we all live and which has a profound effect on our living conditions. These elements also include rural circumstances and thus are not solely urban-biased. The four factors from Table 4.1 that impact on children's wellbeing will be further discussed.

4.2.1.1 Social Environment

Social environment (context) refers to social characteristics such as demographic, socio-economic, macroeconomic and political aspects, and their impact on citizens as communities, groups or individuals (Adimora & Schoenbach, 2005; Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003). Schilling *et al*. (2007) confirm that, in terms of their research within the USA context, the majority of youth from poor and challenging communities enter adulthood with significant difficulties from their past. Poverty and resource deprivation have been associated with socio-emotional challenges such as depression, anxiety and behavioural difficulties. Low income and/or unemployment are

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risk factors linked to poverty-stricken circumstances. A poor social environment can have a direct influence on family wellbeing which, in turn, can be symptomatic of the social environment.

4.2.1.2 Poor Family Wellbeing

Family wellbeing is viewed as the major indicator associated with an individual's sense of contentment and fulfilment (known as subjective wellbeing) (Dolan, Peasgood & White, 2008; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004), consisting of different areas of wellbeing, for example physical, social, economic and psychological (Walsh, 2012; Wollny, Apps & Henricson, 2010). Four elements are focused on particularly:

(i) Poor family relationships are often reflected in high divorce rates and subsequent re-partnering and blended/step families (Brown, 2010).

(ii) Intimate partner violence (IPV) impacted severely on children, manifesting especially in serious emotional and behavioural problems (Graham-Bermann *et al*., 2009; Owen, Thompson & Kaslow, 2005). IPV is often interrelated to other social issues such as poverty and other types of violence, for example child abuse and community violence (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2007; Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

(iii) Substance abuse is a key risk factor in poor developmental outcomes for children (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2007). Children whose mothers use substances are more likely to endure physical, academic and socio-emotional difficulties (Christoffersen & Soothill, 2003; Conners *et al.*, 2004) whereas fathers who abuse substances are more likely to suffer with behavioural as well as emotional difficulties (Fals-Stewart *et al*., 2004). In cases where both parents abuse alcohol, children are more likely to be physically abused and neglected, which may lead to foster care (Christoffersen & Soothill, 2003; Kumpfer & Fowler, 2007).

(iv) Insufficient economic resources, in particular, place severe pressure on parents in meeting the financial and material needs of family members. These stressors impact on family wellbeing since family members' interactions and communications with one another are seriously impaired

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(Dolan *et al*., 2008; Taylor, 2010). Taylor (2010) also confirmed that a major risk factor contributing to adolescents developing poor emotional wellbeing was their exposure to negative environmental conditions, such as financial difficulties (Taylor, 2010).

Poor family wellbeing is a strong indicator of childhood adversity and unhappiness whereby children's lives can be typified by violence, abuse and deprivation. In the next descriptive element of ACEs the focus will be on those responsible for providing appropriate care.

4.2.1.3 Ineffectual caregivers

Effective caregiving involves emotional supportiveness; setting boundaries; and consistent and responsive disciplining which are related to positive educational, social, emotional and cognitive developmental outcomes for children (DeVore & Ginsburg, 2005; Winsler, Madigan & Aquilino, 2005). Family stressors impact on parental discipline and care in terms of being either severely or overly disciplining or inconsistently or negligibly disciplining, showing too much or too little care of and caring towards family members. Poor parenting is typified by minimal affection and emotional sustenance and affirmation; poor interaction and communication; and conflictual relations (Taylor, 2010). There are four elements of importance in ineffectual parenting:

(i) Parental criminal behaviour and imprisonment is a risk factor for a child's behavioural difficulties, child offending, drug abuse and school problems as a result of parental separation, stigma and financial problems because of incarceration (Murray & Farrington, 2008).

(ii) Mental illness has been cited as a serious factor in poor outcomes for children (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2007; Graham-Bermann *et al*., 2009), especially as it becomes more probable that children would experience lack of sufficient support, care, and parentification (see section 4.2.1.4 (iv)) (Aldridge, 2006; Vostanis *et al*., 2006).

(iii) Parental suicidal ideation and attempts are strongly associated with their children's suicidal behaviour (Brent & Mann, 2005; Geulayov *et al.*, 2004; Goodwin, Beautrais & Fergusson, 2004; Fergusson, Beautrais & Horwood, 2003). However, maternal suicidal behaviour is linked with

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increased self-harm and suicide attempts by children (Geulayov *et al.*, 2004; Kuramoto *et al.*, 2010).

(iv) Caregiver absence is associated with feelings of desertion and stress in children that may lead to the risk of behavioural and psychological problems (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004). Father absence particularly increased boys' aggressive behaviour, use of substances and contact with law enforcement (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004), and girls' risk for early sexual activity and pregnancy (Ellis *et al.*, 2003).

There were four key elements that predisposed caregivers to providing ineffective care giving to children. Some of these elements are beyond their control, for example having a mental illness, but there are elements that fall within individual decision making. In the next discussion the focus is on the epitome of childhood trauma.

4.2.1.4 Frequent child abuse

Child abuse is a major factor in child mortality, as well as in physical and emotional injury which have long-lasting effects on the child's mental health and behaviour, for instance regarding substance abuse, especially in girls; risky sexual activities; weight problems; and criminal offences (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009a). Child abuse also leads to lower levels of education and poor economic prospects (Currie & Widom, 2010). Five types of child abuse behaviours are pertinent:

(i) Physical and emotional abuse are both strongly associated with mental health issues (Bierer *et al.*, 2003; Norman *et al.*, 2012; Springer *et al.*, 2007). Physical abuse is also linked with substance use, suicidal behaviour, risky sexual behaviours with the resultant sexually transmitted diseases (Norman *et al*., 2012). In addition to mental health issues, emotional abuse also leads to problems with self-esteem and self-efficacy (Finzi-Dottan & Karu, 2006).

(ii) Physical and emotional neglect is as injurious as physical or sexual abuse in the long term (Gilbert *et al*., 2009). Neglect is characterised by a lack of reaction and responses to the physical and/or emotional needs of vulnerable and minor children despite good intentions (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009). This may lead to 'acting out' behaviours and lack of social skills (Dubowitz *et al.*, 2005).

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(iii) The effects of sexual abuse (and rape) can continue long into adulthood with serious repercussions, for example sexually transmitted diseases or suicide attempts that may be grave (Johnson, 2004). Sexual abuse can also lead to serious mental health problems, such as paranoid and anti-social disorders (Bierer *et al*., 2003).

(iv) Exploitation and parentification where parentification means the use of children to fulfil some or all parental roles and tasks often beyond their capacity in terms of cleaning, caring and cooking, especially in circumstance of parental illness or troubled families (Earley & Cushway, 2002; Jurkovic, 1997; Stein, Riedel & Rotheram-Borus, 1999; Tompkins, 2007; Wells & Jones, 2000). The childhood of children is often sacrificed for these adult responsibilities and their developmental needs and competencies neglected (Earley & Cushway, 2002; Wells & Jones, 2000). The impact on children has manifested in externalising behaviour such as sexual activities, substance abuse, and conflictual relationships (Stein *et al*., 1999).

(v) Abandonment and desertion is an offence in most countries, with policies to protect children (O'Donovan, 2002). In South Africa, for example, as a case in point it would be the Child Care Act 38 of 2005 (referring to Chapter 9 Part 1: section 150 (1) (a)) pertaining to the protection of children who have been abandoned without any means of support. However, the Act does not criminalise the conduct of parents who have abandoned children. In many cases children are abandoned in the care of their extended family and in these cases children do have means of support, but the quality of care is unknown. The term abandonment conjures emotional distress in the separation from significant caregivers in a child's life and becoming dependent upon others who may not always have the child's best interests at heart (Panter-Brick, 2000). Abandonment implies a physical but also moral desertion and could be permanent or temporary, depending on the changing circumstances of the parent(s) (Panter-Brick, 2000; Veale, Taylor & Linehan, 2000).

Child abuse is a serious crime which has severe and long-lasting effects on children throughout their life span. It is therefore a key factor in ACEs.

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In summary, adverse childhood experiences involves various family, household and social challenges experienced during childhood of such a nature that it has a severe and distressing effect on the individual felt residually in later, adult life.

4.2.2 GENERAL IMPACT OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES ON WELLBEING

The preceding section has expounded the descriptive factors and elements in ACEs, as well as the effects of ACEs on the wellbeing of children. This section generalises the main effects of ACEs and builds on the aforementioned discussion. The following effects were reported in the study on ACEs by Anda and Felitti (Anda *et al*., 2006; Dube *et al.*, 2003), with the following diagram representing their findings regarding the relationship between ACEs and later health and social impairments (Figure 4.2):

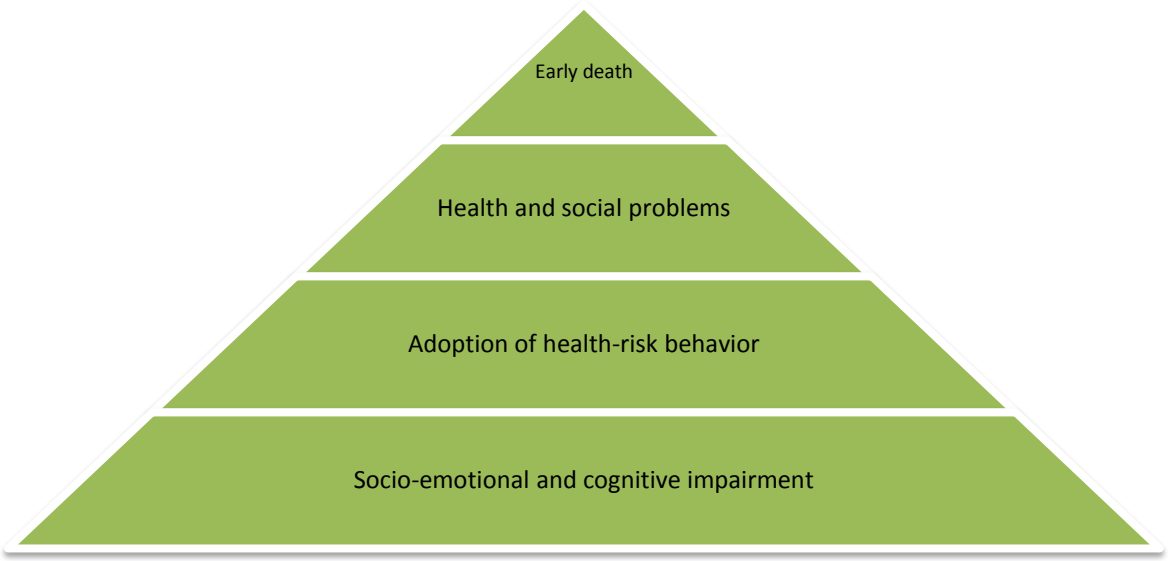

Figure 4.2: The relationship between ACEs and health and social effects
Source: Anda et al.., 2006; Dube et al., 2003

The diagram illustrates the consequences for the individual who has had to endure ACEs, showing the hierarchal relationship between the different effects. The study on ACEs established a link between ACEs and probable socio-emotional and health problems throughout the life span of the individual. For example, the following socio-emotional adverse effects of ACEs have been

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reported within the USA context (Anda *et al*., 2006; Dube *et al*., 2003; Heim *et al*., 2002; Hinnen *et al*., 2009; Kinzi *et al.*, 1997; Larkin, 2009):

- a propensity for habit-forming substances abuse
- depression, anxiety and suicide attempts
- early sexual initiation, indiscriminate sexual relations, and sexual discontent
- an inability to establish durable intimate relationships
- eating disorders, especially in males

The above-mentioned effects centred on the impact of ACEs on the individual in terms of their socio-emotional wellbeing. However, these reported effects do not necessarily show the whole picture. There are inadvertent benefits (such as gaining individual strengths, endurance, coping, and resilience) that can be derived from enduring childhood adversity. This is explored in the following section.

4.3 COPING MEASURES

McMillen (1999) contends that the social work profession has historically focused on the impact of adversity on the lives of people. This focus has taken the form of emphasising the deficit model. Recently there has been a fundamental shift with social workers preferring strength-based models that accentuate people's abilities and aptitudes when confronted with stressful or traumatic situations (Saleebey, 2002). Coping refers to the mental and physical action used to process the internal and external requirements of stressful incidents (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Taylor & Stanton, 2007). The way in which individuals cope depends on specific promotive and protective factors. These factors will be discussed in relation to the dynamics involved in the process of coping. Two significant constructs that emerge from promotive and protective factors are social support as a coping resource and resilience as a coping outcome.

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4.3.1 PROMOTIVE AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Promotive and protective factors are significant when exploring the strengths and competencies that people derive from adverse circumstances. These factors are also vital to determine the elements that are critical for building strengths and positive outcomes. Promotive and protective factors act as mediators between stressors and endurance that may inhibit stress and anxiety and/or safeguard the person from the stressful event. The possible risks associated with adverse experiences may thus be reduced.

Fergus and Zimmerman (2005:299) describe promotive factors as being either "assets or resources". Assets are factors within the person and resources are external to the person. It is illustrated as follows (Figure 4.3):

Figure 4.3: Assets and resources in promotive and protective factors
Sources: Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005

Figure 4.3 shows promotive and protective factors in terms of assets and resources featuring intrapersonal and extrapersonal resources in use during coping. Greene & Greene (2009) identified protective factors as "qualities of a person or his or her developmental context that predict better-than-expected outcomes under adverse conditions". These protective or promotive factors can be depicted in the following way (Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Greene & Greene, 2009; Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Rutter, 1999; Saleebey, 2002; Van Breda, 2001) (Figure 4.4):

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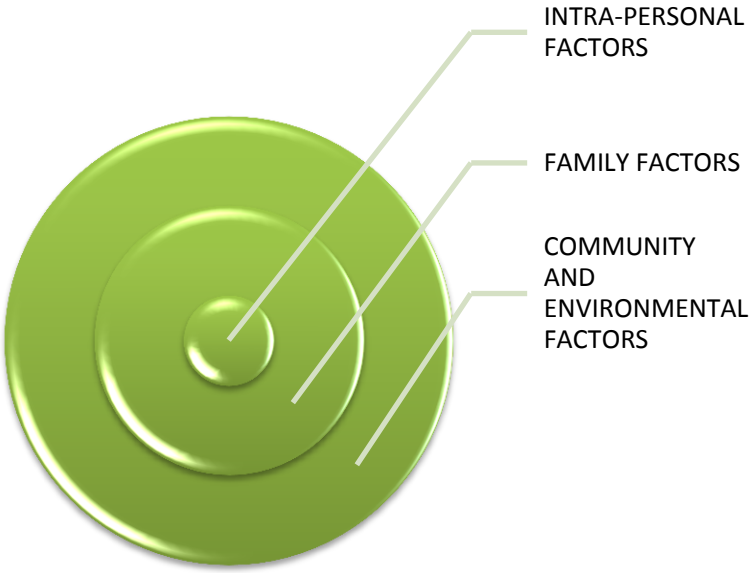

Figure 4.4: Promotive and protective factors in resilience
Source: Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Greene & Greene, 2009; Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Rutter, 1999; Saleebey, 2002; Van Breda, 2001

This diagram shows the co-dependent and hierarchical relationship amongst the factors illustrating containment. This means that the factors build upon one another starting at the inner circle (intra-personal factors), which is enveloped by family and then community and environmental factors as further protective layers. These promotive and protective factors are further clarified below (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch & Ungar, 2005; Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Saleebey, 2002) (Table 4.2):

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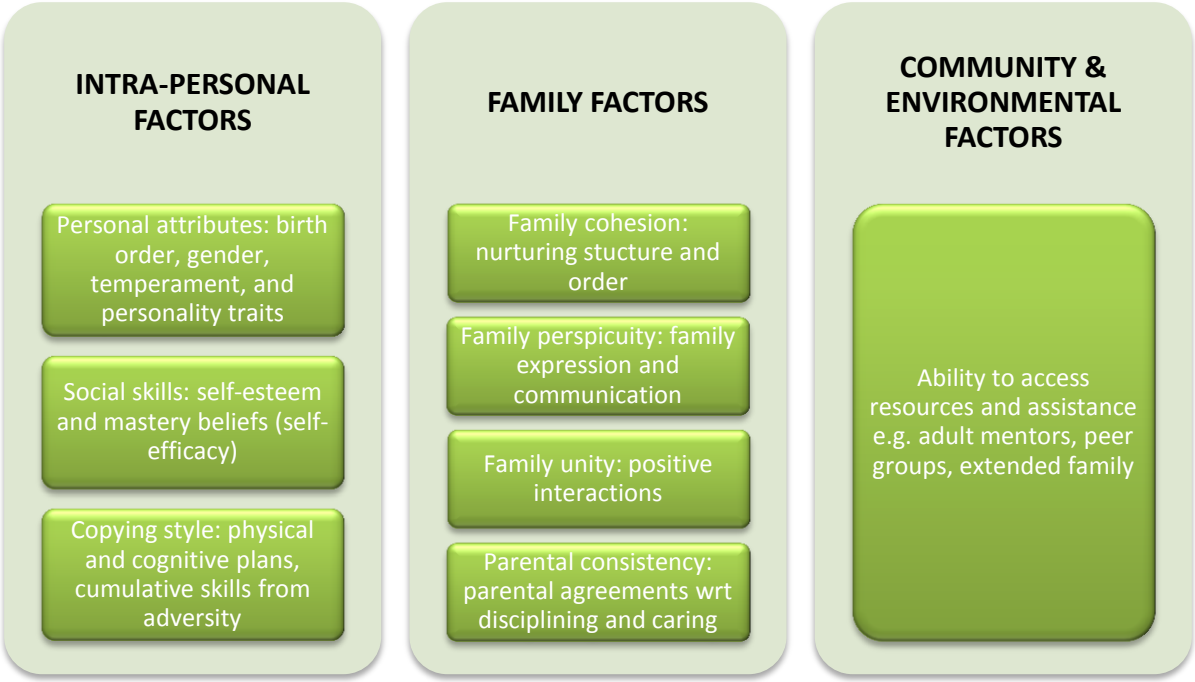
Table 4.2: Levels of promotive and protective factors



Source: Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch & Ungar, 2005; Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Saleebey, 2002

Table 4.2 shows the three levels of promotive and protective factors that mirror the description of ACEs. In highlighting intra-personal factors, much has been written on emotional intelligence as protective factor generally, but Kinman and Grant (2011) have written about specific emotional abilities that would support resilience to stress in the work environment. Emotional intelligence is defined as being able to maintain control over moods and desires, as well as being able to defer emotional fulfilment for resolving hindrances (Kinman & Grant, 2011). Emotional intelligence is articulated in terms of possessing the following four competencies:

- Insight and expression of emotions
- Emotional impetus to thoughts
- Comprehension and exercise of emotional knowledge
- Control of emotions that enables emotional and cognitive growth

With particular reference to social work students, significant qualities are reflective abilities, empathy and social skills. However, these qualities would mean that students would require requisite emotional intelligence and cognitive abilities, as described above. These, in turn, would

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presuppose promotive and protective factors. Kinman and Grant (2011) contended that resilience would be the result of using emotional competencies in reaction to psychological distress.

Wilks and Spivey (2010), in their research with social work students regarding their coping with academic stress, concluded that the means of coping comprised social support mechanisms (such as specific family members and friends) whilst the outcome of effective stress management was resilience. This is especially important for this study as it focuses on social work students and their ACEs; socio-emotional qualities and resilience thus are of special interest. The literature has emphasised social support as vital in developing resilience regarding the socio-emotional consequences of ACEs. In the next section, social support as an example of a promotive and protective factor external to the individual (i.e. resources) will be explicated.

4.3.2 SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support acts as promotive factor (external to the person) for developing resilience (Ozbay *et al.*, 2008; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). The definitions of social support explicate *the who* (provider) and *the what* (action and assistance) of support. In the first aspect, social support is described as being contextualised within sources of casual (everyday) support provided to others by family, friends, neighbours and peers characterised by non-payment and informal arrangements (Armstrong *et al*., 2005; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). In confirming the source of support, Wilks and Spivey (2010:278) contend that social support "is a broad concept covering the availability of significant others". Gottlieb (in 1983), in the second aspect, confirmed the action of supporters, defining social support as "verbal and non-verbal information or advice, tangible aid, or action that is proffered by social intimates or inferred by their presence and has beneficial emotional or behavioural effects on the recipients" (Armstrong *et al*., 2005:271). On the one level, social support is provided by both significant others and casual relationships that an individual engages with throughout daily routines that may become sources of help and assistance. On the other level, support is characterised in practical terms regarding the type of support (*the what*) that is provided to an individual who requires it. In the next section *the who* of social support is further explicated.

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4.3.2.1 Sources of social support

The previous section has described different aspects in the definitions of social support. One aspect of the definition has been focused on the people who provide support to others who are in need. Pinkerton and Dolan (2007:221) identified the following sources of social support worth noting (Figure 4.5):

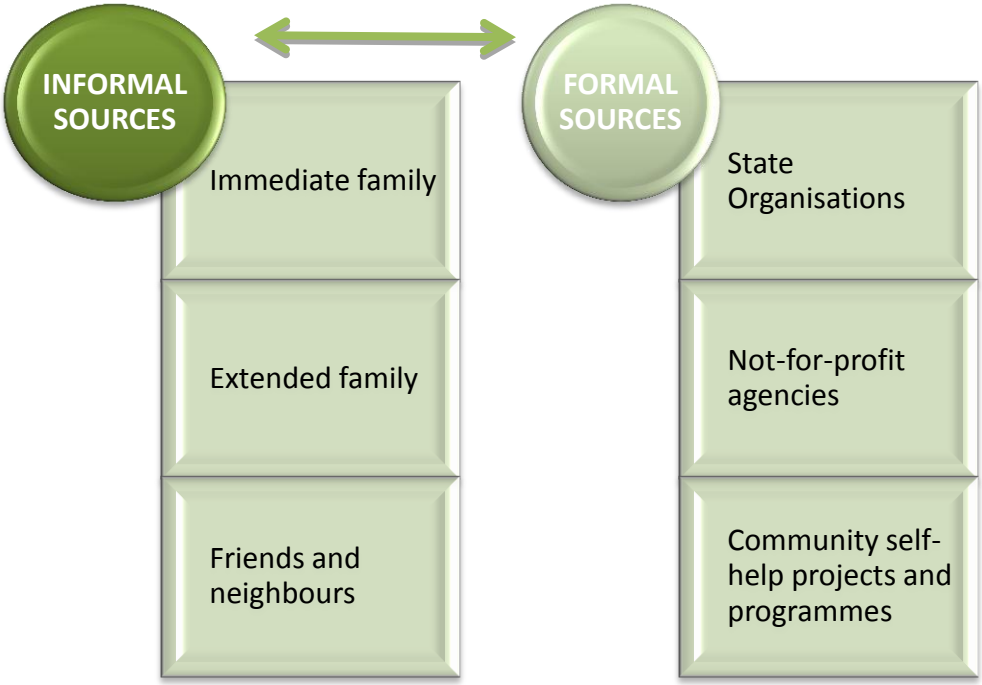

Figure 4.5: A model of social support
Source: Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007

Figure 4.5 illustrates the interactive relationship existing between the informal and formal sources of social support. In the formal sources, individuals, for example, will attempt to access formal and non-formal (such as not-for-profit) organisations and agencies where one would find social work services. Regarding the informal sources, family, friends and neighbours offer immediate, unstructured help and assistance.

The informal sources represent "a central helping system" and it is only when this system breaks down or is viewed as "weak, non-existent or incapable" that people may turn to more formalised agencies for support and assistance (Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007:220). Informal and formal sources of support should not be viewed as oppositional, but rather as complementary as it will depend

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on what type of assistance and support is required. Pinkerton and Dolan (2007) link social support to social capital in that it represents resources that exist in family relationships (informal) and community and social organisations (formal and non-formal) which are imperative for social wellbeing.

Family and extended family represent the most powerful social support structure for people (Taylor, 2010). Social support from the extended family has been shown to contribute to resilience of both parents and children, especially enduring adverse circumstances. Extended family support is vital in two areas especially: the proffering of emotional support and upholding structure and harmony in the home (Taylor, 2010). Support provided by friends (peer groups) is also vital in successful coping (Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). With teens, relationships with peers are significant when teens struggle towards individuality and emotional separation from parents. Importantly, peer relationships underscore different developmental needs and thus these do not displace parental relationships (Herman-Stahl & Peterson, 1996; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007).

Pinkerton and Dolan (2007) have also identified three factors determining the quality and value of informal sources of support:

- Closeness refers to the intimacy that exists between the supporter and the recipient which indicates the nature of the relationship that will suppose that support would be welcomed.
- Reciprocity comprises support where a mutual exchange of help between people is accepted.
- Durability involves the length of time and frequency of contact that people have had with one another, which will determine the kind of help and the acceptance of help.

These three factors influence the acceptance of the support and provide insight into the type of relationship between the giver and the receiver. These factors, however, preclude the undervalued help that individuals often receive from strangers. Thus far, the different sources of social support have been expounded and in the next section the different types of social support will be discussed.

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4.3.2.2 Types of social support

The sources of social support go hand-in-glove with the type of support that is required by individuals. Certain types of social support have been identified as being: giving advice and counsel, offering resources for problem solving, or opportunities for venting and expressing (Herman-Stahl and Peterson, 1996). Four types of social support that can be provided by informal sources in particular have been identified and are shown below (Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007) (Table 4.3):

Table 4.3: Types of social support from informal sources

TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT (INFORMAL SOURCES)			
CONCRETE SUPPORT: Tangible and practical support, for example child minding, baby sitting or shopping	**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** Emotional giving and sustenance to others, for example empathy, listening, visiting and interacting	**ADVICE SUPPORT:** Advice and encouragement to others	**ESTEEM SUPPORT:** Reassurance and building of another's sense of self-worth and confidence (not juding and criticising)

Sources: Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007

Table 4.3 shows four types of support that can be provided by informal sources (such as family and friends). This (informal) type of support is the first line of defence in times of personal need and trouble and is the epitome of family relationships, good friendship and good neighbourliness.

In the literature, social support has been viewed as a vital resource and promotive / protective factor in enduring ACEs positively and thereby developing resilience, for example. Resilience is a positive outcome and an important cultivated characteristic. The following section clarifies this construct further.

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4.3.2 RESILIENCE AS COPING OUTCOME

Resilience originates from the Latin word *resilio* meaning to 'jump back' (Mohaupt, 2008). The concept resilience has some vintage and variations. Resilience was first used in social psychology and psychiatry in the 1940s to ascribe meaning to the recovery of patients (Mohaupt, 2008). Buzz Holling used it in ecology in the 1960s to 1970s to refer to the capability of social-ecological systems to withstand the sudden changes wrought, for example, by climatic or economic shocks, and to survive and transform afterwards (Folke, 2006; Mohaupt, 2008; Simonsen, 2007).

Initial research into resilience focusing on family found positive outcomes despite childhood adversity (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Mohaupt, 2008; Van Breda, 2001). Resilience research subsequently broadened its focus by including community violence and abuse and catastrophic life events. Resilience will be discussed in terms of defining the construct and clarifying how resilience is developed.

4.3.2.1 Defining resilience

In this study, resilience is viewed as an outcome signalling positive overcoming of adversity. In terms of 'successful adaptation', Masten, Best & Garmezy (1990:425) contributed to the initial definition that spearheaded others. They defined resilience as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances". Other definitions that followed focused on the central themes of adaptation and adverse circumstances. For example, Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker (2000:543) defined resilience as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity". Coombes and Anderson (2000:287) refer to resilience as having the "capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning and competence" in the face of "high risk status, chronic stress or prolonged or severe trauma". Regarding resistance, Rutter (1999:119) included this as vital when he asserted that resilience "describes relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences". Saleebey (2002:11) contributed to the process of achieving resilience and gaining competencies. He referred to resilience "as a process – the continuing growth and articulation of capacities, knowledge, insight, and virtues derived through meeting the demands and challenges of one's

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world, however chastening". Salient features of resilience therefore appear to include the following (Table 4.4):

Table 4.4: Main features of resilience

MAIN FEATURES OF RESILIENCE				
PROCESS: Resilience is an active process.	**PROFICIENCIES:** The individual must possess the capacity or ability of resistance and adaptation.	**PREVAILING**: The individual must have overcome risk situations or adversity.	**POSITIVE OUTCOME**: The individual emerges relatively unscathed or with little residual risk for the future.	**POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH**: The individual develops further growth, insight and virtues.

Source: Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Greene & Greene, 2009; Kinman & Grant, 2011; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al., 1990; Rutter, 1999; Saleebey, 2002; Shepherd, Reynolds & Moran, 2010

Table 4.4 shows the salient features of resilience that have emerged from various definitions, as Process, Proficiencies, Prevailing, Positive Outcome, and Post-traumatic growth (henceforth the 5-Ps). Pre-requisite conditions for resilience should be the existence of adverse circumstances and a positive outcome regardless of circumstances (Luthar *et al*., 2000).

Ozbay *et al*. (2008), as medical practitioners, offer an alternative view to the social definition of resilience. They argue that neurobiology (genetic factors) has a definite role to play in susceptibility to stress and resilience. They contend that "[b]rain circuits that regulate memory function, motivation, rewards, responses to fear, and adaptive social behaviours play a central role in resilience, possibly by influencing pertinent personality traits" (Ozbay *et al*., 2008:305). These authors explain that emotional stress causes changes in many 'neurochemicals' that regulate neural pathways said to be linked to resilience, including the pathways implicated in the control of reward, fear conditioning and social behaviour.

Resilience has been described here as an outcome of adversity consisting of five common features (Table 4.4) relating to process, adaptation, resistance and competencies. The 5-Ps

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emerged from the definitions of resilience. Resilience is a characteristic that emerges developmentally from adverse experiences. It is thus a characteristic that is worth noting and promoting in teaching and learning in social work. In the next section, the process of developing resistance is described.

4.3.2.2 Developing resilience

From the foregoing discussion, resilience can be defined as an active process of the relationship between risk and protective mechanisms, both internal and external to the person, which determines the effects of adverse circumstances (Olsson *et al.*, 2003). Resilience is an outcome of endurance and persistence as well as a sign of current and future intrinsic power, as can be illustrated in the following manner (Olsson *et al*., 2003; Wilks & Spivey, 2010) (Figure 4.6):

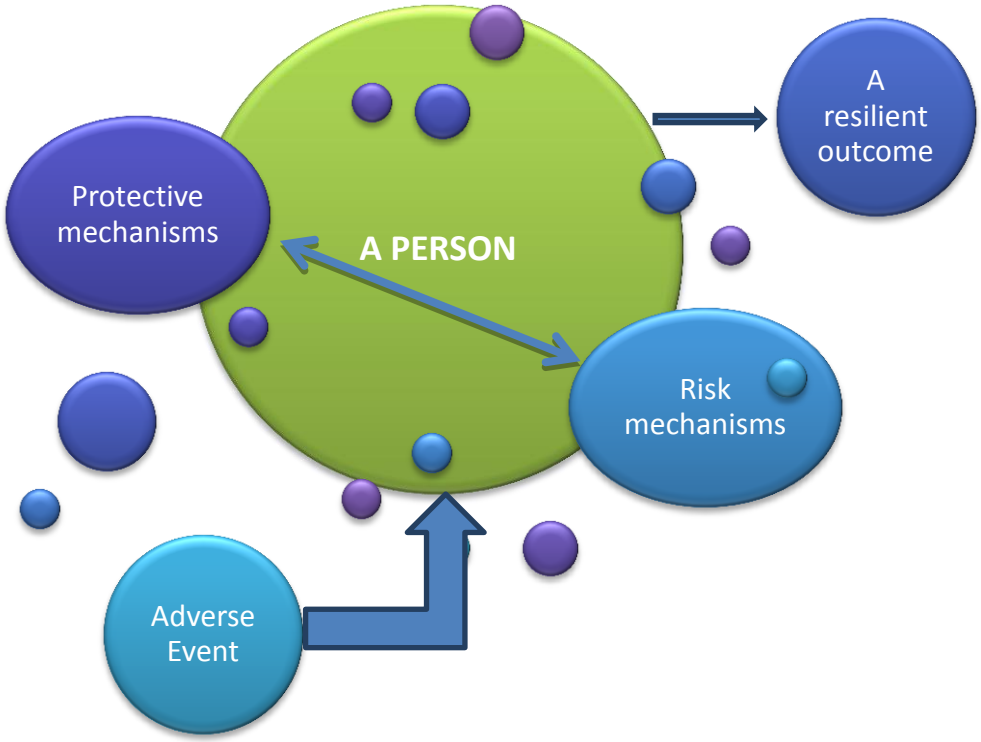

Figure 4.6: The process of achieving resilience
Source: Olsson et al., 2003

The diagram shows an interactive and dynamic process during which an adverse event or circumstance triggers the use of both the protective (such as inner resources, family and peer networks, and community resources) and the risk mechanisms (such as poverty, poor parental

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and family relationships and interactions) that individuals may possess or be surrounded with. Protective mechanisms contribute to resilience, whereas risk mechanisms make people more vulnerable (Olsson *et al*., 2003). The positive outcome would be resilience. In other words, an individual cannot become resilient without testing her/himself through difficulties and struggles. A child's resilience is fostered by the standard of parental care and the child's adeptness in adjusting to stressful situations (Armstrong *et al*., 2005; Masten, 2001).

The discussion thus far has centred on the individual and the process of developing resistance. Another dimension in developing resistance is the notion of "turning points" (Masten, 2001; Shepherd *et al*., 2010). Turning points are pivotal events or incidents that spearhead a difference in the opinion, thoughts, behaviour or lifestyle of the person. These turning points may also result in 'chain effects' signifying that a positive change in one aspect in the person's life can produce commensurate changes in other aspects that contribute further to resilience (Shepherd *et al.*, 2010).

Developing resistance is a complex process of individual, family and social factors that work together to develop the person's resilience to adverse experiences. Each person has different levels of protective and risk mechanisms and these determine the eventual outcome of experiencing adversity.

4.4 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND COPING MEASURES

Part I contextualised adverse childhood experiences in terms of South African conditions. ACEs are important to understand because of the serious impact on the individual's future behaviour, choices, lifestyle and emotions. These effects reflected a primary area for the study. The effect, negative and positive, of ACEs on an individual, especially the role of social support and resistance as outcome, has been described. The possible negative effects on an individual are pertinent to social work students in the professional learning context (Part II).

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PART II: THE SELF IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK

The discussion of ACEs uncovered four essential components, namely social environment, poor family wellbeing, ineffectual caregivers, and frequent child abuse. The associations between ACEs and negative outcomes, particularly socio-emotional effects, furthermore were of significance. These effects are pertinent to the emotional wellbeing of individuals (students) and, in turn, have implications for the professional learning context in social work.

Miller (2010) equates professional socialisation with professional learning, and as such links with the seond component of professional learning, namely, professional identity construction (see Chapter 3 Part II). Professional identity construction is achieved through professional socialisation. In clarifying professional socialisation, Miller (2010:926) uses the definition by Hart (in 1990) that states that "individuals entering a profession adapt externally in the requirements of the specific career role, and internally, in the subjective self-conceptualisation associated with that role". Through these adaptations, individuals (students) develop a professional self instilled with the appropriate values, attitudes, knowledge and skills which become part of the individual's ethos, which underscores her/his behaviour and conduct within various professional settings (Miller, 2010).

Part II establishes the context of professional learning and professional socialisation in social work through the lens of adverse childhood experiences and the development of the student as a professional social worker. This is vital because it explicates the key components in professional learning, that is, the helper and the helping. This part is partitioned into three sections: The first section focuses on the context of the helper (in this case the social worker) (section 4.4). The helper as a person is also a critical resource in the helping. The second section focuses on the context of helping (section 4.5). The focus is not on the intervention approaches, strategies and skills usually associated with helping, but rather on the self in the helping endeavour. This is a deep reflection as to what is happening to the individual when engaged in a helping relationship.

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4.5 THE CONTEXT OF THE HELPER

Human beings are not one-directional, thus people consist of several layers which have been made up of myriad experiences and phases of development. A social work principle is that we approach and treat each person as a unique human being, and thus, likewise, the social worker (the helper) (Potgieter, 1998). The social worker brings to her/his practice her/his uniqueness. By this it is meant that inadvertently or unconsciously one's experiences, characteristics, and qualities impact on the practice of social work. In the following section this confluence is explored. The development of a professional identity is one aspect that informs the professional self.

4.5.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Bogo, Raphael and Roberts (1993:279) assert that "The vitality and coherence of any profession is enhanced by the presence of a common core of agreed-on beliefs, values and interests among its members, in other words, a professional identity". A common view held by many educators is that a vital ingredient in social work training is the development of a professional identity or persona (Campanini, Frost & Hojer, 2012; Miehls & Moffatt, 2000; Urdang, 2010). Campanini *et al*. (2012:34) define a professional identity as "the individual's identification with the occupational group", especially with "the identification with certain traits linked to the profession" (also see Wiles, 2013). In this way it is supposed that the social work student has aptitude, insight and discernment and through the process of learning assumes diverse viewpoints and beliefs.

There are two aspects to the process of developing a professional identity, namely the signature pedagogy of social work (for example texts, theories, models) and personal identity (for example personal values, views, relationships) (Shlomo, Levy & Itzhaky, 2012). From the initial learning stages in social work, students are exhorted to bring their personal characteristics into the professional learning context – to practice the use of self (Campanini *et al.*, 2012). Although this endeavour should be practised with caution as, according to Urdang (2010:523), students "generally do not anticipate the psychological stress and the changes they will undergo in

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developing a professional self". However, this stress occurs as a result of the person adjusting into a professional self. Thus the educator needs to be aware of such adjustments and stressors and prepare students to anticipate these internal stresses. Approaches to viewing professional identity development will be discussed further.

4.5.1.1 Approaches to professional identity

Miehls and Moffatt (2000) identified two approaches to viewing the development of the social work identity, namely ego development, and self and subjectivity.

(i) Ego development approach

According to this approach to the development of a social work identity, new learning produces anxiety for the student. Anxiety is regarded as a "manifestation of the unsettling aspects to the ego as new learning occurs" (Miehls & Moffatt, 2000:340; Ganzer, 2007), but that there is an awareness of a limit before anxiety culminates in being obstructive and debilitating. The role of the educator is to empower the student to restore some equilibrium within their intrapersonal world, in keeping with the principle of homeostasis, so that they are able to be fully attentive to others. Discomfort and anxiety are not wholly negative emotions in learning as these would open up an opportunity to reflect and discern their origins (sources) and meaning. In terms of self-reflection, Miehls and Moffatt (2000:341) confirm that the "process is a self-reflective one which is focused on the internal workings of the student's intrapsychic world". In this way, there is limited attention for the other (for example the client) in this process other than in the sense of having roused reflection within the student. This approach is illustrated in the following way (Figure 4.7):

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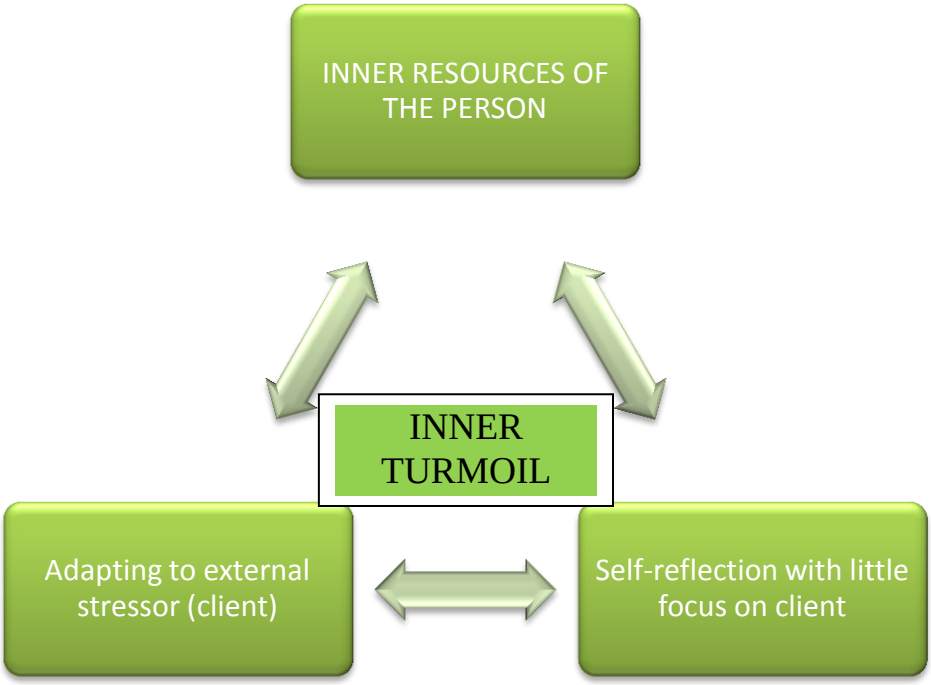

Figure 4.7: The Ego development approach
Source: Miehls & Moffat, 2000

Figure 4.7 shows how the inner resources (of the student) are focused on adapting to the external stressor (the client) and works on her/himself (the ego) to cope with the situation. The struggle is on maintaining an objective, non-judgmental and empathic stance towards somebody who is responsible for such inner turmoil. This approach views the ego function as vital and thus the student would be intent on clarifying the impact of the other on her/himself especially if the focus of teaching is on clinical assessment and treatment. Miehls and Moffatt (2000) assert that there is more to the self-development of the social worker than self-awareness. In the second approach, the self as subjective construct in relation to the client is explored.

(ii) Self and subjectivity approach:

In contrast to Ego Development, where the focus is on the intrapersonal uneasiness and anxiety of the student, the student's attention in Self and Subjectivity is on the self that can appreciate the other (client). In this approach, self-reflection is constructed and understood as "a search for ways to interact with the other" (Miehls & Moffatt, 2000:342). Knowledge of each other is created through dialogues and customs emerging from the interactions with the other. The self is therefore a subject and not an object of knowledge creation. The self is not only formed in

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relation to the development of a personal identity, but also through social interactions. According to Miehls and Moffatt (2000:342), the self is located within the context of personal and social experiences and cannot be conceptualised apart from that context. In this way, the identity of the student cannot be separated from the humanity (called subjectivity) of the other. Subjectivity means that one becomes open and accessible to interactive communication and experiences. When the social worker or student becomes open to communication in this manner, "the construction of a narrative" is initiated (Miehls & Moffatt, 2000:343). These narratives (or oral histories) enable students to value and comprehend their experiences, together with the emotional content linked to them. This can be both a positive and a negative experience, depending on the incident being retold. Constructing personal narratives can be validating for the personal and political facets of the identity.

The two approaches are both focused on the self in relation to and in interaction with the client. The Ego Development Approach is focused on the impact of the client situation on the inner workings of the self and thus the worker has difficulty in focusing on the client's needs. The centrality of the ego is contrasted with the expansiveness of the self in the Self and Subjectivity Approach. Self-reflection is an important process in both approaches, but the first approach is self-absorbed whereas it, in the latter, is a process used to benefit the client.

In the two approaches, the interactions are one-directional, flowing only from social worker to client. However, interaction from client to social worker and back again also occurs. This to and fro interaction is called intersubjectivity (Miehls & Moffatt, 2000). Thus the emotional distance between social worker (and student) and the other (client) is reduced, as both become engaged in the reciprocity of the encounter.

The role of ego development (the inner workings of the self) and subjectivity (the self in appreciation of others) in the development of professional identity was explored. These two approaches did not define the interaction between worker and client, hence the emergence of the third approach, i.e. intersubjectivity. The influence of both social worker and client on one another, and ultimately on professional identity, was revealed. Professional identity is further

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deconstructed in terms of its dimensions, in other words, a discovery of what professional identity consists of.

4.5.1.2 Dimensions of professional identity

Clare (2006) proposes that the social work identity be viewed as consisting of four dimensions to promote professional vigour and depth. These dimensions are interrelated and thus are not discrete. Each dimension is discussed below.

(i) Dimension One: A personal philosophy of practice: A personal philosophy of practice is one that evolves and develops over time. This philosophy is generated through the experiences of the student through teaching and learning opportunities within the social work curriculum. The personal philosophy is also constructed through the personal and social experiences of the student (and later professional). These personal and social experiences of the student provide the input to individual beliefs. This philosophy provides the student with "a professional reference point" separate from, but established from within, the professional role (Clare, 2006:38).

(ii) Dimension Two: An empowered practice stance: This dimension depends on comprehending the ambit of professional power and its constraints, as well as the preparedness to possess professional influence and sanction which can often be aligned with 'care and control' tasks. This dimension requires professional and personal maturity of students which point to a social work curriculum that provide learning opportunities that enable students to become self-reflective in their professional role and tasks.

(iii) Dimension Three: Achieving marginality: Marginality in this case means maintaining a position of balance between impersonal objectivity and over-identification and bias. This would mean "maintaining an insider-outsider perspective", which means also balancing the needs of the client with organisational frameworks and contexts. This again points to the social work curriculum that would offer learning opportunities in this insider-outsider perspective so that students become conscientised and knowledgeable about themselves in relation to their professional viewpoints and interactions with clients, that is, creating learning pathways to professional maturity.

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(iv) Dimension Four: Provisional certainty: In this dimension, a professional identity requires an attitude of provisional certainty where certainty means the ability for intervention-oriented judgments and provisional means maintaining an open stance to the latest trends or wisdom. This dimension involves an open stance to the opinions and knowledge of other sources but without yielding one's own knowledge and understanding to others. This again requires professional maturity to be able to reach judgments for action and to be able to discern what information to incorporate and what information to discard as irrelevant.

These four dimensions which point to teaching and learning areas for a social work curriculum have established the building blocks of a professional social work identity.

In the following section, the second aspect in the context of the helper, namely the principle of self-awareness, is explored. Self-awareness is an important construct here as it presupposes self-reflection and reflexive skills, both of which are necessary for introspection.

4.5.2 THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-AWARENESS

The context of the helper focuses on the professional as an individual apart from professional competencies. The first aspect therefore explored the development of a professional identity. In this section, the principle of self-awareness is described. Reupert (2009) contends that self-awareness is viewed as a practice principle because it has been established that social workers do not rely on their practice skills only in a professional helping relationship, but also on their personal beliefs and viewpoints. The prerequisite for the effective use of self is self-awareness, which is defined as "involving an ability to accurately perceive one's emotions, beliefs and motivations" (Reupert, 2007:108). Self-awareness will be discussed in terms of four approaches which are illustrated as follows (Kondrat, 1999:452-465) (Figure 4.8):

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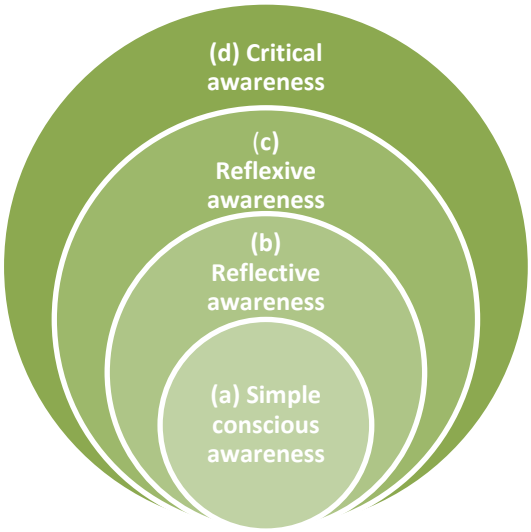

Figure 4.8: The approaches to self-awareness
Source: Kondrat, 1999

This Venn diagram demonstrates the hierarchical and interlinked relationship between the four approaches to self-awareness starting with simple conscious awareness at the bottom as a starting block upon which the other approaches are founded.

4.5.2.1 Simple conscious awareness

This kind of awareness takes place at a basic level of consciousness where one becomes aware of the current situation in which one is, for example noticing the physical locale, identifying observations, moods, and behaviour. This self is conscious of and can identify experiences. This self is therefore known as the observing self, the source of feelings, insights, and thoughts. The focus of awareness is on the present situation that the self is experiencing and not on the self who is the one experiencing. In this sense it emphasises the "unselfconscious" or the "pre-self-awareness" (Kondrat, 1999:453). Simple conscious awareness is the precursor for experience and memory and a forerunner for the other three forms of self-awareness. Developing skills in simple conscious awareness in social work involves teaching effective listening and observation skills. Process recording is one way in which students learn to observe and document the surroundings and interactions with clients and rely on memory to recollect the elements of the encounter later during the recording.

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4.5.2.2 Reflective awareness

In contrast to simple conscious awareness where the emphasis is on "direct experiences", reflective awareness is on the self who is experiencing. The behaviours, feelings, reasoning, and achievements of the self become the focus of attention. In this way "the self steps back to observe and consider its own performance" (Kondrat, 1999:454). This activity creates two selves – one that is reflecting and the other who is doing the experiencing. In understanding the self in this way, there are three epistemological suppositions about the self that are rooted in this notion of the 'knowing-self', as shown in Table 4.5):

Table 4.5: Epistemological suppositions in reflective awareness

EPISTEMOLOGICAL SUPPOSITIONS IN REFLECTIVE AWARENESS		
Self-reflection is achieved by differentiating between the reflecting self (the reflecting aspect of the self) and the object-self (the self as reflected upon)	*The reflecting self (the self as 'I') comes into operation when reflecting on the experiences of the object-self. *In doing the reflecting the self as 'I' stands aloof from the 'me'. *Only the object-self ('me') is able to undertake empirical inquiry.	The more the reflecting-self ('I') is separated from the object-self ('me'), the more trustworthy and consistent the knowledge is, as it is deemed to be objective knowledge.

Source: Kondrat, 1999

Table 4.5 shows the epistemological assumptions in reflective awareness that encompasses self-reflection through the differentiation between the reflecting and the object self as layers of an individual observing and reflecting on experiences.

Postmodernism rejects the notion of the dualism between the reflecting and object-selves. Postmodernists do not believe that a part of the self exists that can make sense of its own experiences from a sterilised vantage point. Other theorists believe that social workers are often advised to make 'conscious use of self' and become objective to limit the adverse influence of subjective perceptions in the helping relationship. Thus, social workers reflect on their values, beliefs, experiences and prejudices to understand themselves (Kondrat, 1999).

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4.5.2.3 Reflexive awareness

The opposing view of the self as two separate aspects endorse the conceptualisation of the self as being "inherently reflexive – that is, self-referential" (Kondrat, 1999:456). Self-knowledge emanates from the same self. Here authentic and consistent self-knowledge emerges from the uniformity between what is being reflected and what is being experienced. The knowledge does not emanate from the ability to be objective and separate into two selves. There are also three epistemological suppositions on which this notion is based (Table 4.6):

Table 4.6: Epistemological suppositions in reflexive awareness

EPISTEMOLOGICAL SUPPOSITIONS IN REFLEXIVE AWARENESS		
The awareness between 'I' and 'me' is existentially pointless as they both are part of the same person experiencing the same things.	The view that one is able to remove one part of the self to a preferential position in order to judge the self is epistemological unattainable.	Authentic, subjective self-knowledge is useful in terms of self-perception, sensitivity, and feelings.

Source: Kondrat, 1999

Table 4.6 displays the epistemological assumptions of reflexive awareness which also reject the differentiations referred to in reflective awareness, but realise instead the relevancy of self-knowledge in relation to self-awareness, emotions and insight. In social work practice, reflexive awareness is undertaken to conscientise oneself to the role of early life experiences and self-perception of the practitioner and the possible influences thereof on the helping relationship.

4.5.2.4 Critical awareness

In critical awareness the self is socially constructed, being viewed as "co-constructor of his or her immediate worlds of meaning" (Kondrat, 1999:460). Viewing the self and self-awareness exclusively in terms of psychological or socio-psychological notions would limit its examination within broader epistemological and social frameworks. Self-knowledge is inextricably linked to societal structures, as the self cannot do without the social context in which it is developed. The

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self therefore is viewed as "a social actor" (Kondrat, 1999:460) and is both an agent and an outcome within societal structures. There are four epistemological suppositions in critical awareness (Table 4.7):

Table 4.7: Epistemological suppositions of critical awareness

EPISTEMOLOGICAL SUPPOSITIONS OF CRITICAL AWARENESS			
The self as insider to one's own inner world and within the social context means that knowledge about 'self-in-society' to a degree would be biased but reflexive.	The self comes into the world that existed prior to the self. There are parts of co-construction that take place without the self.	The self exists both within 'my world' (individualised social world) and 'the world' (external public world).	The self exists in daily participation in the continuous creation, conservation and regeneration of societal structures.

Source: Kondrat, 1999

Table 4.7 explicates the epistemological assumptions of critical awareness, showing the importance of viewing the self in relation to the external world and its role in the co-construction in the external, social world. Critical awareness is founded on the acuity and perceptiveness that was developed through the previous approaches to self-awareness. This kind of awareness is inward and outward-focused and is active in both worlds, acting as true co-constructor of the worlds it inhabits. It becomes an assertive self.

Each of the four approaches to self-awareness provided insight into the construct and process of developing self-awareness. Although highly theoretical, the insights are critical in helping students to understand the dimension of the self in building self-knowledge, especially in social work practice.

In the first section of part II (the context of the helper), attention was focused on the inner world of the helper. In the next section, the context of helping, this inner world of the helper is broadened and framed within the professional practice of helping.

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4.6 THE CONTEXT OF HELPING

In terms of social work, the context of helping involves the tasks, knowledge and skills in the practice. This is the essence and core that makes the practice what it is and how it will be judged. This section is explored in terms of two constructs, namely the use of self and transference and counter-transference reactions, again through the self as framework.

4.6.1 THE USE OF SELF

The use of self has been identified as a key element in social work practice in establishing the practice within the relationship building context (Dewane, 2006; Ganzer, 2007; Mandell, 2008). The use of self has its origins in clinical therapy, especially within counter-transference reactions. Traditionally, the social worker, using the therapeutic relationship to resolve her/his own personal issues, had been supported by the 'wounded healer' orientation with both negative and positive implications. Within this context, the social worker developed self-awareness and self-monitoring (Ganzer, 2007).

The advent of critical, anti-oppressive social work practice with diverse client systems expanded the use of self to include the worker's social position (power) and knowledge orientation. This contemporary notion of the use of self is concerned with the social identity of the social worker as being socially constructed and where self-reflections illuminate "privilege and power" (Mandell, 2008:237). However, Mandell (2008) identifies a schism between the traditional (and individualist) and contemporary (social) views of the use of self and does not believe there should be a choice between the two views, but rather an integrative approach. Mandell (2008) argues that there is a place for both orientations, as it is important that the social worker combines individual and personal histories in relation to social constructions of power and position in a multi-layered reflective approach. This, she notes, is "an expanded use of self" (Mandell, 2008:240).

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In symmetry with Mandell's (2008) contention on the use of self, Taylor and Cheung (2010:160) also argue that "[t]he appropriate use of self is determined by how practitioners integrate their personal experiences in their counselling process in order to help clients understand how to utilise their personal strengths". Thus, the use of self assumes a practical orientation as the social worker develops the skill in using personal information within the helping relationship. Reupert (2009:767) confirms that "the use of self is not merely incidental, unconscious or inevitable but is instead intentional and purposeful. This functionality of one's personal self assumes professional boundaries and working within a professional code of ethics". Thus, Reupert contends that the practitioner should carefully consider what parts of her/himself would be relevant to the helping relationship. When personal information of the practitioner is thoughtfully related, it can improve the helping relationship and lead to greater client insight (Jeffrey & Austin, 2007).

The use of self is mostly used in therapeutic engagements with clients and is vital for relationship building in terms of the manner in which practitioners engage and interact with others (Reupert, 2009). The use of self is initiated with the aim of combining the professional and personal selves in practice. This combination involves what one professionally knows (for example, knowledge, skills and practice competencies) and personal knowledge (personal traits, beliefs and experiences) and is considered to be the cornerstone of practice (Dewane, 2006; Reupert, 2009). The use of self is projected through self-disclosure, which Jeffrey and Austin (2007:96) define "as the verbal communication of personal communication about one's self to another".

The use of self can be made operational through two main principles, namely, self-disclosure and empathy, which is the focus in the next section (Comerford, 2005; Jeffrey & Austin, 2007; Reupert, 2009).

4.6.1.1 The principle of self-disclosure

The first principle in the use of self is self-disclosure. Jeffrey and Austin (2007:99) use Knox and Hill's 2003 definition of self-disclosure being "an interaction in which the therapist reveals personal information about him/herself and/or reveals reactions and responses to the clients as they arise". The practice of self-disclosure helps to create a therapeutic setting where clients can

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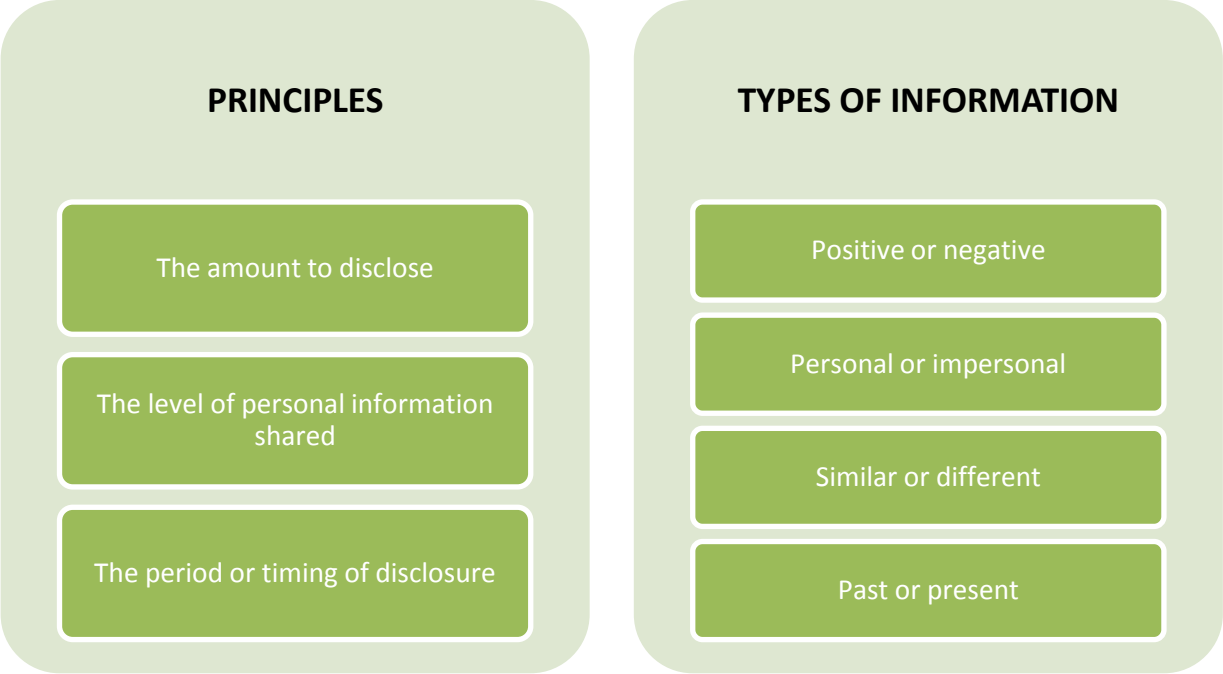
feel encouraged by the honest reflections of the practitioner (Jeffrey & Austin, 2007; Knight, 2012; Zur, 2007). Furthermore, self-disclosure helps to overcome the distance between client and practitioner by enriching the interaction (Jeffrey & Austin, 2007; Green, Gregory & Mason, 2006) and which ultimately leads to growth (Dewane, 2006). The dimensions of self-disclosure consist of its principles and types of information, as depicted in Table 4.8 (Jeffrey & Austin, 2007).

Table 4.8: Principles and types of information regarding self-disclosure



Source: Jeffrey & Austin, 2007

Table 4.8 shows the principles and the types of information that is applicable to the use of self-disclosure. The principles suggest how self-disclosure is to be applied (i.e. the amount, level and timing) and the types of information refers to the kind of information that can be disclosed. The latter is quite expansive, which is then tempered by the adjacent principles.

Opposing views on self-disclosure encompassed the following reservations (Audet & Everall, 2010; Jeffrey & Austin, 2007; Knight, 2012; Zur, 2007): self-disclosure moves attention from the client to the practitioner; self-disclosure increased clients' concern for the adherence of

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therapeutic boundaries; and self-disclosure inhibits the noting and analysis of counter-transference.

In summary, self-disclosure is favourably looked upon as long as it is within context and the decision to use self-disclosure is based on a theoretical perspective rather than the personal / professional style of the practitioner. In the following section, the principle of empathy is seen to moderate the use of self-disclosure, keeping its usage firmly in the practice context.

4.6.1.2 The principle of empathy

The second principle in the use of self is empathy. Empathy is derived from the Greek word 'empatheria' which means actively valuing the feelings and experiences of others (Freedberg, 2007). Empathy has the power to bridge emotional distance between the practitioner and client(s). Emotion is a significant dynamic when relating to another person across many different contexts (Comerford, 2005).

In social work, empathy is a key principle of the engagement phase in the helping process (Comerford, 2005; Hepworth *et al*. 2013; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2013). There is some disparity regarding its meaning as a practice principle or a disposition of the social worker (Comerford, 2005; Freedberg, 2007; Gerdes & Segal, 2011; Gerdes *et al.*, 2011; Gerdes, Segal & Lietz, 2010). The use of empathy occurred along the following timelines:

- Between the 1940s and 1950s the construct of empathy was mainly shaped by Freudian trained psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (in 1959) who coined the phrase "vicarious introspection" to mean "the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person" (Gerdes *et al*., 2010:2327). It was also Kohut who included a further dimension of cognition to empathy.
- During the same time the well-known psychologist Carl Rogers asserted the importance of empathy in his client-centred approach (Freedberg, 2007). He contended that being empathic "is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition" (Comerford, 2005:120; also see Gerdes & Segal, 2011; Gerdes *et al*., 2010). The 'as if' condition cautions the use of empathy, exhorting the

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respect of boundaries within the relationship and the different experiences of the practitioner and client. This approach to empathy was widely accepted in social work.

- Both Kohut and Rogers identified affective and cognitive aspects to empathy (Martz, 2001).
- In the 1960s, Robert Carkhuff, a social scientist, argued that empathy was not a relational and interactive process but a particular skill (Gerdes *et al*., 2010). Henceforth, empathy was conceptualised as a specific communication skill.

However, from the 1990s empathy was viewed as a relational process and a skill, culminating in the conceptual model of Decety and Moriguchi (in 2007) establishing four affective and cognitive components in operation when using empathy (Gerdes & Segal, 2011; Gerdes *et al*., 2011; Gerdes *et al*., 2010):

(i) Affective sharing: This involves the personal response to the observed feelings of the other person (for example, feeling sad when someone is crying) using facial expressions, gestures, body language and vocal tones. This implies being particularly attentive to the other person's own body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions in order to comprehend what the person is communicating and responding in kind. This does not involve theorising or analysing the content of the communication. This signifies a process of empirical observation.

(ii) Self-other awareness: This means that the social worker clearly distinguishes between her/his own emotions and those of the person being observed. This skill is crucial as it teaches the social worker the value of separateness. Self-awareness enables the detachment of own feelings from those of others and counteracts over-stimulation. Without these conscious boundaries, there is a danger of perceiving the client's feelings as if they were one's own.

(iii) Mental flexibility: This means being able to understand and cognitively comprehend the conditions affecting others and to imagine the experiences as if they had been yours. This skill enables the social worker to negotiate between her/his own thoughts and feelings and those of the client and discerning the differences. This competency requires conceptual skills, functional knowledge and judgment.

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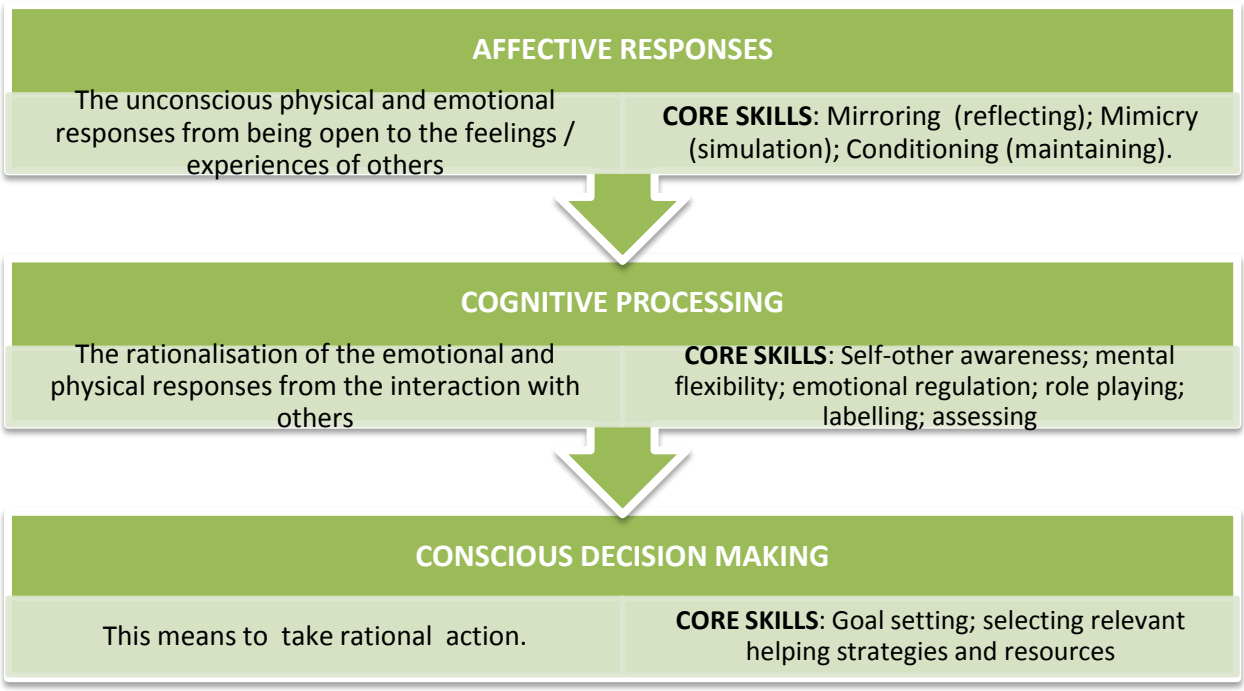
(iv) Emotion regulation: This signifies that the social worker contextualises and minimises her/his own feelings as they emerge in response to the feelings and experiences of the other person. Emotion regulation involves a cognisant and purposeful endeavour to manage one's feelings and behaviour in relation to others.

The four components of empathy serve as regulatory guidelines for the appropriate use of empathy in the helping relationship. In the application of empathy, Gerdes *et al*. (2011) proposed a three-part application framework (Figure 4.9):

Figure 4.9: The application framework of empathy



Source: Gerdes et al., 2011

Figure 4.9 shows the application framework of empathy that contributes to "empathic accuracy" (Gerdes *et al*., 2010). The framework constitutes a process of affective response, then cognitive processing and rationalisation, culminating in rational decision making. In each phase there are helpful core skills for the social worker to use. An added dimension is that the interactional empathic process is not one-directional but considered as being "interpersonal mutuality" (Freedberg, 2007:254). In terms of relational cultural theory, empathy is viewed as "mutual

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relations in which empathy flows out of a reciprocal interchange between the worker and the client" (Freedberg, 2007:254). In this way, empathy is not only viewed as an intervention principle and skill, it illustrates the character and value of the relationship between the worker and client. Empathy in this respect is a means to reflect to the client that she/he has had an impact on the social worker. To achieve this, the worker has delved into her/his own personal history and memories. Thus, empathy would not be profound if the persons involved in the process are not fully conscious of the presence of the other, fully participatory in the interchange and feeling the impact of each other's presence (Freedberg, 2007).

In the context of helping, the use of self has not only been established as a vital ingredient in the act of helping, but also the framework for its usage in the form of the principles of self-disclosure and empathy. In the following section, the self in professional learning is taken a step further (in the context of helping) through the reactions of transference and counter-transference.

4.6.2 TRANSFERENCE AND COUNTER-TRANSFERENCE REACTIONS

The importance of transference and counter-transference is that the personal experiences of social work students (and practitioners) may become defused with those of clients and conversely. Dewane (2006) asserts that transference and counter-transference are constructs arising from the interactions within the therapeutic relationship. In the following discussion, the various ways of viewing these constructs will be explored from classical viewpoints to modern insights.

4.6.2.1 Transference

The notion of transference is attributed to Sigmund Freud and his colleague Joseph Breuer (Jones, 2005). Freud's view was that transference "is a reliving of the past, pre-existing conflicts" (Norton, 2011:96).

The following definitions of transference link strongly with Freud's original notion. Urdang (2010:531) contends that "a client's transference feelings evoked towards the clinician are related to feelings from the client's past experiences and relationships". Similarly, Jones

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(2005:1177) defines transference as "an unconscious relocation of experiences from one interpersonal situation to another". Both Urdang and Jones view transference as focusing on the client's reliving of past experiences in present relationships. Thus previously established patterns of social interactions are unconsciously replicated. Transference is thus viewed as being linked to formative childhood connections which influence future relationships (also see Dewane, 2006).

Transference means "*transferring* points of view in the form of personal attitudes between key relationships and might be positive or negative or else a mixture of both" (Jones, 2005:1178). In a positive sense, it can include being too responsive to ideas, the offering of gifts, and in overt and indirect displays of feelings. Negative transference can culminate in mistrust, anger, and belligerence without clear reason. Transference is initiated by particular traits of particular persons or the contexts in which interactions take place.

Not all feelings or attachments towards others should be viewed as transference. Jones (2005) argues that understanding transference enables practitioners to construct authentic professional relationships. In the next discussion, the notion of counter-transference is explored.

4.6.2.2 Counter-transference

Transference is viewed as a client's transferring of their past feelings and experiences. In contrast, counter-transference is viewed as practitioner responses evoked by the experiences and issues of the client and infusing these with the experiences and narratives of the client (Dewane, 2006; Norton, 2011; Urdang, 2010). Freud viewed counter-transference as threatening and a symptom of the practitioner's own personal troubles. These reactions were taboo, as the practitioner had to be neutral and dispassionate. This approach was disputed in terms of the view that the practitioner's feelings were vital to the helping process, as it could lead to identifying underlying issues which would not have come to light in the usual helping process. Additionally, the principle of self-awareness is cited by Helen Perlman (1989) as essential to managing counter-transference in that self-awareness was the first step to objectivity (Norton, 2011). An opposing view was that transference and counter-transference were anomalous to objectivity and had no place in the therapeutic relationship (Norton, 2011).

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Currently there are three interpretations of counter-transference (Gibbons, Murphy & Joseph, 2011; Jones, 2005; Norton, 2011; Urdang, 2010):

(i) In the classic Freudian approach, counter-transference involves those feelings and reactions that result from "unresolved and unconscious conflicts" within the social worker, which arise from transference by the client and are depicted as follows (Figure 4.10):

Figure 4.10: The Freudian approach to counter-transference
Source: Gibbons et al., 2011

This diagram shows the nested and interconnected relationship of these steps. It is also hierarchical, as the process is hinged on the client's story and the client's transference and the subsequent counter-transference of the social worker.

In this classic view, the feelings are 'countered' from the social worker in reaction to the projection of the client but have reverberated with the life history of the social worker. Here the counter-transference is viewed as detrimental and unwanted within the helping context.

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(ii) Counter-transference, as postulated by Paula Heimann, a British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who wrote on counter-transference in the 1950s, contended that counter-transference involves a gamut of feelings and reactions to the client and in this way can be seen as universal, which is depicted as follows (Figure 4.11):

Figure 4.11: The Heimann approach to counter-transference
Source: Gibbons et al., 2011

This diagram in Figure 4.11 shows the nested and hierarchical relationship between the two steps in the Heimann approach to counter-transference. It consists only of the reactive emotional responses by the social worker to the client's narrative, without the prior transference feelings of the client.

(iii) Jones (2005) supports the view of counter-transference as a reaction to transference but reflects a third view. This contemporary view suggests that responsive feelings can emanate from the client or from the practitioner as a reaction to the initial transferring feelings. Counter-transference is considered as mutual and interactive, taking place from one to the other (Ganzer, 2007; Mandell, 2008).

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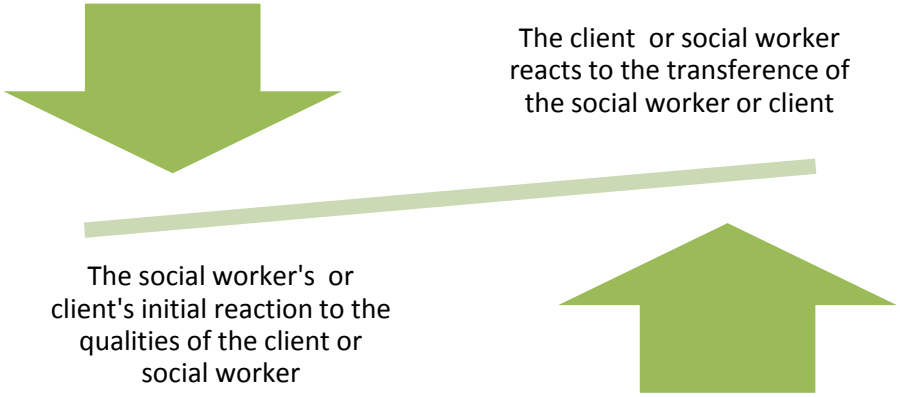

Figure 4.12: The Interactive approach of counter-transference
Source: Jones, 2005; Norton, 2011; Urdang, 2010

This diagram (Figure 4.12) shows the mutual reactions of both the client and the social worker to the qualities and/or transference of each.

Urdang (2010:531) agrees that transference and counter-transference must not be seen as distinct occurrences but as an "ongoing transactional exchange of feelings". This interchange of reactionary feelings was supported by Norton (2011:96) who confirmed that "modern psychodynamic theorists view transference as a combination of both the projection of past conflicts and also a piece of real life – a process of interaction between the therapist and the client that occurs in therapy". This exchange between the client and the practitioner is referred to as 'intersubjectivity' by Urdang (2010) and as 'reciprocal transference' by Dewane (2006:552). The issue with the (first two traditional) views of counter-transference was that they did not focus sufficiently on structural and critical, anti-oppressive social work practice. Therefore counter-transference maintained the separation between the individual and the social environment which served to perpetuate traditional structural and power arrangements, as well individual deficit orientations (Mandell, 2008).

Through the above discussion it was seen that a shift occurred with regard to reactions of transference and counter-transference which traditionally were viewed as negative, especially from a classical, Freudian point of view, to a modern, embracing view in which it is acknowledged that these reactions do occur and should be moderated and contextually framed.

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4.7 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE SELF IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK

Part II of this chapter focused on the self in professional learning in social work. The choice of focus in this part of the chapter was guided by the notion of the self. Thus, the contexts of the helper and helping were explored using the self as lens. Professional identity, self-disclosure, empathy, transference and counter-transference are all constructs where the self is the main agent. This point is important for the study because students' ACEs and the effects on professional learning informed the focus areas of the research.

In part III the focus is on the effects of Part I (adverse childhood experiences) and Part II (the self in professional learning in social work) in social work education.

PART 111: ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Part I (Adverse childhood experiences and coping measures) and Part II (The self in professional learning in social work) provide the premise for the discussion of adverse childhood experiences and professional learning in social work in this part of the chapter. The aim is to discern the relationship amongst adverse childhood experiences, coping measures, the self in professional learning, and social work education (its signature pedagogy). Part III is divided into three sections: firstly, ethical and professional conduct (section 4.8), since the supposition is that the ACEs of students will have some influence on their conduct; secondly exploring the role of emotions in learning, because there is a need to ascertain how the emotional state of students regarding their ACEs impact on their learning (section 4.9); and thirdly, fostering self-awareness in social work education focusing on psychodynamic theories and self-awareness in the classroom and in fieldwork practice (section 4.10).

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4.8 ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Adverse childhood experiences may manifest in ethical and professional misconduct of social work students (or practitioners). Urdang (2010:525) argues that the gap in social work training points to practising social workers who might be deemed "naïve, inexperienced or inadequately trained". Similarly, Schenck (2009) contends that social work has to look at its current education if it aims to produce social workers with the necessary awareness and competency in professional and ethical conduct. In research with social work lecturers at the universities of Limpopo and Stellenbosch, it was reported that many of the 'attitude problems' of students could be grouped into unprofessional and unethical conduct, for example, disrespect for authority and towards clients and colleagues, as well as disrespectful communication style; poor quality work and poor adherence to deadlines and structure (Earle, 2008:119).

Although gaps in social work education were fingered, Urdang (2010) nonetheless claims that merely teaching social work ethics will not be enough to prevent boundary violations (unprofessional conduct involving inappropriate relationships) with clients. Within the South African context, boundary violations could not be sufficiently discerned from published statistics (SACSSP Annual Report 2008-2009; SACSSP Newsletters, 2010, 2011). Three vital factors that influence boundary violations are worth noting, as they can serve as conduits for violations brought on by ACEs (Urdang, 2010:526).

(i) The nature of the helping relationship: Intrinsic to the professional helping relationship is its complex character and emotional content. Students are often overwhelmed and bewildered by the depth of expressed emotions. In the helping relationship they are required to temper their own emotional responses, and if they are swept into the emotional upheaval and narrative of their clients the situation is predisposed for boundary violations to occur. This is especially so when 'professional' pressures increase or the relationship nears termination and the sense of being overwhelmed and overburdened also increases commensurately.

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(ii) Similarities between clients and students: The helping relationship can be further compromised when there are unforeseen commonalities between the student and the client which can lay the ground for the exchange of feelings and narratives from the client (transference) and the student (counter-transference). Boundaries then become distorted and the assessment and intervention may be based on student needs and narratives, rather than those of the client.

(iii) Self-disclosure: Self-disclosure is a technique that is regularly used in relationship interventions. It fosters an authentic element in the helping relationship, as the sharing of appropriate experiences with the client facilitates empathy, support and acceptance. This technique, though, should be carefully used in the helping relationship, especially by students, as allowing students to substitute a personal conversation for a therapeutic encounter can become a professional habit (see discussion in section 4.6.1.1).

These three learning areas are pertinent for social work educators to note when designing learning outcomes and module content. These areas also point to the pivotal use of self, self-awareness and self-disclosure (context of the helper) with regard to the upholding of ethical and professional conduct. Within the context of social work education, the role of emotions is particularly emphasised as a consequence of the impact of ACEs on students.

4.9 THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN LEARNING

The second aspect in adverse childhood experiences and professional learning in social work education is the pivotal role of emotions in learning. The role of emotions is a contested area as educators are divided into what seems like two camps: those supporting the traditional notion of learning mainly see learning as a theoretical, cerebral activity (called cold cognition) and view emotions as barriers or obstructions to learning (Brand, 1987; Dirkx, 2008; Roseman & Read, 2007), as opposed to those who accept that “students can have an emotional way of learning” (called hot cognition) (Bramming, 2007:51). These approaches to the way students learn can be depicted as follows (Figure 4.13):

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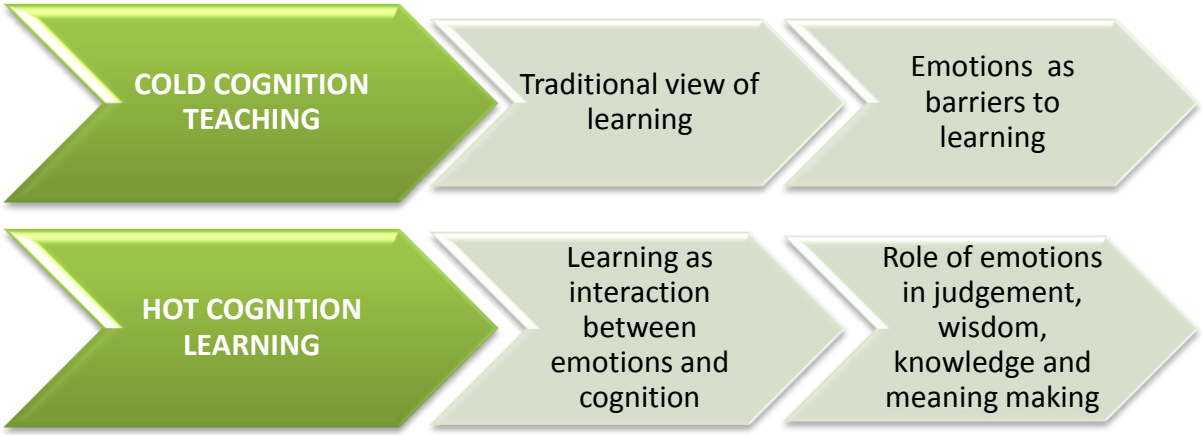

Figure 4.13: Views regarding the role of emotions in learning
Source: Brand, 1987; Dirkx, 2008; Roseman & Read, 2007; Bramming, 2007

Figure 4.13 shows the traditional versus the increasingly progressive view of the role of emotions in learning. Research in the USA found that many socio-emotional difficulties accompany the majority of adult students into the classroom, which affects their ability to learn because trauma impacts on the brain (Dirkx, 2008; Perry, 2006). According to Anda *et al*. (2006:175) "childhood abuse and exposure to domestic violence can lead to numerous differences in the structure and physiology of the brain that expectedly would affect multiple human functions and behaviors". The impact of childhood trauma on adults in later life is typified by cognitive impairment, post-traumatic stress syndrome or chronic fatigue syndrome (Majer *et al*., 2010). In terms of cognitive impairment, research has shown that memory is affected and that memory is a key element of depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome (Majer *et al*., 2010).

Engstrom (2008:7) called the interaction between emotions and cognition the "affective dimension of learning". This 'affective dimension' has been extensively acknowledged as an influential factor in students' academic success, but researchers and educators have not been attentive to affective barriers that impact on throughput and completion (Kannan & Miller, 2009). In recent developments in adult and continuing education, the role of emotions in learning has increasingly been viewed as being essential and crucial in judgment, wisdom, knowledge and meaning making (Dirkx, 2008). The role of emotions is summed up as "a neurophysiological response to an external or internal stimulus, occurring within and rendered meaningful through a

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particular sociocultural context and discourse, and integral to one's sense of self" (Dirkx, 2008:13).

Msila (2007) confirms that when the learner's background, history and community are taken into account, learning is more likely to occur as it becomes more learner-focused. Brookfield (1995), in providing an overview of adult learning, determined that, in order to understand adult learning, teachers needed to know the connections with the learning experiences in childhood and adolescence. Dirkx (2008) also asserts that it is incumbent on the teacher to help students comprehend their emotional experiences within the context of the curriculum and learning, which reflects one of the most challenging tasks of teachers. Furthermore, curricula content may induce strong emotional reaction from students through memories of past trauma or adverse experiences (Dirkx, 2008).

In view of the evocative and emotional nature of learning, Towle (Chung, 2010:76) argued that the strain caused by learning within the social work context was attributed to the notion that social work "engages the emotions deeply". Emotions may either block or enable the learning experience through two means, as illustrated in the following manner (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14: The pathway of emotions in learning
Source: Chung, 2010

Figure 4.13 shows the influence of learning on emotions in that, firstly, the learner enters the learning situation with socio-emotional experiences and, secondly, learning can trigger emotional reactions. Charlotte Towle (Chung, 2010:76) has stated that social work educators should understand students' learning in relation to their "human needs, wants and strivings".

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The views of various authors have confirmed that the role of emotions in learning is no longer seen as a prohibitive factor, but is increasingly acknowledged as a vital ingredient and manifestation in learning, which confirms that learning should take the affective domain into consideration.

4.10 FOSTERING SELF-AWARENESS IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The third aspect in adverse childhood experiences and professional learning in social work education is self-awareness. Self-awareness has been explored as a necessary skill in the context of the helper (section 4.4.2). As a helper (i.e. social worker), it would be essential to learn to become self-aware – to discern, for example, one's emotions, emotional 'triggers', strengths and vulnerabilities. Recommendations for developing self-awareness include the following (Urdang, 2010):

4.10.1 INTRODUCING CONTEMPORARY PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACHES

Social work education and training has over-emphasised its external or 'outer world' focus, for example on systems, ecological, cognitive-behavioural, anti-discriminatory, or strengths theories and has de-emphasised its internal or 'inner world' focus, for example on the internalised feelings and experiences of the client (Urdang, 2010). Classical psychodynamic theory is traditionally related to Sigmund Freud. This has been a source of controversy and contention that became discredited and subsequently outdated in terms of its neglect of the role of the external (objective) world of the individual (Coady & Lehman, 2008; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). Psychodynamic approaches became bolstered by the ideas of John Bowlby in his Attachment Theory as a contemporary psychodynamic approach (Coady & Lehman, 2008; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). In psychodynamic approaches the individual's past (mainly childhood experiences) is used in such a way that it informs the present at the level of the individual's current experiences relating to relationships, attachments, and interaction (Bruschweiler-Stern *et al*., 2007; Coady & Lehman, 2008). These approaches contend that the aim of intervention is the

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facilitation of emotional and cognitive insight into the relationships between previous and present problems (Coady & Lehman, 2008).

It is argued that, by incorporating psychodynamic theory into the curriculum, students learn awareness, knowledge and skills regarding client traits, reactions and behaviours. A thorough knowledge of human nature is also essential to the fostering of this type of self-reflection. Psychodynamic theory explicates the issues of transference and counter-transference that are central to self-awareness development.

4.10.2 TEACHING SELF-AWARENESS

Social work education may challenge many students to re-assess previously-held beliefs and opinions about themselves and the world they inhabit (Hancock, 1997). Courses are thus designed to include learning about diverse peoples, cultures and social traditions and behaviour which may be very different from their own. In emphasising the significance of teaching self-awareness, Mosek and Ben-Oz (2011:90) contend that, although students need social work practice skills, "…of equal importance are students' self-awareness and an understanding of how they make use of themselves in developing their professional identity". Hancock (1997) states that, in learning about themselves as social work students, the key principle of self-awareness is assessed according to three dimensions, illustrated as follows (Figure 4.15):

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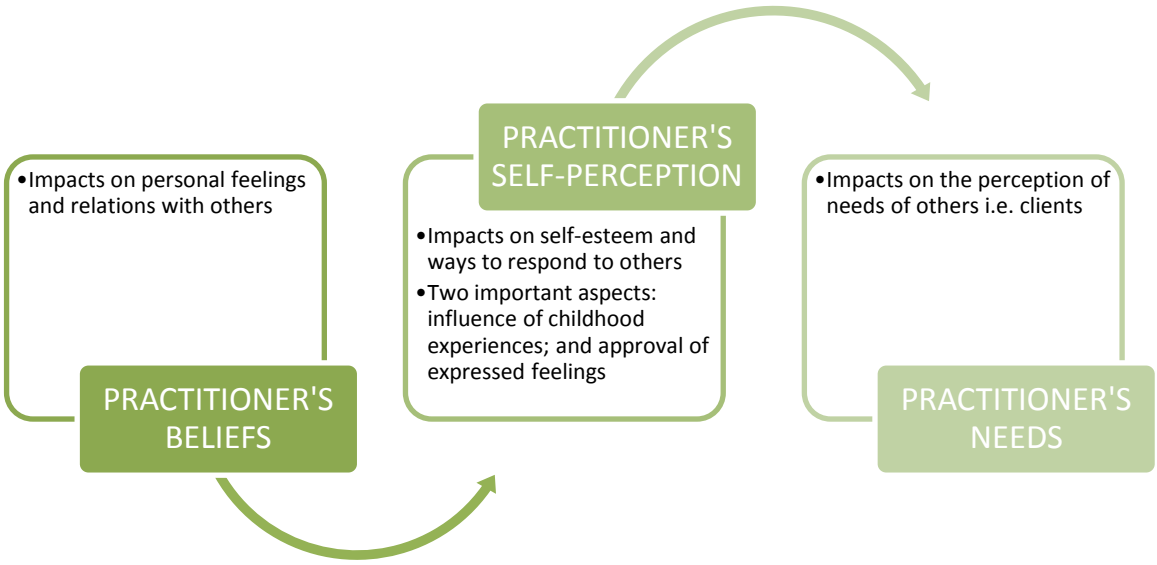

Figure 4.15: Dimensions of self-awareness of practitioners
Source: Hancock, 1997

This diagram in Figure 4.15 shows the interrelated dimensions of self-awareness according to which students can assess their self-awareness in accordance with practitioner's beliefs, self-perception and needs. Through self-awareness education, students are often confronted ('face-to-face') with their 'true' selves. Therefore, learning opportunities must be focused on preparing students for the possible outcomes of these honest appraisals.

In the helping relationship with clients, students need to appreciate the relational characteristics of the work; learn how to make sense of these characteristics through reflection after the fact; and, where necessary (with experience and training), immediately with the client as the narrative unfolds (Urdang, 2010). Another focus area consists of setting boundaries and using professional authority or power. Urdang (2010:532) asserts that "[t]he ability to set limits is necessary in order to establish the basic parameters of the social work relationship; it also lays the foundation for setting clear boundary demarcation". The following are key learning sites in teaching self-awareness (Urdang, 2010:532):

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4.10.2.1 Classroom learning

Urdang (2010) stresses that self-reflection is necessary throughout the social work curriculum (see Chapter 3 Section 3.10.1). A technique recommended is 'anticipatory awareness', where the educator opens up discussion by alerting students to the possible effects of the topic on the students, especially if they have a personal history or trauma in relation to the topic. The point in anticipatory awareness is to become conscientised to possible emotional reactions to developing a professional identity. Additionally, the educator needs to create a safe environment for students to share any personal information (evoked by the topic) without fear of being criticised or belittled. Educators are also role models by emphasising the importance of self-awareness in social work and sharing personal experiences of becoming self-aware that would be of benefit within the teaching and learning context (Urdang, 2010).

Reupert (2009:766) asserts that self-awareness activities focus on students' insights and encounters in the world. These activities would shed light on unknown personal flaws or biases. Such activities establish a "process of examining unspoken assumptions, beliefs, values, schemas and rules", especially when students are being trained to work within diverse contexts (Reupert, 2009:766). Some activities include the following (Table 4.9):

Table 4.9: Self-awareness exercises for social work learning

WRITTEN TASKS	• Portfolios • Journal writing
CULTURAL EXERCISES	• Art, music, dance, collages
REFLECTIVE EXERCISES	• Looking backward, inward, outward, and forward regarding prior life experiences

Source: Reupert, 2009

Table 4.9 explicates three types of exercises that can be used by social work lecturers to foster self-awareness. Reupert (2009:766) has highlighted the following disadvantages of self-awareness and reflective activities (Table 4.10):

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Table 4.10: Disadvantages of self-awareness and self-reflective exercises

DISADVANTAGES OF SELF-AWARENESS AND REFLECTIVE EXERCISES				
Could be destructive to self-esteem as being too negatively focused	Exercises formulated in unclear, deficit-based terms	Complete objectivity and insight is unachievable	Exercises do not always integrate perceptiveness and application	Exercises do not automatically mean that students are more effective in the field

Source: Reupert, 2009

Table 4.10 shows the disadvantages of indiscriminate use of self-awareness and reflective exercises. As in any teaching and learning exercise, careful thought and consideration should go into learning exercises in order to maximise the benefits of the task. Boud has also proffered the following examples of poor reflective exercises (cited in Reupert, 2009:767):

- *Recipe following*: exercises that stick to a basic and pedantic order
- *Intellectualising content*: exercises that overly-emphasise cerebral and rational reflection without balancing emotional and personal aspects

Table 4.10 and the aforementioned examples of poor reflective exercises have provided clarification regarding the appropriate use of self-awareness and reflective exercise. Clarification is needed because it is argued that self-awareness is vital in social work learning and it therefore is advisable to get it right. Thus, Reupert (2009:767) emphasises that "it is important for students to not only become more aware of the self that they bring to their practice, but also to consider how the self that they bring might be purposefully and intentionally applied". In the next section, self-awareness in fieldwork learning is discussed.

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4.10.2.2 Fieldwork learning

Fieldwork learning provides opportunities for student's professional self to develop as they become more exposed to the challenges of working with clients in the field (Urdang, 2010). In this endeavour, though, supportive supervision is vital where the teaching emphasis must be on the learning process of fieldwork tasks and the professional development of the student through self-awareness and reflection. There are two important fieldwork tasks that provide opportunities for students to learn, not social work professional practice competencies only, but also self-awareness (Urdang, 2010).

(i) Process recordings: Regular process recordings are essential learning tools (Urdang, 2010). Urdang (2010:533) clarifies what process recordings mean: "It is not a script; it is not a verbatim transcription of the interview. It is a first-person narrative describing the essence of the interactions between the clinician and the client, including non-verbal communications and affect". The student's self-reflection on her/his responses and observations are also an important component in process recording. This provides the supervisor with additional insight as to the learning needs of the student. Process recordings thus are a key tool in furthering self-reflection and self-awareness. Ultimately, the student will process all that she/he has learnt through process recordings and these will become assimilated into the student's practice (Urdang, 2010).

(ii) Observations: Self-reflectiveness is the foundation for professional maturation, which must then be fostered and developed through social work education and training. Regular observation with repeated comprehensive examination will allow student's self-reflective competencies to be enhanced through comprehending their personal responses to the observed and evaluating what is being observed (Meek, 2005; Urdang, 2010). In observation, the emphasis is on experiencing themselves as observers rather than problem-solvers. Mindfulness has developed as a major practice to enhance awareness for the aim of self-observation and understanding the world (Birnbaum & Birnbaum, 2008). The practice of mindfulness can incrementally facilitate operational principles such as acceptance, trust, becoming non-judgmental, self-awareness and developing an authentic personal and professional identity (Birnbaum & Birnbaum, 2008; Shier & Graham, 2011). In this way mindfulness will ensure that the practitioner's reactions do not transgress professional boundaries and counter-transference (Meek, 2005).

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Introducing psychodynamic approaches in teaching and learning in social work is a significant recommendation that may be quite contentious because of its historical roots, but would be helpful in re-orienting social work education in terms of the learning needs of students.

4.11 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE SOCIAL WORK PEDAGOGY IN SOCIAL WORK

Part III focused on the implications of ACEs (Part I) and the self in professional learning in social work (Part II) for teaching and learning in social work. Three main learning areas emerged from the literature, namely ethical and professional conduct; the role of emotions in learning; and fostering self-awareness in social work education. These learning areas have implications for current social work curricula which have become entrenched in conventional social work education.

4.12 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

The objective of Chapter 4 was to explicate ACEs and discuss the implications of ACEs in the learning experiences of students and thus the teaching practices in social work education, particularly in the context of professional learning. Through the literature, it became clear that ACEs and their aftermath have a direct impact on an individual's capacity to learn. The physiological and emotional bases for this have been confirmed by the literature. The impact on learning was thus established. In defining the elements of ACEs as construct and expounding on components thereof assisted in establishing their implications. Social support and resilience are two positive elements that emerged from the literature. Social support was identified as vital in the study, firstly, as jumpstarting positive outcomes out of adverse circumstances, but also highlighting its significance in cultivating it as a helpful resource. Resilience was recognised as the ultimate outcome of endurance. Resilience is a strength and is not easily attained. It is a characteristic that must be unearthed during assessment.

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The helper and helping are two crucial components in social work practice. There has been an over-emphasis on the helping in recent years and insufficient focus on the helper and the use of self. There is need to refocus and rediscover the importance of the influence and impact of the peculiar traits of the helper on the helping relationship. Thus, the development of a professional identity and the principle of self-awareness are both means of peeling away the layers of professionalism and laying bare the authentic person with her/his subjective feelings, thoughts and opinions. The impact of this notion was explored with regard to its impact on the client and the helping. In the context of the helping, the use of self and transference and counter-transference reactions were particularly noted as means to show negative and positive subjectivity.

All the above, in turn, implied that teaching and learning would be affected. The literature identified key learning sites to be ethical and professional conduct; the role of emotions in learning; and reclaiming psychodynamic theories. These three aspects can serve as points of departure for further discussion.

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CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was focused on the adverse childhood experiences of third-year social work students at a particular HEI. The goal was to gain an understanding of the archetypal adverse experiences and the role of these experiences during a specific social work class that focused on family well-being. Finally it sought teaching practices and learning activities that would be beneficial within this context.

Mouton (2006:35) states that research consists of

> …the application of a variety of standardised methods and techniques in the pursuit of valid knowledge. Precisely because scientists aim to generate truthful knowledge, they are committed to the use of objective methods and procedures that increase the likelihood of attaining validity.

This chapter therefore focuses on expanding on these methods and techniques pertaining to the study in order to obtain authentic data and resultant knowledge useful in the teaching and learning context.

There are three typical purposes of social research, namely exploring, describing and explaining (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). This study emphasised exploring and describing. In exploring, this research examined a topic that "is relatively new" and "may lead to insight and comprehension" (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:79). This means that the researcher revealed the broad landscape of the data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). In describing, this research provided detailed and precise information about the issue in terms of "typical features, idiosyncrasies, and exceptions" (Bernard & Ryan, 2010:9).

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Research objectives have been identified as exploring and describing three main aspects, namely the theoretical landscape of the study; typical (and deviating) adverse childhood experiences as well as the coping measures of student participants; the learning experiences of student participants; and the teaching experiences of staff participants, to recommend helpful teaching and learning practices.

Emerging from the research goal and objectives, the central research question was the following: *What are the learning experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university with regard to the role of their own adverse childhood experiences*? The resultant sub-questions focused on asking student participants about their adverse childhood experiences; how they interpret, experience and cope in class learning about similar incidents of childhood adversity; asking staff participants about their experiences with third-year students' engagement with their learning; and asking both student and staff participants about what they viewed as helpful teaching and learning practices.

Thus the unit of analysis was focused on third-year social work students (individuals). Patton (2002:228) clarifies this decision, stating that "often individual people, clients, or students are the unit of analysis" (also see Babbie, 2014; Babbie & Mouton, 2007). He clarifies further that choosing individuals as the unit of analysis "means that the primary focus of data collection will be on what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting" (Patton, 2002:228). This decision signified that individual students comprise the unit being analysed in terms of two variables, namely adverse childhood experiences and teaching and learning experiences and practices.

The structure of the chapter takes the form of three main parts. In Part 1 the philosophy of the research is explicated on the basis of three vital considerations:

- The first section (section 5.2) required the researcher to reflect on the study's philosophical assumptions; the second section (section 5.3) required that the researcher deliberate on the metatheories that would inform the study; the third section (section 5.4) necessitated that the researcher examine which methodological research paradigm would direct the research process. These three considerations were inextricably linked and had to occur a priori.

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- In Part II the researcher pondered the appropriate research design and method (strategy) for data collection and analysis and decided that the case study design would be the most incisive.
- All the afore-mentioned tasks and responsibilities took place within the stipulated ethical parameters and behaviour required of the researcher (Part III).
- The chapter is concluded with a reflection of the main points of the research methodology.

PART I: RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND PARADIGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Fouché and Schurink (2011:323) confirm that the researcher must locate the study "within a specific framework with interrelated assumptions, concepts, values and practices that comprise the way one thinks reality should be viewed (ontology) and studied (epistemology)". The researcher carefully considered how the research goal and objectives influenced and directed ontological and epistemological viewpoints. These ontological and epistemological viewpoints equate to paradigmatic considerations (Houghton, Hunter & Meskell, 2012). Guba and Lincoln defined a paradigm as "a set of basic beliefs or a frame of reference that explains how individuals perceive the nature of the world and their place in it" (Houghton *et al*., 2012:34).

Paradigmatic considerations consist of three levels in which the philosophical and methodological parameters of research are contextualised (Creswell, 2007; Hemin, 2002). The following diagram depicts the broad philosophical research base of any study comprising these three levels of paradigmatic considerations: (i) the philosophical assumptions of the study; (ii) the metatheoretical worldview underpinning the study; and (iii) the methodological paradigm according to which principles the research is undertaken.

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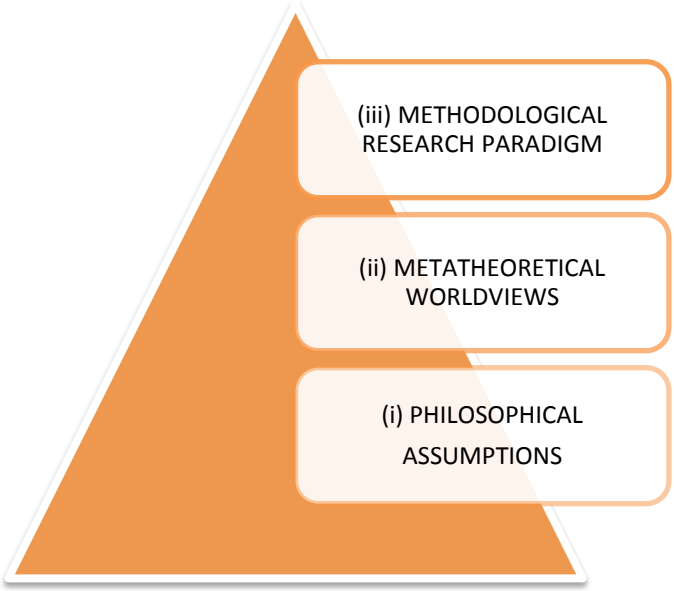

Figure 5.1: Philosophical underpinnings of research
Source: Creswell, 2007; Hemin, 2002

Figure 5.1 depicts the hierarchical relationship amongst the three levels critical before commencing any research study, but also parallels the role of the research goal and objectives alongside these processes. The triangle illustrates the sequential steps in the researcher's philosophical deliberations, starting with broad assumptions that are foundational to the study and the apex of the research paradigm. Each level will be discussed and the implications for the study explicated.

5.2 LEVEL I: PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PARADIGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) proposed three axiomatic considerations or accepted beliefs that the researcher had to reflect on with regard to particular paradigms and the underlying beliefs of the researcher as well. Creswell (2007) confirmed that each study has embedded philosophical assumptions that must be critically appraised before research can begin (also see Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001). Building on Denzin and Lincoln's assumptions, Creswell (2013) proposed four philosophical assumptions that a researcher must consider to determine her/his philosophical stance in relation to the research enquiry.

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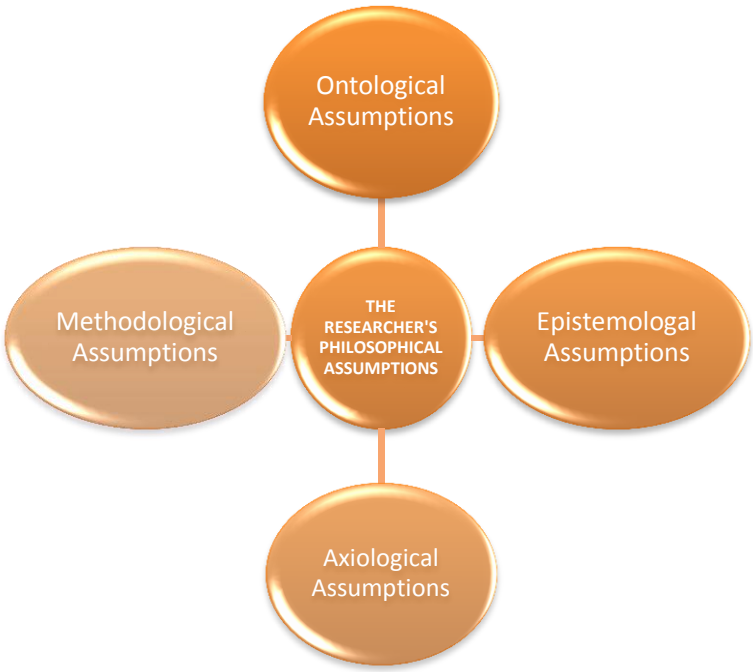

Figure 5.2: Philosophical assumptions of the researcher
Source: Creswell, 2013

The four assumptions contextualised the reflection process of the researcher prior to the commencement of the research study. These assumptions assisted the researcher's consideration of personal beliefs and the implications for the research. The assumptions, beliefs and research implications are explicated below.

5.2.1 THE ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION

Ontology is traditionally viewed as that part of philosophy known as metaphysics and focuses on existential questions about what exists. Smith (2003:155) confirms that "[o]ntology as a branch of philosophy is the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in every area of reality". The ontological assumption means that the researcher considered her position regarding the "nature of reality" or being (existence); or whether the researcher believed in multiple realities or whether the participants or the readers of the research do (Creswell, 2013, 2007; Mouton, 2006). The fundamental question in social research concerns the pondering of the extent to which the natural and social worlds are alike or

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consonant. Researchers who are in agreement that adequate consonance exists between these two worlds identify themselves as "ontological naturalists or positivists" and support evolutionary or systems theory. Researchers who contest this consonance, identify themselves as "anti-positivists or realists" (Mouton, 2006:47). The implications for the researcher and the study are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: The implications of ontological assumptions for research study

THE RESEARCHER'S ONTOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY	The researcher (and thus the study) follows the belief that there are fundamental differences between the natural and social worlds and the same research methods cannot be used.
	The study focus and objectives concern describing multiple realities.
	Evidence of these multiple realities can be obtained by using several quotes, replicating the exact words of the participants and reflecting their different viewpoints and realities.

Table 5.1 draws the link between ontological assumptions, the researcher's personal beliefs and the implications for the research study. This research therefore is ontological in nature as it "aims to generate knowledge about the social world" or social reality (Mouton, 2006:46), using many quotes to show multiple 'viewpoints and realities'. In the next discussion, the epistemological assumption will be expounded.

5.2.2 THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION

The epistemological assumption requires that the researcher must consider where she would source the knowledge or data (Creswell, 2007). Babbie (2014:4) refers to epistemology as the "science of knowing" and Cakir (2012:664) defines it as "the theory of scientific knowledge". In qualitative research, the researcher attempted to become as close to the source of knowledge as possible, meaning close to the participants or 'the field' where participants live and work in their "search for 'true' or at least 'truthful' knowledge" (Mouton, 2006:28). The length of time spent in the field determines what researchers know, which increases the richness and authenticity of

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the data. Mouton (2006:28) asserts that truthful knowledge in the Greek notion of episteme means "knowledge that is well substantiated". Table 5.2 delineates the link between the epistemological assumption and the study.

Table 5.2: The implications of epistemological assumptions for research study

THE RESEARCHER'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY	The researcher sourced the data directly from participants who have first-hand experience and knowledge regarding the research problem.
	The researcher had become 'close to the source' as the researcher has built up a teaching relationship with student participants since their first year of study.
	To ensure a substantive study, the researcher collected in-depth data.

Source: Mouton, 2006

The epistemological assumptions show the importance of the source where knowledge was obtained to facilitate the substantiveness of the study. In Table 5.2 the epistemological implications for the study has shown the location of the data for the study and how substantiveness was to be ensured. In the next section the axiological assumption is discussed.

5.2.3 THE AXIOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION

The axiological assumption means that the researcher had to consider the nature and type of values and of value judgments within the study and needed to consciously report on their values and biases, as well as the resultant values from within the study. The following axiological aspects pertinent to the study are outlined in Table 5.3:

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Table 5.3: The axiological assumption and implications for research study

THE RESEARCHER'S AXIOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY	The researcher is part of a formal institution of higher education and a professional council which have rules and ethics that set parameters for appropriate conduct.
	The researcher is also lecturer of the student participants and colleague to staff participants.
	The researcher had to carefully reflect on her values, family life, and possible biases emanating from her own childhood and family life (see further section 5.8.5 and 5.9).

Source: Mouton, 2006

Table 5.3 illustrates the importance of considering the personal values and conduct of the researcher. Values and beliefs form an integral part of the research process with students and staff as participants. The nature of the relationship between researcher and participants could easily have given rise to unethical behaviour and decision making from the researcher. The methodological assumption is considered in the next section.

5.2.4 THE METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION

Creswell (2013, 2007) views the methodological assumption as meaning that the researcher had to consider whether the study would be informed by the type of reasoning or logic followed, namely deductive or inductive reasoning (also see Delport & De Vos, 2007; Mouton, 2006):

- Deductive reasoning: Deduction is used when a researcher wants to test an existing theory or propositions that necessitate constructing hypotheses. Collected evidence serves to confirm or repudiate such hypotheses. Conclusions drawn are cogent (logical) and obvious. Deduction thus moves from the general (the theory) to the specific (particular conclusion) and is associated with positivism.
- Inductive reasoning: Induction is used to generalise from a sample to a larger population. Reasoning advances from the particular (a sample) to the general (conclusions about the population). Conclusions drawn are provisional and exploratory (truth as probable, rather than proven).

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In considering deductive and inductive reasoning or logic underlying the study, the implication for this study is shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: The methodological assumption and implications for the research study

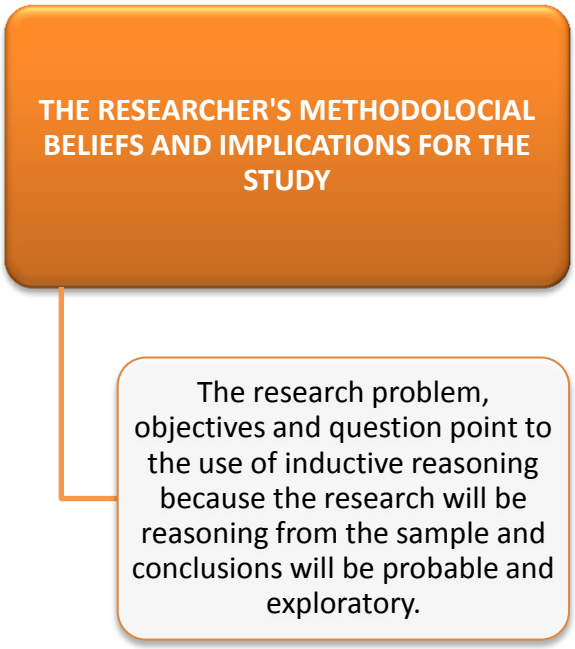

Table 5.4 shows the implications of the methodological assumption for the research study regarding the use of the inductive reasoning from the sample and probable and exploratory study conclusions.

Mindful of the four philosophical assumptions, the researcher carefully considered critical views with regard to each assumption in relation to the purpose and objectives of the research study (Creswell, 2007). These assumptions inform the metatheoretical paradigms or worldviews, a fundamental set of beliefs that underlie the research procedures.

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5.3 LEVEL II: METATHEORETICAL WORLDVIEWS

Metatheory is a form of philosophical scholarship that extricates and links the knowledges of various paradigms and theories to construct an integrated and comprehensive theoretical framework in which to locate research questions (Abrams & Hogg, 2004; Edwards, 2010). Thus the discussion in level II centres on the explication of overarching research theories.

This research formed part of the social sciences defined as sciences that focus on the dimensions of social and human society (De Vos *et al*., 2011). Social sciences are often called "soft sciences" because of the focus on human existence and social interactions that pose distinct research challenges in terms of the changeability, observance, measurement and generalisation of human life (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Brod, Tesler & Christenson, 2009; De Vos *et al*., 2011)., Different approaches (or worldviews) were therefore developed to research "human phenomena as scientific matter" (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:5). Lietz and Zayas (2010) confirm that the selected worldview that guides the research assists in clarifying the epistemological stance of the researcher, the research methods used, and the conceptualisation of the study.

De Vos *et al*. (2011) discerned seven such worldviews (metatheories), namely positivism, postpositivism, constructivism, interpretivism, critical approach, feminism, and postmodernism. Creswell (2007) discerned four worldviews: postpositivism, social constructivism, advocacy / participatory, and pragmatism. Babbie and Mouton (2007) delineated three worldviews, namely the positivist, the phenomenological or interpretivist, and the critical tradition. From these offerings, six worldviews have been discerned as common, as depicted in Table 5.5:

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Table 5.5: Metatheoretical worldviews of research

Common / Dominant Worldviews	Creswell, 2013, 2007	Babbie and Mouton, 2007	De Vos *et al.*, 2011
Positivism	Not indicated	Positivism	Positivism
Interpretivism (Social constructivism; Phenomenological)	Social Constructivism	The Phenomenological / Interpretivist tradition	Constructivist/ Interpretivist tradition
Critical Approach (Feminism; Advocacy; Participatory)	Advocacy / Participatory; Critical theory; Feminisim)	The Critical tradition	The Critical approach; Feminism
Postmodernism	Postmodernism	Not indicated	Postmodernism
Pragmatism	Pragmatism	Not indicated	Not indicated
Postpositivism	Postpositivism	Not indicated	Postpositivism

Source: Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Creswell, 2013, 2007; De Vos et al.., 2011

Table 5.5 illustrates the different paradigms on offer in three well-known research texts (nationally and internationally). There is strong similarity amongst the views but also some distinct differences. The first column represents the six common elements that have been grouped into metatheoretical worldviews in accordance with their common characteristics. These are discussed in the following section, together with requisite research methodologies which are depicted in the following table (Table 5.6):

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Table 5.6: Metatheory and research methodologies

Common Worldviews / Metatheory	Main elements of Worldview	Research Methodologies
Positivism	In this view, scientific assertions are validated based solely on empirical (observable) evidence in accordance with a rigid scientific method of inquiry.	Quantitative
Interpretivism	This view aims on acquiring an insider perspective on people's feelings and experiences. The researcher focuses on interpreting the underlying reasons and meanings of people's experiences and behaviour.	Qualitative
The critical approach (including critical theory; feminism; advocacy; participatory)	This view has a research focus on an action plan that will impact on people's lives. Marginalised groups form the research participants and the focus is on the social exclusion issues that these groups face such as oppression, discrimination and social injustice. This research provides a voice for disempowered groups.	Participatory action research / qualitative research
Postmodernism	Research is focused on the search for the real experiences of participants within their particular (local) socio-historical contexts. Its focus, for example, on the current social issues of people and on the intersection of diverse identities which brings multiple viewpoints and knowledge generation.	Participatory / collaborative research
Pragmatism	The centrality of the outcomes or goals of the research dominates this worldview rather than historical factors. The researcher focuses on practical corollaries and resolutions.	Mixed methods
Postpositivism	This view has its origins in positivism which thus characterise postpositivism as reductionist and logical. Research analysis is also cause-and-effect orientated based on priori theories. Post-positivism acknowledges that the social world is complex and diverse and that universal and unitary laws of explaining phenomena are no longer appropriate.	Mixed methods

Source: Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Creswell, 2013, 2007; De Vos et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2009

Table 5.6 illustrates the common worldviews that have been extrapolated from literature, as well as the research methodologies that are appropriate to establish the relationship between the metatheory and the research methodology.

It is essential to understand positivism as a metatheory because research methods in the social sciences started with the advent of positivism. Briefly, the origins of positivism can be traced to

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the early 16th century and predicated on two philosophies which would form the basis of the scientific method, namely (Hamrah & Bazghandi, 2012; Henderson, 2011):

- Cartesian rationalism, which is attributed to Rene Descartes, a French philosopher (1596-1650), and signifies the separation of the body and mind, with the mind differentiating humans as rational, as opposed to the behaviour of other life forms.
- Baconian empiricism of Sir Francis Bacon, an English philosopher (1561-1626), which proposes that true knowledge mainly emanates from sensory experiences and evidence.

These ideas consolidated the scientific method, which was given broader application through the writings and research of two prominent sociologists, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim, in terms of translating the scientific method to the field of sociology, known as positivism (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Flick, 2014). Positivism is summarised as possessing the following principles illustrated in Figure 5.3 (Henderson, 2011:341):

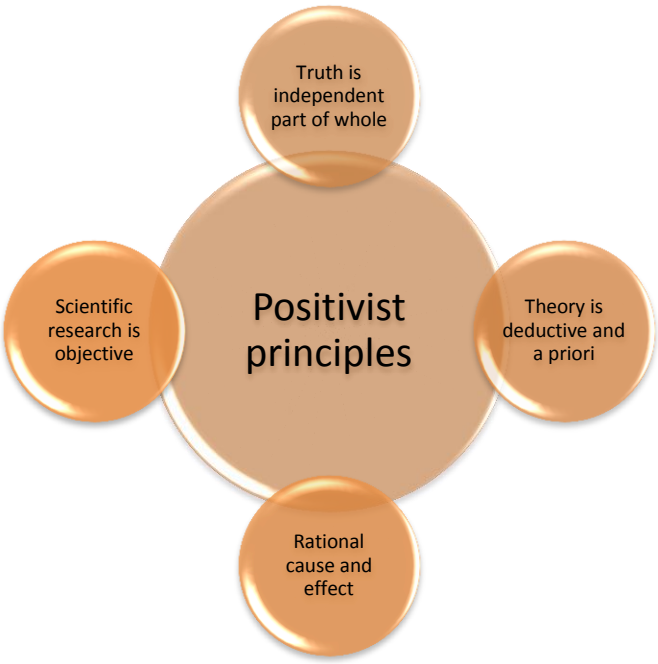

Figure 5.3: Positivist principles
Source: Henderson, 2011

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The four principles shown in Figure 5.3 have formed the impetus for subsequent research paradigms and methodologies based on or opposed to the central ideas of positivism. Interpretivism, in this sense, was also known as anti-positivism and has spawned the modern and participatory research methods we have today (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; De Vos *et al*., 2011). Emanating from these philosophical ideas, this research is also anti-positivistic and thus is essentially interpretivist.

5.3.1 THE INTERPRETIVIST WORLDVIEW / METATHEORY

The interpretivist worldview follows the emic point of view (studying social phenomena from the insider perspective). In the next section the advent of Interpretivism is discussed.

5.3.1.1 The origins of Interpretivism: The role of Hermeneutics and *Verstehen*

This worldview is founded on two interrelating schools of thought, the German intellectual tradition called hermeneutics and the *verstehen* tradition in sociology.

(i) Hermeneutics: The etymology of hermeneutics is located in the Greek mythical figure, Hermes, who was viewed as a messenger, intermediary and interpreter between people and the gods (Berque, 2010; De Vos, Schultz & Patel, 2007; Kleining & Witt, 2001). Conventionally the origin of the term is located in the Greek word *hermeneus* which means "interpret" (Berque, 2010; Dictionary of spiritual terms, 2003). The word and meaning became established in early western philosophy through the works of Aristotle and Plato (McCaffrey, Raffin-Bouchal & Moules, 2012). In philosophy, hermeneutics thus became "the art and science of interpretation especially as it applies to text" (Tan, Wilson & Olver, 2009:3; also Lehtinen, 2009; Kleining & Witt, 2009). Hermeneutics became further established in philosophy and research through the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), both of whom focused on the interpretation of texts, communication and documentation in human development and knowledge building (Kleining & Witt, 2009; Lehtinen, 2009).

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(ii) *Verstehen*: Schleiermacher contended that, in the understanding of texts, the researcher has to psychologically imagine her/himself in the position of the writer (Lehtinen, 2009). Dilthey also viewed this empathic stance of the researcher towards the original writer of the text as vital, but put forward "historical consciousness" as an important ingredient. This means that the researcher must have knowledge of the historical context of the writer and the writing (Lehtinen, 2009). Dilthey proposed the notion of *verstehen* (understanding) to conceptualise this understanding. *Verstehen* signifies the understanding "of the everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings" (De Vos, Schultze & Patel, 2007:6). He also wrestled with the "explanation of the natural sciences and the understanding (*verstehen*) of the human sciences" (Tan *et al*., 2009:3; Kleining & Witt, 2009). The differences between nature and mind lay the basis for what Dilthey called the "*geisteswissenschaften*" (spirit and science) where he identified hermeneutics and *verstehen* as its foundational principles (Kleining & Witt, 2009).

Hermeneutics and *verstehen* did not only form the basis of '*geisteswissenschaften*' (human sciences) but were its founding principles. Interpretivism as Metatheory in the human sciences is explored further in the next section.

5.3.1.2 Interpretivism and research in the human / social sciences

The establishment of interpretivism as research worldview was carried further by two key social scientists, namely: Max Weber and Georg Simmel:

- Max Weber (1864-1920): Building on the differences between nature and mind, Weber confirmed that these differences rested on the intellectual objectives of the researcher, not on the research methods or the research problem. The roots of hermeneutics and *verstehen* can be seen in Max Weber's focus on "the subjective meanings that human actors attach to their actions in their mutual orientations within specific social-historical contexts" (Coser, 1977:217). Thus Weber emphasised the value-laden or subjective overtones of choosing research problems in the human sciences juxtaposed with objective research methods. Weber viewed *verstehen* as a precursor to finding the causal relationship in the research process (Coser, 1977).

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- Georg Simmel (1858-1918): Simmel contended that the arena for sociology was human interaction and its manifestation within the group context. Simmel's primary focus was on the social process and the complex networks in which people interrelate, which are pivotal in the construction and re-construction of the society (Coser, 1977). These seminal ideas were encapsulated in Simmel's foremost volume, *Sociology: Investigations on the Form of Sociation*, 1908, and contributed to what would be known as interpretivism.

The historical development of interpretivism paralleled the history of research in the classic social sciences such as sociology and anthropology. The innovative (and radical) thinking and research methodology undertaken at the time were in contrast to positivistic and mechanistic processes that were universally accepted as the only scientific method.

Rubin and Babbie (2009:37) sum up interpretivism as being "a research paradigm that focuses on gaining an empathic understanding of how people feel inside, seeking to interpret individual's everyday experiences, their deeper meanings and feelings and the idiosyncratic reasons for their behaviors". Interpretivism then established the philosophy and research framework for research with human beings in the quest for knowledge and the meaning of the human experience.

Paradigms that have emerged in this metatheory are phenomenology and social constructivism. Regarding the appropriate methodological paradigm, the qualitative approaches are applicable.

5.3.2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Emerging from the interpretivist worldview is the social constructivist paradigm. This study is related to the social constructivist paradigm because understandings of the world people live in are sought (Creswell, 2007). In social constructivism, persons' subjective meanings are derived socially and therefore meanings and interpretations are formed with others through events which impacted on their lives. Although these meanings commonly are socially construed in the company of others, this study focused on assignments (textual evidence) and individual interviews for data collection. Social constructivism is further confirmed because the research is focused on the interaction patterns amongst people and on comprehending their traditional and

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cultural contexts. The researcher also needed to be aware of her own socio-cultural context and the role these may have in her interpretation of data (see section 5.8.5 and Annexure J).

Participants explored their understanding of the domain in which they live (i.e. childhood experiences) and work (i.e. the educational domain). In this way they developed their own perception of their experiences. These perceptions and meanings are complex and thus the researcher searched for the intricacy of viewpoints as opposed to reducing these into simplified meanings. Complexity also develops as a result of the interaction between people in terms of social and cultural relations and traditions (therefore called social construction). Traditionally, social constructivism means that research does not start with a theory (such as in positivism) but knowledge rather is developed inductively or generatively. Thus the research questions are deliberately general and broad, so as to avoid restricting the meanings that participants can construe from the questions. According to Creswell (2013), it is possible in qualitative studies to utilise both deductive and inductive methods. Both methods were used in this study (see section 5.4.3 (iv)). The role of the researcher is to derive interpretations from the data within the framework of the literature. These interpretations are also inevitably formed by the researcher's own socio-cultural position (see Annexure J). The researcher's objective was to interpret the meanings that others (the participants) have about the world (Creswell, 2007) (see Chapters 6 and 7).

The outcome of the philosophical assumptions and metatheoretical considerations in level II was the confirmation of interpretivism as the worldview for this study which was based on the insider perspective crucial to the goal and objectives of this study. These reflections led to the social constructivist research paradigm as the study focused on exploring and describing people's lived experiences, which then also linked with the unit of analysis, which focused on individuals. In level II the research methodology and the selection of a particular approach for the research process and methods that were appropriate for this study have thus been discussed.

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5.4 LEVEL III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Hemin (2002:6) defines methodology as meaning "the philosophy underlying the process of research and the overall understanding of the system of methods used in the process of research". The philosophical assumption and metatheoretical worldview have firmly directed this research in following the qualitative research approach. Prior to these considerations, the focus of the research goal on exploring and describing also pointed to the appropriateness of qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Creswell (2013:44) contextualises qualitative research and confirms the precursor considerations undertaken by the researcher: "Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem".

5.4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research emerged as a result of varied developmental processes emanating from specific research environments (contexts) and rich narratives that provided in-depth knowledge and insight (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The following briefly summarises the emergence of qualitative research approaches as documented by Babbie & Mouton (2007) (also see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005):

(i) The emergence of field research in anthropology (before 1915): Initial research in anthropology was undertaken through secondary research methods (supplied by persons who had routine access to people and cultures), as researchers did not use direct evidence through the personal study of people and culture in their true settings. The first researcher who deviated from this accepted practice was the American scholar Frantz Boas (1858-1942), who contended that an alternative research design was needed to study the intricacies of other cultures in his book, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911). This was a major contribution to research, which was followed by the research on the Trobiander Islands (New Guinea) by the social anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942).

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(ii) The Chicago School (1915-1940): During this period, the Chicago School in the University of Chicago represented a significant site in the development of qualitative research. The pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey (1859-1952) and his students left a tradition of pragmatism and a research focus on real and first-hand (direct and observable) fieldwork. In addition, a major text on fieldwork was published by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, called *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. This text highlighted the 'perspective of the insider', which today is the hallmark of the qualitative approach.

(iii) The widespread acceptance of participant observation (1940s-1960): Based on the work conducted in the Chicago School, participant observation became entrenched within anthropology in the 1940s. Margaret Mead (1901-1979), with her research and publication of *The Mountain Arapesh* (1949) for which she immersed herself for two years in the study of a section of the population of Papua New Guinea, and Robert Redfield's (1897-1958) *The Primitive World and its Transformations* (1953), which is a thorough explication of the impact that cities have wrought to the lives of human beings, produced studies which were vital in terms of changing the nature of social research and the persona of the researcher from one that was aloof to one that is participatory and subjective in terms of the researcher's own impact on the research process. The rise of symbolic interactionism (George Mead and Herbert Blumer) also further cemented the research focus on "meaning and interaction" that extolled researchers "to become more reflective and sensitive to their interactions with subjects in the field" (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:57).

(iv) Methodological and epistemological legitimation (or the process of becoming normative) (1960s and beyond): Studies emerging from the 1960s grappled with the philosophical foundations of the qualitative approaches. It was argued that the methodological and epistemological bases of qualitative approaches were in "metatheories such as phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and existentialism" (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:57), which, in turn, also established and formalised an array of qualitative methods and techniques with rigorous verification methods. An example would be the ground-breaking text by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss called *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967).

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The historical development of qualitative research developed from the fields of Anthropology and Sociology through ground-breaking research that established nascent methods and techniques in research that mirrored the principles of anti-positivism and thus interpretivism.

5.4.2 THE NATURE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research encompasses varied conceptual and theoretical principles and methods drawing from the social sciences such as sociology, anthropology political science and psychology (Brod *et al.*, 2009:1264). The plethora of principles and methods necessitated the researcher to carefully select what was appropriate for her research and could contribute to depth and 'richness' of research findings and interpretation.

In keeping with interpretivism and the ontological assumption, Alasuutari (2010:147) states that "[q]ualitative methods produce different lenses on social reality, lenses that make society and its phenomena understandable". Qualitative research is thus located in the interpretivist tradition in which studies are conducted to explore and comprehend experiences in perspective (context) to provide complexity and insightfulness (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). In this way qualitative research is focused on clarifying the elements of social traditions and interactions as well as belief systems. Qualitative research was therefore deemed appropriate for the purpose and focus of this study of participants' childhood experiences. Additionally, it was focused on the interpretation of social experiences in terms of the emic perspective, since the participants had direct and insider knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (i.e. adverse childhood experiences) (Lietz & Zayas, 2010; Brod *et al*., 2009). Furthermore, with Denzin and Lincoln (2005) affirming that qualitative research is a contextual endeavour that positions the study within society, this study is contextualised within higher education as setting. This appropriateness is further supported by the explication of the essential characteristics of qualitative research.

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5.4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Creswell (2013:45-47) has provided a comprehensive exposition of the characteristics of the qualitative approach:

(i) Natural setting: The researcher collects data at the site or in the field where the participants experience the issue under study, whether where they live, work or where they study, as in the sample of this study. For this study, the data were collected at the site (the university and the particular module) where the participants experience the impact of ACEs on their social work learning.

(ii) Researcher as key instrument: The researcher was responsible for designing the research instruments and for collecting the data. In this study, determining the questions for the reflective assignment and the interview schedules for both student and staff participants were undertaken by the researcher.

(iii) Multiple methods: The researcher chose multiple methods for obtaining multiple opinions and meanings, as well as for triangulating the data for verification and trustworthiness of the process, the data and data analysis. Reflective assignments (textual data) and interviews for this study were selected by the researcher from two sources.

(iv) Inductive and deductive reasoning: Qualitative studies hitherto have focused on the inductive method of interpretation (Lietz & Zayas, 2010) but Creswell (2013) asserts that qualitative studies can follow both inductive and deductive methods reflecting the emergent nature of analysis. Interpretation can be derived inductively from the "bottom up" for building categories, patterns and themes from the data into an "increasingly more abstract unit of information" (Creswell, 2013:45). Deductive reasoning can also take place from the "top down", deriving interpretation from a theoretical base or premise and then "constantly being checked against the data" (Creswell, 2013:45). In this study, the researcher used both methods of interpretation: deductive because of existing categories arising from the literature in terms of ACEs; and inductive because categories, patterns and themes also emerged from the data.

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(v) Participants' meanings: The researcher's absolute focus was on the opinions, beliefs and experiences of the participants in the study regarding the research issue or problem and not on the researcher's opinions or perspectives from literature. In this study, the researcher allowed the data to be at the forefront of the research and infused the literature with the dominant focus that emerged from the data.

(vi) Emergent design: In the qualitative approach, the research design, phases and steps in the process are not slavishly followed. The researcher thus allowed the design and process to be modified as data collection and analysis commenced and became apparent. The researcher had to allow the research process to evolve as she became immersed in data collection and analysis.

(vii) Reflexivity: In the qualitative approach, there is an understanding that researchers bring their own subjectivities into the research process. Through the process of reflexivity, the researcher locates her/himself in the study in terms of "their background (e.g. work experiences, cultural experiences, and history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in a study, and what they have to gain from the study" (Creswell, 2013:47). In this study, the researcher used a reflexive journal to write about her personal interpretations and perceptions that occurred parallel to the research process, as well as to reflect on her own personal and social background and circumstances which could impact and influence the research process and interpretations.

(viii) Holistic account: Context and perspective are especially vital in qualitative research studies. Context refers to "the social and cultural construction of the variables of interest as integral to the concepts under objective examination" (Brod *et al*., 2009:1264). The researcher attempted to illustrate an in-depth perspective of the research issue. In the interpretation and discussion of research findings in this study, the researcher had to look wider in terms of the context within which the research issue or problem occurs and which exerts an influence or impact.

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The eight characteristics discussed here have provided depth to qualitative research in terms of knowledge and understanding of the essence of the approach and, importantly, also in terms of the working elements that a research design must possess. This knowledge funnelled the focus to the research design and method to be used to collect, analyse, and interpret the necessary data.

5.5 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND PARADIGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Part I established the philosophical parameters of this study and the key areas of consideration that the researcher had to critically appraise in order to arrive at the research study design and methods (Part II) which were predicated on the aforementioned.

PART II: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Research design explicates the planning of the research study, focusing on how the research investigation is to be undertaken and the data collected and analysed (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). A design consists of two main aspects: specifying what is to be researched and deciding how the research is to be done in the most efficient way. Creswell (2014, 2007) has delineated five approaches to research design from which the researcher can make a selection to enable her/him to undertake qualitative research. These approaches are as follows (Table 5.7):

Table 5.7: Approaches to research design

NARRATIVE	•Exploring the life of an individual participant
PHENOMENONOLOGY	•Exploring the essence of an experience
GROUNDED THEORY	•Developing a theory developed from the data
ETHNOGRAPHY	•Describing the experiences of a culture-sharing group
CASE STUDY	•An indepth description of a single or multiple cases

Source: Creswell, 2014, 2007

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From the five research approaches, case study research seemed more suited to the research objectives of this study, as it is focused on exploring and describing multiple cases of a particular issue. Case study research consists of the study of an issue by means of one or more cases within a particular context (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Creswell, 2013, 2007; Fouché & Schurink, 2011). Tight (2010:337) explains the case study method as "the detailed examination of a small sample – at its extreme a single sample – of an item of interest, and typically also from a particular perspective". The case study is an explication of the characteristics of qualitative research and its source, interpretivism, as can be seen in the following illustration of the process of decision making (Figure 5.4):

Figure 5.4: The process leading to the research design
Source: Creswell, 2014, 2007

Figure 5.4 shows the reflective process that culminated in the selection of the case study research design. The case study has a long and illustrious history which will provide insight in terms of its research beginnings and the ways in which case study has been used and developed since 1871.

5.6 THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

The case study design and the motivation for its use will be discussed in the framework of the following topics such as the origins and development, characteristics, types and the relevance of case study design.

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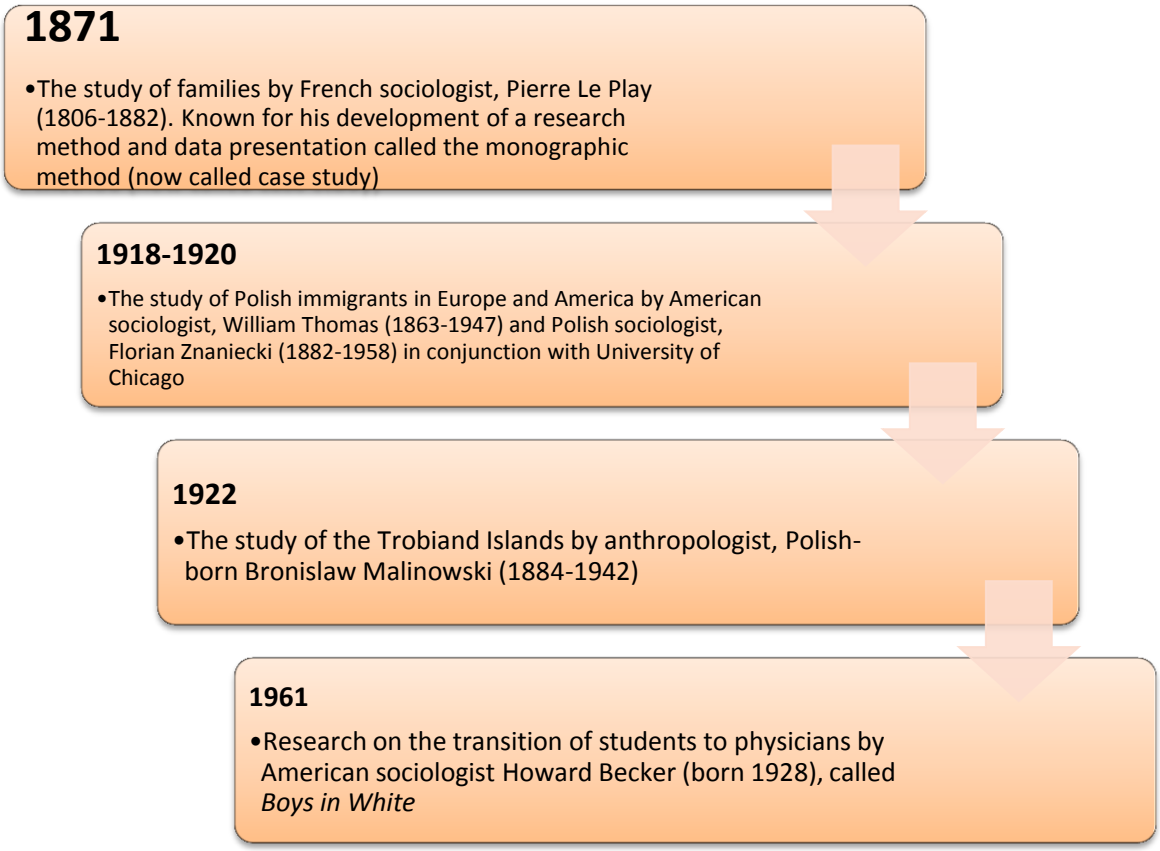
5.6.1 THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

The case study approach stemmed from anthropology and sociology. The first case study research emerged from the following examples (Figure 5.5):

Figure 5.5: The emergence of the case study design



Source: Creswell, 2013, 2007; Fouché & Schurink, 2011

Figure 5.5 illustrates that the case study has been used, research, refined, written about and debated since 1871 and mirrors the emergence of qualitative research. The value of a case study is in deriving knowledge from a single case (or multiple cases) (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Stake, 2005). In expanding on this, Creswell (2007) and Khan and Van Wynsberghe (2008) contend that the case study approach focuses on the study of an issue (for example, adverse childhood experiences) explored through one or more cases (for example, the case social work

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teaching and learning) and the corresponding unit of analyses (individual social work student and staff participants) within a bounded system which could indicate the context or setting (for example, the third-year social work class in a module called Family wellbeing, within one university setting). The value of case study design is further seen in its particular characteristics.

5.6.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CASE STUDY DESIGN

In Table 5.8, characteristics of the case study design as well as their applicability to the study are delineated (Creswell, 2013, 2007):

Table 5.8: Characteristics of the case study design

CHARACTERISTICS		APPLICATION
A BOUNDED SYSTEM	Creswell does not define bounded (De Vos *et al*., 2011) but does explain some aspects to clarify the term as being "constrained in terms of time, events, and processes" (Creswell, 2007:76). The author further stresses that the researcher will need to establish boundaries that will frame the case. This means the case is restricted ('bounded') by context (the case or cases selected for data collection all belong to a specific context) or time (the issue being studied would either have occurred within the same time frame and/or the data from the case or cases would be collected within the same time frame).	The study is bounded in terms of the following: ▪ Context: The study took place within the context of a third-year social work theory module at a specific HEI. ▪ Time: Data were collected within the same time frame for student and staff participants and were focused on a particular period in the lives of the student participants (i.e. childhood) and current learning experiences in 2013.

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A CASE OR CASES WITHIN A LARGER CONTEXT:	In case study design, the researcher decides between the efficacy of one single case or cases within a particular context within which to conduct research and make interpretations.	▪ This study used multiple cases within a bounded system, for example the third-year social work class at one institution, to conduct research on the specific phenomenon (adverse childhood experiences).
A COMPREHENSIVE PROCESS WITH MULTIPLE SOURCES:	In case study design, the researcher considers all relevant data collection methods that would provide comprehensive and rich data, for example observations, interviews, audio-visual material, as well as documents and reports).	▪ The researcher explicated a comprehensive data collection process with multiple sources, for example textual data and individual interviews from multiple cases (see section 5.6.4).
A CASE DESCRIPTION FORMAT OR CASE-BASED THEMES:	The researcher has to select either a case description format in data analysis or case-based thematic analysis.	▪ The researcher chose thematic analysis because individual sources were explored and analysed within the case in accordance with themes that provided in-depth data and findings.

Source: Creswell, 2013, 2007

Table 5.8 shows the four characteristics that distinguished the research activities which were formatted according to the case study design.

5.6.3 TYPES OF CASE STUDY DESIGN

The type of case study design is important as it signifies the goal and objectives of the particular research study. Stake (2005) proposed three variations or types of case study design in terms of intent or purpose (also see Creswell, 2013, 2007; Fouché & Schurink, 2011). Table 5.9 illustrates the various types of case study design as well as their applicability to the purpose of this study:

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Table 5.9: Type of case study and their relevance

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION
The single instrumental (or explanatory) case study:	The researcher's attention is centred on an issue of concern (such as adverse childhood experiences) and thus selects one case to elucidate the issue. The purpose of this kind of research is theory building (generating new knowledge) and testing (new or existing knowledge) providing needed insights into issues or phenomena.	▪ The researcher did not select the single instrumental type because the study focus is on a single case.
The collective or multiple case study:	The researcher also focuses on one central issue or phenomenon (such as adverse childhood experiences) but selects multiple cases to illuminate the issue (such as many social work student as well as staff participants). In this way a variety of cases are used to demonstrate multiple viewpoints and settings of the particular issue. Here the researcher uses the principle of replication, where the procedures are repeated for each case.	▪ The researcher selected this type of design because of the emphasis on multiple case studies.
The intrinsic or descriptive case study:	The researcher focuses on the uniqueness of a particular case (compared to the focus of an issue in the single instrumental case study above) that would justify research through describing, analysing and interpreting its uniqueness. The purpose is not to explore a broad issue but only the selected aspect or case. In this type of case study, as the researcher focuses on "all its particularity and ordinariness, the case study is of interest" (Stake, 2005:445).	▪ The researcher rejected this type because this study does not focus on the uniqueness of one case but on an issue.

Source: Stake, 2005; Creswell, 2013, 2007; Fouché & Schurink, 2011

Table 5.9 shows the types of case study design and the applicability of each one to this study. The researcher selected the collective or multiple case studies method because of the focus on an issue of concern (such as adverse childhood experiences) and the selection of multiple cases to elucidate the issue. Multiple viewpoints of an issue will be investigated, which would provide

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rich and in-depth data because individuals form the unit of analysis (for example, third-year social work students and staff). The point of focus is on orientations, for example attitudes, beliefs, values, prejudices and predispositions (Babbie & Mouton, 2007) regarding their childhood and subsequent learning experiences in social work education particularly.

5.6.4 THE RELEVANCE OF CASE STUDY DESIGN

This research used the case study approach because it focused on studying a phenomenon or issue (for example adverse childhood experiences) and how people (in this case third-year social work students at the University of the Western Cape) experienced this phenomenon and how they described these experiences from a social work student perspective. The aim of this study was also closely related to the phenomenological approach, but its use of only one or two research questions was considered as limiting the expanse of the study. The case study design allowed the researcher ample scope to ask multiple questions of the student participants, for example, regarding their experiences not only of ACEs, but also of the role of ACEs in the professional social work learning context.

In the following discussion, the systematic process for the steps in data collection is set out to ensure consistency and thoroughness.

5.7 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

According to Creswell (2007), data collection consists of seven interrelated steps. The researcher has sectioned these steps as before and during data collection. This is depicted in Table 5.10:

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Table 5.10: The data collection steps based on Creswell (2007)

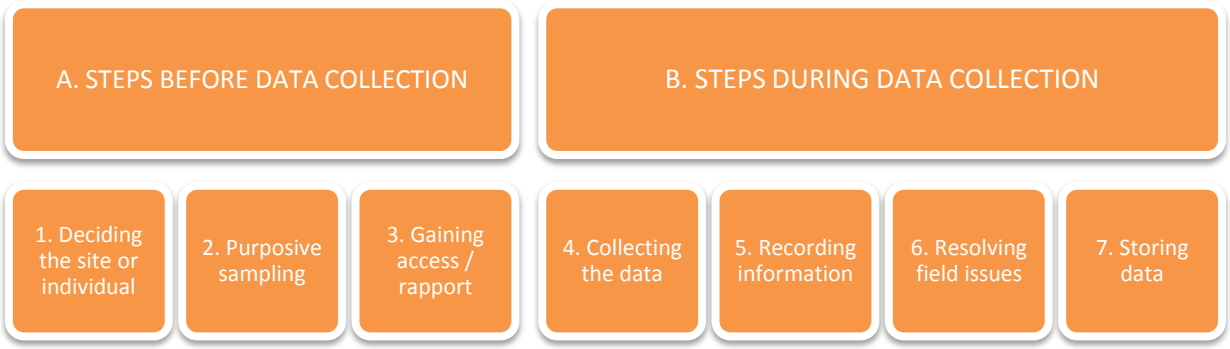

Table 5.10 illustrates the steps in the data collection process as used by the researcher. The researcher delineated the steps into two phases, namely steps taken before data collection and steps during data collection. The researcher also undertook these steps in the order that was deemed suitable for the study and diverted from the sequence in Creswell (2007).

SECTION A: PERTINENT STEPS *BEFORE* DATA COLLECTION:

There are three tasks that are deemed essential before data collection can begin, namely deciding on the site and/or the individual(s); the sampling methods to be used; and gaining access and rapport in order to collect data in the appropriate manner.

5.7.1 DECIDING ON THE SITE OR INDIVIDUAL

The site or individuals represent the bounded system where (and from whom) the data would be collected. In this study, both the site and individuals were applicable: the site (representing the third-year social work class at a particular university) and individuals (representing third-year social work students and colleagues). Pertinent to this study was the question posed in Creswell (2007) about whether researchers can study a site or individuals in which they have personal or professional interests. This, Creswell (2007) says, may cause power imbalances between the researcher and participants who may feel coerced by the position of the researcher (for example lecturer and students). To neutralise this, the researcher can use multiple sources of information and multiple strategies for validation (see section 5.8).

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5.7.2 SAMPLING STRATEGY: PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

Purposive sampling is a commonly used method in qualitative research. Purposive sampling is applied in situations where the researcher chooses "individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007:125). Sampling must also cohere with the data required and be in concert with one of the five approaches to research (in this case the case study method). An important aspect of purposive sampling is that the researcher carefully stipulates explicit criteria for the appropriate selection of participants (Strydom & Delport, 2011). In setting selection criteria, the researcher should ensure that the data that will emerge will be both standard and deviating (Strydom & Delport, 2011).

The researcher selected participants from among students and staff in the social work department. Student participants were drawn from a particular theory module focused on family wellbeing. A reflective writing assignment was used as part of a formative task asking that students reflect on the kinds of experiences they had during their childhood and their learning experiences in the module. The particular class consisted of approximately 86 students and volunteers were requested for their tasks to be analysed in this research. The researcher limited this sample to approximately 20 student participants. In this first phase, purposive sampling was appropriate, since only those assignments which were expected to be of benefit to the study were selected from those that were volunteered (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Strydom & Delport, 2011).

The criteria for inclusion to the next phase in data collection, namely interviews of student participants, consisted of students having experienced incidents of at least two of the elements listed in the description of ACEs. The researcher looked for a variety of incidents as explicated in the description. Furthermore, the researcher included those student participants who could describe their learning experiences. A maximum of ten interviews were undertaken during this phase.

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In the third phase of data collection, staff members who teach on the third-year level were drawn into the study, for example, one theory lecturer who teaches a theory module focusing on intervention and child and youth wellbeing in the first semester. This module was selected as it related to the module focusing on intervention and family wellbeing which the researcher teaches, which is also taught in the first semester. One fieldwork coordinator who facilitates the practical module on the year level was also drawn into the study as she had experience of the practical work of the students and their personal circumstances.

5.7.3 ACCESS AND RAPPORT

It is important that the researcher gains access to the setting and can establish rapport with research participants. Gaining access and establishing rapport represent ways of ensuring rich and in-depth data from participants (Creswell, 2013; Strydom, 2007). The applicability of access and rapport is illustrated in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11: The applicability of access and rapport

ACCESS	RAPPORT
• The researcher ensured that the necessary permission was obtained from review boards for the acceptance of the proposal, ethics clearance, and consent from the participants in the study before data collection was commenced.	• The researcher needed to establish rapport with the participants so that participants would be comfortable enough to provide information of a personal and possible traumatic nature. • By the third year of study, the researcher and student participants had built a trusting relationship with one another from their contact in the first year of study and this would contribute to the rapport.

Source: Creswell, 2013; Strydom, 2007

Table 5.11 shows how the researcher applied the process of access and rapport to the study with regard to the official procedures of both the Universities of Stellenbosch (where the researcher is registered) and Western Cape (where the research took place), as well as efforts to ensure rapport.

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The steps preceding data collection consisted of locating the research site; deciding on the sampling strategy; and gaining access and establishing rapport before data collection could commence. Section B (below) explicates the steps followed during the data collection process.

SECTION B: PERTINENT STEPS *DURING* DATA COLLECTION:

The researcher undertook four steps during the process of data collection, namely identifying and using the data collection methods (for example, written reflective assignments and individual interviews); recording the data; resolving issues in the process of data collection (in the field); and the appropriate storage of data.

5.7.4 IDENTIFYING AND USING DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In terms of the research question and objectives, two main data collection methods were used, namely collection through textual data and through interviews with student and staff participants:

5.7.4.1 Written reflective assignment: Student participants

The writing of a formative, reflective assignment in a specific social work theory module gave rise to textual data in the language and writing style of the participants. For this assignment, the students were required to reflect on seven questions which had emerged from the researcher's prior experience and the literature and which related to the research objectives. A portion of all assignments was obtained for research purposes in accordance with the purposive sampling strategy. This assignment is likened to the definition of personal documents by Strydom and Delport (2007:316), who state that personal documents "add to the sensitivity of concepts, theory development and verification"). In the strictest sense, these reflective assignments of students do not appear to form part of 'personal documents' as identified in the literature (Babbie, 2014; Babbie & Mouton, 2007). However, this source of data fulfilled the requirements of the definition from Bogdan and Taylor (2002) as being "any first-person account of the whole or a part of his or her life or an individual's reflection on a specific topic or event" which is used by Strydom and Delport (2007:316).

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An example of the kinds of questions asked in the formative task (Annexure A) is:

> *Describe the kinds of incidents or circumstances that had occurred during your childhood years (i.e. from birth to 18 years) that you think have had a NEGATIVE influence on the kind of family life that you had experienced.*

This question typifies the open-ended nature of the questions contained in the written assignment in the social work theory module. The next data collection method involved research interviews conducted with student and staff participants.

5.7.4.2 Research interviews: Student and staff participants

Individual interviews are a common data collection method in qualitative research (Kvale, 2007). A significant reason for using interviews is that the researcher thereby obtained direct information from the participants that would in other instances not have been as easily and expediently attainable. The interview, in addition, is an appropriate tool for eliciting specific and sensitive information through probing techniques, especially in terms of past events and experiences (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; Kvale, 2007; Perakyla, 2005). The latter reason especially is predicated on the interview being "a jointly constructed conversation and a form of discourse" during which two things occur: the conversation may take on a natural and free-flowing course which gives insight into the world of the participant and the researcher, in turn, strives to comprehend the world of the participant according to their definition and to routinely reflect and verify her/his interpretation and perception (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; Kvale, 2007). The choice of interview for this study is succinctly stated by Kvale (2007:11-12) as the following: "A semi-structured life-world interview attempts to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subject's own perspectives."

The interview can represent a source of bias and unethical conduct by researchers in spite of strategies to eliminate and/or curtail bias and subjectivity (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010). However, self-reflection and reflexivity can help to limit bias and subjectivity through identifying and making transparent possible biases which pose risks to the validity of the findings (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010) (see section 5.8.5 and Annexure J).

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Participant interviews were used to obtain data from student and staff interviews. In student interviews, interview schedules were used for student participants to expand on their ACEs and learning experiences (depending on the saturation of the data). The following is an example of questions that were asked (Annexure F):

> *Identify one main feeling to describe your emotions or reactions in class when participating in or listening to debates around incidents or circumstances similar to your own experiences during childhood.*

In staff interviews, individual interviews were conducted with two social work staff members to obtain data regarding their teaching activities and experiences with students who might have endured challenging circumstances. The following example illustrates the type of questions that were asked (Annexure G):

> *Describe the reaction or responses of students during teaching and learning activities centred on discussions or topics on family life, child and youth experiences, as well as family and social issues which as lecturer you had become aware may be similar to their own circumstances.*

The two examples of questions posed in the individual interviews with student and staff participants again reflect the open-ended nature of questions that gave students and staff scope to respond in their own unique way, which ensured richness and depth in the data.

5.7.5 RECORDING THE DATA

This step consisted of 'logging' data through a number of means; pertinent to this study were reflection following the numerous readings of students assignments and interviews and audio recordings of student and staff interviews. The audio recording of the interviews was undertaken with both the student and staff and these recordings were transcribed by a reputable scribe unconnected with the university or the study.

The researcher ensured that at least three copies of the reflective assignments and interview transcriptions were made for making notes on them and cutting and pasting (manual in terms of the reflective assignments and on the computer in terms of interview transcriptions). One copy was the master copy kept locked in the office of the researcher. Different coloured pens (kokis)

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were used for colour coding and a sufficient number of batteries were purchased to ensure that there would be no technical interruptions during the interviews.

Possible difficulties in obtaining participants and collecting data that were foreseen are discussed in the following section.

5.7.6 RESOLVING FIELD ISSUES

Researchers often encounter unforeseen difficulties whilst conducting their research in the field. The following issues were pertinent to this study (Creswell, 2013) (Table 5.12):

Table 5.12: Resolving field issues

ISSUES IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH SITE:	
Convincing people to participate in the study to obtain a rich and diverse sample	The researcher extolled the purpose of the research and its benefits for student learning
Negating of possible bias since the researcher is connected to the research site as lecturer of student participants	The researcher kept to the interview schedule and wrote stringent reflections on the process of the interviews and emotional reactions
The researcher also planned to interview colleagues, whereby collegial relationships could pose a threat to data validation	The researcher adhered strictly to the interview schedule, as the recording would pick up any bias or non-pursuance of all the questions
The researcher could have her own point of view on the phenomenon or issue that could obscure other pertinent information	(see also section 5.8.5)
ISSUES IN TERMS OF THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED:	
The researcher's management of sensitive information during interviews	The researcher was alert to the reactions of the participants during interviews and offered breaks and support
The researcher might have to deal with interview fatigue and equipment failure; and/or interview room or scheduling clashes	The researcher planned well in advance in terms of the scaffolding of the questions, the arrangements of interviews, and the functionality of equipment.

Source: Creswell, 2013

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The field issues that were pertinent to the research study and the recommendations for circumventing these issues are set out in Table 5.12. Once the data were obtained the next issue was to store the data adequately.

5.7.7 STORING DATA

Since the use of technology in research is common and practical, storage of data was primarily focused on using ample data storage devices. The researcher, for example, used an external hard drive and backed up data; a high-quality audio recording device with sufficient data capacity for 45 to 60-minute interviews and for retrieving data were used; types of information collected were listed and saved in Microsoft© Word folders and files. The means of storing data to protect the names of student participants was paramount (also see section 5.8).

The data collection process discussed here has illustrated clear and comprehensive steps and tasks that were fundamental to ensuring that the data analysis process provided rich and in-depth data (section 5.8 below).

5.8 THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

According to De Vos (2007:333), "data analysis is…the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data" and it is "a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data." Babbie (2014:403) defines qualitative data analysis as "[t]he nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships".

The data analysis process advocated by Creswell (2013, 2007) and Schurink, Fouché & De Vos (2007) was used. Initially there were nine steps as recommended by these authors, but these were collapsed into seven, since planning had already been done in the data collection process (see section 5.7 and 5.7.5) and searching for emerging and alternative explanations were combined. Thus the process and (seven) steps followed here are unique to this study and explicated below (Figure 5.6):

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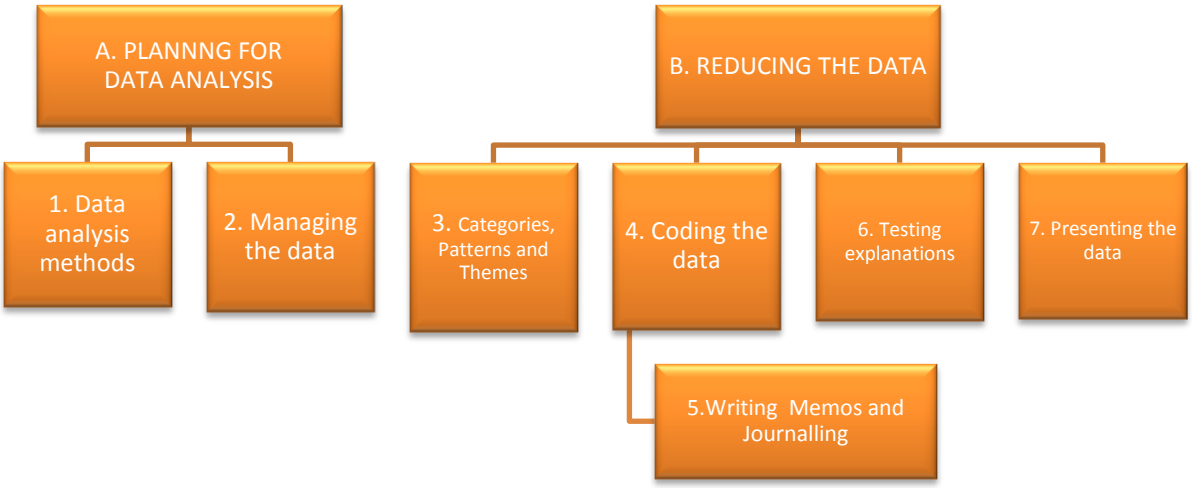

Figure 5.6: The data analysis process plan
Source: De Vos, 2007; Schurink et al., 2011

Figure 5.6 illustrates the two main processes followed by the researcher in terms of planning for data analysis and then implementing the planning.

SECTION A: PERTINENT STEPS IN PLANNING FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Planning for data analysis involves two steps, namely, deciding on the appropriate methods for analysis and managing the data.

5.8.1 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD AND PROCESS

This study used thematic analysis to understand the data collected. Braun and Clarke (2006:79, 86) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" but it, importantly, is to find "repeated patterns of meaning". This study followed a multiple case context where data analysis firstly took the form of providing a detailed description of themes, sub-themes and categories within each case, and then using cross-case analysis for multiple case analyses (Creswell, 2007:75; see also Babbie, 2014; Paterson, 2010; Schurink et al., 2011). Cross-case analysis involves three phases:

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(i) Data analysis of each case (*the reflective assignment of each student; data transcription and analysis of individual student interviews; and data transcription and analysis of interviews of each staff participant*).

(ii) The data then were coded and summarised in the individual data method across all cases in each method used.

(iii) The researcher also looked across all three data methods for data synthesis, comparing and contrasting.

These three steps are not wholly linear, but are "fluid and interactive" (De Vos, 2007:335), therefore the researcher went forwards and backwards in the analysis process to ensure the integrity and authenticity of data analyses. The process of data analysis tasks in cross-case analysis is illustrated below (Figure 5.7):

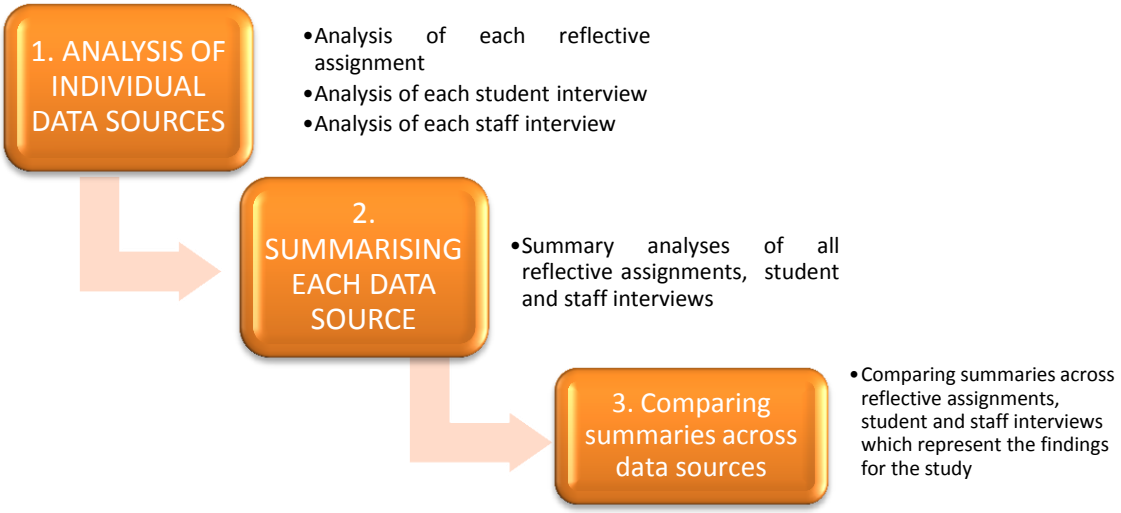

Figure 5.7: Cross-case data analysis process
Source: De Vos, 2007; Schurink et al., 2011

Figure 5.7 illustrates the plan in descending order for the researcher's implementation of data analysis and the interrelationship amongst the various data analysis tasks.

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5.8.2 MANAGING THE DATA

Administratively, the researcher has to decide how data will be organised to facilitate efficient retrieval. Managing the data went hand-in-hand with the method of data analysis as the phases of analysis unfolded, so these phases of data were managed and stored appropriately.

Application in the study: In terms of administrative organisation, the following plans were realised:

- The researcher organised all data in Microsoft© Word folders and files on an *external hard drive* reserved especially for this purpose.
- Templates for data analysis (and coding) were used and individually saved in separate files in individual folders for each step in data collection and analysis.
- Regular backup copies were saved as a master copy that ensured information and data would not be lost on account of technical difficulties in particular.
- Hard copies of transcripts were also kept.
- Each transcript was assigned a unique identification number (Babbie, 2014) to remove the names from data analysis, thereby minimising any preconceived notions about the participant.

The data were analysed, organised and presented in terms of thematic analysis in accordance with the three phases in cross-case analyses. The data were managed administratively with the help of information technology, as described. Section B focuses on extricating the precise steps in data analysis and data reduction in terms of coding for themes, sub-themes and categories.

SECTION B: PERTINENT STEPS IN DATA REDUCTION

Data reduction refers to the steps for condensing all the information received through the data collection methods as discussed in Section A (above) into common patterns and relationships. Five steps were followed in working through the data used in the study, namely, generating themes, sub-themes and categories; coding the data; memoing and journalling by the researcher (which occurred during the aforementioned steps); testing for emerging and alternative

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explanations for perceived patterns and themes in the data; and representing and illustrating the data (Creswell, 2013). These five steps are presented in Figure 5.8.

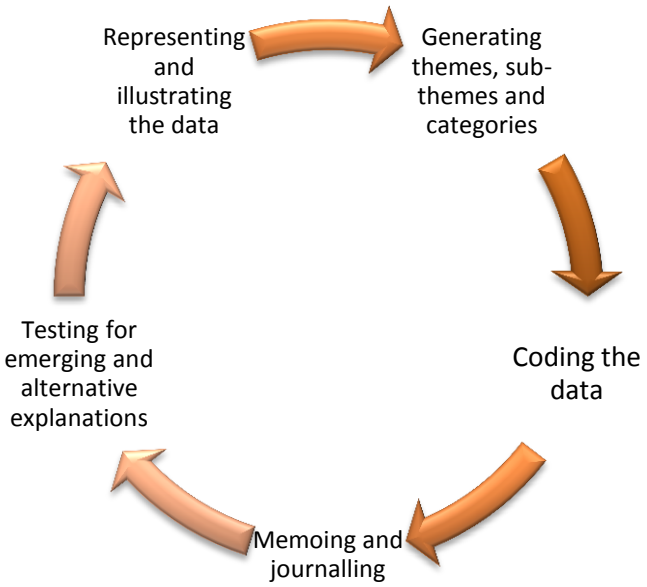

Figure 5.8: Steps in data reduction
Source: Creswell, 2013

Figure 5.8 shows the steps in the circular process of data reduction to finally arrive at research findings (Chapters 6 and 7). These steps are purposefully circular to denote the continuous sequence of the tasks.

5.8.3 GENERATING THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES

The process of transforming participant information into data requires the crafting of three levels of data, namely themes, sub-themes and categories from the information. Bernard and Ryan (2010:5) state that "[w]e create data by chunking experience into recordable units". In this process qualitative data is produced through reducing or condensing the data into words or phrases (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

Searching for themes, sub-themes and categories is the essential task in data analysis. Conceptually the terms 'category' and 'theme' appear to be used interchangeable in the literature

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(Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; De Vos, 2007). Categories involve "grouping similar events, incidents, feelings or experiences together … to simply reduce the data package" (De Vos, 2007:341). Within this process, the researcher must also search for similar data (internal divergence) and dissimilar data (external divergence). The first task in data analysis is the grouping or categorising of similar and dissimilar information. Categories are further identified by a specific sub-theme and themes that inform the essence of multiple categories. Thus themes are overarching topics representing the data as a whole or as a composite picture. Themes (and sub-themes) emerge from categorised data and are illustrated as in Figure 5.9.

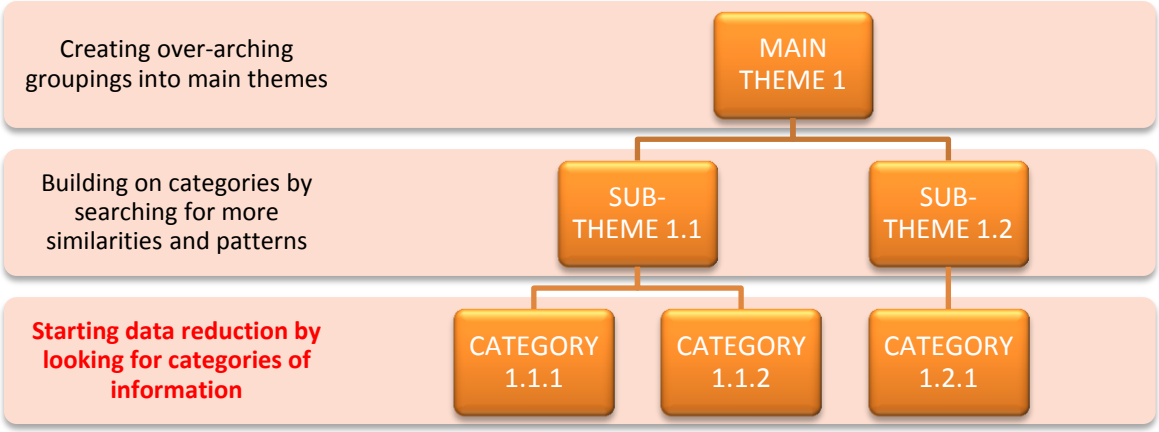

Figure 5.9: Generating categories, sub-themes and themes
Source: Creswell, 2013; De Vos, 2007; Schurink et al., 2011

Figure 5.9 shows how data reduction commenced in the study by first looking for categories of information that was similar and scaffolding sub-themes and main themes from there. These categories, sub-themes and themes can be obtained through two approaches (Bernard & Ryan, 2010):

- An inductive approach relies on categories and themes that emerge empirically from the data without any expectations or preconceptions of the data;
- A deductive approach relies on *a priori* categories and themes that emerge from "our prior theoretical understanding of whatever phenomenon we are studying" (Bernard & Ryan, 2010:55). Categories, sub-themes and themes can also emerge from "already agreed-on professional definitions found in literature reviews; from local, common sense constructs;

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and from researchers' values, theoretical orientations, and personal experiences" (Bernard & Ryan, 2010:56). The questions in the interview schedule can also indicate categories and themes.

Figure 5.9 showed how to reduce data by creating categories, sub-themes and themes for each individual case. This sequence is repeated for all the data from each method of data collection until all information has been categorised, which is illustrated as follows (Figure 5.10):

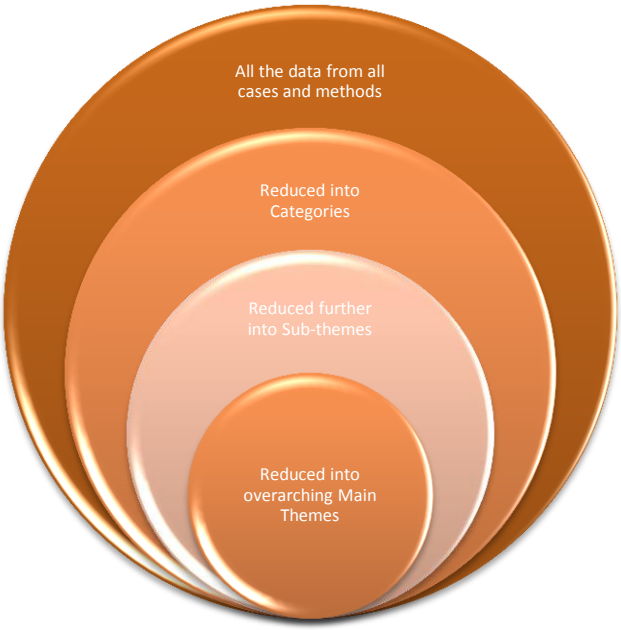

Figure 5.10: Data reduction in the form of themes, sub-themes and categories
Source: De Vos, 2007

Figure 5.10 illustrates the process of data reduction that the researcher followed in the analysis of the data through, firstly, the search for patterns and categories, and then the discernment of sub-themes and themes. This process is represented as a nested approach with categories producing sub-themes and themes showing the reduced nature of the data. Therefore, there are groupings (patterns) of information that make up sub-themes and categories within each theme, as was depicted in Figure 5.9.

The process of generating themes, sub-themes and categories occurs alongside the coding of the data; as the researcher searches for categories of information, ideas for coding develop.

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5.8.4 CODING THE DATA

Babbie (2014:346) defines coding as "the process of transforming raw data into a standardized form". In this way coding is used to sort and classify the data. De Vos (2007) confirm that coding is a recognised or sanctioned description of methodical and systematic reasoning. Gibbs (2007:38) explains that "coding is a way of indexing or categorising the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it".

Babbie (2014) proposes that researchers consider two sources of codes of which one or both can be used (also see Weston *et al.*, 2001):

- *Predefined codes* stem from the literature and the researcher's prior knowledge. Weston *et al*. (2001) confirmed that *a priori* theory can be used to contextualise the data collection questions and to operationalise the coding in qualitative data analysis.
- *Emergent codes* materialise spontaneously and developmentally during the data analysis process.

The researcher can decide what kinds of codes will be used, for instance abbreviations of keywords, coloured dots, or numbers by which to delineate common elements emerging from the data (emergent coding) and categories that have been preselected (predefined coding).

Application in the study: There is a distinct interaction between searching for categories and themes and the coding of data. Categorising data and then looking for patterns and themes prepares the data for coding. In the first phase of coding, the researcher used highlighters in different colours to segment the raw data into data-driven categories and themes, as well as *a priori* categories and themes. These then typified the themes as shown in Table 5.13:

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Table 5.13: Main themes and initial colour coding (Reflective assignments)

COLOUR	THEME
PINK	Abuse of participants
LIME	Ineffectual caregivers and care giving
LIGHT ORANGE	Troubled family life
DARK ORANGE	Impact of ACEs on participants
YELLOW	Positive outcomes
BLUE	Impact on Teaching and learning experiences

The table illustrates the process of segmenting the raw data into the six main themes that had emerged from the analyses of the 20 reflective exercises of student participants. These themes occurred after analysis into comprehensive categories residing under particular sub-themes and themes (as illustrated in Figures 5.8 and 5.9).

In addition to the colour coding of the initial data, the researcher also used a code numbering system in the ordering of the data. When qualitative data are condensed or transformed into numbers, the outcome is quantitative data (Bernard & Ryan, 2005). The researcher also used both sources of codes in data analysis as *a priori* theory and code development were equally significant in terms of outcomes of the analysis process. The following is an example of the coding system that emerged from the analysis of student reflective assignments (Table 5.14):

Table 5.14: Theme 1 - Abuse of Participants with sub-themes and categories

THEME 1: ABUSE OF PARTICIPANTS SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES			
Sub-themes	1.1 Emotional abuse	1.2 Physical neglect, abuse and threats	1.3 Sexual abuse
Categories	(i) Using words (ii) Withholding love and affection	(i) Physical neglect (ii) Physical attacks and threats (iii) Parentification	(i) Intra-familial sexual abuse (ii) Corollary or secondary trauma

Table 5.14 illustrates the structure of the data that was followed in each case, but it is illustrated using the data from the reflective exercises of student participants. Searching for categories and themes culminated in a structure created by a coding system using numbers.

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The following template was used to develop a code book for the study in terms of thematic analysis based on Weston *et al*. (2001) (Table 5.15) (also see Annexure H):

Table 5.15: Code book for thematic analysis (Weston et al., 2001)

Code	Predefined and emergent codes	Description of Code	Keywords and/or phrases (quotes)
Indicate the code that would be assigned to the category.	Indicate whether the code is a predefined or emergent code.	Describe and explain what is meant by the code to discern further in the data.	Indicate the keywords and/or phrases in the form of direct quotes to reflect the code and definitional elements.

Source: Weston et al., 2001

Table 5.15 illustrates the coding book and coding system that the researcher used in the study. The first two tasks in reducing the data culminated in the completion of data analysis with the transformation into research findings. The reflections of the researcher also informed and enriched the research findings in qualitative research.

5.8.5 WRITING MEMOS / JOURNALLING

Writing memos alongside analysing the data is vital as these reflections may later become integrated with the data. Therefore reflexive journalling also forms part of memoing. Reflexivity includes the predispositions and preconceptions of the researcher that need to be made overt in order for any deep-seated opinions and feelings to be taken into consideration in the verification process of the data (Ortlipp, 2008). This is vital because researchers have their own subjectivities and experiences which influence the way in which data are viewed and framed, especially in considering that the researcher "is the main instrument for data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2008:2). While memoing, the researcher also contemplates the following three areas (Babbie, 2014:413) (Table 5.16):

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Table 5.16: Memoing and journalling areas

CODE LABLES	• The meanings and particular application in the analysis
THEORETICAL CODES	• Notes on the theoretical relationships beteen and amongst categories, sub-themes and themes
OPERATIONAL NOTES	• Record of methodological challenges during data collection and analysis

Source: Babbie, 2014

Table 5.16 shows the areas that the researcher can focus on when memoing and journalling during data analysis. Before memoing, the researcher read through the reflective assignments and transcripts in each phase several times to obtain a sense of the data. The researcher recorded reflections and observations throughout the phases of analysis in a special notepad, as well as in the margins of the transcripts using code labels, theoretical codes and operational notes. The researcher used a special notebook to record personal reflections throughout the analysis process. Through journaling, the researcher took a critical stance towards her role and to the emerging themes, sub-themes and categories to check whether there were other explanations for the data.

5.8.6 TESTING FOR EMERGENT AND ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Post data analysis begins the process of assessing two kinds of explanations. Testing for emerging explanations requires assessing whether the data is believable, reasonable and useful. Testing for alternative explanations requires assessing whether there are alternative explanations for the existing patterns and themes (De Vos, 2007). In the first endeavour, the researcher searched through the data to test and question the preliminary understandings that emerged through the process of data analysis. Looking for contrasting data may also be integrated into the overall theme if deemed relevant to the overall understanding. The researcher also assessed "how useful the data [were] in illuminating the questions being explored and how central they [were] to….the social phenomenon being studied" (De Vos, 2007:339). In terms of alternative explanations, a researcher has to "identify and describe" the explanations and "demonstrate why the explanations offered are the most plausible of all" (De Vos, 2007:339).

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Application in the study: The researcher undertook to look at all data to assess the extent to which the data addressed the objectives and research questions of the study. The researcher used six (out of seven) research objectives (because these were dependent on the findings) for comparison with the number and types of themes that the data elicited to (later) compare and contrast with the literature and theory (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17: Testing for usefulness of data

NO.	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	Themes	EXPLANATIONS
1.	**The adverse childhood experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university**	3	The number of possible themes to the objective was 3 out of 4 themes (Chapter 6) focusing on childhood experiences, which represented a very strong result.
2.	**The role of adverse childhood experiences in teaching and learning in social work**	2	The response was 2 themes out of a possible 4 (Chapter 7 Part I), which also was a strong result. Also see Objective 4 below in this regard.
3.	**The coping strategies of third-year social work students**	1	Although this was not a strong result it nevertheless produced 1 theme (Chapter 6), considering that it was not the primary focus of the study.
4.	**The teaching and learning experiences of third-year-level social work teachers and students**	2	This response must be read in conjunction with objective 2. These represent 2 out a possible 4 (Chapter 7 Part I), which is a strong response.
5.	**Meaningful teaching practices with regard to the role of ACEs of students in social work education.**	3	This response produced 3 themes (out of 3) (Chapter 7 Part II), which amounted to 100%, as helpful teaching and learning recommendations was a strong focus of the study.
	TOTAL THEMES	**11**	These are the main themes with 34 sub-themes.

Table 5.17 showed the number of themes emerging from the data juxtaposed with the research objectives to show the usefulness of the data and the findings. The method of representing and visualising the data will be explored in the next section.

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5.8.7 REPRESENTING AND VISUALISING THE DATA

In representing and illustrating the research findings, "the researcher presents the data, a packaging of what was found in text, tabular or figure form" (De Vos, 2007:339).

Application in the study: Data are presented in Chapter 6 (Research findings of the adverse childhood experiences of student participants) and Chapter 7 (Research findings regarding the after-effects of adverse childhood experiences and suggestions in the context of teaching and learning in social work). Data presentation took the form of themes, sub-themes and categories, the evidence for which were the direct quotes from the participants and which were graphically represented in tables and figures.

The data collection process established an integrated structure between theory and implementation which the researcher followed on the basis of the process advocated by Creswell (2007), De Vos (2007) and Schurink et al. (2011).

Section B focused on the five important steps in reducing the data through creating themes, sub-themes and categories to code and represent the data. These steps signified the essentials of working the data to arrive at research findings. In the next section, the usefulness and trustworthiness of the data is discussed in relation to validation strategies.

5.9 VALIDATION STRATEGIES

Validation is highly contested as social scientists argue about the appropriateness of using certain concepts for validation of the research process and data (Barusch, Gringeri & George, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Whittemore *et al*., 2001). Creswell (2013) asserts that the term 'validation' focuses on the process as well as outcome. Creswell (2013, 2007) proposed eight strategies for validation that coincide with many of the strategies suggested by Barusch *et al*. (2011). The researcher used the strategies and terms supplied by Creswell (2013), since it presented a practical and efficient framework. Creswell (2013) recommends that at least two strategies be selected for data verification or validation. The researcher selected four strategies to authenticate

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the process of data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Babbie & Mouton, 2007) (Table 5.18):

Table 5.18: Validation strategies and application

VALIDATION STRATEGY		APPLICATION TO STUDY
TRIANGULATION:	Triangulation refers to the "use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (Creswell, 2013:251). Triangulation increases perception and insight, and gains manifold viewpoints. This means that the researcher must be "asking different questions, seeking different sources, and using different methods" (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277).	The study used two different methods of data collection (reflective assignments and individual interviews), two sources (students and staff), and posed similar and different questions (see Annexures E - G).
MEMBER CHECKING:	Member checking has been criticised for creating confusion and an opportunity for participants to rescind their descriptions. However, member checking can be used to enhance insight and comprehension through asking the participants if the themes appear to be accurate and in this way member checking helps to support research findings (Barusch *et al*., 2011). Members can be asked to check for correctness and whether the intention of participant responses had been captured (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).	The researcher asked all student and staff participants in the individual interviews to check whether the themes, sub-themes and categories appeared to be accurate. All participants responded positively (see Annexure I).
RICH, THICK DESCRIPTIONS:	Rich and thick descriptions relate to producing a comprehensive description of the research findings by reporting many viewpoints of a theme, so that the findings and conclusions can be assessed as to their significance and relevance for similar contexts. Techniques for creating rich, thick descriptions are "inter-connecting the details, using strong action verbs and quotes" (Creswell, 2013:252).	The researcher used many quotes to support the categories, sub-themes and themes (see Chapters 6 and 7).

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REFLECTIVITY:	Reflectivity by the researcher on the possible impact of the researcher's background on the interpretations of the research findings. Included in reflectivity is clarifying researcher bias. The reader must be able to comprehend the researcher's stance, preconceptions and beliefs that may influence the research. In order to provide this information, the research must be upfront about "past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study" (Creswell, 2013:251).	The researcher reflected on her social and emotional background with regard to possible influences in the elucidation of the research findings (see Annexure J).

Source: Creswell, 2013; Babbie & Mouton, 2007

Table 5.18 presents the four validation strategies that were used in the study and the ways in which each strategy was applied in order to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data.

5.10 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In Part II the practical and functional components of the research were established. These consisted of the choice of the case study design as research method; establishing the data collection and data analysis processes; and data validation strategies. These processes and steps were vital to the study and provided the blueprint for how the research was to be conducted, as well as the procedures for data analysis. Data collection and data analysis are at the heart of any study and provide the premise for data validation. In furthering the aims of validation and trustworthiness, Part III focuses on the ethical parameters of the study and the ethical conduct of the researcher.

PART III: RESEARCH ETHICS

Strydom (2007:57) defines ethics as "a set of moral principles" and states that ethical guidelines function as criteria and the benchmark according to which researchers assess their behaviour and decision making within the research context. The added dimension is that ethical principles

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gradually become assimilated within the character of the researcher so that future ethical decisions and conduct become automatic.

5.11 ETHICAL GUIDELINES IN RESEARCH

In order to ensure that the study was conducted within the ethical boundaries of the institutional frameworks of the two institutions connected to the study (the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape), the researcher had to adhere to institutional guidelines for ethical research practices. Both institutions approved the research as conforming to ethical research practices, especially as pertaining to the participation of students. The following additional ethical guidelines pertain to this research study:

5.11.1 PREVENTION OF HARM TO PARTICIPANTS

Research participants can be harmed in physical and emotional ways in research endeavours (Flick, 2014). In this research, there is particular attention on emotional harm. Strydom (2007:58) confirms that "[o]ne may accept that harm to respondents in the social sciences will be mainly of an emotional nature". There is a responsibility on the part of the researcher to protect research participants from potential hurt which may be caused by the invoking of repressed memory of negative emotions and events (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Strydom, 2007). In this study the participants will be reliving aspects of their past and this may evoke negative or traumatic experiences. Prevention of harm was ensured in the following ways:

The researcher prepared the participants thoroughly for the kinds of information and experiences that they would be recalling.	Students were also offered debriefing sessions if required, by an experienced counsellor not connected with the research study, the researcher and the institution.

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5.11.2 INFORMED CONSENT AND PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY

According to Strydom (2007:59), the information conveyed must be "accurate and complete" to enable the participants to make informed decisions. The following tasks were undertaken:

All participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures that were followed, information that was required from them, and their general role in the research process. Participants also had a chance to retract their consent at any time during the research process.	Participants were required to complete informed consent agreements. Student participants were asked to complete consent forms for the use of their reflective exercises (see Annexure B) and provide consent for participating in individual interviews (see Annexure C). Staff participants also completed consent forms for participating in individual interviews (see Annexure D).	All participants received a participation information sheet with the necessary information that informed the participants about the study (see Annexure A).

5.11.3 PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF PARTICIPANTS

Strydom (2007) uses Singleton's definition of privacy in research which states that "the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed". The protection and upholding of the privacy of participants denote the two principles (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Strydom, 2007) discussed below:

5.11.3.1 Anonymity

Anonymity implies that particular information provided cannot be traced to individual participants. Full anonymity cannot be guaranteed, though, since researchers often have specific identity markings on the data collected to match specific information to participants, rather than the names on the written tasks and interview schedules.

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A master identification file was created that linked the numbers to names so that missing or contradictory information could be followed up. Only the researcher would hold this file. This was also done to keep track of who responded for follow up (i.e. submission of consent forms, for subsequent individual interviews, and for member checking purposes).	The researcher used an audio recorder to record all data collected in individual interviews and consent was obtained from the participants for this to be done.	Participants were referred to by their alternative identification numbers rather than their names. This assisted the researcher to match responses to previous data collected. The names of participants have to be deleted from files when it is no longer important to have this.

5.11.3.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that the information provided will not be divulged to other parties without the written consent of the participants (Strydom, 2007).

In the provision of written consent the participants were made fully aware and comprehensively briefed in terms of the circumstances under which their information might be divulged and in what form it would take place, for example, in the research report, publication of articles, and presentations at conferences / seminars.

5.11.4 PROTECTION FROM RESEARCHER BIAS

Researchers are not immune from certain biases and opinions about a study, the possible findings, and regarding the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Patton, 2002). Therefore these feelings and judgments could creep into the process of data collection and the interpretation of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2002). The moral integrity of the researcher was vital to ensure the authenticity of the research findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). As the researcher was both the lecturer of student participants and the researcher, these roles could pose a conflict of interest and could impact on researcher objectivity. In this study the following aspects were pertinent:

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Data validation steps were pertinent to offset discrimination or inconsistency, for example through member checking (asking participants to check accuracy of themes), and triangulation (using more than one data collection method means that data can be cross checked) (see section 5.9).	The researcher could position her reflexive thoughts and opinions in the researcher reflexivity report to offset any bias that may have crept into the research process (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Morrow, 2005) (see Annexure J).

5.12 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Four ethical principles that were pertinent to the study because of the sensitive nature of the study focus were the prevention of harm to the participants; informed consent; ensuring anonymity and confidentiality; and protecting participants from researcher bias. These ethical principles were also applied to the study with regard to the ways in which ethical good practices in the research were facilitated.

5.13 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

A philosophy is vital in research for two reasons: as foundation from which the research decisions and methods would be springboarded; and as a framework within which the research study would take place, which denotes structure and order. The interpretivist philosophy and social constructivism formed the foundation of the current study and all research decisions developed from these roots. The qualitative research approach created the framework within which the research study took place. This process prefaced the decision to use the case study method as appropriate means to address the research problem and research objectives. The case study method signalled the implementation phase of the study from which the specific data collection and analysis activities provided the basis for interpretation and recommendations. The research process and data were subjected to a stringent validation process in which the researcher selected specific strategies that would ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The emotional content of the research necessitated that specific ethical principles be selected to ensure that the researcher's decision making and conduct were governed by recognised ethical standards and guidelines. This chapter illustrated that the philosophical, methodological and ethical guidelines

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were all predicated on the specific nature of the study, juxtaposed with the beliefs of the researcher herself.

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CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research followed the case study approach to explore how individuals (third-year social work students at the University of the Western Cape) experienced a particular phenomenon (in this case adverse childhood experiences) in relation to teaching and learning within a social work context. There were two aspects to the research objectives of this study, namely, the description of the ACEs of social work student participants and the description of the role of ACEs in the context of social work professional learning. To provide credence to the two purposes of this research, namely exploring and describing the two aspects of this research, two sources of data were utilised, firstly from third-year social work students and, secondly, social work staff participants teaching third-year courses. The data were collected using two methods: through a reflective assignment in a specific third-year social work module from which 20 reflective assignments were appropriately sampled (see Chapter 5 section 5.7.2); and through individual interviews with a further sampling of 10 student participants (derived from the sample of reflective assignments of student participants) and two teaching staff participants.

The data collection methods and process focused on achieving pertinent data that would be appropriate to the central research question. The research question and ensuing sub-questions provided the foundation that triggered research participants' description, interpretation and understanding of third-year students' adverse childhood experiences, their experiences in the teaching and learning context, and their consideration of meaningful teaching and learning practices.

In the reflective exercises, students reported on their circumstances in their own way, using their own words and language to write down what they felt were important aspects to highlight. The writing of formative, reflective assignments was chosen to connect students with the role and

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influence of their own childhood experiences in their professional learning context. Students were required to do personal introspection in order to reflect on seven questions (Annexure E).

The interview method was selected as ancillary to the data that were collected through the reflective assignment. Ten student participants were further selected from the first sampling of the reflective exercises of students. The researcher was able to hear directly from student participants and to listen to how students described their experiences using their own words. The researcher was allowed a unique means of gaining entry to the personal and often painful world of the participants. Listening to the emotion-laden narratives of the student participants often was a discomfiting experience. The student participants were frequently overcome with emotion as they relayed their personal stories in response to the main and probing questions of the researcher. Debriefing services were offered to affected participants.

Individual interviews were undertaken with two social work staff who taught at third-year level in the social work programme. One staff member taught a theory module focusing on child and youth wellbeing and the other staff member was responsible for the fieldwork module for the year level. The aim with staff interviews was to obtain their perspectives on their teaching activities and experiences with students who might have endured challenging circumstances and the possible impact within the class context. The interviews with staff participants also served as ancillary to the data received from the reflective exercises and student interviews. Seven questions were posed to the staff participants (Annexure G).

The selected questions for the three data collection methods were informed by three sources, namely: the researcher's prior experience in this area, research previously undertaken by the researcher, and the literature around the topic of adverse childhood experiences and social work professional learning.

Data analysis was undertaken by firstly grouping the data into categories, sub-themes and themes, according to common patterns and associations with respect to each data set (reflective assignments, student and staff interviews). Thematic analysis was used to gain understanding of

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the patterns, forms and configurations of the data sets. The data were analysed in accordance with the steps in cross-case analysis, namely:

(i) A thematic analysis of each reflective assignment, individual student interview, and staff interview

(ii) A detailed analysis and description of each data set (the 20 reflective assignments, the ten individual student interviews, and two staff interviews)

(ii) A comparison of data sets, for which the researcher looked across all three data sets for data synthesis, comparing and contrasting for common themes, sub-themes and categories.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on presenting the research findings in respect of step three (referred to above) in the analysis process. Three strong topics emerged from the data sets demarcated in these two chapters. Chapter 6 presents the findings related to the childhood experiences of student participants and Chapter 7 shows the findings for the role and effects of adverse childhood experiences of the participants and their suggestions within the context of social work professional learning. In the next section, the personal and demographic details of the 20 student participants are explicated.

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Twenty social work student participants participated in the study and their personal and demographic details are illustrated in Table 6.1. Six variables were chosen to provide concrete details of each participant, namely gender, age, racial group, marital status, geographic origins and home language.

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Table 6.1: Demographic profile of student participants

	GENDER	AGE	RACIAL GROUP	MARITAL STATUS	GEOGRAPHIC ORIGINS	HOME LANGUAGE
1	F	23	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
2	F	22	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	ENGLISH
3	F	51	COLOURED	MARRIED	WESTERN CAPE	ENGLISH
4	F	21	BLACK	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	XHOSA
5	F	32	BLACK	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	XHOSA
6	M	24	BLACK	SINGLE	EASTERN CAPE	XHOSA
7	M	23	BLACK	SINGLE	ZIMBABWE	ENGLISH
8	F	27	BLACK	SINGLE	EASTERN CAPE	NORTH SOTHO
9	F	27	BLACK	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	XHOSA
10	F	26	BLACK	SINGLE	EASTERN CAPE	XHOSA
11	F	21	BLACK	SINGLE	GAUTENG	XHOSA
12	F	48	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
13	F	22	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
14	F	22	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
15	F	25	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
16	F	24	COLOURED	SINGLE	NORTHERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
17	F	22	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS
18	F	23	BLACK	SINGLE	KWAZULU NATAL	SOUTH SOTHO
19	F	41	COLOURED	MARRIED	WESTERN CAPE	BILINGUAL
20	F	23	COLOURED	SINGLE	WESTERN CAPE	AFRIKAANS

Information from Table 6.1 is further analysed in the following sections.

6.2.1 GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Of the 20 participants, 90% (18 participants) were female. This is a large proportion but it is not especially significant as it relates (generally) to the profession being female-dominated. Regarding the impact of ACEs on girls, studies have found that stress increased for preteen girls but also that there was a gender difference in reactions to stressors (DeWit *et al*., 2005; Kessler,

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2003; Rudolph & Flynn, 2007). Juxtaposed with these findings, females were also found to be more resilient (DuMont, Widom & Czaja, 2007).

6.2.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION

The majority of student participants fell between the ages of 22 to 29 years, accounting for 75% of participants. This statistic denotes an older student population not accessing university education immediately after completing their matriculation certificate. Serious childhood abuses were related to severe emotional distress in young adulthood (Fisher *et al.*, 2010; Turner & Butler, 2003).

6.2.3 RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

The race groupings of student participants fell into the expected range for the Western Cape demographics, for example, Coloured student participants consisted of 55% and Black participants of 45%. In the USA it was found that African-American and Latino (women) reported more childhood stressors (Clauss-Ehlers, Yang & Chen, 2006), but this could be attributed to the socio-economic circumstances of African-American and Latino citizens. This was confirmed in South Africa where socio-economic circumstances are strongly linked to mental wellbeing (Myer *et al.*, 2008).

6.2.4 MARITAL STATUS

Most of the student participants were single (90%), which fell within the expected range. Studies, though, have confirmed that a supportive partner promoted resilience in young adulthood (DuMont *et al*., 2007). Studies have confirmed the social supportive role that marriage can play (Musick & Bumpass, 2012), especially when studies have also shown the prevalence of depression symptoms in young adults generally (Buysse *et al.*, 2008; Eisenberg *et al.*, 2007).

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6.2.5 GEOGRAPHIC ORIGINS

The majority of the student participants hailed from the Western Cape (65%) and from other provinces in South Africa (30%). One student was from Zimbabwe. Most student participants could also be classified as urban-based (70%). The Western Cape Province has shown the highest prevalence of mental health symptoms compared to other provinces in South Africa (Herman *et al.*, 2009). Other studies have also shown that South Africans are exposed to at least one adverse incident during their lifetime, with the majority experiencing multiple incidents (Williams *et al.*, 2007).

6.2.6 HOME LANGUAGE

Most students reported Afrikaans as their home language (40%), with IsiXhosa following with 30%. English was not dominant, with only 15% students indicating this as their home language. Therefore the majority of students used English as second (sometimes third) language within the context of English medium HEIs (Ferreira & Mendelowitz, 2009; Niven, 2011, 2005). For many students, their comprehension of English academic writing may be compromised because of language constraints (Niven, 2005).

6.2.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS FROM DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Female participants dominated the study. However, this was not perceived as significant since it was in keeping with the general demographic profile in social work. It is clear that young adults are particularly affected by stressors and adding to this is the prevalence of mental health issues in the Western Cape, especially. English as medium of instruction is a constraining factor as it represents a second or third language for most of the student participants.

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6.3 THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES RELATING TO THE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

This chapter focuses on the research findings that relate to the childhood experiences of the student participants. These findings have evolved into four main themes that present the experiences of participants as viewed through the personal written accounts and narratives of the student participants, as well as the experiences of staff participants in their engagement with students through teaching and learning activities. The following sections explicate the outcomes of data analysis into research findings as shown by themes, sub-themes and categories (Table 6.2):

Table 6.2: Main themes and sub-themes of ACEs of students (Part I)

	MAIN THEMES			
	1. CHILDHOOD ABUSE	**2. TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE**	**3. IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS**	**4. POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH**
SUB-THEMES	1.1 Emotional abuse	2.1 Ineffectual caregiving provision	3.1 Internalising behaviours	4.1 Positive characteristics and personal traits
	1.2 Physical neglect, abuse and threats	2.2 Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers	3.2 Externalising behaviours	4.2 Life lessons
	1.3 Sexual abuse	2.3 Unstable family relationships and structure	3.3 Low self-esteem	
		2.4 Poor marital relationships	3.4 Enduring consequences	
			3.5 Emotional after-math	
			3.6 Physical effects and remedies	

In Table 6.2 it can be seen that the main themes centred on the participants' unhappy childhood experiences at the hands of their primary caregivers, the impact of these experiences on them, and positive outcomes that developed out of these circumstances. In the following section, these themes are delineated further with the generation of categories of data within each sub-theme.

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6.3.1 THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE

Child abuse is a scourge and a threat to the quality of life of many (Ritacco & Suffla, 2012). As a consequence of the data received from participants, three core sub-themes and seven categories materialised. The sub-themes that were generated epitomised the archetypal childhood abuses, namely emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect and threats, and sexual abuse (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: THEME 1: ABUSE OF PARTICIPANTs: sub-themes and categories

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES			
Sub-themes	1.1 Emotional abuse	1.2 Physical neglect, abuse and threats	1.3 Sexual abuse
Categories	(i) Using words (ii) Withholding love and affection	(i) Physical neglect (ii) Physical attacks and threats (iii) Parentification	(i) Intra-familial sexual abuse (ii) Corollary or secondary trauma

Table 6.3 shows the seven categories that further showcased the kinds of abuse endured by participants, which provided more depth and understanding to the sub-theme.

6.3.1.1 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse elicited the strongest response from participants in terms of childhood abuses. Some researchers view emotional abuse as the most detrimental (Berzenski & Yates, 2010; Burns, Jackson & Harding, 2010; Iwaniec, 2006; Morelen & Shaffer, 2012; Shumba, 2004). Emotional abuse is defined as consisting of caregivers' rejection of the child, which involves various and repeated actions that inflict emotional injury onto the child (Chamberland *et al.*, 2012; Morelen & Shaffer, 2012; Shumba, 2004). The categories in this sub-theme are the following:

(i) *Using words*: Verbal abuse includes words that "attack or injure" and that denote "psychological violence" (Noh & Talaat, 2012:224-225). In summary, participants revealed the hurtful words used to emotionally abuse participants included insults, shouting and blaming,

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swearing, negative labelling and name calling, scaring and threatening. Specific examples of participants' narratives are presented in Table 6.4:

Table 6.4: Emotional abuse: Using words

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.1	EMOTIONAL ABUSE	**CATEGORY (i)**	Using words
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *After all no one ever told me I was beautiful. My cousin used to tease me about my thick lips, long face, big manly hands and big eyes.*

Student participant

- *…she used to tell me that, no-one would ever want you, you are a disgusting person, you will never be good enough for anybody, you are so clumsy and then I used to wear thick glasses and I had this scar from the burn…*

Research confirmed that verbal abuse and aggression was a more significant predictor of children's behavioural problems than physical abuse (Evan, Simons & Simons, 2012; Teicher *et al.*, 2006) or comparable to witnessing IPV or experiencing non-familial sexual abuse (Teicher et al., 2006). As a result of the demeaning role of verbal abuse it specifically hones in on the child's sense of self-worth through the assimilation of persistent censure and disapproval (Iwaniec, Larkin & McSherry, 2007). Maternal abuse caused shame, insignificance, self-disparagement and disempowerment that led to low self-esteem, aggression, self-anger and hopelessness (Iwaniec *et al.*, 2007). Cited literature has supported the findings showing how words can inflict serious emotional pain ("psychological violence") and can have long-lasting effects on children who are already vulnerable and gullible, especially when the source of the abuse is from the mother.

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(ii) *Withholding love and affection*: Withholding or reserving love by parents was characterised by the participants as showing little positive regard, affection and approval towards them as children. Support for this category is shown through excerpts of participants' narratives (Table 6.5):

Table 6.5: Emotional abuse: Withholding love and affection

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.1	EMOTIONAL ABUSE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Withholding love and affection
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *I could always feel the disapproving power without him having to say anything at all because he had this look in his eye where he would just stare at me.*	• *I would often imagine my mother looking at me as if she actually saw me as a person who just wants to be close to her, be hugged and loved by her as she did my brothers and not the clumsy, nervous child who is always dropping and breaking things because she felt so intimidated just by being in her mother's presence.*

Participants' statements show the emotional rejection they felt at the hands of their parents. Withholding love or parental rejection is a key component of emotional abuse which conveys to the child a sense of being unloved and unworthy (Chamberland *et al*., 2012; Morelen & Shaffer, 2012; Niditch & Varela, 2012; Shumba, 2004). Parental rejection is strongly associated with the onset of childhood depression (Bayer, Sanson & Hemphill, 2006; McLeod, Weisz & Wood, 2007; Roelofs *et al*., 2006; Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005). Mothers were found to be more likely to inflict emotional abuse (Chamberland *et al*., 2012; Chang *et al*., 2003; Niditch & Varela, 2012). Participants' revelations were confirmed by the cited literature and again exposed the harrowing nature of parental rejection because parents (or primary caregivers) are expected to be the ultimate source of love and affirmation which in turn supplies self-esteem and self-worth.

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Emotional abuse (sub-theme 1) was found to inflict the most pain in the long term and it was no different for these student participants who still showed immense reaction to the emotional pain inflicted on them by significant others.

6.3.1.2 Physical neglect, abuse and threats

Child abuse consists of physical neglect and abuse of the child that primarily arise from the interplay between parental mental health difficulties such as depression, stress and social isolation (Dubowitz & Bennett, 2007) as well as poverty and unemployment (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 2012) . Physical neglect and abuse is also strongly associated with poor mental health outcomes and socio-economic prospects into adulthood for the children (Currie & Widom, 2010). This sub-theme culminated into the following categories:

(i) *Physical neglect*: Participants illustrated the neglect by parents withholding physical care, for example health care. Food insecurity, in particular, was common (also see Theme 2, sub-theme 2.1). The humiliation of having no proper clothes for church / school also formed part of this category. The following excerpts showcase the support for the category of physical neglect (Table 6.6):

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Table 6.6: Physical neglect, abuse and threats: Physical neglect

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.2	PHYSICAL NEGLECT, ABUSE AND THREATS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Physical neglect
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant	Student participant
• *....my mom was just, she wouldn't wash my hair, I'd get lice she wouldn't care. What she did was she'd take a scissors and she'd just cut my hair off like this and then I'd have to go with hair standing, I can't fasten it, I can't brush it, I can't style it and the children would make fun of me and I would be so humiliated*	• *We more than once had to struggle to get food in our mouths.*	• *Then when we went back to school I had no socks then I was just wearing the takkies and the tackies were smelly and it got older and older and the teacher caned me with a stick and it was compulsory that we wear the black shoes…*

Table 6.6 illustrates the denial of physical care and attention experienced by participants. There is a correlation between the occurrence of child neglect and inadequate parenting knowledge because purposeful neglect is uncommon (Dubowitz & Bennett, 2007; Human Sciences Research Council, 2012). In terms of health care, research findings indicate that responsiveness to a child's distress involves parental care and sanctioning of the child's distress (Ackerman *et al.*, 2011). Risk factors are young mothers and/or a history of child maltreatment (Bartlett & Easterbrooks, 2012). Physical neglect of the child is strongly associated with later (adult) substance abuse (Shin, Miller & Teicher, 2013; Viola et al., 2013), aggression (Kotch et al., 2008), violent and non-violent crime (Evans & Burton, 2013; Robertson & Burton, 2010), and mental health difficulties (Allison *et al.*, 2007; Gil *et al.*, 2009; Taussig *et al.*, 2013). The severe impact of physical neglect on the participants was strongly supported by cited literature. Physical neglect reinforces the child's beliefs that their needs and their distress do not warrant the attention of their primary caregivers. Such behaviour exacerbates the child's increasingly frail self-esteem and vulnerabilities.

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(ii) *Physical attacks and threats*: Participants elucidated the harsh punishments, attacks and threats of violence by fathers, particularly, and at school by a teacher. Table 6.7 provides extracts of student participants' accounts of these physical attacks and threats.

Table 6.7: Physical neglect, abuse and threats: Physical attacks and threats

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.2	PHYSICAL NEGLECT, ABUSE AND THREATS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Physical attacks and threats
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *If I did something wrong I would be punished and was hit with a belt and up till today I still have a scar that was left after he hit me and it was bleeding so that my hair was stuck on my head. I was beaten most of the time when he was under the influence and I would cry myself to sleep.*

Student participant

- *I feared this teacher because (he) used corporal punishment at school. He used to hit us for failing his test and that made some learners to drop out of school. He used to beat learners until they bleed and this happened in 1990s before the abolition of corporal punishment.*

Research confirmed a strong link between child physical abuse and domestic violence, poverty, mental health problems and alcohol / drug abuse of the parents (Herrenkohl *et al.*, 2008; Norman *et al.*, 2012). Richter and Dawes (2008:87) confirm that "parents and teachers are the most common perpetrators of physical abuse". Many parts of South Africa are still patriarchal, and together with traditions and culture, patriarchy can either be positive (protective) or negative (harmful) in terms of how children are viewed (Madu, 2003; Richter & Dawes, 2008). The physical disciplining of learners was institutionalised especially within the South African school system and, although abolished in 1996, this practice remains in place in many parts of South Africa (Richter & Dawes, 2008). The physical abuse of participants by their parents and teacher is supported by the literature referred to. This behaviour reflects a generally violent or aggressive society, as seen in many spheres of social life, such as in homes, schools, national policy, and in traditional beliefs, such as patriarchy. Children are therefore at risk and disempowered through organs of society.

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(iii) *Parentification*: Participants described taking responsibility for the whole household, which included cooking, cleaning and seeing to the needs of minor children even when adults were around, and fending for themselves as children with no adults around (however temporary). These tasks typify parentification, which refers to situations where children are compelled to assume parental tasks and responsibilities which are tantamount to child neglect (Hooper, 2007; Hooper, Marotta & Lantheir, 2008; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2008). Table 6.8 shows examples in support of parentification.

Table 6.8: Physical neglect, abuse and threats: Parentification

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.2	PHYSICAL NEGLECT, ABUSE AND THREATS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Parentification
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *At that age (**9 years**) I could cook, clean, do the laundry, do my schoolwork and go to school the next day. I was forced to grow up very quickly, missing a few stages of development as a child where I still had to play with friends….*

Student participant

- *Therefore over weekends myself and my brother had to fend for ourselves, I had to cook as my father and my mother would be with their friends having the time of their lives and then returning home fighting waking me and my brother up. This would go on weekend after weekend.*

Parentification often resulted in participants missing school in order to attend to household responsibilities. In commissioning research into children's viewpoints on labour practices, the Department of Labour (South Africa) "found that children were excessively involved in domestic chores and labour practices that negatively impacted on their well-being" (September & Savahl, 2009:26). Parentification is another prime example of the abuse of children in terms of their youth and powerlessness against the demands of their families and traditions. Children have no choice but to obey as the pressure and consequences may be untenable.

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Sub-theme 2 gave credence to the physical neglect, abuse and threats endured by participants through significant others, such as parents and teachers. Participants had to battle through the neglect of their basic needs by their parents and their physical abuse by the same parents and their teachers. The parentification gave an additional dimension to childhood abuses. All of these incidents are reminiscent of the traditional and authoritarian role of parents outside of the context of a rights culture, particularly children's rights.

6.3.1.3 Sexual abuse

Four participants (20%) reported incidents of child sexual abuse (CSA). This is not a strong sub-theme, but the harrowing and traumatic experiences of the participants are important to note. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between the experience of sexual abuse and resultant anxiety / depression and post-traumatic stresses (Fergusson, Boden & Horwood, 2008; Haj-Yahia & Tamish, 2001; Mathews, Abrahams & Jewkes, 2013). The sub-theme was informed by the following two categories:

(i) *Intra-familial sexual abuse*: Intra-familial CSA involves sexual abuse of a child by family members, for example a cousin, a brother or an extended family member (Bal *et al.*, 2004; Gold, Hyman & Andres-Hyman, 2004), as revealed by participants. The following are evident of how participants experienced intra-familial sexual abuse (Table 6.9):

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Table 6.9: Sexual abuse: Intra-familial sexual abuse

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.3	**SEXUAL ABUSE**	**CATEGORY (i)**	Intra-familial sexual abuse
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *…my cousin sexually molested me for period of my childhood… because the fact that the sexual abuse occurred while my mother and my cousin's mother were in the same room. Both of them were intoxicated.*	• *…my brother who is 3 years older than me sexually abused me when I was still a 7-10 year old girl.*

Here participants recounted the sexual abuse by close family members. Research confirms that children become vulnerable to predators and sexual abuse as a result of particular family dynamics, notably parental absences or children not living with their parents (Madu, 2003; Svedin, Back & Soderback, 2002) that can have their origins in macro structural forces such as poverty and unemployment (Weir-Smith, 2014; Olafson, 2002). Research confirms that families of the intra-familial adolescent sexual offender are described as chaotic and conflictual with poor communication and engagement (Thornton *et al.*, 2008). The long-term effects of intra-familial sexual abuse include poor health outcomes for the child such as depression, persistent stress, self-mutilation and inhibited sexual development (Tricket, Noll & Putnam, 2011). Sexual abuse by family members contravenes all norms and conventions of society. A vulnerable child enduring this traumatic and violent abuse would further endure the long-lasting mental health consequences for the duration of their lives, as confirmed by the mentioned literature.

(ii) *Corollary or secondary trauma*: Secondary trauma stemmed from the initial abuse such as the shame and guilt experienced, as well as the anxiety about keeping secrets. One participant also particularly mentioned not receiving therapeutic intervention or being taken seriously *(Nothing was done about with that incident of sexual harassment by my so called uncle until he victimised another young girl).* The following epitomises secondary trauma (Table 6.10):

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Table 6.10: Sexual abuse: Corollary or secondary trauma

THEME 1: CHILDHOOD ABUSE			
SUB-THEME 1.3	SEXUAL ABUSE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Corollary or secondary trauma
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *At that time the shame has already instilled in me, because although I didn't want him to do this, my body reacted in a sexual way to his behavior. I felt it was partly my fault and that they would blame both of us, and so my decision was to rather keep quiet and just hope that my mother could rescue me from the hell I was experiencing.*

Student participant

- *With regard to my experienced sexual abuse from my brother, I cannot describe the amounts of pain that I went through during that time. I kept it from my parents and they still have no idea about it because I started to feel sorry for my brother.*

Disclosing sexual abuse is difficult and traumatic and thus clarifies the delay in disclosing (Priebe & Svedin, 2008; Svedin *et al*., 2002). Shame, guilt and not being believed are some reasons for (delayed) non-disclosure (Svedin *et al*., 2002). Priebe and Svedin (2008) confirm that girls, especially, found it difficult to disclose in cases of intra-familial sexual abuse. Secrecy is maintained by threats and the child's level of defencelessness (McElvaney, Greene & Hogan, 2012). We can see that the burden of secrets and secrecy locked the participants longer in these violent abuses. The cited literature corroborated the toll of secrecy that kept the knowledge of abuse from those who would otherwise have helped. This typifies the predatory and calculating behaviour of perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

The findings on sexual abuse confirm that sexual abuse is the most harrowing and traumatic experience for anyone, but especially children. Intra-familial sexual abuse is doubly so, since this is abuse by known family members, which brought issues of trust into existence and contributed to participants' unwillingness to disclose their abuse and led to secrets and secrecy.

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6.3.1.4 Summary and conclusions of Theme 1

Theme 1 revealed childhood abuse endured by participants, which encompassed emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Students described their experiences of abuse at the hands of significant caregivers. The theme is important because of the kinds of abuse that the participants reported as pivotal to their unhappiness during an important part of their lives and which had far-reaching consequences.

6.3.2 THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE

Families are the primary source of socialisation in childhood and early adolescence (Ackerman *et al*., 2011; Fleming *et al.*, 2010). In their seminal ACEs study, Felitti *et al*. (1998) confirmed the relationship between child abuse (Theme 1) and family troubles such as substance abuse (Sub-theme 6.3.2.2 (i)) and intimate partner violence (Sub-theme 6.3.2.4 (i)). Ackerman *et al.'s*. (2011) research highlights that parents who may be identified as emotionally distant or abusive may reflect more about themselves as individuals or as a family generally than an indication of parenting styles / practices. Theme 2 represented strong responses about the disorder and unhappiness that characterised participants' family life. Students' responses created the following four sub-themes: poor interpersonal relationships and interaction; family and intimate partner violence; internal and external living environments; and financial struggles.

This theme elicited overwhelming responses (100%) from participants from their reflective assignments and individual interviews. There thus is ample evidence of the unhappy family life experienced by student participants. The following sub-themes were based on sixteen categories depicting the different kinds of responses (Table 6.11).

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Table 6.11: THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE: sub-themes and categories

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES				
Sub-themes	2.1 Ineffectual caregiving provision	2.2 Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers	2.3 Unstable family relationships and structure	2.4 Poor marital relationships
Categories	(i) Emotionally distant and uncaring (ii) Parental absences (iii) Unmet basic needs (iv) Left-behind children	(i) Alcohol abuse (ii) Parental behaviour and lifestyle (iii) Unemployment and meagre financial support	(i) Poor communication (ii) Conflictual interactions (iii) An environment of fear (iv) Unstable living arrangements (v) Parental illness / disability (vi) Death/loss of primary caregivers	(i) Intimate partner violence (ii) Extra-marital affairs (iii) Parental break-ups

Table 6.11 showcases the relationship between the four sub-themes and sixteen categories of data encompassed in Theme 2. The table shows the different descriptions of students' family life.

6.3.2.1 Ineffectual caregiving provision

The sub-themes focused on the role of primary caregivers and caregiving in the formative years of the participants' lives and the data that were elicited were extremely negative. The ground-breaking taxonomy of parenting styles by psychologist Diana Baumrind provided the basis for analysing parenting (Baumrind, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Faber, 2002; Prevatt, 2003). These styles were identified as being authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful. Parenting styles are multi-faceted beliefs about parenting, and parenting practices are the parenting actions and decisions. This sub-theme focused on the role performance of the primary caregivers in the participants' childhoods. As part of this sub-theme, these elements are explored under four categories:

(i) *Parents as emotionally distant and uncaring*: Participants perceived their parents as distant, uninvolved and disengaged, notably fathers. The following table provides examples of the narratives of student participants (Table 6.12):

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Table 6.12: Ineffectual caregiving provision: Emotionally distant and uncaring

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.1	INEFFECTUAL CAREGIVING PROVISION	**CATEGORY (i)**	Emotionally distant and uncaring
NARRATIVES			

• *…it was raining outside she took my little baby from the bed, shoved her into my arms, took the bedding from the bed, took the mattress, threw it out in the rain and said you get the hell out of my house and it was raining. I took the bedding I covered her and I went outside …. and there was a broken down car outside … and so me and my daughter were sitting there outside in the car. It was raining, there's no windows in the car it was cold and I was sitting there and I was just crying…*	Student participant
• *He was an absent figure for most of my childhood, even when we lived together in a house, he would still be emotionally absent or just absent altogether.*	Student participant
• *I also grew up in a patriarchal setting, so my father was not very involved in my life and my sisters' lives but was more present in my brother's life.*	Student participant

These comments reveal upsetting and emotional distancing behaviour of participants' parents. Research findings show that positive parent-child interaction, such as warmth and involvement, fosters social competence (De Haan, Prinzie & Dekovic, 2009). Lack of parental involvement is also cited as a detrimental factor in the emotional development of a child (Shellenbarger, 2006), especially of fathers (McMahon & Rounsaville, 2002; Stover, McMahon & Easton, 2011) (also see category (ii) below regarding parental absence). Parental absence is attested to in the following account: *My father left when I was a baby and didn't pay any interest in me as his child, this had a negative influence on me and my mother as a family because she had to provide and look after me alone as a single parent.* The cited literature and the findings are in concert regarding the detrimental effect of emotionally distant parents on the socio-emotional development of children. Fathers were the main defaulters, giving credence to patriarchal beliefs. Patriarchism could be a powerful socialisation tool, as correctly pointed out by the participant in the third narrative.

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(ii) *Parental absence*: Participants reflected both parents being absent on a regular basis whether working or living elsewhere and the emotional wait for their return. Participants' statements are shown to substantiate parental absences (Table 6.13):

Table 6.13: Ineffectual caregiving provision: Parental absences

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.1	INEFFECTUAL CAREGIVING PROVISION	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Parental absence
NARRATIVES			

- *Sometimes we would not hear from her, we would not know where she is and then when she came it wouldn't be a matter of mum is home it would be a matter of okay let me just not get excited because she's going to leave any minute now.* — Student participant

- *As I was growing up because some of the things which I was supposed to maybe to do as a man, I didn't have anybody to teach me how to do that or maybe anybody to tell me what to do* — Student participant

September and Savahl (2009) and Pottinger (2005) also reported on the incidents of parental absences (also possibly for job seeking purposes) and not maintaining contact with their children who wait for their return. Referred to as "domestic fluidity" parental absences was a historical characteristic of the family landscape (especially in black rural areas) in South Africa (Townsend *et al.*, 2002). Absent fathers were strongly reported by participants. Such absence had repercussions for the male participants in that their fathers did not provide a positive role model. In South Africa, absence of fathers from their families has increased over the past 20 years to 63% in 2010 (16% because of the father's decease and 47% absent due to living elsewhere) (Republic of South Africa, 2012; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012). Thus the average child is more likely to live with their single mother or extended family.

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The impact of the absent father / fatherless childhood was strongly felt in terms of the acculturation of the cultural role of men within a traditional family context. Ratele *et al*. (2012:554) cautions, though, that the statistics depicting the increasing numbers of female headed household only serve to demonise "poor black men" in terms of their parenting role or lack thereof. The experiences of participants were validated by the literature. The occurrence of parental absence (specifically of fathers) has been a peculiarity in South African communities. The statistics and these findings do not necessarily cast aspersions or blame, but could point to interventions as there are human casualties behind the statistics (also see category (iv), below, regarding left-behind children).

(iii) *Unmet basic needs*: Participants illuminated their unmet needs that included not receiving regular meals or having to eat meagre meals or having to beg for food (Table 6.14):

Table 6.14: Ineffectual caregiving provision: Unmet basic needs

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.1	INEFFECTUAL CAREGIVING PROVISION	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Unmet basic needs
NARRATIVES			

- *Like growing up it was difficult. <u>There were times we would really truly have pap and just one onion and one tomato and we mix it with flour</u>* — Student participant
- *But then it was quite difficult and <u>we would ask relatives for food</u>. Sometimes my oldest brother would actually leave in the morning, we wouldn't know where he went but he would come back in the evening with food.* — Student participant

The majority of impoverished people experience lengthy periods of hunger (De Swardt *et al.*, 2005). Food insecurity means the lack of regular and reliable prospects for sufficient meals for an individual's wellbeing (Swindle, Whiteside-Mansell & McKelvey, 2013). There are many consequences to food insecurity such as inattentiveness at school and reduced emotional well-being (Swindle *et al*., 2013). Most importantly, there was a high correlation between food insecurity and other family troubles (see Theme 3), especially poor parenting practices (see also

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Sub-theme 2.2) (Swindle *et al*., 2013). These findings illustrate the components of large-scale and enduring poverty in South Africa. The impact of irregular meals and the resultant hunger has socio-emotional consequences for the child, as explicated in the literature and evidenced in the findings.

(iv) *Left-behind children*: This situation arises when parents leave children in the care of others, for example older siblings, or with extended family that treat them dismally (also see Sub-theme 2.3 (iv)).

Table 6.15: Ineffectual caregiving provision: Left-behind children

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.1	INEFFECTUAL CAREGIVING PROVISION	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Left-behind children
NARRATIVES			

- *When our mother was a domestic worker, we were left under the supervision of our elder sister (child-headed household).* — Student participant
- *After my grandmother passed away when I was 14 years old, the extended family made our life extremely difficult and wanted us out of my grandmother's house.* — Student participant

A common consequence of migration in developing countries is that children are often left behind (Pottinger, 2005). Strong family and cultural ties facilitate leaving children in the care of extended family or friends (Pottinger, 2005). The effects on children are felt especially in terms of their health, education and general wellbeing (Dillon & Walsh, 2012; Pottinger, 2005). Leaving a child left behind unbeknown to the child is a frightening and bewildering experience for that child. This occurrence renders further powerlessness and exposes such children to neglect and abuse on the basis of their age, vulnerability and dependence. Again, this finding points to action in terms of policy and intervention.

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Ineffectual caregiving provision was focused wholly on parents neglecting their primary role in providing basic care to their dependent and vulnerable children through being emotionally distant and uninvolved; being absent; not meeting their basic needs; and leaving children behind in the care of others whom children did not experience positively left an indelible mark on participants, who still perceive these incidents as adverse childhood experiences.

6.3.2.2 Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers

Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers was related to alcohol abuse by caregivers; negative behaviour and lifestyle of parents; and unemployment and the resultant lack of financial support for families. Ineffectual role fulfilment is also identified as poor parental self-agency in the literature (Meunier & Roskam, 2009). Contributory factors to negative role fulfilment include the socio-economic context and various self-efficacy factors such as lacking the ability to control aggression; problem solving skills; poor life satisfaction; and lacking child rearing competencies (Seng & Prinz, 2008). This sub-theme consists of three categories:

(i) *Alcohol abuse by caregivers*: Participants depicted the alcohol abuse, especially by fathers and stepfathers; only one reported alcohol abuse by a mother. The following participant descriptions substantiate this category (Table 6.16):

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Table 6.16: Ineffectual caregiving provision: Alcohol abuse by caregivers

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.2	INEFFECTUAL ROLE FULFILMENT OF CAREGIVERS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Alcohol abuse by caregivers
NARRATIVES			

- *My father used to be an alcoholic for as long as I can remember* — Student participant
- *When he (stepfather) came into our lives my mother started drinking and our home became a bioscope where people would come and watch fights and laugh as much as they wanted, our home became a tavern because people would go there to drink and when my parents were fighting they would go to their houses one by one.* — Student participant

Coombes and Anderson (2000) confirmed the dominance of alcohol abuse in families where family life becomes governed by the abuse. Research confirms that children are particularly affected with regard to their emotional, behavioural and developmental needs (Coombes & Anderson, 2000; Roghmo *et al.*, 2012; Stover *et al.*, 2011). Both the mother's (Conners *et al*, 2004) and the father's role (Halme *et al.*, 2006), as well as the dual parental role of both (Rognmo *et al.*, 2012) have been linked to poor parenting and high risk to children. Although there is considerable evidence showing the harmful impact of exposure to alcohol abuse and family violence (Stover *et al.*, 2011; Wong *et al.*, 2008), one vital mediating factor is the child's reactions and perception of the abuser's behaviour (Coombes & Anderson, 2000). The findings show the powerlessness and the humiliation of enduring and witnessing the downward spiral of one's parents succumbing to the ravages of alcohol abuse. Participants' revealed their negative reactions, and thus, according to Coombes & Anderson (2000), there is a greater possibility of experiencing socio-emotional effects.

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(ii) *Parental behaviour and lifestyle*: Participants revealed dubious parental behaviour and lifestyle, which included apparent sex work and womanising. The following illustrations provide an insight into certain parental behaviours referred to by student participants (Table 6.17):

Table 6.17: Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers: Parental behaviour and lifestyle

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.2	INEFFECTUAL ROLE FULFILMENT OF CAREGIVERS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Parental behaviour and lifestyle
NARRATIVES			

• *She would say she went to Jo'burg or we didn't know because there were stories because <u>there's usually like stories back home when a woman goes to Jo'burg that she goes to stay with other men and things like that,</u> but what we knew she was working but as I grew older and understood what women really go do and in Rustenburg*	Student participant
• *<u>My dad was a womaniser. He lived for women. He was a bad husband</u>…*	Student participant

There is a strong association between negative parental behaviour and other aspects of parenting and children's conduct, the impact of which results in hyperactivity, disruption and depression (Silberberg, Maes & Eaves, 2012). Research findings suggest that mothers who are sex workers see themselves primarily as mothers and reveal the shame and anxiety they feel for their children's safety as well as their own (Basu & Dutta, 2011; Sloss & Harper, 2004). The impact of infidelity on children is serious and enduring as it relates to parental behaviour modelling and the development of mistrust in the offending parent (Wardle, 2002). Society expects parents to be caricatures of convention and stability, but this is seldom the case. These findings show the impact on children when parents (mis)behave or act out of the norm, because, again, the implication of parental role modelling is highlighted.

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(iii) *Unemployment and meagre financial support*: An occurring theme of parental unemployment as well as negligible financial support from fathers were revealed by participants. Little or no financial support from fathers, in particular, forced mothers to be the sole providers and having to rely on extended family members for sustenance. Loss of employment and job seeking behaviour was typical: one mother having to give up her employment to nurse her husband (the participant's father); a father being dismissed because of being drunk; and mothers being absent from the home whilst job seeking (Table 6.18):

Table 6.18: Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers: Unemployment and meagre financial support

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.2	INEFFECTUAL ROLE FULFILMENT OF CAREGIVERS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Unemployment and meagre financial support
NARRATIVES			

- *My stepfather drinks away his money and didn't care about what happens to his family.* — Student participant
- *My mother and I were very poor because she was unemployed and she had no support system.* — Student participant
- *My father seldom contributed financially to the household after my parents' divorce which meant that there were often times when we did not have anything to eat; my mother resorted to selling what she could in the house in order to provide for us.* — Student participant

In South Africa, unemployment is one of the main macro-economic problems (Harmse, Blaauw & Schenck, 2009) with the unemployment rate for the 3rd quarter of 2013, at 24.7%, of 52.98 million people of which Black South Africans were the most affected at 28% (Statistics South Africa, 2013). Research indicates that the impact on families of unemployment, specifically of a resident father, is profound, as felt, for example, in impoverishment; conflictual relationships;

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poorer wellbeing; and housing problems (Huang, 2009; McClelland, 2000). Children's future employment opportunities may be impaired; research shows that resident father unemployment impacts on achievement at school and results in repeating of grades (McClelland, 2000; Rege, Telle & Votruba, 2011; Stevens & Schaller, 2011). The unwillingness of non-resident fathers to financially support their children has also been found to lead to children's behavioural problems and lower educational achievements (Choi & Pyun, 2014; Huang, 2009). Chronic unemployment robbed individuals of the possibility of earning livelihoods and fulfilling their financial obligations. In South Africa this factor further burdens families, and is exacerbated by some fathers' unwillingness to meet their obligations after marital separation or divorce. The family is forced into crisis decision making in order to survive.

Ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers resulting from alcohol abuse; negative parental behaviour; and the unemployment and non-support of parental figures impacted on the care and lifestyle of participants that parents were directly responsible for providing during the childhood of the participants.

6.3.2.3 Unstable family relationships and structure

This sub-theme represented a strong response. Participants' responses recorded poor interpersonal relationships in their home. In their research with children and wellbeing, September and Savahl (2009) found that children viewed having both parents and a positive family life as important factors of wellbeing. There are three interlinking elements underpin childhood experiences, namely the family management style of parents; the intensity of parent-child relationships; and the level of family conflict (Fleming *et al.*, 2010). Six categories represented this sub-theme:

(i) *Poor communication*: Family communication was characterised by difficulties in talking to parents compounded by the restriction of certain topics as culturally taboo. Family communication is a means whereby members share and learn values and beliefs, citizen norms and the enactment of family and cultural rituals (Koesten, 2004; Koesten & Anderson, 2004; Schrodt, Witt & Messersmith, 2008).

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Table 6.19: Unstable family relationships and structure: Poor communication

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (i)**	Poor communication
NARRATIVES			

- *My family struggled to talk to each other and I think we never really could talk to each other the way we did. It was hard to share our feelings because we were scared what the response of our parents would be.* — Student participant
- *My mother is also to a certain extent a traditional person, so it was not easy to talk to her about everything in my life because in a 'traditional family' there are just some things that are taboo to talk about…* — Student participant

Research confirms the link between poor family communication patterns and communication anxieties and shyness (Kelly *et al*., 2002). Conversation orientation is the level to which family communication is open to discussing a variety of topics (Keaten & Kelly, 2008; Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008). Sensitive topics such as drinking or drugs or sexual issues elicit middle to low openness to a diversity of viewpoints, and where the opinions of parents are dominant (Baxter & Akkoor, 2011; Keaten & Kelly, 2008). Poor communication is another example of the struggles in family life, especially in traditional families struggling with modern social changes. Children experience the effects of poor family communication as this is a conduit to negative socialisation and social anxieties, making them especially susceptible during adolescence to negative peer pressure.

(ii) *Conflictual interactions*: Interactions were typified by poor interpersonal relationships with parents, siblings or extended family through constant fights and differences of opinion that showed little caring and respect. Student participants' portrayals are as follows (Table 6.20):

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Table 6.20: Unstable family relationships and structure: Conflictual interactions

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Conflictual interactions
NARRATIVES			

- *There was constant fighting amongst my parents, which myself and brothers were exposed to, we on many occasions had to witness these events occurring.* — Student participant
- *…we as siblings…did not connect with each other. We were not close as siblings should be. …nobody shared with anyone what they were feeling.* — Student participant

Children exhibited greater anxiety and depression as a consequence of family conflict (Jouriles *et al*., 2000) which, in addition, also exposed children to abuse and enduring emotional difficulties (Higgins & McCabe, 2003). The cited literature verified the anguish that can result as a consequence of constant family conflict. Children are easily frightened by the heightened hostility within their family and this has been shown to have an enduring effect on their mental health. They could, furthermore, become socialised into a negative problem-solving demeanour.

(iii) *An environment of fear*: Participants revealed the fear that was created by various family incidents, for example, a brother disappearing without a trace and participant's parents blaming each other; a participant enduring a mother taking her frustrations out on the participant; being fearful of one's father; the strain of alcohol abuse and family violence; and running away (Table 6.21):

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Table 6.21: Unstable family relationships and structure: An environment of fear

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (iii)**	An environment of fear
NARRATIVES			

- *After the incident of the severe physical punishment of my brother I distanced myself from my father as I became scared of my father's capabilities.* — Student participant
- *…there were always an awkward and uncomfortable atmosphere after a night where me, my mother and my brother had to run for our lives not knowing where we should go in order to get away from my stepfather* — Student participant

Davies *et al*. (2009) confirm that exposure to parental hostility gradually escalates the fear and anger responses of children. Parental hostility therefore poses a threat to the wellbeing of children, especially in later life (Davies, Cicchetti & Martin, 2012). Cited literature shows that fearful children are prone to act out in anger and this behaviour is especially concerning in later, adult life. Situations that arise may trigger the familiar fearful feelings which can erupt into the familiar anger. In adulthood, this can become a precursor to aggressive interactions.

(iv) *Unstable living arrangements*: Living arrangements consisted of constant moving resulting in unstable living conditions and the consequences of this on the family (Table 6.21):

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Table 6.22: Unstable family relationships and structure: Unstable living arrangements

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Unstable living arrangements
NARRATIVES			

- *When my parents parted ways we moved back to my mother's home town. My sister and I stayed with my mother. We also moved around a lot which had a negative impact because we never seemed to find stability.* — Student participant

- *As for the moving around, I felt like there was no use in making friends because there was no guarantee that I am going to stay there forever so as a result I avoided socialising and engaging with people and also getting close to them.* — Student participant

Research findings confirm the link between the numbers of times families or children have moved with adverse behavioural outcomes for children, especially in negative school achievement and early school dropout (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Pettit, 2004). Living with extended family where children endured discrimination and conflict in their new home has also not provided the desired emotional and physical support (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007). The literature validates the findings that living arrangements impact on the child's sense of stability and routine. Participants described their feelings and avoidant behaviours because of constantly moving, especially in terms of socialisation needs.

(v) *Parental illness / disability*: The physical condition of parents and the impact on participants and family life were also revealed. Table 6.23 illustrates participants' comments regarding parental illness and disability.

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Table 6.23: Unstable family relationships and structure: Parental illness / disability

THEME 3: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (v)**	Parental illness / disability
NARRATIVES			

- *I struggled with assisting my mother going with her to the clinic to fetch the treatment, cooking, cleaning and washing in the house, preparing my brother to go to school.* — Student participant
- *…I had to assume responsibility for things my mother was responsible for. I felt that it was my responsibility to look after the household and my little sister.* — Student participant

Statistics South Africa (2013) in their mid-year report 2013 records that 5.26 million people, representing 10% of the total population in South Africa, are HIV positive, among these are 15.9% of the age group 15 to 49 years. Research confirms the link between behavioural difficulties among youth and the level of illness / disability of the parents (Ireland & Pakenham, 2010; Sieh *et al*., 2010). Tending sick parents is a selfless and compassionate deed and some may view this as a duty. The cited literature is clear about this compassionate role being dependent on the age of the caregiver, however. This behaviour may be akin to parentification (see theme 6.3.1.2 (iii)) and thus could be likened to child abuse, particularly in view of the socio-emotional effect on the child / adolescent caregiver.

(vi) *Deaths of primary caregivers*: The deaths of significant role players during participants' childhood revealed the resultant consequences (Table 6.24):

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Table 6.24: Unstable family relationships and structure: Death of primary caregivers

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.3	UNSTABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURE	**CATEGORY (vi)**	Death of primary caregivers
NARRATIVES			

- *When I was 11 years old, my father was murdered by his girlfriend's brother.* — Student participant
- *…my father died when I was a small baby in a car accident.* — Student participant
- *Our father committed suicide at that time… He hanged himself…* — Student participant

Death of a parent is one of the devastating and traumatic experiences of a child's life (Haine, Ayers & Wolchik, 2008). Parental death has profoundly negative outcomes for children (Marks, Jun & Song, 2007) and younger children in particular are severely affected (Nickerson *et al*., 2013). In South Africa, about 12% of children are single or double orphans (Human Sciences Research Council, 2012). The traumatic circumstance of the death also contributes to the trauma and grief, as can be seen in the particular responses of the participants. Adverse parenting of the surviving parent adds to the enduring trauma and grief that has implications for psychological difficulties in adulthood (Nickerson *et al*., 3013).

Unstable family relationships and structure (Sub-theme 3) were at the root of six categories depicting the unhappy family relationships experienced by the participants. The findings presented four categories of conditions (excluding structural conditions) that were largely within the power of the parents to control, such as poor communication; conflictual interactions; a fearful family environment; and unstable living arrangements. The last two categories depicted events that were beyond the control of the parents, such as illness and death.

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6.3.2.4 Poor marital relationships

Participants commented on poor relationships between their parents in relation to incidents of intimate partner violence and extra-marital affairs. These findings were in keeping with the reputation of South Africa as an extremely violent society (Clowes *et al*., 2010). These findings also reflect poor marital quality, which, in other research, has been shown to have a damaging effect on parenting and relationships (Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008) and related to the onset of child and (later) adult depression (Turner & Butler, 2003). Three categories informed this sub-theme, namely:

(i) *Intimate partner violence* (IPV*)*: IPV occurred as fighting and beatings, particularly violence perpetrated by the father or stepfather on the mother; throwing food; or attempting to kill the mother. The following are illustrations from student reflective assignments and individual interviews (Table 6.25):

Table 6.25: Poor marital relationships: Intimate partner violence (IPV)

THEME 3: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.4	POOR MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Intimate partner violence (IPV)
NARRATIVES			

- *My stepfather later begins to accuse my mother of being unfaithful and as the abuse became worse, the marks became more visible, at times my mother had to go to work like that because she didn't want to lose her job.* — Student participant
- *Somehow when I think back to my childhood the first thing that I would remember would be how my dad used to hit my mom and how he on three occasions nearly killed her in front of me.* — Student participant
- *I saw how my mother was abused verbally and food was thrown at her if it was not to his satisfaction.* — Student participant

According to Roman and Frantz (2013), the prevalence of IPV in South Africa during their research period of 2002-2012 hovered at 25.7%, which resulted in a mortality rate (as a

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consequence of IPV) of almost twice that of the USA. The detrimental effects of childhood exposure to IPV are revictimisation (especially of female children as future victims of IPV) and perpetrators of violence (male children) (McCloskey, 2013; Roman & Frantz, 2013). As a result of their exposure to IPV, children suffered high levels of anxiety, distress and other health-related conditions (Levendosky, Lannert & Yalch, 2012; Roman & Frantz, 2013). Cited literature supports the narratives of participants as to the devastating impact of witnessing the violence between primary caregivers. Once again the findings point to the negative impact on participants' mental health.

(ii) *Parental extra-marital affairs*: Participants revealed incidents of extra-marital affairs and the effect on themselves and their family. The following accounts show the support for parental extra-marital affairs (Table 6.26):

Table 6.26: Poor marital relationships: Parental extra-marital affairs

THEME 3: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.4	POOR MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Parental extra-marital affairs
NARRATIVES			

• *Another negative effect of my father's absence is the fact that my mother started having an extramarital affair*	Student participant
• *He (father) was having an affair or a few affairs outside of their marriage and later even had a child with one of the women*	Student participant

Globally, infidelity constitutes the dominant factor in relationship severances (Boloyi, 2010; Buss & Shackleford, 1997; Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004; Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005; Whisman, Gordon & Chatar, 2007). Infidelity means that "emotional and/or sexual intimacy is shared with someone outside of the primary relationship without the consent of the other partner" (Fife, Weeks & Gambescia, 2008:316). Womanising and affairs are types of infidelity (Lusterman, 2005; Wardle, 2002). Wardle (2002) has confirmed the severe impact of

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infidelity on children (see also Theme 6.2.3.2 (ii)), especially seeing the other parent in emotional pain and the negative feelings this arouses towards the offending parent. The impact on the participants was severe, especially if the infidelity resulted in separation and/or divorce.

(iii) *Parental break-ups*: Break-ups were characterised by separation and divorce. The following are excerpts of participants regarding parental break-ups and their effects (Table 6.27):

Table 6.27: Poor marital relationships: Parental break-ups

THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
SUB-THEME 2.4	POOR MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Parental break-ups
NARRATIVES			

- *After their divorce, my father remained in Cape Town and my mother left and for a while we did (not) know where she was* — Student participant
- *…my parents divorced. As a child you do not really understand what this means but when you start to grasp it you realise that a bond has been broken and your family functioning has been impaired* — Student participant

Globalisation and social change (such as individualism that emphasises personal happiness and independence) have resulted in a fundamental shift in attitude towards conventional marriage or life (Ferguson, 2004; Lu, 2006). In 2010, the divorce rate in South Africa stood at 48% (27.3% of marriages lasted between five and nine years and 21% lasted fewer than five years). In terms of the impact on children, 54% of divorces granted during this period involved children younger than 18 years (Republic of South Africa, 2012). These trends also echo the international statistics of high divorce rates, especially in relatively short-lived marriages in which there are young affected children (Portnoy, 2008; Stewart, 2005; Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006). Research indicates that children are the worst affected by parental separation and divorce, often suffering from depression; declining school performance; exhibiting troubled behaviour; and with early sexual or romantic relationships (Aktar, 2013; Ham, 2003; Hartman, Magalhaes & Mandich, 2011; Portnoy, 2008). Research also confirms the strong link between childhood divorce and later adult relationship issues, anxiety and depression (Amato & Cheadle, 2005; Cartwright,

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2006; Short, 2002; Wallerstein, 2005). The effects of separation and divorce as told by participants are substantively corroborated by the cited literature. The basis for a happy childhood resorted in the togetherness and unity of the parents for the most part and the marital break-down most often brought a dramatic change to the circumstances of participants.

Poor marital relationships (Sub-theme 4), as viewed through the retrospective experiences of participants, reveal the harmful relationships of the adults in a home characterised by extreme violence and separation. The sub-theme also reveals the deleterious impact on the participants during childhood.

6.3.2.5 Summary and conclusions of Theme 2

Theme 2 focused on the troubled family life of participants revealed through four sub-themes that depicted the parents as ineffectual caregivers who did not fulfil their roles and meet obligations, which ultimately led to unstable family and marital relationships. This theme is important because it uncovers the unhappy setting in which the participants found themselves and in which they became socialised.

6.3.3 THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS

Wellbeing can be defined in terms of the components that make up a positive quality of life, for example, physical, psychological and emotional, social, cognitive and educational, and economic (September & Savahl, 2009). Theme 4 exemplified the impact of ACEs on participants as a result of the living conditions and circumstances that they endured during their childhood. The data converged in four sub-themes, namely, internalising and externalising behaviours, low self-esteem, and the enduring consequences. These sub-themes can be seen in the components of wellbeing in terms of the extent to which the findings reflect the threats to the wellbeing of children. The categories of data are further explicated in Table 6.28.

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Table 6.28: THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACES ON PARTICIPANTS: sub-themes and categories

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES				
Sub-themes	3.1 Internalising behaviours	3.2 Externalising behaviour	3.3 Low self-esteem	3.4 Enduring consequences
Categories	(i) Inward feelings and reactions (ii) Outward feelings and reactions (iii) Socio-emotional isolation (iv) Emotional insecurity	(i) Behavioural and physical reactions (ii) Rebellious behaviour (iii) Poor judgment and choices (iv) Dropping out / losing focus	(i) Socially shy and inhibited (ii) Poor self-efficacy	(i) Disrupted family life and roles (ii) Forced maturity and self-reliance (iii) Distrusting men (iv) Emotional aftermath (v) Physical effects

Table 6.28 depicts the 15 categories that provided depth to the four sub-themes as a result of the different kinds of responses from the participants.

6.2.3.1 Internalising behaviours

Adversity in life is unavoidable, but many experience serious difficulties that make them vulnerable to detrimental psycho-social (and physical) effects (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Research confirmed a particular relationship between adverse childhood experiences and (later) adult mental health difficulties (Chapman *et al.*, 2004; Jovanovic *et al.*, 2009; Schilling, Aseltine & Gore, 2007). In this sub-theme, participants reported the internalising behaviours and reactions to their childhood experiences. Liu (2004) confirmed that children develop reactions that centre primarily on their inner psychological functioning, such as being withdrawn, anxious, inhibited and depressed. This sub-theme represented the strongest reaction. Categories typifying this sub-theme are the following:

(i) *Inward feelings and reactions:* Participants expressed feelings and reactions which included feeling empty, depressed, repressing feelings, suicide ideation, inhibited communication, as well as shame and embarrassment. Specific extracts are presented in Table 6.29:

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Table 6.29: Internalising behaviours: Inward feelings and reactions

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.1	INTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Inward feelings and reactions
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

…I've grown up to be someone who tends to be alone all the time. I never let anyone in because I do not know how to communicate and talk about my feelings. I also find it very difficult to get attached to people because I do not want to have to deal with the feelings that occur when they leave. I am scared of being abandoned and I also repress feelings.

Student participant

During this time I just wished that my life could end. I constantly had thoughts of committing suicide. If not that, I was thinking of experimenting with 'Tik' or also just getting wasted with alcohol so that I did not have to witness that.

These narratives show the depth of participants' anguish and distress. Childhood trauma can impact on the individual's self-worth and the ability to see the world as a safe place (Amatya & Barzman, 2012; Kapeleris & Paivio, 2011). Incidents of child abuse are linked to various long-term and damaging effects pertaining to emotional arousal and regulation, which leads to intense feelings of depression, sadness, fear or shame (Bernstein *et al.*, 2013; Kapeleris & Paivio, 2011; Plattner *et al.*, 2007). Importantly, further findings also linked adult women (as victims of childhood emotional abuse) to enduring emotional arousal in reaction to triggers (Bernstein *et al.*, 2013). Various authors have linked suicide ideation to family discord (Consoli *et al.*, 2013; King & Merchant, 2008); death / loss of parents (Consoli *et al.*, 2013); child abuse (Consoli *et al.*, 2013; Shilubane *et al.*, 2013); low self-esteem and poor social support (Hall-Lande *et al.*, 2007; Shilubane *et al.*, 2013; Shimshock, Williams & Sullivan, 2011). Participants revealed strong evidence of their inward feelings and reactions which were corroborated by substantive cited literature. It is clear that ACEs have had a severe and enduring impact on the emotional health of participants.

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(ii) *Outward feelings and reactions*: Participants' reactions included feeling anger and hatred towards others, like parents, as well as envying and mistrusting others (Table 6.30):

Table 6.30: Internalising behaviours: Outward feelings and reactions

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.1	**INTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS**	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Outward feelings and reactions
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	*I grew up resenting my mother and blamed her for my painful childhood.*	
Student participant	*I used to hate my stepfather before he came into our family, yes we were poor, but my mother and I were at peace and we loved each other.*	
Student participant	*….I ended up hating my father at the same fearing him. There was no longer that love and bond of father and child. We were just like enemies staying in the same house.*	

Childhood trauma can lead to insufficient regulation of emotions, such as impulsivity and difficulty with anger control (Jackson *et al*., 2011; Kapeleris & Paivio, 2011; Plattner *et al*., 2007). Family experiences were identified as key factors in igniting anger and hostility in teens (Muris *et al.*, 2004). Outward behaviour is directed externally towards others; as such, the person's internal locus of control is of importance as this will regulate emotions and reactions. The emotions are also constantly threatened by environmental triggers and the participants showed their vulnerability in this regard through negative feelings, such as anger and hatred.

(iii) *Socio-emotional isolation*: These reactions included participants isolating and withdrawing themselves from significant others and becoming socially distant. Examples of students participants' socio-emotional isolation are contained in Table 6.31:

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Table 6.31: Internalising behaviours: Socio-emotional isolation

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.1	INTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Socio-emotional isolation
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

When I partake in activities at church I kept my distance and did not allow anyone to become close to me I used defense mechanism to keep my distance.

Student participant

That's why I always keep a distance from people, I don't like to build relationships because of that and I don't know how to explain but like the brother is the one person closest to me or was. I didn't have any other sisters or brothers so being abused by him made me think that I can't trust anyone and therefore I always try to keep my distance from people even with anyone especially male persons, I just let them like a certain extent allow them close but then I just drop them out and I refrain myself from getting to someone…

The hallmark of adolescence is the search for social connections with one's peers and thus the opposite need for social isolation reflects sadness and emptiness (Hall-Lande *et al*., 2007; Newman, Lohman & Newman, 2007). Research supports the link between physical abuse and social isolation that occurs as a result of impairment of social skills and self-esteem (Elliot *et al.*, 2005; Rubin & Coplan, 2004). Social isolation was also identified as an emotional theme of adolescent suicidal experiences (Everall, Bostik & Paulson, 2006; Hall-Lande *et al*., 2007). The significant part of these findings is the conflicting need, for youth especially, to withdraw from their peers. Cited literature has expounded on this tendency (within the context of ACEs), which has serious implications for the individual's sense of self-worth and value to others. Thus repercussions of feelings of hopelessness and insignificance are precursors to suicidal ideation and attempts. Without appropriate intervention, these depressive feelings may well continue to be insidious in the person's life.

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(iv) *Emotional insecurity*: The insecurities of participants encompassed the struggles for appreciation and regard, as well as self-preservation, through pretence and efforts to create emotionally safe hide-outs. The following epitomises students' emotional insecurities (Table 6.32):

Table 6.32: Internalising behaviours: Emotional insecurity

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.1	INTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Emotional insecurity
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	*I pretend. I felt like I was pretending the whole time … To be someone I'm not.*
Student participant	*When I just want that time just to be by myself then just let me be or just to deal… I live there and when you do things to hurt me it doesn't bother me anymore because I'm now comfortable being there*

Studies support the link between marital conflict and emotional insecurity of children that further indicated difficulties in children's social skills (Cummings et al., 2012; Davies, Cicchetti & Martin, 2012). Emotional avoidance, dissociation (pretending) and coping strategies such as emotional disengagement are linked with post-traumatic stress (Thompson, Arnkoff & Glass, 2011). The last narrative provided an insider view of an emotional safe haven to which the participant (when the need arises) withdraws as she is emotionally safe there and just wants to be left alone. The depth of feelings in these narratives is significant and the overwhelming desire to be alone or to pretend is substantiated by the cited literature. These experiences offer insight into the emotional wellbeing of certain participants.

Internalising behaviours (Sub-theme 1) consisted of four categories that revealed the inner turmoil of the participants reflecting their inward and outward feelings and reactions, their socio-emotional withdrawal and emotional insecurities. Participants' internalising behaviours were strongly linked to the turmoil they had endured in their childhood.

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6.3.3.2 Externalising behaviours

There is an interactive relationship (co-morbidity) between internalising and externalising behaviours where the latter typifies a set of behaviours exhibited through outward actions that show the child negatively acting out within an external setting (Liu, 2004). Research findings confirm that externalising behaviour commonly occurred when a child endured frequent rejection (Laird *et al*., 2001). This sub-theme translated into three categories, namely:

(i) *Behavioural and physical reactions*: Participants' reactions included aggression and violence, using alcohol, drugs such as Tik, or suicide attempts and insomnia. Specific excerpts are presented in Table 6.33:

Table 6.33: Externalising behaviours: Behavioural and physical reactions

THEME 4: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.2	EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Behavioural and physical reactions
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *I was afraid of my father and had sleepless nights on the days he was intoxicated.*

Student participant: *Most of the time I struggled to fall asleep.*

Student participant: *At a stage I drank an overdose of tablets to end my life.*

Parental physical abuse was linked to childhood aggression (Gershoff, 2002). Research also found a strong association between violence and living in under-resourced communities and being involved with negative peer groups (Herrenkohl *et al.*, 2003). Florence and Koch (2011) confirm that the onset of substance use by adolescents was attributed to unstable family life or parents who abused substances, and as a result experienced reduced emotional wellbeing and quality of life (also see Beyers *et al.*, 2003). The study by Bader *et al*. (2007) confirmed a strong link between ACEs and primary insomnia in adults, as well as between ACEs and substance abuse, suicide attempts and emotional disorders (also see Anda *et al.*, 2006). Participants disclosed many examples of their behavioural and physical reactions to ACEs. These findings

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were supported by the literature referred to and exposed the kinds of physical reactions that participants were enduring into adulthood.

(ii) *Rebellious behaviour*: Students' descriptions told of thwarting household rules, associating with a negative peer group, committing (petty) crimes, experimenting with substances, and getting involved in fights. Examples are the following (Table 6.34):

Table 6.34: Externalising behaviours: Rebellious behaviour

THEME 4: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.2	EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Rebellious behaviour
NARRATIVES			

student participant *I became a rebellious teenager to my mother. I would come home late or not come at all. Go to parties without her approval.*

Student participant *As a result I ended up with the wrong group of friends, committed small crimes like stealing….*

Student participant *I started to identify with the wrong peers and got involved with smoking marijuana and my school performance reduced.*

Adolescence is typified by parent-child conflict, emotional eruptions, mood swings and rebellion (Cavendish *et al.*, 2014; Hollenstein & Lougheed, 2013). Adolescents participate in risk-taking behaviour in order to establish an identity, autonomy and membership with their peer group (Cavendish *et al*., 2014). Studies also established a strong link between risk-taking and peer group conformist behaviour (Balsa *et al*., 2010). Society expects teenagers to be rebellious as part of the (modern) rituals of maturation and therefore not necessarily needing over-analysis. It is only when these behaviours continue beyond adolescence and take on far more serious overtones that it has implications for their wellbeing. The literature thus explicates the link between rebelliousness, family conflict, and the upheaval of adolescence.

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(iii) *Unfortunate judgement and choices*: Participants revealed regrettable judgment through being sexually explicit, early marriage (to escape the house), emulating violent behaviour and early pregnancy. An example of participants' decision making shows ways of seeking affection (*…so I think that is also one of the reasons why I went out to look for a male person to show me some affection at a young age).* The following are further versions of participants' judgments and choices (Table 6.35):

Table 6.35: Externalising behaviours: Poor judgment and choices

THEME 4: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.2	EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Poor judgment and choices
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *In my mind I thought (I) had to be like that the way my stepfather treated our family.*

Student participant: *My mother … insisted that I had to get married. …but I wanted to get married because I wanted to get out*

Student participant: *I was always with guys and I enjoyed the fact that they loved and appreciated me, unlike my father.*

Steinberg (2005) confirms that decision making in adolescence is complex because of the discordance between the (still) developing maturity of the brain and behavioural and cognitive processes (also Reyna & Farley, 2006). Self-regulation skills are functional in early adulthood when brain maturity has peaked (Steinberg, 2005). Studies therefore validate adolescents performing significantly poorer than young adults in rational decision making (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000; Halpern-Felcher & Cauffman, 2001), as the probability was stronger that adults would account for costs and benefits linked with choices (Halpern-Felcher & Cauffman, 2001). Although Reyna and Farley (2006) stress that adolescents are capable of decision making, but only under specific conditions, in the main "adolescents react rather than decide" (Reyna & Farley, 2006:6). These findings had far more dire implications for the future of the participants through teen sexual activity, parenthood and marriage. These decisions do reveal reactions (to family circumstances) rather than rational decision making, as explained in the literature.

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(iv) *Dropping out of school / losing focus:* Participants divulged incidents of dropping out or losing interest in school. The following illustrates this category (Table 6.36):

Table 6.36: Externalising behaviours: Dropping out of school / losing focus

THEME 4: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.2	EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOURS	**CATEGORY (iv)**	School dropping out / losing focus
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *At one point I dropped out of school because my mother couldn't afford to pay school fees.*

Student participant: *I dropped out in grade eleven when I fell pregnant with my daughter.*

Student participant: *Many times I would sit in school and feel very hurt, angry and emotional and think about what how we were treated and not concentrate in class.*

In South Africa, the probability of early school dropout was highest amongst children whose parents were deceased (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Dropout rates were the highest for Black South African children as a result of deep-seated poverty, unstable families, parentification and constant moving (South Africa UNICEF Country Report, 2009). Generally, the typical reasons for early school dropout consist of family factors such as parental caregiving (Englund, Egeland & Collins, 2008; Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009), teacher-child relationship (Englund *et al*., 2008), and poor academic achievement (Englund *et al*., 2008). Cited literature has explicated the South African context for the high school dropout rate, which was confirmed in the findings. A positive element is that these participants resolved to continue their studies.

Externalising behaviour (Sub-theme 2) represents the behaviours of participants that were expressed outward through physical reactions, rebelliousness, exercising poor judgment and dropping out of school. These reactions were also strongly associated with the poor family life and childhood abuse.

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6.3.3.3 Low self-esteem

Participants reflected on experiences that gave rise to their low self-esteem. Self-esteem is an emotional and behavioural expression of one's self-worth derived from the regard from significant others, as well as perceptions about one's own beliefs, appearance, emotions and behaviours (McClure, Transki & Sargent, 2010). Low self-esteem is related to externalising behaviour such as aggression, disordered eating (McGee & Williams, 2000; Paxton *et al.*, 2006; Strauss, 2000; Wild *et al.*, 2004), substance abuse, criminal acts (Trzesniewski *et al.*, 2006), and suicide (Donnellan *et al.*, 2005), as well as internalising behaviour such as depression (Orth, Robins & Roberts, 2008), anxiety (McClure *et al*., 2010) and suicide ideation (McGee & Williams, 2000). Two categories provided insight regarding participants' self-esteem, namely:

(i) *Social shyness and inhibition*: Shyness and inhibition resulted in being unassertive, social reticence, and social disconnection. Table 6.37 provides examples that corroborate social shyness and inhibition.

Table 6.37: Low self-esteem: Social shyness and inhibition

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.3	LOW SELF-ESTEEM	**CATEGORY (i)**	Social shyness and inhibition
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *I could never speak out for myself. When he started talking I froze because I knew that I must just listen and keep quiet.*

Student participant: *I could no longer keep up with other children as far as clothes is concerned which resulted in me becoming anti-social.*

In terms of the findings of this study, shyness is viewed as an emotional state because it can be transitive and adaptive to change (Henderson, Zimbardo & Carducci, 2010). Shyness (and inhibition) can also be identified as a risk factor for social anxiety problems (Fox *et al.*, 2005; Rubin, Coplan & Bowker, 2009). Research confirms the link between shyness and inhibition and the triggering of fear (Fox *et al*., 2005). During adolescence shyness can exacerbate relationship difficulties, especially with peers and school, and can lead to academic truancy (Rubin *et al*.,

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2009). Specific causal factors are parenting styles and maternal stress, negative peer relationships and internalising problems (Neal & Edelman, 2003). The cited literature has revealed participants' shyness and inhibitions as being located in parenting styles; but these findings also indicate that parenting style is not the only factor; family circumstances and poverty also play a role. All these factors resulted in social anxiety and fear, as cited.

(ii) *Poor self-efficacy*: Poor self-belief of participants was characterised in feeling undeserving of happiness, feeling stupid (despite scholastic success), and unattractive (Table 6.38):

Table 6.38: Low self-esteem: Poor self-efficacy

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.3	LOW SELF-ESTEEM	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Poor self-efficacy
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	*My friends were warned to stay away from me because of my brother's doings and <u>I felt isolated, useless and a person of low importance</u>.*	
Student participant	*For the longest time <u>I believed that I was stupid, ugly, unworthy</u> and a lot of other synonyms that would easily fit this depiction.*	
Student participant	*<u>Throughout childhood my self-esteem and confidence was wrecked</u>. At school I did not have faith in myself. I would not participate in sports and school activities. Because I believed I sucked and was a loser.*	

Albert Bandura, Professor Emeritus (Psychology) at Stanford University (USA) wrote extensively on the development of human agency (self-efficacy) as a subcomponent to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2006: Schunk & Pajares, 2001). Bandura asserted that "among the mechanisms of human agency, none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy" and that "this core belief is the foundation of human motivation, well-being and accomplishments" (Bandura, 2006:3; also Caprara & Steca, 2006). Ultimately, self-efficacy influences whether one thinks positively or negatively about oneself (Bandura, 2006). The link with self-efficacy was established as a vital motivation for learning (Alivernini & Lucidi, 2011;

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Schunk & Pajares, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000). The literature has confirmed that poor self-efficacy is reflected through thoughts of poor self-worth and mastery. The findings show that these thoughts are a consequence of a negative and rejecting home environment. Although participants have progressed academically, the pervasiveness of poor self-efficacy still exists internally.

Low self-esteem (Sub-theme 3) further revealed the inward feelings of diminished self-worth typically reflected in low self-esteem. The two categories deconstructed this feeling in participants disclosing their shyness and inhibition and their sense of poor self-efficacy. This sub-theme was also a strong indicator of the childhood adversity of the participants.

6.3.3.4 Enduring consequences

Participants divulged the kinds of consequences that resulted from their childhood experiences. Children exposed to maltreatment and trauma generally are vulnerable to depression and/or anxiety disorders (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001); particularly prone to a fear of intimacy (Davis, Petretic-Jackson & Ting, 2001); as well as physical and sexual victimisation in adulthood, especially to IPV (Arias, 2004). Studies have found the link between CSA and higher levels of mental health disorders in adulthood, such as suicide attempts, marrying alcoholics, and marital problems in instances of CSA (Banyard, Williams & Siegel, 2001; Dube *et al*., 2005). Physical abuse, depression, anxiety, anger, physical and medical illnesses were identified decades after the abuse (Springer *et al*., 2007). Those children who were exposed to complex trauma (multiple and overlaying abuses) were at risk of the loss of self-regulation and interpersonal relatedness (Cook et al., 2005). This sub-theme informed three categories that pertained to it, namely:

(i) *Disrupted family life and roles*: Precipitative factors were financial struggles, parentification of older siblings, and the aftermath of a father's death (Table 6.39):

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Table 6.39: Enduring consequences: Disrupted family life and roles

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.4	ENDURING CONSEQUENCES	**CATEGORY (i)**	Disrupted family life and roles
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *The elder children had to drop out of school to look at alternative for our survival.*

Student participant: *The love, emotional warmth that we used to get from our parents was gone. Due to our father's death my brother ended up in jail because of stealing some food at the near shop…*

Student participant: *The family split up, my brother came to Cape Town for work before he could finish his matric and my sister got married at an early age with an old man.*

Research findings show that parental absence and left-behind children are related to future socio-economic difficulties for those children (Bonthuys, 2010; Personen et al., 2011). The long-term consequences of a parent's death include emotional (e.g. depression) and behavioural (such as alcohol or substance abuse) difficulties (Brent *et al.*, 2009; Dowdney, 2000; Luecken & Roubinov, 2012). All the narratives thus far have disclosed aspects of disrupted family life and family roles. In this instance, the findings show the impact on participants' siblings who had to shelve their childhood aspirations to assume adult responsibilities and the (financial and emotional) impact on the family of the deaths of valued primary caregivers.

(ii) *Forced maturity and self-reliance*: Participants reported their forced maturity at a young age by learning not to seek help from others (Table 6.40):

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Table 6.40: Enduring consequences: Forced maturity and self-reliance

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.4	ENDURING CONSEQUENCES	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Forced maturity and self-reliance
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

I was forced to mature quicker because of that and I think it also plays a role in me having to be a teenage mother.

Student participant

I learnt not to rely much on others as [I] never experienced the intimate love of the family as [my] single parent was always busy to give that to [me].

Parentification has often been linked to chaotic family dynamics, serious illness, poor mental health and alcohol and drug abuse (Williams & Francis, 2010). Parentified behaviour alternates between help-seeking (social inter-dependence) and self-reliance (social disengagement) (Cook *et al*., 2005). Samuels and Pryce (2008) argue that self-reliance can be a strength, but it is also a possible risk for mediating the vital associations with others necessary in adolescence. The findings show the consequences of participants' parentified behaviour in the home. The cited literature verifies that participants' behaviour showed both social inter-dependence (in seeking help) and social disengagement (in self-reliance). The latter is also confirmed by Samuels and Pryce (2008) as being in conflict with their age and adolescent socio-emotional needs.

(iii) *Distrusting men*: Participants disclosed their feelings relating to men and gender in terms of distrusting men, believing that men were in control, and being submissive as a female in future relationships (Table 6.41):

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Table 6.41: Enduring consequences: Distrusting men

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.4	ENDURING CONSEQUENCES	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Distrusting men
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *I find it difficult to trust males because my father disappointed me the way he did, when he was drinking.*

Student participant: *I have learnt that I do not want to be dependent on my husband when I get married, maybe I do not trust men.*

Student participant: *I was made to believe that women are powerless individuals who should always be submissive to male authority whereas male members have unquestionable authority in the house.*

A key indicator for the prevalence of mistrust of men was childhood emotional abuse (Berzenski & Yates, 2010; Riggs, 2010). This prevalence was linked to the extent of abandonment and attachment anxiety experienced that increased defensive behaviours towards men in particularly (Riggs, 2010; Sandberg, Suess & Heaton, 2010); and viewing them (men) through a subjective lens as untrustworthy and weak (Riggs, 2010). Studies found no evidence of the role of childhood experiences in patriarchal beliefs but identified existing patriarchal beliefs (by men and women) as key in the prevalence of the dominant role of men (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004; Haj-Yahia, 2005; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004).

The antipathy towards men was disclosed by participants as emanating from ACEs. In addition, participants' patriarchal beliefs developed as a result of family and cultural traditions that entrenched their beliefs of the roles of men and women. These findings were verified in cited literature.

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(iv) *Emotional aftermath*: Participants reflected emotions left over from their traumatic childhood experiences. Mothers appeared to be emotional triggers for participants as they revealed their sensitivity to their mothers and were emotional during the interview (Table 6.42):

Table 6.42: Enduring consequences: Mothers as emotional triggers

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.4	ENDURING CONSEQUENCES	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Emotional aftermath
NARRATIVES			

Student participant: *Like in a way I would say that I feel sad for her for the pain that she has had to endure because of us. Like for me because she endured that because of a man and that man was my father*

Student participant: *I really do feel it because sometimes I have to help my mom… Because there's no one to help her*

Student participant: *… another thing that makes me emotional when I think about it, I don't tell her every day how much I appreciate what she's done for us*

When children provide for the emotional needs of their parents, especially mothers, this emotional symbiosis is referred to as emotional role reversal (Katz, Petracca & Rabinoitz, 2009). This symbiosis is brought about by the tension in the continuous process of differentiating the self from that of the mother called individuation (Notman, 2006). In IPV, children identify with the mother figure and develop a stronger attachment (Posada & Pratt, 2008; Reinert & Edwards, 2009; Sternberg *et al.*, 2005; Timmer *et al.*, 2012). In both IPV and child physical abuse, children's attachment to their mothers were typified by over-involvement and over-responsiveness (Timmer *et al*., 2012).

The literature has validated the experiences and narratives of participants and clarified the causative factors in the relationship between participants and their mothers. Findings confirmed that some participants were overly responsive and emotionally attuned to their mothers.

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These emotions spill over into the research interviews. When participants' break down during qualitative research interviews, the researcher has to consider how to appropriately reflect participants' emotions that they have honestly portrayed (Tanner, 2009). Examples of the participants' narratives triggered an overwhelming emotional overflow during the research interview. Key here is that participants still experience overwhelming emotions due to ACEs.

(v) *Physical effects:* The physical impact of adverse childhood experiences on participants and the interventions that were incurred emerged from the individual interviews with staff participants. Studies confirmed the link between child abuse and resultant trauma and the rise in physical ill-health in adulthood (Irish, Kobayashi & Delahanty, 2010; Mulvihill, 2005; Wegman & Stetler, 2009). The physical effects of childhood adversity were characterised by frequent headaches, insomnia, tiredness and the use of anti-depressants, as related by staff participants (Table 6.43).

Table 6.43: Enduring consequences: Physical effects

THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
SUB-THEME 3.4	ENDURING CONSEQUENCES	**CATEGORY (v)**	Physical effects
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant: *…the student related that she's getting headaches now, frequent headaches*

Staff participant: *…can't sleep so he's (**student**) constantly tired…*

Staff participant: *I have a number of students who have disclosed that they are on anti-depressants*

Studies confirm that childhood abuses and resultant trauma place children at risk of developing chronic fatigue syndrome (Heim *et al.*, 2009), insomnia (Anda *et al.*, 2006; Bader *et al.*, 2007) and headaches (amongst other symptoms) (Graham-Bermann & Seng, 2005; Leserman, 2005). Previous studies also verified the relationship between childhood abuse and trauma and the increased prescription rate of antidepressants that counteract the effects of stress symptoms (Bremner, 2006; Felitti & Anda, 2010; Pederson *et al.*, 2008). The knowledge of staff emerged

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from the interactions and engagements with the students regarding the impact of ACEs on their academic obligations and the revelation of students' use of medication.

Enduring consequences (Sub-theme 4) depicted the long-term emotional and physical consequences of experiencing childhood adversity which, in some instances, also necessitated using medication as well as seeking spiritual and cultural interventions as coping strategies.

6.3.3.5 Summary and conclusions of Theme 3

Theme 3 showcased the impact that childhood adversity had on the participants. The four sub-themes revealed, for example, the emotional impact which could be seen through internalising behaviours, low self-esteem, as well as the emotional and physical aftermath that also emerged through the research interviews. The social behaviours operated centrifugally as shown through externalising behaviours, distrust of men and physical effects. This theme is important, because it shows the extent of the impact on the participants.

6.3.4 THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

Theme 4 explicated participants' reflections on the ways in which both the positive and negative experiences had contributed to what they had learnt about themselves. Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) is defined as the phenomenon of growth and development that result as a by-product of the battle with significant childhood challenges (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The concept of PTG was developed through research by Tedeschi and Calhoun founded on the existentialist philosophies of Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and German philosopher Friedrich Nietzche (1844-1900) (Anderson, Davis & Havig, 2011; Janoff-Bulman, 2004; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Tedeschi, Park & Calhoun, 1998; Woodward & Joseph, 2003; Zoellner & Maercker, 2006). Theme 4 gave rise to three sub-themes, namely, positive characteristics and personal traits; life lessons; and strong religious beliefs. The sub-themes were underpinned by categories of data indicating the depth of each one (Table 6.44).

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Table 6.44: THEME 5: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH: sub-themes and categories

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES		
Sub-themes	4.1 Positive characteristics and personal traits	4.2 Life's lessons
Categories	(i) Personal growth (ii) Independence (iii) Being strong and resilient (iv) Relating to others	(i) Positive belief system (ii) Emotional maturity (iii) Valuing family and culture (iv) Religious beliefs

Table 6.44 showcases the eight categories across the two sub-themes. The categories are as follows:

6.3.4.1 Positive characteristics and personal traits

Participants recounted the positive characteristics that developed out of enduring hardship. Positive characteristics reflect the capacity of individuals to respond appropriately (within context) in terms of the means of achieving levels of positive adjustment after traumatic experiences (Westphal, Seivert & Bonanno, 2010). This capacity underscores the inner motivation for change, adaptation and transformation that has since been identified as PTG (Anderson *et al*., 2011; Janoff-Bulman, 2004; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Tedeschi *et al*., 1998; Woodward & Joseph, 2003; Zoellner & Maercker, 2006). This sub-theme also relates to assets regarding the intra-personal attributes of the individual (see Chapter 4). Participants' responses informed four categories supporting this sub-theme, namely:

(i) *Personal growth*: Personal growth was illustrated by a range of behaviours and insights, for example: achieving self-respect; confidence; ability to socialise with others and obtaining diverse views; as well as learning socially acceptable behaviour; learning to be mature, broad-minded, understanding and patient (Table 6.45):

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Table 6.45: Positive characteristics and personal traits: Personal growth

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.1	POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONAL TRAITS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Personal growth
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *This incident moulded me to be a matured, broad minded and to view challenges as opportunities to develop.*

Student participant

- *I grew up as a very matured child if I could put it that way. So when it happened I had to be rational, I had to think straight and I'm not the person that blames people for what I did so it was not very difficult dealing with it personally.*

PTG is initiated from within the individual and emerges from a process of meaning making (cognitive processing) and gaining self-knowledge (becoming self-aware) (Anderson *et al*., 2011; Janoff-Bulman, 2004; Joseph, 2009; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Applicable to these research findings are two of the domains of PTG (the third domain discussed in Sub-theme 6.3.4.2 (iv)), which are: changed perception of self and changed interpersonal relationships (Taku *et al*., 2008). The narratives disclosed the striving of participants to act and behave appropriately despite their adverse circumstances. The findings showed the personal growth achieved through coming to know themselves better and rethinking their familiar perceptions and responses to familiar circumstances.

(ii) *Independence*: Students' autonomy was typified by the sense of doing things on their own and being capable of handling most things. The following extracts provide support for the category of independence (Table 6.46):

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Table 6.46: Positive characteristics and personal traits: Independence

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.1	POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONAL TRAITS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Independence
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *My experiences taught me to [be] more appreciative and to be an independent person.*

Student participant

- *Even though the fact that I had to take care of myself during my teen years, I have realized that the experience has made me an independent person. I have learnt to depend on myself, work hard because there is no one else who will do for me but myself.*

Children forced into adult responsibilities do learn particular coping skills (self-efficacy) enabling them to be mature, resourceful and responsible (East, 2010; Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Masten *et al*. 2009). The findings show the participants' disclosing their independence underpinned by their sense of self-efficacy (mastery) that increased their self-confidence. The literature validates these findings.

(iii) *Being strong and resilient*: Strength and resilience were cited several times by participants, for example in having been able to disclose being gay and to have survived (Table 6.47):

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Table 6.47: Positive characteristics and personal traits: Being strong and resilient

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.1	POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONAL TRAITS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Being strong and resilient
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *These childhood experiences helped me to be strong as a person and learn not to depend on other people but my family because they are always there for me.*

Student participant

- *I (now) consider him to be a good father especially in the way he handled my coming out as a lesbian.*

Resilience is defined as the ability of an individual to overcome and to bounce back from negative and often traumatic incidents and, in so doing, avert, diminish or prevail (McDougall, 2011; Mohaupt, 2008; Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008). Research confirms the significant degrees of resilience that emerged as a consequence of enduring childhood adversity (Bonanno & Mancini, 2008; Masten, 2001; Seery, Holman & Silver, 2010). Resilience is different to PTG in that resilience is viewed as the means to achieve PTG (Westphal & Bonanno, 2007). The findings showed that the participants did have the resilience to endure ACEs and have motivation and hope for the future. Resilience enabled participants to develop the strength and self-confidence to persevere and be assertive. This showed PTG.

(iv) *Relating to others*: Participants reported being caring, loving and compassionate to others that also influenced one participant to become a social worker (Table 6.48):

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Table 6.48: Positive characteristics and personal traits: Relating to others

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.1	POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONAL TRAITS	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Relating to others
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *In a way it influenced me in the manner which pushed me to study social work because I want to assist families going through similar circumstances which I did.*

Student participant

- *Like that really I think it was a blessing in disguise for me to experience that because my experience also contributed a lot to me choosing to be… a social worker because I thought okay if I can be a social worker then maybe I can help other children not to experience what I've been through.*

Positive outcomes are also viewed through the ways that people use to make meaning of childhood adversity, such as by taking action; wanting to enlighten others; to obtain justice; and possibly to prevent recurrences of similar incidents (Tedeschi, 1999). Stevens *et al*. (2012) assert that, to advance social work education and the profession, it is important to understand the reasons compelling people to become social workers. Research findings confirm that the dominant reasons for pursuing social work are personal ones (Perry, 2003), and those relating to family (Buchbinder, 2007; Sellers & Hunter, 2005). The ability to relate positively to others is a hallmark of social work intervention. Findings reveal that participants had gained positive people skills and identified this as motivation for becoming a social worker, which has been corroborated in denoted literature.

Positive characteristics and personal traits (Sub-theme 1) showcased the constructive outcomes that emerged from enduring childhood adversity revealed in the four categories in which participants related their personal growth, independence, strength and resilience, and positive

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relating to others. The significance of the findings relate to the positiveness that could emerge from adversity.

6.3.4.2 Life's lessons

Participants revealed life lessons and beliefs that they have learnt along the way. PTG leads to increased wisdom and insight (Anderson *et al*., 2011), which underscores this second sub-theme. Four categories emerged that formed the basis for the sub-theme.

(i) *Positive belief system*: Participants divulged their overall beliefs regarding externalising behaviour that should be based on values reflecting non-judgementalism; adapting to change; trying one's best; rising above circumstances; not repeating mistakes of others; and exercising self-control (such as to one's finances) (Table 6.49):

Table 6.49: Life's lessons: Positive belief system

THEME 4 POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.2	LIFE'S LESSONS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Positive belief system
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *As a person I became aware of other people's problems and similar situations and I would understand their situations and will not be judgemental or discriminating towards these people.*

Student participant

- *I have learned that no matter what you go through in life you have to rise above your circumstances in order to be a success.*

Studies confirm that learned efficacy and personal beliefs and values (such as self-worth, judgment, dependability, credibility and self-regulation) were related to personal adjustment following adverse experiences (Vogt, Shipherd & Resick, 2012; Lai *et al*., 2014; Turner, Goodin & Lokey, 2012). People who have a receptive cognitive style will be enabled to be accepting, tolerant, and non-judgmental (Tedeschi, 1999). Participants illustrated their positiveness (post

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ACEs) in their interaction and engagement with others, externalising their positive social values and beliefs. According to cited literature, to initiate and sustain these social values, it would presuppose that the individual has achieved a measure of self-efficacy and self-belief after ACEs. Certainly it appears that some participants could achieve this (supported by their training in social work).

(ii) *Emotional maturity*: Participants learnt that behaviour should be based on emotional maturity in terms of owning or admitting to feelings, as well as valuing oneself and one's experiences. Illustrations of the emotional maturity of student participants are as follows (Table 6.50):

Table 6.50: Life's lessons: Emotional maturity

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.2	LIFE'S LESSONS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Emotional maturity
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *Throughout my childhood I have acquired that I am strong young woman who is able to interact with people very well. I have learnt that the experiences that have occurred in my life were my lessons about how harsh life can be and they made me strong as I am today.*

Student participant

- *…even when being involved in a relationship, the student has vowed that he would never want to repeat the mistakes that were made by his father and that is the promise the student is still living to fulfil.*

Research has revealed personality, mindfulness practice (self-awareness) and spirituality to be predictors of maturity or growth (Jong, 2013; Lloyd, 2012) that reflects a healthy balance between posttraumatic stress and growth (Joseph & Lindley, 2008). Klever (2009) also emphasised that PTG is made possible through self-acceptance, personal well-being and environmental conditions. Achieving emotional maturity is not so much an end but rather a process (a journey) of self-discovery. Participants (depending on their age) would be somewhere

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on this journey. Emotional maturity involves a difficult process for anybody. The discussed literature has explicated the key aspects that appropriately focus on the self. Therefore self-awareness and mindfulness are significant drivers on this journey.

(iii) *Valuing family and culture*: Participants believed that family and culture should be valued in terms of relationship building, as sources of support and communication, and through family becoming knowledgeable about heritage and language. The following are extracts from participants' narratives to corroborate the category of valuing family and culture (Table 6.51):

Table 6.51: Life's lessons: Valuing family and culture

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.2	LIFE'S LESSONS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Valuing family and culture
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *The positive incidents installed knowledge to speak and write Xhosa fluently.*

Student participant

- *Due to the family support I received during my early childhood years, I believe that family is the most important source of support and communication.*

Student participant

- *…she started selling everything in the house and that's where I actually saw that she loved us and she loved me because then I started seeing I realised that if there's nothing to eat, she would go sleep without eating and that's where I actually saw that she cared. She maybe wasn't able to show it in the beginning…*

Resilience is not only dependent on the qualities within the individual, but also on the supportive structures external to the individual, such as family and community (see Chapter 4) (Cohen *et al*., 2011; McDougall, 2011). In terms of family support, research results suggest that positive support from families was related to fewer trauma-related symptoms, especially in non-sexual abuse, which contributed to healing and PTG (Bal *et al.*, 2003; Walsh, 2007, 2006). Research also found a strong link between socio-cultural support and the assuaging of the extremes of

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trauma (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; Park *et al.*, 2013; Ungar, 2008). Despite the primary role that family had played in ACEs, participants nevertheless viewed family and culture as vital to their recovery. Literature listed has also acknowledged the significant role of family and culture in life's lessons and for achieving PTG.

(iv) *Religious beliefs*: Participants believed that life should be lived in accordance with religious beliefs and participants acknowledged their belief in God as well as a sense of belonging in their church. Participants' narratives regarding their religious beliefs are as follows (Table 6.52):

Table 6.52: Life's lessons: Religious beliefs

THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
SUB-THEME 4.2	LIFE'S LESSONS	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Religious beliefs
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *My childhood experiences shaped the person I am today and being raised in such a religious family, I still belief in faith and that God can get us through any situation faced.*

Student participant

- *I also discovered that I have a real stable relationship with God, I pray a lot, something I never did as a young child.*

Student participant

- *I changed as a person because I started going back to church where I learnt more about forgiveness.*

The third dimension of PTG involves openness to spirituality and religious beliefs (Anderson *et al.*, 2011; Calhoun *et al.*, 2000; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Shaw, Joseph & Linley, 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Spirituality, religion and personal beliefs are also related to quality of life, reflecting inner peace, faith, hope, optimism and spiritual connection (World Health Organisation QOL (Quality of Life) SRPB (Spirituality, Religion, and Personal Beliefs Group 1, 2006). Research results also show that religion is a significant conduit for meaning making following trauma and loss (called spiritual coping) that is associated with health outcomes

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(Cotton *et al.*, 2006; Park, 2005; Shaw *et al*., 2005). Religious beliefs emerged again as one of life's lessons for participants, and this, in accordance with stated literature, is an important dimension of PTG.

Life lessons (Sub-theme 3) revealed four lessons that participants could glean from living through childhood adversity, for example outward and inner behaviours based on beliefs and emotional maturity, as well as worldviews relating to the role and value of family, culture and religion. These findings are important, because it reveals the social learning that could be garnered from adversity.

6.3.4.3 Summary and conclusions of Theme 4

Theme 4 exemplified the positive outcomes that participants could discern from having endured childhood adversity. The two sub-themes focused on the positive characteristics / personal traits and life lessons that participants discovered retrospectively. The importance of Theme 4 was the juxtaposition of the positive outcomes against the intense negativity that was depicted from Themes 1 to 3.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

Chapter 6 has presented the findings relating to the themes, sub-themes and categories that described the ACEs of participants. The findings were informed by the students' written reflective assignments and the individual interviews with a subset sample of student participants and staff participants. The findings were located within the literature in terms of previous research studies and theoretical frameworks.

The research findings were sufficiently located in the literature depicting individual aspects of the findings for which links could be found in the field of psychology. Insufficient substantiation was found within the global research studies of ACEs. Childhood adversity and childhood trauma elicited substantive support, but again not significantly in the context of studies on ACEs, especially regarding the ACEs of students. A minimal number of research studies within the

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social work literature on ACEs and of social work students could be found. Therefore these research findings will contribute substantially to overall understanding of the ACEs of students, as well as the construct and structure of ACEs.

Chapter 7 builds on the findings presented in Chapter 6 and present the findings of the effects of ACEs in the context of teaching and learning in social work.

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CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND SUGGESTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6, findings related to the childhood experiences of student participants were presented. These findings had been delineated into four main themes that show the experiences of participants as viewed through the personal written accounts and narratives of the student participants as well as the experiences of staff participants in their engagement with students through teaching and learning activities.

Chapter 7 is delineated into two parts to show the findings on the role of adverse childhood experiences of the participants and subsequent suggestions within the context of social work teaching and learning. Part I focuses on the findings pertaining to the role and effects of the ACEs of participants as they relate to the teaching and learning within professional social work education. Part II focuses on the suggestions from participants regarding teaching and learning methods and strategies in the context of adverse childhood experiences, OBE and professional social work learning.

PART I: RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING

Chapter 6 established the adverse childhood experiences that student participants had endured. The data were obtained from specific questions in the semi-structured interviews with student and staff participants. The findings concerning the role and the effects of adverse childhood experiences on the participants during teaching and learning in the social work class context are presented here in Part I.

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7.2 THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES RELATING TO THE EFFECTS OF ACEs IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING

The findings from two data sets resulted in the discernment of four main themes and thirteen sub-themes that related to the effects of ACEs contextualised in social work teaching and learning. These two data sets consist of the individual interviews with student and staff participants. In Part I the findings are consolidated more strongly from the data from staff participants as they were able to provide primary data in terms of their experiences of teaching and learning, as illustrated in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Themes and sub-themes of the effects of ACEs in teaching and learning (Part I)

THEME	SUB-THEMES		
	1	**2**	**3**
1. Students' profile and impact	1.1 General learning profile	2.1 Particular emotional profile	
2. Professional learning and signature pedagogy	2.1 Teaching strategies and methods	2.2 Students' perceptions of learning benefits	2.3 Professional needs and student profile
3. Vicarious traumatisation and professional learning	3.1 Emotions and professional learning	3.2 Emotions and client engagement	
4. Lecturers' classroom characteristics and skills	4.1 Lecturers' immediacy behaviour	4.2 Class organisation and structure	

Table 7.1 shows the four themes and nine sub-themes that were generated from the data of the two data sets that reflected the impact of participants' childhood experiences in the context of their teaching and learning experiences.

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7.2.1 THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT

Theme 1 focused on the students' profile that emerged from the two data sets (individual interviews with student and staff participants). The theme was informed by two sub-themes, namely students' learning and emotional profile referring to the unique characterisations of who students are; the uncovering of an avoidant learning style; the need for debriefing; and the advice-seeking behaviour of students (Table 7.2). Some of the aspects of the sub-themes were related to infringements of student behaviour in the learning context.

Table 7.2: THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT: sub-themes and categories (Part I)

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES		
Sub-themes	1.1 General learning profile	1.2 Particular emotional profile
Categories	(i) Students' learning style (ii) Curriculum inhibitors (iii) Avoidant learning style	(i) Students' emotional make-up (ii) Debriefing and advice-seeking (iii) Reasons for doing social work

Table 7.2 displays the two sub-themes and the six categories that each sub-theme consists of. Each sub-theme is discussed further in the following section.

7.2.1.1 General learning profile

This sub-theme involves the general learning profile of social work students at UWC. Internationally, modern classrooms reflect an increasingly diverse world of differing ages, abilities, cultures, interests, motivations and difficulties (Tomlinson *et al*., 2003). The situation in South Africa is not different. Black and Coloured South African students in Higher Education are commonly (and indiscriminately) described as underprepared, first-generation students (non-traditional) coming from impoverished backgrounds in terms of economic strength, poor schooling and socio-cultural resources, and using English as additional language (Bozalek, 2013; Boughey, 2002; Brussow & Wilkinson, 2010; Carelse & Dykes, 2013; Collins & Van Breda, 2012; Cross & Carpentier, 2009; Hlalele, 2010; Nel, Troskie-de Bruin & Bitzer, 2009; Niven,

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2005; Rollnick *et al.*, 2002; Slonimsky & Shalem, 2006; Smit, 2012). Learning profile refers to students' personal traits (such as biological, cultural and societal factors; emotional and social influences; academic record and learning preferences) that optimise the individual's learning (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2011; Rollnick *et al*., 2008; Tomlinson, 2001).

Learning profile consists of two dimensions (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2009; Rollnick *et al*., 2008; Vanthournout *et al.*, 2013):

- Learning styles (stable personal characteristics of the learner); and
- Learning approaches (changeable competencies related to task and context).

Lecturers have to address these variances within their classrooms where 'equality of opportunity' is fulfilled when the varied needs of the learners are met (Tomlinson *et al*., 2003). The sub-theme consisted of three categories that fed into a composite picture of students' learning profiles.

(i) *Students' learning style*: Staff participants verbalised their awareness of students' learning styles (especially in terms of students' emotional and social challenges) that provide insight into who social work students are and the constraints in meeting the learning needs (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: General learning profile: Students' learning style

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT			
SUB-THEME 1.1	GENERAL LEARNING PROFILE	**CATEGORY (i)**	Students' learning style
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *I must say I never say in a lab reflect maybe on your own childhood or something like that…I know of the type of student that we have and that issues might come up and that it would be difficult to contain…*

Staff participant

- *So there are the practical problems but I think that it's important that we get to the point where we say to the student, tell me a little bit about yourself….Where do you come from? And I guess we do that by way of the sort of social work activity…*

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In order to facilitate learning, it is vital to know who the adult learner is in terms of the role of personal circumstances in the learning endeavour and how adults learn (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007; Ramsden, 1992). The current student profile of UWC started to emerge during the 1980s when the institution initiated an affirmative action admissions policy designed to broaden access particularly to students from historically disadvantaged communities (Bozalek, 2013). The student learning style at UWC mirrors the generalised characteristics described above and confirmed by Bozalek (2013) and Carelse and Dykes (2013). For the non-traditional and adult learner, the concept of self and self-directed learning is vital (Hyland-Russell & Groen, 2011) in feeding into their individual learning approaches that, in turn, advances the philosophy of learner-centredness (Wilcox, 1996). Studies confirm that there is a link between self-efficacy, personal beliefs and the learner's approach to learning of specific activities (Kell, 2006). The value of knowing social work students' profile is in increased understanding of both context (social circumstances) and personal characteristics, because it is the combination of the two that determines students' emotional reactions. The research findings showed ambivalence on the part of the participants, on the one hand fearing students' self-disclosure and personal identities and, on the other, attempting to embrace it but unsure of how. This is where the challenge lies. The findings also reveal that, to meet this challenge, it would be necessary to rethink and reorganise the curriculum structure and design to incorporate familiarising staff with students' learning profiles.

(ii) *Curriculum inhibitors*: The realities of the UWC social work context, such as class size and curriculum structure, prevent teaching staff from being attentive to students as they become engrossed in overall teaching responsibilities. The following are comments by staff participants pertaining to these inhibitors (Table 7.4):

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Table 7.4: General learning profile: Curriculum inhibitors

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT			
SUB-THEME 1.1	GENERAL LEARNING PROFILE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Curriculum inhibitors
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *…the class size then often I think the student would sort of diffuse it into that big number*

Staff participant

- *I think we do have that responsibility and so therefore you know it's one of those things that does have practical implications. When are you going to do it? How will you do it? You know if there's the time limitations and the numbers are excessive in your class, how do you do that?*

Class size is defined as the number of students in a particular assigned course or module (Noble, 2000). Generally, research has confirmed that increased class sizes impacted on student learning and lecturer responsibilities (Hogan & Kwiakowskil, 1998; Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy, 2008; McCurty & McClelland, 1997). Studies confirm the strong emotions students experience while learning in large class format, for example alienation, anger and competitiveness (Hogan & Kwiakowskil, 1998). OBE, which has been legislated and protected in South Africa since 2002, has underscored the first national standards for social work since the 1920s (Carelse & Dykes, 2013; Hochfeld, 2010; Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2011; Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The BSW course with its 27 exit-level outcomes has, however, become so structured and prescriptive that time for critical engagement with learning material is constrained in and amongst administrative university duties (Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006).

Cited literature has supported this finding in that the content, structure and outcomes are viewed as too prescriptive and content-driven to allow time-consuming participatory, critical reflective methods. Constructivist and transformative learning approaches are also severely limited by large classes in social work.

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(iii) Avoidant learning style: This category reflected the disinterest and demotivation that often and intermittently afflict some students, as revealed by their absences from their fieldwork placements and not meeting deadlines in particular. Various authors confirm that students should be taking greater responsibility for their own learning (Devlin, 2002; McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Park, 2003; Silen & Uhlin, 2008). If not, then the teaching style fosters adverse qualities such as disinterest, dependence and competitiveness amongst students (Howell, 2002). The inadvertent outcomes from transmission-type teaching included, for example, students developing the avoidance style of learning typified by absenteeism and poor participation (Howell, 2002; Moore, Armstrong & Pearson, 2008). However, avoidance also emanates from serious personal difficulties in addition to the academic burden (Moore *et al*., 2008). The following epitomises students' avoidant behaviours (Table 7.5):

Table 7.5: General learning profile: Avoidant learning style

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT			
SUB-THEME 1.1	GENERAL LEARNING PROFILE	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Avoidant learning style
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *…quite a few students that has been absent from the agency and lab sessions and supervision due to illness and illness pertaining to their emotional, psychological health.*

Staff participant

- *I've had a few sort of uproars in class for example about when an assignment is due … and then you find that there would be a number of students who would buy into that or participate in the uproar*

McCombs (1997) and Howell (2002) reflected on teacher frustrations at the unmotivated attitudes of their students, but McCombs pointed out the vital link between student motivation and self-determination. Self-determination is related to autonomy and being exposed to academic choices that influence the level of student motivation which, in turn, develops their sense of responsibility (McCombs, 1997; Moore *et al*., 2008). Procrastination has been cited as key to students not meeting deadlines (Novanese & Di Giovinazzo, 2013), with high procrastination

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linked with a lack of motivation (Lee, 2005); students' academic self-efficacy (Farran, 2004; Seo, 2008; Wolters, 2003); general self-esteem, depression and anxiety (Farran, 2004). Academic procrastination refers to neglecting to fulfil an obligatory task or responsibility within a designated period or deferring until the last minute (Wolters, 2003). Cited literature has linked procrastination with several underlying factors, clarifying students' learning style and personal difficulties which lead to poor (academic) choices. This finding is vital as it deepens understanding of such behaviour as pertaining to the social work student profile at UWC in particular. Student absence and procrastination are not new, but they are especially troublesome in social work fieldwork placement learning.

The first sub-theme focused on students' learning profile at UWC. This sub-theme not only contextualised the findings within the class realities of social work and UWC, but also gave insight into the lecturer's role with regard to students' profile and the inhibiting factors in the content-driven and prescriptive BSW exit-level outcomes.

7.2.1.2 Particular emotional profile

Charlotte Towle (1896-1966) brought attention to the emotions that students bring to the learning experience, as well as the emotion created (Chung, 2010). Learning is a transformational endeavour that conflicts with, and alters, students' existing values and norms (Chung, 2010). Emotion consists of interconnected psychological responses such as emotional, mental, behavioural and motivational processes (Maidment & Crisp, 2011). Students' emotions and distress are generally underreported, with the added concern of the dominance of cognitive educational models rather than personal growth models (Litvack *et al*., 2010). Students' particular emotional profile consisted of three categories, namely:

(i) *Students' emotional make-up:* Students' emotional make-up is characterised by their insecurities and emotional instability (identified as such through observing students' behaviour in class by their lecturers (Table 7.6).

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Table 7.6: Particular emotional profile: Students' emotional make-up

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT			
SUB-THEME 1.2	PARTICULAR EMOTIONAL PROFILE	**CATEGORY (i)**	Students' emotional make-up
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *In fact that is the word that he (**another colleague**) uses, that "she's very unstable" and I'm concerned about having a student in third year that, according to a qualified, experienced social worker is very unstable,*

Staff participant

- *…a concern for me would be that at third year level, that some of them are still so uncontained and have a sense, have a feeling, are experiencing that overwhelming feeling I'm not in control, something is not right with me.*

Social workers may have the tendency to over-identify with the client's suffering, which may reveal students' own insecurity and anxiety (Han, Lee & Lee, 2012). Other research findings also confirm insecurities of social work students as relayed through research on student participants' interpersonal competencies (Padykula & Horwitz, 2012). The literature reflects that many social work students do experience fluctuating emotions that are exposed during teaching and learning (Dykes, 2011, 2012; Earle, 2008; Schenck, 2009). This literature has also corroborated the emotional tendencies of social work students globally within the learning context. It is therefore not unusual for students' emotional triggers to be activated. The issue is rather how students must be assisted in their learning.

(ii) Debriefing and advice-seeking

Debriefing and advice-seeking behaviour of students brought about divergent responses from staff. The staff participant in the first narrative (Table 7.7) expressed opposition to the debriefing role and expressed fear that it would culminate in a counselling role, in contrast to the viewpoint of the second staff participant.

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Table 7.7: Particular emotional profile: Debriefing and advice-seeking

THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND IMPACT			
SUB-THEME 1.2	PARTICULAR EMOTIONAL PROFILE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Debriefing and advice-seeking
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *I want to state upfront and say that I do not encourage students to disclose and to come to me to counsel them. I try to maintain that distance. When I say that it is to refer them because I think as social workers we will be inundated with our students wanting counselling from us*

Staff participant

- *There's a sense that they do trust us and one must maybe look at what is it about the staff that makes you want to disclose to them and want to talk to them. Is it because of their knowledge that we know we are social workers, is it our approach to them that they feel that sense of safety*

These opinions reflect the opinions of staff participants. Debriefing is a central point in the learning experience and should be planned for within the teaching and learning method (Garrett, MacPhee & Jackson, 2010; Neill & Wotton, 2011). Lecturers frequently are the first persons that students approach when they are distressed (Easton & Van Laar, 1995; Edinburgh Napier University, 2012; London School of Economics, 2012/2013; University of South Florida, 2010; University of St Andrews, n.d.). The lecturer's role in debriefing is in being in a position to observe the distress of students and to be able to initiate debriefing that would positively affect the student's wellbeing (Edinburgh Napier University, 2012; London School of Economics, 2012/2013; University of South Florida, 2010). The lecturer is also key in helping students to synthesise their learning with their existing knowledge base, including personal experiences (Cantrell, 2008). Listed literature confirmed that it has become necessary to establish protocols for general student support and debriefing in many universities. The findings of the current research have not overwhelmingly verified the need for debriefing and the role of lecturers in this task, in contrast to the suggestion cited in section 7.4.2.3). The need for student debriefing was triggered by teaching and learning in class and students' need for self-disclosure within this context.

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(iii) *Reasons for studying social work*: Staff participants related students' motivation for undertaking social work studies to their personal circumstances. One staff member in particular commented: *... I know a lot of our students have huge emotional issues and ì think that is maybe also something that attracts them to social work.*

The helping nature of social work frequently attracts those persons who are sympathetic, empathic and emotionally-driven, which leads to heighted vulnerability (Han *et al*., 2012). Research verifies that personal and altruistic reasons dominate as motivations for entering social work (Csikai & Rozensky, 1997; Martin *et al*., 2012). Previous studies done by Rompf and Royse have also revealed adverse family circumstances as strong motivations for doing social work (Lafrance, Gray & Herbert, 2004; Wilson & McCrystal, 2007). Other reasons cited by Lafrance *et al*., (2004) include being the parentified child (Chapter 6: Theme 6.3.1.2 (iii)) and the ubiquitous desire to help others (also see studies by Osteen, 2011; Wilson & McCrystal, 2007). In a unique study done with social work students in the USA, findings revealed that African-American and poor or working class students were significantly more motivated to work with vulnerable populations than white or middle-class students, suggesting that one's personal and social experiences are strong motivators for doing social work (Perry, 2003). The overwhelming reasons for studying social work appear to be related to students' personal, adverse experiences. These findings have supported the cited literature on reasons for doing social work and its significance lies in the affirmation of students ACEs and the altruistic extension of their personal distress and trauma to preventing and intervening in other, similar incidents.

Sub-theme 2 encompassed the emotional profile of social work students at UWC, which increased insight into their reasons for wanting to become social workers. Regarding whether it was necessary for staff to have such personal information about students, there was a split response. These findings set the foundation for possible experiences of vicarious traumatisation in Theme 2.

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7.2.1.3 Summary and conclusions of Theme 1

Theme 1 gave insight into the learning needs of social work students at UWC, as well as the lecturer's role and responsibilities in response to these in terms of teaching and learning and debriefing opportunities. Literature supported the findings, which has implications for curricular and lecturer role changes.

7.2.2 THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY

Theme 2 explicated the professional learning context, as recalled by participants as being particularly meaningful. Professional learning consists of two components, professional teaching and learning (called signature pedagogies) and professional identity construction (see Chapter 3 Part II) (Hall, 2005; Osteen, 2011; Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006; Shulman, 2005; Sims, 2011; Taylor & Cheung, 2010). In this we follow Larrison and Korr's (2013) criticism of fieldwork as the signature pedagogy of social work, but rather declare that it is the combination of the development of the professional self and the distinguishing features of teaching and learning. Theme 1 focuses on the signature pedagogy of social work that comprises three sub-themes. The sub-themes and categories are further explicated in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8: THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: sub-themes and categories (Part I)

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES			
Sub-themes	2.1 Teaching strategies and methods used	2.2 Students' perceptions of Learning benefits	2.3 Professional (programme) needs and student profile
Categories	(i) Constructivist teaching approach (ii) The use of didactic methods	(i) Benefits of social learning (ii) Benefits of cognitive learning (iii) Benefits of emotional learning	(i) Influence of social work values (ii) Intervening with issues similar to students' own

Table 7.8 showcases the three sub-themes and seven categories that developed from the data and that substantiated Theme 2.

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7.2.2.1 Teaching strategies and methods used

Participants identified the teaching methods and activities that they valued. The thrust of signature pedagogy is to facilitate students to think and act like social workers, thus teaching and learning must be one of its main engines (Larrison & Korr, 2013). Teaching methods serve as the conduit between students and the approaches of the curriculum (Regmi, 2012). According to Muller (2009), the focus in social work teaching is to enable students to ask questions, thereby creating critical thinkers (Steiner *et al.*, 1999; Wehbi, 2011). This sub-theme was distilled into two categories, namely:

(i) *Constructivist teaching approach*: Findings showed that lecturers used participatory and collaborative teaching methods such as case studies, class discussions, role plays, movies, presentations, and reflective exercises (Table 7.9).

Table 7.9:Teaching strategies and methods used: Constructivist teaching approach

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.1	TEACHING STRATEGIES AND METHODS USED	**CATEGORY (i)**	Constructivist teaching approach
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *Reflective exercise as a way to speak….reflective exercise helped me to share my issue…*	• *I enjoyed that there was a video just overall, would always make it up in case studies or lectures so there was different components*

The above excerpts relate to the notions of constructivist theory, but also to teaching methods appropriate to experiential and transformative learning. Experiential teaching methods revealed by the findings are for example role-play (Dennison, 2001; Sieminski & Seden, 2011), case studies (Hartsell & Parker, 2008; Jones, 2005, 2003; Packard & Austin, 2009; Sieminski & Seden, 2011), and small-group or team-based learning (cooperative learning) (Brandler, 1999; Lavan, 2008; Pearson *et al*., 2007; Robinson, Robinson & McCaskill, 2013; Sieminski & Seden, 2011; Steiner *et al*., 1999). Transformative methods include critical reflective exercises (Davys & Beddoe, 2009; Jones, 2009; Sieminski & Seden, 2011).

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These teaching methods often elicited personal disclosures. One staff participant used mid-lecture breaks in emotionally charged content (*To say let's have a break for now and then we come back just to almost relieve the tension and the intensity of what we were discussing).* A mid-lecture break is defined as an activity that disrupts the flow of the lecture and permits students to have a respite from the current focus of the lecture, either in the form of alternative interactive small group discussions or brief relaxation activities to combat fatigue and over-exposure (Chaney, 2005; Smith, 2006). This provision can also be viewed as a reflection of being student-centred (Senior, Howard, Reddy, Clark & Lim, 2012). The use of this technique is therefore beneficial and useful to revive and reactivate the attention and focus of students.

The literature has substantiated the findings regarding the teaching and learning strategies that related largely to experiential learning rather than transformative learning methods. The findings showed that social work lecturers at UWC are steeped in modern, progressive methods to enhance the learning experience. However, there are gaps in terms of the use of transformative learning approaches such as reflective methods. The impact on student learning would therefore be a deficiency in critical thinking and reflective skills.

(ii) *The use of didactic methods*: Student and staff participants related the use of didactic methods by lecturers, especially in relation to theory and content (Table 7.10).

Table 7.10: Teaching strategies and methods used:The use of didactic methods

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.1	TEACHING STRATEGIES AND METHODS USED	**CATEGORY (ii)**	The use of didactic methods
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Staff participant
• *So you might not be interested a lot in what the PowerPoint says but immediately when someone starts a discussion it triggers something*	• *The students enjoyed the fact that when we're talking about content issues, they enjoyed the fact that I would encourage them to be critical and not just to uncritically accept.*

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These excerpts show differences in student and staff participants' views on didactice and content-driven methods. There has been a departure from didactic (traditional) teaching to more active, participatory teaching methods in higher education (Cooper, Bottomley & Gordon, 2004; Chesborough, 2009). Traditional methods have become entrenched in the physical setting as characterised by lecture theatres within universities (Jamieson, 2003). Passive or rote learning (using didactic methods) is based on the notion that students learn through the transmission of information by an expert and that students learn by listening and by repetition (Banning, 2005; Jamieson, 2003; Lundahl, 2008; Regmi, 2012) and that produces surface learning (Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). Research findings, however, confirm that students perform better academically with inquiry-based and active methods than with didactic methods (Ashcraft, 2006; Edwards & Thatcher, 2004), but also when didactic methods (for example using PowerPoint) are combined with participatory methods (Chilwant, 2012; Gier & Kreiner, 2009; Knight & Wood, 2005; Machemer & Crawford, 2007). Some benefits of didactic methods include teacher-supplied knowledge, time saving, and note taking (Sajjad, 2011).

The discussed literature confirms that didactic methods are still common in higher education and the findings reveal that social work lecturers include content-driven methods in their repertoire. The findings also reveal that students found these methods somewhat tedious and were enlivened when their active participation was required. The findings established that students favoured active participatory methods and that lecturers largely favoured the combined methods (mixing didactic and participatory methods), as also confirmed in the literature.

The first sub-theme focused on student and staff perspectives on teaching strategies and methods delineated in modern methods (such as participatory and inclusive methods) and conventional methods (such as didactic and content-focused methods). Students' responses were strongly positive of the former and mixed regarding the latter. This is in keeping with cited literature.

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7.2.2.2 Students' perceptions of learning benefits

Participants reflected on the academic rationale behind teaching and learning as viewed from the participants' points of view. Teater and Baldwin (2009) point out the dearth of research into student perspectives on the quality and usefulness of teaching and learning strategies. Research with students in a large social work class revealed that students favoured synthesised teaching design using various learning activities and a real-world (authentic learning) focus, as well as teacher enthusiasm (Moulding, 2010). Research findings revealed the following three categories:

(i) *Benefits of social learning:* Participants related their learning that was derived from other students that encompassed obtaining (and listening to) different perspectives and opinions that were different from their personal experiences; and from those who may have experienced the issue under discussion; as well as learning gained from receiving good responses from others upon sharing (narratives in Table 7.11).

Table 7.11: Students' perceptions of learning benefits: Benefits of social learning

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.2	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING BENEFITS	**CATEGORY (i)**	Benefits of social learning
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *Like Mrs D uses case studies a lot in discussion, I think that helps a lot actually because people learn from other people.*	•*I like the activities because you get different perspectives and views and opinions from everyone else to see if where the differences and similarities lie within one's thinking and how one views things.*

For most students, learning at university is a solitary experience and cooperative learning (CL) is a means of introducing a social learning experience (Tinto, 2003). CL comprises small-group learning to achieve common cognitive objectives, with students learning individually and collectively from one another in numerous ways (Gillies, 2007; Li & Lam, 2005; Petersen &

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Miller, 2004; Topping, 2005). In addition to cognitive goals, CL also facilitates social and emotional goals (Topping, 2005). Research findings reflected that students benefitted from the connection and engagement with their peers in terms of the personal experiences, opinions and viewpoints of others in contrast to their own. Literature identifies this as social learning and significantly indicates that CL enables socio-emotional goals, as referred to in one student's narrative.

(ii) *Benefits of cognitive learning*: By using different teaching methods, students learned the following:

- theory helps in promoting understanding;
- class discussions helped to relate and understand that others face similar issues;
- role plays helped to concretise theory and issues through acting out scenes that are difficult to talk about, and enabled students to practise social work;
- movies are a good learning tool because of the stories that they depict;
- working in groups allowed various topics to be discussed, and students to interact / engage with fellow students.

The following excerpts provide credence to the benefits of cognitive learning (Table 7.12):

Table 7.12: Students' perceptions of learning benefits: Benefits of cognitive learning

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.2	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING BENEFITS	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Benefits of cognitive learning
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant	Student participant
•*...role-plays actually do help out because maybe I'm angry then <u>I'm acting a character of someone who's angry so I get to act out those feelings</u>*	•*...those discussions help me to understand, <u>helps me to give me an insight to understand</u> all those issues which sometimes I was socialised to previously*	•*...<u>just to hear what one should do in a case</u> like that and sometimes I'd sit in my room and go through the books*

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These views reveal that students are aware of the cognitive benefits of particular learning methods. Modern, constructive teaching methods using an inductive approach to learning satisfy various learning objectives (Prince & Felder, 2006). These objectives could, for example, include sharing and exchanging perspectives, views and values that produce new learning (Exeter *et al.*, 2010; Lavan, 2008; Regmi, 2012) that is indicative of deep learning (Baeten *et al.*, 2010; Laird *et al.*, 2008). Modern, participatory approaches have refocused attention from teaching to learning and in that way teaching has become student-centred (Huba & Freed, 2000; Wehbi, 2011). Teaching methods assist students in overcoming constraints to learning and the effects of personal experiences on learning (Horwath & Thurlow, 2004; Sieminski & Seden, 2011); increasing confidence (Horwath & Thurlow, 2004; Sieminski & Seden, 2011), as well as learning group dynamics and support (Brandler, 1999; Robinson *et al*., 2013; Steiner *et al*., 1999). The research findings have shown how students have valued the facilitation of participation and opportunity to participate in class, as well as the value in promoting learning and personal growth because it engages the whole person (Lee, 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

The findings are consistent with the listed literature in that the various teaching methods used by the social work lecturers illustrated constructivist methods. Constructivist learning outcomes also matched the narratives of student participants. It is clear that the use of constructivist teaching methods have enabled students to derive a variety of learning benefits that contributed to deep learning.

(iii) *Benefits of emotional learning*: Participants realised that teaching methods triggered constructive emotional benefits, for example:

- case studies helped with real-life issues;
- reflective exercise was helpful as a way to ‘speak’ and to share personal issues; and
- role plays confront and act out feelings;
- the reflective exercise was viewed as a private space to air (and write down) personal issues and was viewed as therapeutic;
- movies provided means to relate to similar issues and allowed those who did not want to talk to watch scenarios that were beneficial to them; and

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- class discussions are a medium through which students disclose personal issues and it is beneficial for all students.

The following illustrations pertain to emotional learning benefits (Table 7.13):

Table 7.13: Students' perceptions of learning benefits: Emotional Learning benefits

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.2	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING BENEFITS	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Benefits of emotional learning
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *For me it **(the reflective exercise)** provided like <u>because these are things that I don't like to talk about ya so writing down for me</u>*	• *Because they **(role play)** <u>help you to confront those feelings you have</u> ya but just maybe by just acting out you'll be maybe taking out those feelings*

In addition to the cognitive domain of learning, the affective domain views students as emotional and animated beings that include their life experiences (Beard, Clegg & Smith, 2007). The affective domain influences students' values, attitudes and behaviours, which increases the sustainability of the learning (Shephard, 2008), and pertains to personal transformative aspects (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). Positive moods have been shown to improve creativity and problem solving (Picard et al., 2004) and, by omission, the converse of this is pertinent to social work students who have issues of low self-esteem. Learning outcomes that synthesise the cognitive and affective domains would optimise students' learning, both academically and personally (Zins & Elias, 2007). The discussed literature has confirmed that the cognitive domain without the affective domain means over-emphasising one aspect of human development over the other. For social work students this would be more harmful, because it would ignore the personal aspects of growth that the findings have shown them to need in order to maximise their potential.

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The second sub-theme in learning benefits encompassed three categories that were identified from the learning engagement with peers, cognitive learning benefits from participating in different teaching methods, and emotional learning benefits.

7.2.2.3 Professional (programme) needs and student profile

This sub-theme emerged from staff participants' descriptions of the context of social work (professional) learning. Social work knowledge, skills and values are derived from diverse (classic and modern) theories that prepare and facilitate social workers to intervene in various social contexts (see Chapter 3 section 3.4) (Dominelli, 2004). The professional knowledge base of social work consists of three domains, i.e. theory, facts, and practice and personal knowledge (Trevithick, 2008) that brings structure to the mountain of information in the process of intervention (Turner, 2011). The practice (and education) of social work within the socio-political context is directly related to the notion of citizenship in relation to service users and students (Powell, 2001) which is particularly pertinent in the South African landscape. The social work curriculum must emphasise practice education and the integration of theory and practice (Teater & Baldwin, 2009). Therefore Cournoyer (2013) argues that social work education needs to prepare students to become scholarly, rational and reflective; and who are critical thinkers and life-long learners. Three categories were distinguished, namely:

(i) *The influence of social work values*: Staff participants voiced their concern regarding the lack of influence of social work values on students' cultural and traditional values. Specific value-based topics that were challenging were: traditional gender relations (for example the father as head of household and cultural authority), as well as gay and lesbian relationships. In addition, there seemed to be a lack of support for the oppressed, despite the teaching of social work values of anti-oppression, acceptance and non-judgementalism. The influence of social work values are epitomised in Table 7.14.

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Table 7.14: Professional (programme) needs and student profile: The influence of social work values

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.3	PROFESSIONAL (PROGRAMME) NEEDS AND STUDENT PROFILE	**CATEGORY (i)**	The influence of social work values
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

- *Like your male students would say, how can a male be beaten up by his wife? I will never allow it ... I would engage and ask why would you never allow it, what is it that and why do you think this person, the case study, is allowing it and so on but it's interesting that it comes from both males and the females. There's also uncomfortable-ness when we talk about gay and lesbian relationships.*

Staff participant

- *I've asked that question and some of the responses has also been that in our culture that is a no-go, in our religion that is a no-go so it is unacceptable and then we would go to the conversation about non-discrimination and so on but it's a struggle for them.*

Studies verified that social work students encounter value clashes between their personal, cultural and religious values, and professional values (Hughes, 2011; Rajan-Rankin, 2013). According to Barsky (2010), it is the task of social work lecturers to enable students to internalise their personal and cultural values with professional values (also called professional socialisation) (see also Ten Dam & Volman, 2004; Gray, Coates & Yellow Bird, 2010; Hughes, 2011; Weaver, 2000). This mix should strike a healthy balance as too strong an identification with professional values depersonalises students and makes them less than what they are (called assimilation), while retaining their personal values lead to snubbing professional values (called separation) (Barsky, 2010). Research with Asian-American social work students (in the USA) on the differences between their traditional norms and values and those of the profession found that a dominant theme was that cultural differences were perceived as deficits (Chung, 2006). Cited literature has substantiated the research findings concerning the difficulties that students have in balancing their personal and professional values, especially when personal values are rooted in

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non-Western traditions and cultures. The findings also highlighted the gap in teaching approaches and in curriculum design for facilitating knowledge and lecturer-modelling of professional socialisation.

(ii) *Intervening with issues similar to students' own*: Students' difficulties in intervening with issues that closely mirror their own childhood experiences also illustrated the relationship between professional learning and personal experiences. The basis for these difficulties is that the content of the course triggers their emotional responses causing the default to advice-giving from their own experiences and traditional beliefs. The following narratives illustrate students' struggles with issues mirroring their own (Table 7.15):

Table 7.15: Professional (programme) needs and student profile: Intervening with issues similar to their own

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
SUB-THEME 2.3	PROFESSIONAL (PROGRAMME) NEEDS AND STUDENT PROFILE	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Intervening with issues similar to students' own
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant	Staff participant
• *…difficulty in dealing with cases of abuse in the field, giving advice such as you must forgive the perpetrator and so forth and so on. So for me it questions how did they deal and how were they told by their parents to deal or what did parents do in order for them to deal if they still at 21, 23 say forgive the perpetrator*	• *Other incidences is where students ask not to be placed at certain placements because of their personal experiences with that issue that the organisation is focusing on*

Rajan-Rankin (2013) confirms that emotions are born and propagated through the social intersections of, for example, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, and gender. Students' personal and professional parts of the self converge through fieldwork education that can be beset with role confusion, stress and strain (Canfield, 2005; Litvack, Mishna & Bogo, 2010). Research also supports the prevalence of social work students (and practitioners) increasingly

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having to address issues that are similar to their own (Didham *et al.*, 2011), and that encountering client issues may trigger students' similar traumatic memories (Litvack *et al.*, 2010; Zosky, 2013).

The listed literature and research findings are concordant with UWC and global contexts which have given rise to the need for different ways of preparing social work students for intervention. This notion is not new but has been sidelined through the years but is now becoming increasingly necessary in terms of the emotion-laden context of learning (see further Theme 3 on vicarious traumatisation). Teaching methods must afford students opportunities for critical thinking, as well as reflective and mindfulness practices.

The third sub-theme centred on students' professional needs and profile and included the influence of social work values on them within a particular cultural context with lecturers worrying about the minimal influence that professional values seem to exert on students. In this context the literature confirmed that lecturers had a decisive and facilitative role to play. The second category focused on a significant area of the study and that was students' intervention when issues were similar to their own. Literature confirmed that this situation is increasing globally.

7.2.2.4 Summary and conclusions of Theme 2

Theme 2 centred on professional learning and the signature pedagogy of social work. The significance of this theme was that it highlighted the aspects and issues of a signature pedagogy in professional learning in social work. Teaching methods for theory and fieldwork learning were clarified, together with the learning benefits from these teaching methods being explicated, especially in the context of the profile of students and their particular needs in terms of teaching and learning.

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7.2.3 THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Theme 3 focused on the impact of the participants' ACEs on the learning encountered in a third-year social work module. Neurobiological research findings indicate that qualities of cognition, for example learning, attention, memory, decision-making, and social efficacy are strongly influenced and overpowered by emotion (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). The emotional reactions of students arose from their exposure to the professional learning context that triggered childhood memories of trauma and adversity (Litvack *et al*., 2010; Miller, 2010). The intense reactions of the students to the issues of clients have been identified as vicarious traumatisation in the literature (Clemans, 2005; Horwitz, 2006; Jankoski, 2009; Napoli & Bonifas, 2011; Newell & MacNeil, 2010; Rasmussen, 2005) with the key role of personal history of trauma of the helper (Agllias, 2012; Cunningham, 2004; Jordan, 2010; Michalopoulos & Aparicio, 2012; Napoli & Bonifas, 2011; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Way, VanDeusen & Cottrell, 2007; Van Deusen & Way, 2006; Zosky, 2013). The term vicarious traumatisation was coined and developed by McCann and Pearlman in 1990 and is defined as the transformative and personal impact on the helper as a result of the helping process with clients who have similar issues to the helper (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). The theme was translated into two sub-themes (Table 7.16).

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Table 7.16: THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: sub-themes and categories (Part I)

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES		
Sub-themes	3.1 Emotions in professional learning	3.2 Emotions and client engagement
Categories	(i) Distress and tearfulness (ii) Negative feelings (iii) Struggling emotions (iv) Rationalising	(i) Ability to relate and understand (ii) Bias and partiality

Table 7.16 depicts the sub-themes and categories pertaining to Theme 3. Six categories of data relating to the sub-themes emerged.

7.2.3.1 Emotions in professional learning

Student participants in particular arrived at specific emotional realisations during teaching and learning activities. Emotions are personal feelings that can be aroused by incidents or experiences that are based on the socio-emotional make-up of the person (Carson & Domangue, 2013). Merriam *et al*. (2007) aver that adult learning is a profoundly subjective endeavour that reflects the personal circumstances of the individual (also see Christie *et al*., 2008). Students' emotions, though, can either be beneficial or a hindrance in the learning context (Carson & Domangue, 2013; Storrs, 2012; Varlander, 2008). Students may not be aware of all their emotions, since these may be unconscious or conscious but not expressed (Storrs, 2012). Participants reflected on their different emotional reactions whilst in class. These reactions informed four categories relating to this sub-theme, namely:

(i) *Distress and Tearfulness*: Student participants detailed emotions that reflected feeling sad that often ruptured into crying and breaking down. Memories were triggered in class particularly by the case studies, discussions and the movies that were shown for discussion (Table 7.17).

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Table 7.17: Emotions in professional learning: Distress and tearfulness

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.1	EMOTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	**CATEGORY (i)**	Distress and tearfulness
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *I found myself crying and getting real upset when we were told to watch the film…because I could relate to the girl that was raped by her uncle. What was really hard for me while watching that film was the fact that she committed suicide, where I myself thought about doing it at times...*

Student participant

- *I feel emotionally, due to the fact that most of the things that we learn are the things that happened to my family.*

Staff participant

- *…we did family wellbeing and youth wellbeing so when this student did her presentation she actually broke down in tears*

These intense reactions arise from over-identification and negative self-compassion (isolation and self-judgment) that cause stress (Canfield, 2005; Ying, 2009; Ying & Han, 2009). Students were open about the emotional impact of and reactions to social work class content. The discussed literature argued that students' reactions spring from over involvement in the issues discussed. These findings broadened the current literature as it appears that students' reactions do not stem only from over involvement and negative self-compassion (which are negative characterisations), but from actual emotional reactions to reminders and memories of childhood adversity. It was established that students have undergone ACEs (Chapter 6) and therefore students' reactions are also human reactions and should be understood within this context.

ii) *Negative feelings*: Students related a range of negative feelings within the context of professional learning, for example vulnerability, anger, frustration, ire, unsettledness, hatred, guilt, resentment and anxiety. Examples of negative feelings are illustrated in Table 7.18.

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Table 7.18: Emotions in professional learning: Negative feelings

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.1	EMOTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Negative feelings
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *But the times <u>when I start feeling angry and sad and let down is when I have to do an exercise like this</u> where it requires me to look at the past and write about it; it bring up the hidden emotions that will always be within me.*

Student participant

- *In class, when there is teaching and learning activities which involve similar negative incidents such as what I experience during my childhood, <u>I end up being irate, unsettled and sometimes even uninterested of the activity.</u>*

Studies confirm that students do experience negative emotions such as anger and anxiety as a result of their exposure in fieldwork (Cunningham, 2004; Maidment & Crisp, 2011). It goes without saying that over and above being tearful and emotional in class, students would also experience negative feelings because their memories emanate from traumatic experiences. Listed literature has confirmed this only regarding fieldwork exposure, but generally is unclear as to general teaching and learning content. The research findings has expanded this phenomenon and provides more evidence regarding the emotional nature of learning.

(iii) *Struggling emotions*: Students recognised their fluctuating emotions which ranged from emotional upsets, resentment and disgust, to a lack of emotion and concern that they had become desensitised (Table 7.19).

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Table 7.19: Emotions in professional learning: Struggling emotions

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.1	EMOTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Struggling emotions
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *When there are discussions in class on things I have experienced …it does bring a sense of emotional recollection as to how I felt when that happened to me. Sometimes it does not bother me, but there are times that it does upset me and make my heart bleed a little...*

Student participant

- *Because they are painful and I have not dealt with them I feel like breaking down and tell[ing] the lecturer to stop teaching*

Student participant

- *I'm doing my third year and I love social work…. But there's still something in me that tells me I'm not strong enough.*

Students do not expect the overwhelming emotions and changes that will occur in tandem with the emotional demands of professional learning in social work (Urdang, 2010). Professional learning evokes feelings and reactions that are unfamiliar and disturbing for students (Napoli & Bonifas, 2011; Newell & MacNeil, 2010). These intense feelings can result in a process of dissociation and detachment or denial that, in turn, can lead to emotional exhaustion or burnout (Newell & MacNeil, 2010). It is feasible that students need to be helped to become self-aware or realise the extent and range of their emotions and reactions, as well as their individual triggers.

(iv) *Rationalising*: Students' rationalising encompassed acknowledging and understanding their experiences, and that sharing experiences help participants to heal and that they must 'toughen up'. For some participants the realisation that other students or people have worse experiences is also helpful in repositioning their own experiences (Table 7.20).

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Table 7.20: Emotions in professional learning: Rationalising

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.1	EMOTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	**CATEGORY (iv)**	Rationalising
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *However, theory has assisted me to understand my situation and realise that people can overcome life circumstances.*

Student participant

- *When I sit in lectures where they talk about abuse in family or alcoholism in the family, I feel that I am able to relate to what is spoken about. I feel that it allows me to acknowledge what I have experienced in my life and gives me a chance to understand what happened.*

These cogent responses are brought about by the interrelatedness between rational coping and acuity of feelings and thoughts (Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011; Dekeyser *et al*., 2008; Felten, Gilchrist & Darby, 2006; Kostanski & Hassed, 2008; Palmer & Rodger, 2009). When trying to cope with difficult situations, individuals use behavioural and cognitive actions to process the internal and external stressors (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). The findings show that students are capable of some rational responses in the acknowledgement of their feelings. The mentioned literature reveals that this can take place as a result of being perceptive of their feelings. This ability can prove a basis for mindfulness practice, which is significant because some of their advice may be unhelpful and would not contribute to wellbeing.

The findings of the first sub-theme revealed the emotional reactions surfacing during learning. Students revealed being tearful and upset due to the evocative nature of learning. Their reactions raised concern as it impacted on the various parts of theory and practice. These findings were confirmed by the cited literature and gave credence to the existence of vicarious traumatisation.

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7.2.3.2 Emotions and client engagement

Participants acknowledged that their childhood experiences impacted (positively and negatively) on their ability to relate to, and understand, clients and client experiences. Students who do not become aware of (and manage) their feelings may become vulnerable to boundary violations (Gore & Black, 2009; Lou, 2009; Smith, 2014; Urdang, 2010). This sub-theme generated two categories that underpinned the sub-theme, namely:

(i) *Ability to relate and understand*: Participants felt that their childhood experiences had enhanced their ability to relate and understand when working with children and families with issues similar to those of the participants. Participants seemed confident that they had developed empathy and knew not to impose their views onto the clients (Table 7.21).

Table 7.21: Emotions and client engagement: Ability to relate and understand

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.2	**EMOTIONS AND CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**	**CATEGORY (i)**	Ability to relate and understand
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *When I sit in lectures where they talk about abuse in family or alcoholism in the family, I feel that I am able to relate to what is spoken about. I feel that it allows me to acknowledge what I have experienced in my life and gives me a chance to understand what happened.*

Student participant

- *When people experience the same incidents or circumstances as I did, I can relate better to them, because I exactly understand what they are going through. Therefore I relate with empathy.*

According to Alexander and Charles (2009), key aspects in the professional relationship are the qualities of mutuality and reciprocity that could easily transgress practice norms and ethical conduct. Okun and Kantrowitz (2008) define the professional relationship as "a working alliance" that underpins the basis for any intervention (see also Furman, Negi & Gragg, 2009). In

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this way, Newman (2007) cautions that the intention of the worker's behaviour and conversation may be in contrast to the impact felt by the client and may inadvertently alter her/his perception of reality. Relationship building is an essential part of social work intervention and therefore there is a need to be scrupulous about the intentions of the practitioner and the debriefing processes in place. In the context of student training, the teaching and learning emphasis would be on self-awareness and mindfulness practices, critical thinking methods and structured debriefing opportunities. The findings were confirmed by the listed literature and exposed a different dimension to social work training vis-à-vis relationship building and ethical parameters.

(ii) *Bias and partiality*: Some participants revealed that they may not always be neutral as a result of their circumstances and might give advice from their personal viewpoint (Table 7.22).

Table 7.22: Emotions and client engagement: Bias and partiality

THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
SUB-THEME 3.2	**EMOTIONS AND CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Bias and partiality
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

- *…I ask myself each day and I feel that how do I counsel other people and ask and teach them to talk about their feelings and to always seek help when I myself is in need of help and do not find courage to seek help.*

Student participant

- *This really have negative impacts when the student graduates and becomes a professional social worker but now how does he become neutral when he feels this way towards men. This is something that the student knows that he should work on solving.*

Studies suggest that people who are engaged in professional helping relationships with others should become aware of their own personal difficulties such as any biases, unresolved issues and conflict (Corey, Corey & Callanan, 2007; Furman *et al*., 2009; Newman, 2007) and how their beliefs may impact on their impression of the client (Furman *et al*., 2009). Furthermore, studies

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confirm that the therapists' childhood adversity may result in a struggle with differentiating the client's issues from their own that causes self-doubt (Baker, 2012). The students were honest in their reflections on how their personal circumstances may have a detrimental impact on professional relationship building. This finding has implications for social work education regarding relationship building and ethical conduct.

The second sub-theme focused on self-awareness and empathy. Students showed the need for greater self-awareness, especially regarding the notion of empathy and, conversely, bias and partiality that would be counter-productive to professional relationship building.

The third sub-theme reflects students' descriptions of the necessity of being conscientised concerning their own emotions at play during social work learning. This sub-theme is significant because it has introduced the notion of students' self-awareness and of mindfulness practices in order for them to learn to become attentive to their feelings and the possible impact on professional relationships. The impact on social work curricula and the role of the lecturer has been implicated.

7.2.3.3 Summary and conclusions of Theme 3

Three sub-themes which explicated the findings under vicarious traumatisation and professional learning emerged under Theme 3. The findings revealed strong student emotions during teaching and learning and the need for student self-awareness regarding the depth of emotions, which would suggest that vicarious traumatisation would be a possibility, as confirmed by the literature.

7.2.4 THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

Theme 4 centred on the lecturer's characteristics and skills within the classroom context. Student responses that informed this theme came to the fore from particular questions in the research interview. Two sub-themes which focused on lecturer style and approach emerged as largely qualitative elements within the teaching and learning process (Table 7.23).

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Table 7.23: THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS: sub-themes and categories (Part I)

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES		
Sub-themes	4.1 Lecturer's immediacy behaviour	4.2 Class organisation and structure
Categories	(i) Lecturer presence (ii) Lecturers' credibility (iii) Affirming behaviour	(i) Class atmosphere (ii) Structure of lecture

Table 7.23 shows the five categories across the two sub-themes. Each sub-theme is explicated in the following section.

7.2.4.1 Lecturer's immediacy behaviours

Participants disclosed aspects of the lecturer's behaviour within the class context that they perceived enhanced their learning. A positive lecturer-student relationship is conducive to learning and predicated on proximity (the level of cooperation and closeness) and influence (the balance between dominance and compliance) (Brekelsman *et al*., 2005; Myers & Anderson, 2010). Janis Anderson (in 1979) identified this action as immediacy behaviours and as a key component in classroom communicative behaviours that fosters student engagement and social presence of the lecturer (Burroughs, 2007; Gendrin & Rucker, 2007; Myers et al., 2007; Reupert *et al.*, 2009; Sibii, 2010; Smythe & Hess, 2005; Witt & Schrodt, 2006). Two categories informed the sub-theme:

(i) *Lecturer presence*: Findings revealed lecturer immediacy behaviour, for example through physical proximity with class, by walking around creating a natural (or comfortable) feeling during the interaction with the class. Participants stated that (social work) lecturers are always '*amongst the students*', always '*interacting and engaging*', '*maintaining eye contact and positive body language*', which was different for the other disciplines. Excerpts are presented in Table 7.24.

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Table 7.24: Lecturer's immediacy behaviours: Lecturer presence

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
SUB-THEME 4.1	Lecturer's immediacy behaviours	**CATEGORY (i)**	Lecturer presence
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

I don't know the correct word to use but I think it's a great lecturing style because in that way you get to see if you're walking around you get to see is there an emotional person here, is there someone crying and if you're just standing far and all you're doing is teaching and not engaging with the learners then you can't really see whether there is a specific person here that is actually having a difficult time with the topic.

Student participant

Lecturers are always amongst the students even if we're discussing or we are generating discussions, always interacting and engaging with the student, eye contact, body language you can see.

Reupert *et al*. (2009) identified this physical proximity as lecturer presence (also see Hoskisson & Clark, 2010). Research findings confirm that students' attention and focus are maintained when the lecturer is in close physical proximity to students during teaching and learning through circulating among them (Myers & Anderson, 2010; Witt, Wheeless & Allen, 2006). The findings also confirm that maintaining eye contact and smiling at students can convey interest and support as part of lecturer non-verbal immediacy behaviour (also see Burroughs, 2007; Romano *et al.*, 2011; Sibii, 2010). The listed literature and findings are in concert regarding the existence and value of lecturer presence. Students' perspectives were revealed as to the positive effect of lecturer presence in teaching and learning. The value lies in highlighting appropriate lecturer classroom behaviour regarding interaction and engagement.

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(ii) *Lecturers' credibility*: Findings revealed participants' perception of lecturers' credibility (trustworthiness, competence and caring) as they felt free to share their personal issues without qualms, whether through class activities or consultation (Table 7.25).

Table 7.25: Lecturer's immediacy behaviours: Lecturers' credibility

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
SUB-THEME 4.1	Lecturer's immediacy behaviours	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Lecturers' credibility
NARRATIVES			

Student Participant

But valuing it seeing the lecturer has been listening to us because we're from different families… We're from different backgrounds…. Whereby we've got different social issues and personal issues…

Student participant

…the fact that I know that I can trust you so anything that is inside being able to talk about it, so these small reflective summaries help me ….

Studies have predominantly focused on the teaching role and methods of lecturers in higher education and the 'self' aspects of lecturers have been mostly disregarded (Fitzmaurice, 2008; Helterbran, 2008; Hoskisson & Clark, 2010; Reupert *et al*., 2009). These disregarded aspects include the lecturer's personal traits and characteristics, beliefs, and social experiences (Reupert *et al*., 2009). The qualitative aspects of the lecturer can be linked to student motivation (Siamian *et al*., 2013). Lecturer credibility (proposed by McCroskey in 1992) is a vital ingredient in lecturer-student relationships and motivation (Myers & Bryant, 2004; Schrodt & Turman, 2005; Teven, 2007; Teven & Hanson, 2004). Lecturers show credibility through immediacy, understanding and integrity (Myers & Bryant, 2004; Teven, 2007). The cited literature corroborated the findings as to the importance of students viewing the lecturers' behaviour as trustworthy and caring towards them. These qualities gave credibility to the lecturer role and underscored their opinion that the lecturer could be trusted with their personal stories. The value of this finding is attributed to the benefit of lecturer credibility, but also points to the need for an introspective gaze by the lecturer.

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(iii) *Affirming behaviours*: Participants viewed affirming or supportive behaviour of lecturers as: approachable, positive, unbiased, engaged, unafraid to share personal anecdotes, and facilitating understanding. Table 7.26 contains extracts of affirming behaviours.

Table 7.26: Lecturer's immediacy behaviours: Affirming behaviors

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
SUB-THEME 4.1	Lecturer's immediacy behaviours	**CATEGORY (iii)**	Affirming behaviours
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

But then social work lectures do motivate me and do encourage me and I feel strengthened to have the lecturers around me

Student participant

It's almost like when you say when you're at your own home you will go and you will open the bread tin and you'll make bread… That's how you feel, that's how you're supposed to feel, comfortable…

Classroom atmosphere and lecturer style can either support or inhibit the inner motivation capacity of students (Reeve, 2006). Lecturers bring not only their professional skills into teaching but also different personal assets and virtues (Helterbran, 2008; Reupert *et al*., 2009). Studies show that lecturers' immediacy behaviours are facilitated particularly through self-disclosure and relationship building (Reupert *et al*., 2009). The findings have exposed the presence and value of affirming lecturer traits. Lecturer self-disclosure was particularly mentioned as a way to establish reciprocal sharing and rapport in relationship building within the class context. This finding contributes to the notion of professional socialisation (Theme 7.2.2.3 (i)).

The first sub-theme focused on lecturer's immediacy behaviours. Students valued the intimacy in which lecturers and students interacted with one another. Lecturer's immediacy behaviours translated into lecturer's proximity in and amongst students, students' perception of lecturer's credibility and affirming behaviours. This sub-theme is insightful since it represents students' opinions about the benefits of certain behaviours of lecturers that are viewed as enabling and

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facilitative. These findings were significant as it confirmed the lecturer's role, not only as an objective and distant conveyor of knowledge but an engaged, proximal co-creator of knowledge.

7.2.4.2 Class organisation and structure

The data revealed lecturers' adherence to class organisation and structure within the ambit of lecturer responsibilities. Van Merrienboer, Kirschner and Kester (2003) aver that two key objectives of complex learning are the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as the attainment of varied and specific skills. To this end the role of the lecturer is to determine the content (cognitive) load of the module and to structure the learning appropriately, through scaffolding, for example (Van Merrienboer *et al*., 2003). However, a more mundane role of the lecturer is also to plan, organise and lead discussions (Gregory & Jones, 2009). The sub-theme translated into two categories.

(i) *Class atmosphere*: The class atmosphere was described as one in which students feel comfortable to participate (Table 7.27).

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Table 7.27: Class organisation and structure: Class atmosphere

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
SUB-THEME 4.2	Class organisation and structure	**CATEGORY (i)**	Class atmosphere
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant

Ya I think it worked because like as I said in class the atmosphere in there was good so I think everyone felt like if you had something to say then you are able to, you are given the floor to say it and the lecturer is always there like if you have a question you can ask your question and then you are sure to get an answer but if like she's not able to do that the class is there and also given an opportunity to contribute.

Staff participant

…the lecturer was I think sensitive and more aware of the topics that we were dealing with because I think you understood that we're coming from different backgrounds as students and then sometimes you would even make examples of your own life and then that's what made us feel like we can also share, it's always okay to share. As long as you feel comfortable with it you can share. I think that was your style.

Creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning is a compelling mechanism that can be undertaken by the lecturer for encouraging learning (Conroy *et al.*, 2009; Toprak & Savas, 2013). Schrader (2004) describes a positive classroom atmosphere as one where students would feel safe intellectually, which has a moral basis, and an epistemological match between lecturer and student. Central to this moral basis is the principle of caring by the lecturer (Parrish & Mahoney, 2006; Schrader, 2004). Classroom atmosphere is also susceptible to the emotional interactions between the lecturer and students where lecturers show their emotions through their facial expressions (Toprak & Savas, 2013). The discussed literature and findings are in agreement that students must feel comfortable in order to share their ideas and give input. In social work classes input is not always cognitively based, as much of the input involves personal sharing. The findings highlight the role of the lecturer in establishing this comfortable atmosphere for valuable and participatory learning to take place.

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(ii) *Structure of lecture*: Participants reported that classes were very structured, where the lecturer provided necessary information and where lectures were clear and understandable (mostly by social work lecturers) as opposed to disorganisation, inconsistency and vagueness. Table 7.28 contains citations pertaining to structure of lecturers.

Table 7.28: Class organisation and structure: Structure of lecture

THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
SUB-THEME 4.2	Class organisation and structure	**CATEGORY (ii)**	Structure of lecture
NARRATIVES			

Student participant

...in terms of the material and the teaching style I found it very organized and I was also able to, if there was anything that I didn't understand, going for consultations but that wasn't really the case because everything is just clear and straight forward

Student participant

They make them clear so each and every lecture that I come out I do understand and I feel like motivated. Mostly the social work lectures besides psychology because psychology is not that much in detail

A structured approach means that lecturers are apt to maintaining dominion over course content and teaching methods (Gregory & Jones, 2009). In terms of the findings, lecturers are depicted as being both structured and student-focused, which, in terms of Gregory and Jones' (2009) Contingency Model in maintaining competence, means that the lecturer would be applying the clarifying strategy required. Clarifying is a strategy whereby lecturers are very clear about course requirements so that students, in turn, are clear about expectations (Gregory & Jones, 2009). The findings validated the social work courses and lecturers' orientation towards the organisation and planning of modules and lectures. The listed literature and findings appear to value this approach, which provides students with structure and transparency of content and requirements. This finding emphasised lecturer professionalism, which provided credence for its continued role in effective teaching.

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Sub-theme 2 centred on class organisation and structure which clarified the ways in which a conducive atmosphere and structured teaching can be utilised for effective learning to take place. This was significant in that the findings suggest that social work classes were student-focused, especially in view of the learning profile of students (Theme 1) and offered insight into the lecturer's role in facilitating effective and supportive learning.

7.2.4.3 Summary and conclusions of Theme 4

Theme 4 was important, as the findings highlighted the characteristics and skills of the social work lecturer generally, and in particularly in the UWC context, fitting in with the learning and emotional profile of students that would enable more supportive learning.

7.3 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS OF PART I

Part 1 related to the after-effects of ACEs in the context of teaching and learning in social work. The findings were relevant since the four themes that emerged gave considerable weight to the projected notion that students would, in fact, experience after-effects of ACEs during teaching and learning tasks. Students' learning needs (Theme 1) consolidated the specific learning profile of social work students at UWC, which pointed to the need for lecturers to inculcate debriefing as a prerequisite in class and within the curriculum. The findings also gave rise to the composite of professional learning and the expanded notion of signature pedagogy (Theme 2). The latter included the teaching and learning for both theory and practice in the context of the student profile at UWC. Another significant finding was the notion of vicarious traumatisation (Theme 3) as one of the effects of ACEs on professional learning. Insight was broadened as to the intensity of the emotions experienced by students in class. These emotions rendered students vulnerable to mirroring the experiences and emotions of their clients. Self-awareness and mindfulness practices were essential constructs that emerged from the findings and literature. The aforementioned themes served as backdrop for preferred teaching skills and characteristics of lecturers (Theme 4) that emphasised structure and being student-centred and engaged. Ultimately, the findings showed gaps in the social work curriculum in terms of addressing students' ACEs, as well as in the conventional role of the lecturer.

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PART II: RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Part I explored the effects of participants' ACEs on them as students in a social work learning context. In Part II, findings are explicated in terms of participants' suggestions for social work teaching and learning that emerged from two data sets, namely the student and staff interviews. The findings were obtained from particular questions on the semi-structured interview schedules (Annexures E - G). The following section presents the themes and sub-themes.

7.4 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES RELATING TO SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The data that emerged from student and staff interviews supplied five themes focusing on the suggestions by these two distinct sets of role players in relation to teaching and learning strategies and methods regarding the role and effect of ACEs (Table 7.29). The findings differ from the presentations in Part I and are structured in the format of themes and sub-themes only.

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Table 7.29: Main themes and sub-themes of Participants' Suggestions for Social Work Teaching and Learning (Part II)

	MAIN THEMES		
	1. Teaching and learning activities	**2. Lecturer immediacy behaviours**	**3. Fieldwork and placement learning**
SUB-THEMES	1.1 Include more participatory learning methods and activities	2.1 Encourage student self-disclosure	3.1 Include orientation sessions
	1.2 Add and elaborate on real-world issues that students face	2.2 Respond to students' emotional reactions	3.2 Incorporate preparation for practicum
		2.3 Create debriefing opportunities	3.3 Ensure efficient fieldwork coordination and supervision
			3.4 Incorporate fieldwork educational approaches
			3.5 Teach students self-assessment of strengths
			3.6 Focus on mindfulness

The table shows the three main suggestions from the data (main themes) and the eleven individual components of the main suggestions (sub-themes). Each main theme is individually explored in the following sections.

7.4.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The suggestions about teaching and learning methods in class that are pertinent to the experiences of student and staff participants are explicated in two sub-themes.

7.4.1.1 Include more participatory learning methods and activities.

Participants identified participatory methods such as (amongst others) reflective assignments, case study use, and movies as conducive to learning and lecturers should include more of these in teaching and learning (Table 7.30).

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Table 7.30: Teaching and learning activities: Include more participatory learning methods and activities.

THEME 1	TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES	SUB-THEME 1.1	Include more participatory learning methods and activities
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *I think that there should be like more exercises on more stuff like the reflective summary where you can be in touch with your feelings and you can share your experience.*	• *I think the lecturer should just continue those case studies where people can unpack and discuss in small groups because in that way yes you'll be in pain or you'll be uneasy but at least you will be in the company of your friends and your class mates.*

According to Bozalek and Biersteker (2010), South Africa needs practitioners who are critical, thinking and caring. Participatory methods can provide a springboard from which experiential learning activities can take place (Bozalek & Biersteker, 2010; Lee & Fortune, 2013; Norton *et al.*, 2011; Wehbi & Strake, 2011). Examples of experiential learning methods (and transformative learning) are reflection and reflective exercises (Mezirow, 1997; Wehbi, 2011). These have been extolled as being central to social work education for promoting deep (and new) learning and critical thinking skills (Hinett, 2001; Hussain, Mehmood & Sultana, 2011; Ringel, 2003). The significance is that reflection is the means of integrating and making sense of cognitive (rational and factual) and metacognitive (self-awareness, personal assumptions and insight) experiences (Baum, 2012; Hinett, 2001; Pallisera *et al.*, 2013) and socio-political learning constraints (Chapman & Clegg, 2007). Pertinent for the research findings of this study, reflective exercises enhanced insight into the emotions of learning to facilitate the ability to be aware of their own feelings, actions and values in order to improve students' professional responses and reactions (Furman, Coyne & Negi, 2008; Hussain *et al*., 2011). In participatory methods, the use of case studies and movies, and written exercises are often cited as means to facilitate deep and reflective learning (Gibbons & Gray, 2004; Hussain *et al*., 2011; Jay, 2004; Pallisera *et al*., 2013). The value of this suggestion is that participatory and reflective methods

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should not be an inconsistent application at the will of individual lecturers, but should be structured as part of the teaching philosophy of the social work programme.

7.4.1.2 Add and elaborate on real-world issues that students face

Participants expressed the need for lecturers to use real-world issues (authentic learning) to better prepare them for practice (7.31).

Table 7.31: Teaching and learning activities: Add and elaborate on real-world issues that students face

THEME 1	TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES	SUB-THEME 1.2	Add and elaborate on real-world issues that students face
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
•*I can say to my lecturers, yes it is good work that they are doing but I think they should elaborate more on these issues, elaborate more that these things these are things that are real, these are the things that we face and that you should expect in the future*	•*…bringing in more issues at the same time will also trigger those personal experiences, maybe like the issues of rape it is quite a traumatic situation*

A real-world context refers to concrete or realistic learning experiences in contrast to the often intellectual, academic or model-type context of the classroom (Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, 2010). Students generally desire to learn through real-world issues; through active rather than passive learning that can be achieved through experiential learning (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Knobloch, 2003; Kolb *et al*., 1999), authentic learning (Lombardi, 2007; Rule, 2006; Stein, Isaacs & Andrews, 2004; Yeen-Ju *et al.*, 2013), work-based learning (Tynjala, Valimaa & Sarja, 2003), service learning (Cashman & Seifer, 2008; King, 2004; Mitchell, 2008) and problem-based learning (Baturay & Bay, 2010; Gardner, Tuchman & Hawkins, 2010; Jonassen & Hung, 2008; Lam, 2009; Lam *et al*., 2006; Wong & Lam, 2007). Here the participants expressed the need for their learning to be real-world based (in terms of

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students' real world) and this seems common sense but should be consistently applied in all social work theory and practice modules.

7.4.1.3 Summary and Conclusions of Theme 1

Theme 1 converged into teaching and learning methods that contained two suggestions. The first suggestion exhorted the increase in the use of participatory learning methods and activities. The second suggestion was to use real-world issues in the context of learning. These suggestions are relevant as participatory methods can be the conduit for reflective learning. Reflective learning facilitates critical thinking and deep learning. Significantly in terms of this study, reflective tasks enable students to gain insight (self-awareness) regarding the emotions of learning. Using real-world issues presupposes that students would be better prepared for practice and that the learning context must be based on concrete and realistic learning tasks which encourage active rather than passive learning.

7.4.2 LECTURERS' IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOURS

The suggestions provided participants' views about the lecturers' personal and professional behaviours within the classroom (see also Part I, Theme 4 in this regard) that revealed four sub-themes, namely:

7.4.2.1 Encourage student self-disclosure (sharing / talking)

Participants suggested that lecturers encourage sharing and talking about their personal experiences (Table 7.32).

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Table 7.32: Lecturers' immediacy behaviours: Encourage student self-disclosure (sharing / talking)

THEME 2	LECTURERS' IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOURS	SUB-THEME 2.1	Encourage student self-disclosure (sharing / talking)
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *Well I would actually say is you could encourage people to talk more in class, to share their stories*	• *I also suggest that maybe instead of doing case studies or like in terms of activities, they would just ask maybe because there are students in class that also went through similar situations*

Good teaching should not only facilitate academic success but also life success by being aware of the interrelatedness of socio-emotional skills and academic outcomes (Grauerholz, 2001; Zins & Elias, 2007). Meyer and Turner (2002) confirm that emotions are entangled within the responses of both students and lecturers and therefore are central in the relational aspects within the classroom. By teaching holistically, lecturers link academic teaching to students' personal experiences and, in this way, deep learning takes place (Grauerholz, 2001). Although there are boundaries to student self-disclosure (student protection, stigma and discrimination), the notion of self-disclosure is a shared and necessary activity that would consequently influence class interactions (Rosenbloom & Fetner, 2001). It is the lecturer's role to manage the process of student self-disclosure in the ways in which self-disclosure can take place and its possible implications and impact on students themselves (Rosenbloom & Fetner, 2001; Tardy & Dindia, 2006; Ward, 2008). The literature has highlighted the parameters of students' self-disclosure and these are helpful guidelines. The finding shows that self-disclosure is necessary, but that it should be structured and purposeful in terms of teaching and learning and professional outcomes.

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7.4.2.2 Respond to students' emotional reactions

Recommendations were obtained about the way in which student participants wanted their emotional reactions to be responded to (Table 7.33).

Table 7.33: Lecturers' immediacy behaviours: Respond to students' emotional reactions

THEME 2	LECTURERS' IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOURS	SUB-THEME 2.2	Respond to students' emotional reactions
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *And even if you know that you're going to encourage them you know you must have a back-up plan if someone gets emotional, what am I going to do.*	• *If you're walking around you can actually see and ask them okay maybe you should stay behind, I noticed during the lecture while I was walking around and while you were engaging with other group members that you were actually maybe uncomfortable with the topic. Maybe if you do that you could give the person some recommendations to speak to people.*

Historically, universities have been the site for intellectual and logical reasoning underscoring the pre-eminence of the Cartesian polarisations of, for example, cognitive vs affective, mind vs body, and the gender split, rendering the context for higher learning devoid of feelings and passion (Blomberg, 2013; Leathwood & Hey, 2009; Varlander, 2008). Therefore the place of emotion in learning in higher education is strongly impugned (Leathwood & Hey, 2009). However, studies have confirmed the significance of emotion in learning and the necessity of HEIs to recognise its influence and role within the learning context (Cartney & Rouse, 2006; Kasworm, 2008; McLaughlin, 2000; Rosslyn, 2004; Storrs, 2012) and for lecturers to respond to students' emotions (Storrs, 2012; Varlander, 2008). Participants proposed that suitable lecturing skills included, for example, being sensitive to students' viewpoints; preparing students beforehand regarding the emotional content / possible impact of topics; being empathic and observant; providing personal examples; and allowing voluntary student participation. Some

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strategies that lecturers could use in the classroom in emotionally charged situations are: cultivating a supportive culture in the class, for example respect for other' histories and feelings; adhering to the principles of confidentiality and boundaries; recognising the distress of others; initiating dialogues as co-constructions of meaning; facilitating reflection; taking the student's perspective; and active listening (Agllias, 2012; McLaughlin, 2000; Storrs, 2012). Varlander (2008) used Crotty's (1998) definition of constructivism to link the role of emotions in learning to the constructivist notion of learning where knowledge building is socially constructed out of the interactions between people and their environment. The cited literature has explicated very meaningful ways in which the personal narratives of students can be elicited, which provide a structure for confidentiality, respect and trust. The suggestion clearly indicates that students' emotions in learning are going to stay within teaching and learning in HEIs.

7.4.2.3 Create debriefing opportunities

Recommendations included suggestions for debriefing opportunities for emotionally-laden discussions and reflective tasks, for example (Table 7.34).

Table 7.34: Lecturers' immediacy behaviours: Create debriefing opportunities

THEME 2	LECTURERS' IMMEDIACY BEHAVIOURS	SUB-THEME 2.3	Create debriefing opportunities
NARRATIVES			

Student participant	Student participant
• *I felt that we should have had a space where we could have discussed it (**the movie**) afterwards*	• *Even if it was just some friends making groups and going to discuss the movie and then writing up some of the things that came up*

Koster (2011) argues that student self-disclosures alter the lecturer-student relationship boundaries because the need to help students overrides the academic role. Course content and (simulation) exercises can ignite a powerful need for debriefing (Cantrell, 2008) and thus social work students (in particular) should be prepared for the nature of the learning and possible

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emotional reactions (Didham *et al.*, 2011). Debriefing should be a vital component of the curriculum and should take place after the exercise to assist with disengagement and to assimilate the academic and emotional experiences into learning (Cantrell, 2008; Didham *et al*., 2011; Fernandez *et al.*, 2007; Garrett, MacPhee & Jackson, 2010; Reese, Jeffries & Engum, 2010; Rudolph *et al.*, 2007; Sieminski & Seden, 2011), which means that debriefing needs to be included in academic planning (Garrett *et al*., 2010). Debriefing, including critical reflection, is an important step in experiential learning (Fanning & Gaba, 2007; Rudolph *et al.*, 2007). Debriefing can be free-form, for example email and phone conversations with the lecturer, but it will depend on the lecturer-student ratio in the class (Agllias, 2012). Debriefing can also be open in the classroom, where the lecturer may ask students to explore their own socio-emotional histories that could lead to countertransference issues or vicarious traumatisation (Didham *et al*., 2011). The findings again denote that participants are clear about their needs. Debriefing in the class (or after) is a necessity and the literature verifies this task; whether free-form or structured, this must be in the mind-set of the social worker lecturer.

7.4.2.4 Summary and Conclusions of Theme 2

Theme 2 involves lecturers' immediacy behaviours, which sprouted three suggestions. These suggestions encouraged student self-disclosure; exhorted lecturers to institute structured responses to students' emotional reactions in class; and creating structured debriefing opportunities. The suggestions are relevant to the ACEs of students and their resultant heightened emotions and clarify the role of lecturers in this context.

7.4.3 FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING

Staff participants suggested that students be sufficiently oriented and prepared for theory and practice on third-year level in the Bachelor of Social Work curriculum. There were six sub-themes.

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7.4.3.1 Include orientation sessions

Students suggested that the third-year social work curriculum include, for example, sessions focusing on student orientation to the fieldwork practice requirements for the year level. Participants also suggested that first-year students be oriented as to the rigours of the course, the profession and university requirements and standards (Table 7.35).

Table 7.35: Fieldwork and placement learning: Include orientation sessions

THEME 3	FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING	SUB-THEME 3.1	Include orientation sessions
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant	Staff participant
•*I would definitely think I would focus a bit more on their orientation to the fieldwork placement instead of maybe having one session on that I would have maybe two or three sessions on that.*	•*…in political studies and some administrative and political studies we had an orientation that was unrelated to the issues of politics and admin so if they could do it at the time, why can social work not do that. So I would recommend that…*

Student orientation is strongly correlated with student retention, persistence, and completion of degree (Derby & Smith, 2004). In social work, students' level of preparation impact on their fieldwork experiences that are then typified by dread and nervousness (Kanno & Koeske, 2010). Participants were clear about the need for structured orientation sessions for students to better prepare them for module requirements, which would advance transparency, knowledge building and empowerment.

7.4.3.2 Incorporate preparation for practicum

One staff participant recommended that more time needs to be configured into the programme for preparation for practice, for example preparing students for their placement interviews and focusing on students' self-belief in their skills and knowledge by bringing awareness and reinforcing what students bring to the placement (prior and existing body of knowledge) *(…preparing them for practice, again reflecting on self and what are they bringing and what will they be adding to…especially in preparing them for their placement interviews…).*

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There is a recognition that students and social workers bring more than academic knowledge to practice and therefore self-knowledge is emphasised in terms of the conscious use of self enacted through self-awareness (Dewane, 2006; Heydt & Sherman, 2005; Reupert, 2009, 2007). Preparation to fieldwork education should focus on assisting students to develop self-awareness in order to comprehend the significance of this particular insight within the context of practice (Reupert, 2009). The following skills are helpful, for example, continuous introspection; understanding and developing intuition; as well as creativity in using the self (Ringel, 2003). Examples of teaching practices are: journalling, reaction papers (after an exercise), seminar discussions, role plays, video / films, genograms, ecomaps, and life history timelines (Heydt & Sherman, 2005). This finding again highlights the role of students' low self-esteem and self-worth that strongly impacts on their perception of self-efficacy. This suggestion is therefore vital as it would provide structured preparation that will build self-confidence and thus their self-efficacy perception.

7.4.3.3 Ensure efficient fieldwork coordination and supervision

It was suggested that a year level full-time supervisor (as opposed to multiple part-time supervisors) would be able to regularly visit all fieldwork placements that will contribute immeasurably to students' practice learning, their motivation and validation; in this way the BSW programme will become more student-centred, as highlighted by the following.

Staff participant

- *For one thing out of the strat planning the idea <u>that we have a full-time supervisor that can go to the agency.</u> I see how students light up when I come to their agency and I see them in action or just engaging with the staff, them. I think they want us to see them in action and they feel validated and <u>I think with having that type of supervision where the supervisor goes and sees them at the agency, supervision at the agency, observing them, that would be good. It would also have the opportunity of immediate feedback to the student</u>*

Social work fieldwork emerged from the apprenticeship model of learning by doing and through role modelling by the practitioner (Cleak & Smith, 2012). The aim of social work fieldwork supervision is to facilitate opportunities for theory and practice integration and the development of a professional persona (Cleak & Smith, 2012; Everett et al., 2011). The traditional fieldwork

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model consisted of one-to-one supervision which has become expensive and time consuming, and has evolved into modern alternatives such as task, group, external and co-supervision models (Cleak & Smith, 2012; Coulton & Krimmer, 2005). In South Africa, supervision is usually undertaken in a triad, namely by the fieldwork coordinator (the person coordinating the fieldwork education for the year level), the university supervisor (the social work practitioner paid by the university to undertake supervision of students) and the agency supervisor (the social work practitioner who renders on-site supervision) (Dhemba, 2012; Hochfeld *et al.*, 2009). Findings confirm that the relationship between the supervisor and student is highly valued by students, hence students desire the closeness of their familiar supervisor (in the case of South Africa this could be the fieldwork coordinator or the university supervisor), especially in view of their unaccustomed practice responsibilities (Bennett, 2008). This suggestion is based on an attempt to streamline the supervision process in terms of efficiency (funds) and effectiveness (management). This proposition will go a long way in efficiency (streamlining the payment of one rather than multiple supervisors), but would not necessarily reduce the huge supervisor's bill. The effectiveness will be derived from the consistency of minimal assessors and the time to build positive relationships with all students on a year level, as the person will have more hours in which to undertake this task.

7.4.3.4 Incorporate fieldwork education approaches

A staff participant recommended the inclusion of teaching and learning approaches for the practicum programme, namely the student-centred approach and the human capabilities approach which will link to RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) students who enter with experiential knowledge that can be valued in concrete ways.

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Table 7.36: Fieldwork and placement learning: Incorporate fieldwork education approaches

THEME 3	FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING	SUB-THEME 3.4	Incorporate fieldwork education approaches
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant	Staff participant
• *I think it is more student-centred …. we should really hone in on that approach to supervision and to our curriculum. I know it's aimed at clients… But I think we could draw on the theoretical philosophy of it more for our students as well*	•*…we should look at human capabilities approach when we re-curriculate because of the uniqueness of the UWC BA social work in that we have a particular number of our student cohort that should be RPL, that should be SD, that comes with experience and also our young newly matriculated students, they come with a variety of different backgrounds and experience… And then hand in hand with that would go strength-based…*

The capabilities approach is based on welfare economics originally developed by Amartya Sen and further developed by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum (Maddox, 2008; Robeyns, 2003; Walker, 2012; Wood & Deprez, 2012). A key principle is the focus on what people are able to do and to become, emphasising the values of autonomy and freedom (Robeyns, 2003), which can counteract an adverse past, present circumstances, and feed into educational needs (Wood & Deprez, 2012). In relation to education, Nussbaum (2006) has proposed a three-part model which concentrates on critical thinking, world citizenship and imaginative understanding to enhance students' critical and imaginative capacities (also see Walker, 2012; Wood & Deprez, 2012). The constructivist approach to teaching and learning is not dissimilar in that the principles of student-centred learning and active learning are particularly geared towards developing the students' capacities through flexible, self-directed, collaborative, problem-based and experiential learning (Mascolo, 2009; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005). RPL can be strongly linked to the capabilities approach in terms of its focus on past injustices and prior learning competencies (Dykes, 2010; Harris, 1999). The suggestion that the fieldwork programme be underpinned with a specific learning approach is positive and the suggestions are worth considering as they link with the student profile at UWC in particular.

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7.4.3.5 Teach students self-assessment of strengths

To inform the learning contract, students should be assisted from the first year to assess their own strengths and to yearly scaffold and reflect on them, instead of supervisors fulfilling this task (Table 7.37).

Table 7.37: Fieldwork and placement learning: Teach students self-assessment of strengths

THEME 3	FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING	SUB-THEME 3.5	Teach students self-assessment of strengths
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant	Staff participant
• *In that first year already maybe in every year level that the students write for us that will go onto their personal file, what are my strengths and it comes from them. We have in this fieldwork practice between second and third year, where the supervisor does a questionnaire form where the supervisor campus and student talk about the strengths and the challenges but it's more from the perspective of the supervisor but I would like a similar form for the student to say this is my learning and that becomes basically the foundation for your learning contract, your learning agreement with your campus supervisor and coordinator*	• *I think I would definitely next year want to focus more in having them believe and accept that when they go into an agency that they're coming to add some value. Because some of them do feel that what am I doing here? What can I really do? I've been abused can I really do this? I have such a failed self-esteem can I really do this?*

Research has confirmed that self-assessment (where it operates as a mechanism for learning) can be a means for enabling students to accurately identify their strengths and weaknesses (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Eva & Regehr, 2005). Benefits for students are professional self-regulation, appropriate goal setting, confidence boosting, and increased motivation (Andrade & Du, 2007; Eva & Regehr, 2005; Langendyk, 2006; Ross, J., 2006). For the most part, students generally linked self-assessment to their perception of the time and effort that was invested in the task, not necessarily related to the standard of work (Taras, 2003). However, accurate self-assessment was linked to a deep approach to learning (Cassidy, 2006). This is a suggestion that is already used in

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social work (UWC), but somewhat inconsistently and unstructured. The cited literature has expanded the thinking around student self-assessment that, when used in the suggested way, will assist in achieving deep learning.

7.4.3.6 Focus on mindfulness in learning

To focus on the self in the first year, with topics on self-development (in the first-year practicum) allowing students to reflect on who they are and 'what they're about', will be the basis for their professional self and identity. This focus will assist students to develop intra-personal awareness and strengths to manage their past, as well as assess whether social work is the appropriate career for them (Table 7.38).

Table 7.38: Fieldwork and placement learning: Focus on mindfulness in learning

THEME 3	FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING	SUB-THEME 3.6	Focus on mindfulness in learning
NARRATIVES			

Staff participant	Staff participant
• *I think there should be something more maybe built into 101 on self-development, personal development, just for that student from first year to know who they are, what they're about, more intense work with that so that they can determine whether this is for me there already you know instead of coming to third year and working with all these different types of issues and then dropping out to say that because it's too hectic.*	• *I say it must start from their first year so that they can develop into this practitioner when they come to third and fourth year. So I think it's definitely a matter of having to – I don't want to say overcome – but having to accept their past and what has happened and having tools to manage that past and I think that would be a good investment*

Mindfulness in the classroom is a cognitive activity for raising students' awareness of their internal and external lenses that would enable them to pay unencumbered attention to their emotions and to the various viewpoints in the class as the learning process unfolds (Coholic, 2011; Napoli & Bonifas, 2011; Napoli, Krech & Holley, 2005). The outcomes of mindfulness include self-acceptance, trust, non-judgementalism and self-awareness (Birnbaum, 2008;

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Birnbaum & Birnbaum, 2008; Dekeyser *et al*., 2008). The suggestion is an important one as it reflects and acknowledges the personal struggles of students especially in the social work learning context. Self-awareness and mindfulness have emerged through previous findings and it is mentioned here again as a learning technique for self-awareness.

7.4.3.7 Summary and Conclusions of Theme 3

In Theme 3, fieldwork and placement learning was the dominant focus. The suggestions were attentive to the needs of students within their fieldwork and placement settings and the ideas that emerged essentially centred on enriching the learning experiences in this context. Furthermore, these suggestions are important as they are helpful strategies to sufficiently induct students to fieldwork practice for the year level, as well as for ongoing preparation sessions so that students could feel more contained, knowledgeable, and confident about expectations and requirements. The suggestions regarding student self-assessment of strengths and linking this to mindfulness practices are appropriate in terms of the student profile (see Theme 1 section 7.2.1).

7.5 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS OF PART II

Part II delineated three main suggestions from student and staff participants pertaining to social work teaching and learning in the context of students' experience of ACEs. The importance of participants' suggestions is the invaluable ideas and proposals from those who experience the issues under discussion first-hand. These suggestions focused on teaching and learning methods that participants wanted more of, for example, modern participatory approaches in the context of real-world issues. Participants wanted lecturers to be more engaged and not to fear self-disclosure, students' disclosures, and students' emotional reactions. Participants desired orientation and preparation to fieldwork and placement learning to boost their knowledge, confidence and self-esteem. Lastly, participants wanted fieldwork and placement learning to be grounded in relevant educational approaches; student self-assessment of their strengths; and mindfulness practices to be incorporated into the curriculum. These suggestions are focused on enhancing the teaching and learning experiences, but with a strong qualitative component. What

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was profound was the impression that participants do not want to be lost or ignored in the learning process.

7.6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHAPTER

This chapter assimilated the findings of the experiences of participants regarding their engagement in teaching and learning in the context of students' ACEs. The chapter was sectioned into two parts, the first containing findings regarding the after-effects of students' ACEs on their teaching and learning experiences; and the second presenting participants' suggestions for social work staff, teaching practices, and curriculum development through their ideas for enriching the teaching and learning of students within the context of ACEs.

The findings of Part I augmented and expanded our knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning methods utilised by social work lecturers and the experiences and depth of emotional reactions of students, which facilitated increased comprehension of social work students' learning profile at UWC. The lecturers' role was a constant in the findings and participants were clear about how they viewed the gaps, but also the positive aspects, in social work lecturers in particular.

The essence of Part II was the three main suggestions from participants focusing on their perceptions of how teaching and learning may be improved. In terms of theory, participants wanted more participatory learning in a real-world context. In terms of fieldwork and placement learning, useful suggestions were focused on fieldwork training sessions; more efficient and engaged coordination and supervision practices; using fieldwork educational approaches; and self-awareness practices. Transcending both theory and fieldwork are the suggestions calling for lecturers to be more engaged with students, especially regarding self-disclosure and responses to students' emotional reactions in class. These suggestions also serve as a jumping-off point for the overall suggestions from this study (see Chapter 8).

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7.7 GENERAL SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF ALL RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings of this research study produced eleven main themes that were divided into three parts. The findings of the first part are apportioned to Chapter 6, because of the focus on the student participants' ACEs, information about which was obtained from 20 reflective formative assignments, 10 student and two staff interviews. The four themes that emerged set the context for the difficulties that students had experienced in their formative childhood years. These themes accounted for the neglect, abuse, desertion, conflict and violence that characterised the childhood years of the student participants (Themes 1 and 2, mainly). Theme 3 produced the findings of the impact the ACEs had on them and Theme 4 (focusing on posttraumatic growth of students) reported positive (and hopeful) experiences.

By implication then, findings confirmed that social work students were not above the expected socio-emotional upheavals with which our service users usually approached social workers. Also of note was that these findings would bring considerable awareness of the kinds of issues that beset social work students, therefore social work lecturers can no longer remain aloof from it and be oblivious to the decisive role they play in the learning of students.

The findings from the teaching and learning experiences and participants' suggestions originating from these experiences were sectioned into Parts I and II respectively and are contained in Chapter 7. These findings serve as evidence of the anguish, anxiety, and intense emotions that student participants experienced during learning. Interesting and rich data were obtained regarding professional learning; the signature pedagogy of social work; vicarious traumatisation; mindfulness practice; debriefing needs of social work students; and the lecturers' classroom characteristics (such as immediacy behaviours) and skills.

In part II, the three suggestions from participants again emphasised that students in HEIs (mostly adult learners) desire to be active participants in class; that they want lecturers to be more meaningfully engaged with them as whole human beings; and that their fieldwork and placement learning must not only take their needs (their 'wholeness') into account' but also their learning needs for fieldwork/placement learning, with particular reference to mindfulness practices.

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CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this study was contextualised within social work teaching and learning. The drive behind the focus on the essentials of teaching and learning in social work centred on the emergence of adverse childhood experiences experienced by social work students. The researcher had become increasingly interested in the ways in which these ACEs impacted on students in social work classrooms and became compelled to enquire what the responses of the signature pedagogy of social work should be.

The rationale for the study was further established by the dearth of research in this focal area. The study explored and contextualised the perceptions of students and staff participants of how students' ACEs might have affected the teaching and learning in social work education. The research goal was to gain understanding of the experiences of third-year students and the perspectives of social work teachers with regard to the role of adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities, and to recommend meaningful teaching practices.

The research objectives generated the central research question, which was: What are the learning experiences of third-year social work students at a South African university with regard to the role of their own adverse childhood experiences? Four sub-questions (Chapter 1 section 1.3) provided the basis for the research questions used in the reflective assignments and individual interviews with student and staff participants (Annexures E-G). These sub-questions ensured that the eventual fulfilment of the research goal and objectives could be achieved.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the main research findings to form a basis for conclusions and recommendations. These are the chief outcomes for any research study. Research recommendations are vital as they establish the value of the study, not only for the researcher and higher education, but for future social work students, and for the advancement

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and responsiveness of the social work signature pedagogy for the broader teaching and learning context, nationally and internationally.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Overall, the research findings were rich and comprehensive and large components of the findings consolidated the existing literature, for instance, the themes underlying ACEs. However, there were also areas where the research findings were unique, for instance, ACEs pertaining to social work students; the construct of vicarious traumatisation as applied to social work students as a consequence of having endured ACEs; the impact on professional learning and the signature pedagogy of social work; the introduction of mindfulness practice in social work; and the importance of the social work lecturers' immediacy behaviour.

Student participants were mostly young adult Coloured and Black females from the Western Cape Province. The majority of students conversed and wrote in a language (English) that was not their first or home language, which has implications for learning in an English learning environment. It can be **concluded** that these findings are in concert with the demographic profile of UWC in terms of providing higher education to those students who may have been historically disadvantaged. A further **conclusion** is that ACEs afflicted both Coloured and Black students and that this finding is attributed to their socio-economic circumstances, but also rooted in the racial connotations of poverty within the South African context. The implication is that the study was focused on Coloured and Black students within a socio-political context.

8.2.1 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS REGARDING THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Four themes were produced from the research findings. The findings were informed by students' written reflective assignments and individual interviews with a subset sample of student participants, as well as staff participants.

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8.2.1.1 **Theme 1: Abuse of Participants**

Theme 1 produced three sub-themes, namely emotional abuse (such as using words and withholding love and affection); physical neglect, abuse and threats (such as physical abuse including parentification); and sexual abuse (especially familial abuse). These findings revealed the childhood abuse at the hands of significant caregivers. There was overwhelming evidence that the findings concerning childhood abuse confirmed the general literature on types of child abuse. The **conclusions** are that social work students had undergone childhood abuse that could be defined as adverse childhood experiences (confirming the fourth element in ACEs as to frequent child abuse), that they were not aloof from these harrowing incidents themselves, and that they are continuing to experience the emotional effects (also see Theme 3 below). The implication is that many social work students inhabit social work classes having experienced the myriad of childhood abuses as depicted in the findings.

8.2.1.2 **Theme 2: Troubled Family Life**

Theme 2 focused on the troubled family life of participants revealed through four sub-themes that depicted the parents as ineffectual caregivers because they did not fulfil their roles and obligations, which ultimately led to unstable family and marital relationships. Two sub-themes concerned parental roles, namely ineffectual caregiving provision and ineffectual role fulfilment of caregivers; and two concerned family wellbeing, namely unstable family relationships and structure as well as poor marital relationships. The ineffectual caregiving also linked strongly to the childhood abuse experienced by participants and reported under Theme 1. From the findings it is **concluded** that student participants did endure unfortunate and unhappy circumstances that characterised poor family wellbeing. This theme confirmed the second element in the description of ACEs (poor family wellbeing) as well as the third element (ineffectual caregivers and caregiving). The implication is that students' troubled family life provided little background and experience of a happy childhood and family life from which to draw in their interventions with clients, which has further implications for the professional use of self, and possible counter-transference issues.

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8.2.1.3 **Theme 3: Impact of ACEs on Participants**

Theme 3 produced four sub-themes: internalising behaviours (such as internal feelings and withdrawal); externalising behaviours (such as behavioural reactions); low self-esteem (such as being socially shy and having poor self-efficacy); and enduring consequences (such as the impact on family members and student participants themselves, especially emotional and physical effects). These findings provided clarity regarding the effects of childhood abuse (Theme 1) and troubled family life (Theme 2) on the participants as children, specifically on their emotional, behavioural, and physical functioning and wellbeing during a significant phase of development and growth. This is an important theme because of the understanding the findings provided into the extent and severity of the impact of ACEs on participants. It can be **concluded** that the impact on the individual's wellbeing is varied and long lasting, causing emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties. The implication is that social work students continue to struggle with the effects of childhood adversity and this, again, confirms that the social work class is a site for their emotional and behavioural struggles.

8.2.1.4 **Theme 4: Posttraumatic Growth**

Theme 4 clarified the positive outcomes that participants could discern after having endured childhood adversity. The two sub-themes illuminated the positive characteristics and traits of participants that they discovered in themselves (such as personal growth, independence and resilience), as well as life's lessons that participants derived from these circumstances (such as personal and religious beliefs and values). The **conclusion** is that participants have derived constructive outcomes and growth from their ACEs (as explicated in the sub-themes and categories). The implication is that posttraumatic growth must be understood alongside the impact of ACEs on participants (Theme 3) to fully comprehend the consequences of ACEs in terms of being 'two sides of the same coin'. This means that many social work students show resilience in the face of adversity, but also continue to struggle with the effects of ACEs, as delineated under Theme 3.

These four themes confirm that social work students have not only endured ACEs in accordance with three out of the four descriptive elements of ACEs only, but that they developed posttraumatic growth such as positive characteristics and valuable life lessons. The findings were

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unique in that they pertain to social work students in South Africa and were focused on their childhood circumstances only (in relation to previous SA studies).

8.2.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS REGARDING THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK

Four themes characterised the after-effects of ACEs in the context of teaching and learning in social work. The findings were informed by the individual interviews with student and staff participants.

8.2.2.1 **Theme 1: Students' Profile and Impact**

Theme 1 consisted of two sub-themes, namely students' general learning profile (such as their learning style and avoidant behaviours) and their particular emotional profile (such as their emotional make-up, debriefing needs and advice-seeking behaviours). Students' general learning profile developed through personal circumstances that provided insight into who social work students are, especially within the UWC context. In turn, participants' emotional profile signified the emotions and reactions in class that gave rise to their need for debriefing and advice in relation to their emotional struggles. These findings consolidate previous studies on reasons for doing social work. This theme provided ample evidence of the effects of ACEs on the participants' learning profiles and their emotions. A **conclusion** is that students' ACEs contributed significantly to their learning and emotional profile in the social work classroom context. This implies that many social work students have emotional difficulties triggered during teaching and learning (also see section 8.2.1.3).

8.2.2.2 **Theme 2: Professional Learning and Signature Pedagogy**

Theme 2 presented three sub-themes, namely teaching strategies and methods (such as constructivist and didactic methods); students' perceptions of learning benefits (such as social, cognitive and emotional benefits); and professional needs and student profile (such as the role of social work values and intervention in issues similar to students' own). The significance of this theme was that it revealed aspects of the signature social work pedagogy and the influence of students' profiles (Theme 1 above) on professional learning. The **conclusion** is that students

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have described their teaching and learning preferences that provide input into the signature pedagogy of social work and professional learning requirements such as constructivist methods. A further **conclusion** is that the students' profile (their learning and emotional characteristics) has influenced their assimilation (rather than balanced integration) of social work values and their intervention in issues mirroring their own. The implication is that teaching and learning in social work is no longer in keeping with many students' learning and emotional needs.

8.2.2.3 **Theme 3: Vicarious Traumatisation and Professional Learning**

Theme 3 encompassed two sub-themes that consisted of students' emotions regarding professional learning (such as their distress, negative and struggling emotions, and rational reactions) and client engagement (such as their ability to understand and relate to clients, as well as their fear of being biased and partial). The findings clarified the intensity of the emotions experienced by students in class, which is denoted as being vicarious traumatisation in cited literature. The **conclusion** is that vicarious traumatisation was a significant finding that impacted on appropriate client engagement that ultimately would impact on the context of professional learning. The implication is that vicarious traumatisation of some students in social work classes would have a serious impact on their ability to learn, to intervene with issues that mirror their own, and professional use of self.

8.2.2.4 **Theme 4: Lecturer's Classroom Characteristics and Skills**

Two sub-themes focused on lecturers' classroom competencies, namely their immediacy behaviours (for example their presence, credibility and affirming behaviours) and their classroom organisation and structure (for example creating class atmosphere and structure). The findings showed that the participants valued specific characteristics and skills of the social work lecturer (relating to immediacy behaviours described above). These attributes were contextualised within the learning and emotional profile of students and would facilitate authentic and supportive learning. The **conclusion** is that participants have delineated the role of social work lecturers in teaching and learning within the context of students' learning and emotional profiles. The implication is that, with this knowledge, social work lecturers would have an opportunity to transform their conventional classroom behaviours.

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These themes provided an understanding of the effects of students' childhood adversities on their learning in social work and imparted awareness of students' profile in social work at UWC, converging into vicarious traumatisation. The findings have also elevated understanding of the signature pedagogy of social work and professional learning, stressing the significance of lecturers' immediacy behaviours and class organisational skills in the context of ACEs. The **conclusion** is that ACEs resulted in vicarious traumatisation in social work students and this has implications for the professional learning setting and the characteristics and competencies of the social work lecturer.

8.2.3 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS REGARDING THE SUGGESTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS FOR SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Student and staff participants provided three main suggestions (themes) related to teaching and learning with regard to the effects of ACEs in the social work classroom.

8.2.3.1 **Theme 1: Teaching and Learning Activities**

Theme 1 consisted of two suggestions (sub-themes) concerning teaching and learning activities, namely participatory methods and activities and using real-world issues. This theme showed that students were clear about the teaching methods they favoured in the context of their childhood and subsequent classroom experiences. Participatory learning using real-world issues would afford opportunities for students to become involved in their own learning with realistic exercises and activities. The **conclusion** is that participatory methods and activities were highly favoured as the most appropriate means for teaching social work students. The implication of using real-world issues also provides credence to using students' ACEs as real-world issues in the social work learning context.

8.2.3.2 **Theme 2: Lecturers' Immediacy Behaviours**

Three suggestions (sub-themes) came from student and staff participants, namely lecturer encouragement of student self-disclosure; lecturer responses to students' emotional reactions in class; and lecturer provision of debriefing opportunities. This theme showed that student

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participants wanted to disclose personal stories in the context of professional learning in social work. In concert with students' self-disclosure and emotional reactions, they wanted lecturers to accept these and to provide appropriate support and facilitate debriefing opportunities. The **conclusion** is that lecturers' behaviour was not in tune with students' needs. The implication is that lecturers might have to transform or amend their position regarding students' needs, which would also give input into immediacy behaviour valued by participants.

8.2.3.3 **Theme 3: Fieldwork and Placement Learning**

Theme 3 focused on fieldwork and placement learning and was mainly derived from staff participants. The six suggestions (sub-themes) under this theme consisted of the orientation and preparation of students for fieldwork placements; efficient fieldwork coordination; the introduction of student self-assessment of strengths and self-awareness practices; and the use of fieldwork educational approaches such as the capabilities approach. The **conclusion** is that these suggestions are relevant to professional learning in social work because fieldwork and placement learning provide the context in which students learn to practice social work. The implication is that these suggestions would serve to boost fieldwork and placement learning experiences in view of participants' learning and emotional profiles and that their implementation would therefore be meaningful.

What these three central suggestions mean is that student and staff participants have identified specific gaps in social work theory (such as developing from the use of theory and approaches that do not link with students' realities); fieldwork practice (such as the lack of orientation, preparation, and self-awareness); and teaching and learning (such as the inconsistent application of constructivist methods) in relation to students' learning profile. The implications are that these suggestions would facilitate forging strong links between students' ACEs and meaningful learning experiences for students.

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8.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Seven research objectives emerged from the research goal. These objectives are addressed through the research findings but also through a comprehensive literature study. The following discussion assesses the extent to which the study has met the established research objectives (see Chapter 1).

8.3.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

This objective was addressed by means of a literature review in Chapter 2. The focus was on the explication of the emergence of OBE as an educational approach and the significance and criticism of its implementation in the South African basic and higher educational context. The **conclusions** reached was that OBE essentially is a behaviourist approach which is focused on the use of learning objectives and outcomes that are especially in contrast with (essentialist) constructivism, which proposes that all learning is negotiated by learners in a specific context and thus not predetermined. In addition, the highly structured and conforming nature of OBE is at variance with individualised learning and knowledge construction. OBE is thus mismatched with the learning needs of social work students and with producing autonomous and self-directed learners.

The implication therefore was that OBE (in its current form) is not particularly suited to the higher educational context and professional programmes, although the teaching methods could be termed transformational (for example aspects of constructivism).

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8.3.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING PECULIAR TO THE DISCIPLINE OF SOCIAL WORK

The second objective incorporated Social Work teaching and learning and was explored and described in Chapter 3. It not only focused on teaching and learning practices but also on exploring the essential components of social work education, globally, as well as in the South African context. This discussion contextualised and situated South African social work education and practice in terms of World I and II knowledges in particular. This setting firmly embedded social work in an established knowledge framework and created a recognisable knowledge base founded in science. Social work curricula became rooted in conventional knowledge from which arose traditional, didactic teaching methods. These traditional teaching methods had to be transformed to incorporate more constructivist teaching and learning practices, such as experiential and transformative learning theories and constructive alignment.

Chapter 4 also provided evidence to support the fulfilment of this objective because of the discussion of professional learning (of which the signature pedagogy of social work forms a part). The association between ACEs and the teaching and learning context in social work determined the location of professional learning in Chapter 4, rather than Chapter 3. The professional learning context consists of the helper and helping, with a new look at the helper (i.e. social work student or practitioner) and the use of self. The **conclusion** reached was that there is a need for renewed exploration of the effects of particular attributes of the helper on the helping (i.e. intervention). The principle of self-awareness is a way of conscientising the helper to underlying drives and motivation, thereby revealing the authentic person underneath with her/his individualised persona. In the context of helping, the use of self and transference and counter-transference reactions were particularly noted as means to show negative and positive subjectivity.

Research findings (Chapter 7) confirmed that the professional social work learning context contained its signature pedagogy (the professional self as well as teaching and learning in theory and fieldwork). The findings supported the value of the use of self, self-awareness, and mindfulness practices as a result of the effects of ACEs on social work students.

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The implications are therefore that social work in particular had a responsibility to transform its curriculum and its professional learning endeavours to relate to the students' learning and emotional profile (see section 8.2.3.1).

8.3.3 THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF THIRD-YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

Theoretically, this third objective was initially met in Chapter 4 with the discussion of ACEs as a general construct with reference to four elements, namely, (i) poor social environment; (ii) poor family wellbeing; (iii) ineffectual caregivers; and (iv) frequent child abuse. The literature had confirmed that ACEs (and consequences) have a direct impact on the capacity of certain social work students to learn with regard to emotional triggers and their physiological and emotional reactions.

The research findings strongly confirmed that student participants subscribed to the elements of ACEs that focused on the family's internal wellbeing and functioning (elements of poor family wellbeing, ineffectual caregivers and frequent child abuse). This implies that the construct of ACEs could be applied to social work students. It also implied that social work teaching and learning had to be adjusted to meet the needs of these students.

8.3.4 THE ROLE OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK

The fourth objective was met solely through the research findings of the study (Chapter 7). The findings exposed the overwhelming emotional reactions and responses of students during teaching and learning. These emotions relating to the social work teaching and learning context were identified by the literature as vicarious traumatisation. The findings also disclosed the need for student self-awareness regarding the depth of these reactions and responses as the result of their ACEs and triggers within the classroom setting. This implies that social work students are

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overwhelmingly encumbered with ACEs and are attending social work classes assailed by their distressing memories.

8.3.5 THE COPING MEASURES OF THIRD-YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Coping measures as a general discourse is explored and described in Chapter 4. In this discussion, coping was viewed as emanating from an individual's protective factors. These protective factors consisted of two main sources, namely, *assets* (referring to an individual's internal capacities) such as personal attributes, social skills and coping style; and *resources* (referring to an individual's family) such as family communication and relationships; (and external environment) such as access to and utilisation of community resources. Social support (resources) is vital towards igniting positive outcomes out of adverse circumstances, but also to highlight the significance of their cultivation as a helpful resource. Resilience was an attribute that emerged from adverse experiences.

The research findings applicable to objective five is located in Chapter 6 (Theme 4), with two sub-themes revealing assets in the form of positive personal characteristics of students and resources such as family support and religious beliefs (spiritual resources). The implications of the findings are that posttraumatic growth should be considered by social work lecturers in curriculum planning regarding the professional use of self, self-awareness and mindfulness practices.

8.3.6 THE TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF THIRD-YEAR LEVEL SOCIAL WORK TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Chapter 7 presents the research findings from the teaching and learning experiences of third-year students who had endured ACEs. The research findings combine the findings derived from student and staff interviews. The sixth objective was achieved since the research findings revealed four themes providing strong evidence in the classroom context of teaching and learning experiences in relation to the effects of students' ACEs. The findings pointed to

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meaningful teaching and learning practices, such as mindfulness practice; constructivist alignment contributing to the social work signature pedagogy; professional use of self and self-awareness; and lecturer immediacy behaviours contributing to professional learning. The implications are that the effects of ACEs in social work classes is accepted as a factor in the learning experiences of students and that professional learning and the signature pedagogy in social work should be adjusted.

8.3.7 TEACHING PRACTICES WITH REGARD TO THE ROLE OF STUDENTS' ACEs IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

This seventh objective was informed through two phases:

- The first phase was theoretically established in Chapter 2 (Teaching and learning within the context of outcomes-based education in higher educational institutions); Chapter 3 (Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education); Chapter 4 (Adverse childhood experiences and coping measures in the context of professional learning); and the research findings in Chapter 7 (Part II). These findings encapsulated three suggestions by student and staff participants: student participants made two suggestions focused on teaching and learning activities and the immediacy behaviour of lecturers; and staff participants made six suggestions focused on fieldwork and placement learning.
- The second phase in meeting the seventh objective involves the construction of the study recommendations presented in section 8.4, below.

The conclusion is that student and staff participants have identified gaps in theory and practice, teaching and learning, and lecturer behaviour. The implication is that these gaps should be addressed in the endeavour to relate more strongly to social work students' learning and emotional profile at UWC.

These seven objectives encapsulate what the study wanted to achieve. The literature review and the empirical findings fulfilled the objectives of the study. Consequent to meeting the study objectives, the following recommendations can be made.

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8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The recommendations are based on the conclusions of the study, which are summarised as follows:

- Social work students have endured ACEs and continue to struggle with the emotional aftermath known as vicarious traumatisation that is particularly stressful for students during teaching and learning.
- Teaching and learning (theory and fieldwork learning) and lecturers' classroom behaviour are required to change to meet the emotional and learning needs of students.
- Social work has a responsibility to transform its curriculum and its professional learning endeavours to relate to the students' learning and emotional profile.
- OBE (in its current form) is not particularly suited to the higher educational context and professional programmes.

Three core recommendations have emerged from the findings of the study and the conclusions.

8.4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

The study's findings and conclusions have identified three learning areas that should be developed in professional learning, namely (i) professional use of self; (ii) self-awareness; and (iii) virtue ethics. A discussion should be initiated by the researcher with relevant role players in the social work department at UWC (such as the Head of Department and Social Work teaching staff) regarding these learning areas. The researcher should motivate for the incorporation of the following into the social work curriculum:

- The professional use of self (including counter-transference, inter-subjectivity, self-disclosure and empathy), in an appropriate place in the existing social work curriculum to maximise optimal learning in terms of theory and practice;

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- Introduction of contemporary psychodynamic theories (for example intersubjectivity theory or relational theory) that would refocus attention on the socio-emotional factors that are the basis for behaviour, feelings and emotions, and development of awareness of how these link with early experiences, both in terms of students' self-awareness and their understanding of how these affect their clients.
- The inclusion of mindfulness practices into fieldwork learning to support students' posttraumatic growth and teach self-awareness (such as facilitating self-observation and introspection regarding personal reactions, strengths, motives, and histories), to develop insight and perceptiveness regarding feelings, behaviours, and virtue ethics. These activities would contribute to dimension 1 of professional identity, i.e. developing a personal philosophy of practice.

The recommendation and strategies also have policy implications, as the 27 exit-level outcomes that exist at present do not provide learning outcomes and assessment criteria that would encapsulate these learning areas. This would have further implications for the current BSW degree and policies of the professional council of social work (SACSSP).

8.4.2 THE RECONSTRUCTION AND REAFFIRMATION OF THE SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL WORK

Based on the study's conclusions, social work's signature pedagogy has been exposed as fragmented and not particularly focused on the students' profile. The recommendation is that the structured use of constructivist, participatory methods should exponentially become the dominant teaching methods in all social work courses. It is recommended that the Department of Social Work and teaching staff should:

- Incorporate Constructive Alignment as overarching educational approach to synchronise co-created learning outcomes with constructive learning methods to train authentic and autonomous learners.
- Use the Experiential and Transformative learning approaches, for example problem-based learning methods such as case studies of real-world issues; and critical reflective tasks such as thought-provoking interchanges, observations, reflective recall activities, and journal

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writing to facilitate introspection and future perspectives (looking backward, inward, outward and forward).

The application of these recommendations should be contained in the internal teaching and learning policy of the Department of Social Work to be used as part of its strategic plan for the monitoring and evaluation of its impact on student learning. The first strategy also has implications for the continued use of OBE in Higher Education and policies to this effect.

8.4.3 THE ALIGNMENT OF FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING IN ACCORDANCE WITH STUDENTS' PROFILE

There are three strategies that are recommended to align fieldwork and placement learning (situated cognition) to students' learning and emotional profile.

8.4.3.1 Restructuring of fieldwork and placement learning

The first strategy focuses on fieldwork and placement learning and comprises two tasks on the third-year level in social work. It is recommended that the Fieldwork Coordinator should:

- Ensure a well-managed fieldwork programme in terms of: firstly, providing sufficient and timely orientation to fieldwork requirements and, secondly, facilitating consistent, structured and timely preparation of students for their specific fieldwork and placement learning at agencies (including the partnering with practitioners). These tasks would increase students' self-efficacy.
- Promote student self-development through facilitating skills regarding student self-assessment of personal strengths, social work, and academic abilities that will be authentic and based in a growth and development context. In addition, all teaching staff should also encourage and implement structured appraisals of students for a composite view of student profiles to be used to inform teaching and learning responsiveness.

This strategy and tasks would have implications for current departmental policies on fieldwork coordination and programme structure; as well as current social work student assessment policies in the department, which should be expanded to include student self-assessment.

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8.4.3.2 Development of lecturer's immediacy behaviours

Three tasks that relate to lecturer immediacy behaviour arose from the study findings and conclusions. Therefore it is recommended that lecturers should:

- Extend lecturer presence in class context through open and active interaction and engagement with students during class activities (alongside the use of constructivist teaching methods).
- Increase lecturer credibility and trustworthiness in interactions with students through behaviours that show values (such as consistency, fairness, non-judging, and non-discrimination) for students to endorse and affirm lecturers' trustworthiness.
- Develop the use of lecturers' self-disclosure that link with the topic under discussion to benefit from the lecturers' experiences and knowledge.

The above strategy and tasks have implications for the conventional role of the lecturer. These may have internal policy implications to expand or develop the role of the lecturer so that all staff is well-informed. This is especially pertinent when new lecturers are inducted.

8.4.3.3 Responding to students' emotional needs and vicarious traumatisation

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, three tasks concern the appropriate response to students' emotional needs and vicarious traumatisation. It is recommended that lecturers should:

- Incorporate structured debriefing sessions in class using case vignettes for discussion, reflection, and (appropriate) self-disclosure.
- Manage student self-disclosure to preserve confidentiality (taking place in consultation) and/or maintain principles of non-judging, and acceptance (taking place in class) where discussion is structured and topic-specific.
- Clarify appropriate lecturer and fieldwork supervisor responses to students' emotional reactions that include timeliness, appropriateness and sensitivity.

The policy implications of this strategy and tasks would be to concretise an internal departmental policy on appropriate lecturer responses to student self-disclosure (in consultation and in the context of teaching and learning).

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8.4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations for future study emerged from the study are made:

Explore -

- The role of coping measures and resilience (especially the 5Ps of process, proficiencies, prevailing, positive outcomes, and posttraumatic growth) because it would be of benefit not only to social work teaching and learning but also to social work practice.
- The techniques in mindfulness practice for social work education with regard to self-awareness.
- The role and application of psychodynamic theories in social work education.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS

The title of the study was, '*An inquiry into the role of adverse childhood experiences on teaching and learning in Social Work'.* Overwhelming evidence of the role of ACEs in teaching and learning in social work has been provided through the literature review (Chapters 2 to 4) and the research findings (Chapters 6 and 7). In Chapter 1 (section 1.1), Haggis (2002) is cited with regard to the reframing of adult learning experiences. The recommendations from the study provide an alternative framework through which to view social work students' past and present learning experiences. These recommendations could contribute to students' fulfilling their potential and completing their studies despite the effects of childhood adversities. In the assessment of social work competencies of students, Gibbons *et al*. (2007) identified two vital factors, namely the resolution of adverse experiences and the lack of narcissism. The implementation of the recommendations from the study would directly address these factors. With all of the recommendations above, the study has contributed significantly to the scholarship of social work teaching and learning, especially in the light of the renewed focus on professional learning and signature pedagogy in social work.

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ANNEXURE A

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
Tel: 021 9592851

27/06/12

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title:
An inquiry into the role of adverse childhood experiences of students on teaching and learning in social work

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by GLYNNIS DYKES, MA SOCIAL WORK (UWC), from the Social Work Department at Stellenbosch University. Research results will contribute to a thesis in fulfillment of a PhD degree in social work. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because as a social work student you have indicated in a formative assessment that you have endured adverse childhood experiences.

What is this study about?
This is a research project being conducted by **GLYNNIS ZENA DYKES** at the University of the Western Cape. Those students who had endured adverse childhood experiences will be drawn into the study and the researcher is interested in hearing your experiences. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the experiences of third year social work students and the perspectives of social work teachers with regard to the role of adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities in order to recommend helpful teaching practices.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

VOLUNTEERING OF FORMATIVE WRITTEN TASK: You will be asked to volunteer the use of your written assignments to be used by the researcher to analyse for adverse childhood experiences.
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS (If requested further): Only if necessary, a maximum of ten individual interviews will be undertaken using interview schedules for student participants to expand on their childhood experiences and learning experiences (depending if additional information is needed). This will be 45 minutes per interview if required. The venue would be on campus for convenience. Time would be negotiated.

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Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?
I will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, *I will be able to ensure the following:*
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can possibly be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Information obtained will be used only for educational purposes.

Regarding all data collection tasks: Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained by means of identification numbers rather than the names on the written tasks and interview schedules. A master identification file will be created that links the numbers to names so that missing or contradictory information can be followed up. The researcher will only hold this file. The researcher will lock all written tasks, interview transcripts and analyses in her office in a document safe which can only be accessed by her.

The researcher will be using a tape recorder to record all data collection strategies and consent will be obtained from the participants for this to be done. As a participant you will have the right to review/edit the tapes by emailing the request to the researcher at gdykes@uwc.ac.za and the reason for the review. The master file and audio-tapes will be destroyed once the research has been completed and data verification has been undertaken.

No information will be released to any other party unconnected with the research study.

The results of study will be published and participant anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained in publication as no names will be used and statements by participants will not be traced through the publication.

What are the risks of this research?
There may be some risks from participating in this research study. This study will contain en emotional risk because the process could make you recall the pass and negative emotions could relived. However, we will thoroughly prepare for the interview. No interview will be undertaken until the participants are ready for it.

What are the benefits of this research?
Student participants will now be aware of the influence of their adverse childhood experiences and the role they play in their social work learning and becoming a competent and professional social worker.

Describe the anticipated benefits to science or society expected from the research, if any.
This research aims to contribute significantly to the scholarship of social work teaching and learning. This will be achieved through exploring social work teaching and learning approaches and methods that will enable students particularly hampered by past trauma to appropriately position their own experiences in relation to those of others within a learning context; and thereby positively impacting on retention and throughput. This research may challenge the traditional notion that social workers are only drawn from conservative or stable home environments but drawn from all social backgrounds.

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Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?
You can choose whether to be in this study or not. Please do not feel any pressure or under an obligation to participate in this research because of my role as lecturer in this module and the perceived authority within my role. Please see section 4 (above) for potential benefits of participating in this research. If you are then interested in being a volunteer in this study, please note you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Any withdrawal on your part will have no bearing whatsoever on your studies in the module or any other module taught by the researcher. If you at any time feel during the module that you are being discriminated against or unfairly treated by the researcher (as lecturer) as a result of having withdrawn from this research, please do not hesitate to contact the department's head of department regarding this issue.

You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, for example, if it comes to light that your responses to questions have not been truthful.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?
Students will be offered debriefing sessions if required, by an experienced counsellor.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by *Glynnis Dykes at the Social Work Department* at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Glynnis Dykes at: 021 959 2851/2277 or gdykes@uwc.ac.za

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

ACTING Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences: Professor J. FRANTZ
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

Kind regards.
Glynnis Dykes
Social Work Researcher

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959, Fax: 27 21-959

E-mail:

ANNEXURE B

GENERAL CONSENT FORM: STUDENT WRITTEN PIECE

RESEARCHER: GLYNNIS DYKES

Title of Research Project: An inquiry into the role of adverse childhood experiences of students on teaching and learning in social work

I hereby confirm that this study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate by providing my written reflective exercise to be used in this research study. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Participant's name		**Date:**
Participant's signature		
Witness' Name		**Date:**
Witness' Signature		

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the research supervisor:

Study Coordinator's Name: Professor Sulina Green

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

✉ **PRIVAATSAK/PRIVATE BAG X1 RYNEVELDSTRAAT/RYNEVELD ROAD MATIELAND 7602 STELLENBOSCH, 7600**

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ANNEXURE C

GENERAL CONSENT FORM: STUDENT INTERVIEW

Title of Research Project: An inquiry into the role of adverse childhood experiences of students on teaching and learning in social work

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I agree to be audio-taped during my participation in the study.

Participant's name		**Date:**
Participant's signature		
Witness' Name		**Date:**
Witness' Signature		

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the research supervisor:

Study Coordinator's Name: Professor Sulina Green

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ANNEXURE D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (LECTURER / FIELDWORK COORDINATOR)

TITLE OF STUDY
An inquiry into the role of adverse childhood experiences of students in teaching and learning in social work

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by GLYNNIS DYKES, MA SOCIAL WORK (UWC), from the Social Work Department at Stellenbosch University. Research results will contribute to a thesis in fulfillment of a PhD degree in social work. You were selected as a possible participant in this study to obtain data regarding your teaching activities and experiences with students who might have endured challenging circumstances.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To gain an understanding of the experiences of third year social work students and the perspectives of social work teachers with regard to the role of adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities in order to recommend helpful teaching practices.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to participate in an individual interview with me regarding your teaching experiences with students in your module that you teach on the third year level in the Bachelor of Social Work degree. The particular focus is on the possible role of students' adverse childhood experiences during teaching and learning activities in theory class.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is low risk and discomfort on you as a person or as a lecturer.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research aims to contribute significantly to the scholarship of social work teaching and learning. This will be achieved through exploring social work teaching and learning approaches and methods that will enable students particularly hampered by past trauma to appropriately position their own experiences in relation to those of others within a learning context; and thereby positively impacting on retention and throughput. This research may challenge the traditional notion that social workers are only drawn from conservative or stable home environments but drawn from all social backgrounds.

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5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any payment for their participation in this research study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can possibly be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Information obtained will be used only for educational purposes.

The researcher will be using a tape recorder to record all data collection strategies and consent will be obtained from you for this to be done. As a participant you will have the right to review/edit the tapes by emailing the request to the researcher at gdykes@uwc.ac.za and the reason for the review. The master file and audio-tapes will be destroyed once the research has been completed and data verification has been undertaken.

No information will be released to any other party unconnected with the research study.

The results of study will be published and participant anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained in publication as no names will be used and statements by participants will not be traced through the publication.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. Please do not feel any pressure or under an obligation to participate in this research because of our collegial relationship. Please see section 4 (above) for potential benefits of participating in this research. If you are then interested in being a volunteer in this study, please note you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact*:*
Researcher – GLYNNIS DYKES 021 9592851 Department of Social Work, Social Sciences Building, UWC.
Research Supervisor – PROF S. GREEN 021 8082070 Department of Social Work, SU.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:
Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences: Professor H. Klopper
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

Stellenbosch University http://scholar.sun.ac.za

Kind regards.

Glynnis Dykes
Social Work Researcher

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The information above was described to me, the participant, by GLYNNIS DYKES in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Participant's name		**Date:**
Participant's signature		
Witness' Name		**Date:**
Witness' Signature		

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the participant]*. *[H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and *no translator was used.*

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator **Date**

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ANNEXURE E

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT

The following questions will be included in the reflective task:

- Describe the kinds of incidents or circumstances that had occurred during your childhood years (ie. from birth to 18 years) that you think have had a negative influence on the kind of family life that you had experienced (*These incidents could include the following: physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been - substance abusers, involved in criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or in poverty-stricken circumstances and/or surroundings)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe the effect or influence of these incidents or circumstances on the kind of family life that you had experienced *(broken up family, moving around, angry / distrustful family relationships, negative living conditions, violent and abusive interactions)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe the effect of these incidents or circumstances on you as a person (*self-blaming, sad, unhappy, fearful, anxious, angry, frustrated, troubled behaviour, suicidal ideation / attempts, traumatised, depressed, drug / alcohol usage, poor concentration at school, teen runaway, no effect)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe what you have learnt about yourself as a result of these childhood experiences *(resilience, emotional strength, decision making skills, leadership, assertiveness, aggressiveness, timidness)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe your feelings in class when teaching and learning activities involve similar incidents or circumstances such as what you had experienced during your childhood *(sadness, anger, anxious, hurt, no effect)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

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2013 SCW313 TASK 3 REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT

- ***TAKE YOUR TIME AND COMPLETE THIS REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT ON YOUR OWN FAMILY EXPERIENCES.***
- ***THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL HELP IN THINKING ABOUT YOUR OWN FAMILY AND THE IMPACT YOUR EXPERIENCES CAN HAVE ON YOUR ROLE AS A SOCIAL WORKER IN FAMILY INTERVENTION AND DURING TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES.***

1.	Describe the kinds of incidents or circumstances that had occurred during your childhood years (ie. from birth to 18 years) that you think have had a POSITIVE influence on the kind of family life that you had experienced
2.	Describe the kinds of incidents or circumstances that had occurred during your childhood years (ie. from birth to 18 years) that you think have had a NEGATIVE influence on the kind of family life that you had experienced
3.	Describe the effect or influence of these negative incidents or circumstances on the kind of family life that you had experienced
4.	Describe the effect of these negative incidents or circumstances on you as a person
5.	Describe the effect of these positive incidents or circumstances on you as a person
6.	Describe what you have learnt about yourself as a result of these childhood experiences
7.	Describe your feelings in class when teaching and learning activities involve similar (negative) incidents or circumstances such as what you had experienced during your childhood

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ANNEXURE F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS

The following questions will be included in the interview schedule:

- Describe one incident or circumstance within your family that you think was the most challenging in your family life (*physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been - substance abusers, involved in criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or in poverty-stricken circumstances)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe what you needed to do or decisions you needed to make to enable you to have overcome these challenges for your future *(leave home to live elsewhere, refocus on school and learning, seek positive role models / motivational friends, join sports, dance, or volunteering activities, suspending criminal activities (such as theft, robbery, prostitution) and gang membership, seek counselling or other interventions (such as social work)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Identify one main feeling to describe your emotions or reactions in class when participating in or listening to debates around incidents or circumstances similar to your own experiences during childhood *(anger, anxiety, hurt, trauma, no effect)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe why you think these feelings and reactions occur (*bringing back past memories, feeling the sadness, anger, powerlessness or vulnerability again)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe the in-class learning activities and the lecturing style of the lecturer in facilitating learning of these topics and/or issues *(constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks; positive / motivating lecturing style)*

  (CHAPTER 2: Teaching and learning within the context of OBE in higher education)
  (CHAPTER 3: Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education)

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- Discuss the reasons why you think these learning activities facilitated by the lecturer worked or did not work for you *(retention of information, understanding of the topic, motivation to learn more about the topic, able to understand unresolved feelings evoked by the topic; and the converse of these factors)*

  (CHAPTER 2: Teaching and learning within the context of OBE in higher education)
  (CHAPTER 3: Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education)

- Discuss the reasons why you think the lecturing style of the lecturer worked or did not work for you in facilitating topics of this nature (*retention of information, understanding of the topic, motivation to learn more about the topic, able to understand unresolved feelings evoked by the topic; and the converse of these factors)*

  (CHAPTER 2: Teaching and learning within the context of OBE in higher education)
  (CHAPTER 3: Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education)

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS

IDENTITY NUMBER OF STUDENT PARTICIPANT:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**DATE OF INTERVIEW**	____ AUGUST 2013

	QUESTION	**POSSIBLE RESPONSES / POINTERS**	**OBSERVATIONS / NOTES**
1	Describe one incident or circumstance within your family that you think was the most challenging in your family life	(*physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been - substance abusers, involved in criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or in poverty-stricken circumstances)*	
2	Describe what you needed to do or decisions you needed to make to enable you to have overcome these challenges for your future	*(leave home to live elsewhere, refocus on school and learning, seek positive role models / motivational friends, join sports, dance, or volunteering activities, suspending criminal activities (such as theft, robbery, prostitution) and gang membership, seek counselling or other interventions (such as social work)*	
3	Identify one main feeling to describe your emotions or reactions in class when participating in or listening to debates around incidents or circumstances similar to your own experiences during childhood	*(anger, anxiety, hurt, trauma, no effect)*	
4	Describe why you think these feelings and reactions occur	(*bringing back past memories, feeling the sadness, anger, powerlessness or vulnerability again)*	
5	Describe the in-class learning activities and the lecturing style of the lecturer in facilitating learning of these topics	*LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks; positive / motivating lecturing style)* *LECTURING STYLES: the facilitator and arranger*	

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	and/or issues	*of the learning environment (well-organised, structured, planned learning activities, interactiveness, responsiveness to learning needs, clarity, emotional association or distance between lecturer / students; and the converse of these factors)*	
6	Discuss the reasons why you think these learning activities facilitated by the lecturer worked or did not work for you	*(retention of information, understanding of the topic, motivation to learn more about the topic, able to understand unresolved feelings evoked by the topic; and the converse of these factors)*	
7	Discuss the reasons why you think the lecturing style of the lecturer worked or did not work for you in facilitating topics of this nature	(*retention of information, understanding of the topic, motivation to learn more about the topic, able to understand unresolved feelings evoked by the topic; and the converse of these factors)*	
8	What would you have preferred the lecturer rather to have done in terms of learning activities and lecturing style	*(constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks; positive / motivating lecturing style)*	

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ANNEXURE G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL WORK STAFF MEMBERS

The following questions will be included in the interview schedule:

- Describe the kinds of circumstances that you were aware of that third year students had experienced (*These incidents could include the following: physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been - substance abusers, involved in criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or in poverty-stricken circumstances and/or surroundings)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe the teaching and learning activities that you used to facilitate and engage participation around topics on family life, child and youth experiences, as well as family and social issues (*constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks)*

  (CHAPTER 2: Teaching and learning within the context of OBE in higher education)
  (CHAPTER 3: Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education)

- Describe the reaction or responses of students during teaching and learning activities on discussions or topics on family life, child and youth experiences, as well as family and social issues which as lecturer you were aware may be similar to their own circumstances *(angry or emotional outburst, passive and withdrawn, inattentiveness, no effect)*

  (CHAPTER 4: Adverse childhood experiences: coping strategies and professional learning)

- Describe how as lecturers you would have wanted to facilitate and design the teaching and learning activities in retrospect (*constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks)*

  (CHAPTER 2: Teaching and learning within the context of OBE in higher education)
  (CHAPTER 3: Teaching and learning peculiar to social work education)

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF PARTICIPANTS

STAFF PARTICIPANT:	1	2	**DATE OF INTERVIEW**	____ AUGUST 2013

	QUESTION	**POSSIBLE RESPONSES / POINTERS**	**OBSERVATIONS / NOTES**
1	**Describe the kinds of circumstances** that you were aware of that third year students had experienced	*These incidents could include the following: physical abuse / neglect; emotional abuse / neglect; exploitation; sexual abuse; rape; abandonment; absent caregivers; caregivers who are / have been - substance abusers, involved in criminal activities, mentally ill, suicidal (attempts / ideation), and/or in poverty-stricken circumstances and/or surroundings*	
2	Describe **the kinds of behavioural and emotional reactions** of the students generally that concerned or alerted you	*Angry, aggression towards other students, upset, sadness, absenteeism, inappropriate behaviour in client relationship (practicum)*	
3	**What knowledge is useful** to have about the well-being of our students	*Aspects regarding their physical and emotional well being*	
4	**Describe the teaching and learning activities that you used** to facilitate and engage participation around topics on family life, child and youth experiences, as well as family and social issues	*constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks*	
5	**Describe the reaction or responses of students during teaching and learning activities** on discussions or topics on family life, child and youth experiences, as well as family and social issues which as teaching facilitator you were aware may be similar to their own circumstances	*angry or emotional outburst, passive and withdrawn, inattentiveness, no effect; generally inappropriate behaviour in class*	
6	**Describe how you would usually manage the student**'s behaviour and/or emotions whether in class or in consultation	*Debriefing, using breaks, making consultation available*	
7	**Describe how as lecturers you would have wanted to facilitate and design** the teaching and learning activities in retrospect so that students can contribute to a level of well-being and future success	*constructivist teaching methods, learning styles, scaffolding tasks, debriefing, reflective tasks*	

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ANNEXURE H

CODE BOOK FOR THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Code	Predefined (PC) and emergent (EC) codes	Description of Code	Keywords and/or phrases (quotes)
CODES REGARDING ACES OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS			
THEME 1. CHILDHOOD ABUSES			
1.1 Emotional abuse			
(i) Using words	PC	Using words as verbal assault	*no-one would ever want you, you are a disgusting person, you will never be good enough for anybody*
(ii) Withholding love and affection	PC	Emotional rejection and reserve	*I would often imagine my mother looking at me as if she actually saw me as a person who just wants to be close to her*
1.2 Physical neglect, abuse and threats			
(i) Physical neglect	PC	Neglecting child's physical needs	*We more than once had to struggle to get food in our mouths.*
(ii) Physical attacks and threats	**PC**	Physical assault on the child	*he hit me and it was bleeding so that my hair was stuck on my head.*
(iii) Parentification	**EC**	Leaving children with adult responsibilities	*At that age (9 years) I could cook, clean, do the laundry, do my schoolwork and go to school the next day*
1.3 Sexual abuse			
(i) Intra-familial sexual abuse	**PC**	Sexual abuse by family members	*my brother who is 3 years older than me sexually abused me*
(ii) Corollary or secondary trauma	**PC**	The trauma produced by sexual abuse	*the shame has already instilled in me, because although I didn't want him to do this, my body reacted in a sexual way to his behavior.*
THEME 2: TROUBLED FAMILY LIFE			
2.1 Ineffectual caregiving provision			
(i) Emotionally distant and uncaring	PC	Parents rejecting behaviors	*even when we lived together in a house, he would still be emotionally absent*
(ii) Parental absences	EC	Parents not physically present in the upbringing of their children	*Sometimes we would not hear from her, we would not know where she is*
(iii) Unmet basic needs	PC	Parents not providing in the basic needs of their children	*There were times we would really truly have pap and just one onion and one tomato and we mix it with flour*
(iv) Left-behind children	EC	Children deserted and left in care of others	*we were left under the supervision of our elder sister*
2.2 Ineffectual role fulfilment of care-givers			
(i) Alcohol abuse	**PC**	Parents frequently abusing alcohol	*My father used to be an alcoholic for as long as I can remember.*
(ii) Parental behavior and lifestyle	**PC**	Negative lifestyle choices of parents	*there's usually like stories back home when a woman goes to Jo'burg that she goes to stay with other men and things like that*
(iii) Unemployment and financial support	**PC**	Parents who do not hold a job on a regular basis	*My mother and I were very poor because she was unemployed*

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(i) Poor communication	**PC**	Unclear and misunderstood verbal interactions amongst family members	*My family struggled to talk to each other and I think we never really could talk to each other*
(ii) Conflictual interactions	**PC**	Negative and sometimes aggressive interactions amongst family members	*There was constant fighting amongst my parents*
(iii) A fear environment	**PC**	Physical and emotional setting that produces feelings of fear and anxiety	*I became scared of my father's capabilities*
(iv) Unstable living arrangements	**PC**	Frequent moving and / or different carers	*We also moved around a lot which had a negative impact because we never seemed to find stability.*
(v) Death/loss of primary care-givers	**PC**	Death of parents or those designated as primary care-givers	*I struggled with assisting my mother going with her to the clinic to fetch the treatment*
(vi) Parental illness / disability	**PC**	Parents who are chronically ill or disabled that impacts on the family wellbeing	*When I was 11 years old, my father was murdered by his girlfriend's brother*
2.4 Poor marital relationships			
(i) Intimate partner violence	PC	Aggressive and violent acts of partners upon one another	*my dad used to hit my mom and how he on three occasions nearly killed her in front of me.*
(ii) Extra-marital affairs	**PC**	One or both parents conducting intimate relationships outside of the marriage	*He (father) was having an affair or a few affairs outside of their marriage*
(iii) Parental break-ups	**PC**	Disrupted or terminated relationships between care-givers	*After their divorce, my father remained in Cape Town and my mother left*
THEME 3: IMPACT OF ACEs ON PARTICIPANTS			
3.1 Internalising behaviors			
(i) Inward feelings and reactions	EC	Internal emotions, feelings and reactions	*I just wished that my life could end. I constantly had thoughts of committing suicide*
(ii) Outward feelings and reactions	**EC**	Internal feelings and reactions outwardly displayed	*I used to hate my stepfather before he came into our family*
(iii) Socio-emotional isolation	**EC**	Emotional reserve and withdrawal from social interactions	*I kept my distance and did not allow anyone to become close to me*
(iv) Emotional insecurity	**EC**	Emotional uncertainties and anxieties	*I felt like I was pretending the whole time … To be someone I'm not.*
3.2 Extermalisingbehaviour			
(i) Behavioral and physical reactions	**EC**	Negative and acting out behavior	*I drank an overdose of tablets to end my life.*
(ii) Rebellious behaviour	**EC**	Openly flouting and disobeying conventions and rules	*I started to identify with the wrong peers*
(iii) Poor judgment and choices	**EC**	Making ill-conceived choices and decisions	*but I wanted to get married because I wanted to get out*
(iv) Dropping out / losing focus	**EC**	Irregular and/or terminating school attendance	*I dropped out in grade eleven when I fell pregnant with my daughter.*
3.3 Low self-esteem			
(i) Socially shy and inhibited	**EC**	Lack of confidence in social settings	*I could never speak out for myself.*
(ii) Poor self-efficacy	**EC**	Lack of belief in	*I felt isolated, useless and a person*

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		competencies	*of low importance*
3.4 Enduring consequences			
(i) Disrupted family life and roles	**EC**	Unstable and chaotic family functioning and wellbeing	*Due to our father's death my brother ended up in jail because of stealing some food*
(ii) Forced maturity and self-reliance	**EC**	Parentification compelling children to grow up fast	*I learnt not to rely much on others*
(iii) Relating to men and gender	**EC**	Fear and distrust of men	*I find it difficult to trust males*
3.5 Emotional aftermath			
(i) Mothers are emotional triggers	**EC**	Reflecting on their mothers are emotionally difficult	*... another thing that makes me emotional when I think about it, I don't tell her every day how much I appreciate what she's done for us*
(ii) Crying in interview	**EC**	Participants frequently showed emotion during interviews	*everything that I am now I have to like thank my mother because she's been amazing for me, she's been there for me*
3.6 Physical effects and remedies			
(i) Physical effects	**EC**	The physical after-effects of ACEs	*...the student related that she's getting headaches now, frequent headaches*
(ii) Using medication	**EC**	Use of medication to alleviate the physical effects	*I have a number of students who have disclosed that they are on anti-depressants*
(iii) Spiritual and cultural intervention	**EC**	Turning to religion and culture for help	*...she (student) was told by her paternal family that her family should be doing some ritual in order to rid her of this what she called psychological or mental situation*
THEME 4: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH			
4.1 Positive characteristics and personal traits			
(i) Personal growth	EC	Emotional maturation	*This incident moulded me to be a matured, broad minded*
(ii) Independence	**EC**	Self-sufficiency and self-determining	*I have realized that the experience has made me an independent person*
(iii) Being strong and resilient	**EC**	To be able to endure and overcome difficulties	*handled my coming out as a lesbian.*
(iv) Relating to others	**EC**	To be able to positively interact and associate with others	*it influenced me in the manner which pushed me to study social work because I want to assist families going through similar circumstances which I did*
4.2 Life lessons			
(i) Personal beliefs	**EC**	A value system to base actions and decisions on	*I would understand their situations and will not be judgemental or discriminating*
(ii) Emotional maturity	**EC**	Emotional maturity and independence	*I have learnt that the experiences that have occurred in my life were my lessons about how harsh life can be and they made me strong as I am today.*
(iii) Valuing family and culture	**EC**	Appreciating the role of family and culture in life	*I believe that family is the most important source of support and communication.*
(iv) Strong religious beliefs	**EC**	Having firm religious beliefs and values	*I changed as a person because I started going back to church where I learnt more about forgiveness.*

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CODES REGARDING THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF ACES ON STUDENT LEARNING			
THEME 1: STUDENTS' PROFILE AND CONSTRAINTS			
1.1 Student learning profile			
(i) Learning style	**EC**	Personal characteristics of the learner	*I know of the type of student that we have and that issues might come up and that it would be difficult to contain*
(ii) Curriculum inhibitors	**EC**	Class realities and physical settings that impact on quality of the learning	*…the class size then often I think the student would sort of diffuse it into that big number*
(iii) Avoidant learning style	**EC**	Procrastination and delay in meeting learning tasks	*a few students that has been absent from the agency and lab sessions and supervision*
1.2 Students' emotional profile			
(i) Students' emotional make-up	**EC**	The emotions and feelings of students	*I'm concerned about having a student in third year that according to a qualified, experienced social worker is very unstable*
(ii) Debriefing and advice-seeking	**EC**	The need of students to seek guidance and support	*There's a sense that they do trust us and one must maybe look at what is it about the staff that makes you want to disclose to them and want to talk to them*
(iii) Reasons for doing social work	**EC**	The motivation and impetus for studying social work	*a lot of our students have huge emotional issues and ì think that is maybe also something that attracts them to social work.*
THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY			
2.1 Teaching strategies and methods used			
(i) Participatory teaching methods	**EC**	Teaching methods focusing on active engagement and collaboration of students	*I enjoyed that there was a video just overall, would always make it up in case studies or lectures so there was different components*
(ii) Didactic methods	**EC**	Traditional and transmission type teaching where students are passive.	*you might not be interested a lot in what the PowerPoint says*
2.2 Students' perceptions of Learning benefits			
(i) Social learning benefits	**EC**	Value derived from group learning	*…uses case studies a lot in discussion, I think that helps a lot actually because people learn from other people.*
(ii) Intellectual learning benefits	**EC**	Intellectual value derived from learning	*those discussions helps me to understand, helps me to give me an inside to understand all those issues*
(iii) Emotional learning benefits	**EC**	Personal and transformative benefits from learning	*(role play) help you to confront those feelings you have*
2.3 Professional needs and student profile			
(i) Influence of social work values	**EC**	The disjuncture between social work values and traditional values of students	*we would go to the conversation about non-discrimination and so on but it's a struggle for them*
(ii) Intervening with issues similar to students' own	**EC**	Difficulties distancing from clients with similar issues	*students ask not to be placed at certain placements because of their personal experiences with that issue*

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THEME 3: VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
2.1 Emotions and professional learning			
(i) Distress and tearfulness	**EC**	Emotional outbursts of students in class context	*I feel emotionally, due to the fact that most of the things that we learn are the things that happened to my family.*
(ii) Negative feelings	**EC**	Showing anger, resentment and bitterness	*when I start feeling angry and sad and let down is when I have to do an exercise like this*
(iii) Struggling emotions	**EC**	Fluctuating emotions	*I feel like breaking down and tell the lecturer to stop teaching*
(iv) Rational reactions	**EC**	Intellectualising the issue	*theory has assisted me to understand my situation*
2.2 Emotions and client engagement			
(i) Ability to understand and relate	**EC**	Heightened empathy and rapport	*I can relate better to them, because I exactly understand what they are going through.*
(ii) Bias and partiality	**EC**	Showing subjectivity towards particular clients	*how does he become neutral when he feels this way towards men. This is something that the student knows that he should work on solving.*
THEME 4: LECTURER'S CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS			
4.1 Lecturer's immediacy behavior			
(i) Lecturer presence	**EC**	Lecturers engagement and interaction with students in class	*always interacting and engaging with the student, eye contact, body language you can see*
(ii) Lecturer credibility	**EC**	Lecturers trustworthiness and authenticity felt by students	*I know that I can trust you so anything that is inside being able to talk about it*
(iii) Affirming behavior	**EC**	Lecturers nurturance and affirmation of students	*social work lectures do motivate me and do encourage me*
4.2 Class organisation and structure			
(i) Class atmosphere	**EC**	Ambience and mood of class environment	*I think everyone felt like if you had something to say then you are able to, you are given the floor to say it*
(ii) Structure of lecture	**EC**	Order and organisation of learning facilitation	*They make them clear so each and every lecture that I come out I do understand*
CODES REGARDING PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING			
THEME 1: TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES			
1.1 Include more participatory learning methods and activities	**EC**	Encouraging student engagement and interaction in learning activities	*there should be like more exercises on more stuff like the reflective summary*
1.2 Add and elaborate on real-world issues that students face	**EC**	Use the reality of people's struggles as basis for learning	*elaborate more that these things these are things that are real, these are the things that we face and that you should expect in the future*
THEME 2: LECTURER IMMEDIACY BEHAVIORS			
2.1 Encourage student self-disclosure	**EC**	Use students' own issues relevant to the topic	*you could encourage people to talk more in class, to share their stories*
2.2 Respond to students' emotional reactions	**EC**	Have response plan to students' emotions in class	*you know you must have a back-up plan if someone gets emotional, what am I going to do.*
2.3 Create debriefing opportunities	**EC**	Have debriefing plan	*we should have had a space where we could have discussed it (the movie) afterwards*

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THEME 3: FIELDWORK AND PLACEMENT LEARNING			
3.1 Include orientation sessions	**EC**	Plan briefing and induction training sessions	*focus a bit more on their orientation to the fieldwork placement instead of maybe having one session*
3.2 Incorporate preparation for practicum	**EC**	Structured, relevant training prior to placements	*preparing them for practise, again reflecting on self and what are they bringing and what will they be adding to*
3.3 Ensure efficient fieldwork coordination and supervision	**EC**	Structured fieldwork organisation and supervision to students	*that we have a full-time supervisor that can go to the agency.*
3.4 Incorporate fieldwork educational approaches	**EC**	Education theory to underpin fieldwork training	*I think it is more student-centred …. we should really hone in on that approach to supervision and to our curriculum.*
3.5 Teach students self-assessment of strengths	**EC**	Students assess competencies independently	*students write for us that will go onto their personal file, what are my strengths and it comes from them.*
3.6 Focus on mindfulness	**EC**	Self-awareness training	*– but having to accept their past and what has happened and having tools to manage that past*

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ANNEXURE I
MEMBER CHECKING OF RESEARCH FINDINGS OF CHAPTERS 6 AND 7

Dear Participant

Member checking was selected by the researcher as one way to enhance insight and comprehension by asking the participants if the themes appear to be accurate and in this way help to support research findings[2]. Members can be asked to check for correctness and if the intention of participant responses had been captured[3].

Your member checking role:

Your role as a participant in this research is to check if you think that the themes, sub-themes and categories generated by the data are relevant in terms of the input that you provided. Take note, not all would be applicable to you as the findings contain the narratives of 20 reflective exercises, 10 individual interviews (students) and two interviews (staff participants). You have to check if you are able to see relevant aspects of your own narrative in the findings.

Please respond to me whether you **CONFIRM and ENDORSE** (that is you confirm / agree that the themes, sub-themes and categories are largely characteristic of the narratives you have provided) or **NEGATE OR CONTRADICT** (there is little or no similarity or correlation with the narratives you have provided). In the latter please provide reasons so that I can go recheck with the original transcriptions.

Please note further that the themes, sub-themes and categories are confidential and subject to further editing and amendments and thus remain the intellectual property of the researcher and cannot be reproduced or disseminated at this time.

THANK YOU for your kind cooperation. It is very much appreciated by me.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING AND EMAIL THIS PAGE BACK TO ME.
[Tick the relevant box.]

STUDENT PARTICIPANT	
STAFF PARTICIPANT	
I hereby **CONFIRM and ENDORSE** (that is I confirm / agree that the themes, sub-themes and categories are largely characteristic of the narratives I have provided to the researcher) **OR**	
I hereby **NEGATE OR CONTRADICT** (there is little or no similarity or correlation with the narratives I have provided to the researcher)	

THANK YOU.

[2] Barusch, Gringeri and George, 2011.

[3] Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2007. *The Practice of Social Research* (SA Edition). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

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ANNEXURE J
REFLEXIVITY REPORT: GLYNNIS ZENA DYKES

This reflexive report is an endeavour to provide credence to the principle of transparency to expose details about myself that would otherwise be hidden. This task links with the methods of validation in qualitative research. I had selected researcher reflexivity to consider how my personal and socio-cultural world may affect the research process. The object is to especially uncover any hidden bias, partialities and assumptions to determine the extent of influence and whether the data is in jeopardy and therefore untrustworthy and invalid.

The context of the study from a personal viewpoint

For purposes of the study, I would be classified as a Coloured female from a working class background. My parents owned their own house in a working class suburb. I enjoyed stable family circumstances with both parents being gainfully employed in the formal sector (local government employees). Both parents reached high school. My father was an ambulance driver and my mother a qualified nursery school teacher. Both are now retired. I am the middle child of three female children. I have close relationships with my sisters and parents. My childhood was uneventful except when I reached high school and was catapulted into the school boycotts of 1976 and became more conscientised and engaged in the socio-political conditions under which we were all living.

I was the first family member to attain tertiary qualifications. I practiced as a social worker on the Cape Flats in Cape Town for 15 years covering all the major areas designated by the Group Areas Act of 1950 to be Coloured living areas. I was employed by the Provincial Administration as a social worker and probation officer and was exposed to all fields in social work.

I came to UWC in 2002 employed first as a Fieldwork Coordinator. By this time I had completed the Master's degree in social work (UWC). This was my first formal exposure to academic teaching responsibilities (hitherto had been exposed to providing training). My interest in students' socio-emotional difficulties and experiences was kindled when I gave the first year students an assignment entitled, "Who am I"? My perception was that their childhood adversities appeared to influence the professional learning context. I subsequently published two articles in accredited SA journals on the information that emerged from these assignments. I became deeply affected by the depth and extent of childhood adversities that the students experienced.

The context of UWC and students' profile

As an undergraduate social work student at UWC in 1981, I am a product of the said institution and have become very familiar with the ethos of the institution and its student profile. I am aware that students who attend UWC are often from impoverished communities and that students and their families experience dire financial constraints. I have often had students approach me for something to eat to ward off hunger. I admit that I am profoundly affected by these incidents and the plight of my students. They frequently talk to me about their personal difficulties and I have been privy to startling confessions that they have told to nobody else.

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My values and assumptions in the context of the study

* I value the role of family, of positive parenting and stable home circumstances in providing the optimal springboard for children to reach their potential.
* I value the richness and diversity that an extended family brings to the lives of children.
* I value these experiences because I enjoyed the stability and care of my attentive parents, my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and many cousins.
* These experiences and relationships with family and friends from all works of life contributed to my personality and character. I am able to see within myself and to reach outwards to other people.
* I am sensitive to, and mindful of, the needs of others. I have developed this through the awareness of the difference and diverse circumstances and experiences of others who have entered my life through the years. These experiences have been concretised by the professional practice of social work on the Cape Flats and later the experiences with my students.
* I relate strongly to my socio-cultural heritage consisting of being (compelled) into racially identifying myself as Coloured, being Christian, and living a Western lifestyle.

As a result of Apartheid legislation, most of my exposure personally and professionally has been within segregated boundaries along racial lines. Since employment at UWC in 2002 my professional boundaries were expanded to render a service to diverse groups in particular to Black students. Via my students I learnt the (ongoing) impact and legacy of Apartheid policies especially on the 'born-free' generation (those born after 1994). I am consistently evaluated by all my students as being fair and non-discriminatory.

Who am I in relation to the research findings?

Reflections on the individual interviews with students
▪ Some of the narratives were very emotional as they remembered the past, traumatic and sad memories. ▪ Most of the sadness emanated from their relationships with their parents. ▪ Ten interviews that were quite different but some very similar themes. ▪ Themes of neglect, abuse, abandonment, left-behind, and parentification. ▪ Feelings of loss, not belonging, unwanted and deep sadness.
Impact on me as researcher
▪ I was sensitive to the trauma, evident sadness, tears of my students. ▪ I felt very honoured to have heard their stories, and by their willingness to share what was clearly very painful and sad. ▪ I was confident in their honesty regarding the information that they shared. ▪ I was aware and felt humbled about their trust in confiding in me.

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Impact on the research process
▪ My personality and character enabled me to be attentive to the emotions of students' narratives but my social work professional experiences also taught me objectivity and distancing. ▪ I acknowledge the real or perceived power and authority inherent in my position as lecturer to student participants and that these perceptions may have inadvertently played a role in the research process. Power does play a role when the individual who is perceived to hold this power uses it routinely to characterise the lecturer-student relationship. It would be untrue to say that I do not use my position to enforce rules and requirements or even student conduct in keeping with social work curriculum and university prescriptions. Students are aware of this in my behavior towards them. My routine interaction with them though would be balanced with fairness and open-mindedness. Through many student evaluations these mentioned attributes are often repeated and would have carried over into the researcher-student participant encounters. ▪ The process between data collection and eventual analysis (for example coding and recoding into main themes, sub-themes and categories) helped me to distance myself from the narratives as personal to student participants and therefore meaningful as data and research findings. ▪ In this way I could position and reposition the data and findings into a coherent whole and contrast with extant literature without over-involvement with the data or findings.

Conclusion

My personal socio-emotional and cultural background and subjectivities did not influence the data and findings of the study. My professional social work training and professional experiences have prepared me to distance myself within a professional (and academic) context. These combined factors have enabled me to be sensitive to the nuances and sadness behind the words in the narratives.