THE EXPLORATION OF DEVELOPED METAPHORS OF SCHOOL COUNSELLORS-IN-TRAINING
AS A REFLECTION OF THEIR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.9. Summary

1.8. Demarcation of the Study

1.7. Ethical Adherence

1.6. Validity & Reliability

1.5. Research Design & Methodology

1.4. Purpose of the Study

1.3. Problem Statement

1.2. Background to the Problem

1.1. Introduction
1.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I introduce the reader to concepts pertaining to school counselling through the lens of personal and professional development. I will highlight the problem as well as the purpose of this research, which is to create a deeper understanding of the underlying knowledge base. I also explain the research approach which guided this research in my discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins this research.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

At the end of their training in 2009, students, who were doing a programme in school counselling at a university in Gauteng, submitted professional portfolios to illustrate their learning. This research inquiry focused on the metaphors developed in these portfolios in order to obtain insights into the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. Meeting the portfolio requirements meant that students had to call on their in-depth self-knowledge and reflective skills.

The school counsellors-in-training used metaphors in verbal or visual art representations as a reflective tool in these portfolios. These metaphors were used to transfer meaning from one object to another on the basis of a perceived similarity (Fritz in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). The value of metaphors is that they enrich the transfer of meaning which takes place (Smith, 2002). In this study, this transfer of meaning in these metaphors enabled me to explore the identity which was being created. Therefore, the importance of this research lies in what it reveals about the development of a professional identity as a counsellor during the training process (Du Preez & Roos, 2008).

Learning, in a school counselling context, refers to the personal and professional development of the student counsellors-in-training. This development was revealed in their exploration of their own selves, reflection, their supervision, their narratives and the use of metaphors to describe their journey within the programme. This personal and professional development was both a conscious and an unconscious part of the learning process. According to Seitz (2005), the consciousness deals with situations that require novel and non-stereotypical responses, while unconscious mechanisms deal with stereotypical behaviour. This unconscious learning, illustrated through the
developed metaphors and the visual representations of the school counsellors-in-training, revealed the conceptual structure of their thinking processes (Smith, 2002).

Learning, as a function and a result of thought, can be said to be guided by experience of exposure to different learning environments and opportunities. This thought process can be divided into four stages, incubation, insight, confirmation and verification (Wallas, 1926). The creative thought required for the development of metaphors similarly develops during these four stages. As the metaphor develops, thought and learning, develop too. In summary, thought leads to learning when the cognitive process is completed. This process is guided by experience, exposure and personal worldviews which influence every aspect of human learning. In the school counsellor field, as in the field of psychology, students learn through experience and operate at times by intuition during the learning process. Intuition can be seen at work in these same four stages: incubation where thought is initiated and kept for a period to ponder on, the application of insight; confirmation; and finally verification from other sources, such as the supervisors of the school counsellors in this study. In the case of unconscious metaphors, the incubation stage when unconscious ideas begin to form and the insight stage in which new ideas emerge into consciousness are particularly important (Seitz, 2005).

Bowers, Reggehr, Balthazard, and Parker (1990) investigated the role of intuition during insight and incubation. During incubation, or the initial guiding stage, students make use of unconscious perception, during which basic metaphorical processes are incorporated into their learning. During the insight stage, more advanced conceptual metaphor and analogical reasoning abilities intuitively emerge (Seitz, 2005). The strength of metaphors lie in their ability to form mental representations of objects, to integrate sensory and affective experiences and to form relational concepts (Seitz, 2005).

Because metaphor is a linguistic device that makes it possible to transfer properties from one concept to another (Scaruffi, 2001), it allows the student to express a lot, even when they start with very little. In this study, metaphors are not utilised only as a linguistic device, but also as a visual representation of learning and thought. Importantly, metaphors are ultimately based on our bodily experiences (Lakoff &
Johnson, 1980) and are therefore an intermediary between our conceptual representation of the world and our sensory experience of the world (Scaruffi, 2001). To sum up: students carry around, in their heads, a large array of concepts that govern their thought processes and everyday functioning (Brown, 2003). These concepts are linked to their thinking and learning, and ultimately influence how they make meaning. In the case of this research, school counsellors-in-training used metaphors to reflect their learning and meaning making experience.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Metaphors are used as a transfer of meaning from one object to another on the basis of a perceived similarity (Fritz in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). Metaphoric language can effectively communicate richness, and thus enhances the transference of meaning (Smith, 2002). Meaning here provides insights into the developing identity of school counsellors-in-training. This research studied the developed metaphors in the counselling practicum portfolio, in order to explore the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training and gain valuable insights into the development of their professional identity (Du Preez & Roos, 2008).

The transfer of meaning, made possible by the use of metaphors, aids the learning process. Metaphors reveal the conceptual structure of a speaker’s thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), or, in the case of this research, the visual representation showcases the thinking of the school counsellors-in-training and the learning which their practicum programme allowed them to experience. Scaruffi (2001) strengthens the argument for using metaphors by saying that the cognitive force of metaphors comes from a re-conceptualisation of information which has already been acquired about the world. The reconceptualising or re-organising of information leads to enhanced learning and influences the personal and professional development of learners in the field of school counselling.

Reflection, through creative metaphors, facilitates self-insight and self-awareness and can be regarded as a tool to promote the process of continuous personal and professional development (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2003). Johns (1999) posits the view that the practitioner comes to understand the power perspectives within a situation through reflection, which makes it possible to respond appropriately. The
concomitant empowerment thus leads to the growth or development of the personal and professional qualities of school counsellors-in-training. The need for this personal and professional development is highlighted in a study of school counselling done by Borders (2002). External factors such as shifting educational philosophies, social movements, economic swings, and federal legislation are mentioned as driving forces of change for the needs and expectations of school counsellors.

Scaruffi (2001) argues that the literature on metaphors reveals that they are cognitive phenomena that involve concepts. Lakoff (1987) makes a similar point, stating that metaphor can be used for reasoning and to create meaning in the mind of the thinker, not in the world. This meaning making process aids the learning process since knowledge is expanded. My research question therefore is: **What do the developed metaphors of school counsellors-in-training reflect about their personal and professional development?**

When considering this question, I utilised transformational learning theory as my central theory and golden thread to guide this study. Transformative or transformational learning is meaningful, reflective, idiosyncratic or creative in what learning is restructured by the student through evidence of new learning that transforms current understandings in the reflective process (Moon, 2004). The lived experiences of students are therefore significant. This study incorporates the sharing of these experiences in the developed learning portfolio. Through transformational learning, the personal and professional development of school counsellors in training was considered.

Marini and Genereux (1995) suggested three important conditions that influence transfer: features of the task, features of the learner, and features of the organisation and social context. In my research, the task of the school counsellors’ training programme was studied along with personal attributes of the learner in making meaning of their experiences within a university in Gauteng and the practical training setting that they engage in. I focused on the metaphors used in the developed learning portfolios of school counsellors-in-training. Through creative construction of metaphors as an aid during their journey of training, counsellors could solve new problems and use their skills creatively. Furthermore, counsellors - through clear
instructions and guidance - had the opportunity to learn (Yates, 2005). Through exploring this creativity in the learning process, personal learning styles became evident, as did personal and professional development. Creativity is the ability to produce work that is both original and appropriate (Sternberg, 1999). The portfolios produced by the school counsellor-in-training are original and appropriate in the sense that they present their unique views and learning, using creative scrapbooking methods. Lubart and Sternberg (1999) identified six resources of creativity – intellectual processes, knowledge, intellectual styles, personality, motivation and environmental context (Smith, Ward & Finke, 1995).

The use of metaphors was accompanied by the use of reflection. Reflection is important because it helps those in learning and professional situations to make sense of an area of human functioning (Moon, 1999). By examining the developed metaphors, research could be conducted into the constructed meanings of the counSELLlers in relation to the future self and identity (Orton, 1997). Identity of school counSELLors is closely related to the development of a professional identity, as a counSELLor, during the training process (Du Preez & Roos, 2008). The greater awareness of self which results from exploring identity enhances personal and professional development.

1.4. PURPOSE OF STUDY
During the 2009 examinations after the practicum had ended, students submitted a professional development portfolio as evidence of their personal and professional development. Most students used metaphors. Therefore, this research was based on the personal and professional development that these metaphors illustrated and reflected.

Through the analysis of themes that emerged from the use of metaphors in the school counSELLors’ professional development portfolios, I hoped to find ways of complementing the training of school counSELLors and also to add to the body of knowledge of Educational Psychology and the training of school counSELLors.
1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
In this section, I will describe the methods and approaches used in this qualitative research. This kind of research makes it possible to gain richly descriptive information concerning participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that qualitative research has a strong potential for revealing complexity through descriptions nested in a context.

1.5.1. Methodology
Qualitative research was chosen because of its versatility, the sensitivity of its research tools, the variety of techniques that one can employ and the authenticity of the results that one can produce. Phenomenological research design best suited this study as phenomenology deals with questions pertaining to personal experience (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). It made it possible to gather rich information on the participants’ relationship with their training, colleagues and support structures. As Flood (2010) explains, phenomenology is an interpretive, qualitative form of research which seeks to study phenomena that are perceived or experienced. Thorne (1991) takes a similar view. He sees phenomenology as a philosophic attitude and research approach, with its primary position being that the most basic human truths are accessible only through inner subjectivity, and that the person is integral to the environment.

1.5.2. Participants
Sampling was purposive therefore participants included were people of interest – any who do not suit the purpose were excluded (Straker, 2008). Thus, three participants were approached and asked if I could use their portfolios in my research. Their portfolios and artefacts, semi-structured interviews, photographs and other documentation were used.

A sample of students from the BEd Honours Educational Psychology programme at a university in Gauteng were approached in order to gather data and gain personal insight into the use of metaphors in their personal and professional development. Students completed a practicum of 6 months duration in schools as part of the requirements for completion of the degree in order to register as a counsellor after passing the Board Examination. During this period, students were expected to
assess and counsel learners and provide teacher, learner, parent and community support. This experience provided school counsellors with authentic education and training situations while students worked under the supervision of a site supervisor as well as a registered educational psychologist at the university. Students were able to learn on site when situations arose for which their training had not yet prepared them (Studer & Quigney, 2004).

Through this learning, as well as the reflective process used, students were able to develop both their personal and professional identities. Du Preez and Roos (2008) state that developing a professional identity is of the utmost importance in the training process of the students, as this development of professional identity influences the personal development, as well as the learning, that students experience during their training. The participants in this study are discussed in further depth in Chapter Three.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews. These are designed to have a number of questions prepared in advance. The questions I prepared were designed to be sufficiently open. Follow-up questions could not be planned in advance, but were improvised in a careful and theorised way, in relation to participant response (Wengraf, 2001). The semi-structured interviews were an appropriate phenomenological data collection method in that the interview was reflective (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). Through this reflective process, meaning was created as a result of co-creation by the researcher and the participant (Flood, 2010), rather than simply the subjective interpretation of the researcher. The methods I chose provided insight into participants’ personal and professional development. The personal accounts provided by participants eliminated a degree of researcher bias and misinterpretation, thus allowing for valid results. Further explanation of this will be provided in Chapter 3.

Data analysis used phenomenological methods. An analysis of the structure of a phenomenon in context is one of the outcomes of phenomenological research (Flood, 2010). Thus, through careful consideration of participants’ responses during semi-structured interviews and through analysis of the portfolios and artefacts, photographs and documentation, data was enriched through the personal reflection
on their creative metaphors. In Flood’s (2010) study, the method of analysis aims at eliciting meanings shared between researcher and participant.

1.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Patton (2002) takes the view that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should take into account when designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. Making sure that this qualitative research was valid was challenging because of the necessity to incorporate rigour and subjectivity as well as creativity into the scientific process (Johnson, 1999). Subjectivity when studying the creative metaphors was imperative so as not to lose the meaning each participant portrayed through this visual representation. Golafshani (2003) study makes it clear that validity, reliability and trustworthiness go hand-in-hand as validity and reliability are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality of the study. Through clear adherence to the guidelines for qualitative research, I was able to meet the necessary demands. More detail on how this was done will be provided in Chapter 3.

1.7. ETHICAL ADHERENCE

Ethical behaviour is central to the practice of Counselling and Psychology. A registered counsellor, practising within the scope of practice defined by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), has to meet stringent ethical requirements. The counsellor is ethically bound to have a thorough knowledge of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board of Psychology, and to conduct psychological practice and research in accordance with guidelines for professional practice of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology, and possess thorough knowledge of relevant legislative framework which impacts on psychological practice and research (HPCSA Form 224, 2008). Within this framework, a registered counsellor’s scope of practice is defined as being involved in assessment and intervention in order to optimise functioning in the broad context of learning and development. As a researcher in the field of psychology, I had to be aware of the professional ethics that school counsellors-in-training should adhere to throughout their training and learning.
Both societal norms and standards of accepted practice were always taken into account when conducting research on persons where a degree of impact (whether positive or negative) could occur. This required that great care on my part to behave ethically and not to overstep the boundaries in my search for answers to the research question.

All researchers at this university have to obtain ethical clearance from the Ethics Board of the University of Johannesburg. In this research, the participation of students was entirely voluntary. They were asked to sign an informed consent form in which it was made clear that their involvement in this research was voluntary and that there would not be any monetary gain. It was made completely clear to them that they were free to withdraw from the research at any point without penalty. The research process and its goals were also made clear to participants. This is elaborated on in Chapter Three.

1.8. **DEMARcation OF THE STUDY**

The chapters for this study have been arranged in the following order:

Chapter One provides an overview of the study, where the background to the study, including my theoretical framework, is introduced. The research design and methodology are described briefly, and will be elaborated on further in Chapter Three. This chapter ends with a short discussion of the reliability and validity of this study, and a brief overview of the ethics involved with this study.

Chapter Two provides an in-depth discussion of the literature and theories that have guided this research. Transformational learning theory is discussed in relation to metaphors and reflection, which form main points in this study.

Chapter Three elaborates on the research design and methodology introduced in Chapter One. It includes a detailed discussion of the data generation and analysis procedures which I followed. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the themes that emerged from this research.
Finally, Chapter Four serves as a conclusion for this study. A brief overview of this research study is provided, and the limitations and strengths of the study are also discussed. Recommendations for further research are also provided.

1.9. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the background to the research and the problem which motivated this research were discussed. The chapter also touches on ethics, validity and reliability and the participants that were included. These aspects will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. An introduction to the theories informing this research, as well as the chosen research methodology and design, was provided in order to orientate the reader.

Chapter 2 will explore learning, as related to the personal and professional development of the student counsellors-in-training, which results from the exploration of their own selves, their reflections, supervision and narratives, as well as, the use of metaphors within the programme.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.7 Summary

2.6 Metaphors for Personal & Professional Development

2.5 Facilitating Personal & Personal Development through Reflection

2.4 Learning Portfolios

2.3 School Counsellors-in-training

2.2 Transformational Theory

2.1 Introduction
2.60 INTRODUCTION
This study, which looked at the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, used metaphors as a tool for reflection, learning and development. It is important to begin this chapter by acknowledging the South African context in which training occurs. Accordingly, the contextual backgrounds or the social, cultural and historical experiences (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002) of counsellors-in-training are given attention. Holmes (2006) supports the need for professionals working in psychological services to create a collaborative, as well as a preventative and health-promoting model of practice which supports school change, community development, and social change. School counsellors play an integral role in the lives of learners because of the various forms of counselling they offer, the psycho-educational assessments they do and the learning support they offer. In our dynamic and diverse South African context, counsellors need ongoing education and training on issues and laws related to the work they do (Studer & Quigney, 2004) so they continue to develop personally and professionally. Du Preez and Roos (2008) thus highlight the urgent need for trained professionals in the changing South African socio-cultural context.

2.61 TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Transformational learning occurs when learning in one context enhances related performance in another setting (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). According to Genereuz (1995), transfer of learning requires three important conditions: these are features of the task, features of the learner, and features of the organisation and social context. As is the case with all personal and professional development facilitation, supervisors need to help school counsellors-in-training understand the tasks they undertake in the various social contexts in which their practicum takes place. Students embark on a journey of understanding and learning the benefits of their role to the individuals concerned. These impact on how the insights they have gained should inform their practice in various learning contexts. Students also need to be aware of the similarity of the tasks they undertake in the learning setting to those in the setting they will enter into once they have qualified and registered (Harris, Lowery-Moore & Farrow, 2008). Through engagement in learning in their practicum settings, school counsellors-in-training are provided with multiple opportunities to integrate theory and
practice and thus apply their training (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). During the practicum, counsellors-in-training are able to make meaning related to the tasks they perform and learn from them these experiences and their reflections on them.

Perkins and Salomon (1992) highlight the ability of the learner to understand how individuals are able to incorporate change into their personal and professional lives. It is through this change that learning occurs. They also make the point that reflection aids understanding. In the light of this, I explored the use of reflective metaphors as a means of enhancing personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. Another key factor in enhancing personal and professional development is the learner's attitude (Harris, Lowery-Moore & Farrow, 2008). The final factor highlighted is features of the organisation and the social context, including the level of workplace collaboration and the external economic or political factors that may be present in a particular context (Barnett, 2005; Caffarella, 2002). These features result in the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training through their engagement in learning throughout their training process. By taking account of these factors, transformational learning is facilitated. This allows the counsellors-in-training to engage with their experiences and create shared meaning as part of the learning process.

The concept of transfer of learning theory is closely linked to transformative theory, which has gained prominence in recent times. The shift in the education literature from “what we know” to “how we know” (Baumgartner, 2003) gives considerable attention to Mezirow (1997, 2000). In his transformative theory, Mezirow (1997) defines learning as a social process using prior interpretation to understand a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in guiding future action. In considering meaning-making structures, Mezirow highlights two dimensions, namely meaning perspectives and meaning schemes. In understanding these two dimensions, Barkhuizen and Gravett (2001) describe meaning-making perspectives as habits of the mind or a general frame of reference, and meaning schemes as points of view which people use in their thought, and, consequently, their learning processes. Meaning perspectives are mostly pre-rational and unarticulated presuppositions (Mezirow, 1991). Meaning processes can be problematic when predetermined thoughts and ideas, created without connection to current events, are
applied to current situations and experiences. This means that all the attributes of the current experience are not considered and thus rational thought is not related to the learning processes.

Transformative learning differs from other forms of learning in that transformative learning involves a re-interpretation of one’s assumptions, beliefs and presuppositions that inform one’s meaning schemes and perspectives (Barkhuizen & Gravett, 2001). Through this reinterpretation process, one engages in reflection in order to assess one’s assumptions, beliefs and thinking. This process is linked to the core process of reflection which is thinking that is focused, intentional, and purposefully directed, and aimed at the deepening of understanding that will inform further thought and informed action (Gravett & De Beer, 2010). Thus transformative theory emphasises rational thought and reflection. This recursive process of reinterpretation is depicted through a diagrammatical representation in Figure 2.1, of Mezirow’s ten step process in transformative theory.

**Figure 2.1: Mezirow’s Ten Step Recursive Process of Thought & Reflection (1997)**
In understanding and making meaning of events and experiences in the school counsellors’ training, I applied Mezirow’s ten step recursive process (see Chapter three). In order to make meaning, school counsellors-in-training need to have a clear understanding of their own assumptions about the world. They also need to know that they might need to revise these after exploring their old belief systems, and then develop a new belief system with which to interact with the world. An important intermediate step between this assessment and revision is the realisation, as well as the internalisation of this realisation, that others have gone through what might be felt now by the reflective individual. For instance, all humans experience fear, anger, guilt or even shame about their reactions to situations, events or thoughts.

One can then commence with planning a course of action while gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to implement new plans. Individuals need to try out new roles so they can see which roles fit or work best in the situations they encounter and learn from. This requires becoming confident about change. Finally, individuals can re-integrate themselves into their lives and training situations, based on a new perspective developed through this recursive process. As individuals progress through their programmes, they are quite likely to find themselves in similar fear-evoking dilemmas. Mezirow’s rationally devised discourse guides individuals towards becoming reflective practitioners with a new way of seeing experiences. The result is an enhanced personal capacity and a deepened sense of social justice (Harris, Lowery-Moore & Farrow, 2008). Personal and professional development can thus be facilitated by means of Mezirow’s ten step process.

### 2.3 SCHOOL COUNSELLORS-IN-TRAINING

At the end of 2009, school counsellors at a university in Gauteng, submitted professional portfolios to illustrate their learning. The training of school counsellors entails development on both personal and professional levels since practice in school communities requires them to act as mediators between teachers and learners, and the school and parents. Furthermore, counsellors’ roles involve advising teachers on effective management of learners with learning difficulties and special needs; or counselling the parents of these children; and conducting training sessions for teachers to help them manage different classroom situations effectively (Mägi & Kikas, 2009). Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz and Van der Westhuizen (2011)
describe professional preparation programmes, such as the programme in which the school counsellors-in-training were involved, in which there were opportunities for participants to construct knowledge in community with others. This was not only to gain theoretical knowledge relevant to professional practice, but also for the sake of personal development.

In order to adhere to the demands on school counsellors-in-training, in-depth self-knowledge and reflective skills are required to make meaning of learning and experiences. The meaning-making process linked to transformational learning ideals. Learning within this context entails interfacing with the ‘unfamiliar’, a process which challenges students both culturally and personally (Eagle, Haynes & Long, 2007). These reflective skills are demonstrated through the participants’ use of reflective metaphors to make personal and professional meaning when they reflect on their learning experiences during their training programme. In this study, these metaphors were analysed so that I could explore the participants’ meaning-making. In order to make sense of the research topic, I reviewed the literature on reflection, specifically on metaphors that relate to personal and professional development. The importance of this research is that it provides insights into development of a professional identity as a school counsellor-in-training during the training process participants were enrolled in (Du Preez & Roos, 2008). As metaphors are used as a transfer of meaning from one object to another on the basis of a perceived similarity (Fritz in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006), the metaphors can be integrated into reflection in order to create a deeper understanding of the personal experiences of the research participants. This, in turn, can lead to greater understanding of the personal and professional development of the participants concerned.

2.3.1 School Counsellors in South Africa

The category of registered counsellor was introduced by the Board of Psychology in South Africa in 2003 (Abel & Louw, 2009). This registration category was created in response to the need to make basic primary psychological counselling services available to the previously disadvantaged communities of South Africa (Abel & Louw, 2009). As South Africa is a developing country, many health, social and economic challenges are faced daily, therefore it is important to clarify the role that counsellors play professionally within the greater South African context. Elkonin and Sandison
(2006) provide evidence that health services in general, and psychological services in particular, are erratic and under-resourced. Thus there is an increasing need for school counsellors. School counsellors play an integral role in the educational lives of learners. They not only support students, but also provide support for families and develop support structures for learners. These include teachers and staff, and members of the community (Studer & Quigney, 2004). Therefore they need to be actively involved in various facets of specialized programming, including referral, identification, multi-disciplinary teams, consultation, counselling learners, and child advocacy (Bowen & Glenn, 1998).

The need for the personal and professional development of school counsellors is highlighted in Borders (2002). Here external factors such as shifting educational philosophies, social movements, economic swings, and federal legislation are mentioned as a driving change in the needs and expectations of school counsellors. In order to understand the shifting educational philosophies, the historical South African educational system is outlined. Here I draw on the information John Clerk (2011), a contributor to the rewriting of the education system in the Central Gauteng region of South Africa, gave during an interview. Prior to 1994 the NATED 550 syllabus was used in schools. This system was characterised by clearly defined knowledge-based subject matter and assessed almost exclusively using examinations. Pupils with good memories and effective examination techniques tended to excel. This curriculum was identical for all schools. There were national syllabi for the five main subjects – First Language (English or Afrikaans), Second Language (English or Afrikaans), Mathematics, Science, and Biology. Next the C2005 curriculum or the OBE Iteration 1 was piloted in 1997 and implemented in 1999. This system gave schools and individual teachers the right to develop appropriate curricula that suited their learning environment. The South African version of OBE (the underlying philosophy behind South Africa's Curriculum 2005), points to a variety of concepts like contextualised learning, student-centred, collaborative and interactive learning, critical thinking skills and problem-solving, self-empowerment, integrated skills, reflexive competence and the processes of learning (Costandius, 2006). The weakness of this model of education was that there were not enough guidelines to build a credible and measurable education system. Thereafter the Revised National Curriculum Statement was introduced in 2002. Here
C2005 was strengthened and streamlined (DoE, 2002). Confusion over the assessment strategy, coupled with changing management personnel at departmental level, resulted in poor implementation. Currently, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is being developed and will be implemented in 2012 (Clerk, 2011). Obviously, there are no studies yet on the effect of this new curriculum on schools, educators, learners, parents and school counsellors-in-training. School counsellors-in-training need to understand the development and history of curriculum growth and apply their insights. In order to gain the necessary skills for learning support and educational interventions, school counsellors-in-training require a thorough understanding of educational practice within the environment in which they work. Through application of this knowledge, effective interventions can be carried out within the system.

School counsellors-in-training also need to understand the effect of economic swings. The current recession in the South African economy means that some parents who lost their employment, or were without jobs, have been unable to find new employment. This has negatively affected family structures. Low job availability also affects learners’ desire to perform well at school. The third factor affecting change is that of social movements. In today’s technological age, there are more forms of communication ranging from photographs to cell phones that expose learners to negative influences. Cyber ethics thus has an important role in the training and development of school counsellors. It is incumbent upon school counsellors-in-training to be aux fait with social media in order to connect fully with clients. Lastly, national legislation also affects the role of counsellors. Obtaining knowledge pertaining to labour laws, job protection, ethics, discipline and corporal punishment is an important part of the training for professional practice of registered school counsellors. High importance is given to the Children’s Act, given that clients in the school counselling setting are mainly children.

### 2.3.2 School Counsellors-in-training

The Board of Psychology and the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) provide the framework for practice (Government Gazette, 2011). Professionals must adhere to the ethical regulations and scope of practice of the counselling profession. As a guiding body of support and regulation, the HPCSA
provides levels of support and almost limitless resources for the counsellor-in-training and registered professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Counselling Psychologists, Psychometrists and Clinical Psychologists. The support given substantially advances the counsellor’s professional development. The HPCSA’s resources and its own integrated community facilitate networking with peers and other relevant organisations. In addition, the HPCSA also helps to protect the clients’ needs and interests.

Professional development is also enhanced and facilitated through supervision. In a study done on other helping professions, Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004) found that supervision provides emotional support that helps trainees develop personal and professional skills. Its aim is to strengthen the trainees’ sense of identity and thus reduce stress. Maggs and Biley (2000) identify three main functions of supervision: to develop competence in professionals, to protect clients, and to provide structured support for professionals. Appropriate supervision relationships have been shown to contribute to general skills development of school counsellors (Agnew, Vaught, Getz, & Fortune, 2000; Benshoff & Paisley 1996; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Henderson & Lamp, 1992; VanZandt & Perry, 1992). These forms of supervision can be extended to counsellors-in-training as a vital aspect of their growth and development throughout their training. Through the support resources such as supervision, the Board of Psychology, the Health Professions Council of South Africa and the university as the training institution, school counsellors-in-training are educated and receive updated training on topics, laws and the needs of all learners (Studer & Quigney, 2004).

Students are asked to reflect on their personal learning experiences – through analysing and exploring their knowledge, skills and values, school counsellors are able to explain how these have changed over a specific period of time (Dunbar-Krige in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). In this study, school counsellors-in-training made use of reflections in their developed learning portfolios. In Chapter Three, the level of personal and professional development is analysed.

The programme at a university in Gauteng, which has been accredited by the HPCSA, represents a pivotal source of network-based support combining lecturers,
resource and research material, peer counsellors as well as equipped facilities used to support the training programme of school counsellors. In providing these services, the university forms a learning community which is effective in promoting student learning and success (Huerta & Bray, 2008). The learning community provides a space where individuals from varying backgrounds and with diverse experiences are able to meet and share experiences (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Therefore, as a tertiary institution, the university itself offers integrated support systems enabling growth, both personally, professionally and educationally.

According to Kottler and Shepard (2008), the process of networking is what forges connections between people, thus creating professional and personal friendships that can last a lifetime. The sense of support from the learning community which school counsellors-in-training enjoy, plays an important role in facilitating the learning, sharing, growth and development that is experienced during such a programme (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Thus, during this research, I looked at the personal and professional development manifested by their reflective metaphors in order to identify the support network counsellors-in-training highlighted in their portfolios. Support throughout this tertiary programme is vital for development. The responsibility for learning and success does not lie solely with the university though; here active participation and the shared responsibility are promoted. In sum, transformative learning encourages counsellors-in-training to develop the personal and professional attributes necessary for their future role at schools.

2.4 LEARNING PORTFOLIOS FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A portfolio is often defined as a ‘collection of work’ or a ‘collection of evidence’ (Hoel & Haugalokken, 2004; Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991; Snadden & Thomas, 1998). Portfolios can contain evidence of task-related activities as well as personal reflections and metaphors which speak about personal and professional development. Portfolios are used extensively throughout the education system, including tertiary and higher education institutions (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2010). Portfolios as a showcase for an individual’s work have a long established history in
the world of art, design and photography. In these portfolios, a practitioner collects examples of work of particular personal importance to illustrate practical skills and the development of ideas (Pickering, Daly & Pachler, 2007). A portfolio is thus an accumulation of evidence about individual proficiencies, especially in relation to explicit standards used in the evaluation of competency as a school professional such as a school counsellor-in-training (NCATE, 2008). A professional developmental portfolio makes a powerful statement about the identity of a supervisee (Dunbar-Krige in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). Transformative theory highlights both the personal and the professional development of participants (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). This emphasis is the focus of this research in that the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training is linked to transformational learning.

A learning portfolio, as a form of developmental portfolio, is personalised and richly contextualised; it acknowledges the practitioner as an individual with a personal philosophy of practice, working in a particular context with specific challenges (Pickering, Daly & Pachler, 2007). Learning portfolios involve thinking, talking and knowing about teaching; it is self-directed and involves a process of discovery (Grant & Huebner, 1998). As Kocoglu (2008) demonstrates, compiling a portfolio is an effective means of supporting ongoing professional development. It thus stimulates learning. Learning portfolios are used to engage counsellors-in-training to explore their own learning and practice, and to document this process of learning, development and reflection (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2010). A learning portfolio is thus grounded in the context of school counsellors-in-training, and enables students to engage in professional dialogue with their lecturers and to collaborate and develop understanding and ideas on school counselling and learning (Klenowski, 2002). The portfolios also allow school counsellors-in-training to demonstrate their learning as they experienced it throughout their training programme. By exploring their portfolios, I was able to study the engagement of school counsellors-in-training and, consequently, their personal and professional development throughout the programme.
2.5 FACILITATING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH REFLECTION

Various tools can be used to help the school counsellors-in-training to achieve and depict their learning and personal and professional development. However, before describing these tools, I need to define the personal and professional development in question. Here this refers to personal awareness, the ability to reflect on self and practice and the ability to identify and address one’s own issues and self in relation to self and others.

2.5.1. Reflection Pertaining to Personal and Professional Development

Reflection is defined as a cognitive, affective and conative process or activity (Dunbar-Krige in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006) which requires active engagement on the part of the individual; it is triggered by an unusual or challenging situation or experience; involving one’s responses, beliefs and premises in light of the situation at hand; and it results in integration of the new understanding into one’s experience as part of a developmental process (Rogers, 2001). Moon (2004; 2001) postulates five stages in a map of learning and representation of learning in Figure 2.2.

![Figure 2.2: A map of learning & the representation of learning adapted from Moon (2004 & 2001)](image-url)
The first stage of learning starts with noticing. This is the least detailed form of learning. However, without noticing, learning cannot exist. The second and third stages are making sense and making meaning respectively. Through the reproduction of ideas, material becomes coherent in relation to itself but not to previous understanding, encompassing sense making. Making meaning is the development of deeper learning, which is the linking of meaningful and well integrated ideas. The fourth stage involves the meaningful, reflective, and well structured representation of material. Here there is further linking up with other ideas and the development of new material is facilitated. Transformative learning culminates in the fifth stage where meaningful, reflective and restructuring ideas are created creatively or idiosyncratically. There is evidence of new learning that has transformed current understandings in the reflective process. Reflection is a purposeful activity utilised to promote the process of continuous development (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004). Bengtsson (1998) suggests that reflection can be understood and used as thinking and self-reflection, which links up with Moon’s map of learning. Reflection is meta-thinking (thinking about thinking) in which we consider the relationship between our thought and action in a particular context. We pause to reflect because some issues that arise demand that we stop and take stock or consider before we act. We do so because the situation we are in requires consideration: how we act in it is a matter of significance (Gravett & De Beer, 2010).

Reflection is a process of deliberate, active, persistent and thoughtful consideration over a period of time to firstly, understand, and secondly, make sense of experiences on cognitive and emotional levels in order for learning to occur and change or transformation to take place (Dunbar-Krige in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2007). Reflection thus, as an individual practice, helps those engaging in the process to learn about the actual practice of the profession, and might possibly help individuals to consider their own performance. This relates to transformational learning as it emphasises how experiences are re-interpreted through newly constructed assumptions, resulting in an alternative understanding and perception of the experience (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011).

The importance of reflection is explained by Amulya (2011) through the intrinsic property of reflection where challenging experiences provide powerful reflective and
learning opportunities. Challenges may include experiences of uncertainty or struggles which arise from dilemmas. For school counsellors-in-training, great uncertainty can be felt throughout the training programme as new areas of experience are entered. Transformational learning can thus take place through the experience of a dilemma and how one interprets the experience through reflection. Barkhuizen and Gravett (2001) state that an experience which causes disequilibrium in the lives of individuals holds the possibility of re-interpretation that can lead to transformational learning. Here supervision is key in establishing the ground from which to reflect, understand and make sense of experiences.

King (2007) states that there is a strong argument for mentors or supervisors to assist with the lifelong process of career development. School counsellors-in-training find themselves at the beginning of the process of their own career development. As training progresses, school counsellors-in-training are exposed to working in settings involving interactions with a variety of cultural backgrounds and life experiences which may differ from their own. Eagle, Haynes and Long (2007) state that the combination of multicultural difference, the unfamiliarity of the setting and the direct emotional impact of intense presenting problems, compounded by difficult social circumstances, means that working with the unfamiliar can be an extremely visceral experience. Through support in supervision, counsellors-in-training can be assisted in their personal and professional development, as well as internalising their experiences in the training process.

The process of development is a dynamic one in which learning and growth does not stop. Continuous professional reflection is seen by King (2007) as the fundamental developmental process in one’s professional life. In their reflection of personal training as school counsellors, Hollihan and Reid (1993) highlight the importance of supervision for school counsellors-in-training, as it is advantageous for both personal and professional development. This speaks directly to the purpose of this research.

Kings’ (2004) reflection model identifies seven stages of reflection which resonate with the reflection done by the school counsellors-in-training. Figure 2.3 below, depicts this model.
The reflection process is often described in terms of a cyclical model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Reflection, as the central element of the cyclical figure above, is facilitated through a seven stage process. The first three stages – purpose, basic observation and additional information – refer to the basic steps required for later reflection. Through the revisiting of earlier reflections, real reflection takes place in which a view from another perspective is possible (Dunbar-Krige, 2006). A higher level of reflection is achieved during stage five when the reflective school counsellor-in-training stands back, resulting in reflection at a new level as the new actions are tested and the results discussed. The final level of reflection encompasses moving on through the application of the knowledge gained through this process. Here this is...

**Figure 2.3: King’s Simplified Reflection Model (2004)**

The reflection process is often described in terms of a cyclical model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Reflection, as the central element of the cyclical figure above, is facilitated through a seven stage process. The first three stages – purpose, basic observation and additional information – refer to the basic steps required for later reflection. Through the revisiting of earlier reflections, real reflection takes place in which a view from another perspective is possible (Dunbar-Krige, 2006). A higher level of reflection is achieved during stage five when the reflective school counsellor-in-training stands back, resulting in reflection at a new level as the new actions are tested and the results discussed. The final level of reflection encompasses moving on through the application of the knowledge gained through this process. Here this is...
achieved, for example, when something has been learnt or a problem has been solved, or a new idea has been formed. This leads to a further cycle of reflection (Dunbar-Krige, 2006).

The model in Figure 2.3, enables reflection, through creative metaphors, facilitates self-insight and self-awareness and can be regarded as a tool to promote the process of continuous development (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2003) enhancing both personal and professional development. Reflection is an essential component of good-quality learning and the representation of that learning, as well as being a fundamental feature of a deep approach to learning (Dunbar-Krige, 2006). Moon (2002) describes the link between reflection and learning as enabling one to feel that one owns the knowledge and understanding as one is part of the creation. Ability in reflection implies ability in metacognition where metacognitive ability is associated with effective learning. Lastly, being reflective slows learning down as it requires time for the processing of ideas (Moon, 2002). Through this process of slowing learning down, students are able to engage in reflection and derive full benefit from following the stages of reflection. Neufeldt (1999) sees reflection as a means of searching through uncertainty in the learning process in order to enhance professional growth. In embracing increased self-knowledge through the practice of reflection, school counsellors-in-training extended their personal growth.

Du Preez and Roos (2008) state that developing a professional identity is of the utmost importance in the training process of students. This development of professional identity influences the personal development, as well as the learning that participants experience during their training. Wenger (1998) presents the persuasive argument that through active participation, and reflection, in the learning process, identity and learning serve each other in the learning process. One cannot exist without the other as these develop simultaneously. In developing a personal and professional identity as school counsellors-in-training, reflection is key to the development of the self. Johns (1999) posits the view that through reflection, it possible for the practitioner to understand the power perspectives within a situation and thus respond appropriately. In the process of reflection, penetration is achieved which creates deeper levels of reflection (Johns, 1999).
2.5.2. Engaging in Reflection

Reflective practice can be a day-to-day practice. This encourages professionals and school counsellors-in-training to promote professional development, which would mean better care and support for clients (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004). According to Amulya (2011), reflection is seen as the foundation of purposeful learning. Purposeful learning is required in a changing profession such as school counselling where this is achieved by professionals through continuous professional development. Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004) see life-long learning as a prerequisite for a profession that is in constant change, in that it enables professionals to be prepared for these changes.

Reflection is an active process of witnessing one’s own experience in order to take a closer look at it, sometimes to direct attention to it briefly, but often to explore it in greater depth. It is through this that personal and professional development can take place. Reflection is a tool or an instrument to promote the process of continuous development (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004). Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004) also explain that reflection as an activity is a tool for improving professional development. In their 2004 study, Gustafsson and Fagerberg found that the meaning of the reflective activity is to think back – consider, mirror, reflect before and reflect after, and use experiences. By developing the ability to explore and be curious about our own experience and actions, we suddenly open up the possibilities of purposeful learning — learning derived not from books or experts, but from our work and our lives. Learning is thus a culmination of sensory and physical experiences, interwoven with practical and theoretical training provided to the school counsellors-in-training. Amulya (2011) defines the purpose of reflective practice as the generation of learning from experience. Taking a different view, Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004) see reflective practice as involving learning alone to be able to see situations in different ways and from different perspectives. Here conscious reflection can be used individually or in the supervision of school counsellors-in-training.

School counsellors-in-training reflect using the different levels of reflection: core reflection, surface reflection, critical reflection and deep reflection. Critical reflection is used to revisit historically and culturally anchored assumptions, prejudices and values underpinning old perceptions (Barkhuizen & Gravett, 2001). Core reflection is seen as
a means of enhancing professional development (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). This reflection is achieved through engaging with the different levels as depicted in the figure below. These levels influence the way a professional functions (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) explain that the idea behind this model is that the inner levels determine the way an individual functions on the outer levels – where movement from the outer levels towards the centre is also possible. Professional identity, which is a desired outcome in the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, is facilitated through incorporation into the inner level of mission. Reflection relates to mission in focusing on the motivation for participating in their training programme. The levels of mission and identity are closely linked (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Here the environment determines how the school counsellor-in-training will function on this level of reflection. It is thus important to be aware of the role that the environment plays in the reflection process.

**Figure 5.4: Levels of Reflection**

Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) explain that the idea behind this model is that the inner levels determine the way an individual functions on the outer levels – where movement from the outer levels towards the centre is also possible. Professional identity, which is a desired outcome in the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, is facilitated through incorporation into the inner level of mission. Reflection relates to mission in focusing on the motivation for participating in their training programme. The levels of mission and identity are closely linked (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Here the environment determines how the school counsellor-in-training will function on this level of reflection. It is thus important to be aware of the role that the environment plays in the reflection process.
Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) address this point when they discuss the ideal situation as well as the factors in the environment which are experienced as inhibiting. These make the reflective practitioner feel an inner tension or a sense of discrepancy. To overcome this tension or sense of discrepancy, the practitioner needs to take a step back and evaluate the situation. In so doing, the reflective practitioner – in this case the school counsellor-in-training – becomes aware that he or she has a choice. This is an empowering experience (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Sheldon, Williams and Joiner (2003) claim that this awareness of having a choice is one of the most fundamental factors in a person’s development, as it contributes to personal autonomy.

Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) also state that through reflection, core qualities are developed. Drawing on Tickle (1999), they highlight both personal and professional development through looking at policy and practice. Here the identification and development of personal qualities is addressed. In addressing these factors, one looks at the interface between aspects of one’s personal virtues and one’s professional life (Tickle, 2009). Through core reflection, core qualities can be activated in practitioners (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). These core qualities include empathy, compassion, love and flexibility, with other examples of courage, creativity, sensitivity, decisiveness, and spontaneity (Tickle, 2009). It is useful for school counsellors-in-training to incorporate such aspects into their practice and develop them further in order to enhance their skills. Thus through personal development of these aspects, professional development is facilitated through enhancing the skills necessary for engaging with clients during their practicum training programme.

In actualising core qualities, Korthagen and Vasalos’s (2005) use phases to facilitate this process. Figure 2.3 below demonstrates how core qualities can be activated in professionals through using the phases of core reflection.
Through experience in the environment facilitating learning, school counsellors-in-training are required to assess the problems they encountered or are encountering in this first phase of core reflection. In the first part of phase 2, where awareness is central, the school counsellors-in-training need to assess what they wish to create in the learning environment. This is closely followed by an awareness of limitations where limiting behaviour, feelings, images, or beliefs need to be addressed in order for the school counsellor-in-training to assess how they might be preventing themselves from achieving an awareness of their limitations. Often limiting beliefs or images have repressed important core qualities for so long that a stimulus from outside may be necessary to activate them again (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).
Phase 3 incorporates an awareness of the core qualities needed to realise the ideal situation and overcome their limitations. Through actualisation of these core qualities in phase 4, experimenting with new behaviour in practice is made possible, thus fulfilling the cycle of core reflection taking place. The processes in phase 3 and 4 can lead to a redefinition at the level of professional identity or mission (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). This is, in essence, the aim of personal and professional development in that the school counsellor-in-training is challenged to incorporate thinking and reflection in order to grow both personally and professionally. Core reflection is also an effective instrument for self-reflection (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

Core reflection aims at building people’s strengths, and focuses on the positive feelings often triggered when people feel in touch with positive meanings, and with their strengths. Through engaging in core reflection, school counsellors-in-training can function optimally and thus promote rapid learning (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Thus, the importance of core reflection in the reflective process is highlighted.

2.5.3. Reflections in Developing Critically Reflective Learners

Through the reflective process, critically reflective learners are developed (Brockbank & McGill, 1998). Engaging in reflective dialogue, with peers or with a supervisor, leads to a deeper understanding of events and learning experiences (Shepherd, 2004). Eagle, Haynes and Long (2007) see the supervisor’s role as helping to facilitate the transformation of trainees’ raw emotional experiences into emotional experiences which can be borne, thought about and learnt from. Professional development is that which occurs with reflection as a starting point where development may occur in different ways. The fundamental idea is that the individual, either alone, or together with others, reflects upon the practicum training situations that are related to the areas in the model (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004). Bengtsson (1998) suggests that reflection can be understood and used as thinking and self-reflection. In relation to this study, Gustafsson and Fagerberg’s 2004 study showed that self-reflection can help the school counsellors-in-training to learn about their own achievements within their profession, and it provides an opportunity, not only to learn from this, but also to provide them with the competence to teach others. Through interaction with other students, school counsellors-in-training are afforded
the time to reflect, to share personal reactions, to be curious and to engage in thoughtful discussion (Eagle, Haynes & Long, 2007).

Here the guidance in terms of supervision is seen as the supervisor working with the counsellor in a defined therapeutic space, to enable the counsellor-in-training to find meaning in their experience (Johns, 1999). This links with Amulya’s (2011) views on why we as practitioners should engage in reflective practice. Reflective practice can be used in order to create awareness that will guide our patterns of thinking and action. This in turn centres our thinking about learning, in order to help us develop on both a personal and a professional level. Ongoing learning is facilitated through reflection and can be used to bring greater alignment between activities, relationships and deeper values.

Furthermore, reflection can be used to strengthen shared thinking, or to expose the framework underlying a complex body of work. Bengtsson (1998) suggests the reflection can be understood and used as thinking and self-reflection. Through this process, school counsellors-in-training can engage in reflecting on their own practical experience during their training programme, and relate this to their developed learning metaphors.

2.5.4. Reflection to Empower

In understanding power perspectives, which is relevant to both the registered professional and the school counsellor-in-training, reflection is key to re-evaluating one’s practice, updating one’s knowledge and adjusting one’s perspective as one’s skills and knowledge base develops. Power perspectives should be deliberately developed through engaging with the literature, discussions with lecturers and peers – both practising professionals and school counsellors-in-training – and through reflection on experiences within the practical training programme. The power of personal development in enhancing self awareness, self exploration and aiding the ability to be congruent lies in reflection (Robson & Robson, 2008). Robson and Robson (2008) underline the empowerment of school counsellors-in-training which results from engaging in personal development situations such as reflection and supervision, for example. This is accomplished through the development of personal awareness, the ability to reflect on self and practice and the ability to identify and
address one’s own issues of self in relation to self and others. The counsellors-in-training, through supporting one another in their training programme, build a vibrant context for identifying personal development needs (Dryden, Horton & Mearns, 1995).

Johns (1999) believes growth or development of the personal and professional qualities is accompanied by empowerment. Empowerment in that study refers to the ability of school counsellors-in-training to develop on both personal and professional levels. Reflective practice was used to enhance learning through experience. The learning that resulted from reflective practice empowered the counsellors-in-training to engage in critical thinking to enhance their practice and learning. The essence of learning through reflection is for practitioners to bridge contradiction between what they intend to achieve within any situation and the way they actually practise (Johns, 1999). The use of reflection, as discussed in Johns (1999), is similar to what was done in this study; school counsellors-in-trainings provided their personal and professional views on the work they engaged in during their practical training.

2.5.5. Reflection in Order to Distance Oneself from Practice

Bengtsson (1998) suggests that reflection can be understood and used as thinking and self-reflection. This practice can enhance personal and professional development as identity and awareness are created in relation to one’s practice. In a study by Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004), self-reflection implies being able to establish a distance from the person and the practice. Self-reflection helps in-training professionals to learn about the actual practice of the profession, and might possibly help them to consider their own performance. The counsellors-in-training themselves could learn from these experiences and by doing so, they may acquire the competence that is needed to develop effectively, personally and professionally, within the chosen field of school counselling. Hollihan and Reid (1993) identify some aspects of reflection in their counsellor training programme as being beneficial on both a personal and professional level.

On a personal level, school counsellors-in-training developed better personal critical thinking skills. Knowledge of self was increased through regular reflection and supervision. These methods also helped identify areas in which the school counsellors-in-training could improve. Where identification occurred, active work
could be engaged in, in order to develop the counsellors personally and professionally. These are but a few advantages highlighted in Hollihan and Reid’s (1993) reflection. In the in-depth discussion in Chapter Three, the participants’ experiences of reflection through metaphors will be expanded.

2.5.6. Summary of Reflection

![Image Description]

Figure 2.6: Integrated Summary of Reflection

In the above diagram, the significant aspects of the reflective process have been incorporated and illustrated to develop an overall view on this process. In understanding this diagram, the integration of the five phases of core reflection and the seven stages of reflection need to be incorporated and applied at all levels at
which reflection takes place. These phases and stages take place simultaneously in a circular movement around the environment as a necessary part of reflection which is integral to understanding the learning process and the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training.

2.6 METAPHORS FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout history, myths and metaphors have played an important part in the education and development of wisdom (Burns, 2001). Understanding metaphors infuses life with purpose, worth, meaning and value (Bheamadu, 2003). Lakoff and Johnson (2002) take a similar view. They perceive metaphors as an understanding and experience of one kind of thing in terms of another. For Bheamadu (2003), metaphors are directly related to the development of thought. He argues that through the interactive human mind, order, integration and coherence are created. Through this, we are able to use metaphors for deeper learning and development as metaphors work on multiple levels of functioning – conscious and subconscious (Mills & Cowley, 2001). In the programme for school counsellors, conscious thought related to reflection is seen as key to both personal and professional development. Through the use of metaphors, alternative means of solving problems are explored (Bheamadu, 2003).

Contextualised learning is integrated in the training programme of school counsellors-in-training through the exploration of problems experienced in their training programme. Its importance lies in relating learning to previous experience, such as life experience, fears or prejudices. Experience has an influence on generating meaning and we cannot divorce our learning from our lives. It is not possible to assimilate new knowledge without having some structure developed from previous knowledge to build on (Costandius, 2006). Thus the development of metaphors aims at extending the knowledge of the school counsellors-in-training is hoped to be developed. The metaphors used by the school counsellors-in-training to illustrate their learning at the end of their training become a way of communicating symbolically (Banaszynski, 2002). This view resonates with Lakoff and Johnson’s (2002) perception of metaphor.
2.6.1. Metaphors in Development
The value of metaphors in learning is that they allow the individual starting with very little to express a lot: a metaphor is a linguistic device used to transfer properties from one concept to another (Scaruffi, 2001). In this study, metaphor is not only a linguistic device, but also a visual representation of learning and thought. Metaphors are a way to conceive something in terms of another thing (Scaruffi, 2001). Importantly, metaphors are ultimately based on a person’s bodily experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and therefore are an intermediary between the conceptual representation of the world and the sensory experience of the world (Scaruffi, 2001).
Johns (1999) further discusses the use of ‘voice’ as a metaphor for empowerment. In the research process, I explored both personal and professional development in the portfolios, particularly, where reflection and developed metaphors are used to facilitate the learning and thinking processes.

2.6.2. Metaphors as Visually Expressive Tools
Metaphors can be seen as visual expressions used to overcome the limitations literal text has in attempting to construct knowledge (Du Preez & Roos, 2008). They are used to contemplate ways of overcoming these limitations and to facilitate thinking about those elements of the social world which cannot always be literally expressed. As counsellors-in-training, this critical engagement with the world in which practical training takes place requires in-depth thinking about the circumstances surrounding the practicum programme. A metaphor as described by Lankton and Lankton (1989), Freedman and Combs (1990), and Burns (2001), is as a figure of speech in which a place, a word or a phrase denoting one kind of object or action is used in place of another or to suggest a likeness or analogy between the two. A likeness can also be depicted in a drawing. In this study, counsellors-in-training produced a pictorial representation of ‘something’ to depict their experience and learning was developed. A metaphor thus implies a comparison between two things that are not literally alike and as such can be used in the application of a description, phrase, or story about an object or action to which it bears an imaginative but not literal resemblance (Thompkins & Lawley, 2001).

Lakoff and Johnson’s theory of metaphors (1999) provides a basis for describing everyday cognitive structures using linguistic models and thus, making it possible to
uncover both individual and collective patterns of thought and action (Schmitt, 2005). Metaphors are a cognitive phenomenon that involves concepts (Scaruffi, 2001). Support for this view can be found in Lakoff (1987) who states that a metaphor can be used for reasoning and to create meaning. This meaning is therefore in the mind of the thinker, not in the world. This meaning aids in the learning process as knowledge is expanded.

When using metaphors in order to explore the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, a reflective process is needed in order to facilitate development. As Kopp (1997) explains, metaphors are mirrors reflecting our inner images of self, of life and of others. Like Alice in Through the Looking Glass, a researcher can journey beyond the mirror’s image, entering the domain of creative imagination where metaphoric imagery can become a key that unlocks new possibilities for ‘self-created insight’ and change. Through the use of metaphors in this study, the creative imagination can be considered in terms of self-created insight through reflection of the learning process. Here, specifically, the personal and professional development of participants had to be considered through reflection of the learning process as school counsellors-in-training.

The argument for using metaphors in exploring the personal and professional development of counsellors-in-training is strengthened by an argument presented by Scaruffi (2001). In his view, the cognitive force of metaphors comes from a re-conceptualisation of information about the world that has already been acquired. The re-conceptualising or re-organising of information facilitates enhanced learning, and can therefore influence the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. As seen in Chapter One, the main aim of this study was to contribute towards the literature on school counsellors-in-training. At present there is little literature on what metaphors reveal specifically about their personal and professional development.

2.6.3. Metaphors and Learning

In learning, a person has to re-arrange existing schemes of thought into new and more complex schemes or structures to account for the new understanding (Holmes, 2006). Learning, especially in the health care profession, is not a one-off event as
new knowledge and theories are constantly developed through experience and research. Lifelong learning forms part of the role of educational psychologists (Afonso, 2008). School counsellors fall into a similar category. Thus, school counsellors-in-training and registered professionals are encouraged to engage in continuous personal and professional development to meet the demands of the changing field in which they work. School counsellors-in-training can make use of metaphors to explore their beliefs and values, to help them simplify and clarify problems, and help them to summarise thoughts. Metaphors can also serve as a bridge between a schema and newly developed constructs (Fritz in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). This will be borne in mind when I engage with the data in an attempt to explore the personal and professional development they reveal.

Learning comes from participating in a culture and the community of practice which means to know, but also being together, living meaningfully, and developing an identity of profession (Wenger, 1998). For the school counsellors-in-training, the learning community of which they form a part, both during their training programme and as registered professionals later on, can play an integral role in their personal and professional development. This relates to Lave and Wenger’s theory (1991) of situated learning which proposes that learning involves a process of engagement in a ‘community practice’. The basic argument made by Lave and Wenger is that communities of practice are everywhere and that we are generally involved in a number of them - whether at work, school, home, or in our civic and leisure interests. In some groups we are core members, in others we may play less significant roles, or even be onlookers. Dam and Blom (2006) explain that becoming a more central participant in society is not just a matter of acquiring knowledge and skills; it also implies becoming a member of a community of practice. This requires people to see themselves as members, taking responsibility for their own actions (including the use of knowledge and skills) in that position. During their training programme, school counsellors form a community of their own as a result of their interaction with lecturers, fellow students and other professionals in the field of Psychology (see 2.3.2.). Counsellors-in-training need to take responsibility for their personal and professional development in this interactive community where learning is facilitated through experience and reflection on this experience in order to make meaning.
Learning is seen as an active process to be engaged in throughout every phase of a professional's career (ESoE, 2009). Professional learning encompasses not only learning in one’s work environment, but involves an attitude towards profession-orientated learning and learning to become a professional (ESoE, 2009).

2.7 SUMMARY
In this chapter, the reflective tools for personal and professional development were discussed in detail. Reflection through the use of metaphors was also discussed to highlight what developed metaphors could reveal about the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. Their personal responsibility to develop critical thinking skills in the process of reflection was underlined.

The stages, phases and levels of reflection of three models were outlined and represented diagrammatically in the explanation of reflection. In an attempt to synthesise these three models, I developed a model incorporating all three aspects of reflection, showing the inter-relational functioning of the components of reflection.

Throughout the training of these school counsellors, growth, development and learning were facilitated through an interactive process which required the counsellors-in-training to engage in reflection. In this study, I reflected on the developed learning metaphors as a means of understanding the personal and professional development that resulted from their experiences and learning during the training programme.

In Chapter Three the data gathering process will be described, before the themes that emerged from the data are identified and elaborated upon.
3.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, I explore the developed metaphors and reflective tools used by the school counsellors-in-training to research their personal and professional development as a result of their experiences in their training programme and practicum at a South African university.

I begin with a concise discussion of the research paradigm, approach and design used to guide this research in order to outline the research and data gathering process. After describing the participants, I explain the selection criteria and the importance of this research. Next, I provide an in-depth discussion of the data collection methods and analysis. This includes aspects such as trustworthiness and validity. The themes drawn from this research are discussed systematically, in order to provide an understanding of the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training they would have achieved by the end of their training programme at a Gauteng-based South African university.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM
A paradigm is a framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand it (Babbie, 2007). A research paradigm is characterised by the non-controllable variables that characterise a qualitative research study. Variables are usually not controlled because it is exactly this freedom and natural development of action and representation that researchers wish to capture (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). My aim as researcher was to understand and explain the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. I used the evidence provided by the data and the supporting literature reviewed in Chapter Two in order to do so. Not placing boundaries on the data facilitated the free flow of the data (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

In conducting research, researchers position themselves within the research and accept that their own personal, cultural and historical experiences influence their interpretation of the research (Creswell, 2007). By using an interpretative paradigm I was able to explore in detail the meanings given to particular experiences, events, and states by participants in the process of making sense of their personal and social worlds (Smith & Osborn, 2008). An interpretive paradigm recognises the self
reflective nature of the researcher who interprets data and then presents the information (Creswell, 2007) taking account of the participants’ lifeworlds, and exploring their personal experiences and perceptions of events (Smith & Osborn, 2008). During the data gathering and analysis process, I ensured that I maintained a reflective stance on the interpretation of data and ensured that I understood the meanings created by the participants.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH
A qualitative research approach (Weil, Eberle & Flick, 2008) was used in this study in order to examine the participant’s experiences and personal and professional development as illustrated in their metaphors. This approach seemed appropriate because of its versatility, the sensitivity of research tools, the variety of techniques that one can employ and the authenticity of the results that one can produce. Qualitative research is designed to explore the human elements of a given topic, where specific methods are used to examine how individuals see and experience the world. The table on the following page summarises the features of qualitative research (Adapted from Hancock, 2002):
Table 3.1 Features of Qualitative Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of Qualitative Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research describes social phenomena as they occur naturally. No attempt is made to manipulate the situation under study as is the case with experimental quantitative research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of a situation is gained through a holistic perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data are used to develop and expand on concepts and theories that help us to understand the social world. This is an inductive approach to the development of theory, yet in this case, working from a theoretical framework and consulting the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the main concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative data are collected through direct encounters with individuals, through one to one interviews or group interviews or by observation. Data collection is time consuming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The intensive and time consuming nature of data collection necessitates the use of small samples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different sampling techniques are used. Qualitative sampling techniques are concerned with seeking information from specific groups and subgroups in the population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These features of qualitative research informed the design used to ground this research. I chose a systematic and a disciplined investigation to increase knowledge and understanding related to this field of study. Through using these features of qualitative research, I was able to explore the opinions, experiences and feelings of school counsellors-in-training, and thus gather data to demonstrate their personal and professional development.

As indicated above, this research inquiry focused on the evidence of personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training which emerged when I investigated their developed metaphors. These metaphors depicted learning and experience gained during the practical training which the school counsellors-in-
training did in the final stages of their BEd Honours degree in Educational Psychology at a University in Gauteng in 2009.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN
I deemed a phenomenological design appropriate because it made it possible to obtain richer information on the participants’ experience of their training, colleagues and support structures. Flood (2010) describes this kind of design as an interpretive, qualitative form of research that aims at studying phenomena that are perceived or experienced. This is in line with Thorne’s (1991) view of phenomenology as a philosophic attitude and research approach, with a primary position that the most basic human truths are accessible only through inner subjectivity, and that the person is integral to the environment. Such an approach has strong potential for revealing complexity through descriptions nested in a context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.4.1. Phenomenology
Phenomenology is the reflective study of pre-reflective or lived experience (Adams & van Manen, 2008). Phenomenology literally means the study of phenomena – it is a way of describing something that exists as part of the world in which we live (Hancock, 2002). Phenomenological research is the study of lived or experiential meaning and attempts to describe and interpret these meanings in the ways that they emerge and are shaped by consciousness, language, our cognitive and non-cognitive sensibilities, and by our pre-understandings and pre-suppositions (Adams & van Manen, 2008).

By using a phenomenological approach, I was able to explore the unique meanings of the human experience or phenomena (Adams & van Manen, 2008) that the school counsellors-in-training experienced in their training. In this study, I chose phenomena related to the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. These phenomena involved events, situations, experiences or concepts (Hancock, 2002) which the school counsellors encountered. As researcher, I was interested in the way the experiences, events and situations experienced by the school counsellors-in-training were reflected in their learning and concept development, which in turn influenced their personal and professional development.
My assumption was that the gap in our understanding of the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training is decreased through clarification or illumination of their experiences (Hancock, 2002) by creating shared meaning in the research process. Through phenomenological research I was able to raise awareness of and increase insight (Hancock, 2002) into these experiences. This was done through phenomenological reflection which enabled me to perceive the meanings of human experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2008). Reflective methods thus aim to interpret the aspects of meaning or meaningfulness that are associated with the phenomenon of personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. In order to understand the meanings shared by research participants, both researcher and participants need to engage in self-reflection in order to appropriate, clarify and make explicit thematic meaning of the lived experience (Adams & van Manen, 2008).

Phenomenological understanding needs to be practised as a method, and identified as a style of thinking – a manner of orientating ourselves to experience as we live through it (Adams & van Manen, 2008). I, as the researcher, submerged myself in this method or way of researching effectively in order to gain conclusive results. Phenomenological research thus explores ways of doing research that remain focused on and sensitive to the concrete, subjective, and pre-reflective dimensions of the lifeworlds of the participants (Adams & van Manen, 2008). My understanding of lifeworld lies in different domains in which these individuals function. Adams and van Manen (2008) state that within the lifeworld there is irrevocable tension between what is unique and what is shared, between particular and transcendent meaning, between what can be thought and what remains unthought, and between the reflective and the pre-reflective spheres of the lifeworld. The lifeworld is the pre-given world, the existent world as we find ourselves in it (Adams & van Manen, 2008). The lifeworld of school counsellors-in-training is different for each of them. This is because of their experiences leading up to the culmination of their training, their different experiences during their training and the differences between their internalisation of how they experienced their worlds and made meaning. Through reflection, school counsellors-in-training are able to engage with their lifeworlds. The link between phenomenology and lifeworlds was made by Heidegger. He gives the concept of lifeworld a more worldly, existential thrust in his description of
phenomenology as the study of being, the study of our modes of-being or ways-of-being-in-the-world (Adams & van Manen, 2008).

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3.5 PARTICIPANTS

The main selection criterion was that participants should have completed the BEd Honours Educational Psychology Training Programme at a particular university in Gauteng in 2009. School counsellors enrolled in this programme were required to submit a professional portfolio to illustrate their learning during their training in terms of personal and professional growth. These portfolios, along with interviews, were used as data to gain further insight and understanding of school counsellors-in-training and their personal and professional development.
Purposive sampling was used in this study: the participants therefore included people of interest and excluded those who did not suit the purpose (Straker, 2008). Palys (2008) argues that engaging in purposive sampling signifies that one sees sampling as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one’s research. This statement implies that the researcher’s sample is tied to his/her objectives. For ethical reasons, I approached participants for their permission to use their learning portfolios for this research. I explained that I believed that I would find strong links to their personal and professional development in the data I hoped to gather from their reflective learning portfolios.

Table 3.2 depicts the age, ethnicity, gender and home language of the research participants.

**Table 3.2: Participants in this Research Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All but two members of the BEd Honours programme were female students. It is interesting to note that all the research participants in this phenomenological study were of the same age, ethnicity and gender. Although purposive sampling was used in this study, the coincidence of matching age, gender and ethnicity lies only in that these chosen participants produced powerfully visual metaphors in their learning portfolios. This provided rich data for my study which aimed to explore the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training through their developed learning portfolios. The home languages of the participants are tabulated in order to create a better understanding of the participants. It is worth noting that English was the medium of instruction during the taught part of the programme. However, the school counsellors-in-training did their practicum in English and Afrikaans. In the case of their peers, however, interpreters and language specialists were used where necessary to conduct scholastic assessments. In looking at the coincidences in the sample, the advice given by Palys (2008, p. 698) is true of this
research: “Think of the person or place or situation that has the largest potential for advancing your understanding and look there.”

3.6. ETHICS

Ethics exist within a social context (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) where the ethical dimensions of research involve human participants. The individuals concerned are entitled to certain basic expectations of treatment by others (Preissle, 2008). Considering the area in which this research on the way personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training is depicted in learning portfolios and enhanced through reflection and metaphors, the ethics of educational research embraces moral issues related to the conduct of research (Gregory, 2003). This links to the Human Rights Code of South Africa, which must be considered in all areas of research.

Research ethics are about acquiring and disseminating trustworthy information in ways that do not cause harm to the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I obtained informed consent from the research participants before the start of this research. Participants were also made fully aware of the forms of data collection that would be required for this study and were assured that confidentiality would be maintained at all times throughout this research study and thereafter. Participants’ consent was also acquired for the use of photographs in which identities of the persons had not been disguised.

Importantly, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time they saw fit without any consequences for them. In the event of the need to share recorded data with anyone other than myself, the researcher, and my research supervisors, I would first obtain written permission from them. All of this was clearly explained to participants in the letter of consent for this research study. A further means of ensuring ethical research lies in my moral integrity as a researcher – a critically important aspect of ensuring that the research process and my findings are trustworthy and valid (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

In ensuring ethical research practices in this study, I made it clear to participants that there were no known risks pertaining to this study and that they would not receive
any form of compensation for their participation. Although there was no direct benefit to them, they would be contributing to a better understanding of the role of a school counsellor.

In the event of this research study’s findings being presented at conferences or being published in books or articles, I informed participants that pseudonyms of their choice would be used in discussing and presenting this research. I also notified participants that the findings of this research would be shared with them at the end of this study. In addition, they were told that the data would be in safe-keeping for two years after the completion of this research study.

My practice was ethical in the broadest sense through observing the societal norms and accepted practice standards, as I always do when conducting research in which a degree of impact (whether positive or negative) could possibly occur. I ensured that this study was guided by ethical principles (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) by making ethical considerations part of the entire research process, from selecting the research problem to carrying out research goals and interpretation and reporting on the research findings. I always took great care to ensure that ethics were strictly adhered to, and that no ethical boundaries were crossed in the search for answers to the research question.
3.7. **DATA COLLECTION**

In generating data during this research, I used various sources as shown in Figure 3.1 below.

![Figure 3.1 Data Collection Process](image)

3.7.1. **Semi-structured Interviews**

Qualitative approaches to data collection usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting (Hancock, 2002). In this research study, I collected data through an individual semi-structured interview process. The data obtained from the learning portfolios and semi-structured interviews were combined to enhance my understanding of the experiences of school counsellors-in-training during their training programme. This was linked to the use of reflection to enhance understanding of the counsellors’ personal and professional development.

Semi-structured interviews involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover (Hancock, 2002). In-depth interviews are interviews in which participants are encouraged and prompted to talk in depth about
the topic under investigation without the researcher's use of predetermined, focused, short answer questions (Cook, 2008). Semi-structured interviews include a number of interviewer questions, which I prepared in advance. Below is an example of the questions I used during the interviews.

**Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about the metaphors in your learning portfolio.
2. What brought this metaphor to your mind, thinking about your involvement in the programme?
3. What were you trying to convey through your metaphor?
4. How does the metaphor relate to your personal development as a counsellor?
5. How does the metaphor relate to your professional development as a counsellor?
6. If you now look back at your metaphor, what stands out or comes to mind?

**Excerpt 3.1: Interviewer questions used during semi-structured interviews**

In-depth interviews are often referred to as semi-structured interviews because the researcher retains some control over the direction and content to be discussed, yet participants are free to elaborate or take the interview in new but related directions (Cook, 2008). I used the six open questions listed above (see Excerpt 3.1) in the interview and then improvised the rest of the questions in a careful and theorised way in relation to participant response (Wengraf, 2001). I used open-ended questions related to the topic under investigation so that the interviewees could feel as though they were participating in a conversation or discussion rather than in a formal question and answer situation (Hancock, 2002). A distinctive characteristic of in-depth interviews is that the conversation oscillates among the researcher's introduction of the topic under investigation, the participant's account of his or her experiences, and the researcher's probing of these experiences for further information useful to the analysis (Cook, 2008). Thus, semi-structured, in-depth interviews are appropriate for phenomenological data collection in that the interview is reflective (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000).
The interviews were audio recorded in order to allow me, as the researcher, to concentrate and listen to responses, without the distraction of attempting to write everything down. Hancock (2002) highlights the increased risk of interviewer bias in note taking because the interviewer is likely to make notes of the comments which make immediate sense or are perceived as being directly relevant or particularly interesting. The whole interview was recorded on audio tape. This provided complete data for analysis so cues that were missed the first time could be recognised when listening to the recording (Hancock, 2002). The audio recording also made it possible for me to address my own assumptions about this research, and ensure that the data were valid and trustworthy. Engaging with what the data presented was made easier through audio recording as the content of the interviews – through careful awareness of my own involvement in this training programme – was examined thoroughly and explored through sub-questions in the interview process.

In addition, I used active listening techniques so the data would include both verbal and non-verbal communication. This allowed me as researcher not to focus on my own inner dialogue, but to remain focused and actively listen and hear what the research participants were telling me (Ayres, 2008). It was especially important to constantly check that my personal views were not changing the meaning of the participant’s messages. This was necessary in order to maintain the validity of the shared information and data. Through reflexivity, I was able to continuously explore my own assumptions and be aware of how these affected my research activities, interpretations and the generation of knowledge (Somekh, 2008).

3.7.2. Portfolios and Artefacts

When looking at the developed portfolios, I was able to consider symbols, words and phrases, pictures and photographs, and the use of colour and creativity. These were used in the data analysis process to show links between themes and thus add to the validity of this research.

Through the reflective process, I created meaning as a result of co-creation between myself and the participant (Flood, 2010), rather than simply relying on my subjective interpretation of the shared information. I asked participants to think of an artefact or
symbol relating to their learning experience, considering the lapse of time from the
completion of their training programme to the time that interviews were conducted.
Artefacts provide a rich source of data. They are a source of information not available
from interview or observational data. Artefacts can be used to support or challenge
other data sources and literature, to generate or confirm hunches, and to help
provide in-depth description of people and/or settings. The story they can tell is
valuable (Norum, 2008). Artefacts are objects which inform us about the
phenomenon under study because of their significance to the phenomena (Hancock,
2002). Artefacts become data through the questions posed about them and the
meanings assigned to them by the researcher (Norum, 2008).

The artefacts presented by the participants were discussed in the interviewing
process in order to further enhance the data. Two participants chose to use their
developed metaphor as their artefact, while another chose a symbol related to the
developed metaphor. These were all representations and significant to the research
participants. Here, I noted the high level of personal ownership in the process that all
of the participants went through in their training.
Artefacts 3.1: Artefacts presented by the research participants

3.7.3. Photographs

Prior to the interviewing stage of data collection, I made use of photographs in order to capture the developed metaphors of the school counsellors-in-training. When engaging with the learning portfolios of the school counsellors-in-training, I used photographs in order to represent the data, both in this discussion to assist the reader in engaging with my research study, and during the interview process to assist the participants in answering the interview questions.
Photographs, along with other visual representations such as drawings, cartoons, videos, and even colour swatches, play a variety of roles in qualitative research because it offers a visual medium in addition to the more common verbal medium of the interview (Keegan, 2008). Photographs are a good way of collecting observable data of phenomena which can be captured in a single shot or series of shots (Hancock, 2002). These photographs were then used as a guide for the preparation of the research interview questions. Participants also referred to their developed metaphors extensively throughout the interviews. This establishes the relevance of the data collection methods and enhances the research data.

Photographs, in this research, served two purposes. Firstly, the photographs were a form of data gathered from research participants. Secondly, they were a stimulus that was used to focus discussion during the interview process. As researcher, I acted as photographer in capturing the visual representation of the participants’ developed metaphors. This is in line with Keegan’s (2008) view that the researcher can also act...
as photographer, using the photographs as a complementary form of data to the interviewing itself. The photographs of the metaphors were then shown to the research participants in order to explore the meaning that the school counsellors-in-training had gained through their training and how they were attempting to convey this meaning making and learning through their developed reflective metaphors. Not only was the meaning explored, but I examined the differences between participants’ responses in order to draw out generalised themes in the research (Keegan, 2008).

3.7.4. Documentation

A final method of data collection involves documentation which was used to supplement the data. As reflection played an important role in the learning process and the personal and professional development of the school counsellors-in-training, various reflective tools were used. Research participants frequently used reflection throughout their training through various methods: journals, scrapbooking, free writing and free creative activities such as drawing. Documentation gathered specifically was through written reflections. These were either of a planned nature, as with the journal writing, or free writing exercises.

Documentation 3.1: Example journal writing samples presented by the research participants
2009 A Scrapping Time

This year can be related to doing scrapbooking. I enjoy scrapbooking a lot and find it very calming and relaxing. It helps me to reflect and enjoy the memories that have been created. A pictured captured in a second brings a memory for a lifetime... Throughout this year I have gone to scrapbooking classes as part of my self-care routine. I didn’t go as much as I would have liked to but I ensured that I went regularly. Going for these classes reminded me of going to supervision. Likewise you are given new techniques and skills from experienced professionals that you have to personalise and incorporate on your own page of life or your client’s page.

Reflection 3.1: From Participant 3

In this data collection process I tried to engage with the presented data on a personal level in that I tried to understand the meanings created by the participants through the lenses I was given. These lenses were specific to each participant, and unique to their process of creating shared meaning with me.
3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping-stone towards gathering data and linking one’s findings with higher order concepts (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2008). The analysis of data in a research project involves summarising the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features (Hancock, 2002).

I strove for greater depth of interpretation to investigate the social and cultural complexities of the data fully (Brotherson, 1999). In line with the chosen phenomenological research design of this study, I analysed the phenomena in context (Flood, 2010). Thus, through the careful consideration of participants’ responses during semi-structured interviews and through analysis of artefacts as well as portfolio reflections, the richness of the developed metaphors was fully realised.

Table 3.3: Analysis of different data sets in this research study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Semi-Structured Interviews</th>
<th>Portfolios &amp; Artefacts</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
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</tbody>
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The table above shows the different data sets that I analysed for each participant. In the analysis process, I used a systematic approach to each set of data.

3.8.1. Interview Analysis

Once the interviews were audio recorded, I was able to engage with the data through replaying the recordings in order to identify data and themes within the data. Transcription of the recorded data was also necessary to aid my further engagement with the data. In order to have a written version of each of the interviews, I transcribed them (Hancock, 2002). As part of the process of transcribing qualitative data, tone and inflection can be identified as a means of enhancing the data. Good quality transcribing is not simply transferring words from the tape to the page (Hancock, 2002).
This example of an interview transcript is beneficial in helping the reader understand
the process involved in my engagement with the data. From the interview, my
speaking turns and those of the participants were indicated.

Transcription:

M6: OK, so if you were to use that recipe in your metaphor, how would you describe your personal development through that recipe metaphor?

L7: I think … I am not a chef … at all. I cannot bake, I cannot cook food, so I thought the one thing, when you are a chef, you start at a very kind of a beginners’ level and you have to work your way to the top. You have to experiment. You have to see what works for you. You have to (um) to look at … you know, you have to find your niche in terms of cooking, be it (um) a Crème Brule, or be it a rye bread or , you know, anything. You have to … that’s your process and that’s your discovery. And you can add ingredients and you can take ingredients away and that’s absolutely up to you and you must find what works for you at the end of the day. So if I can … my professional development or personal development … both of them (um) I had to find what worked for me, in terms of my recipe to success. (Um) I had to try things. (Um) I had to exclude things. I had to add a pinch of whatever here and a quarter of whatever over there (um) and at the end of the day, I’m still busy with my recipe, but my recipe … at least we’re at a bit of the last section, at this stage, (um) in terms of making recipes.

Transcript 3.1: Extract from Participant 2

Once the transcriptions of the audio recorded interviews were completed, each transcription was coded separately. Here an excerpt of transcription coding is shown to illustrate the method used to arrive at the themes that emerged during this research inquiry.
In this process, once the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews were completed, I engaged with the data on various occasions. Inductive coding was utilised in order to conduct research without a preset list of categories. I therefore analysed the data in terms of analytic units that conceptually matched the phenomenon of personal and professional development (O'Neil Green, 2008). The data was initially skimmed in order to identify important statements made by the participants in order to highlight general and interesting responses that were linked to the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. I then looked at the transcriptions individually to highlight specific themes relating to personal and professional development, learning, reflection and metaphor. These were colour coded in order to make their identification easier. Once this had been done, correlating themes were gathered from all three interview transcriptions to find any overlap in the data.
3.8.2. Portfolios as Artefacts and the Analysis thereof

In analysing the developed learning portfolios of the school counsellors-in-training, I was exposed to a myriad of different techniques used to engage with their experiences over the course of their training.

Participants used colour, symbols, word, pictures and photographs in their visual representations. The photographs used in many accounts showed peers in the learning and social situation, activities that the participants engaged in throughout the year, training workshops and other experiences which the participants saw as relevant to their personal and professional development. I engaged with the developed portfolios, and also took photographs in order to engage on a more in-depth level later on through careful analysis of the content of the portfolio.

Symbol – Flower, linked to metaphors and reflections within the learning portfolio

Photographs – Personal experiences of school counsellors-in-training that hold significance for the participant.

Words – depicting action in this case.

Other words showing significant or motivational sayings were also used extensively in the learning portfolios.

Portfolio 3.1: Example of brief portfolio analysis of Participant 3
Motivational sayings, ideals and things that hold significance in the experience of the participant were included in this data set. Images relating to success and an end result of learning and achievement were included in this portfolio. Other images here show a journey with footsteps in the sand, and flowers, which show growth and beauty in the training process.

Portfolio 3.2: Example of brief portfolio analysis depicting the use of words and pictures of Participant 2

Photographs – Personal experiences of school counsellors-in-training that the participant found significant were included. These included the formal learning environment of lectures and workshops, as well as activities engaged in throughout the training programme which related to learning and developing as a school counsellor and activities of self-care.

Portfolio 3.3: Example portfolio depicting photographs being used to share experiences of Participant 1

In looking at the content of the portfolios, it is clear that personal, meaningful learning experiences were included. The words evident in the learning portfolios provided codes and categories, and ultimately enriched the themes.
The portfolio content depicted in the above images made it possible for me to see the personal and professional development of these counsellors-in-training. Here my personal involvement in the BEd Honours training programme deepened my understanding and made it possible for me to share the meaning that the counsellors-in-training were depicting.

Artefact 3.2: Artefact linking to developed metaphor of Participant 2

Photographs – Personal experiences school counsellors-in-training found significant were included. These included the formal learning environment of lectures and workshops, as well as activities engaged in throughout the training programme relating to learning and developing as a school counsellor and activities of self-care. The content of photographs enriched the themes.

Metaphor – Pertaining to the learning experience of this participant in which a link was made to the “gaining of personal insight, growth and knowledge” through tapping into the mind of the child and having to see through his/her eyes in order to be the best possible school counsellor”.

Symbol – South African Flag: Depicts context in which counsellors-in-training work.

Artefact 3.3: Artefact linking to developed metaphor of Participant 1
When considering the artefacts – which participants were asked to bring along to the interview stage of the data gathering process – a similar focus was applied to the content in the artefact and the explanation of it, which the participant provided. As with the process of engaging with the portfolios, I focused on the words used in the artefacts, the photographs shown and the content of the artefacts. To create clarity, it is important to note that the photographs contained in the artefacts and the photographs discussed in 3.8.3 differ. In the analysis of the photographs within the artefacts, I took photographs of the photographs and then analysed these for content.

3.8.3. Photographs
In engaging with photographic data, I looked at the content of the images. The images taken from the portfolios relate to the learning experiences that school counsellors had during their training programme.

Photograph 3.2: From Participant 1’s Learning Portfolio
Photographs – relating to learning activities that the school counsellors engaged in during their training. These photographs were selected as meaningful to the participant as they were seen as significant to her personal and professional development.

Photograph 3.3: From Participant 2’s Learning Portfolio

It is clear that personal, meaningful learning experiences were included in the portfolios. Both photographs of their experiences, and words relating to these and other experiences were included. Since photographs were used in the different data sets, these have been elaborated on in the discussions relating specifically to the portfolios and artefacts, as well as the documentation.

In this chapter, I included photographs of the participants. Permission to use the photographs without hiding the identity of the participants was obtained in order to ensure that ethics in this study were adhered to carefully. I feel that is it important to have used the images as they were in order to enrich this study and the themes emanating from it. I believe that in using these photographs, no harm or threat is posed to the individuals in the photographs.

3.8.4. Document Analysis

In the analysis of documents evident in the learning portfolios of the participants, their written reflections provided rich data to aid my exploration of the research question on the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training through the use of reflective metaphors in developed learning portfolios. The
documents have a high level of validity because they reveal what people do or did and what they value and all these behaviours occurred in the training setting of school counsellors (University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2011).

Reflection 3.2: Reflection extract from Participant 3’s portfolio

Reflection 3.3: Reflection extract from Participant 2’s portfolio

The use of reflection to enhance personal meaning-making of experiences through reflecting on different cases which the student engaged with in their training

Identification of personal characteristics

Learning through growth and development

Awareness of personal boundaries

Development – awareness of professional growth, the idea of finding the right tools necessary to establish a place suited to the participant as a professional; the role of motivation in the journey of professional development
The reflections of participants gained through the interview process elaborated on their developed creative metaphors. In Flood’s (2010) study, Giorgi’s phenomenological method of analysis also aims at arriving at meanings shared between researcher and participant. The creative metaphors themselves were studied as personal expression of experiences, adding to the data for this study. Through an in-depth study of the themes emanating from metaphors, I was able to identify codes and categories within my findings from the semi-structured interviews, portfolios and artefacts, photographs and the documentation in the developed learning portfolios. An in-depth discussion of emerging themes will be provided later in this chapter.

Through a careful analysis of the data, themes were identified and elaborated on, in order to provide an understanding of the personal and professional development of the school counsellors-in training. The photographs as data were also analysed in terms of themes and their confirmation of the recorded words of the research participants. Through an analysis of the written reflections of the participants and a consideration of the other data sets, I ultimately identified themes.
Experiences in the training programme – a reflection at the end of the training year.

Personal and professional development reflected in the idea of a journey with professional competency as a destination.

Identity – the school counsellor as an individual, applying personal attributes and strengths to the training process.

Personal development through learning through experience and applying this development in a professional setting and thus enhancing the development of identity as a school counsellor.

Application of learning in designing own style of working with client

Professional Development through the development of a future career

Photograph 3.4: Photograph of a reflection written by Participant 2

Where a single theme was evident in all the data sets, these themes were then correlated with the research question. Using insights from the literature review, these themes are elaborated on later in this chapter in order to discuss the relation between these themes and data findings through the lens of the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training.
3.9. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Patton (2002) makes the point that every qualitative researcher should be concerned about validity and reliability when designing a study, analysing results or judging the quality of the study. Achieving a high level of validity in this qualitative research was challenging because it necessitated the incorporation of rigour and subjectivity as well as creativity in the scientific process (Johnson, 1999). Subjectivity is imperative when studying creative metaphors, in order to retain the meaning each participant portrays through this visual representation. Since I was a student involved in the same training programme from which participants were selected, I had to consciously and continuously reflect on the research processes to ensure that the meaning made through this research process was a shared meaning of the participants’ experiences, and not merely my own. The data had to be protected from skewing, so I could increase the validity and trustworthiness of this study.

Golafshani (2003) makes it clear that validity, reliability and trustworthiness go hand-in-hand as validity and reliability are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality of the study. Through a clear adherence to research guidelines such as validity and reliability in carrying out a qualitative study, these aspects were achieved. The fact that I was a participant in the training programme myself made it possible for me to have a richer understanding of the experiences that participants had in their training. This added depth to the findings. The process of achieving this involved researcher credibility through internal validity, which is where I sought to ensure that my study engaged with the research question posed initially (Shenton, 2004) relating to the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training.

In this process of engagement, through the use of audio recording and transcribing the interviews, I used in-depth interviews with open interview questions, in order to elicit a flow of information from the participants. Open questions allowed me to direct what the participants said back to them, in order to ensure that shared meaning was being created. This enhanced trustworthiness as researcher biases and misunderstandings were illuminated through the sharing and confirmation of information. I further ensured that I engaged with all the data sets thoroughly, in order to immerse myself in the participants’ worlds of experience. In doing this, I initially engaged with the portfolios, and then took photographs in order to study the data
further. I next conducted the interviews and transcribed them. Thereafter, I coded the transcriptions in order to find categories of information grouped together. After analysing this, I then identified the themes in this data set. Later I returned to the portfolios themselves, and again took photographs to enhance the data and my understanding of it. I engaged with the portfolios and artefacts of the participants, before taking an in-depth look at the documentation in the portfolios. From these data sets I developed codes, categories and themes. The themes that emerged clearly in all the data sets were used in the theme discussion that concludes this chapter.

In considering trustworthiness in a qualitative study, Strauss and Myburgh (2003) and Creswell (2002) warn that it is important to bear in mind that triangulation of methods, techniques and even approaches is vital for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon being investigated. Triangulation is seen by Creswell (1998) as being one of eight popular procedures of verification. In order to triangulate the data in this study, I engaged with the different data sets separately. This made it possible to understand and link the information being shared and to make meaning of the experiences of school counsellors-in-training and the way these experiences led to their personal and professional development. To further ensure credibility, a clear evidence trail was provided to illustrate how I engaged with the data, and ultimately how I reached my findings and recommendations related to this research.

In qualitative research, credibility depends on transparency, consistency, coherence and communicability (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In establishing trustworthiness, gathering data from participants through the individual interviews was a vital means of constructing valid and accurate accounts of the experiences of the school counsellors-in-training during their training programme. The supporting data in the form of the photographs, artefacts and reflections of the school counsellors-in-training added to the richness of the data gathered. To further enhance credibility, I reflected on my research processes in order to ensure that my own assumptions and possible biases were addressed, and in so doing limited the impact that these might have had on the research study and its findings.

In this study, the intended aim was to provide insight into the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. Through maintaining a
focus on the research question at each stage of the research process, I achieved this aim. The extent to which research findings can be applied to further studies is pivotal since transferability is an indication of the external validity of research (Merriam, 1998). It was thus important to provide clear descriptions of the research process so research could be repeated by other researchers (Shenton, 2004). The detailed description of the data analysis process therefore was a means of enhancing the dependability of this study.

Lastly, confirmability helps to establish the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of research. The concept of confirmability is related to the investigator’s concern for objectivity (Shenton, 2004). I was guided by Cohen and Crabtree (2008) regarding the criteria for good qualitative research. As a researcher, I endeavoured to conduct ethical research, to adhere to the importance of research, provide clarity and coherence in the research report, use rigorous and appropriate methods, attend to researcher bias through reflexivity, establish validity and credibility, and ensure reliability in this research.

3.10. DISCUSSION OF THEMES
Once the process of data analysis was completed, the final themes of this study were identified. I was able to use the themes that emerged to engage with the research question in my discussion of the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. These themes relate to the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, which are parallel developments since professional development cannot occur without personal development being affected and vice versa. The themes are: a) The Awareness of Self & Others, b) Interacting with Peers & Others, c) Making Connections – Creative Engagement & Development, d) Reflection and e) Empowerment through Control.
My analysis of the data from the portfolios of the school counsellors-in-training and through the interviews that were conducted, highlighted various elements. These elements which aid the learning process and facilitate the school counsellors’ growth as individuals and as counsellors-in-training will feature in the discussion of the themes.

3.10.1 The Awareness of Self and Others

“My Ingredients to Grow” – Requirements for Development (Individual Interview: Participant 2):

The above quotation formed part of an analogy that one of the participants made between a recipe and the growth and development she experienced during the training programme. The ingredients used related to both individual and peer
contributions to the process of creating learning during interactions in a learning community.

In professional preparation programmes such as the one in this study, opportunities are created for participants to construct knowledge in community with others – not only for the benefit of gaining theoretical knowledge relevant to the professional practice, but also for the sake of personal development (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). This was evident in the following comment: “Personal development gave me the awareness to grow as a person through the aspect of culture awareness” (Individual Interview: Participant1). Culture awareness is situated in the South African context in which the training of school counsellors was studied. Developing an awareness of cultural diversity is important for school counsellors-in-training as they need to learn about different cultures and practices in order to work with clients in a variety of situations. In support of this awareness-raising, participant 3 refers to the use of scrapbooking and reflection as making her “aware of certain issues or certain things” that she never realised about herself. “I think I become more compassionate, more empathetic – ultimately that growth reflected on me as a person” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). Individual awareness or the awareness of the self is equally important in making meaning in the learning process as well as in interactions with clients and other professionals. In becoming aware of the self, counsellors-in-training recognise their own personal qualities and characteristics and open themselves to becoming more aware of others during interaction with them. Here, the need to be aware of personal biases and views is evident in the interactions school counsellors-in-training had with their clients, peers, lecturers and other professionals in the health care field. Thus this awareness and shared experience enables school counsellors-in-training to develop personally and professionally.

The success of training programmes such as the 2009 BEd Honours Educational Psychology Programme relies on interaction between a community of learners or students; facilitation of learning relates to the way participants construct knowledge relevant to professional practice, but also for the sake of personal development (Wolfensberger-Le Fevre, Fritz & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). This interaction leads to a transformative learning process in which a community of learning feeds the
development of school counsellors-in-training. Participant One noted that the “Interactions with my peers and the knowledge they had, [this] contributed to my growth and personal development” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). Here an awareness of others facilitated learning and personal and professional development through engaging and sharing with others in a community of learning. These school counsellors-in-training benefited from the interaction with peers, lecturers and other professionals in their development and training programme.

As part of being a community of learning, “We decided to work together to share the load” (Reflection extract from Portfolio of Participant 3). The idea of working together to achieve a common goal here facilitates the learning process of school counsellors-in-training. Tackling the shared workload leads to the creation of awareness of the strengths and contributions of others and their different learning styles. School counsellors-in-training thus develop relationships of trust and share ideas and learning: “It is important for you to connect with people in the field in order to build up a system of confidants” (Reflections from Participant 2). The reciprocating process of learning in the various learning interactions and reflective practices of participants facilitated the acquisition of knowledge. School counsellors-in-training were thus guided towards becoming reflective practitioners with a new way of seeing that enhanced personal development (Harris, Lowery-Moore & Farrow, 2008). Thus creating a new way of seeing, leads to awareness of self and others and enriches learning experiences.

To sum up, personal development is enhanced by an awareness of core qualities of the individual. “I have learnt to acknowledge my personal weaknesses and shortcomings, working on them not to allow for it to be seen as hindering the counselling process I embarked on with my clients” (Reflection extract from Portfolio of Participant 1). Participant Two made a similar observation, which I recorded photographically:
Reflection 3.4: Participant 1: Personal Awareness

This emphasises the need for school counsellors-in-training to get to know themselves in terms of their personal characteristics, their strengths and weaknesses and their preferred manner of learning and developing throughout the programme. Further core qualities relate to empathy, compassion, love, flexibility, courage, creativity, sensitivity, decisiveness, and spontaneity (Tickle, 2009). Once this understanding of the self is gained, it can be integrated into developing personal skills necessary for the effective personal and professional attributes beneficial to school counsellors in the practising profession. The tool of reflection can then be used to create awareness and facilitate learning through the assessment of personal qualities and actions, as well as in reviewing and understanding the ways others function. This links to the development of critically reflective learners through the formation of reflective dialogue in engaging with events and learning experiences. This engagement can be linked to the identification of core qualities through core reflection. As discussed in Chapter Two, core reflection aims at building people’s strengths and facilitates learning in a reflective process, which in turn creates a deeper awareness of one’s core qualities as well as a deeper understanding and awareness of others.

Awareness-raising, related to personal development, may be hindered by the inability to engage with oneself in a critical and reflective manner in the meaning making process. Here the experiences of school counsellors-in-training and how they engage with these experiences is fundamental to development. A failure to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses could lead to school counsellors being overly confident in themselves, possibly resulting in professional negligence.
In personal development, awareness of one’s limitations is a vital part of the learning process of school counsellors-in-training. Through reflective dialogue, school counsellors-in-training were able to engage with their learning experiences in creating a deeper understanding of their experienced events and learning experiences (Shepherd, 2004). When negative dialogue or self-talk occurs, it is often curbed through interaction with others or reflected on in a more balanced way, in order to create a realistic way of thinking and experiencing.

Professional development is enhanced through self-awareness and engaged thinking. Self-awareness through reflection can help the school counsellors-in-training to recognise their own achievements within their profession, and it provides an opportunity to learn from this (Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004). This in turn facilitates a greater awareness of the self. In interacting with peers, reflection is facilitated and allows for engaging in thoughtful and directed discussion (Eagle, Haynes & Long, 2007). Conscious thought in the reflective process is important for enhancing both personal and professional development. The metaphors used by the school counsellors-in-training enhance the building and enrichment of information, and how sense and meaning is made of the world in which counsellors-in-training enter into in their learning process. Thus, in organising and reflecting on information, professional development is enhanced through learning. This is similar to the view in
Holmes (2006) that in order for learning and development to be achieved, a person’s thought must be re-organised to accommodate new learning and understanding.

Professional development is hindered by a counsellor’s inability to recognise core personal qualities and integrate these into his/her practice. Similarly, development might be hindered in the inability to reflect and integrate learning into the development of a professional identity and task conduction. Wenger (2008) contends that learning is facilitated in the active participation in a community of practice. To sum up, development cannot be separated into two unrelated parts: personal and professional development are inter-related parts of the same whole.

“Throughout this year I have gained personal insight, growth and knowledge, tapping into the mind of a child and having to see things through their eyes in order to be the best possible school counsellor” – Metaphor Reflection from Participant 1

3.10.2 Interacting with Peers and Others

“Everybody brings about a different element that makes the circle whole...”

The analysis of the data in the portfolios of the school counsellors-in-training revealed the importance of significant contributors to the training programme. These significant others comprised the participant’s peers, lecturers, other professionals, supervisors, and family, friends and loved ones. “The support of family, friends, colleagues and supervisor made up my support network – without this I would not be where I am today” (Metaphor reflection from Participant 1).

The following photographic representation of a reflection from Participant Two highlights the need to connect with others in order to receive support.

Reflection 3.6: Participant 2: Connecting with people in the field.
Every human constructs unique understanding of the world by experiencing, evaluating and interpreting the world and by merging these interpretations with their earlier interpretations of the world (Leinonen, Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Meilonen, 2000). In creating their interpretations of the world, school counsellors-in-training enter a community of learning with their peers, lecturers and other professionals they work with during their training programme. Through this community, school counsellors benefit from the realisation of “how important the opinion and advice of other people in the field is” (Reflection from Participant 3). School counsellors relied strongly on these interactions throughout their training.

Photographs 3.5: Participant 3 – Learning opportunities and experiences
Photographs – Peer group members engaging in learning in the practical training setting of the programme for training school counsellors

Photograph 3.6: Participant 1 – Learning opportunities and experiences

A community of learning facilitates the development of knowledge and enhances the learning process of acquiring knowledge through the active construction of learners’ own understanding of that knowledge (Leinonen, et al., 2000). Construction of knowledge can also be seen as a participation in shared learning activities (Sfard, 1998). The school counsellors-in-training identified in their portfolios the importance of interacting with peers in their learning experiences. Learning through shared experiences and meaning was evidenced across the data sets. It is clear that the school counsellors-in-training relied on their peers to enhance their learning, as well as to provide a support structure. Learning is always communicative and therefore a social process (Leinonen, et al., 2000). Through the exposure to the experiences of other counsellors-in-training in group reflection activities, “these experiences added to [our] knowledge and contributed to [our] growth, as well as, [our] personal development” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). Learning is best facilitated through reflection on events, for example challenges experienced during the training of school counsellors-in-training. Butler (1996) emphasises that if the learning event is intended to be transformative, there must be a period when the participants are unsettled, wondering and challenged. Through peer interaction and group reflection, participants engaged with unsettling experiences and shared these experiences in the learning community. In this shared learning, I can say that the school counsellors-in-training contributed to the construction or adaptation of the course, and thus
remained more involved and focused with the course materials (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007).

Participants indicated their need for knowledge development throughout their training experience through their expressed need to “gain more knowledge and continually developing on that knowledge through Continuous Professional Development” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). In this development of knowledge, active membership in a learning community allows knowledge and understanding to be accumulated (Lee, 2008). Knowledge is constructed by students; however, interaction with people and the social context is an important part of learning (Perry, Dalton & Edwards, 2008). The training provided the foundation of learning where “school counsellors have the personal and professional responsibility to develop on that by engaging in the current and new literature, [and attend] new workshops to keep up with the ever-changing context of South Africa” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). The school counsellors-in-training shared in the responsibility of this development through the community of development and interactions with others in the training programme.

The aspects of personal and professional development and learning go hand-in-hand in the development of school counsellors-in-training. Within the community of learning through interaction with others, counsellors “tried to integrate both the personal as well as the professional development through [their] learning experiences” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). Through the use of reflection of these shared learning experiences and interactions with others, it was possible to engage with the learning experiences of the counsellors-in-training on a deeper level. This was necessary in order to revisit their preconceived ideas regarding what would affect learning. Cognitive or learning strategies are the “steps or mental operations used in learning or problem-solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials in order to store, retrieve, and use knowledge” (Wenden, 1986). In engaging with these strategies in the community of learning that school counsellors-in-training formed, learning was enhanced. In using this developed knowledge, school counsellors-in-training also shared this knowledge in the community of learning, and in so doing extended their shared-meaning creation throughout their training.
In interacting with peers and others, school counsellors received support for their learning process. These support structures were mentioned as integral parts of the learning process. It seems that the personal support system of the counsellors-in-training – all the necessary and expected pillars such as family, friends and loved ones – is in place. The following photographs of extracts from the portfolios of all three participants are evidence of this.

Photograph 3.7: Participant 1’s Portfolio

Artefact 3.3: Participant 1: Text description of the value of interaction with others

Photographs 3.8: Participant 2: Loved ones providing support throughout the training programme
Participants highlighted the need for support throughout their training, in addition to the support received from the university in the form of lecturers and supervision. Peer support, as well as the support of loved ones and friends, is vital in the learning process. The role of good social relations with the people in a counsellor’s life must not be underestimated; through the support they received, counsellors-in-training were able to complete their training programme despite the enormous stresses the programme causes such as time constraints and stringent requirements. The development of shared learning communities partially meets this need. Through active, responsible involvement in the training programme, school counsellors-in-training were responsible, in part, for their learning and personal and professional development.

3.10.3 Making Connections – Creative Engagement and Development

In the training of school counsellors, theoretical knowledge is presented. This knowledge is then integrated into practice during the practical component of the training of school counsellors. During this time, emphasis is placed on personal and professional development. One of the methods used to assist this integration was engaging with reflective metaphors of learning where “the metaphor relates to professional development as a counsellor. I was able to link [things] in the metaphor to my professional practicum – for me that was the development, being able to make those links” (Individual Interview: Participant 3). These links that were made, speak to the process involved in scrapbooking which this participant engaged in, both as a reflective medium and as a medium for the facilitation of self-care.

In constructing knowledge, school counsellors-in-training attempted to integrate their experiences to enhance their learning through “trying to link all the different elements of scrapbooking to [their] learning process and [their] learning journey” (Individual Interview: Participant 3). In the design and layout of scrapbooking, the photographs and elements are perceived as a unified whole rather than a collection of parts (Pickering, 2004). During the training programme, school counsellors-in-training are taught different knowledge and skills which can be likened to these elements. Similarly, Participant 1 presented these elements as ingredients in the recipe that made up the training programme: “the Honours module included Assessment, Career Development, and all those types of things, and underneath all of that, there were a
lot of other different segments ... those are the ingredients that you need” (Individual Interview: Participant 2).

Participant 3 used Creative Arts Therapy extensively in her connection-making practices. By their very nature, the arts foster different ways of experiencing the world. They are enriching, stimulating, and therapeutic in their own right. In this study, creative arts are represented by the medium of scrapbooking, free writing – “randomly chart down what comes to my mind” – and paintings.

Creative Arts 3.1: – Participant 2: Example of scrapbooking technique

Creative Arts 3.2: Free Writing Example – Participant 2
Deeper reflection was used to promote further learning through making connections. Theories were integrated so that main concepts could be explored within the reflection experience, and later reflected upon again in order to broaden understanding. Here transformative learning is evidenced by the re-interpretation of assumptions, beliefs and presuppositions, which leads to the forming of meaning making schemes and consequently facilitates learning (Barkhuizen & Gravett, 2001).

Through doing “scrapbooking in [her] free time, which was one of [her] self-care things” (Individual Interview: Participant 3), one participant was able to integrate creative arts techniques into her learning. Self-care is a concept that was regularly referred to throughout the training of school counsellors-in-training. One of the focal aspects of self-care is to avoid burnout. Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do people work of some kind (Maslach, 1976). School counsellors-in-training were made aware of the dangers of limited self-care and the effects of burn out, and encouraged to facilitate self-care practices regularly. The participants of this study effectively used the creative arts throughout their programme to facilitate expression, learning and reflection.
In summary, the participants used reflective tools in their self-care activities, and reflective creative art techniques were used in order to utilise creative energies. The use of creative arts therapy techniques was again used as a self-regulating technique in the face of the high demands made by the programme on the school counsellors-in-training; participants would “sometimes just do a painting and leave it” (Individual Interview: Participant 3). Other times, these therapeutic creative techniques were elaborated on, using free-writing. This enabled the school counsellors-in-training to expand their meaning making techniques, and in so doing facilitate the connections made between theory and practice.

3.10.4 Reflection

Reflection played a central role in the learning that school counsellors experienced throughout their training programme. Benefit was derived from reflective activities used to enhance learning: “In the beginning of this year I found it difficult to reflect on feelings and emotions. But as the year passed by, it became easier and allowed me to grow from my reflections” (Reflection from Participant 3). Reflection is a process consisting of five phases which are demonstrated according to the ALACT-model developed by Korthagen (Vidal, 2008). This model conceptualises the steps school counsellors followed in engagement with reflection.
Reflection 3.7: Learning reflection from Participant 2’s Portfolio

4. Creating alternative methods of action

3. Awareness of the essential aspects

2. Looking back on the action

1. Action

5. Trial

Figure 3.3: The ALACT Model describing the ideal process of reflection
In engaging with the portfolios, reflections were used frequently by the school counsellors to enhance their learning. Through engaging with reflection, counsellors made use of the following process as conceptualised by the ALACT model which is an acronym representing the first five phases of the reflection process. Once an action or event had been observed, three basic questions were asked in steps 2, 3 and 4 to facilitate the reflection process:

- **Step 2:** What had happened?
- **Step 3:** What was important there for the school counsellor?
- **Step 4:** What would the school counsellor determine for the next time?

Through engaging with these three phases, school counsellors-in-training were brought to the fifth and final stage in which possible solutions for the initial action or problem were devised and put into practice to help facilitate learning through experience.

In order to gain understanding of these phases, the environment of school counsellors-in-training included the practicum setting where their practical learning and experience was gained. This environment also included the theoretical learning situation of a university in Gauteng, as well as supervisory assisted learning in the supervision sessions which school counsellors-in-training engaged in on a regular basis. The behavioural aspect of reflection included personal behaviours and reactions to the learning situation throughout their training programme.

Reflection needs to be temporarily and contextually appropriate and relevant to personal projects (Clegg & Bufton, 2008). Throughout their training, school counsellors-in-training used various mediums of reflection in order to make meaning of their worlds. Participant 1, for example, used “a lot of poems, pictures, writing and blogging when [she] interacted with forms of reflection. Each individual reflective medium used, gave a different perspective” (Individual Interview: Participant 1).

“Reflecting on the learning process” (Individual Interview: Participant 1) throughout this study formed an important focal point. Through this, transformative learning could be integrated in the learning of school counsellors-in-training through using reflective processes and techniques. This made it possible to engage with different
learning situations and contexts. On reflecting – in the final stages of their training programme – the metaphors and learning portfolios developed by these 2009 group of school counsellors-in-training, depicted personal ownership of the learning process through engaging in the processes of reflection repeatedly and at various levels. Metaphors were a useful means of engaging with and depicting the learning that took place during their training programme. Not only were metaphors used, but the use of reflection on these metaphors was key in the data gathering process as the individual interviews were structured around the exploration of these reflective metaphors. Thus “the process of reflecting is crucial to personal and professional development as a helping-professional” (Individual Interview: Participant 1).

Participants strongly felt that reflection had a positive effect on their learning as it “developed [school] counsellors-in-training both in a personal and professional capacity, as helping professionals, becoming more aware of what [they were] going through, what [they were] feeling, [their] actions and reactions to certain situations, and how [they] might have responded differently” (Individual Interview: Participant 1).

3.10.5 Empowerment through Control

School counsellors-in-training “are absolutely in control of where [they] are going on a professional level” – Individual Interview: Participant 2. Through learning and development, participants were able to own the process of empowering themselves. This empowerment was facilitated through continuing (or continuous) professional development, which has been described as the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the need of the professional, the employer, the profession and society (Madden & Mitchell, 1993). Thus continuous Professional Development (CPD) is integral in the process of professional development. According to the research findings of this study, all participants agreed that the onus is on them as members of the helping professional to attend workshops and gain more information and more theories, and integrate these into practice. Here the school counsellors revealed that they are in control of their professional development and are responsible for attending training opportunities after the completion of their training.
Participant 1 used the image above to highlight the need for professionals and school counsellors-in-training to have a passion for the helping profession in which they practise and to draw strength from it to continue their development. All professionals have an ethical obligation to be involved in and continue their education in the dynamic field in which they practise. As school counsellors-in-training, the development of the professional self commences with the training programme through the exposure to different theories from which one can build one’s own theoretical framework which will guide one’s practice. As beginners in the field, school counsellors-in-training have the opportunity to be “the creator of something different” in their professional careers (Individual Interview: Participant 2). The goals of participants, in terms of their professional goals, played an integral part in their idea of professional development from their training programme. In committing to their goals, school counsellors-in-training were able to make a personal investment in their training, and similarly in their own personal and professional development.

As a guiding body, both during the training process and professional practise of practitioners, the HPCSA and Board of Psychology in South Africa provide counsellors-in-training with a code and scope of practice: “Scope of Practice helps me as a professional to work within my boundaries” (Individual Interview: Participant 1). In having a thorough knowledge of the scope of practice, counsellors-in-training are able to strive for development in the areas of personal and professional development and ethics. The aspect of guidance in the learning and training process, as well as the professional conduct of the HSCPA, is of the utmost importance. Not
only does the HSPCA guide professional practice, but this body facilitates the
development in all areas of training as the scope of particular practice defines the
area in which school counsellors will need to function. These areas are areas which
the participants felt they had personal ownership of, in that they were responsible for
the outcome and success of their interactions and training.

In summary, “professionally, the theoretical component of the training gives
grounding and it gives you a foundation to use in practical” (Individual Interview:
Participant 3). In gaining this grounding, school counsellors-in-training have a
platform on which they can build and develop personally and professionally, and
maintain the responsibility for their development. Through this, empowerment is
incorporated.

3.11. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research paradigm and approach were discussed to assist the
reader in understanding the data gathering and analysis process. The
phenomenological research design, including the data gathering process and the
methods used to analyse the data, were highlighted since they informed this
research study. A clear indication was given that the requirements of ethical conduct
had been met and that the study was trustworthy. Finally, the themes that emerged
were discussed in order to represent the findings of this study and highlight the
achievement of an inquiry into the personal and professional development of school
counsellors-in-training through reflective metaphor analysis. These themes were: a)
The Awareness of Self and Others, b) Interacting with Peers & Others, c) Making
Connections – Creative Engagement & Development, d) Reflection and e)
Empowerment through Control.
CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Brief Overview

4.3. Strengths of the Study

4.4. Limitations of the Study

4.5. Conclusion
4.1 INTRODUCTION
As described in Chapter One, this study aimed to explore the developed metaphors of school counsellors-in-training as a reflection of their personal and professional development. This chapter serves as a concluding summary of the study conducted on the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training through the use of reflective learning metaphors in their developed learning portfolios. Based on an understanding of reflection and theory related to learning and personal and professional development, a thorough discussion of the theoretical framework followed the introduction and motivation for this study. In this chapter a brief overview of the research focus as well as recommendations will be provided. The strengths and limitations of the research will also be discussed in order to provide an overview of this study.

4.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FOCUS
The data in this study speak to the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. Through the phenomenological research design, developed creative metaphors as presented in the participants’ portfolios, were studied, focussing on their reflections pertaining to personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. As was made clear through the content of interviews and data in this study, personal and professional development took place, and was facilitated through the use of learning and reflective activities in order to make meaning in the transformative learning process. This content related to the experiences of the participants in both the formal and informal learning settings, where theoretical and practical knowledge was developed and enhanced.

As a result of this study, I was able to show that personal and professional development are key elements in the training of school counsellors. The use of metaphors by school counsellors-in-training provided a deeper insight into their meaning making processes. As a result of engaging with the participants in semi-structured interviews, I obtained confirmation and supportive evidence of what had emerged from engaging with the developed learning portfolios: effective reflection techniques promote learning. Central to this learning was core reflection through journal keeping, free writing, scrapbooking, and other creative arts therapeutic techniques which facilitated a self care component for the participants in the
programme. Through developing into a community of learning and immersing themselves into this community, the need for connectedness and shared learning became evident. School counsellors made connections not only in their interactions with their peers and other professionals, but also in linking theory to practice during their practicum training programme.

Also important was the way learning facilitates the personal and professional development of counsellors-in-training, through transformative learning. Here the importance of learning and making meaning of experiences – where these experiences are revisited through reflection techniques in order to make sense of the lived world of the school counsellor-in-training – highlight learning as a reflective process. It is through the process of revisiting and making sense of experiences that learning takes place – where the school counsellor-in-training, and even practitioners within the helping profession, engage in a recursive process of thought and reflection. This process includes experiencing disorientation, which requires reflection and critical thought processes in order to make sense of it. One’s assumptions are addressed through this process, as well as a realisation that experience is not unique to a single person, but rather is shared and similar situations might have been encountered by others. Here the premise that one is not alone in experiencing dilemmas and learning is highlighted. By engaging with learning during the process of developing and gaining the necessary knowledge and skills for the implementation of new plans in order to deal with dilemmas, new roles are developed and put into practice. This allows for the development of a confident attitude to change. This ultimately allows for the reintegration of the school counsellor-in-training’s life, empowered with new perspective with which to view the world and continue making meaning.

Metaphors, when combined with reflection facilitate self-insight and self-awareness can be regarded as a tool to promote development. This relates to the aim of the research which was to study the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training through developed metaphors in the learning portfolios. As metaphors function on multiple levels (Mills & Cowley, 2001), I was able to see evidence that school counsellors use metaphors for deeper learning and development.
4.3 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

This research adds to the body of knowledge on school counsellors-in-training in the South African context. Research done aids the understanding of the value of the training programme school counsellors undertake in order to join a worthy helping profession.

During the process of analysis, the visual representations of learning provided rich evidence of the personal and professional development of school counsellors. In developing the themes, I was able to engage with various symbols used in the creation of the reflective metaphors. People in a particular group collectively define the meanings and significance assigned to symbols, words, objects and actions (Pace, 2008). As researcher it was my responsibility to ensure that I understood the meaning participants assigned to the symbols in their learning portfolio, rather than impose my own meaning. This added to the strength of the research.

The strength of phenomenological research is that it allows new features or nuances of the phenomena to appear, which allows for a more in-depth understanding. Phenomenological methods facilitate the study of reflection in that they allow the meanings of human experiences to be perceived (Adams & van Manen, 2008). Furthermore, these result in in-depth research. A phenomenological approach to the study of personal and professional development was used as it assisted in creating an understanding of the concept of reflection – making an everyday lived occurrence, a cognitive and meaningful way of understanding the development and learning of school counsellors.

In conducting this research, I was able to incorporate my personal skills into the data gathering process. The fact that I am an enthusiastic photographer was well received by the participants. My photographs aided the research process, providing a data set that bridged the time that has elapsed since the end of the school counsellors-in-training’s programme in 2009 to the culmination of this research study almost 2 years later.

The research allowed for a greater understanding of reflection. The greater understanding created through the lens of a transformative theoretical framework,
and the simple every day task of reflection was shown to be a powerful tool in the process of learning and personal and professional development. As a helping professional myself, I gained in knowledge and the ability to apply this knowledge to my personal and professional practices – further encompassing the aspect of personal and professional development as an aim of this study.

Having been a member of the group of 2009 BEd Honours Educational Psychology students, I was able to gain a rich understanding of my peers’ experiences throughout the programme. In so doing, I was able to reflect on my own experiences and enhance my understanding and learning, as well as my own reflective skills. This, I believe, has led to and will continue to lead to additional personal and professional individual development. Experiencing the training programme through the eyes of others allowed me greater perspective into my own experience; I have had the opportunity to relate to the learning experiences of my peers on a deeper level than I once had. The learning that has taken place in terms of theory development has opened my eyes to the creative arts therapeutic technique – a technique I was not always comfortable with during my year as a school counsellor-in-training.

The significant contributors to the training programme for school counsellors-in-training were the lecturers, peer school counsellors-in-training, other professionals in the training setting and friends, family and loved ones who provided participants with support, guidance and encouragement to persevere in their learning. An understanding of the contribution that these role players make to the professional journey of school counsellors could also enhance the training programmes for school counsellors. It should be noted that peer counsellors and members of the lecturing team continue to be significant since they become key members of the school counsellors’ networks, promoting future professional growth and learning.

The experiences narrated by the research participants can inform revisions of current training practices and thus enrich the training programmes in tertiary institutions, not only in Gauteng, but in the broader South African higher education context.
Thus the general strengths of this study lie in the understanding it offers of the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. In engaging with rich data sets through portfolios and artefacts, interviews and transcriptions, and photographs a study such as this one allows the data to portray the personal experiences of the participants. The shared meaning created means that the research offers insights into the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training, benefitting the researcher as well as readers who engage with this research.

Researcher bias is a possible limitation to this study. Here my own experiences in the course could have influenced the findings and my discussion of these. I did, however, try to remain as objective as possible when interviewing participants and transcribing the interviews, as well as when I was interpreting the results. This factor is always a challenge in conducting research. In order to limit its effects, I became consciously aware of my own personal experiences, beliefs and expectations and strove to find shared meaning and understanding.

Lastly, my thorough grasp of the theories that informed this research made it possible for me to understand the purpose of this study, and engage with this research on an in-depth and personal level. Through reflexivity and the guidance of my supervisor, I ensured that I was able to construct an understanding of school counsellors-in-training without my own assumptions and prior experiences skewing the results of this research. I was able to in turn enhance my personal meaning and learning experiences through sharing in the experiences and shared meaning created between myself and the research participants. This research study was a rewarding study to engage in as a researcher who was part of the peer learning group of participants involved in this research.
4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

An obvious limitation of this study lies in the lack of male participants as well as cultural diversity – the participants in this study were white females. Cultural diversity would have been interesting to observe and engage with, and would have provided a richer understanding in the South African context. In the absence of male participants, the research findings are only specific to female participants. Later studies of all the students involved in the training programme could provide a more rounded account. The socio-economic background of the participants involved is homogenous. Diversity might have provided more complex findings. Within a qualitative study, only a small number of participants are used. However, had I ensured that I had more time in which to conduct this research, I would like to have included more participants in this study, and thus a more representative group with regard to culture, gender and religion. If I had included participants of different religious backgrounds, for example, it might have been possible to explore differences in the learning and personal and professional development that occurred.

In this qualitative study, where I myself had a learning role, I was not always able to conduct this research as I would have liked to. Initially, I found this study difficult on many levels. I was only able to use half of the time available to me to conduct this research for the minor dissertation. The reasons for this were personal, as well as a change in supervisor.

The process of doing this research was begun in December 2009 when I collected the initial photographic data from the university. In hindsight, I should have conducted the interviews much sooner than I did. Participants had progressed in their studies and life stages, thus had had the opportunity for greater additional personal and professional development to take place. This could have influenced the results of the study as all participants were nearing the end of the Master’s in Educational Psychology programme. Thus the distinction between development and enhancement in the learning process might have been blurred with the passing of time and the further learning that has taken place in this field.

As a student in the course from which participants were selected, I had to be extremely careful to ensure that I did not impose my own meaning on the intended
meaning when I interacted with the data. Biases and personal experiences needed to be kept in strict check in order to limit interference. Being part of the group could have been limiting in terms of the interactions with participants where a more casual approach to the interaction between researcher and participant was taken. However, it also proved to be a strength in this research as participants were comfortable with me as the researcher and thus willing to share experiences or aspects of experiences which were of a more personal nature. They might not have been as ready to share these with a researcher who was a stranger.

In transcribing the participant interviews, the speaking turns were recorded and numbered. I did not however, number each of the lines individually. This made it difficult to engage with the research swiftly as exact references of comments in the data were not available. This limitation relates to the accuracy of the data analysis process where further study would require additional reading in order to locate the exact references made to the data.

In consideration of the research process as a whole, the use of a written reflective journal could have provided enrichment for the data. Although I engaged in reflection cognitively, written reflection could be revisited at later stages and thus the lack of a reflective journal is a limitation to this study. Additionally, in coding the data, utilising external input in the coding process would have provided a more accurate reflection of the data analysis process. In not utilising this input, the validity of this study could possibly be limited as a comparison of my findings and that of an external person could have illuminated further themes or enriched those themes already identified.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Recommendations for future studies like this one, would involve clear theoretical underpinning and an understanding of theory related to personal and professional development. Since reflection is a central component of this study, it is have a thorough grasp of the underlying principles involved in this cognitive process.

This study was conducted with female participants only – a sample of male participants would provide the men in the field with a voice too. Along with gender considerations, the race dynamic of participants – all white, middle class, females –
could yield interesting results in terms of the use of metaphors within different cultures of school counsellors-in-training.

In addition to the participant group demographics, the effect of interaction and networking on personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training could provide an interesting parallel study to this research. The strong learning community which greatly benefitted participants in their training programme could be researched. This research could add to the body of knowledge on the personal and professional development of school counsellors, as well as on learning.

The value of reflection and creative art techniques as a means of developing metaphors is that it can provide rich evidence of the process of personal and professional development. Again, a parallel study on creative arts techniques alone could provide an interesting study, with rich creative data to aid in theme development and a greater understanding.

In conducting this research, my recommendations related to the practical component of gathering the data would be:

1) Do not underestimate the size of the tasks involved in a study such as this.
2) Allow enough time to engage with every aspect of the study so that you are able to understand them and produce trustworthy findings.
3) Conduct interviews as soon as possible in order to gain a clear understanding of the level of personal and professional development at the culmination of a training programme.
4) If time has passed since the portfolios were produced, take this into consideration when conducting interviews and gathering data and assist participants by using photographic data, for example.
4.6 CONCLUSIONS

This research study focused on the personal and professional development of school counsellors-in-training. I hope that the clear introduction to the study in Chapter One and thorough description and integration of theory in Chapter Two have made it possible for me to provide an in-depth understanding of the learning and reflective processes involved in Chapter Three. This final chapter has provided a brief overview of the findings of this study, along with the strengths and limitations of this phenomenological study. I hope that the detail provided will make it possible for researchers interested in developing this study further to do so.

In conclusion, I would argue that this research should prove inherently valuable to faculties of educational psychology as well as those doing communications research. I hope that this research will form a platform for further research which will lead to greater understanding, not only of personal and professional development of school counsellors, but also of the effectiveness of training methods within a structured university programme. This study thus adds to the body of knowledge used to define the support school counsellors-in-training need as well as the body of knowledge which the counsellors-in-training must familiarise themselves with in order to function professionally within this field.
LIST OF REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

ETHICAL DOCUMENTS

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear Megan Clerk,

Ethical Clearance Number: 2011-013

Re: An exploration of developed metaphors of school counsellors in training as a reflection of their personal and professional development.

The FAEC has decided to

☒ Approve the proposal
☐ Provisionally approve the proposal with recommended changes
☐ Recommend revision and resubmission of the proposal

Sincerely,

Professor Alan Amory
Chair: FACULTY ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE

5 May 2011
LETTER OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Dear BEd Honours Educational Psychology Students 2009

The University of Johannesburg’s Educational Psychology department has requested research on the BEd Honours Educational Psychology Programme of 2009. The metaphors used by counsellors in their Practicum of 2009 will be analysed by Megan Clerk in order to gain a richer understanding of their experience of the programme. Through this research we aim to further enrich the programme offered by the University.

The data collection methods will include photographs of the metaphors, a copy of the description of the metaphor and audio and video tape recordings of an individual interview. Confidentiality will be maintained and information will be released only to the research supervisors involved. At any given time the counsellor may withdraw consent without consequences. The record of our conversations, as well as the visual recordings, will only be available to me and my supervisor and will be stored in a safe and locked space. Recorded material to be shared with other individuals will only be done with your written permission with the knowledge that your identity will be protected.

There are no known risks involved in this inquiry and you will not receive any financial reward for your participation. Therefore, while there is no direct benefit for you, the possible advantage of your participation is the development of a better understanding of your role as
a school counsellor. The findings of the inquiry may also be presented at conferences, as well as appear in books or articles, where your chosen name will be used. Feedback of the findings will be shared with you at the end of the research project.

______________________________     ____________________________
Megan Clerk      Dr Helen Dunbar-Krige
Student researcher     Research supervisor

I, _______________________________ (BEd Honours Educational Psychology Student) have read the attached letter of consent and it has been explained to me by Megan Philippa Clerk. I subsequently give consent to Megan Philippa Clerk to utilise my counsellor practicum metaphor as data for the M.Ed Educational Psychology Research. By signing below, I acknowledge having read all the information in this consent form and agree to all the conditions stated above.

Signed at (place) _________________________ by (signature)

______________________________ on ______________________________ (date).

I also provide assent for the inclusion of the following data collection methods (please circle your response):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
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<td>Video recordings</td>
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<td>Photographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copy of the description of the metaphor in the portfolio</td>
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APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION DOCUMENTS

EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONS USED IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS
PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the metaphors in your learning portfolio.
2. What brought this metaphor to your mind, thinking about your involvement in the programme?
3. What were you trying to convey through your metaphor?
4. How does the metaphor relate to your personal development as a counsellor?
5. How does the metaphor relate to your professional development as a counsellor?
6. If you now look back at your metaphor, what stands out or comes to mind?
APPENDIX C

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to attest that I have edited the language of Megan Philippa Clerk’s minor dissertation (The exploration of developed metaphors of school counsellors-in-training as a reflection of their personal and professional development)

(Dr) Elaine Ridge
Freelance Editor and Translator

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