

2015

Thinking differently about reflective practice in Australian social work education: A rhapsody

Lynelle Watts
Edith Cowan University

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Thinking differently about reflective practice in Australian Social Work Education: A rhapsody

Lynelle Watts

Bachelor of Social Work Honours (First Class)

This thesis is presented for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Regional Professional Studies

Edith Cowan University

October 2015

Abstract

There are many different ways of thinking about reflective practice in social work education in Australia. This research utilises a musical metaphor to illustrate this diversity. Written as a piece of music with album notes, the study utilises a reflexive methodology with a qualitative mixed method approach. Three studies were conducted to explore how reflective practice is understood in social work education and practice in Australia. The first study examined my own learning and teaching of reflective practice through an autoethnographic process. The findings indicated a range of models of reflective practice potentially available to the educator. Also explored in this study were the kinds of reflection these models make possible and visible to educators and students. The second study traced the emergence of reflective practice within Australian social work education by conducting a Foucauldian inspired archaeology. This study demonstrated the emergence of specific models in social work education and how their adoption has transformed the language and discourse of problem-solving within the discipline through the use of specific kinds of social theory. In the final study qualitative interviews with social work students, practitioners and educators were undertaken. This study explored the beliefs, attitudes and values held by participants about reflective practice. The final study illustrated the social and oral nature of reflective practice within the discipline. Participant interviews also indicated that reflective practice is a significant means for solving problems and building understanding for learning and practice for social workers. Overall, the study establishes that current models of reflective practice could be enhanced if more attention was paid to instructing students in critical reflection skills such as deconstruction, evaluation, critique, problematisation and interpretation. This would contribute greatly to the ability of social workers to effectively test the limits of their knowledge and practice in the interests of the people they serve.

The declaration page
is not included in this version of the thesis

Dedication

For my grandmother

Ada Violet Griffiths

(1923 -2012)

Miss you

Acknowledgements

This kind of undertaking would not have been possible without the generosity and support of numerous people. I would like to start with thanking the participants who gave their time and expressed interest in the research – it would not have been possible without them. I am also indebted to the many students who have delighted, challenged and inspired me over the years – their dedication and desire to make a difference fills me with admiration and pushes me to do the same.

Huge thanks are owed to my supervisors Dr Vicki Banham and Dr Julie Goyder. Both have been integral to the success of this project. My thanks to Julie – who has been with the project from the start – for all her late night texts saying bravo, numerous encouraging emails, for not being afraid of Foucault, for commiserating with me on the vagaries of archaeology, and for sharing the odd bottle of wine (or two). Heartfelt thanks to Vicki – who came into the project a little later but who has been a wonderful contributor – for being such a great source of calm wisdom with her just-in-time approach to supervision and guidance, the gentle nudges to be clearer and more concise and for taking a chance on a few of my ‘creative’ ideas. These words do not really capture my gratitude to them both. The project is what it is through their wise and generous counsel, any errors belong with me.

I also wish to acknowledge the support of Dean Lyn Farrell and my colleagues at Edith Cowan University’s Faculty of Regional Professional Studies. In particular, the final stages of the writing were made bearable with their support and understanding about what was needed to bring this beast in. A special acknowledgement to my colleagues in the social work program: Professor Kathy Boxall, Rebecca Burns, Colleen Carlon, Meisha Chalk, Jeni Henderson, Dr David Hodgson, Karen McDavitt, and Dr Marilyn Palmer. I have appreciated their encouragement, conversations and support.

For kindnesses both large and small (really too many to list), I offer special thanks to Dr David Hodgson. My thinking in this thesis has benefited greatly by countless conversations about the state of knowledge in our discipline, the craft of teaching, the demands and pleasures of being an academic, a mutual admiration for the work of Foucault and philosophy generally. David also read early drafts and said the magic words: keep going! Thanks also to David for putting up with being quizzed about all things musical towards the end of the project – he took this with great patience.

Thanks to Gayle Hall for reading the final draft of the thesis and giving me such helpful advice and support to keep going in the last days of the project. I appreciate too the time and effort of Dr Nathalie Collins in reading an early draft of my journal article on the autoethnographic stage of the research and providing comment – the paper benefited greatly from her input. Thanks to Graham Hodgson for his support in the final phase of the project where he took my work, cast his keen eye over it and gave it back with lots of little blue and green flags to work through. The work has benefited greatly through his editorial advice. Lastly, there are sections of this thesis and research that have benefited from specific discussions with kind scholars and colleagues. I have indicated where these are in footnotes throughout the text.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I have enjoyed the support of a vast network of family, friends and supporters to whom I owe my thanks and gratitude. Rather than hold up proceedings any further, I have instead chosen to offer these thanks at the end of the thesis in a section entitled *Album Credits*.

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Acronyms

AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
ASWEAS	Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards
EBP	Evidence based practice
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SSA/E	Serious speech acts/events

Presentations of this research

Aspects of this research have been presented in conference posters, presentations and in a journal article:

Watts, L. (2014). A general history of critical reflection in Social Work education in Australia. [Poster]. *The Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development: Promoting Social and Economic Equality*. Melbourne: July 9-12.

Watts, L. (2015). Knowledge for practice: Reflective practice as collaborative negotiation. [Paper]. *2015 ANZSWWER Symposium Building collaborations in education and research: beyond the rhetoric*. Melbourne, Vic: RMIT September 3-4

Watts, L. (2015). An Autoethnographic Exploration of Learning and Teaching Reflective Practice. *Social Work Education*, 34(4), 363-376. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2015.1016903

Prelude¹

Note to the reader

There are many different ways of thinking about and discussing reflective practice. This research has utilised a musical metaphor to illustrate this diversity. What is presented in the following pages is a thesis written as a concept album² featuring a piece of music known as a rhapsody. Rhapsodies are typically quite epic. Two famous examples are Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*³ and Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*⁴. Rhapsodies are usually presented in one movement, although they can incorporate different sections, and they combine a range of musical elements (Thompson & Bellingham, 2015). The inspiration for this format and the creation of a reflective rhapsody came from an interview I saw featuring Freddie Mercury discussing *Bohemian Rhapsody* where he suggested that "... it was basically like three songs I wanted to put out and I just put the three together..." (Queen, 2014: 23). The thesis incorporates 'album notes' as background and orientation to the 'music' of the research. These can be found in chapters one, two, three and four. The 'album' itself can be found in chapters five, six, seven and eight. These chapters have been written as the parts of the rhapsody 'music' taking on a verse, chorus and bridge structure. The only exception is chapter six which is written in two parts with three bridges and a finale. Across the whole work I have included interludes also in a musical sense. In a literary sense, however, these interludes serve as exegeses intended as reflections and explanatory notes as the work progresses.

¹ Prelude can have two meanings. The first is as the opening before a larger piece of music and the second is as a preliminary action or event that is leading to a more important aspect ("prelude <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prelude>," n. d.). In this case the prelude is meant to orient the reader/listener to what is in store.

² Concept albums typically include linked songs on a long-playing record and were prevalent in popular music from 1967 to 1982 (Montgomery, 2002). Moreover, Montgomery suggests that the "...concept album, in addition to musical material, used words or lyrics to communicate that theme to listeners (consumers)" (p. 34).

³ *Rhapsody in Blue* was written by George Gershwin in 1924 and is a combination of jazz, pop and classical elements which has meant that it has always remained difficult to classify (Gutmann, 2003). An example of the piece performed by the Libor Pesek (Conductor) and the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra may be accessed here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynEOo28lsbc>

⁴ Queen's track *Bohemian Rhapsody* was released in 1975 as a track on their *A night at the opera* album (BBC, 2015). The official video released by Queen in 1975 may be accessed at the official Queen channel on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj9rUzIMcZQ>

Chapter 1

Album notes 1 - Orientation

Introduction

This chapter sets out a brief survey of how reflective practice is discussed in the social work literature. The chapter also explains how I became interested in understanding reflective practice through my experience as a social work student and later as a lecturer in social work. The chapter serves as an introduction to the research questions and approach and as an aid to reading. I conclude the chapter with a description of how the thesis has been constructed.

A brief survey of reflective practice

Who isn't reflective? Archer (2010) suggests that the human capacity to reflect is indispensable to human life in at least three main ways. The first is to provide a sense of self "... necessary for the correct appropriation of rights and duties by those to whom they are ascribed" (Archer, 2010, p. 281). The second is the way it enables monitoring of human performance. Lastly, and somewhat crucially, reflection enables human beings to consider the gap between the actual conditions and those of the ideal as they move through society (Archer, 2010, p. 281). Archer goes further to sum up and offer a working definition of human reflective/reflexive capacity as "...The mental capacity that all normal people [possess] to consider themselves in relation to their social contexts; and their social contexts in relation to themselves" (Johnson, 2011, 12:31).

Given the stated ubiquity of reflective capacity how then did reflection/reflexivity become such a *thing* in higher education and in professional social work education particularly? Reflective skills are now considered to be a core element of practice for social workers (Gursansky, Quinn, & Le Sueur, 2010; Thompson, 1995). Moreover it has become an important part of the landscape of social work education in Australia (Connolly & Harms, 2012; Fook, 1996a; Healy, 2014; Pawar & Anscombe, 2015). There

has also been a proliferation of models and processes for conducting, teaching and considering reflective practice in higher education and in social work specifically. Nevertheless, in 1999 Ixer raised a question about reflection from an assessment point of view by suggesting that:

If reflection is to be regarded as a core facet of individual professional competence, then we need to know far more about its structure, substance and nature before we can safely assess it in professional social work training (1999, p. 521).

This question still has relevance for contemporary social work educators as some of these issues are still to be addressed.

Originally based on the work of Dewey (1910 see also; Redmond, 2004) reflective practice was introduced to social workers through a range of different educational sources (Gould & Taylor, 1996; Yelloly & Henkel, 1995). The earliest influence in the social work discipline appears to have come from the work of Donald Schon (1983; 1987) and his collaboration with Argyris (1974;1978). Schon's model of reflective practice actually owes a debt to educational philosopher John Dewey and particularly Dewey's work in *How we think* (1910). Schon's model may be read as being primarily about the use of reflection for the development of practical judgement⁵ in professional life. Schon considered reflection as an important route to the avoidance of routine

⁵ I am using the term practical judgement with a considerable debt to Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012). Kinsella and Pitman suggest that *phronesis* is a species of rationality which is pragmatic, oriented to action, developed *in situ* or is considered as context dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Kinsella & Pitman, 2012). *Phronesis* has been discussed by Flyvbjerg as different from *techne* and *episteme* where *techne* is understood as craft knowledge based on the implementation of procedures in a context dependent way in order to accomplish a specified goal. This rationality is sometimes also referred to as instrumental rationality. *Episteme* in contrast to both *techne* and *phronesis* is rationality that is universal and thus context independent. Modern usage of these terms would be technical, technician and technology while *episteme* has come to be used in relation to debates about knowledge known as epistemology.

applications of learnt theories or procedures, so-called technical solutions or *technical rationality*⁶, to ill-structured problems which arise in practice.

However reflection in education theory has a much longer pedigree. Redmond suggests that Schon's primary achievement was to take an educational notion such as reflection, and through his earlier collaboration with Argyris, apply it to professional practice beyond the academy (Redmond, 2004, pp. 31-33). This was of great interest to social work as a minor or semi-profession (McDonald, 2006) where the links between the practical work of the discipline are often experienced as occurring at a distance from the theories developed to explain the work (Ryan, Fook, & Hawkins, 1995). Social work educators saw reflection as a way to bridge the gap between practice and theory (Fook, 1996a; Thompson, 1995). Social work educators in Australia also utilise the idea of reflection to develop ways to build practice theories within an Australian context (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Fook, 1993; Healy, 2000), a point that is described in detail in chapter six where I examine the emergence of the concept through the method of Foucauldian archaeology.

Schon's work started to emerge into Australian social work from the mid to late 1980s (Scott, 1989) and began to be adopted into social work texts from the 1990s (Fook, 1999; Gould & Taylor, 1996; Sheppard, 1998). The concept *reflective practice* was also undergoing something of a transformation within the wider adult education literature. The works of Paulo Freire (1972), Jack Mezirow (1990; 1991), Stephen Brookfield (1993; Brookfield & Preskill, 1999), and Australian David Boud (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Boud & Knights, 1996) were particularly influential as these works introduced ideas about education as a means for achieving emancipation. Of these educational theorists only Mezirow and Brookfield acknowledge the role of Dewey in influencing their particular models (Redmond, 2004). Freire, in contrast, developed his pedagogical approach out of his experiences in his native Brazil, where he worked with oppressed

⁶ Technical rationality, also sometimes used interchangeably with instrumental rationality and is understood here as the application of processes and procedures to a problem for the purposes of accomplishing a goal (Schon, 1983). An example of this in social work may be the application of an assessment tool for enabling intake and referral to a service. The purpose of the assessment tool is to assess whether the client's situation meets already determined criteria.

groups in an education system unresponsive to local contextual knowledge (Freire, 1972). For Freire, reflection is seen as an important component of achieving *conscientisation*⁷ and thus a route to achieving freedom from oppression.

These ideas about emancipation resonated strongly with social work educators working within an academy which was increasingly being transformed by managerial ideas (Fredman & Doughney, 2012) that were implemented through the adoption in Australia of widespread neo-liberal⁸ practices. These practices were locally described as economic rationalism⁹ (Ife, 1988, 1997; Pusey, 1991). Critiques of economic rationalist practices encountered in higher education resonated with social work practitioners who confronted similar imposts in the delivery of welfare across Australia during this period. The parallels between the academic experience and that of practitioners' practice emerged through conference discussions and connections were made between reflection and consciousness raising in both settings (Bainbridge & Williams, 1995). It was felt that students should be enabled to challenge these economic and managerialist practices both for themselves as workers likely to be affected, but more broadly for the people social work serves in its social justice mission. Education was considered a key way for this process to occur. Educators of a critical persuasion would link these processes together: becoming educated and working for the liberation of others.

One of the links between Brookfield and Mezirow is the work of Freire according to Redmond (2004). Work inspired by Freire has since come to be known under the broad

⁷ Conscientisation is developing "... critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action (The Freire Institute, 2015).

⁸ According to Centeno and Cohen the term neo-liberalism can be defined in at least three ways (Centeno & Cohen, 2012). The first is in policy terms about operating an economy; second as a response to crisis in politics and the uses of power; and third as an ideology (Centeno & Cohen, 2012). Social work commentators (Dominelli, 1999; McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009) have focussed on how neo-liberal practices have affected welfare delivery in various states thus focussing on both economic and ideological definitions of neo-liberalism.

⁹ Economic rationalism was a term first coined by Michael Pusey to describe a certain type of approach to government, which saw the implementation of ways of delivering services modelled on market context (Pusey, 1991).

heading of *critical pedagogy*¹⁰. This work sees education as a process of liberation and freedom and critical pedagogy has adopted ideas from feminist, Marxist, post-colonial and post-structural social theory (Kincheloe, 2004). As a result the original Schon model has since been elaborated by social work educators in Australia (Fook & Askeland, 2007; Fook & Gardner, 2007; Morley, 2004; Morley & Dunstan, 2012) and beyond (Redmond, 2004; Ruch, 2007, 2009; Thompson & Thompson, 2008). These elaborations have incorporated existing concepts and ideas from within the social work profession in addition to those offered within the education theory of critical pedagogy itself. The result has been the creation of a range of reflective practice models with a unique social work disciplinary flavour.

One result of this transformation in a disciplinary sense is that it has become more common for Australian social work texts and authors to use the term *critical reflection* in contrast to the older term *reflective practice*. This combination picks up the influence of critical theory inspired critique and combines it with a focus on the development of a practice epistemology. This can be seen, for example, in the Australian Association of Social Workers *Practice Standards* (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2003, 2013b) where the term critical reflection is the only term utilised within the document to indicate the ability to reflect on practice, attitudes, skills or values.

The adoption of the term *critical reflection* may not be a particular issue where there is broad agreement about its meaning. Whether such agreement has been achieved since its introduction into Australian social work education is far from certain, despite its adoption into the Australian Code of Ethics (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010a), the Practice Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013b) and the education and accreditation standards of the profession (Australian Association of Social Work, 2013a). There are many different ways in which social work educators

¹⁰ Critical pedagogy here is understood as the recognition that educational practices never occur in ideological and politically neutral spaces. Thus critical pedagogy is oriented to naming the political and ideological factors that are present and working to end the forms of oppression that result through the practice of dialogue and conscientisation (Kincheloe, 2004).

utilise terms like reflection, reflexivity, and reflectivity even without the addition of the term *critical*. In their survey of the way in which social work utilises the various terms D’Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez (2007) suggest there are three different ways in which they might be conceptualised. The first is broadly sociological derived from work by Beck and Giddens (Beck, Lash, & Giddens, 1994). This kind relates to theorising about how humans relate to the social contexts they find themselves contending with. The second kind of reflexivity described by D’Cruz et al (2007, p. 77) is one concerned with “ ... questions how knowledge is generated and, further, how relations of power influence the processes of knowledge generation”. Thus, practitioners and educators must subject their own knowing to analysis and reflection. In this schema this kind of reflexivity is seen as closer to that of social scientific practices of reflexivity. Lastly, a third form is described by D’Cruz et al, which incorporates earlier social work approaches to the ‘use of self’ derived to some degree from psychodynamic understandings (Ruch, Turney, & Ward, 2010) but which include explicit attention to anxiety and emotion (Rai, 2012; Ruch, 2009) more generally. The upshot to the range of diversity with regard to these terms is that “ ... there is a lack of clarity about the concept in terms of who is being exhorted to be ‘reflexive’, when and how” (p. 73).

Just as there is a range of different conceptions of reflexivity there is also some confusion about the term *critical*. It can have a range of meanings in social science generally (Hammersley, 2005) depending on its purpose in being utilised. For example, it can mean “assessment of knowledge claims in terms of their likely validity” (Hammersley, 2005, p. 176) or it can be taken much further inspired by the theorising for the Marxist, feminist or poststructural schools of social theory to mean a thoroughgoing critique of all claims to knowledge (Hammersley, 2005). Similar elements can be found in both, suggesting a common theme that relates to the attention paid to knowledge creation and claims about knowledge.

The term *critical* is also debated within wider education circles and can have widely differing meanings, depending on particular academic tribal orientations and their approaches to knowledge (Ylijoki, 2000). Within the social work field *critical* has come to denote the relation between individuals and societal structures (Fook, 2002; Fook & Askeland, 2006) and perspectives on how these might be contested and changed (Fook, 2002; Healy, 2005; Rossiter, 1996). Yet in education circles *critical* may mean *critical analyses*, which involve processes of hypothesis testing, compare and contrast, deductive and inductive thinking processes through which beliefs and ideas are tested (Halpern, 1992; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). In social work the processes of have become tied up with perspectives emanating from critical theory (Tilbury, Osmond, & Scott, 2009).

For students and instructors this lack of clarity about concepts and their terms is problematic. It also raises questions about how concepts can come to indicate something specific beyond their face value, which is related to disciplinary knowledge. For example, do these terms signal, in a disciplinary sense, a particular type of reflective action, and if this is so, what is this action? Does this term prescribe certain ways of considering the problems of practice? If so, what are the implications for teaching students what social work means when it discusses being critical in the context of analysis and reflection? Does the incorporation of *critical perspectives*, derived from various social theories, introduce a particular theoretical stance towards practice? And are we as a discipline clear about what this stance is? What kinds of critical analysis do these theoretical stances pre-impose for students as they learn the practices of being critical? Does the adoption of sanctioned approaches to theory and thinking foreclose other kinds of reflective thinking? Are we, as a profession, turning the wicked problems that characterise social work practice into *structured* problems by introducing theoretical solutions? And will this perhaps foreclose the development of the “complex monitoring...involved...when adults are faced with ill-structured problems” (King & Kitchener, 2002, p. 37), which characterises the development of reflective judgement (King & Kitchener, 2004). In light of these questions I turn now to consider the reason for examining reflective practice in this study.

Why examine reflective practice?

This study has set out to examine the practice of reflection within the context of social work education and practice in Australia. Given the discussion above, the aim was to consider how reflective practice emerged as a core skill required for social workers and to examine the various models that might be utilised to teach it to students. My initial interest in the topic arose from two distinct but related experiences. The first was my experience of learning social work in a school whose broad ethos was one of a critical pedagogical approach during the late 1990s and early 2000s. I found the experience of learning to be a social worker within this environment both exhilarating and very challenging. I learnt my critical reflection lessons well and had by the time of graduating adopted, fairly uncritically as it turns out, the broad tenets of a critical reflection largely underpinned by feminist and Marxist explanations of oppression and marginalisation (Griffiths, 1995; Young, 1990) and the uses and abuses of power (Grosz, 1990). I learned that no space was free or neutral from the effects of structures and power.

My practice experiences subsequently neatly demonstrated both the extent and the limits of this particular way of using reflection in order to understand the problems of my practice within the organisation and with my work with service-users. I found many of my assumptions about power challenged by moving through various organisational and practice settings. Nevertheless being able to engage in an analysis of power offered significant benefits. At the same time it seemed to me that the challenge to power that came with a critical stance could be difficult to enact as it was not so easy to see who the decision makers were and the various markers of power shifted with every context. Further, significant parts of my practice became routine, which I experienced as a sense of competence and not as a cause for concern. I settled into understandings about my practice context that started to serve me fairly efficiently in navigating the “swampy lowlands” (Schon, 1983, p. 42) of practice. I preferred to see myself this way rather than accept that I had adopted too easily the practice of a technical bureaucrat. I found that I quite liked having clear processes and procedures to follow, even if they were constructed by me. They were comforting to both myself

and my clients. Having learnt my critical reflection lessons well I admit to feeling concerned about this sense of *settling in* or *selling out*. I was not challenging much in the way of the status quo. I wondered about having sold out. I found myself concerned at how quickly that might have occurred. I worried about my moral character and my credentials as a critically reflective social worker. I could if pushed still offer a fairly robust analysis of power, however, my experience was that it often precluded the very outcomes I was trying to achieve for service-users I was working with. I wondered if this was the gap the literature talked about between theory and practice.

The second was my experience of taking up a lecturing position, returning to the same social work school where I had undertaken my undergraduate studies in social work. The school was still broadly committed to a critical pedagogy in terms of the kinds of theories it taught and the practices within individual units¹¹. Things had changed though in that the university instituted a range of quality assurance mechanisms, which constrained the ways in which assessment were negotiated with students. My first teaching foray was in field education units with a focus on integration of theory and practice and by teaching a unit on social work practice within the field of alcohol and other drugs. In both units there were significant reflective assessments requirements. These assessments seemed to generate enormous angst between the students and myself. Students worried about these assessments more than any others. I seemed to spend more time explaining how to approach these papers than any other kinds of assessments. This reignited my doubts from my social work practice experiences and it sent me to the social work literature to try to find some clarity about the role and purpose of reflective practice within social work particularly. What I found was a bewildering array of models (Fook, 1996a; Gould & Taylor, 1996; Taylor, 1996; Yelloly & Henkel, 1995) and many different ways it could be taught across not just social work but also in other disciplines (Boud & Middleton, 2003; Gibbs, 1987). As

¹¹ At this institution the term *unit* describes a course or subject within the social work curriculum. A unit typically runs for a semester and includes designated learning outcomes, content and assessment that can be delivered in various modes including online, on-campus, block or intensive. These can also be referred to as courses, subjects, modules depending on the institution.

a result of these experiences a number of questions presented themselves about the issue of learning, teaching and using critical reflection.

The intention of this chapter, so far has been to introduce the topic of reflective practice in social work education and how I came to be interested in researching it. In the next half of the chapter I introduce the research problem and conclude with a description of the aims and research questions of the study. The final section of this chapter will outline how the thesis has been conceptualised as an album and piece of music. The specific content of each chapter is included as an aid to the reader.

Formulating a question

Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) propose the idea that there are many different approaches to arriving at the parameters of a research problem. Most commonly, researchers build their research problem by examining the way in which the topic is understood through the various bodies of knowledge that surround it and which have contributed to its current status or development. This approach is called gap-spotting. There are different strategies involved in gap-spotting including where there is confusion about the issue or problem; neglect of significant aspects; locating under-researched areas or where problems might have been overlooked and lastly areas that could be enhanced by empirical studies or extensions of existing models (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011). Sandberg and Alvesson suggest that this is the main way in which researchers approach the development of research topics or problems. The underlying assumption of their claim is that researchers *develop* research problems as these are generally not lying around waiting for a smart analyst to find them (Stone, 2002). Sandberg and Alvesson suggest that research problems are developed through distinct strategies, which should, in an ideal sense, add to the knowledge base and “generate interesting and significant theories” (p. 24).

A second way in which a research problem might be developed is through problematisation. Problematisation is a process where the ground of the topic may be developed through “the identification and challenging of assumptions underlying the

perspectives and cultural ‘truths’ within which we are situated” (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 22). There are also elements of problematisation in gap-spotting approaches; however, problematising underlying assumptions is not generally the main focus in gap-spotting. Within problematising approaches the purpose is to demonstrate deficits in current conceptualisations of the topic. There are a number of ways this might be undertaken. The first is to consider how complete the available knowledge on the topic is. The second is to evaluate the kinds of approaches taken to the topic by previous researchers. Thirdly, a researcher might canvass the existing approaches and suggest that they are incommensurate and have therefore neglected to fully develop some or all aspects of the topic. In this strategy researchers seek to add to the body of knowledge by suggesting corrections to the way in which the topic is understood.

The main strategy in this study was to deploy a problematising approach. The way each part of the study addresses problematisation is discussed below in chapter four. The reason for this began with my curiosity about how reflective practice had become a ‘given’ within social work to such an extent so that it had become difficult to imagine the possibility that one might practice effectively, or well, without being reflective. The idea of reflection as a way of learning and improving practice has become so accepted within the discipline of social work that questioning its use had become increasingly unthinkable and unsayable (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

This is not to say that there have been no questions raised about its wholesale adoption into social work education and practice, but rather, that these critiques (Ixer, 1999; McBeath & Webb, 2005) have found little purchase within social work in the face of the overwhelming acceptance of reflective practice and critical reflection which reached a peak in the early 2000s. I became interested in understanding what had been in its place as “good” practice if it had only been “discovered” as a technique in the late 1990s. Moreover *critical reflection* had become problematised for me through the experiences described above. In my brief survey of the literature it had also become clear that there was a widespread acceptance of some kinds of reflection over others

within social work and that the way in which it was discussed signalled a particular disciplinary sense.

The research aim and questions

My ultimate goal is for this research to contribute to improving teaching and learning for social work students. Therefore the aim of this research is to examine the ways in which reflective practice is understood within the discipline of social work in Australia. I recognise that social work in Australia has significant ties to the international social work community through its participation in various peak bodies and also through knowledge exchange across universities, journals, conferences and organisations. These ties are important sources of history, knowledge exchange and development for the discipline. Social work in Australia nonetheless has also established its own distinctive flavour developed from within the Australian culture and history. Consequently in developing my approach I became interested in conducting a study that focussed particularly on the Antipodean¹² experience of reflective practice.

Research questions

This research has a primary question that has shaped the overall design and which relates specifically to the aim outlined above. This question is:

- In what ways can reflective practice be understood in social work education and practice in Australia?

In order to address this question three lines of inquiry have been conducted, each utilising a different method situated within an overarching reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Each line of inquiry was pursued through a single study that contributes to main research aim and question.

The first line of inquiry was an autoethnographic study of my experience of learning and teaching reflective practice. The question addressed in this study was:

¹² Antipodean refers to people from Australia and New Zealand and was first coined in the 17th Century (Oxford Dictionary, 2015)

- What was my experience of teaching and learning reflective practice?

The autoethnography utilised a range of data sources including an original autoethnographic study conducted during my third year as an undergraduate student about learning social work, student journal data, assorted class notes, lecture notes and associated marginalia, a teaching journal, and various voice memos from the period 2002 -2012. The specific data sources and the process undertaken are outlined within chapter four. The autoethnography is reported in chapter five.

The second line of inquiry utilised the method of archaeology (Foucault, 1972) in which the following question was addressed:

- How did reflective practice emerge in social work education in Australia?

This study outlines the emergence of reflective practice and was undertaken as a way to problematise reflective practice. This is sometimes referred to as conducting a *history of the present* (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). A history of the present is an inquiry that examines the limits of the sayable within a specific field focussed particularly on processes of subject-formation¹³ (Karakayali, 2015). Limits can mean a number of things within this context but it has been taken here to mean:

... the characteristic forms of thought and action which are taken for granted and not questioned or contested in a practice of subjectivity, thereby functioning as the implicit or horizon of their questions and contests, or it can mean that a form of subjectivity (its forms of reason, norms of conduct and so forth) is explicitly claimed to be a limit that cannot be otherwise because it is universal, necessary or obligatory (the standard form of legitimation since the Enlightenment). (Tully, 1999)

¹³ This was a focus of Foucault's early work where " ... he studied the processes of subject-formation mainly as forms of *subjection*, focusing primarily on the role of scientific discourses and technologies of power in the constitution of subjects in western culture" (Karakayali, 2015, p. 105).

In developing this analytic¹⁴ the purpose was to understand the taken-for-granted and unquestioned aspects of reflective practice which can be characterised as a form of subjectivisation (Tully, 1999). This kind of subjectivisation is where “... subjects render an aspect of their experience problematic, in response to difficulties and obstacles in practice” (Foucault, 1988, cited in Tully, 1999, p. 97). The purpose of this stage of the study was also to operate as an antidote to the highly interpretative autoethnographic stage of the study, not least by using a method that does not situate discourses within the consciousness of a single author (Foucault, 1992).

The third line of inquiry was the conduct of qualitative analysis of interviews with social work educators, practitioners and students in order to answer the question:

- How is reflective practice utilised in learning, teaching and practicing social work?

This stage was designed to consider the ways in which social workers describe and understand reflective practice in the contemporary period. The interviews were conducted with practitioners, educators, and students. This study developed a line of inquiry concerned with the cultural knowledge of social workers about the place of reflective practices in contemporary social work education and practice. The analysis explored the meaning of reflective practice for participants in addition to how it is learnt, where and through what activities it takes place.

The research as a whole has been captured in figure 1 below. The study design has been situated within an overarching reflexive methodology where the purpose of each line of inquiry provided a mechanism for addressing four different kinds of interpretations using an overarching hermeneutic movement between part and whole, pre-understanding and understanding (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

¹⁴ Koopman and Matza (2013, p. 822) suggest the use of the term *analytic* which in terms of Foucault’s work refers to the way of “conducting an inquiry”. Thus in this sense the term can be contrasted with theory which “... by contrast, needs *do* no work in order to *be* true. Analytics gain any *being* they have only by *doing*.” (*ibid*)

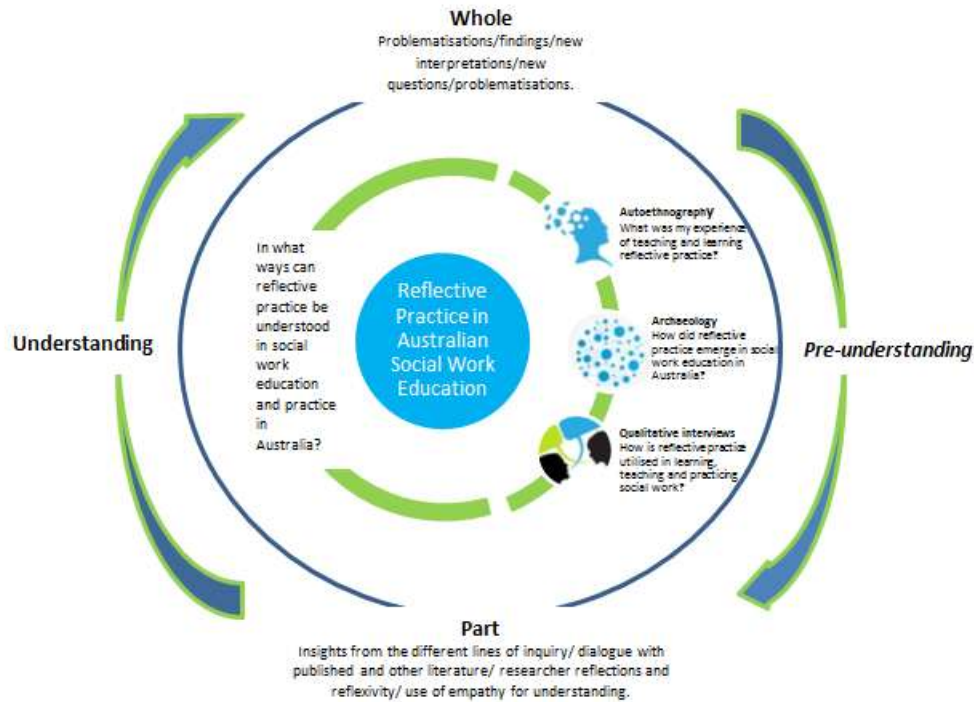


Figure 1: Graphic depicting the study as a whole

The methodology is discussed at length below in chapter three. This figure is also discussed in the final chapter which presents the findings in relation to the main question of the research. I turn now to discuss my presentation of the thesis as a concept album.

The structure of this thesis

Metaphors

As mentioned in the prelude the thesis is presented as a concept album that contains a piece of music called a rhapsody. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe metaphors as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 5). I am using the idea of a concept album to give shape to seeing reflective practice in the same way that music can be seen: as diverse and combinatorial. The concept album allows room for including all the orientation, background explanation for choices of methodology, method, ethics and themes that have gone into preparing to perform the various lines of inquiry in the research. Metaphors can add to the exploration, and analysis, and convey ideas in different ways in addition to the disciplined reporting of the results. I am aware, however, that there is a tension between rigour and creativity

that must be balanced. Metaphors may be taken too far or considered too literally. Indeed Alvesson (2011, p. 64) cautions however that “even ...lovers of metaphors must balance creativity and imagination with discipline and carefulness in use of metaphors” (2011, p. 65).

The need for rigour and discipline has been accomplished in a number of different ways. Bridges¹⁵ have been incorporated into the thesis as forms of transition between different parts of the thesis. These bridges appear in the form of exegeses throughout the thesis and they serve a range of functions: as pauses, reframings, wonderings and explanations of lines of inquiry sometimes taken or at other times not pursued. The bridges are generally short so as to mimic an early jazz style where they were used to “separate strains of multi-thematic compositions” (“Bridge” 2015). These are indicated between formal chapters by the title *Interludes*. Each bridge includes a subtitle to indicate its respective focus. They generally pick up on an aspect of the chapter that preceded them as they are research reflections. The purpose of the bridges is discussed further in chapter three.

Chapters have different roles to play in the album. Each chapter denotes a particular part of the album or music. As mentioned in the prelude, chapters one to four can be likened to the notes included in an album that explain the thinking, rationale, background and development of the album. Thus, in chapter two, I have charted the theoretical ‘melodies’ that have informed the work here and related these to different kinds of music. Next I have presented an examination of the philosophical basis of the research and presented the methodology informing the design of the study in chapter three. In chapter four the methods used to develop the three lines of inquiry are described. I have also included the limitations and a section on the ethics of the study overall in chapter four.

¹⁵ A bridge is a term for the formal transition between pieces of music where it can often incorporate other themes, different key and musical contrasts (“Bridge”, 2015).

In chapters five, six, seven and eight the rhapsody is presented as album tracks. Each of these chapters has a particular song to play within the rhapsody as a whole. In order to illustrate this I have chosen specific musical genres to give readers with a sense of what they might be ‘listening’ to as they read each chapter. In chapters five, six and seven each of these lines of inquiry are presented as parts of the rhapsody: the autoethnography is a track that includes a solo performance, the archaeology as an instrumental track, and finally the interviews as a choir performance. Chapter eight presents a finale track which brings the rhapsody to a conclusion by returning to the main research question: In what ways can reflective practice be understood in social work education and practice in Australia? I have included explanations in footnotes of the kinds of music and have created a playlist to illustrate the kind of music¹⁶ discussed. Only the album *track* chapters utilise a verse, chorus and bridge structure to indicate sections and changes in direction. The titles to these music chapters also indicate the kind of music it is and what subject positions it is meant to capture within the research. For example, the autoethnography in chapter five explores the experience of a single subject but relates this to the social, cultural and professional context surrounding that individual. Thus, this chapter is represented as a solo performance. In contrast chapter six utilises forms of instrumental post-rock¹⁷ form of music as a way of representing the archaeological line of inquiry. This form of music is suited well the focus on the discursive landscape which shapes the limits and freedoms that people might experience. Lastly, chapter seven presents the findings from qualitative interviews and utilises a gospel choir song to represent the idea of people in a group singing with and about their experience. Chapter eight is shorter than the others as this represents a *finale*. It brings together the main melodies and ‘sounds’ from the rest of the thesis together in order to summarising the research findings.

¹⁶ A Spotify playlist has been developed to enhance reader understanding of the chosen music genres – it is recommended that readers listen to it in the order as this has been constructed deliberately to match the order in which music genres and songs have been introduced

<https://open.spotify.com/user/ljljwa0401/playlist/3j0C4rffO92tN5gXBGShSx>

¹⁷ Post rock music is, according to Reddit users, the kind of music that “uses rock instrumentation but disregards typical “rock” song structure (r/post-rock, n. d.). Mostly instrumental, a typical track features quiet arpeggios around simple chord progressions that swell into rousing crescendos. Fans liken the style to the avant-garde with soundscapes similar to that of classical music (Redwood FM, n. d.).

The reader might be reassured that despite this creative use of structure and style (Sword, 2009) attention has also been paid to balancing this with meeting the expectations of a thesis (Kamler & Thomson, 2006). Therefore, this thesis has all of the usual sections that readers might expect to find in a dissertation: theoretical discussion, methodology, methods and ethics, results and analysis, conclusions and recommendations (Becker, 1986; Thomas, 2013). The only exception to this is exclusion of a traditional literature review chapter. As the research incorporates three smaller studies using a great deal of the same literature I have incorporated the literature throughout the thesis rather than presenting it in a single chapter.

Closing notes

In summary, reflective practice has enjoyed a significant rise in status within social work over the last 20 years and as such it has been elaborated into a range of approaches that are the focus of this research. Three main lines of inquiry have been pursued in this research using the methods of autoethnography, archaeology, and qualitative interviews. The research has been written as a concept album within which these lines of inquiry are represented as the album tracks. The idea of the concept album and a piece of music called a rhapsody was intended as a way to bring disparate elements together to address the aim of the study, which is to understand reflective practice within the context of social work education in Australia.

Interlude 1

*Wrestling octopi (or my missing literature review chapter)*¹⁸

Like many doctoral students the *literature review* loomed as an overwhelming task (Kamler & Thomson, 2006). Based on my initial review, conducted for my research proposal, four main areas appeared to be important for understanding reflective practice in social work education. These were psychology, education, sociology and social work itself. I set off and ended up conducting a great deal of literature reading and searching. And, of course, if you go far enough back in all of these disciplinary areas you start arriving at philosophy and ideas stemming from the Enlightenment (Bristow, 2011). Eventually you realise that many of these ideas have separated into various disciplinary approaches to knowledge (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Take John Dewey as an example. Widely revered as the grandfather of American pragmatism and also important to education scholars, Dewey's work has enjoyed a renaissance in philosophy in recent years (Festenstein, 2014; see also Koopman, 2013). Any work that traces its understanding of reflective practice to Donald Schon (1987) is also influenced by the work of Dewey (Redmond, 2004).

I had started the review in my home territory of social work but soon found many links to the other disciplines as expected from a profession that explicitly uses interdisciplinary knowledge (D'Cruz, Jacobs, & Schoo, 2009). I started a process of tracing reflective practice from each discipline through various literatures starting with experimental or philosophical/theoretical research and moving through these to more applied research and then back to social work. I started to group the findings into themes. Three themes emerged that related to reflective practice and which seemed to be common to all the disciplines I'd considered: the development of judgement; importance of including emotion, and critical thinking. The literature considered in this process is also represented in a graphic, which can be found Appendix C. Some of this literature and the main conclusions of the review were included in a paper submitted to *Social Work Education – The International Journal* (Appendix B).

Once I'd considered this literature I wondered if it would connect to the many reflective practice models I had already accumulated and which people had kindly sent to me when they learned of my research topic. What I found was that all of these reflective practice models had elements of judgement development, included a link to emotion and included different kinds of critical thinking (Bain, Ballantyne, Mills, & Lester, 2002; Baxter Magolda, 2004; Fook, 1999; Gibbs, 1987; King & Kitchener, 1994; Moon, 1999; Redmond, 2004; Ryan, 2012; Schon, 1983). What differed were the emphases on these three main aspects. One thing was clear - the consensus on the importance of reflection is pretty widespread.

¹⁸ The title of this exegesis is a play on a metaphor discussed in Kamler and Thompson (2006, p. 34). The original metaphor was offered by a doctoral student on the issue of writing a review of literature within a study and involved "persuading (selected arms of) an octopus into a glass" (Kamler & Thomson, 2006, p. 34). In this study I felt more like the task was closer to wrestling than persuading, and possibly more than one octopus (perspectives, theories, ontologies and critiques).

Chapter 2

Album notes 2 -Theoretical melodies

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework as a form of background to the research. This forms part of the album notes for the design of the rhapsody/research. The starting point for this chapter is placing theory into the context of questions raised by my engagement with students around reflective assignments. In this opening note I also introduce the idea of thinking about theories as if they are melodies that combine and may repeat and reappear throughout a piece of music. The next three sections of the chapter present the different theoretical melodies of critical theory, post-structuralism and interpretivism. The chapter concludes with a table summary of the main ideas taken forward into different parts of the research.

This inquiry began with a number of questions about theory that arose from my engagement with how social work students utilised (or not) theory or critical thinking in their assessments, particularly reflective practice assessments. I wondered if it was possible for a student to be reflective and not use ideas drawn from theory. Would the absence of theory automatically render their account merely descriptive? Is it the incorporation of knowledge that makes an account reflective as various reflective practice models (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Gibbs, 1987; Ryan & Ryan, 2012) suggest? What theories or kinds of knowledge are we talking about? Are all theoretical explanations in reflective accounts equal? For example, would a social work educator recognise an account as reflective if it did not incorporate dominant social work ideas about oppression, power, and structure? Given those ideas about oppression, power and structure are also theoretical and contested; I wondered if I would recognise different theoretical accounts of the same phenomena if they were presented differently? I was not entirely convinced I would and this troubled me.

Theory and knowledge use in social work is a contested notion (D'Cruz, 2012; Powell, Lovelock, & Lyons, 2004). Nevertheless, theory and knowledge in a discipline can act like the melody of a song or piece of music that makes something sensible or recognisable to others. Some theories, like some melodies, have a long history while others are fairly new. The musical genre of sampling¹⁹ demonstrates how melodies may be combined from wildly different sources. In sampling, recognisable musical sequences are utilised to create new music. Famous samples often utilise recognisable musical sequences in ways that capture the attention of older audiences and in doing so introduce new sounds along the way. A famous sample that demonstrates this is Vanilla Ice's *Ice Ice Baby* (SiriusXM, 2013) which utilised a Queen/Bowie sequence from *Under Pressure* (Mercury, May, Taylor, Deacon, & Bowie, 1981). Theory has a similar quality as new theories often incorporate existing concepts that may be familiar, applying these to new situations or extending them to create new explanations of social phenomena. This phenomenon can also be seen in social work theory.

Social work is an applied profession and as such utilises theory from a range of other less applied academic disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and political science (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). The emphasis in the profession has always been on theory that is relevant to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Thus, how social theory informs practice (Kreisberg & Marsh, 2015). How theory should be incorporated into, or even resisted, has been the focus of a range of longstanding debates since the beginning of the social work profession (Camillieri, 1996; Cree, 2011; Parton, 2000; Sheppard, Newstead, Di Caccavo, & Ryan, 2000). Nevertheless, theoretical thinking is seen as an important element in explaining the activities, processes and purposes of social work practice (Healy, 2014; Payne, 1997, 2014; Trevithick, 2008).

¹⁹ Sampling is a form of music that uses portions of sounds and sequences found in other music and reusing it to create a new piece of music. The form has been controversial due to the perception that it infringes on the creativity of others and as a result sampling musicians have frequently been accused of copyright infringement (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Others see it as creatively using existing ideas with acknowledgement to create something new (Andean, 2014). In academia using and extending the work of others is an accepted practise, as long as due acknowledgement is made to the original source of work being utilised (Partington & Jenkins, 2007; Wakefield, 2006).

In my discussion of theory I am taking my lead from Chafetz (1987, p. 25, cited in Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006) where theory is considered to be "...a series of relatively abstract and general statements which collectively purport to explain (answer the question "why?") some aspect of the empirical world (the "reality" known to us directly or indirectly through our senses)"(p. 7). Setting aside for the moment the various debates about terms such as empirical (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), reality (Bhaskar, 1998b) and what might be known by our senses, the explanation outlined by Chafetz serves a purpose in directing attention to the purpose of theory generally and this chapter specifically.

Theory is generally utilised within the social work profession to direct attention to the conditions that might prevent people from flourishing. Practice theory is generally utilised to suggest interventions and is created from practice (Fook, 1996, cited in Healy & Mulholland, 1998; Shannon & Young, 2004, p. 4). Interventions may be with individuals, families, groups, communities and indeed at the level of societies. The International Federation of Social Workers Global definition of social work embeds these kinds of foci along with a professional notion of 'the good'. For example:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing...

(International Federation of Social Workers, 2014)

In this chapter the focus is on the way social theory has assisted in the design of the study in particular, and how this forms a combined melody that runs through and recurs at times throughout this reflective rhapsody.

Three main theoretical perspectives have informed the study design. These perspectives accomplish two main aims. The first aim was to use the perspectives to assist with situating the research as a social work inquiry particularly. The second aim was to support the study

design overall. The first perspective discussed is critical theory. The second theoretical approach is interpretivism, in particular hermeneutics. The third is post-structuralism/postmodernism. These perspectives have different assumptions about reality and the subject (Schwandt, 2000). Depending on the particular authors there can be links or divisions between these different theoretical perspectives but it has been suggested they can be combined by careful deployment at different levels of the inquiry (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Therefore it is in this sense that I wish to outline how each theoretical *melody* contributes to the overall study and the choice of methods and analytical strategies.

Critical theory in social work refers to a range of theoretical perspectives rather than a single theory, despite the use of the singular term ‘theory’ (Briskman, Pease, & Allan, 2009). As mentioned above critical theory is a perspective that mostly assists in situating the study within the professional sphere of social work as critical theory underpins a range of approaches or perspectives within the discipline. These approaches are variously social action models (Alinsky, 1969, cited in Hick et al., 2005, p. 3); radical social work (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Healy, 2000); feminist perspectives (Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1990); anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 1998); and lastly critical social work practice (Healy, 2014). Hick et al (2005) are worth quoting at length here as they provide a good synthesis of what all these approaches have in common, which has become grouped within a critical social work approach:

- Larger social relations, whether we call them social structures, large scale social processes or society, contribute to personal and social dislocation or personal problems;
- A self-reflexive and critical analysis of the social control functions of social work practice and social policies;
- Working with and for oppressed populations to achieve personal liberation and social change;
- Participatory rather than authoritarian practice relations between “worker” and “client”; and

- Recognition that critical social work knowledge is itself socially produced and may exclude the voices of those with the least power (p. 21).

It is possible to see the main tenets of a critical theoretical approach in this explanation, which will be discussed more directly below. What social work has sought to do is operationalise this body of social theory to make it amenable for practice purposes. This has created a number of core principles for working with individuals, families, groups and communities under the broad rubric of a critical social work approach (Healy, 2014). The activities of self-reflexivity and critical analysis are central to this practice approach. These are of interest to this study as they form a large part of the understanding of reflective practice within social work education in Australia.

Theories as melodies

In my thinking about each of these perspectives as a kind of music critical theory would have a strong protest melody²⁰. My reason for this is the emphasis within critical theory on oppressive social forces and the need and call for social change. Early critical theorists began their protest by calling attention to *positivism*²¹ as the “most effective new form of capitalist ideology” (Agger, 1991, p. 109) and how this ideology has served to prevent the socialist revolution from occurring as predicted by Marx. Critical theorists are interested in using critique as a way of changing social relations for the better. In contrast to the protest melody of critical theory, interpretivist hermeneutics, somewhat obviously, could be likened to a gospel²² melody where the music has a strong central harmony bringing together the parts and the whole to reveal a range of truths about a phenomenon. One of the central aspects of

²⁰ Protest music has no single melody and there are many different kinds of protest music much like there are many different kinds of social movements (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998) and thus kinds of critical theory. Examples from Australia would be *blackfella/whitefella* by the Warumpi Band; Yothu Yindi's *Treaty*; Midnight Oil's *Beds are burning* and Archie Roach's *They took the children away* (Rose, 2014)

²¹ Positivism refers to the movement within the social sciences to adopt methods developed in the study of the natural sciences to study involving individuals and society. Objects for study must be observable and measurable and this is the link to classical empiricism outlined above in the discussion of critical realist ontology. Growing critique from the 1960s based on Marxist and humanist schools of thought saw this epistemology wane in use across the social sciences according to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009).

²² There are a number of genres within the term gospel music, however, the kind of gospel music I have in mind here is that sometimes referred to as “gospel music” within the African-American community but others sometimes refer to it as “[B]lack gospel music” (Shearon, Eskew, Downey, & Darden, 2015).

gospel music relevant to thinking about this theory is the call-and-response²³ aspect of the music which could represent the social aspect of interpretivism especially in relation to the co-creation of meaning and the intersubjective nature of human interpretation (Holmes, 2010; Schwandt, 1999) Lastly, post-structuralism is often characterised or discussed by what it is not or what it is against as much as what it is or what it describes. Thus post-structuralism could be represented as a form of music that incorporates both older ideas and which extends them using different sounds to create something new and different. The music that exemplifies this idea for me is *progressive rock*. This kind of music is characterised by longer songs (or epics); unexpected time changes; and complex instrumentation including a range of instruments such as piano, strings, and wind instruments in addition to the usual drums and guitars. Musicians in this genre often incorporate conceptual ideas into their lyrics and arrangements, often developing concept albums to capture themes or abstract lines of music over several songs (Prog Rock & Metal Internet Radio, 2015).

Just as there are subgenres of progressive rock it appears there are different forms of post-structuralism and postmodernism (Alvesson, 2002; Olssen, 2003). This study has not utilised all aspects of critical theory, interpretivism or post-structuralism but has instead taken a lead from Alvesson (Alvesson, 2002) and considered particular characteristics of each in developing the study. With regard to post-structuralism the study has been particularly influenced by the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault²⁴.

This chapter will discuss each of these perspectives - critical theory, post-structuralism and interpretive hermeneutics- in turn in order to outline the assumptions each contributes to different levels of the inquiry. Lastly, the chapter will offer a brief discussion of how some authors in social work have utilised these quite distinct perspectives within the broad rubric of critical social work.

²³ Call and response is “The performance of musical phrases or longer passages in alternation by different voices or distinct groups, used in opposition in such a way as to suggest that they answer one another; it may involve spatial separation of the groups, and contrasts of volume, pitch, timbre, etc” (Kernfeld, 2015, n. p.)

²⁴ There is considerable debate about whether Foucault is a postmodern or post-structuralist author. According to Agger (1991) Foucault joins Barthes, Lyotard and Baudrillard in the postmodern camp which is more concerned with developing theories of society, history and culture. As Foucault himself disliked the term postmodernist I have chosen to use the term post-structuralist after Alvesson (Alvesson, 2002).

Melody 1: Protesting the state of the world - critical theory²⁵

Critical social work is informed by a collection of critical theories that describe the way in which structural conditions in society create problems for individuals and society. Thus Palmer (2014) can assert that “[C]ritical theory is a collection of emancipatory theories guiding action by exposing oppressive elements within structures and institutions in society (such as in medicine, education, politics, religion and the media) which restrict and constrain the human subject” (p. 62). Fay (1987, cited in Briskman et al., 2009, p. 5) suggests that these theories offer a perspective on the sources of oppression that people experience in society. Thus these theories are expected to act as guides to practice within the social work discipline. There are a number of critical theories and they emerge from different traditions. Critical theory can also come under a range of names within social theory and social research (Agger, 2006). These are variously critical theory, critical perspective, criticalist approaches, and critical inquiry (Gannon & Davies, 2012; Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, 2006; Schwandt, 2007d). These terms may be different according to discipline. For example in education the term *criticalist perspective* is often used. The term *critical theory* will be utilised within the rest of this chapter to discuss the theory as that which is derived primarily from a critique of positivism (Agger, 2006); and *critical research* will be utilised to denote research that is informed by critical theory (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009, p. 145) state that “critical theory is characterised by an interpretative approach combined with a pronounced interest in critically disputing actual social realities...its guiding principle is an emancipatory interest in knowledge...[and] it maintains a dialectical view of society, claiming that social phenomena must always be viewed within their historical contexts”. Many of the theoretical concepts about oppression began with ideas developed in the 1930s by theorists who have become known as the Frankfurt School (Briskman et al., 2009). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009, pp. 144-145) also suggest that critical theorists utilise methods of interpretation in research through which these realities may be disputed. Accordingly, Kellner (1993) proposes that the early critical

²⁵ I am grateful to Colleen Carlon, Rebecca Burn and Dr David Hodgson for discussions which contributed to my thinking in this section.

theorists looked to combine theory and practice together by "...attempting to articulate the interconnections between the economy, state, society, culture, and individual experiences" (p. 47). Early critical theorists drew eclectically from economics, sociology, psychoanalysis and philosophy and were influenced by Marx, Weber and Kant, as well as Freud and Hegel. It is from the work of Hegel that critical theorists derive their emphasis on dialectical processes where historical and social conditions are viewed within their social contexts (Heywood, 2000). Indeed Kellner states that dialectics:

...for critical theorists, was the art of making connections and discerning contradictions...opened the space for thought and action in the oppressively closed totalitarian universes of fascism, Stalinism and...totally administered societies of corporate capitalism. (p. 47)

Early critical theorists were generally pessimistic, influenced as they were by their contexts in which fascism and totalitarian regimes had undermined the enlightenment ideals of social development. These theories focus on the connections between the social, political (Leonard, 1997) and personal (Wearing & Marchant, 1986; Weedon, 1999). More important even than describing and making connections between "given, empirical social conditions and the historical and social contexts in which they developed" (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009, p. 145) is the critical theory emphasis on social change.

The importance of this theoretical melody, this protest song against oppressive structural forces, is two-fold. First, this body of knowledge has been, and continues to be cited heavily, as central to notions of critical social work approaches (Fook & Kellehear, 2010; Fook & Pease, 1999; Healy, 2014; Ife, 1997; Mullaly, 2007). Moreover, a key way the insights of critical theory are translated into practice occurs through the mechanism of *critical reflection* (Fook, 1996a, 2002; Fook & Gardner, 2007; Morley, 2004; Morley & Dunstan, 2012). These models may be seen as a particular disciplinary response to neo-liberal programmes within the welfare state (Bay & Macfarlane, 2010; Wallace & Pease, 2011). Hence, a thorough understanding of this theory is necessary to aid the comprehension of the use of it within the social work professions engagement of reflective practice models.

Second, critical theory offers a sustained critique of objective social science as it has pointed out that the "...ideological-political dimension of social research [that can] be made subject to reflection" (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009, p. 145). As mentioned previously the early critical theorists saw positivism as the ideology that sustained capitalist modes of production (Agger, 1991) and by extension fostered unequal and oppressive social relationships. Of particular interest was the way in which science articulates a value free language about social 'facts', which then "promotes passivity and fatalism" (Agger, 1991) about social conditions. Later critical theorist Jurgen Habermas, in developing his communicative theory, would distinguish between self-reflection/communication and causality/technical rationality (Owen, 1999).

Agger (1991; see also Benhabib, 1984) suggests that this distinction undermined the emancipatory aspects of the critical theory project as it left the sciences intact through the suggestion that emancipation would instead come from dialogue in the communicative sphere of the *lifeworld*. The various conditions under which dialogue as discussed by Habermas have been subjected to intense critique (Dryzek, 1990). Despite this, social work theorists would later find resonance between the work of Habermas and Donald Schon (1983). Schon developed an epistemology of practice which became known as reflective practice. The combination of an epistemology of practice with the communicative theory of Habermas centred on the operations of dialogue which would be foundational to the social work model of *critical* reflection developed by social work academic Jan Fook (1999).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) make the point that critical theory and "... its level of abstraction often lies at some remove from the questions, concepts and interpretation that typify empirical research" (p. 145). This makes translation of the theoretical insights of critical theory into critical research methods and procedures frequently difficult. These authors propose, therefore, some methodological principles for how critical theory may be

used to inform empirical²⁶ social research. These methodological principles for critical research relate to the role of empirical materials; the importance of theoretical ideas in the conduct of critical research; and the use of a hermeneutic notion of interpretative levels from which such theory might be applied. As mentioned above, critical research is interested in problematising social relations that are represented as *natural* and *given* and so the kinds of theory utilised are emancipatory in flavour. Thus, critical research questions thus should be directed to problematising dominant and oppressive social relations. In this research the questions are directed at problematising a taken-for-granted practice within the discipline of social work by asking from where this practice has emerged and in what ways it might be understood.

This problematisation process of critical research extends to consideration of the politics of who is undertaking the research (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000) and the production of knowledge through the work of interpretation (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). In this study critical theory has been utilised to pay attention to the ideological-political dimensions of the research in addition to answering the aims of the study with regard to reflective practice. Thus, the research has been conducted with the notion that there is no position from which to interrogate the practice of reflection which is not also context-dependent and thus value-laden (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

As a result, the choice of methods is to a great extent an interpretative and political activity as these choices are able to “differently produce, reveal, and enable the display of different identities” (Fine & Weis, 1996, cited in Fine et al., 2000, p. 119). Thus the autoethnographic account presents and explores a range of different identities from student, practitioner and educator. These subject positions are ones that emerged from the careful and strategic use of an archaeological analytic deployed to consider the emergence of this practice within the

²⁶ Empirical research here merely means that kind of research with tightly established procedures for handling data such as grounded theory. Alvesson and Skoldberg use the term ‘empirical’ to describe data materials as the bedrock of social research and acknowledge the various objections to pure empiricism rather than as a particular research approach often associated with positivism (p. 3). This includes work with secondary data material in addition to interviews and accounts of people’s experience. I am taking my lead from their work and using it in a similar way.

discipline. The use of critical theory to inform a program of problematisation within this research is therefore explicit.

Alvesson (2002) writes about the issue of researcher reflexivity and suggests that the usual social research approach is to include the “researcher-self and its significance in the research process” (p. 171). Alvesson (2002) with his colleague (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) advocate a broader conception of reflexivity which “... stands for conscious and systematic efforts to view the subject matter from different angles, and to avoid strongly privileging a favoured one” (171). Just as not all protest music is loud, this research has utilised a subtle approach to the deployment of critical theory. What makes this an overall critical research project is therefore the careful deployment of different *methods* and theories through which to view the subject matter of reflective practice. I turn now to discuss the elements of post-structuralism, which has also informed the study.

Melody 2: Post-structuralism – new sounds with old instruments

It is difficult to consider post-structuralism without discussing the impact of structuralism across social theory in a wide range of disciplines. Brewer (2003) suggests that broadly structuralism is “any approach in the social sciences that accords primacy to social structures over human agency” (p. 309). In according primacy to structural forces social theorists considered a range of areas such culture (Levi-Strauss, 1958); history of the human sciences (Foucault, 1972); ideology and the state (Althusser, 1968); and, psychoanalysis via Lacan (see Sarup, 1993, pp. 5-29). What structuralism demonstrated was “[humans] are subject to the structural forces that envelope [them]; not free of them – prisoners of the unconscious mind, of discursive formations, of systems of signs or sets of social relations rooted in the system of production” (Brewer, 2003, p. 310). In terms of social work theorising this movement towards understanding structural forces was picked up early by radical social workers unhappy with traditional methods of casework that tended to see the problems people experience as being firmly seated within individual agency and pathology (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Rojek, Collins, & Peacock, 1988). This focus on structural forces was then elaborated through the work of Peter Leonard (1975); Bob Mullaly (1997, 2007); Nigel

Parton (2000) and later through critical authors in Australia such as Bob Pease and Jan Fook (1993).

Brewer (2003) goes further to state that post-structuralism is an extension of structuralism rather than a suggestion that structuralism was wrong in its approach to the description of structures, relations and forces. This explains why many authors discuss them together (Olssen, 2003; Sarup, 1993). Moreover, Sarup (1993) earlier had explained that both bodies of theory may be seen as critiques. Additionally, both theoretical perspectives maintain similar critiques on certain topics within social theory. These notions centre on the human subject as based on a Cartesian notion of reason²⁷ (Olssen, 2003); the uses of a particular kind of historicism²⁸ or pattern to the play of events in social theory; and, the issue of meaning and the relations between the sign and signifier; or as Olssen (2003) outlines:

[structuralism]...dispensed with the 'correspondence' theory of language or truth which saw them as representing reality as a transparent reflection (or expression) of the real. Rather than categories and concepts taking their origins and meaning from the nature of the world, they were determined by the nature of language, as well as the contingent historical factors that shaped language.(p. 190)

With regard to the structures, however structuralists tended to emphasise these as "fairly constant and unchanging...[S]ocieties appear to change more than they actually do, since social change rarely involves a dramatic shift in the underlying structure" (Brewer, 2003). This is to produce a history where structures determine social relations. In contrast post-structuralists remain more interested in discontinuities (Dean, 1994). Thus Sarup (1993) says that "[P]ost-structuralism...involves a critique of metaphysics, of the concepts of causality, of identity, of the subject and of truth" (p. 3). For social work theorists this translated into the adoption of only parts of a post-structural critique because not all aspects sit comfortably

²⁷ This idea of a Cartesian subject derives from the famous dictum "I think, therefore I am" of Descartes, which "presupposes that man [sic] is a free, intellectual agent and that thinking processes are not coerced by historical or cultural circumstances" (Sarup, 1993, p. 1). It has been the centre of a range of critiques from feminist philosophers (Benhabib, 1992; Griffiths, 1995; McAfee, 2009) and post-structuralists (Foucault, 1972).

²⁸ Sarup (1993) discusses historicism as the idea that the present is superior and has direct relations to the past and thus travels a trajectory of development from one state to another characterised by events that explain the present in the context of what went before. Historicism implies a continuous idea of events (Dean, 1994), whereas this critique from structuralists and post-structuralists alike develops a discontinuous notion of history, which is more contingent than causal (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

with the broad humanism of the profession (Ife, 1997, 1999), a humanism that inhabits the centre of a social work *raison d'être*.

It could also be said that not all those theorists associated with post-structuralism consider the same aspects of knowledge and reality such as identity, issues of causality, or metaphysics or truth mentioned above. Rather, theorists take up different aspects as a program of inquiry, just as progressive rock musicians take up different aspects of the music and extend these to produce different sounds and ideas. Different poststructuralists stress different critical aspects depending on their specific focus and thus there are different post-structuralisms. Hence, not all of the insights from this “thought collective²⁹” (Dean, 2014) have been utilised in the study design; instead, I have sought to leverage different elements to develop different lines of interpretation on the topic of reflective practice. Below I will discuss the specific post-structural insights that have been useful to this study. I have primarily relied on the early work of Foucault with regard to the development of an archaeological analytic (Foucault, 1972) and thus my use of post-structural theory has been primarily in aid of problematising the practice of reflection as well as to unsettle identity and subjectivity as an essentialism.

The debate introduced by post-structuralists about the issue of truth has informed the approach to this study. Post-structuralists disagree with the idea that it is possible to find an ultimate truth hidden, or within, the subject, the text or sign. Sarap (1993) suggests that this is because post-structuralists de-emphasise the sign and instead concentrate on the signified. What this means is that ‘reading’ assumes significance as a *productivity* relation whereas structuralists presumed stability with regard to the sign. Consequently ‘readers’ are given as equal weight with regard to making meaning as the author/speaker within post-structural theory. This means that for structuralists, while the reading of a text or sign, may be predetermined by stability of meaning within the sign, this is not the case for post-

²⁹ Dean uses the term “thought collective” after Mirowski (2009, cited in Dean, 2014, p. 152) to denote “an organized group of individuals exchanging ideas within a common intellectual framework”. While these theorists may share a common framework, their theories may overlap or depart from one another on specific aspects. I have adopted this term here as the same could be said of post-structural thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault.

structuralists. Post-structuralists such as Derrida (1966) considered this stability to be mythical as in his view there is no outside reference to reality that would anchor the sign. Indeed Bolton (2012) suggests that instead signs are nested within other signs and that this chain of signification has no end. This also means deconstruction of texts and signs may also be unending. The unending nature of deconstruction is one of the main criticisms of this approach and Derrida specifically (Baert, Weinberg, & Mottier, 2011). In this study this idea is important to understanding the account here about reflective practice is partial. It has also been utilised to eschew attributing what is spoken, written or practiced with regard to reflective practice to the single consciousness of the author, particularly with regard to the archaeological stage of the study.

The unending nature of deconstruction connects to the second of the main features of a poststructural theory or melody utilised within this study. This is the feature that history is not patterned by one event leading inevitably to another event making the present understandable in terms of the past nor is the present leading to an ultimate end. This idea that the present is an outgrowth of past is one of the syntheses or unities outlined by Foucault (1972) which is seen to be at odds with the deployment of an archaeological analytic. Thus, Sarap (1993) can say that Foucault rejected the "Hegelian teleological model, in which one mode of production flows dialectically out of another..." (p. 58). In fact, this rejection of the dialectic is part of the reason for adopting an explicitly poststructural stance in the study. It works in juxtaposition to the embedded dialectic present in both critical theory and interpretivism (Conant, Kern, & Abel, 2014). The post-structural rejection of a history as events across a total horizon was important to this study because it offered a way to explore reflective practice within the social work field without tying it to events or ideas that existed previously as natural developments of previous practices. Instead, the archaeological analytic allowed for understanding the emergence of reflective practice as contingent and thus part of wider discursive regimes operating across the field.

The third aspect of post-structuralism that has informed this study is the critique of subjectivity and the associated issues with viewing individuals as "the bearer of meaning

and as an active and “... acting subject around which the social world revolves” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Thus, in the archaeology it was possible to discern different kinds of subjectivity at the centre of the emergence of reflective practice and these had more or less dominant positions within the subsequent dispersion of the practice and its associated models and modes of thinking. Within the autoethnography, exploration of the different subjective position of teacher, researcher, student and woman allowed an interrogation of that “space between the position of subject offered by a discourse [or discourses] and individual interest” (Weedon, 1997, p. 109) to illuminate places of resistance. In the interviews conducted as part of this study the relation between subjectivity and language utilised by interviewees formed part of the focus of the analysis. As Alvesson (2011, p. 99) remarks, in discussing the metaphor in relation to interviews, the focus of this kind of analysis is “how the discourses are making themselves present in the interview situation, working on the subject...” (p. 99).

In sum, post-structural theory has informed the study through a focus on subjectivity as an emergent construct constituted from the operation of language practices and discursive regimes within a specific field, which is local, limited and specific. It has picked up these aspects through careful, targeted use of some elements of post-structuralism which enable problematisation at different levels. Thus the study does not purport to offer a total account of reflective practice displaced from its context and universal in its description. I turn now to consider the third melody of the study, that is interpretivism, and in particular, hermeneutics.

Melody 3: Interpretivist hermeneutics – Gospel music

It could be said that social work comes to interpretivist approaches and the incorporation of lived experience into social work practice through something of a tortured route. Early social workers were concerned with documenting the effects of poverty and problems of living using case methods initially developed in such a way as to be investigations of problems in the environment shaped by social conditions (Shaw, 2014). Indeed, Shaw suggests that the mutual influence between sociology and social work saw the unique

development of “casework” into something that incorporated the social conditions, inasmuch as what the people at the centre of these conditions thought about these conditions. Later social workers would shift tack for a time as they “... swallowed the elixir of psychodynamic explanation” (Shaw, 2014, p. 762). Psychodynamics or psychoanalysis is, according to Epstein (1994) “... one of the four governing faiths of modernism [along with] ...capitalism, Marxism and democracy” (p. 3). Thus social work researchers were part of early movements in social research concerned with establishing ‘new’ methods of social science in addition to instituting a ‘scientific’ base for the profession. Different approaches to methods would for a period of time divide the profession (Cornwell, 1975; Epstein, 1999)

Subsequently, the emphasis on using methods associated with natural sciences changed in social work as in the social sciences with the advent of various critiques of this position put forward by the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) and the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011) (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Robbins, Chatterjee, Canda, Richardson and Franklin (2012) suggest, however, that it was not until the 1970s that interpretivist thought permeated the social work discipline with much force. It showed itself in practices such as “existential psychology, Gestalt psychology, and humanistic therapies such as Rogerian client-centred practice” (p. 337). These therapies and approaches place human meaning making at the core of the process for working with service-users. Moreover, Robbins et al (2012) place phenomenology, social constructionism and postmodernism together as united by their considerable critiques of positivism (Robbins et al., 2012).

The other element that unites these theoretical perspectives is a sense of how reality might be *constructed*, an insight that owes its roots to the work by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Actually, Gubrium and Holstein assert that “although the term *construction* came into fashion much later, we might say that consciousness constructs as much as it perceives the world” (p. 488). It is Husserl’s philosophy that provides an emphasis on how human consciousness is structured and what this makes possible in terms of perception. Gubrium and Holstein (2000) suggest that Schutz extended the philosophy of

Husserl into consideration of everyday life. Central to this process is that of *empathic identification* (Schwandt, 2000) where the interpreter is able to create understanding through a "...psychological re-enactment – getting inside the head of the actor to understand what he or she is up to in terms of motives, beliefs, desires, thoughts and so on" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192). The idea of individuals and social actors as active and conscious in their perceptions of the social world is an important aspect of social work carried forth from the impact of this theoretical perspective. It is an idea that permeates many of the contemporary theories and models within the discipline (Saleebey, 1997) and can be seen in the emergence recently in a new reflective practice approach (Pawar & Anscombe, 2015).

This interaction between individual consciousness and the social world is at the centre of interpretivist concerns. There is a call and response aspect to this interaction in interpretivism where individual *lifeworlds* are shaped by both the individual and the social conditions in which they find themselves (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This is echoed in certain kinds of gospel music where the song emerges through the pattern of call and response. In some respects the call and response pattern may also be seen in critical theory if the use of dialectics is privileged in particular. In my discussion of critical theory, however, I have taken my lead from social work theorists who emphasise the structural aspects instead, although even here dialectics between structures and individual outcomes are often assumed. I have chosen to down play this aspect of critical theory and instead use an interpretivist notion of consciousness. This is why I have chosen to consider this theoretical perspective separately from both critical theory and post-structuralism.

There are, of course, significant links between this melody and critical theory particularly; less so with the other melody of post-structuralism, which in some aspects critiques the central premises of the theory centred on understanding (Schwandt, 1999). These links are through the way various theorists have drawn from work by Martin Heidegger³⁰ and

³⁰ Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a German philosopher who wrote *Being and Time* (1927), which can be considered influential to the development of "Satre's existentialism; Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, and Derrida's notion of deconstruction" (Wheeler, 2014). It is through Heidegger that the work of Nietzsche finds itself in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009)

Friedrich Nietzsche³¹ leading to some kinds of interpretivism to be discussed as either *a hermeneutics of existence* or *hermeneutics of suspicion*³². The aspect of the interpretivist melody foregrounded within this study is the process of building understanding about the phenomenon of reflective practice.

Interpretivism centres on the issue of understanding or *verstehen* in social life. Blaikie (2004) suggests therefore that the term covers broad theoretical perspectives that share a common ontology and epistemology and which are concerned with “[t]he study of social phenomena requires an understanding of the social worlds that people inhabit, which they have already interpreted by the meanings they produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities” (p. 509). There are three assumptions and commitments that characterise interpretivism. The first assumption is that “human action is meaningful” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). The second is more of a commitment to “...respect for and fidelity to the lifeworld” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). The third assumption concerns human subjectivity, and the claim that it is possible to “...understand the subjective meanings of action (grasping the beliefs, desires, and so on) yet do so in an objective manner” (Schwandt, 2000). This last assumption is the one which has been debated extensively within social research methods as it assumes the interpreter is able to bracket their own historical and social location in providing the interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). It is also the main point of departure for philosophical hermeneuticians (Schwandt, 2000) and post-structuralists (Gannon & Davies, 2012) albeit in different directions.

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) has been a significant influence on modern social thought and according to Wicks (2014) this influence was especially felt in French philosophical circles across the period 1960-1980. His work influenced the development of a range of different social theory but was perhaps most influential in the development of post-structural thought, particularly through the adoption of genealogy in Foucault’s work for the tracing of power knowledge relations. In interpretivist thought Nietzsche is sometimes included in a *hermeneutics of suspicion* along with Marx and Freud (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009).

³² Hermeneutics of suspicion is a term used to describe any kind of hermeneutics that questions truth status of understanding. This kind of hermeneutics is also called radical (Schwandt, 2007c) because it not only questions truth claims but also the very conditions under which understanding might be achieved. It is this distinction with regard to the conditions that sets it apart from Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics according to Schwandt. Interestingly, *critical hermeneutics* associated with Jurgen Habermas share some aspects from both the hermeneutics of *suspicion* and *philosophy* (Schwandt, 2007f).

This is not without its debates in terms of how such meanings and social worlds can be understood. Moreover the meanings that might be attributed to actions, behaviours, and events by social actors could be different to what the social researcher might make of the same event or behaviour. Early theorists such as Weber (1864-1920) and Schutz (1899-1959) were keen to develop an objectivist approach to social subjectivity. Despite a focus on processes for studying social life, developed as distinct from that of the natural sciences, early hopes remained that broadly comparative social statistical measures and a focus on the meaning abstracted from that of the social actor would offer theories of social life at a “higher level of generality” (Blaikie, 2004, p. 509). Debates over this possibility and methods resulted in different kinds of interpretivism, in the end primarily united by a common rejection of positivism. Not all of kinds of interpretivism, however, are included within the gospel melody of this study.

According to Schwandt (2007g) there are two main variants under the term phenomenology: existentialist and hermeneutic. Phenomenological existentialism has been influential within social work for theoretical perspectives such as those mentioned previously: gestalt psychology (Congress, 1996), existential social work (Krill, 1996), transpersonal theories of social work (Cowley, 1996). To some degree it has also informed the client centred approaches adopted from work by humanist psychologists Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers’ (1902-1987) and Pamela Trevithick (2011). The influence of this interpretivist perspective probably occurred due to its development in universities and schools of social work in the United States particularly post war (Schwandt, 2000). The theoretical perspective in use in this study is that of hermeneutics, in particular, that associated with Hans Georg Gadamer, which is more associated with the European tradition. This tradition is concerned with prospect of “ ... get beneath or behind subjective experience to reveal the genuine, objective nature of things” (Schwandt, 2007g), and as a critique of both taken-for-granted meanings and subjectivism. In contrast the existential interpretivism associated with Ricoeur (1913-2005) is concerned primarily with understanding the everyday social meanings people attach to their lifeworlds (Schwandt 2007g). In this study interpretative techniques devised by hermeneutic scholars have been

adopted to aid in developing relations between the individual studies and the research as a whole.

Originating in the study of biblical texts, hermeneutics is still concerned with the study of texts, however the idea of what constitutes a text has shifted with successive generations of theorists in this tradition (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). This meant that by Gadamer's time what is meant by *texts* had broadened to include any social phenomena that could be converted or rendered into a textual form (Linsenmeyer, 2015). In hermeneutics, interpretation occurs through the attempts to understand the meaning of a phenomenon through considering the whole in relation to the parts and completing movements between the parts through their relation to the whole (Higgs & Paterson, 2005). Again, empathic identification is central to this movement between understanding the part of a phenomena and its relation to a whole context (Schwandt, 2000).

The overarching question of this research is clearly an interpretive question as it is concerned with developing understanding about reflective practice in social work education. The design of the study is broadly hermeneutic because it develops this understanding through explicit movements between a broad scale understanding of reflective practice as a professional project through to various examinations of its use and value in the lives of practitioners, educators and students. The hermeneutic movement of the study also occurs through various exegeses written as a means of outlining the relation between each individual study, the construction of the text and the main question of the research as a whole. Thus, in this research, the texts to be interpreted using a hermeneutic process are the following: texts constructed by me as the researcher/researched in the form of an autoethnographic study (Ellis & Bochner, 2000); an archive derived from the deployment of an archaeological analytic (Bernauer, 1990); and, asking questions of the text created from qualitative interviews (Ayres, 2008; Kvale, 1996).

Combining melodies

How do you bring melodies together? There are places where music might come together to form a background harmony for the whole piece. Table 1 below sets out the positions about

which each perspective has something to contribute: delineating objects of research/concern; subjects; what orientation to thinking is involved and ethical concerns. Each theory approaches these aspects differently. Consequently I have constructed a table which offers a snapshot of how each perspective considers issues of concern to this research study.

Table 1: Key aspects of each theoretical melody important to this study

Contribution	Critical theory	Post-structuralism	Interpretivism
Object of research	Social relations, structures and human experiences society, power, relation between individuals and society.	A critique of historicity, meaning, language and human subject (Sarup, 1993.)	Human experience.
Subjects	Individuals, agents (Jary & Jary, 2005)	Discursive and subjectivising practices (Rose, 1996, 2008); subjects	Human beings.
Orientation to thinking (practices of critical reflection) (Owen, 1999)	Dialectical (Leonard, 1997), analytic, evaluative and communicative (Tully, 1989).	Problematising, analytic, genealogical (Koopman, 2013).	Analytic, evaluative, understanding, interpretation (Tully, 1989).
Ethics	Ethics is addressed to rebalancing the unequal distribution of power and resources for individuals and communities (Koggel & Orme, 2010).	Interrogation and critique form the basis of an ethics of the self that addresses power/knowledge practices (James & Wilson, 2011).	Human beings and experience are a central ethical concern (Twomey, 2015).

As can be noted there are significant areas of agreement amongst these theoretical perspectives and some areas where the approach to subjects, objects, ideas about reality, reflexivity and embodiment are in fact quite distinct. The lines of inquiry pursued in this research privilege certain parts of these theoretical perspectives over others. For example *embodiment*, *subjectivities* and *reflexive engagements* are a core theme of the autoethnographic research. In the archaeology, by contrast attention is paid to the way in which *discourses*, freed from being situated in individual consciousness, shapes the *subjectivities* available for social workers with regard to theory, practice and reflection as a tool for professional learning. In the qualitative interviews the *experience* of social work educators, practitioners and students is placed in the centre to consider the kinds of social work reflective practice makes possible and visible in contemporary practice.

Conclusion

Thus the study has made use of these different theoretical perspectives: the protest songs of critical theory have provided a focus on connections between the personal and political, social structures and outcomes for individuals; the soaring riffs and epic strains of

progressive rock help visualise and describe a social landscape that moves and changes and is emergent and contingent; and, the call and response gospel sound can be likened to hermeneutics, which supplies the movement from part to whole and back again. These theories have informed distinct and specific melodies for the purposes of this research.

The next two chapters engage in a more in-depth discussion of the study design. I begin in the chapter three with the big questions of placing the research within the context of the philosophy of social science. I do this through a consideration of questions of ontology and epistemology. The chapter concludes with my description of the research design using a reflexive methodology. In chapter four I discuss the methods of all three studies.

Interlude 2

Theories and my own irrationality

I like to think of myself as a rational person. Further I like to think that my adoption of various theories has been largely informed by careful and systematic study of relevant ideas about my topic. And yet...and yet...

As I came to write about my use of theory in relation to the study I found my reasons for rejecting some ideas over others were less rational than I had previously imagined. Some theories were more beloved than others and I found often for no good reason other than I seemed to 'get' these more easily than others. With others I had to work harder to understand what the theorist was trying to explain. It was tempting, of course to go with the theories that came easily...ones I had learned well and which fit so neatly with the professional learning I had already undertaken. I found I had held onto ideas about these theories from my undergraduate socialisation that made them feel like a pair of softly worn leather gloves. Sigh, oh so lovely and comforting and familiar...

But there were surprises... my understanding of theory was akin to knowing theory like a person might know a pair of *Nike* shoes through the term *Just do it!* (Peters, 2009) I knew the taglines pretty well but as it turned out not much about the theory beyond that. Some of these taglines are "unfair privilege accrues to some groups by way of their class, ethnicity, and gender"; "economic rationalism is a scourge against social justice"; "hierarchy is bad"; and "the personal is political". And while I could, at a stretch, trace them to undergraduate sociology, politics and gender studies my overall understanding of where these ideas came from was sketchy at best. I don't disagree that there may be truth (!) in these pithy taglines but expanding beyond to understand precisely what it means in practical and theoretical terms took some effort.

Worse still I had developed some pretty strong biases towards some ideas over others, not based in how well they explain a problem of practice or research – no, that would be rational, right? No, these biases had more to do with who liked or used the particular theory amongst my various circles of acquaintance. I found I had rejected some ideas, theorists and possibly even whole bodies of knowledge based on whether a previous lecturer or colleague with whom I may have developed a disagreement, or with whom I disagreed about issues used those ideas or not. Thus it seemed I was applying another kind of rule of thumb or shorthand. Such-and-such likes and uses theory Y; I like such-and-such so therefore I will probably like theory Y too. So-and-so uses theory X and I disagree with their world view about most things, therefore I reject theory X as well.

Saves a lot of time...

Chapter 3

Album notes 3 - Philosophy and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is part of the album notes. This chapter is written in two main sections. The first section contains a discussion of the philosophical considerations of ontology and epistemology. I discuss the way in which a critical realist approach combined with a weak social constructionism supplies a focus for choosing the methodology for the study. In the second section this methodological approach is outlined. Before commencing section one I present a musical analogy for research design, starting with ontology.

How does the philosophical and methodological design of the study relate to the creation of this reflective rhapsody?

It is possible to think about music philosophically, epistemologically and methodologically. However this is not the primary purpose of this research. In this brief section I instead offer an analogy of how one might place music in the context of discussions of ontology through to method and analysis. This analogy is meant to serve my wider purposes in presenting the philosophical, epistemological and methodological thinking behind the study.

Beginning with ontology we might ask "... what kind of thing is a musical sound or a musical work?" (Goehr, Sparshott, Bowie, & Davies, 2015, n. p.). These authors suggest that philosophers of music have spent more time on the second part of the question than the first. Nevertheless, thinking about music philosophically occurred at the same time as many of the great debates about knowledge, science, aesthetics and subjectivity (Bowie, n. d). In the case here it is beyond my purposes to do more than acknowledge that music exists and that music works in a particular way (Goehr et al., 2015) and therefore I must leave the discussion of what *kind* it is to the music philosophers.

Music and art have been subjected to many of the same philosophical debates and have been part of the same inventive and innovative spirit that characterised the period beginning in 1700s (Howard Goodall, 2013). These inventions and innovations changed the way we create music in the modern period especially in the West (Goodall & Jeffcock, 2006). Like the Greeks and their many terms and ways of categorising knowledge (Thomas, 2007), the same can be seen in the ways different arrangements of notes occurred over time; these were called *modes*³³. Eventually, to facilitate different instruments for different musical effects two scales³⁴ were created. Epistemology could be likened to the different scales or modes available for producing different kinds of music, just as different epistemologies result in different kinds of approaches to knowledge.

What these different scales and modes enable in terms of music was the creation of different *genres*. This is similar to how different epistemologies resulted in different approaches to research design. The classification of music into genres has a long history going back to Aristotle and the study of genre has developed into two main forms (Samson, n. d.). The first is a branch based on analysing music for its aesthetics. This approach has its roots in literary theory. The second approach is based on understanding the communicative function of music in a social and historical sense (Samson, n. d.). Thus in my analogy genre in music could be likened to methodology in research design in two respects: the relation to epistemology and the classification according to the universalist-relativist continuum (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Lastly, to bring this discussion to a close, let us turn to briefly touch on the place of methods and analysis within this analogy between music and philosophy of social science and research design. For my purposes methods can be likened to the forms of *instrumentation* needed for producing various arrangements for the performance of analysis. These forms of instrumentation are discussed in chapter four. In terms of analysis, I have likened this to the

³³ Modes are the way in which groups of notes were arranged to create different mood effects (Goodall & Jeffcock, 2006). Examples are Ionian, Dorian and Aeolian modes.

³⁴ These are the *major* scale and the *minor* scales in use today. The major scale was largely adopted from the Ionian mode, whereas the minor scale was created out of an amalgamation of the Dorian and Aeolian modes (Goodall & Jeffcock, 2006, n. p.)

performance of research. While this outline of my musical analogy could be taken much further and given more depth for tracing connections between philosophy of social science and methodology space forbids more than this brief survey. The rest of this chapter instead presents an outline of the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues pertinent to this research and in relation to researching reflective practice. I begin with a discussion of ontology and critical realism.

Critical realism³⁵

Ontology is the study of *kinds* and their respective qualities and is often tied to philosophy of science. This means that the study of ontology involves asking questions about the status of beings/kinds in the universe (Hacking, 2002). According to Bhaskar (1998), there are three main traditions in the philosophy of science concerned with the issue of being. These are classical empiricism, transcendental idealism and his proposed perspective called transcendental realism. Classical empiricism incorporates amongst others the idea that the world may be known through sense-experience and that “knowledge is a surface on which facts appear” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 19). This tradition proposes that experience may correspond with reality and that it is apprehendable through this. This tradition also considers that there is little distinction between natural *kinds* and social *kinds*. In social science this ontology is most often associated with the epistemological position of positivism (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 165). While this study has not employed an empirical ontology, it has utilised studies and research that proceed from the basic premises of this tradition.

The second tradition, of transcendental idealism, considers that *kinds* are in effect like models or ideals and therefore they are not independent of human cognition. Indeed, knowledge of beings comes from the minds of humans. Further, this perspective holds that this knowledge is thus a “structure rather than a surface” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 19). This perspective has been described as constructivism by Lincoln and Guba (2000) and the position underpins a wide array of epistemologies including social constructionism and interpretivism. As this study utilises methods within these epistemological traditions the

³⁵ I am grateful to Dr David Hodgson for several discussions which assisted in focussing this section.

premise that human cognitive activity creates a structure through which *kinds* become knowable has been included in this study. This is to the extent that two of the methods within the study assume a knowing subject that can account for the experience of being reflective.

The last tradition is that of transcendental realism³⁶ where knowledge is generated by objects in the universe. This is the tradition that has most influenced the study here. Critical realism in this sense makes three main claims in terms of ontology. The first is that knowledge of the universe produced by scientific activity involves two distinct sides (Bhaskar, 1998). The second claim is that reality is stratified into three domains: the *real*, the *actual* and the *empirical*. The third claim involves the prospect of building knowledge of causal tendencies when generative mechanisms, events or structures may emerge in the domain of the real and thus may or may not be observed by the methods of science. These claims have significance to this study because they provide an ontological basis for the use of different methods of inquiry at the epistemological and theoretical level in the study. I will discuss each in turn.

The notion that there may be two ways to think about *kinds* or *beings* was also canvassed by Ian Hacking in his discussion of ontology in the context of delineating social constructionism (Hacking, 1999). For Hacking the two sides may be divided between interactive and indifferent *kinds*. The terms *intransitive* and the *transitive* used by critical realists (Archer, 1998; Outhwaite, 1998) are broadly correspondent with some slight differences. The difference is that Hacking divides the dimensions by using the notion of interactivity and thus in the indifferent category he includes objects such as rocks, quarks and stars. For critical realists, the *intransitive* may also contain people, beliefs, and concepts (Al-Amoudi, 2007, p. 545). Critical realism divides the dimensions on the basis of dependence on human activity (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 16). Thus the transitive describes "... the antecedently established facts and theories, paradigms and models, methods and techniques of inquiry available to a

³⁶ Transcendental realism has become known as *critical realism* following the shortening of the terms *critical naturalism* and *transcendental realism* according to Bhaskar (1998a). For the rest of this discussion the term critical realism will be utilised.

particular scientific school, or worker” (p. 16) and from which knowledge of these objects emerges. In Hacking’s schema this would be the interactive side (Hacking, 1999).

The difference between the intransitive and transitive are important to critical realist ideas about reality. The objects in the intransitive can be known by science but their existence would continue even if science did not exist to know them (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 16). Bhaskar contends that this is not the case for the transitive. Namely, one could conceive of a world where the moon still rises without an explanation of how that occurs using concepts from science. It is not possible to imagine a science without concepts, established facts or theories through which knowledge about kinds becomes known. Bhaskar (1998a) is worth quoting at length on the significance of intransitivity:

The Western philosophical tradition has mistakenly and anthropocentrically reduced the question of what we can know. This is the *epistemic fallacy* ...epitomised by concepts like the ‘empirical world’. Science is a social product, but the mechanisms it identifies operates prior to and independently of their discovery ... (italics original, p. xii)

Thus critical realism suggests that there may be objects within the intransitive that can be known only partially through methods of inquiry that originate from the transitive dimension. I turn now to consider the second claim of critical realism.

The second claim of critical realists is that reality can be conceptualised as stratified into domains (Houston, 2001). These domains are known as the *empirical*, the *actual* and the *real*. It is in the empirical that we have those structures, mechanisms and events that may be observed through experience. This is the narrowest domain of the three. The domain called the actual, while containing the structures, mechanisms and events described in the empirical, also has within it objects which may be beyond the researcher to record or observe. Lastly the domain of the real is considered to be the domain that is the most extensive and also contains aspects of reality from which events, structures and objects may emerge into the other domains but which are unable to be known through current scientific methods. The role of the scientist therefore is to understand structures, events and

mechanisms that occur and emerge in these domains and how these relate to one another (R. Bhaskar, 1998).

According to Outhwaite (1998) the third claim important to critical realism is the idea of seeing “Causal relations as tendencies, grounded in the interactions of generative mechanisms; these interactions may or may not produce events which in turn may or may not be observed ...” (p. 282). What this means is that generative mechanisms may emerge in the domain of the real and some aspects of these may be observed within the empirical through observation; however, not all parts of these mechanisms will be amenable to observation by experiment or experience. For example, it has been understood that humans have the ability to infer emotions from the facial expressions of others (Bernhardt & Singer, 2012). Aspects of this ability can be observed through experiments; the generative mechanisms of this ability however may not be immediately observable as these occur in domains beyond current technology or method to determine. Yet, their existence is hypothesised as occupying domains such as the actual or real. Critical realists assume that generative mechanisms or causal tendencies may operate beyond closed systems and therefore could be universal. This notion is called *transfactuality*³⁷.

Bhaskar (1998a, p. 21) contends that these claims with regard to reality present the other traditions of classical empiricism and transcendental idealism with a number of problems. The key one important to understand in terms of this study is the premise with regard to apprehending objects emerging from the intransitive through the use of experience. Bhaskar states that experience has become conflated with the ontological level when instead it should be confined to the epistemological level as a means through which science builds knowledge. The conflation extends the second problem, which is to see the world only through the prospects of it as able to be experienced. If this is the case then physics could not

³⁷ Transfactuality is a term Bhaskar uses to describe generalisation within a critical realist framework. Danermark et al suggest that there are two different ways in which generalisation can be understood from a critical realist position. One sense encompasses phenomena/events that are generally occurring whereas the other sense is focussed on what fundamental properties and structures there are that work as generative mechanisms and could be seen as emergent from the domains of the *actual* or *real* (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002)

posit the existence of physical objects which may be beyond the ken of human experience but may be known through experimental procedures. Bhaskar (1998a) takes the view that essential experience “may be more correctly conceived as an accidental property of some things” (p. 21) whereas in the other traditions this property is emphasised, albeit to different extents. For this study critical realism provides a frame for considering reflective practice as a process which may have generative mechanisms occurring in the *real* but may be examined as a practice within the *actual* or indeed the *empirical*. It also assists with placing ontological considerations in proper relationship to the epistemology of the study. It is too these that I know turn.

Epistemology

Epistemology as a concept describes the parameters and conditions under which things might be known within contexts of debates about the nature of reality. This is particularly in relation to research and science. There are debates about the meaning of epistemology within the philosophy of science where it is asked, for example what is epistemological as opposed to what is ontological or methodological? (Crotty, 1998). The word itself can be traced back to the Greek concept *episteme* which means formal or scientific (Flyvbjerg, 2001) or indeed as *certain* knowledge (Danermark et al., 2002). Within the context of its first appearance as a category of knowledge, there were many other types of knowledge and *episteme* was generally defined in opposition to the word *doxa*, which denotes belief or common opinion (Danermark et al., 2002) or other forms of knowledge such as *phronesis* which describes the use of knowledge for practical affairs. To a considerable extent, Western science has been built on this distinction between reason and belief. Another distinction made by the Greek philosopher Aristotle was between *episteme* and *techne* where *techne* refers to craft knowledge and so has a practical instrumental focus that is “oriented towards production” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 57).

Hence, epistemology is concerned with formal rules for engagement with an area of inquiry. With the adoption of particular epistemological perspectives, one also adopts perspectives on objectivity, subjectivity and the extent to which the social and natural sciences differ.

These differences between natural and social science have been important areas of debate with regard to epistemology, not least due to early attempts to introduce a “nullifying of the ontological differences between natural and social reality” (Archer, 1998, p. 189). Indeed early social science attempted to apply methods and epistemologies that maintain a separation between object and subject and this led to the creation of positivism. The extent to which objectivity is possible with interactive subjects has led to sustained critiques about the purposes of social science and to the emergence of a range of positions on the issue of explanation versus understanding³⁸. The key difference turns on the recognition of the interactivity that humans bring to the social (Hacking, 1999). This quality creates social reality as an open system due to the reflexive³⁹ nature of humans that is different from that found in the natural world (Archer, 1998).

Social constructionism⁴⁰ is an epistemology that has been associated with a range of positions with regard to realism, objectivity and subjectivity as well as a range of theoretical perspectives in research (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). According to Crotty (1998, p. 42) constructionism holds that:

...knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.

³⁸ Explanation here is denoted by Schwandt (2000, p. 191) using the German word *eklarieren* often contrasted with epistemologies based on *verstehen*, also German and which equates to the English word *understanding*. Thus, Schwandt (2000) suggests that the two epistemologies had different purposes: positivist social science is concerned with establishing the “causal explanations of social, behavioural, and physical phenomena” whereas interpretative epistemologies “aim to understand human action” (p. 191)

³⁹ Reflexivity is a term that has at least six distinct meanings according to Lynch (2000). The quality all reflexive types have in common is that recursive movement to consider events or phenomena. Within Lynch’s typology, he discusses methodological reflexivity. Methodological reflexivity describes the process of paying attention to the ways in which knowledge is constructed in the context of research. This is primarily the kind of reflexivity promoted by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) where “serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written” (2009, p. 9).

⁴⁰ I am using the term social constructionism after Hacking (1999, p. 49) who suggests leaving the term ‘constructivism’ to mathematicians who had a grip on it much earlier. Hacking uses the terms constructionism to mean all “various sociological, historical, and philosophical projects that aim at displaying or analysing [sic] actual, historically situated, social interactions or causal routes that led to, or were involved in, the coming into being or establishing of some present entity or fact” (Hacking, 1999). Schwandt (2000) also uses the term constructionism.

Further Fuss, (n.d., cited in Schwandt, 2007c, p. 3) suggests that constructionists are interested in social practices, discourses, and ideologies and how these are produced and organised within a field of view, and because of this “they therefore reject the idea that any essential or natural givens precede the process of social determination” (*ibid*).

While these explanations link closely with the position in the philosophy of science discussed by Bhaskar as *transcendental idealism*, there are different positions within this epistemology with regard to material reality. Schwandt (2007c) outlines these as the strong and weak positions within the epistemology but suggests that both positions include the notion that “our concepts, theories, ideas, and so forth do not chart, map, or straightforwardly represent or mirror reality” (p. 4). The key difference between the two positions is the extent to which constructionists acknowledge reality as having its own existence outside human ideas about it. Strong constructionists deny the existence of any ‘ontology of the real’ (Schwandt, 2007c, p. 40) whereas the weak position encompasses a material reality that can impact on the social. In light of my use of critical realist ontology, the weak position in terms of epistemology is more able to incorporate notions of a stratified ontology.

I began this research with a desire to trouble a practice in my profession that seemed to have taken on ‘natural’ qualities. That is, reflective practice had become inevitable for social workers as a way of learning but also as a way of conducting professional practice. Troubling ‘givens’ is something of a sport for social constructionists, particularly those engaged in theorising from a critical or post-structural perspective. Nevertheless, it is possible to offer a simple thesis that is well outlined by Hacking in his engaging treatment of social constructionism (Hacking, 1999). Hacking (1999) states:

‘X’ need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is. ‘X’, or ‘X’ as it is at present is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable. (p. 6)

If we substitute ‘X’ with my topic then following thesis may be offered: *Reflective practice need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is. Reflective practice, or reflective practice as it is at present in Australian Social Work Education is not determined by the nature of things; it is not*

inevitable. Thus this study attempts to problematise the naturalness of reflective practice as it is understood in social work education. What it is not troubling is the existence of the human ability to be reflective with regard to the social milieu in which humans find themselves (Archer, 2010). Instead, the study is using a weak social constructionist epistemology to the issue of *reflective practice* as it is conceived within a particular setting or social arrangement.

Schwandt (2000, p. 198) points out that the commonality with both weak and strong positions within social constructionism is how they proceed from an assumption that knowledge is “not disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied human experience, but is some sense ideological, political, and permeated with values”. This assumption explains why it is that social constructionists take the simple thesis outlined above further by suggesting that ‘X’ is a problem and that it would be better if ‘X’ was changed or in some cases done away with completely. This reveals that the epistemology can in some cases include an underlying logic aimed at transformation/emancipation. Thus, a researcher using this epistemology tends to describe the topic or concept in detail, and generally then explain how bad it is, with a view to contributing to the emancipation of human beings from the described social relations or practices. From this position many researchers then move to suggest measures to do away either with the practice or at the very least transform it. My intention is not necessarily aimed at doing away with the practice of reflection but rather I am seeking to problematise the practice through the strategic use of different forms of critical reflection⁴¹ (Tully, 1989).

⁴¹ Tully (1989) suggests that there is a widespread notion at least in political philosophy that “that our [sic] way of political life is free and rational only if it is founded on some form or other of critical reflection” (p. 172). Furthermore this has led to heated debates about what kind of reflection should be foundational to a democratic liberal society. The main contenders according to Tully are a *critical* or justificational form associated with Habermas or an *interpretative* kind aimed at understanding, often associated with Charles Taylor (*ibid*). Tully points out that this seeming need to choose a foundational *kind* of reflection obfuscates the possibility of using a variety of *practices* of critical reflection to understand the pressing political problems we face (Tully, 2008). Different kinds of critical reflection include “... deconstruction, evaluation, explanation, genealogy, interpretation, interrogation, justification, representation, survey, validation, verification” and “... these have distinctive grammars and complex historical genealogies as established practices or languages-games” (Tully, 1989, p. 198). Three main forms of *critical reflection* have been utilised explicitly in this research: interpretation, critique and problematisation.

Combining critical realist ontology with a weak social constructionist epistemology is on the face of it problematic, due to the issue of accepting the material bases of reality. Hacking's work is again helpful here in suggesting that it is possible to reserve our focus on what is constructed by creating clarity about the focus of attention on the *kind* of thing at the centre of the inquiry (Hacking, 1999). For example, he suggests that it may be possible to use the commonsensical notion of object to denote things in the world such as "...people (children), states (childhood), conditions (health, childhood autism); practices (child abuse, hiking), actions (throwing a ball, rape), behaviour (generous, fidgety)..." as being objects in the material sense, while still being ontologically subjective.

However, in accepting a stratified ontology we may direct efforts to understand what in the domains of the *empirical* and *actual* may be constructed through human ideas and social practices. It also allows for this study to leave aside processes that may be generated from the *real* and take on board the "... fortunate consequence of the stratification of the world is that we don't have to work back through all the successive constitutive strata in order to understand objects in any specific stratum" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 63). Thus it is important to describe not only the processes of inquiry but also the level of reality with which these processes are concerned. Certainly Danermark et al go further and suggest that the task of the social scientist is therefore to attend to that which is emergent as mechanisms or processes within the stratum under investigation.

It is therefore possible within this conception of reality to take for granted the existence of stratum below, or even above, the one in which an inquiry is focussed. For example, the social sciences confine their inquiries generally to the structures and social relations of individuals and communities. In doing so it is possible to proceed with the assumption that the biological components that make up people who inhabit these structures and relations are in existence without having to describe them down to their biological and chemical details. Social science may describe the way in which the biological components impact on structures and social relations, and indeed describe or investigate the mechanisms that contribute to these impacts. A disease such as cancer is an example. Social science may

describe the way in which cancer is considered within society, its impact on individuals, families and its prevalence and the way in which this disease has and is received by health systems. Social science would not necessarily consider the chemical or biological components of cancer but instead assumes that these emerge in different stratum for investigation by scientists using processes and procedures adequate for the task of understanding it within that level of reality.

Thus, in this study, the question of the stratum and the object of the study are important in determining strategies of method that would yield the widest interpretation of the phenomena of reflective practice. The ability to reflect can be assumed due to its existence being seated within the human brain (Evans, 2008). There is evidence for this position from scientific experiment within the disciplines of psychology and neuroscience (Evans, 2011). My study does not have to establish that this ability of individuals exists but rather can focus instead on the social relations, structures and mechanisms whereby the ability is utilised and practiced. The social relations in this particular study can be seen to include the discipline of social work, its establishment within the academy in Australia and within society, the structures and conditions of learning within which reflective practice is taught including within field placements. Therefore, epistemology needs to be able to encompass objects or *kinds* including ideas, discourses, and practices within this *particular* social field. Secondly, the rules of knowledge need to be sensitive to context and will not render a generalised account of the phenomena. Third, any rules of knowledge should be able to encompass a range of methods and levels of interpretation to aid in developing the problematisation of the practice along different lines of inquiry. Thus, social constructionism is able to address these requirements within this study. I will turn now to discuss the methodological approach, which served to support my efforts at developing different lines of inquiry.

Reflexive methodology and problematisation

The methodology that forms the basis of this study is *reflexive methodology* (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Reflexive methodology synthesises key insights from a range of other methodologies such as grounded theory, phenomenology, critical theory, post-structuralism

and feminism and discusses these in the context of the philosophy of science and the nature of epistemology within the social sciences. In doing so Alvesson and Skoldberg assert that all social research involves interpretation of some kind, and in view of this insight, they propose a range of methodological principles that can assist researchers to pursue the incorporation of reflexivity in how they conduct and report social research. For Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) reflexivity is important because:

Good research should be characterized by the following features...empirical 'arguments' and credibility; an open attitude to the vital importance of the interpretive dimension; critical reflection regarding the political and ideological contexts of, and issues in research; an awareness of the ambiguity of language and its limited capacity to convey knowledge of a purely empirical reality and awareness about the rhetorical nature of ways of dealing with this issues (the representation-authority problem) [and] theory development based on the mentioned issues. (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 277)

Thus, research as it is interpretative can include reflection on the construction of knowledge in relation to identified research problems and other social reality (Alvesson, 2002).

Is it possible to combine different aspects from methodologies, which in the research methods literature are often seen as having distinct and sometimes incommensurate philosophical and epistemological orientations (Guba, 2005; Morgan, 2007). This is part of what Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) address. Further, they argue that this may be undertaken by researcher's paying careful attention to the use of interpretative levels as a way of conducting mixed *qualitative* methodological research. In this study this notion of interpretative levels was explicitly utilised to design a study that employed three distinct *methods* to examine how reflective practice is understood. This meant that each small study addresses a different interpretative level within the main inquiry. In this respect *reflexive methodology* was considered to be a way in which to hold the tension between the various methodologies and theoretical frames, drawn as they are from quite distinct research traditions.

It is possible to assert that all social research is broadly reflexive in the sense of being a double hermeneutic⁴² enterprise; the interpretation rendered by interpreting subjects (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Further Alvesson and Skoldberg make the point that if one includes critical theory with its focus on the ways in which social structures and power impact on participants and their subjectivities within social research then we might be discussing a triple *hermeneutic*⁴³. With regard then to reflexivity within their suggested methodology, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) make the following point:

In reflexive contexts there cannot be definite demands – at least not heavy ones – as regards theoretical consistency, in the sense that a particular ontological and epistemological position is strictly maintained throughout. The point of reflection is rather to break away from consistency and a narrow focus on a particular aspect, to question weaknesses inherent in the mode of thought one embraces (and is easily imprisoned within), to break up and change a particular language game rather than expanding it. (p. 246)

This “...break away from consistency and a narrow focus on a particular aspect” (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p.246) is taken seriously here and has been incorporated into the design of the study. It meant paying attention to the careful handling of each study as distinct inquiries but with the aim of using each as forms of juxtaposition, deconstruction and reconstruction. This is to take up the challenge of engaging in distinct kinds of reflexivity within a single study as outlined by Alvesson (2011) where he discusses the differences between reflexivities that “emphasize problematic or ‘dangerous’ thinking – intellectually, politically or ethically – and those that try to produce new insights” (p. 108). Consequently, the study has implemented the elements of a quadri-hermeneutic as “exemplified...by the empirically based, the hermeneutic, the ideologically critical and the postmodernist” (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 248).

⁴² A term coined by Anthony Giddens that has come to denote the distinction between natural and social science where social scientists study “... social phenomena (i.e. human activities of various kinds) that (unlike the objects studied in natural science) are already constituted as meaningful” (Schwandt, 2007e, p. 76).

⁴³ A triple hermeneutic takes the idea of the double hermeneutic proposed by Giddens (1976, cited in Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p. 203) and includes a focus on the social structures that constrain and create unequal power relations. The double hermeneutic was first coined by Anthony Giddens to acknowledge that social research is always working with the “interpretation of interpreting subjects” (Schwandt, 2007e)

This attention to quadri-hermeneutic methodology has also facilitated the adoption of a problematisation approach to formulating the research questions of the study.

Problematisation, in this sense, is a strategy of formulating research questions that emerge from "... a *dialectical interrogation* of one's own familiar (or home) position, other theoretical stances, and the domain of literature targeted for assumption challenging" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 49; emphasis original). There are significant links between

problematisation and the programmes of research formulated by Foucault (Tully, 1999) and others such as John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and C. W. Mills (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011).

There are a range of processes involved in problematisation but these all involve scrutinising assumptions as a beginning point; those that are evident in the theory or topic but also those held by the researcher. Alvesson and Sandberg's (2013) interest is in the development of interesting theory and so they suggest that two issues are important in developing problematisations from assumptions. First, what types of assumptions are relevant to the topic? And second, what is the process for articulating and challenging the assumptions identified (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Reflexive methodology is one of a number of "methodological resources" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 50) that can facilitate problematisation.

Alvesson and Sandberg (2009) offer a typology of assumptions that can assist in opening inquiries to problematisation within a given literature domain. This typology distinguishes five sets of assumptions that "differ in both depth and scope" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, pp. 54-55). These are *in-house*; *root metaphor*⁴⁴; *paradigm*; *ideology*; and *field*⁴⁵ assumptions. The assumptions should be viewed as sitting along an overlapping continuum from the "minor form" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 55) of *in-house* assumptions to the broader *field* assumptions which can potentially problematise whole bodies of thought in the social sciences. Foucault's (2002) *The order of things* is an example of a study that addresses *field*

⁴⁴ These assumptions are described as "broader images of a particular subject matter" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 54). Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5) suggest that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". An example from social work might be the adoption of the term "swampy lowlands" (Schon, 1983, p. 42) to describe the inherent uncertainty of practice.

⁴⁵ Field assumptions are the broadest set to problematise as these generally include whole disciplines and can work across a range of disciplines and professions. A famous example of this kind of problematisation is that of Foucault's *History of Madness* (Foucault & Khalfa, 2006)

assumptions. In the context of this study my main question is aimed at providing a wide lens through which each stage of the study can problematise reflective practice from a different position on this suggested continuum. Not all of the positions outlined in this typology are relevant to the study here so I will confine my discussion to those of *in-house*, *paradigm* and *ideology* below.

In-house assumptions are those that are shared by members within a particular school within a discipline or profession (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). In this sense then this study sought to develop understandings of the culture and meanings attached to reflective practice within social work through the lens of an insider, particularly one who had learnt the *critical reflective model* (Fook & Gardner, 2007). The main way this has been accomplished is through the autoethnographic stage of the study and also through discussion in some of the Interludes (exegeses) included across the whole thesis.

Paradigm assumptions are those that problematise the ontological, epistemological and methodological levels of a specific literature or domain of a school, discipline or profession (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). The strategic deployment of an archaeological analytic has been utilised to consider the transformation of problem-solving practice, significant to social work in its earlier history, into different models that focus on changing the assumption of social workers themselves. This transformation has occurred largely through the adoption and dispersion of ideas drawn from more structural, critical and feminist sources.

The final assumptive ground developed in this study was that of *ideology*. Here ideological assumptions are those that include the ways in which social workers discuss reflective practice as part of their personal and professional beliefs. The third stage of this study had been originally envisaged as a series of case studies of the ways in which students, practitioners and educators in social work use reflective practice within their work or study. In fact, the other stages clarified a number of specific areas about reflective practice in Australian social work education and practice. The first is the predominant model of reflective practice in Australia, the kinds of reasoning or rationality this makes possible for

students, educators and practitioners and lastly the subject positions which emerged from the predominant model as a *technique of the self*.⁴⁶ The autoethnographic and archaeological stages of the inquiry suggested a different line of inquiry than that originally designed in the study. The result is that the interviews have contributed to understanding the various ideological assumptions⁴⁷ expressed as value and belief statements in accounts of reflective practice.

Thus, problematisation has been explicitly developed as part of the research questions across the entirety of the study along with the elements of a quadri-hermeneutic across the range of methods utilised. These are designed to address my own limits in terms of deploying a repertoire of interpretation. As mentioned previously part of the reflexive and problematising nature of this methodology is to work at both understanding one's own repertoire and going beyond this where possible. This study has utilised a mechanism (the exegesis) to work directly with expanding, and to some extent displaying, my repertoire of interpretation and its limits. To do so is to use this process to illuminate the way "... different elements or levels [might] played off against each other" (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009, p. 272). Further the process of exegesis between each stage operates to link the parts into the study into a whole inquiry. Table 2 has been reproduced from Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) and it illustrates the way the different levels of interpretation can play this part in a single research project.

⁴⁶ Techniques of the self are "those reflective and voluntary practices by which men [sic] not only set themselves rules of conduct, but seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make of their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (Foucault, 1984, cited in O'Farrell, 2014).

⁴⁷ Ideological in this sense as the "political-, moral-, and gender-related assumptions" articulated by participants based on their occupation of a range of subject positions outlined as part of the archaeological study (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). These ideological assumptions can also be found in the shared literature and moral order (Ylijoki, 2000) of the profession of social work. Also of interest is the way in which participants use reflective practice in ways that resist disciplinary power established within this moral order (James & Wilson, 2011).

Table 2: Aspects of a reflexive methodology

Aspect/level	Focus
Interaction with empirical material.	Accounts in interviews, observations of situations and other empirical materials.
Interpretation (understanding).	Underlying meanings.
Critical interpretation.	Ideology, power, social reproduction.
Reflection on text production and language use.	Own text, claims to authority, selectivity of the voices represented in the text.

Table 3 outlines my own interpretation in order to further illustrate my understanding of how this methodology works. I considered various research methods⁴⁸ for the purposes of developing assumptive ground and chose autoethnography, Foucauldian archaeology and interviews as illustrated in the column added to the right under *possible research methods*. As each method is described in the next chapter at some length, here I will only briefly account for their placement within the methodological framework outlined by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009).

Table 3: Levels of interpretation with suggested research methods

Level of interpretation	Aspect	Focus	Possible research methods
1	Interaction with empirical material.	Accounts in interviews, observations of situations and other empirical materials.	Foucauldian discourse analysis (archaeology); interviews.
2	Interpretation (<i>understanding</i>).	Underlying meanings.	Autoethnography.
3	Critical interpretation.	Ideology, power, social reproduction.	Archaeology, interviews.
4	Reflection on text production and language use.	Own text, claims to authority, selectivity of the voices represented in the text.	Reflective exegeses; autoethnography.

As mentioned in chapter one, three lines of inquiry have been developed involving different methods. The first line of inquiry in the research is broadly interpretative through the use of an autoethnographic process, although there are some distinctly post-structural elements in

⁴⁸ There are debates on whether discourse analysis (of whatever type) and autoethnography should be considered to be methods or methodologies. Crotty (1998) places them in his schema as methodologies. As they are nested within a reflexive methodology I discuss them as methods in this study.

this stage as well especially with regard to how best to consider the subjectivity within an autoethnographic process. The second line of the inquiry operates at level one of this schema in terms of working with empirical materials. Archaeology can include written, recorded and observed materials as part of the *archive* (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). A description of the process and the data are discussed in the chapter below. The exegesis involves quite different processes of interpretative activity and considers the process of archaeology from levels three (ideology, power and social reproduction, also known as critical theory) and four (researcher bias, text production and language use considered as a form of post structural theory).

The third line of inquiry operates primarily at levels one and two as this stage is interested in understanding and explanation of how reflective practice is utilised in social work education and practice. The exegesis at this stage will operate again at levels three and four in order to consider the process and analysis of stage three paying particular attention to issues of representation and text construction. Table 4 below outlines the way the various lines of inquiry in the research aimed to incorporate different levels of interpretation.

Table 4: Illustration of relation between each level/foci and each stage of the research

Level of interpretation	Aspect	Focus	Possible research methods	Lines of inquiry
1	Interaction with empirical material.	Accounts in interviews, observations of situations and other empirical materials.	Foucauldian discourse analysis (archaeology); interviews.	Inquiry 2 and 3.
2	Interpretation (<i>understanding</i>).	Underlying meanings.	Autoethnography, qualitative interviews.	Inquiry 1 and 3.
3	Critical interpretation.	Ideology, power, social reproduction.	Foucauldian discourse analysis (archaeology), interviews.	Inquiries 1, 2 and 3.
4	Reflection on text production and language use.	Own text, claims to authority, selectivity of the voices represented in the text.	Reflective exegeses; Autoethnography.	Whole study.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by offering an analogy between research design and different aspects of how music is created in order to illustrate how issues of reality, knowledge and methodology fit with the creation of this research approach. The chapter has surveyed the debates about reality, knowledge and then offered a description of the methodology that has informed the research design. I offer a brief recap and summary of the main points here before moving in chapter four to a description of the methods (instruments utilised) to undertake (perform) the research.

In sum, the research has been informed by critical realist ontology, albeit in a fairly limited way, which has resulted in the incorporation of an acknowledgement that reality may be stratified into layers. Moreover, if stratification is assumed then the methodology and research methods employed in this research are necessarily partial and will not likely advance any causal inferences to mechanisms that might be coming from layers beyond the *empirical*, or possibly, *actual* layers of reality. This acknowledgement does not preclude the use of a social constructionist epistemology, and this has been adopted for this research. This epistemology recognises the constructed nature of knowledge but also concedes that not all social phenomena are the result of human consciousness alone. The adoption of social construction supports the whole study, which has been designed using reflexive methodology and resulted in using three different forms of critical reflection (hermeneutic, critique and problematisation) for examining the phenomena of reflective practice in Australian social work education. This methodology is well suited to the task of bringing different methods to bear on the topic in order to develop different lines of inquiry. The contrast and juxtaposition of the methods forms a major aspect of the reflexive nature of the research overall.

Interlude 3

Methodological battles and misinterpretations

Like most doctoral candidates I made a number of attempts at writing this chapter on methodology. The version that stayed is rather more traditional than some of my early drafts. By traditional I mean that it follows a fairly standard line, adopted from Crotty (1998) where the discussion starts with ontology and wends its way to methodology. I did attempt an earlier version which completely sidestepped this linking of methodology to philosophy as I had been persuaded that linking them was part of an ideological battle in research methods, waged to claim some ground from the “positivists” (Morgan, 2007) in the 1970s and 80s. From some accounts it appears this is a battle that is still being fought but perhaps the ground has shifted since then and its being waged over the inclusion of non-Western ontologies and epistemologies (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006). The earlier non-traditional version was based on my idea that perhaps my readers would appreciate not having the same old battles rehearsed apart from the odd footnote. My point in revealing this is to acknowledge that this is not just any text and I am not just writing for my own knowledge, or even pleasure. It is a text produced to report the results of years of research work and to demonstrate knowledge about how this research might be located within the wider context of social research in my discipline and generally. It is also being presented for examination. These factors, of course, shape many of the decisions about the creation of this text.

My first foray into the research methods *scene* was through being allowed to hang around with PhD students in arts, social science and humanities as an undergraduate honours student. I was definitely on the sidelines but I did witness various battles for sources of truth about knowledge. These battles were waged between colleagues from arts, social sciences and science disciplines, all of whom were based on a small faculty. The faculty was a unique interdisciplinary laboratory and these battles could get vicious. It was a seminal experience for me. When I began this engagement with the literature doubts started to surface about my earlier understandings of critical postmodernism, reflexive methodology and even the issue of linking philosophy and theory to research methods (Silverman, 2007). I realise now how much of my thinking had been shaped by the dialogues and battles of that earlier time.

One consequence of this is that I am now fairly certain I misinterpreted what using a *reflexive methodology* entails. This misinterpretation occurred early in designing the research. Later when looking for studies using the same methodological approach I could find none. It seems I might have taken the ambition of developing a repertoire of interpretation a little too literally. Thus, the decision to keep to the traditional format here was made on the basis that this is a thesis with enough non-traditional combinations, metaphors and other idiosyncrasies to be going on with. Including a methodology chapter written in a non-standard fashion was a step too far.

Chapter 4

Album notes 4 - Methods

Introduction

This chapter outlines in detail the three methods utilised in the different lines of inquiry. Here we are looking at the *instrumentation* needed to offer a performance of the rhapsody. Adjacent is a figure showing the three lines of inquiry as depicted in chapter one. Each section corresponds to a different method and a similar diagram will

indicate this at the beginning of each section. The discussion will begin by

outlining the method generally, the kinds of data utilised within each study and any core concepts and issues related to its application to the specific research question of the study. Each section also outlines the limitations of the specific method. I will begin with an examination and description of autoethnography (the solo performance). I then move to discuss the development of an archaeological analytic (a post-rock anthem) in relation to the emergence of reflective practice in social work education. In the third section, I outline the method of the final study, which involved interviewing practitioners, educators and students in social work about their learning and use of reflective practice (a choral piece). The chapter then closes with a brief discussion of the different ethical considerations involved in each study.



Figure 2: Picture of all three methods

Autoethnography⁴⁹

The term autoethnography is thought to have been first coined by David Hayano (Anderson, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The method refers to research designed to understand a phenomena through the connections between the self, culture and the wider society (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Reed-Danahay (1997) suggests therefore that:



Figure 3: Autoethnography

[A]utoethnography stands at the intersection of three genres of writing...(1) "native anthropology," in which people who were formerly the subjects of ethnography become the authors of studies of their own group; (2) "ethnic autobiography," personal narratives written by members of ethnic minority groups; and (3) "autobiographical ethnography," in which anthropologists interject personal experience into ethnographic writing." (p. 2)

Moreover, Reed-Danahay (1997) links her discussion of autoethnography to a need to break apart the former distinctions between ethnographic and autobiographical research. In her treatment of the origins of the method this is outlined as a way of meeting the challenges posed by post-modern theorising about the distinction between the subjective and objective, the self and society (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2). Thus, this kind of autoethnography arose from assumptions that research accounts could move between objective phenomena and the subjectivity of the researcher and that this would shed light on the intersections between society, culture and various selves.

⁴⁹ I am indebted to Professor Donna Chung, Ms Petra Elias, Dr Tina Fernandes, Ms Kirsty Oehlers, Associate Professor Liz McKinlay, Dr Karen Upton-Davis, fellow companions in a fledgling WA social work autoethnography group, for discussions which assisted in focusing this section.

As a result a range of processes have been developed by autoethnographic researchers to enable this movement between the *self as a lens* and the cultural, social and, increasingly, political phenomena at the centre of various inquiries (Ellis & Bochner, 2014). This has led to the situation where the autoethnographic method may have diverse emphases depending on disciplinary differences and orientations. For example, in literary criticism, notions of culture are understood through existing theories that posit dominant and subordinate cultural groups, and autoethnographic research within this discipline would include attention to this knowledge. Thus, autoethnography would act as a “counter-narrative” (Reed-Danahay, 2006, p. 2) to dominant cultural stories. By contrast, for ethnographers the method is more likely to be used to interrogate cultural practices which may, but may also not be limited to, local cultural practices and border-crossings (Reed-Danahay, 2006). Reed-Danahay suggests that autoethnographers such as Ellis and Bochner have also used the term to “label forms of self-reflexivity” (*ibid*, p. 2). To a considerable degree the acceptance of the inclusion of the researcher perspective within qualitative accounts can be seen as tied to broader social movements emphasising human reflexivity⁵⁰.

In light of increasing acceptance since the original appearance of autoethnography as part of the “fifth moment” of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 27) there has been a widening in applications for the method as well. For example, autoethnography has been used in studies of management (Kempster & Stewart, 2010); health and illness (Moore, 2012); disability (Scott, 2013); the military (Taber, 2010); organisations (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009); counselling (Wright, 2009); education (DeMeulenaere & Cann, 2013); nursing (Foster, McAllister, & O'Brien, 2006; J. Wright, 2008); and, increasingly social work (Krumer-Nevo, 2009; Pfau, 2007; Ruch, 2000; White, 2002). These works represent a diverse range of ways to undertake autoethnography. There has, in the last few years, emerged two different

⁵⁰ Some authors suggest that reflexivity is a condition of late modernity (Beck et al., 1994) and thus it is tied to a dissolution of structures into individual agency brought about the decline of traditional and habitual models of identity (Farrugia, 2013). Archer (2007) suggests that this notion of reflexivity attributes it as a property to collectivities, institutions or organisation that cannot have it. Archer, in contrast to Beck and Giddens, firmly seats reflexivity within the purview of *agents* thus it is the way in which people consider themselves in relation to their social conditions and vice versa (Johnson, 201). The main points of agreement amongst social theorists are that reflexivity is made more important as a quality of agents under conditions of rapid social change (Archer, 2010; Farrugia, 2013).

approaches to autoethnography and comparing the differences between them was helpful in locating my own approach.

An alternative conception of autoethnography to that promulgated by Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner was proposed by Anderson (2006) an analytic autoethnography. Anderson suggests that this kind of autoethnography could preserve the reflexive character of the method but may also encompass a more realist position in terms of ontology. This is not the only difference between the kind of autoethnography proposed by Anderson and that of the predominant kind described by Reed-Danahay (1997) and which has led to the *evocative autoethnographic* movement disseminated by Ellis and Bochner (2000) and others (Holman-Jones, 2008). Table 5 (next page) outlines the similarities and differences across a range of issues that I have identified as critical for use of the method by both major schools of thought. I have also included a column which outlines these categories and orientations within the present study:

Table 5: Comparison of analytic and evocative autoethnography part one

Categories and orientations	Analytic	Evocative	My study
Reality	Accepts the existence of reality outside the knowledge generated by the researcher (Anderson, 2006, p. 48; Charmaz, 2006).	Rejects the realist position (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).	Accepts the existence of reality outside the interpretations and knowledge generated by the research. Adopting a critical realist position means an acceptance that reality is stratified across three domains, <i>real</i> , <i>actual</i> and <i>empirical</i> .
Epistemology	Constructivist ⁵¹ .	Constructivist/subjectivist.	Weak constructionism (Hacking, 1999; Schwandt, 2000).
Data generation and researcher visibility within the text	Field notes; participant observation; other members of the same cultural or social group; self-narratives. Essential for researcher visibility in the text.	Researcher narratives; journals; poetry; prose; co-constructed evocative stories; vignettes; visual texts and performances. Essential researcher visibility in the text.	Journal data; class notes and associated marginalia; poetry; reflective recall; published literature; unit plans and assignment instructions; participant observation and voice recordings. Essential researcher visibility in the text.

⁵¹ Anderson (2006) utilises the term constructivist as does Ellis and Bochner (2000) reflecting to some extent its usage within the tradition of ethnography and symbolic interactionism.

Table 6: Comparison of analytic and evocative autoethnography part two

Membership of cultural group, research or setting	Required	Helpful but not essential nor precluded. Focus is on the researcher rather than participation in a group or setting.	Required.
Focus of research	Understanding social or cultural phenomena through participation with group. Always involves dialogue with others.	Social or cultural phenomena through practices that reveal these through self-examination. May include dialogue with others but is not essential.	Participation within the cultural and social setting informed the process of self-examination. Dialogue with others occurred in naturalistic ways.
Reflexivity	May utilise <i>methodological self-consciousness</i> ⁵² ; or <i>analytic reflexivity</i> ⁵³ ..	May utilise <i>radical reflexivity</i> ⁵⁴ ; <i>standpoint reflexivity</i> ⁵⁵ ; or <i>breaking frame</i> ⁵⁶ ..	May utilise <i>reflexive social construction</i> ⁵⁷ ; <i>standpoint reflexivity</i> and <i>analytic reflexivity</i> .
Kind of reasoning	(mostly) Abduction ⁵⁸	(mostly) Induction	Abduction

⁵² The process of taking account of the researcher's relationship to participants and the instruments and methods of conducting research (Lynch, 2000).

⁵³ Anderson outlines this kind of reflexivity as "the self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through an examining of one's actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others." (2006, p. 382)

⁵⁴ A reflexivity outlined by Lynch (2000) that embodies the political and emancipatory hopes for the conduct of programs of research designed to allow the voices and experiences of participants to be heard. This kind of reflexive program rejects empiricism and sociological functionalism and advances a "constructionist alternative" (*ibid*, p. 37).

⁵⁵ A form of reflexivity where the researcher subjects their own position and construction of the research (cultural, social, political) to critical scrutiny in order to interrogate the functions of *a priori* socio-structural features (Lynch, 2000, p. 31).

⁵⁶ This is a kind of reflexivity most often seen in literary, film and art and can be distinguished from standpoint in not using *a priori* categories but rather the emphasis is on rendering accounts of the researcher and researched through the deployment of "locally ordered and highly flexible" (Lynch, 2000, p. 32) experiences. Lynch (2002, p. 32) cites the work of Erving Goffman where the assumption is that people can shift standpoints "both physically and imaginatively" to illuminate different ways of seeing experience. In autoethnographies this kind of reflexivity interrogates the boundaries of experience for new ways of seeing chosen research topics.

⁵⁷ Refers to the idea that humans are self-reflecting beings; this kind of reflexivity was first described by Weber and Mead, and later expanded by Berger and Luckmann (Lynch, 2000). It includes the notion that human reflections and knowledge can disappear as originating with human action and knowing and come to constitute the ways in which "consensual beliefs and concerted practices give rise to objective social institutions" (Lynch, 2000, p. 29).

⁵⁸ A process that moves between inductive and deductive reasoning "first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action" (Morgan, 2007, p. 71). According to Blaikie (Schwandt, 2007b) abduction means to move between everyday understandings which social actors hold and consider the social scientific understandings of the same phenomena. In autoethnography, the method itself renders open taken-for-granted ideas about a given topic.

The main differences between analytic and evocative kinds of autoethnography is the type of reasoning employed, the kinds of reflexivity utilised, orientation to ontology and finally the relative emphasis on membership in the group under study. As can be imagined research of both kinds may come in many forms. These forms can include poetry, story, constructed narratives, and performance as methods of evoking experience (Holman-Jones, 2008) interleaved with more analytic accounts (Anderson, 2006). The present study has used a synthesis of both kinds of autoethnography but has adopted a critical realist stance. Therefore my approach tends towards the analytic more than the evocative.

I utilised a range of empirical materials in addition to my own creative output as my purpose was to use my own experience as a way of identifying and articulating disciplinary assumptions about reflective practice. The processes of data creation and analysis are intimately related to each other in this kind of method. As such the method developed here was uniquely tied to the research question of how I learned reflective practice. I will move now to discuss the process of assembling the different kinds of data utilised in creating the autoethnographic account of this study.

Assembling the data; creating a process...

There were two main phases to the autoethnographic study of stage one. They involved different kinds of data. I assembled the following sources for the first phase:

- Journals from my third and fourth social work undergraduate years (2001-2003);
- Class notes with associated marginalia from the same period;
- An autoethnographic research study conducted in a senior research methods class in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) in semester 1 in 2001;
- Two reflective logs on the research study which outlined the method of conducting that autoethnographic research study;
- Three reflective papers written as class assignments as a social work student unrelated to the autoethnographic research study and reflective log papers; and,
- BSW unit plans with instructions on the same assignments.

This data set was to act as a temporal anchor and a source of remembrance about learning reflective practice in the context of formal education as a social work student. And while the

original autoethnographic study had a different focus to my purposes for this study, it was included because it formed a reflective record of the process of socialisation into being a social worker.

In addition I also collected a range of published sources related to learning reflective practice. My intention was to use published textbook and peer reviewed sources as forms of authority (an objective pole) against which the accounts from my novice self might be considered (the subjective pole). The second phase was intended to create a link between my student experience and the present in order to consider the issue of teaching reflective practice as a social work educator. These ideas and processes were suggested by work from Pfau (2007), although the data sources I chose and my method of creating the account are different. The data for this phase included:

- A teaching journal spanning the years 2007-2012;
- A number of unit plans which I had constructed that contained reflective practice assignments; and,
- Research journal (written and audio) on the autoethnographic process.

I began the research journal specifically in order to capture my thinking about the data as I was reading, remembering and analysing it. During this stage I also used published texts as authoritative (objective) sources on reflective practice but with a new focus that related directly to teaching practice.

With each phase I made notes and recordings of my thinking and reactions to the various sources of data. The process was challenging, not least due to the confluence of different identities occurring across one liminal⁵⁹ space. I was at that time learning the craft of teaching as well as occupying the identity of being a student through undertaking this study. I found echoes began to occur between my earlier experiences as an undergraduate

⁵⁹ Liminal is a term used to describe that of being “betwixt and between” (Beech, 2011). It was described by Van Gennep (1960, cited in Beech, 2011, p. 287) in the context of ritualistic process whereby people change from one identity to another. Van Gennep considered there to be three phases to the process and the liminal phase was the second step where separation has occurred from a previous identity but consummation has not happened as yet. Thus liminality in this schema is the state between separation and consummation [of the new identity].

and the latter experience of learning to lecture and learning to study as a postgraduate. My identity as a research student found resonances with learning to be a social worker as well as learning the craft of teaching. I found re-reading these various selves across the pages of journal entries, old assignments and marginalia poignant, sometimes hilarious and weirdly fascinating and also disturbing. The resulting autoethnographic vignettes are 'constructions' designed to illustrate the main outcomes of the autoethnographic process. These are outlined in chapter five of this thesis. In the next section I give a brief discussion of the limitations of the method after which I will move to describe the process of conducting the second stage of this study: the archaeology.

Limitations

Autoethnography certainly offers a way of understanding social relations, cultural phenomena and human experience, albeit refracted through the lens of a single individual. This is both its strength and its limitation. While it allows for an in-depth understanding of social categories and cultural conditions, the researcher is only one part of these complex relations. Indeed Anderson says "No ethnographic work – not even autoethnography - is a warrant to generalize from an *N of one*" (2006, p. 386).

Thus while the method itself has offered a way for a member of this shared professional community to examine the process of learning to be reflective the account remains partial. The method did assist in problematising the assumptions evident in both the practice and literature about reflective practice in social work. The question of how I learned reflective practice is, however, just one example of how reflective practice is understood in Australian social work education and so cannot be generalised. Importantly, generalisation was never the goal of this line of inquiry.

As mentioned above, the autoethnographic account offered a place to begin the whole research study. Moreover the inclusion of social work texts within the data set contributed to an imaginary dialogue between myself and a generalised social work 'other' where the literature stood for the social work community and I stood with/for the novice/learner. From this analysis came a number of insights important for subsequent lines of inquiry, which

would widen the lens for the main question about the ways in which reflective practice is understood in the Australian social work context. For example, it became apparent that the term 'critical' carries a particular meaning within the Australian social work community and the combination of this term with reflection suggested a particular approach to reflective practice. The impact of this notion of 'critical' for students is also not obvious from a straight reading of the literature where the status of the term critical is taken for granted.

A further limitation is the self-scrutiny required and the associated vulnerability this might introduce for the researcher. My inclusion of empirical materials developed by others was intended to off-set this tendency to some extent. Further, I was fortunate to have had access to a small number of interested colleagues who listened, questioned and challenged some of the perceptions of the matters arising in the analysis. These conversations and materials were important anchors outside of the self at the centre of the inquiry. The intense focus on knowledge arrived at through the subjectivity of a single individual was an interesting, and at times, challenging journey.

This focus on humans as a source of knowledge would be challenged enormously by the conduct of the archaeological stage of the study. I was going to shift my focus to consider reflective practice in a landscape depopulated of people and where the emphasis is instead on the discursive. From the very beginning of formulating my research design archaeology was always intended as an antidote to the highly subjective nature of autoethnography. Having said that nothing could have prepared me for how radical a shift in thought archaeology would require. I will move now to discuss the method of archaeology.

Archaeology

Foucault's bizarre machinery⁶⁰

The method⁶¹ of archaeology⁶² was developed by Michel Foucault through his conduct of three major studies: *Madness and Civilisation* (2001), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1989) and *The Order of Things* (2002). The method is also described by Foucault in two of his works: *The Order of Things – A archaeology of the human sciences* (2002) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). This method can be considered to be a form of critical reflection (Tully, 1989)



Figure 4: Archaeology

along with genealogy (Koopman, 2013). These methods are in

Koopman and Matza's terms "higher order methodological constraints, limits, and heuristics that facilitate inquiry" (Koopman & Matza, 2013). In this study I have developed an approach that utilises some aspects of an archaeological method to consider the topic of reflective practice within social work education in Australia. The description of how this has been utilised is below. In my construction of the method for this particular study I have

⁶⁰ Sheridan (1980, p. 103) discusses Foucault's attempts to "replace the old unities of discourse – *oeuvre*, authors, books, themes" as a "mass of bizarre machinery". This machinery distinguishes archaeology from the history of ideas in four main ways: "the attribution of innovation, the analysis of contradictions, comparative descriptions, and the mapping of transformations" (Sheridan, 1980, p. 104).

⁶¹ Koopman and Matza (2013, p. 822) discuss the various terms that have been used to describe the tools devised by Foucault in his pursuit of critical forms of inquiry. These are analytic, method, technique and diagnostic. Their main point is that each of these suggested terms point to the fact that the tools are ones that work to constrain and facilitate inquiry, rather than as theories. In this chapter I have utilised the terms *method* and *analytic* are used interchangeably.

⁶² Archaeology has only the faintest resonance with the academic discipline of *archaeology* according to Scheurich & McKenzie (2008, p. 318). In fact to consider Foucault's archaeological method in terms of geological excavation is likely to introduce the wrong analogy as the method does not refer to excavation in the sense of digging beneath. Instead archaeology is descriptive and seeks to consider the surface manifestations of discursive regimes.

primarily utilised *The Archaeology of Knowledge* along with a range of secondary sources (Bernauer, 1990; Graham, 2011; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Sheridan, 1980; Topp, 2000).

Archaeology is a historical method aimed at describing history as a series of discontinuities rather than as a linear or continuous series of happenings where a development at one point is a natural outcome of previous events. Foucault was specifically interested in problematising the knowledge within human systems (Tully, 1999). In Foucault's terms (Foucault, 1992, pp. 59-60) archaeology refers to the description of an archive through which the limits and forms of the sayable, conserved, remembered, reactivated and appropriated aspects of discourse⁶³ within the field are defined and outlined. These are sometimes referred to as *discursive formations* which Foucault discussed as "systems of dispersion" (Sheridan, 1980, p. 97) of knowledge, a term Foucault preferred to *theory, sciences or disciplines*. Davidson (1986, cited in Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1128), in a comparison of archaeology with the later developed method of genealogy, suggests that "archaeology attempts to isolate the level of discursive practices and formulate the rules of production and transformation for these practices." Foucault discusses his archaeology as talking about "a practice, its conditions, its rules, and its historical transformations at the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*" (Foucault, 1972). This is a point I return to when discussing the limitations below.

In the context of the archaeological process the outline of these limits and forms creates the opportunity to "treat discourse...as a monument...described in its intrinsic configuration" (Foucault, 1992, p. 60); to investigate the conditions of existence of discourses and, lastly to relate the discourse to the practical field in which it arises and not to the "single mind, thought or subject that engendered it" (Foucault, 1992, p. 61). Indeed in this case I am using archaeology to investigate the emergence of a technique (reflective practice) in a quite

⁶³ *Sayable* refers to what serious speech acts are possible in a given discursive field; the *conserved* denotes those utterances that are retained and those that disappear; *remembered* describes speech acts that everyone recognises and the relation between those retained and things forgotten; *reactivation* refers to those discourses from previous times and how they might be reinvented in the present; and lastly *appropriation* describes the access of groups and communities to different types of discourse and the rules for how that process occurs (Foucault, 1992, pp. 59-60).

specific practical field; i.e. Australian social work education and practice. An archaeological analytic is thus only possible through the restraint or suspension of an array of unities or syntheses (Foucault, 1972). These unities are discussed below.

Clearing the space for an archaeological analytic

These syntheses or unities actually work to introduce continuity between happenings across disparate time and space, and because they act as a backdrop, they undermine the operation of thought needed to displace this background meaning (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). These unities enable accounts of history to assume the centrality of humans as a continuous development. This is a deeply humanist kind of history which “allows a reduction of the difference proper to every beginning” (Foucault, 1972, p. 21). Histories of this kind are sometimes referred to as *total histories* (Dean, 1994). Archaeology, in contrast, offers a way of conducting a *general history* (Dean, 1994); one not concerned with human agency but with the way in which subjectivities and practices are made possible and visible. Archaeological histories, through a suspension of unities and syntheses, become able to locate and focus on discontinuities, series, divisions, events and relations between them (Dean, 1994).

Therefore, an archaeological history of the Foucauldian kind, operates in the space made possible by two key developments: these are the decentring of the sovereignty of the subject; and the rejection of the idea that history is about the search of origins, which was developed by Nietzsche (Bernauer, 1990). This suspension of the unities makes the analytic⁶⁴ of archaeology possible. I have created two tables that outline different levels of syntheses that are in need of suspension. The first table (table six) outlines the two major unities of hermeneutics and Marxism. Below this is another table (table seven) which includes minor syntheses that must also be held in suspense. I have included a description and also a reference to what each synthesis makes possible for a total history.

⁶⁴ Dreyfus & Rabinow (1982, p. 56) suggest that archaeology is best described as an *analytic* because “it seeks to discover the *a priori* conditions that make possible the analysis practice in each specific discipline including structuralism.”

Table 7: Major syntheses

Major syntheses		
Kind	Description.	This synthesis makes it possible:
Hermeneutic.	The phenomena of everyday experiences which is arrived at through human interpretation. Heidegger's <i>Being and Time</i> resulted in two kinds of hermeneutics now translated into social science methodologies (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). The first focuses on the "describing the experience of everyday life as it is internalized [sic] in the subjective consciousness of individuals" (Schwandt 2007g, p. 226).	To make the connection of social practices to human experience, collective or individual as a way of providing a continuous history. A hermeneutic synthesis introduces the notion that these background practices can be known through human consciousness. Thus agency is assumed and from this flows many of the minor unities outlined below.
Marxist.	The second kind is called the hermeneutics of suspicion and is associated with Gadamer (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The focus here is on understanding background practices but with an emphasis on the collective or shared aspects of everyday life. This has been characterised by Foucault as the Marxist error – where there is a past ideal state or future to which one might return or aspire (Foucault, 1972).	For social scientists and historians to search beneath the surface for other hidden or deep meanings.

Table 7 outlines the minor syntheses in need of suspension to enable the work of producing an archaeological account as outlined by Foucault (1972).

Table 8: Minor syntheses

First order syntheses		
Kind	Description	This synthesis makes it possible:
Tradition	Refers to the search for origins as a way of conducting history. Confers a “special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical” (Foucault, 1972, p. 21).	To see history as continuous development from a beginning point to the present inquiry and thereby “isolating the new against a background of permanence” (Foucault, 1972, p. 21).
Influence	Refers to the support to ideas, theories, events that occurs through communications that introduce causes using instances of repetition and resemblance (Foucault, 1972).	To link “individuals, oeuvres, notions and theories” through causal fictions offered by the apparent similarities across time.
Development or evolution	The idea that in each event there is a “principle of coherence” (Foucault, 1972, p. 22) where development is an outcome of assimilation and exchange and has a beginning point in common which can be traced back to an origin.	The mastery of time and to see current events or statements as an outcome of previous adaptive strategies.
Spirit.	This is the idea of a collective unconscious which includes symbolic links which span different times and events (Foucault, 1972, p. 22).	Claim a coherent meaning and explanation for various events and statements.
Familiar divisions or grouping.	Categorisations of various knowledges and genres which are accepted as givens but are themselves products of history. For example groupings such as ‘art’ and ‘science’.	To take for granted divisions inherited from previous times with the assumptions that they are unchanging and continuous.
Book.	The synthesis of the book refers to the special pre-eminence given to this object, and its contents (Foucault, 1972, p. 23). Foucault suggests that books should be viewed as “nodes within a network...and thus cannot be regarded as identical in each case” (Foucault, 1972, p. 23).	To attribute solely to a single subjectivity (the author) ideas and history when in fact the content may actually be unintelligible without recourse to a “complex field of discourse” which renders thought possible (Foucault, 1972, p. 23).
Oeuvre.	This is a related issue to that of the book in that oeuvre refers to status accorded to a group of works by a single author and decisions made about their relative connections (Foucault, 1972, pp. 23-24).	To include or group single author’s works in ways that refer only to the author and not the discursive formations that enable those works to manifest.

This negative work is described by Bernauer (1990, p. 104) as the step which leads to the “establishment of a field of effective signs”. In addition, Bernauer (1990) suggests that the archaeologist needs to maintain an attentive curiosity “aimed at the rarity of what is said...and embraces an interest in the exteriority of those signs that do come into existence” (pp. 105-106). Exteriority represents the notion that what is said can be distinguished from the consciousness of the person who has said it. Further, an *archaeological* sensibility includes sensitivity to the effect of accumulation by which Bernauer means the way in which discursive events are preserved, combined and spread within a field. Within this field of effective signs the archaeologist locates the smallest unit within the discourse, i.e. the *statement* (Foucault, 1972).

This step proved to be both crucial and extremely challenging. Many of the syntheses represent the foundational aspects of accepted scholarship where author attribution is seen as crucial to the avoidance of plagiarism and appropriation of other’s ideas. These are the very sciences that Foucault turned his attention to in his studies of madness, psychiatry, and the history of thought. My initial attempts at conducting the archaeological stage proceeded with the collection of data, which would be considered a reasonable sample by many texts on discourse analysis (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Perakyla, 2008; Scheurich & McKenzie, 2008). When I began what I thought was the archaeological analysis I found I could suspend some second order judgements as recommended (Kendall & Wickham, 1999); however, I was not confident that I was locating the kind of *statements* so often discussed in Foucauldian scholarship within my *archive*. The suspension of the syntheses makes the location of the archive possible. What I had been doing was using the syntheses to create a sample that would work for a discourse analysis concerned with tracing influence of particular authors or ideas. It would, however, not assist with mapping the field of effective signs needed for tracing discourse formation in ways that would lead to “clarification of the history of the *rules* that regulate particular discourses” (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1128). I turn next to describe this field and the various components for undertaking this kind of analysis in addition to having cleared the space through the various suspensions.

Tracing the field of effective signs – discourse formation

Statements are not merely linguistic; although they do utilise language. Statements are more than speech or utterances. What makes them extra-linguistic is the view that they are actually *events* within the field. Statements can be seen in this way by how they must pass an institutional test of some kind (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 48). Dreyfus and Rabinow distinguish Foucauldian speech acts or statements from those outlined in *speech act theory* undertaken by John Searle (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 46). Searle's work is different as it maintains an interest "in how the hearer *understands* a speech act" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 46, emphasis original).

Archaeological method in contrast is not interested in statements as a representation of a single consciousness, but rather in their relation to "existential rules and conditions" (Bernauer, 1990) that delimit the phenomena. Archaeological analysis is concerned with outlining how statements signal other relations of knowledge, materiality, and their relation to the field under study. As a result of this difference Foucauldian statements were called *serious speech acts* by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982). I follow their lead in discussing statements within this study as serious speech act/events.

Serious speech act/events (SSA/E)

The next stage in conducting this kind of analytic is to outline a discursive formation which is made up of SSA/Es. A discursive formation is a group of SSA/Es made possible by a "a set of rules that determine what can be stated at a particular time and how these statements are related to one another" (Bernauer, 1990, p. 107). The rules that must be outlined by the analyst are those concerned with the formation of:

- Objects;
- Enunciative modalities;
- Concepts; and,
- Strategies.

Each of these are part of the field in which "archaeological thinking takes place" (Bernauer, 1990, p. 110); that is in the archive. The description of them involves different operations of

analysis (Graham, 2011). I will outline each in turn and briefly explain the various operations required to trace the way SSA/Es contribute to a description of discursive formations. I have relied on a range of key secondary sources in addition to Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (AS) for this outline. At the end of this description I will discuss the limitations of the method for my purposes with this study, paying careful regard to the contribution an archaeological analytic has for addressing the second question of the study and for developing the paradigmatic assumptive ground of reflective practice in Australian social work education and practice.

Objects

Objects are those things which SSA/Es confer coherence on within a field (Bernauer, 1990, p. 108). There are three ways in which the archaeological analytic traces the formation of objects within discourse. These involve tracing the surfaces of emergence, the authorities of delimitation and to outline the grids of specification (Foucault, 1972, p. 41). I will deal with each aspect beginning with surfaces of emergence and use small examples from my study to illustrate the way these are used to reveal discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49).

Topp (2000), in a careful reading and application of Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, suggests that surfaces of emergences remain specific to the discursive field with which the archaeological analytic is concerned. Surfaces of emergence in the case of this study are those spaces where social work practice is explained and described to others. Therefore, reflection on practice emerged as an object which could be described, differentiated from other kinds of practice through various schools of social work across Australia. Moreover, different processes of reflection also emerged through informal and formal networks between different schools, often delivered as conference papers, workshops and through textbooks.

The next analytic move is to trace the authorities of delimitation. Authorities of delimitation refers to those groups, individuals and professions which are recognised as being positioned

to speak about the object (Topp, 2000). Thus, for this study, the question became *what groups, individuals, or professions represent authorities of delimitation within this particular field?* The authorities for reflective practice were educators with strong connection to field placement programs within schools of social work. Other professions who contributed to the development of reflective practice within this field are educators, particularly educators influenced by humanist and Marxist ideas about education as a form of transformation and emancipation.

The final move in revealing the object of this particular discursive field is to trace the existing bodies of knowledge within the field onto which this object may be grafted or through which new objects might be detailed. In the case of reflective practice these are already outlined as *methods of social work practice*, especially those that already included introspection or evaluations of practice. While there are a range of models of reflective practice as objects across the discursive field in this study, they are all effectively traceable to three main bodies of knowledge: pedagogy (Dewey, 1960; Schon, 1983; Taylor, 1996); psycho-dynamic and humanist schools of psychology (Miller & Rose, 1988); and critical social theory (Agger, 1991; Beck et al., 1994). Moreover, in different contexts there are different emphases on aspects of each of these bodies of knowledge. For example, the critical reflection model that emerged in Australia is informed by more critical social theory and pedagogy, and less by psychodynamic knowledge. In contrast, the model that has emerged in the UK is informed by more psychodynamic knowledge and pedagogy with only limited aspects of critical theory in the form of work on communicative action⁶⁵ introduced from the work of Jurgen Habermas (Ruch, 2002; Ruch, 2007, 2009) and incorporated into it. This is an example of what Foucault (1972) refers to as *locating the grids of specification*.

⁶⁵ Communicative action is a theory proposed by Jurgen Habermas to take forward the Kantian idea of the *lawful* use of reason as being a mechanism for “... reconciling the real and the ideal” (Owen, 1999). In this sense it is an orientation to thinking about the present and its limits which has long been considered as an Enlightenment ethos. The key difference between Kant and Habermas’ is that Habermas uses a notion of intersubjectivity, which seats the communicative action on the recognition of the claims of other subjects as being valid participants in a discourse, provided they meet certain claims and conditions (Bohman & Rehg, 2014).

Enunciative modalities

The next set of traces are those that directly concern how to distinguish “who has the right to make statements, from what site these statements emanate, and what position the subject of discourse occupies” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 68). There is a caution here that Foucault discusses at length and which concerns the suspension of the unities described above.

Foucault (1972) is not referring to the consciousness of a single subject but rather the “various statuses, the various sites, the various positions that he [sic] can occupy or be given when making a discourse” (p. 54). Topp (2000, pp. 367-369) helpfully provides some guidance on the three elements through which to trace these modalities. These elements are *individual speaker status*, *institutional and technical sites* and lastly *subject positions* within the formation.

Individual speaker status refers to those within this discursive formation who have the right to make statements regarding social work practice and reflection in particular. In the case of this study these individuals generally occupied the space between academia and the field of social work proper. Field education coordinators or directors of field education occupy a position within a network of relations between the formal curricula and that of the activities of practice where students are placed within social work agencies. In this regard these individuals can speak across both arenas and have status in each, albeit through different mechanisms.

These individuals are able to speak from both places. Within the institutional site of academia, field education coordinators or directors bring practice expertise and contact with the activities that constitute social work practice. In the field these individuals are able to speak with the authority of the institution. The agency sites themselves have differing statuses as does the kind of practice which these individuals are known for. The field supplies the technical expertise and this is treated as authentic if it originates through stories of practice, captured in case studies and manuals of field education and incorporated into models of practice for students. Only individuals who have practice experience derived

from sanctioned arenas of practice are authorised to generate “serious speech acts” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 48) in this particular formation.

The third element is the subject positions made possible within the discursive formation. Subject positions refer to the “possible positions that subjects may take up: positions such as teacher, expert, leader, follower, observer, commentator, practitioner, measurer or judge.” (Topp, 2000, p. 370). Within this study there are a number of subject positions in relation to reflective practice. These are practicum students, practitioners, students, lecturers, supervisors, clients, and field educators.

Concepts

This refers to descriptions of the pattern and regularity with which concepts appear within a given discursive formation. Topp (2000, p. 370), in his discussion, outlines three moves through which concepts can be traced. Firstly, concepts are traced according to succession and patterning. This means tracing the way concepts that characterise reflective practice follow a certain order when it is being articulated and explained. For example, in many social work texts that outline reflective practice the concept is discussed in relation to theory and practice, professional artistry, and the impact of social conditions in which social work operates (Connolly & Harms, 2012; Fook, 1999; Healy, 2014). Secondly, an archaeological analytic traces *forms of coexistence* (Foucault, 1972, p. 57). Tracing this includes the way concepts are included or excluded within a body of knowledge which is to trace a “*field of presence*” (Foucault, 1972, p. 57). The way to trace them includes giving attention to the way in a body of knowledge they are:

- Criticised;
- Judged;
- Discussed;
- Verified by experiment;
- Repeated;
- Justified by tradition or authority;
- Or implied by the ordinary language of practitioners and participants in the discourse (Foucault, 1972).

An example could be tracing the term *problem* within social work professional language and the way this term has come to denote a certain stance towards practice, which could be characterised as pathologising of clients and their circumstances. The term *problem* eventually becomes excluded as a term appropriate for practice through some of the processes outlined above.

Concepts are also traced according to their relations with or from other domains, which Foucault outlined as a *field of concomitance*. This is where concepts from related domains are utilised within a discursive formation but serve as analogies, models, principles, and forms of reasoning that support the current discourse. In social work an example would be to trace the term 'self-awareness' and how it served as a rationale for including the practitioner-self in deliberations on social work practice with others. Foucault also discussed the way an enunciative field might contain a *field of memory* (Foucault, 1972). Attention to this part of the field enables the tracing of any "... lingering implicit concepts that filter and transform the current concepts in use" (Topp, 2000, p. 370). Thus, in this line of inquiry concepts were traced along these three different lines to locate their relations and regularities in order to illustrate the emergence of reflective practice.

Third, Foucault outlines a range of *procedures of intervention* (1972, pp. 58-59). Procedures of intervention are strategies used to transform concepts within discursive formations.

Foucault outlines seven different kinds of procedures, not all of which will be present as regularities but nevertheless can be traced (Foucault, 1972, pp. 58-59). These procedures are described in Table 8 below with examples from this study. Only those procedures traceable in this study are included as examples:

Table 9: Procedures of intervention

Kind of procedure	Description	Example from this study
Techniques of rewriting.	The way in which elements or descriptions are used from one area without reference to where they come from using the same words.	The term <i>critical</i> is a case in point – in social work the term may be used to include a range of theoretical perspectives associated with Marxism, feminism (Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1990), Habermas and Bourdieu (Connolly & Harms, 2012; Fook, Hick, & Pozzuto, 2005), whereas the same term <i>critical</i> can be also used in other disciplines to denote critical analysis with regard to operations of thought, which include compare/contrast, use of inference, analogy, deduction and induction (Halpern, 1992).
Methods of transcribing statements	This is the way common every day natural language (speech acts) become serious speech acts (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, pp. 47-48) through the “use of a more or less formalized [sic] and artificial language” (Foucault, 1972, p. 58).	In social work the phrase “use of self” denotes a whole language that takes in professional and personal identity and the socialisation process of becoming a social worker (O’Connor, Wilson, & Setterlund, 1998).
Modes of translating.	The various means by which qualitative descriptions can be re-presented as quantitative descriptions and vice versa.	
Methods of increasing the approximation of statements.	Processes that relate statements to each other within the discursive field.	
Delimitations of validity of statements.	This is how concepts are made valid within a field by their inclusion or exclusion.	This is through the authorisation of who can speak about practice. Field education coordinators, practitioner-academics writing about practice.
Transferring concepts or statements from one field of application to another.	Concepts and statements arising in a different discursive formation can be utilised or transferred to a new formation decoupled from the original statement or concept.	Schon’s concept about practice and technical rationality were being read onto existing debates about traditional approaches to casework (Fook, 1996a; Fook & Pease, 1999).
Methods of systematising propositions.	The mechanisms by which statements that may already be linked are further rearranged into new systematic wholes.	

While this table describes all seven kinds of procedures utilised within Foucault's own scholarship, I have only included those relevant to my deployment of an archaeological analytic. It has been suggested that this is appropriate and that each inquiry shapes the tools appropriate to the analytic (Koopman & Matza, 2013). This has been the experience in this study as the use of archaeological analytic was deployed only to a limited extent within the research as whole. The main procedures located were where concepts/statements had been *transferred from one field* to another and utilised within the context of social work practice; the *methods of transcribing*, which refers to the way in which less formal or natural language with regard to practice is abstracted into a new language incorporating ideas without referencing back to the original concept(s); and the way in which *techniques of rewriting* could be seen with regard to some statements or concepts.

Strategies

Strategies refers to the way in which objects, modalities and concepts form themes or theories which afford a discursive formation its coherence (Foucault, 1972). Foucault advises that the configuration of these various aspects should be seen as particular and thus must be traced through the specificity of each instance of discourse. This means that for this research utilising an archaeological analytic such strategies must be traced in relation to the particularities of the actual field of the study. This is a key point often missed in uses of Foucauldian ideas about discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000); that the concepts and ideas have arisen in relation to careful tracing of practices and texts under specific conditions. In my study, this accounts for why some aspects of Foucault's machinery have *not* been traceable or utilised.

Objects, concepts and modalities form themes and theories, which Foucault characterises as *strategies*, not least due to the inclusion of practices beyond grammar and language. Locating this configuration is the final component for tracing a discursive formation using an archaeological analytic. Again with this tracing there are a number of operations of thought to be employed. These are the determination of the possible *points of diffraction*; *the economy of the discursive formation*; and lastly the *function* of the body of knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

The possible *points of diffraction* refer to how concepts within a discursive formation can be incompatible or at odds with each other. Topp (2000, p. 372) offers a range of questions that assisted in applying this within the archive with regard the points of diffraction:

- What incompatibilities are evident in the active body of knowledge?
- What alternative approaches and theories are evident within the bodies of knowledge?
- Have alternative approaches developed into coherent theoretical options?

An example of incompatibility can be seen in the way two different kinds of critical reflection have been combined into one social work model (Fook & Gardner, 2007) and yet they contain quite different orientations to thinking and reflecting. Both are aimed at a critique of the present and share their heritage in the Kantian project of enlightenment albeit from different standpoints (Owen, 1996). The first is oriented to interrogating the gap between the ideal and the real and can be characterised a form of Habermasian critique or critical reflection (Ruch, 2002). The second orientation is aimed at interrogating the limits of the present through problematising *all* claims to truth through deconstructing the knowledge and language through which claims are made (Tully, 1999); this deconstruction includes claims to any ideal state.

These incompatibilities resulted in the development of a *postmodern critical perspective* (Pease & Fook, 1999) in Australia, which later proved foundational to the development of the Fook and Gardner model (discussed above). Both use different *aspects* of what philosophers describe as *critical reflection* (Tully, 1989). Critical notions that are retained include an analysis of how human wellbeing and agency may be undermined by structures and processes of oppression and domination. In order for people to cope within such structures they develop a “false consciousness” (Little, n. d.). People thus require emancipation from this false consciousness which, is thought to be best achieved through processes of conscientisation, mostly through various programs of collective action and dialogue (Healy, 2000).

By contrast postmodernist⁶⁶ ideas maintain somewhat different notions about human agency⁶⁷. Indeed many of these theories constituted a critique of the various structural ideas at the heart of a critical theory (Mullaly, 1997, 2007). Thus, from a number of the poststructural theoretical positions it is doubtful there is a human agent through which conscientisation might occur (Sarup, 1993). Furthermore, using a postmodernist approach, processes of emancipation should be subject to scrutiny for the way in which the language positions people as victims of various sociologically derived structures such as gender, class, and ethnicity (Jessup & Rogerson, 1999). This is an example of the existence of *points of diffraction*.

The *economy* of the discursive formation is a description of the relations between the discursive formation being outlined and others contemporary to it. This can also include discursive formations related to it. Foucault (1972) suggests that discourses may be in relations of opposition, used as an analogy of something else, or indeed may be complementary. An example of a strategy at odds with reflective practice within social work is that of *evidence based practice* (EBP). Indeed, the two are often set in opposition to one another with EBP being characterised as a rational planning approach to the use of knowledge in social work practice (Taylor & White, 2000). Reflective practice is often put up as an alternative to this kind of technical rational approach to practice. Attempts have been made to effect a rapprochement between the two approaches (Plath, 2006). An example of complementary strategy is that of community development, particularly from the critical tradition (Ife, 2001).

Lastly, to describe the *function* of various strategies (bodies of knowledge or theories) within the discursive formation is to outline the *positivity* that is created between words and things; where "...function can be theorised as a discursive junction-box...and [where words and

⁶⁶ I use the term postmodernism here as the authors Pease and Fook (1999), while acknowledging some differences, used the terms interchangeably but with a preference for postmodernism (p. 9).

⁶⁷ Early poststructural accounts were an extended critique on the notion of a human *subject* according to Sarup (1993) and they do not tend to utilise the term *agent* as this would undermine the argument that human beings are only understandable as parts of discursive structures and relations. The term human agency has enjoyed a resurgence in recent times through the work of Margaret Archer (2000).

things] become invested with particular relations of power” (Graham, 2011, p. 668). An example can be seen in the following statement “The increasing bureaucratization of social work practice and an emphasis on instrumental accountability have generated approaches that seek to validate practice discretion and practice wisdom” (D’Cruz et al., 2007). Why would that be the case? The text links bureaucracy and accountability in opposition to practice discretion and wisdom signalling a relation between practices that is *generative* of a relation between knowledge (practice wisdom and discretion) and the effects of another kind of power relation (accountability).

This concludes my description of the archaeological analytic utilised within this study and as outlined by Foucault and others. In summary, the crucial factor to consider has been the particular *operations of thought* that enable the archive to become available to the analyst, thus making possible the tracing of objects, enunciative modalities, subjects and strategies. The actual outline of various tracings is presented as a form of post-rock music as part of the rhapsody album. This can be found in chapter six. The next section will discuss the issues of restraining the analysis and the limits to my use of this in relation to the question for this stage of the study.

Limitations and restraints in the use of an archaeological analytic

Many discussions of problematisation in research consider Foucauldian archaeology as a grand form that most often operates at the epistemic level (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Bernauer, 1990; Graham, 2011; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Foucault (1992, p. 54) also considers the project in which he has deployed an archaeological analytic to be aimed at the level of the *epistemic*. By this Foucault meant an archaeological analytic was formulated for examining “disciplines – so unsure of their frontiers, and so vague in content – that we call the history of ideas, or of thought, or of science, or of knowledge” (Foucault, 1972). Alvesson and Karreman (2000, p. 1134) suggest that analyses of this kind tend to occupy a space at the level of a macro-systemic focus at the expense of more localised discursive investigations. In their view it is quite difficult, albeit not impossible, to connect such grand analyses with more localised studies of talk and text. The implication is that the application of this method is better reserved for tracing the histories of whole disciplines or histories. Others (Graham,

2011; Koopman & Matza, 2013) disagree stating that this misses the point that Foucault's work was carefully empirical and the many of the tools he developed should not be applied universally beyond their historical context.

This is a fair point. It has indeed been a difficult task to restrain the archaeological analytic to the level of the technique at hand. I take some comfort from comments by Foucault himself and the way in which he discusses his methods as being tools for tracing practices (Foucault, 1972), which is what I have attempted here. I also take some heart from Tully's (1999, p. 68) point on the issue of critique being about "deliberative judgement, of orienting practical reason to the unique, local exigencies". I have instead utilised only some of the "bizarre machinery" formulated by Foucault and deployed these only to the extent needed to inform this aspect of the overall inquiry. Given this, it is possible to acknowledge that others may already be able to view *reflective practice* as one of many "techniques of the self" well described in other archaeologies and genealogies of the contemporary neo-liberal period (Cruikshank, 1996; Rose, 1989, 2008). The archaeology here attempts to trace it as a part of a local and contingent emergence, which has had consequences for how we approach learning, teaching and using it in social work education and practice in Australia.

The other limitation of this method is the tendency to want to trend towards totalisation but in terms of discourse by acting as if "individuals are only embodied appendices of various discourses that have constituted the subjectivity the observer may think that s/he observes" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011, p. 1130). My interest in using archaeology was to delineate the emergence of this now firmly established *practice* within social work. In light of the almost complete acceptance of reflective practice as a core social work skill, I was interested in this *totality* within my own discipline and wanted to examine it differently than the way accepted accounts (Fook, 1999, 1996c; Gould & Taylor, 1996; Redmond, 2004; Yelloly & Henkel, 1995) have characterised it. It is hard to imagine now a social worker declaring their rejection of reflective practice. It seemed to me that by paying attention to the divisions and transformations of this practice within my own discipline I would arrive at a more robust account of its emergence than if I just traced it using the methods of scholarship which

connect events across time and through the unity of authorship and oeuvre or even through hermeneutic interpretation (Foucault, 1972). I chose to use it as a *method* within the study rather than as the whole methodological approach in order to work against any notion that social workers using and recommending the practice are without agency.

The other issue is that archaeology in some circles is considered to have been superseded by other forms of problematisation such as genealogy (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Even Tully (1999) suggests that certain structural aspects of archaeology were abandoned by Foucault. Thus, it is more common now to source studies that trace specific power/knowledge configurations using genealogical analyses than it is to find studies using the earlier archaeological analytic. As I mentioned earlier, the question for this part of the research was centred on tracking the emergence of reflective practice, rather than to engage in a thorough problematisation of its use in social work specifically in relation to power/knowledge relations. I took heart too from Miller (1997, cited in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000, p. 1134) who offered the idea that:

Whatever the form of the data, Foucauldian discourse studies involve treating the data as expressions of culturally standardised discourses that are associated with particular social settings.

Hence, somewhat in spite of these various discouragements, archaeology was adopted and this offered a focus on texts as well as practices.

To conclude, these limitations all formed important cautionary tales when conceptualising this study. It is a risky business to incorporate a method that includes the suspension of any hermeneutic synthesis in a study designed to accomplish a hermeneutic arc between the experience of a single individual, across a *discursive* landscape and into the talk and texts of my fellow professional inhabitants. Lastly, this attempt is not one that tries to say everything that could be said about reflective practice in Australian social work education; nor has it been undertaken to lay bare particular power relations between specific individuals or institutions within the discipline of social work in Australia. Rather, this archaeological attempt has been made to clear the field of existing structures and ideas linked together by

the economy of knowledge usual to academic and social work practices, and thus to try to think differently about the topic of reflective practice.

The next section of this chapter outlines the method utilised in undertaking interviews for the final stage of the study. In this stage I utilised qualitative interviewing with practitioners, educators and students on their use of reflective practice in learning and practicing social work. Participants shared their thoughts not just on what they believe about reflective practice but how they described the rationale, means and ends, spaces, locations and practices of contemporary reflective practice.

Qualitative interviews

Introduction

The interview is a well-established method in qualitative research (Silverman, 2007).

According to Warren (2001)

interviews are based on conversation and as such are informed by a constructionist epistemology. In this respect qualitative interviews conducted in this study operate within the *empirical* realm outlined within critical realist ontology in addition to being constructionist in

their epistemological foundation.

Thus the assumption is that the

accounts generated within this aspect of the whole study offer a partial and incomplete account about the phenomena of reflective practice. This is because it may be there are generative mechanisms operating within the domain of the *real* and *actual* that may not be available through this generation of experiential accounts by participants using a method for understanding phenomena in the *empirical* domain (Bhaskar, 1998a). The inclusion of

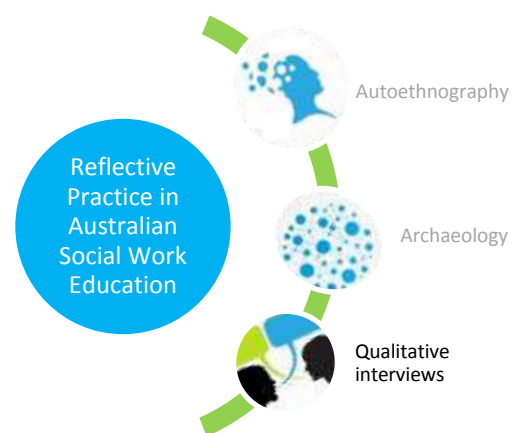


Figure 5: Qualitative interview

participants in the study forms an important part of going beyond my own experience and that of the discursive landscape outlined by earlier parts of the research. This part of the research forms a dialogue with fellow travellers and thus is characterised as the *choral* part of the rhapsody.

According to Fontana and Frey (2008) qualitative researchers generally no longer consider the interview as a strictly neutral undertaking. Instead interviews are now considered *always already* performances, which include “ the *hows* of people’s lives (the constructive work involved in producing order in everyday life) as well as the traditional *whats* (the activities of everyday life)...”(Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 119, emphasis and brackets original).

Moreover, the purpose of interviews within social research is acknowledged to be significantly shaped by various theoretical perspectives (Alvesson, 2011). These perspectives contain ideas about the subject, object and kinds of knowledge made visible and possible by interviews of respondents close to phenomena under study. Those from an interpretivist paradigm see qualitative interviews as being concerned with the meaning and interpretation of the *lifeworlds* of participants (Warren, 2001). In this part of the research my interest was in the ways participants utilise and describe learning reflective practice.

Furthermore I am also taking a lead from Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) and applying a fairly minimalist critical interpretative approach “...which in the dialectic between reinforcing and questioning established institutions and ideologies, avoids the unequivocal adoption of either position” (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Thus, my purpose is not to take the accounts offered through the interview process and apply a thorough-going deconstructive interpretation of the kind outlined by Alvesson, which he termed *D-Reflexivity* (Alvesson, 2011). This kind of reflexivity includes destabilising practices such as problematisation and destabilisation of taken-for-granted certainties and is a particular kind of critical reflection (Tully, 1989). This kind of reflexivity is taken up in other aspects of the study.

Rather, in this qualitative stage of the study my aim was to institute another kind of reflexivity more concerned with reconstructive techniques. This reflexivity is discussed by Alvesson as *R-reflexivity* (Alvesson, 2011). *R-reflexivity* involves pointing out alternative ways to conceptualise an issue, or even a premature closure of possibilities. The aim is to "...provide alternative descriptions, interpretations, results, vocabularies, voices and points of departure..." (Alvesson, 2011). Both kinds of reflexivity ideally work together and this is the case in research as a whole but for this stage primarily I am utilising a reconstructive kind of critical interpretation.

In addition, this stage utilising qualitative interviews was undertaken in order to move the inquiry beyond my own experience and that of the archaeological analytic of the previous stages. In terms of the research as a whole this line of inquiry addresses interpretative level one (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009) and is therefore focussed on accounts in interviews and the use of empirical materials. The other level of a reflexive methodology addressed in this part of the research is that of "critical interpretation (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009) of the ideological, power and socially reproductive mechanisms can be described. Therefore, this stage was designed as a way to consider the political-practical-moral assumptions about reflective practice, which participants might or might not share as an element of their membership in the profession of social work. In light of this focus an explicit analysis of how participants valued reflective practice was included and is discussed in chapter seven.

Methods

Kind of interviews

A semi-structured format for the interviews was chosen as appropriate as this allowed for a "series of predetermined but open-ended questions" (Ayres, 2008, p. 811) exploring a range of topics related to learning and using reflective practice. This process allows for the interview to range away from predetermined questions but still offers some structure to the encounter. Three different interview guides in the form of a series of questions or open ended statements was developed (see Appendix G). The interview guides were approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). I conducted all 14 interviews, either

by phone or in person at a location and time convenient to the participant. Time allocated for each interview was 40 minutes with the average duration of 32 minutes.

Consent procedures

The procedure approved by HREC had three stages. On recruitment participants were sent the information letter and consent form and asked to read and return a signed consent form to me either by email if remote or in person depending on how the interview was conducted. Before commencing each interview, I again explained the purpose of the interview, the confidentiality provisions, and asked participants if they wished to proceed. I also asked for verbal consent to audiotape the interview. All participants returned signed consent forms and gave verbal consent before the interview commenced.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by a reputable transcription service and returned to participants for their approval and/or amendment. Participants were asked to give final consent to be included in the data analysis. All 14 interview participants gave consent for their interview to be included in the analysis.

Empirical materials produced

The final tally of data included 14 interviews which represents a total of 77,360 words. The total time of audio recording was 468.01 minutes/seconds.

Process of analysis

First stage

There were three stages to the analysis. This involved two main cycles of coding and then a process of categorising to analyse for emergent themes. The first cycle included preparing the transcripts by firstly de-identifying each of them and instituting a tracking process for following up the numbering ascribed to each of the paragraphs on each interview transcript. This was to enable easy tracking after which I utilised an open coding process as recommended by Saldana (2012). The units of analysis were generally phrases or meaning units within the transcript and I utilised a form of condensation “which entails an abridgement of the meanings expressed by participants into shorter formulations” (Kvale,

1996, p. 192). These formulations were highlighted, numbered and placed next to the emerging codes. The codes were then entered into a word document table along with the phrase or meaning unit identifier. After I coded all the interviews using this method, I wrote a number of analytic memos about what I thought the main overall themes might be at this first stage.

I also utilised a computer program called *wordle*⁶⁸ to consider the frequency of particular codes that had resulted from the process (Lake, 2015). I removed the word reflection for this block of text to concentrate on other phrases or meaning units. Lastly in this phase of the analysis, I also separated out all the phrases used by participants about the *barriers to reflection* and utilised *Wordle* to create a word-cloud of these ideas about barriers. I have not specifically addressed barriers to reflection in the discussion of the analysis presented in chapter seven primarily because it did not emerge as a significant aspect of the inquiry. Nevertheless, I have included these word-clouds can be seen in Appendix I.

Second stage

After this initial open coding process, a second stage to the analysis was initiated. This second stage was conducted on the open codes that resulted from the first stage. Open codes were entered into a table with a separate row for each code. The exception was the codes concerned with barriers. These were omitted from this second stage and excluded from this table. A column entitled *values codes* was added to the table. Four other columns were also added to the table. These columns were to enable coding for a *domain analysis*, which is discussed below. Using this table and working between the initial codes in column one and the transcripts I began the analysis with the practical-moral descriptions by participants about reflective practice in terms of values, attitudes and beliefs. The *second stage* table can be seen in Appendix I.

⁶⁸ Wordle is a program for generating word clouds. These word clouds are produced by the frequency with which words appear in a block of text that is uploaded to the program. The program can be accessed at <https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=wordle>

I chose a schema to assist with analysing for the political-practical-moral expressions of participants with regard to reflective practice. This schema was one that explicitly enables a focus on *value dimensions*. Saldana (2012) suggests that this schema is “... appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for those that explore cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions...” (p. 111). Utilising this schema I analysed the open codes to consider the values, attitudes and beliefs about reflective practice expressed by participants. The coding process was challenging especially with regard to values, attitudes and beliefs. Saldana (2012) too admits that the boundary between values, attitudes and beliefs may be slippery. Nevertheless from this cycle of coding a number of categories emerged and could be grouped under values, attitudes and beliefs.

It also meant that I needed to institute an extra procedure within the coding and categorising process due to the way in which participants often used similar words but these may have different meanings. As I was undertaking the second cycle of coding I would tag cases where I found I had coded similar items to separate categories. I would then revisit the transcript, and in some cases the audio as well, to check my interpretation of the sense-making of the participant. I recorded analytic memos about these instances in order to aid the final analysis.

Third stage

Using the remaining four columns in the table I conducted a further layer of analysis which result in a number of themes that outlined the reasons and practices for using, teaching and learning reflective practice. I chose to conduct a domain analysis for doing this (Saldaña, 2012, p. 157). Domain analysis is a method of analysis that is considered interpretative and is a way of presenting the cultural knowledge associated with the topic of *reflective practice*. The first step in a domain analysis is to analyse for specific terms within the data. This had occurred during the first cycle of coding. In this second stage of coding I undertook an analysis of the semantic relationships which participants outlined in their discussion of reflective practice. There are nine possible semantic relationships that might be coded for, as outlined by Spradley (1979, cited in Saldaña, 2012). I chose to consider only four out of the

nine as these four directly related to the focus of the research question. These were *means-end; rationale; location for action and function* (Saldaña, 2012). According to Sells, Smith and Newfield (1997) not all semantic relationships will be relevant to all ethnographic research. I present the results of the analysis as the third track of the album, a choral piece within the rhapsody. I have included the coding sheets in Appendix I.

Representing and theming the data

Once the codes were stabilised through this second cycle of coding I then undertook a further process to categorise the values, attitudes and beliefs and the four semantic relationships discussed above. A sheet for each was prepared and the data from the master sheet was cut and pasted into these documents. This step also included cutting and pasting the initial codes or meaning units and statements into the sheets and grouping them together. This enabled a systematic progression from code to category to theme in the case of values, attitudes and beliefs. A graphical representation became possible as it could pick up the relative weighting of each theme based on the analysis. The same process was undertaken with the domain analysis categories. The progression of the domain analysis from codes to themes and finally to graphical representations are also included in Appendix I. Discussion of the resulting themes is outlined in chapter seven. I turn now to discuss the participants.

Participant information

Fourteen participants were recruited for this part of the study using purposive sampling⁶⁹ (Palys, 2008). Three different groups were identified as important to building understanding on the uses of reflective practice and confirmed through the conduct of the autoethnography and the archaeology. These were social work practitioners, educators and students. Each group required different processes of recruitment. For the educators participants were recruited through my own networks. I chose not to interview social work educators from within the social work team at my own institution. This is because these colleagues were already familiar with the study and I was in a leadership role for most of the study, which

⁶⁹ Purposive sampling is where participants are chosen on the basis of their connection to the aims of the research (Palys, 2008). Even though it is considered to be fairly standard within qualitative research there are different criterion that might be utilised to decide on where, what and how to recruit participants. In this case I recruited for “typical cases” for three different categories of participants: social work students, practitioners and educators. These ‘cases’ were suggested as key informants based on the other outcomes of the previous lines of inquiry.

might introduce a potential conflict of interest to the interviews. Five educators in total participated in the study; three from Western Australia, one from South Australia and one from Queensland. All the educators were women. No other demographic information was collected as this was not deemed relevant to the study.

In contrast to that of educators, the recruitment of students was undertaken through my own institution, although attempts were made to recruit from other Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) courses. To recruit student participants I initially placed posters around campus about the research calling for participants; however, I received no inquiries through this method. Ethics approval was sought for a change in recruitment methods. This approval allowed recruitment via direct email to students through an 'all-student' program Blackboard⁷⁰ community site in which all students are automatically enrolled if they are enrolled in the BSW. The recruitment emails for this process is included in Appendix F. Students who met the following criteria were eligible to participate in the study:

1. Must have successfully completed one semester in a BSW course.
2. Have undertaken at least one reflective practice assessment.
3. Should not be enrolled in any units of which I am the unit coordinator or lecturer during the interview phase of the study (July 2014 – December 2014).

The first criteria and second criteria were aimed at ensuring that student participants had experienced at least one semester enrolled within a BSW course and had experienced learning reflective practice through an assessment process. These criteria were included in the email invitation. It was hoped that these provisions would assist participants to provide an informed view in relation to the research question. The third criterion was discussed with students who indicated interest in participating. This criterion was included to ensure that the students' participation was free of coercion resulting from my assessment of assignment work. Three of the four students were female. All were mature aged students; two were already practicing within the human services in addition to studying social work students. Two students were in their first year, one was a second year student and one was in third

⁷⁰ Blackboard is the name of the learning management system (LMS) utilised in my university.

year of their course about to commence field placement. No other demographic information was collected.

In order to recruit social work practitioners I sent an email invitation to a local human services agency network with approximately 1200 members asking for participants. The criterion for participating was that the person had to be eligible for membership of the AASW⁷¹. When potential participants contacted me I asked them how long they had been in practice as I was keen to include both new graduates⁷² and more experienced practitioners. Practitioner participants were also recruited through my professional networks. A total of five interviews were conducted with social work practitioners. Two practitioners were new graduates and the other three were experienced ranging from three years to 11 years in practice. All practitioners were women. The practitioners were practicing in the following fields:

- Health
- Child protection
- Justice
- Aged care

No other demographic information was collected.

Limitations of qualitative interviews

Interviews by their very nature are open to a range of criticisms. Kvale (1996) in his treatment of qualitative interviews suggests two different metaphors: interviewers as *miners* or as *travellers*. Miners conceptualise the role of the interviewer as one where nuggets of truth or meaning are "... uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner ...nuggets of data or meanings [are dug out] of the subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by leading questions." (Kvale, 1996, p. 3). In this metaphor nuggets of knowledge remain pure and unchanged by the interpretative process of the miner/interviewer. The other metaphor is of a different kind where the interviewer is a traveller. Kvale (1996, p. 4) describes this approach as one that is

⁷¹ Eligibility for membership is only possible if the person has graduated from an AASW accredited school of social work or were eligible after an assessment by the AASW of their overseas qualifications.

⁷² Defined as graduated within two years at the time of the study.

akin to collecting stories from conversations one has with people throughout the traveller/interviewers journey and which will be told as “ ... stories ... to the people of the interviewer’s own country, and possibly also to those with whom the interviewer wandered.” The traveller interprets these stories for different audiences and they are “ ... validated through their impact on the listeners” (Kvale, 1996, p. 4). These two metaphors correspond to different research perspectives. Kvale considers the key contrast between these metaphors is that the *miner* represents a mainstream conception of knowledge in social sciences and the *traveller* could be seen as a postmodern perspective. My view is that the difference is rather between an objective epistemological perspective and that of the more constructionist/subjectivist positions (Crotty, 1998). Subjectivist epistemology can encompass other research paradigms such as interpretivist, critical and postmodern (Robertson, 2007). Kvale (1996) uses these metaphors to provide a contrast in the various objections to interviews. As the traveller metaphor more closely represents the way in which interviews have been included in the research my focus is primarily on these *internal critiques* raised by Kvale. Table 10 outlines my response to each of the critiques:

Table 10: Response to Kvale's critiques

Kvale's (1996, p. 292) - internal critiques	My response
Individualistic, it focuses on the individual and neglects a person's embeddedness in social interactions.	Questions were asked about the social context of the interviewer with regard to the topic. Interviewees were also asked about their experience with social work and also their own learning of reflective practice. Other aspects of the whole study (archaeology, autoethnography) provided context for choosing who to include as participants in an interview stage.
Idealistic, it ignores the situatedness of human experience and behaviour in a social and material world.	This research is not claiming that the interviews in this study are able to, or likely to capture all elements of human experience of the respondents. Nevertheless it is true that every act of asking a question involves interpretation by both the interviewer and interviewee (Gibbs, 2011, November 21).
Intellectualistic, it neglects the emotional aspects of knowledge, overlooks empathy as a mode of knowing.	The interviews were conducted with participants with whom I share experiences in terms of education experiences and in some respects practice and learning experiences. Thus the interview process was conducted as a conversation between fellow inhabitants within a professional field, albeit with different subject positions. Using techniques of rapport building, tone of voice, showing interest and allowing the interview to flow as a conversation assisted with ensuring the interview was not a primarily intellectual interview.
Immobile, the subjects sits and talk, they do not move or act in the world.	This is a limitation of interviews however interviews by themselves may be seen as a form of action if we take the view that interviews are more than a one-way communication and that the conduct and interaction between interviewee and interviewer is a form of action (Gibbs, 2011, November 21).
Cognitivist, it focuses on thoughts and experiences at the expense of action.	Participants were asked questions that would elicit responses that would yield views about where and how reflective practice takes place in their experience, not just what they <i>think</i> about the topic. The data analysis also considered the topic in relation to actions in practice.
Verbalising, it makes a fetish of verbal interaction and transcripts, neglects the bodily situatedness of the interview.	This is a limitation of interview research generally. There was recognition that the transcribing process contributes to the erasure of the bodily aspects of the interview. This made consulting the audio important during the analysis where there were a few instances which required re-listening to the audio recording as this offered a better sense of the meaning of particular points made by a participant.
Alinguistic, although the medium is language, linguistic approaches are ignored.	The forms of data analysis did not encompass a linguistic analysis of the interviews as this did not fit with the aims and research questions of the inquiry. Nevertheless it can be acknowledged as a limitation of the analysis which focused on instances at the expense of sequences which would have been closer to a linguistic approach. A linguistic analysis was therefore beyond the scope of the study.
Atheoretical, it entails a cult of interview statements, and disregards theories of the field studied.	The conduct of the interviews has been informed by three kinds of theory: Critical, poststructural and interpretative. This means that the analysis was informed by an acknowledgement of intersubjective nature of interviews, the possible power relations, and the way in which interpretations of the topic can be informed by the way in which the questions and interview proceed.
Arhetorical, published reports are boring collections of interview quotes, rather than convincing stories.	I have utilised Borum and Enderud's (1980, cited in Kvale's 1996, pp. 266-267) guidelines for reporting interview quotes. They entail keeping them short, contextualising them through their placement within a wider discussion of my analysis and interpretation of the study, rendered into written form for ease of reading and all identifying information removed.
Insignificant, it produces trivialities, and hardly any new knowledge worth mentioning.	

Another limitation is the standard one that concerns sampling. The sample was never intended to be representative of the whole professional social work body. Instead, the sample was chosen to represent the main subject positions that emerged as significant to the development of reflective practice within Australian social work specifically. These positions were social work practitioners, educators, field educators and students and they emerged as significant through the discourse analysis in the archaeological phase of the research. In terms of sample size, or how many people to interview, pragmatic considerations were important (Baker & Edwards, 2012). The qualitative interviews represented only a third of the study as a whole and were conducted as the last stage of the research. Three main subject positions were chosen with the understanding that participants may have occupied more than one of these potential positions and thus would be able to draw on experiences beyond the primary category. Thus, a minimum of three participants and a maximum of five in each category would be sufficient to provide a picture of contemporary perspectives on reflective practice. I found that three out of five educators recruited had been field educators. Two out of four of the recruited practitioners had been educators at some point in their careers. One significant limitation with regard to the student participants was that none of them had experienced a field placement, although two out of four students already possessed practice experience in the field. Field placement experience had not been a condition for participation. This represents an area for future exploration. All participants had experiences as social work students to draw on in their discussion. In conclusion, whilst there are considerable limitations to qualitative interviews, I have attempted to address these through careful attention to research design, maintaining a reflexive attitude to the limits of interviews and the issues of representation and sample size. Other issues pertaining to assessment of quality in qualitative research are addressed below in the table presented in the *interlude* following this chapter.

Ethical considerations

There have been different ethical considerations for each of the different stages. This section includes a discussion of the ethical issues that pertain to the research that move beyond the institutional approval given by the institutional review board of my institution. As mentioned above the study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human

Research Ethics Board (WATTS 5875). In this section I want instead to briefly discuss the ethical stance that has informed the conduct and subsequent production of this research.

Ethical issues

Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Higgs & Paterson, 2005) outlined a number of key questions every social researcher should consider whilst conducting social research. These questions relate to the issues of worthiness of the project, competence and trustworthiness of the researcher, informed consent, benefits, costs and reciprocity between the researcher and participants, harms and risks, issues of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, and lastly, integrity and quality. In this section I mainly focus on worthiness of the project, competence and integrity and quality. Confidentiality and informed consent processes have been outlined above.

Tracy (2010) suggests that the worthiness of a project relates to its timeliness, relevance, significance and whether the topic is interesting. This research began with my desire to explore a particular practice within my own discipline for the purposes of seeing how teaching it might be improved. The timing seemed right to consider how the profession of social work understood this core skill which was being named as essential in an increasingly prescriptive set of national social work education and accreditation standards (Australian Association of Social Work, 2013a; Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010b) and the ever evolving practice standards for the profession (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2003, 2013b). The near complete acceptance of it, I sensed amongst colleagues and in various literatures, indicated that being reflective was a significant marker of a *good* social worker. This also sparked my curiosity. Moreover, the practice had been in use for some time in the discipline with enough documentary and research evidence and debate to make an inquiry possible from the point of view of testing its limits. In terms of making the topic interesting, given the ubiquity of materials about reflective practice, the choice of pursuing a methodology that would problematise it rather than attempt to spot gaps (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013) was used in an effort to contribute interest to the topic.

Problematization brings its own ethical dilemmas. Problematization can be uncomfortable but it is not necessarily unethical. It is uncomfortable precisely because it often targets the very things that one has assumed as settled, and which form the background horizon within a community of practice or, in this case, a discipline (Koopman, 2013). This background is often not open for critique. In considering how to design a study that would consider this limit or horizon I considered the following question. On what basis was I warranted to engage in this kind of limit testing? One driver of the research was my commitment to teaching practice within my discipline and this has been important to how the research has been conceptualised and conducted. I was aware of how beloved this practice was for my fellow teachers and scholars and how much effort had informed its development within the discipline. I am taking my cue here from Hammersley (2005, p. 183) where he suggests that:

It is also important that the main business of academic criticism does not come to focus primarily on the character or competence of other researchers, or on the way they have pursued their work, rather than on the knowledge claims they have put forward.

My aim was to build on these efforts first through engaging in a thorough exploration of them. The methods chosen were in large part intended to pay due respect to these efforts and the knowledge-creation of my own discipline but I wanted to do so in a way that effectively tests its limits, respectfully, but without losing sight of how "... research knowledge is always implicated in the operation of power" (Hammersley & Traianou, 2014, p. 229).

The issue of designing research also relates to the competence of the researcher. Competence is an issue which Miles and Huberman raise as an important ethical question. My response is to wonder if anyone knows what competence is required in advance of conducting their research. In terms of competence I had been a member of research teams, had led research projects myself and had participated in various research projects as a subject prior to embarking on this doctoral research. The skills and knowledge from these experiences provided a place to begin. I chose methods that would extend the boundaries of these skills and my knowledge of social research. With this in mind I also chose my supervisory panel with regard to their skills, knowledge and values and worked to remain as open as possible

to their advice and critiques of the approach taken. I benefited enormously by being surrounded by trusted colleagues and opportunities to discuss and receive feedback on my research in various forums over the life of the study. These measures I think have contributed greatly to building the required competence to carry it out.

There are, of course, ethical considerations that occur in the context of specific methods. Thus the autoethnography, conducted as a first stage in the research, introduced a range of ethical dilemmas that were in the end to act as sensitising forces for the conduct of the latter archaeology and qualitative interviews. The issue of representation especially with regard to autoethnography can be summed up in the adaption of a question posed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000, cited in Tolich, 2010, p. 1599): *Do I own the story of my learning and teaching of reflective practice just because I tell it?* My learning of reflective practice involved others as has my teaching of it. What rights do these others have in the telling of this story of my journey from student, to practitioner to lecturer? What ethical considerations must be considered as I represent the voices of participants in the qualitative interviews? What issues of representation are there in the conduct of archaeology? I have utilised the 10 ethical guidelines for autoethnography as outlined by Tolich (2010) to address some of these concerns. The guidelines are grouped under the following headings: consent, consultation, and vulnerability. The table below outlines these and my responses and the processes that resulted for this study.

Table 11: Responses to Tolich's ethical criteria

Items	Tolich's guidelines (2010, pp. 1607-1608)	My response
Consent	1. Respect participants' autonomy and the voluntary nature of participation, and document the informed consent processes that are foundational to qualitative inquiry.	No participants were interviewed for the autoethnographic or archaeological stages of the research. Colleagues, students and others with whom I discussed my study were made aware of the nature of the research and that some of the study included writing stories that could contain elements of our conversations, especially in the autoethnographic study. Any vignettes or stories that contained elements that made the participants identifiable were discarded. Published documents and sources were utilised in the archaeology, other documents such as unit plans were considered to be public domain.
	2. Practice "process consent," checking at each stage to make sure participants still want to be part of the project.	This occurred for participants in the qualitative interviews.
	3. Recognize the conflict of interest or coercive influence when seeking informed consent after writing the manuscript.	Retrospective consent was not required for this research.
Consultation	4. Consult with others, like an Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Chang, 2008; Congress of Qualitative Inquiry).	The whole proposal, including the intended autoethnographic stage, was approved by the IRB of Edith Cowan University.
	5. Autoethnographers should not publish anything they would not show the persons mentioned in the text.	Only elements of the study deemed suitable were included in the autoethnographic part of the study, which has been published in a paper in <i>Social Work Education – the International Journal</i> .
Vulnerability	6. Beware of internal confidentiality: the relationship at risk is not with the researcher exposing confidences to outsiders, but confidences exposed among the participants or family members themselves.	Due to the nature of the study care has been taken to centre the autoethnographic gaze firmly on my own practice, rather than that of others with whom I work or teach. Vignettes that recount dialogue have been created from a range of different conversations over a time span of 12 years. Care has been taken to ensure these do not include confidences that would be considered risky, or detrimental to anyone or their families. Archaeological analysis does not centre on individuals. Care has been taken to ensure confidentiality and privacy is preserved in the qualitative interviews including how the quoted materials of participants is offered, framed and discussed in the text.
	7. Treat any autoethnography as an inked tattoo by anticipating the author's future vulnerability.	I discussed my own vulnerability within supervision and with two close trusted colleagues during all stages of the research as a strategy for considering present and future personal costs of the research. The final study is presented as my acceptance of any future vulnerability and thus stands as my version of an inked tattoo.
	8. Photovoice anticipatory ethics claims that no photo is	Due care has been taken to anticipate whether each story of the autoethnography could cause

	<p>worth harming others. In a similar way, no story should harm others, and if harm is unavoidable, take steps to minimize harm.</p>	<p>harm and efforts to de-identify any critical incidents and descriptions in vignettes without losing the sense of the story or illustration have been made.</p>
	<p>9. Those unable to minimize risk to self or others should use a nom de plume as the default.</p>	<p>In terms of my own vulnerability I do not believe the study represents a scale of risk that makes the use of a non de plume necessary. I have taken due care to ensure I have represented the work of others fairly and with due courtesy.</p>
	<p>10. Assume all people mentioned in the text will read it one day.</p>	<p>The autoethnography, archaeology and qualitative interviews have been written with this view in mind and thus all care has been taken with how myself and others are represented and discussed.</p>

In conclusion, Tolich's criteria have been immensely helpful not just for considering autoethnography but in also consideration of how participant voices might be represented. In terms of the archaeology these criteria have also been effective for thinking about how the ideas and work of others should be included and discussed.

Conclusion to chapter four

This chapter concludes the album notes for this reflective rhapsody. Here I have outlined the methods (instrumentation) chosen for the 'tracks' of the album and discussed the processes and limitations of each. I have also discussed the ethical issues of conducting each of these different approaches to the research. In the next chapter the first track of the album commences with the performance of the autoethnography.

Interlude 4

Quality in qualitative research

This interlude acts as a conclusion to the 'album notes' section of the thesis. It seemed a good point at which to pause and reflect on the aims, theories and methods utilised in this research and to engage in something of a self-assessment of the research for which I have used criteria developed by Tracy (2010) as a guide. First, the aim is consider the ways in which reflective practice is understood in a specific discipline but in a limited field. This field is Australian social work education and practice. In this research I have utilised critical theory, post-structuralism and interpretivism as the theoretical melodies (framework) and seated within a reflexive methodology, these ideas have informed my choice of methods to aid in developing three different lines of inquiry about the topic. Each of these lines of inquiry has called on different kinds of thinking and I have experienced this as incredibly challenging as it stretched my thinking in ways I did not know were even possible.

Table 12: Responding to calls for quality in qualitative research

Criteria	My response
<p>Worthy topic - The topic of the research is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant • Timely • Significant • Interesting 	<p>How Australian social work education understands reflective practice presented as a timely topic given the increasing emphasis on reflexivity in the practice, education and accreditation standards of the social work profession. I have chosen a problematisation approach given the widespread acceptance of the need for reflective practice.</p>
<p>Rich rigor - The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical constructs • Data and time in the field • Sample(s) • Context(s) • Data collection and analysis processes 	<p>The study has been conducted over a significant period, involved a range of methods of data collection including documentary analysis, interpretative methods of autoethnography, discourse analysis and interviews to consider the topic across a range of research question. Data collection has been systematic and examples included in order illustrating the approaches taken to analysis.</p>
<p>Sincerity - The study is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) • Transparency about the methods and challenges. 	<p>I have adopted an explicitly reflexive methodology and incorporated a number of opportunities to reflect on the text production and conduct of the research. These include transparency about the various challenges associated with conducting the research using quite different methods. I have included my own voice at times but tried not to let this overwhelm the voices of others or the discursive elements as much as possible. I discovered just what a balancing act that can be.</p>
<p>Credibility - The research is marked by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallization • Multivocality • Member reflections 	<p>I incorporated three different approaches to undertaking the research. Given the use of different methods the amount of concrete detail and description is considerable. I have not explicitly included member reflections but I have worked to preserve and honour the sense-making of participants as much as possible.</p>

Criteria	My response
<p>Resonance - The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic, evocative representation • Naturalistic generalizations • Transferable findings. 	<p>I have explicitly utilised a metaphoric structure to present the research, employing evocative methods to describe various experiences. Feedback from naïve readers suggests that various aspects of the research resonate, are moving and suggestive of connections to their own experience.</p>
<p>Significant contribution - The research provides a significant contribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptually/theoretically • Practically • Morally • Methodologically • Heuristically. 	<p>The study has resulted in a theoretically informed approach to the teaching, use and practice of critical reflection. The study has built on an extended understanding of reflective practice. The research has applied a methodological approach to the deployment of methods which are not usually utilised together. The limitations and prospects suggested by doing so could be seen as a significant contribution.</p>
<p>Ethical – The research considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural ethics (such as human subjects) • Situational and culturally specific ethics • Relational ethics • Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research). 	<p>Ethics approval for the study was granted by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent for participants was sought and participants were given multiple opportunities to withdraw. Participants were asked to approve and/or amend their interview transcripts.</p>
<p>Meaningful coherence - The study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves what it purports to be about • Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals • Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other: 	<p>A great deal of attention has been given to achieving coherence between research aims, design, methodology and method, data and analysis. The use of the concept album structure was one mechanism chosen to support the conception of this being a single piece of research that pursued three different lines of inquiry. The song structure hopefully assists with linking theory, data analysis and findings.</p>

In the next sections I present the ‘tracks’ of the album. We will begin with the autoethnographic study which has been presented as Track 1 and which features a solo performance. My voice is strong in this track. In chapter six I present the archaeological line of inquiry tracing the emergence of reflective practice and this is represented as a post-rock anthem focussed on a discursive landscape of contingent relations, knowledges and practices. The voices of participants are presented in chapter seven and represented as a choir performance of the main themes to emerge about the value and use of reflective practices in contemporary Australian social work education and practice. Chapter eight returns to the overall aim of the research and presents something of a finale bringing together my voice, participants and the discursive to offer my conclusions and recommendations for teaching and learning critical and reflective practice(s) for social work.

Chapter 5

Track 1 - Autoethnography (featuring a Solo⁷³)

Introduction

Singing and playing a reflective song

This chapter presents the autoethnographic study. The aim of this autoethnography was to address the research question:

what was my own experience of learning, using and teaching reflective practice?

Autoethnographic writing is often presented in a range of formats which utilise different literary (Richardson, 2001) and artistic techniques (Kidd & Finlayson, 2009; Spry, 2001). The

chapter has been written using a verse, chorus and bridge

structure taken from popular song forms (Owens, n. d.). The chapter is represented as a solo performance.



Figure 6: Presenting the autoethnography

Each vignette is presented as a *verse* and the explanatory discussion elements of the study have been presented as *bridges*, both in the musical sense but also with the purpose of making connections through explicating the relation of the verse to the aims of the inquiry. Lyrics from various songs make up the *choruses* of the performance. These choruses have a range of functions within the autoethnographic process. In some cases they serve to indicate

⁷³ The Oxford Dictionary of Music describes *solo* "...A vocal or instr. piece or passage perf. by one performer, i.e. a solo song is for one singer, with or without acc. The solo instr. in a conc. might also be acc. by a solo passage for one of the orch. players." ("Solo", 2015, n. p.)

shadow material (Estés, 1998), unspoken fragments, or a change in the emotional register within the wider song. The *verses* are presented as different forms of writing. There are examples of my reflective thinking utilising various models of reflective practice, and some journal extracts. Also included are other forms of speaking back to key texts such as a Unit Plan and in two cases to my own previous work/reflections. I have also incorporated a number of fictional dialogues about teaching and learning. Lastly some vignettes have been represented as songs and steps in a performance as well.

The verses are *not* presented in chronological order and do not depict moving from my undergraduate years through to my years as a lecturer. I did not want to present this process of considering my learning and teaching of reflective practice as a movement from unknowing to knowing how to be reflective. To do so implies that once learned, it is learned forever. To represent it that way would be to work against what I actually found in undertaking the process. Instead, I conceptualised the movement to be rather more like a song with a central theme but which can deepen and change with the progression of the music. I am hopeful that even without the movement in chronological order, the piece is sensible. The *bridges* within the performance are intended to lift the weight of sense-making across the whole piece.

Verse 1: Instrumental opening...

The song begins here...

Walking, walking...I feel the stretch lengthen my calves as I pick up speed, welcoming the slight pain as proof of effort. I experiment with striding according to the beat of the music...its dark out, no-one around...I always just assume I am safe out at night. It was my daughter who asked me if I should go out at night? I hesitated a bit, realising I hadn't thought about safety. I like the cover of night, even like not wearing my glasses as it renders everything misty and indistinct, leaves me space to concentrate on the music, letting my thoughts whisper on...

Walking is a different experience in the mornings...I am more focussed on walking fast but I like looking at everything, taking in the trees, mist on the lake, the dark water black and still under the paperbarks, ducks and other water fowl drifting slowly out as the day gets lighter.

I always walk west first towards the sea and face the sun rising on the way back to the house, get to the top of the rise where there is a small clearing, pause the iPhone App tracking my efforts and stand to feel the sun on my face when I can...taking it all in...bringing the world into me...I like starting the walk in the dark in winter, three layers on with a beanie and gloves, cold and not cold at the same time. Summer is a different experience. I drive to the beach with the sun just up and walk on the sand near the shore, waiting for the beach to be lit with sunshine over the sand dunes. Walking in and out of shadow and light offers a beautiful poetry to the experience of water flowing along my feet; feet that become brown over the long slow summer, just with that small bit of exposure.

Night walking is about something else, covered in darkness, miming along with a song, more introspective, inward looking, found I can even cry a little when I need to, release feelings, smile to myself, enjoy the solitude...And the thinking is different too in the night...back and forth my attention wanders from the sound of the music, the beat, and on over work, study, family, people, relationships, fragments of conversations, things to do, back to the music...often I come out of a reverie to find I am moving to the rhythm of the music...walking through pools of darkness and light with the street lights a pale orange. A reversal from the mornings in summer on the beach...

Morning walks are about processing things, making up to-do-lists, bringing mind, body and purpose together. I often find myself concentrating too on how I feel in my arms, shoulders, neck, down my back and through the legs...shaking off sleep, dreams, worries...getting ready for another day...blood moving, picking up speed, faster thinking...and it's here that I do much of my...

...thinking about my thesis, sorting out problems with the analysis, asking myself questions, acting devil's advocate, humbugging myself about my cheek in attempting to do a PhD at all, or indeed whatever new idea I have had about the research. The latest thing I have been considering is the question of why I am using a musical metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) for the thesis. And running alongside this question I have been turning over the issue of embodiment in qualitative research (Birk, 2013; Ellingson, 2006). Such a cognitive subject this topic of mine: reflective practice. So I began to think where is the body in it all? I found myself asking why music, why not some other metaphor...like the one I used in the original

autoethnography about place and country (Read, 2000; Watts, 2001)? Why this metaphor... especially when I have to learn about the production of music? I mean what is a note and how does this relate to a chord? Is it another elaborate exercise in writing avoidance (very possibly)? Could I pick a harder road, not being any kind of musician myself, not even knowing enough to ask sensible questions of people I know who do make music...

...and it comes to me as I pound along to the song *Timber* (Pitbull (Feat. Ke\$ha), 2013) that the two are linked,

embodiment and music,

not just for others who use their bodies to study or make music (Bartlett & Ellis, 2009; Webber, 2009); or who write about illness (Birk, 2013) or grief (Lee, 2006)

or even those who make music and research too (Carless & Douglas, 2009)

but also for me...

I only recently took up walking in a bid for sanity. Music was part of a rapprochement between me and the parts of me I had been ignoring for most of my adult life. Walking was hard at first. It brought to consciousness so many feelings of being at odds with myself. That there existed a *me* who was dragging my/our body up and down the roads around the house, and that part of *me* was kicking and screaming on the inside, while other parts geared up to meet the challenge; a gauntlet barely thrown down. And I...

...didn't want to hear my own heavy breathing. I felt and heard it like an accusing chorus; an indictment of neglect at my failure to maintain a fit body, to keep my body trim, evidence of my lack of self-control and will. Carrying this shame I discovered and the breathing stood as a symbol of my shame for being this way...that and the feeling of hesitation in stepping out onto something (will my legs support me, will my knees or ankles give way, will I fall?)...unable to risk anything in case the body lets *me* down...as though *I* had no part to play in its neglect...*my* laboured breathing felt like a failure of character...

but which part of me failed?

my body or was it *me*?

This was less a chorus and more a backbeat lying under the other personal songs forming a playlist across my experience...

...so the *me* that wanted to feel better decided that the *me* interfering with this needed a bit of a talking to...so I took us all off to a hypnotherapist. I asked the hypnotherapist to explain

the problem to that part of *me* that was complaining. I asked her to gently request the *body-me* to remember how to walk, run and move as it was meant to as I was sure the memory was still contained within my tissues and muscles (Damasio, 2011; Hunt & Sampson, 2006). She added a step of her own. She asked all parties to remember they are one and that no accusations about failures of character and neglect were any longer relevant. These must be left behind *us* all on the beach where this conversation between us all took place (figuratively speaking).

On the way home the CD in the car started on *I can't stand the rain* by Angeline Ball⁷⁴. I put it on repeat as it fitted perfectly. I took the road inland instead of the highway driving slowly. This road weaves through low-lying forest and coastline coming out at places right on the beach, and then winds back through farmland and forest. I stopped the car to look out over the ocean with the song playing in the background. I heard the music, really heard it. The continual backbeat playing in my head was silent for the first time since I could remember...

I would like to say that it was all good after that...walking wise, but no...I still panicked for a while after if I heard my own breathing. Stairs of any kind represented an exquisite torture. But a delightful gift from my daughter of a playlist with old favourites and some new music provided another turning point...the music helped keep the *reluctant-me* busy while the *other-me* got on remembering how to walk easily, mindfully, joyfully, eventually even a slow jog...

start the playlist, begin walking,
 after a minute or so assume the stance for jogging,
 using the beat to structure the pace and distract *reluctant-me* by directing
 attention to the song

body-me did the rest...

once I got out of the way...

...it came to me one day sometime later that both parts of me had begun acting together – a new backbeat had emerged...

along with a metaphor and possible way to consider
 the journey into
 my experience of

learning reflective practice

⁷⁴ Song written by Ann Peebles, Don Bryant and Bernard Mitchell (Peebles, Bryant, & Miller, 1973) and included on the CD from *The Commitments* [Original Motion Picture Soundtrack] (1991).

Bridge

Jackson, borrowing from Foucault (1990, cited in 2009, p. 165), suggests an important question to consider particularly in relation to the use of voice in qualitative inquiry. She asks "... what am I doing when I speak of this present?" This question is meant to "fashion a different way of questioning the present" (Jackson, 2009, p. 165). Indeed Jackson uses this question to consider the kinds of subjectivity made possible through speaking by looking at an account from an interview with 'Amelia' conducted within a research study about which she does not comment in much detail. The piece is utilised to illustrate and open a discussion about the way in which power/knowledge relations are made visible through the act of speaking. It seemed from this discussion by Jackson that the issue turned on what kind of account 'Amelia' wanted to present when asked to consider her interview transcript after the interview was returned to her. Jackson's account of this raised issues for my presentation of this autoethnography. What kind of account do I want to present and what power/relations will this account make visible? Thus I opened the autoethnography placing the matter at hand within the present by considering the use of metaphor within the account as well as in the thesis more generally. Here I sought to present the intersection of my own biography with the presentation of this part of the study. I think of it as a moment to turn and look at the issue of learning and teaching reflective practice. It also signals that there is no past that is free from a reflexive moment of re-imagination within this account.

Thus in considering this issue of what account to present I take up the problem of how the enlightenment ideal, as a reflective questioning of the issue, simultaneously works to make the present possible (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984). This does place the autoethnographic study itself in a hall of mirrors with regard to the topic. Use of reflexive tools and techniques in order to consider learning reflective practice may be an absurdity (Coleman, A, personal communication, 24th April 2009). There is a small wriggle space that I intend to use and this involves a recognition that this account is not an *objective* account but instead it aims to be one that is *truthful* (Medford, 2006). Not giving an objective account here means I am not speaking from above or outside power/knowledge relations. Rather, through the very act of speaking/writing this account I am doing the work of making them visible. This should trouble any sense that this autoethnographic account of *my* learning reflective practice

occurred as a linear, structured, attained-once-and-for-all process. I offer the account obliquely and through the subjectivity which make the "...social relations, cultural meanings, and histories... assembled together to create truths... [through a rendition of]...a desiring voice, a discursive voice, a performative voice" (Jackson, 2009, p. 172), which represent various positions and subjectivities.

Verse 2: Critical incident #1– A minor song in six movements⁷⁵

Background scene:

Person A invites Person B to participate in a class. Person A is running the class as subject coordinator and has taught the class for many years. Person B is a stated expert in the field which forms the basis of the class. Person A is keen for her students to benefit from being introduced to an expert. Person B is senior in rank but not necessarily in teaching experience to Person A. They are joined by Person C. Person C is a close colleague of Person B, having worked with her before. Person C is a new colleague of Person A, having just joined the school, not long after Person B. The incident occurs during and after the class.

Movement 1: Person A outlines the topic matter for students and gives some background to the session. Person A introduces Person B by outlining their expertise and hands the class over.

Movement 2: Person B opens their remarks by offering the opinion that the background to the topic is mistaken and that the approach taken in the class could be perceived as culturally inappropriate.

Person B proceeds to outline alternative interpretations and ways of approaching the subject matter.

Movement 3: Person A is surprised at Person B's stance given Person B's publications on the subject in question.

Movement 4: Students ask questions, which begin to challenge Person B's stance and interpretation.

Person B begins to tell stories from practice that illustrates the opposite of their claimed position.

Person C looks on silently.

⁷⁵ These accounts are constructed out of various critical incidents spanning 10 years of teaching. Rendered here refers to boiling down something until it is purified to its bare extracts. Thus, critical incidents 1 & 2 are represented as a series of moves and then in a song form that picks up on the main themes that emerged from removal of all extraneous context. The minor songs are meant to demonstrate the emotional tenor of each critical incident in addition to the movements

Movement 5: Person B begins to become uncomfortable with the student questions. At the break Person B offers an extensive critique of the whole approach to teaching being taken by Person A from the point of view of its cultural sensitivity. The encounter has shifted to being about the performance of the Person A, rather than what happened with Person B. Person C says nothing.

Movement 6: Person A wonders if she could have foreseen the differences in their approaches; she wonders how she will retrieve the situation with students in the tutorial.

Post-incident events

Over lunch other members of the school join Person A, Person B and Person C. Someone asks Person B how the class went. Person B says she thought it had gone very well and that she welcomed the opportunity for a robust discussion of alternative ways to see the topic. She felt the students asked excellent questions. Person B proceeds to praise and thank Person A for her organisation of the class. Person C says nothing.

Minor song

Verse 1: I know about this area of social work.

Chorus: Agree with me I have status; I am very important.

Verse 2: You have different knowledge about this area but it is misguided because it is different to mine.

Chorus: Agree with me I have status; I am very important.

Verse 3: I know about this area because I have researched it and I am published in the area. I can change my mind and you should accept it.

Chorus: Agree with me I have status; I am very important.

Bridge: Being critical is the hallmark of a good academic, all encounters are opportunities for changing the misguided thinking of *others*. It's my role to ensure others know the truth about matters so they can think like me.

Chorus: Agree with me I have status; I am very important.

Chorus

The people that claim, to have known me then
 Not on my wavelength and it's such a shame
 That they have to play the name game
 The fame game, oh the name game,
 Lord it's a cryin' shame
 (Van Morrison, 1999)

Bridge

Everyone here is performing status. Removing the contextual details and background makes these performances more visible. To render something could be a form of reflective practice, an analysis of the incident down to its bare moves. Perhaps this is the first move. We might engage in an evaluation of the performances of each person involved forgetting that to do so requires already existing norms of understanding and behaviour (Bourdieu, 1999; Haidt, 2001). We could then add possible explanations for the various positions and actions taken. Doing so requires the ability to empathise (Oatley, 2010), reason and create imaginary hypothetical scenarios as explanations (Stanovich, 2011), but most of all, to have a motivation for doing it. One could imagine Person A instead going for a long run, or having a drink after work rather than engaging in an analysis of their own and others performances after an incident like this. The most likely scenario is that Person A will talk it over with someone especially if they experienced a strong reaction to the events. This is most likely to occur on the day the incident or event happens, according to research by Bernard Rime (2009). Is this then the likely motivation for reflection? Other than being able to discharge emotion what does one get from engaging in reflection, especially if it means rehearsing a less than edifying encounter at work?

Of course, the assumption at work here is that the *critical* incident belongs to Person A. It is somewhat harder to imagine this as a critical incident for Person B, or possibly even Person C. It is possible, but unlikely. This suggests, then, that the very motivation to reflect is connected to performances of vulnerability and power. It probably accounts for why those made vulnerable through a display of status and/or power are often the ones who engage in the reflection. It is likely that Person B and C would consider themselves reflective if asked. And there is no reason to doubt this as reflective capacity is considered a normal attribute for people (Archer, 2007). Power is therefore intricately implicated in who engages in

reflective practices then, but what about how they engage in it? Is the person's biography part of the picture? How does that affect the kinds of reflection and reasoning adopted by someone post a *critical incident*?

Verse 3: Critical incident #2 – A minor song in six movements⁷⁶

Background scene:

Person A asked to see Person B about something and they do not specify in advance what the issue is. Person A and Person B are colleagues.

Movement 1: Person A suggests strongly that Person B is at fault in their recent behaviour towards someone in the school.

Movement 2: Person B listens carefully but begins to feel defensive. Person B finds themselves paying close attention to how their body is sitting, taking deep breaths and slowing down their breathing, trying to keep calm.

Movement 3: Person B repeats back to Person A what they think is being said about Person B's behaviour. At the same time Person B begins an inner dialogue asking why and on what basis is Person A could be thinking this? Person B begins to think of instances where she may have committed the error, fault, behaviour, or omission being outlined in some detail by Person A.

Movement 4: Person B finds it difficult to see the errors but concedes that it is possible to interpret the behaviour in the way Person A has done. On this basis Person B prepares to concede that Person A may have a point.

Movement 5: Person A waits for Person B to respond; Person B responds with an apology for the transgression, mistake, unfortunate or unpleasant thing on the basis of accepting the interpretation of Person A. Person B does not really think the interpretation fits with her own interpretation of the same behaviour but concedes on the basis that more than one interpretation is possible and both might be reasonable.

Movement 6: Person A leaves content to have brought to Person B's attention behaviours they feel are inappropriate, misguided, unfortunate or unpleasant. Person B has taken responsibility for behaviours based on another person's interpretation and her own interpretation, barely formed as yet, has gone unheard.

⁷⁶ I am designating participants with letters to differentiate them. It is not meant to signal that the same persons are involved in both critical incidents.

Post-incident events

Person B discusses the incident with a third person (Person C), not involved in the event. Person C is neutral and just listens. Person C is also a colleague of both people, neutrality is a good strategy. Even so Person B experiences this as unsatisfactory and this forces Person B to realise that even though one might rationally recognise the wisdom of Person C's neutrality it still leaves a feeling of being unheard or discounted in some way. Person B realises also from this that they might actually want someone to side with their point of view. It is also at this point that Person B starts to appreciate that not all interpretations are equal and that they might have accepted responsibility for something they were not clear about or did not intend to. Person B wonders if being able to trace the reasoning of others and recognising that multiple interpretations are possible is really all that helpful under these circumstances.

Minor song

Verse 1: When you do/don't do [fill in the blank] I feel [fill in the blank]...

Chorus: I should have known better. You should have known better.

Verse 2: Here are the reasons why your behaviour is a problem for [fill in the blank].

Chorus: I should have known better. You should have known better.

Verse 3: I would like you to stop/start doing [fill in the blank] so that I might return to, or begin feeling [fill in the blank] again.

Bridge: Paying attention to the feelings of others is important; I should be able to anticipate and change my behaviour before it is offensive to others.

Chorus: I should have known better. You should have known better.

Bridge

Individuals come with habitual thinking patterns and expectations for how the world treats them and how they should treat others (Haidt, 2001). Responses to critical incidents can often be immediate and may be below the conscious perceptual level. It might take time and energy to sort them out. Cognitive theorists have developed a dual process theory of how people reason and make judgements (Evans, 2008). Evers et al. (2014) state that "Dual-process frameworks assume that psychological responses are a joint function of two largely

independent systems, one automatic and the other reflective” (p. 44). Type 1 processing, which has been characterised as being independent of cognitive ability, (Evans & Stanovich, 2013) is distinguished by being autonomous⁷⁷ and is not reliant on working memory. Generally, type 1 processing is considered to be similar to animal cognition because it involves learning that is conditioned and implicit (Evans & Stanovich, 2013) as well as the “... automatic firing of overlearned associations” (Stanovich & Toplak, 2012). Type 2 processing, in contrast, requires significant working memory and “involv[es] cognitive decoupling and hypothetical thinking” (Evans & Stanovich, 2013). Stanovich and Toplak (2012) suggest that in order to reason hypothetically human beings must be able to create temporary models of the world or situation in order to rehearse actions or outcomes. Moreover, they need to be able to maintain awareness that these models are representations and therefore not *real*, holding them separate from real-world events or conditions (Stanovich & Toplak, 2012). Hypothetical reasoning is not possible without this cognitive decoupling ability. Thus, type 1 processing, which is automatic, is less resource intensive than type 2 processing. Evans and Stanovich (2013) suggest using the term *intuitive* for type one and *reflective* for type two kinds of processing.

Moreover, there is evidence that there are differences in how emotions are processed in each of these relatively independent systems of cognitive processing (Evers et al., 2014). People do become aware of their habitual default patterns for emotional reactions, but doing so depends on the development of type two processing. Many reflective models⁷⁸ — while moderately acknowledging emotion primarily in regard to critical incidents or puzzling, surprising events — tend to privilege the cognitive aspects of reflection and offer the possibilities of engaging in type 2 processing. Indeed, pausing by engaging in processes of reflection is sometimes a key intervention so that a person does not act on the automatic side of emotions and reasoning initiated by type 1 processing, which is fast, holistic and

⁷⁷ Autonomous in this context refers to cognitions that rely on automatic systems in the brain (Stanovich, 2011). Included would be some processes of emotional regulation and some aspects of problem-solving. (Stanovich & Toplak, 2012)

⁷⁸ I am referring here to the following reflective practice models: Fook & Gardner’s 2007 critical reflection model; Redmond’s (2004) reflection in action model and Schon’s reflective practice model (Schon, 1983). An outline these and other significant reflective practice models utilised in Australian social work education is outlined in Appendix A.

frequently heuristic, and can be biased towards conditioned and implicitly learned behaviours.

Yet, even type 2 reasoning is shaped by our learned dispositions, habits and emotional repertoires. There are different chains of reasoning that are coloured by the habits of emotion already possessed by individuals (Mar, Oatley, Djikic, & Mullin, 2010). These chains of reasoning lead to radically different responses to the same event. For example, backward chaining⁷⁹ tends to be inwardly focused. Thus backward reasoning is more associated with emotions of sadness. Forward chain reasoning is action oriented and more associated with anger, sparking the need to do something about a situation. People develop habitual orientations to either forward or backward oriented reasoning (Mar et al., 2010) because the effects of a narrative can last long past the actual event or reading about the event (Mar & Oatley, 2008, cited in Mar et al., 2010). This does not mean they cannot do both. The minor song above suggests that even using well established reflective practice models, people will bring with them particular habits, dispositions, and repertoires of emotion. If that is true, then a one size fits all approach to reflection is probably not possible or even desirable. Some practice models are aimed at exploration of these personal repertoires (see for example Ruch, 2000) and others may be more aimed at contributing to social change and addressing injustice and power dynamics (Fook & Gardner, 2007). This suggests that the role of the educator requires knowing what models to use when and for what purpose.

Chorus

It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me
And I'm feeling good
(Muse, 2001)

⁷⁹ Backward chaining is reasoning backward from a stated conclusion and forward chaining involves “ ... reasoning forward from a premise towards a conclusion ...” (Mar et al., 2010).

Verse 4: Reflecting back, looking forward...

A little forest bathing⁸⁰ in amongst the Karri⁸¹, crunchy gravel track...just birdsong, breeze amongst the trees...its early morning. The camp is asleep ... *[off stealing a little time to myself - mmm...so okay time for an inventory I am 40 today...sigh...thought I would be slimmer, thought I'd have given up cigarettes by now...didn't keep that promise to myself huh!...okay so no joy there...er taking inventory is not that great if you have not achieved anything you promised yourself you would]* Turn right on the track, red seed pods laid out in various comforting fractal patterns; setting up a beautiful contrast against the orange gravel, brown dirt and green moss on the forest floor *[well there must be something good since I turned 30 – great now I am really thinking in decades, ok ok well what have I achieved?...Wow the place is well overgrown since last I was here... lovely smell...]* There are logs lying fallen over the floor along with a deep covering of pine needles. The sequoia stand is up ahead and the way is slippery due to fallen leaves, bark and tree branches from the NSW Eucalyptus stand, very messy tress. The Sequoia stand was planted 70 years ago making it a quiet grove perfect for sitting and thinking, breathing in the smell of the moss and pine needles. *[the kids are growing up so fine...mmm...okay what else... mmm well I did study all through that decade...and got my honours in the end...well that's a big deal because this time ten years ago I hadn't even started going to Uni...and now a new job teaching...]* A likely sitting log presents itself, resting there, the sun comes down in broken streams catching dust and small insects in its path *[okay sooo I am excited and scared! It's like a dream come true...I still can't believe it! A whole year contract as associate lecturer...don't know after that, trying me out I guess...my own classes oh god what will I teach? Ok then time is up, time for brekkie pancakes and a new day with the family. You know if that can happen in one decade what could happen in the next ten years...oh er I'll be 50 shake of head - er let's get through one decade at a time...]* Taking a different track on the way back to camp...stones along the creek bed invite a closer look. *[I take a black rough pebble home with me as a reminder of the day and the small pleasure of getting up early to steal a little time.]*

⁸⁰ Forest bathing is a Japanese term for spending time in forests for the purposes of relaxation and stress relief. The phenomena has been studied in Japan (Parallelus, n. d.).

⁸¹ Karri is a species of Eucalyptus found the South West corner of Western Australia (Australian Geographic & McGhee, 2012, n. p.).

Bridge

The transition from practice into academia has significant resonances with the transition from university to practice. Social work academics, until recently, were often employed on the basis of their social work practice experience. This meant they generally achieve higher education qualifications while also learning to be an academic (Agbim & Ozanne, 2007). Learning to be an academic — never mind a scholar — takes time and in recent years this development of teaching skills has become the focus for many higher education institutions (Dall'Alba, 2005; Kandlbinder, Peseter, & Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, 2011). Some aspects of practice, are of course, transferable to the new context. For example, good interpersonal skills, the ability to work independently or in a team, writing reports, presenting information in PowerPoint formats, participating in team meetings, working a photocopier and filling in forms.

I experienced the transition as a fairly smooth one because I was surrounded by a small number of colleagues willing to share their time and effort into mentoring me into this new community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Taking your first class, being responsible for creating learning opportunities, unit curriculum and designing assessments is akin to being thrown in the deep end of the pool. Some aspects of the job built on previous experience in practice while other aspects took much longer to learn and required explicit attention and effort. It was the performative aspects of the role that exercised my reflective capacities most. What happens in the class spaces? I started a journal pretty soon after commencing as a lecturer.

Verse 5: An encounter with students

Students in XXXX Class asked me today in class what I want to see in their reflective papers. Actually they asked me how many references, what should the format be and what should they write about. I said I would like them to write about their experience of being on [social work field] placement and to include literature where relevant and where the literature supports and expands their ideas about their experiences. I said it can be written in essay format or in report format but that I wanted them to be consistent with the form they choose. The class got that heavy feeling... like a big chasm had yawned open in the floor, felt my distance from them telescope out, leaving me on one side and students on the other. They became a sea of faces, no longer individuals but now a mob. We had been going so well up to then, dammit! And of course I got nervous then, found myself repeating the point, not once but a few times in different ways, hoping to close the gap...a little voice began to shout in my head..."LYNELLE stop talking it's really not helping." The tutorial ground to a halt; completely petered out...students filed out mostly not looking at me. No-one approached me after class like they usually do...I had failed to give them something. Ok so what happened? What is it about this assessment? Is it the length, the subject matter? What, what? Maybe it's me? I am not sure I know how to explain it? What if it's impossible to do? Oh great, fantastic I have set an impossible task! Perhaps I should try writing one myself...how hard can it be?

(Teaching Journal entry 19th September 2007)

Bridge

Setting assessment for students is challenging. Assessment is situated within the moral order of the discipline or profession (Ylijoki, 2000) and comes to represent disciplinary methods of addressing the content, knowledge and skills of the profession. Reflective practice assessments are problematic because there is little agreement on what makes a good reflective paper or report (Ryan & Ryan, 2012). If this was the case for higher education in the 1990s, then it was even more difficult to locate *systematic* approaches or descriptions for designing and grading reflective assessment originating from within the social work discipline. I could locate agreement that reflection on learning was important (Boud & Knights, 1996; Gould & Taylor, 1996; Rossiter, 1996; Yelloly & Henkel, 1995) and the general idea that students should develop this capacity. Even Boud and Knights (1996) point out in their discussion of course design that " ... we are conscious that we are dealing with a topic that has attained the status of being a 'good thing' and something which some teachers

regard as self-evidently worthwhile” (p. 32). This was my experience on returning to lecture. Reflective practice was seen as a method for unlocking student engagement with the idea that knowledge is constructed and for considering their place in this constructive process. And yet when I graded reflective papers students seemed to make little or no links to this idea. They did not see themselves as active constructors of knowledge, nor did they particularly relate their learning to wider concepts and theories. Overall the papers remained primarily descriptive. In contrast, if I asked for papers that critically analysed a topic and included the requirement that students write in first person and incorporate their own perspective, the papers tended to make this link more explicitly. It did not seem to matter what year students were in either. I began to question what I was looking for in these kinds of assessment. What was the link then between reflective practice and critical analysis? What was I looking for in these papers?

Verse 6: Staff discussion

“Students just don’t seem to get it!” E⁸² flings herself into the chair opposite me [*sigh –just trying to eat my lunch here - my chest tightens and I feel my face stop moving, it settles into what I hope is a pleasant mask. I hate these conversations, which start with what students cannot do, don’t do, or worse always do wrong. I wait...one...two...three...just breathe in, out...*]

“I don’t think they read enough or pay attention enough...I mean, I give them instructions on how to do it, this time I even did a workshop on it in class but when I get the papers, well I have just waded through 35 x 1500-word-descriptions of what they did in class... no links to theory...no connections to materials from class, actually there was barely a reference.” [*I think just breathe out, breathe in, E just wants to have a vent...*]. E looks at me with exasperation...“I don’t know...it’s so important for them to learn critical reflection...”

I say “Actually why is it so important?” My colleague stops short and looks at me

⁸² I have utilised initials to stand in place of names and these initials are not signifying single individuals, nor are they disguising individuals through de-identification. Indeed E could, in fact, be me at one point and the reaction I am describing may have been someone else. I am using the initials to indicate fellow singers and musicians who have contribute to this song. I have constructed these fellow music-makers out of discussions with various others, observations and imaginary dialogues between myself and others which I have engaged in over the life of the study. I am not assuming a straight reporting of some essentialist identity but rather using the notion that any idea about voice can be rendered problematic. Indeed the representation of others, never mind the self remains fraught with tension, especially with regard to the issue of voice (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009) and who may be speaking for whom (Fine et al., 2000)? This is an issue taken up in more detail within the exegesis at the end of this chapter.

“Well if they can’t reflect on their practice how will they understand their impact on others, how will they work for social change?” She shakes her head at me [*aah okay then breathe out and...*] I nod and say “Right, sure, of course...yeah I know...[*let out my breath, lean forward...*] “sometimes I have trouble explaining reflective assessments too.”

E looks at me and shakes her head. I have misunderstood. “No, I don’t have trouble explaining – students just don’t listen” She shrugs and gets up to leave. [*I nod, of course, sigh uh-huh...*]

Bridge

Conceptions of learning (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992) and how students learn are important shapers of attitudes towards students amongst teaching staff. These attitudes can have significant impacts on the climate of the teaching. Wider university processes can affect “ ... core aspects of academic culture, values and identity such as autonomy, collegiality and their status as professional experts” (de Zilwa, 2007, p. 560) which in turn can create climates of distrust (Lindenberg, 2000). Innovative methods of teaching and learning oriented assessment are less likely to be implemented in climates of distrust according to Carless (2009). Learning to teach may mean unlearning some things as well.

Chorus

I am an arms dealer
 Fitting you with weapons in the form of words
 And don't really care which side wins
 As long as the room keeps singing
 That's just the business I'm in, yeah
 (Fall Out Boy, 2007)

Verse 7: Learning from a maestro?

“Thank you everyone, we might begin I think” The class starts to settle, although a few are still shuffling bags and papers, coming in to find a seat, while others are still talking, catching up after the semester break. I am sitting with paper and pen out, ready, alone. This is my second semester here as a student but the fourth for everyone else. I don’t know anyone in the class. The lecturer starts to move around the class, standing close to those talking, just waiting. The chairs and tables are in a circle and everyone can see everyone else. At least we have desks in front of us. The lecturer is in the middle of the circle, central. A hush descends as she walks around, standing lightly next to people who haven’t yet given over their attention. People begin to fall silent. The process takes a bit of time. She is seems very patient. “Welcome to XXXX studies, I hope you all had an enjoyable break and have come back refreshed for this second semester.” She says this quietly, so quietly that we all have to strain to hear. She is clearly comfortable in the space, and the class finally begins. The process has taken about 20 minutes. This has been enlightening but I am impatient. Can we begin already?

Bridge

Critical pedagogies (Freire, 1972; Gore, 1992) and critical social work ideas (Adams, Dominelli, & Payne, 2002; Fook, 1993; Leonard, 1997; Pease & Fook, 1999) were a significant stream of thought within the school when I was a student. These ideas sat somewhat uneasily alongside social work methods, knowledge and skills informed by social work history (Gitterman, 1996; Hollis, 1964; O’Connor et al., 1998; Perlman, 1957; Turner, 1996). This meant that lecturers could teach more by their inclination and enthusiasm for relevant theories and ideas during my undergraduate education. The climate of the school became characterised by conflict between lecturing staff for the hearts and minds of students and by battles over the ‘truth’ about social work. The student body generally split into factions based on their inclinations for different approaches as well. I remember some of the effect of these differences.

Chorus

Don't wanna see those eyes
 Don't wanna take that ride
 No I'm not driving down your sentimental highway
 Don't want to be nostalgic
 Don't want to be nostalgic
 For something that never was
 (Joan As Police Woman, 2014)

Verse 8: Student worries...

I've got to decide whether to go back to social science, this [social work] isn't for me... nothing I've learnt up to now seems at all useful to social work. I feel so out of step with the cohort [class] and when I try to talk about what's happening ... no-one seems to get what I'm trying to say...that it's not the course, that maybe it's me and then I find myself in these conversations with people defending the course, saying well maybe you are too intellectual for this course because it is practical after all and so on... which just makes it all worse...because I am sure I can be practical but I thought we were here to also think about things...I feel so frustrated that *thinking* about everything can be so wrong... (*Third year student journal entry, 2001*)

The consequences of a fractured curriculum can be profound for students. It impacts on their identification and commitment to their profession. Heggen and Terum (2013) use the term *coherence* to describe the process of synthesis between the practical and theoretical aspects of a professional education. This occurs through four main mechanisms, according to their research: theory-practice interaction; teacher-student interaction; peer-interaction and supervisor-student interaction (Heggen & Terum, 2013). The residual effects of this time of conflict were still evident when I joined the teaching team in the later years. There were three main drivers behind the eventual rapprochement of these different approaches to the professional project of social work (McDonald, 2006). Internally, the University governance arrangements became more managerial and thus more centralised with regard to the oversight arrangements of curriculum teaching and learning. The second is that at the national level the AASW began advocating for a more systematic approach to practice standards (Lonne, 2009) and began implementing changes that would eventuate in prescribed content in social work programs. The third major change was through the adoptions of critical ideas within professional literature. Ideas such as a focus on human

rights, acknowledgement of the social construction of knowledge, the existence of structural barriers such as gender, ethnicity, class, and anti-oppressive practices, which had been fought so bitterly over in the 1990s, became mainstreamed within the corpus of texts available to students. The outcome was that the curriculum became more coherent for students, with lecturing staff also being more accountable for delivering the learning outcomes and assessment advertised to students through unit outlines and the University handbook and required by the national accrediting body. The climate improved.

Verse 9: A student reaction to a unit plan for social work theory

DESCRIPTION

This unit introduces students to critical theoretical *[okay what is this? Is it the same as the 'critical' theory in sociology?]* **thinking in social work practice. Students develop an understanding of the social construction of theoretical thinking in relation to culture, race, gender, age** *[yep, this is good perhaps this is where those earlier units will come in handy such as sociology & community development],* **and regional and remote location. Students are introduced to the structure of theoretical thinking to develop skills and knowledge in theoretical positioning in relation to social work practice. Students are given an overview of the history of social work** *[good I want to know about this]* **theoretical development and the major ideological** *[is this like political ideologies because that's something I do know about already – or is it different?]* **influences on modern day social work construction. Students develop beginning skills in direct social work practice** *[good, good this is what I want to know for placement]* **as these relate to their theoretical knowledge development.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

1. **identify the domain and nature of social work** *[uh-huh looking forward to this]* **with particular reference to the nature of rural and remote social work practice;**
2. **articulate the predominant ideological and theoretical influences in social work** *[which are what?],* **including Aboriginal ways and Aboriginal terms of reference** *[okay that's good, maybe I can use what I have learned in that first year unit here];*
3. **describe the social work interventions** *[what is an intervention?]* **that are informed by these ideological** *[again?]* **and theoretical positions** *[er, which theories?];*
4. **consider the implications of the interventions for anti-oppressive** *[what is this?]* **and in particular, anti-racist practice** *[mmm...I have heard of this in that unit we did on community development];*
5. **articulate an understanding of the nature of the social work process across the range of client systems - individual, interpersonal, group, community and organisation** *[no idea what this means?];*
6. **demonstrate competence in basic social work intervention processes and skills;**
7. **articulate an understanding of the value of action research for developing social work skills and naming tensions and challenges inherent in the theory and practice of social work** *[not sure what this means; will find out I guess?];*
8. **Explore the relevance of the teaching and learning approach to social work** *[?].*

UNIT CONTENT

1. Introduction to a paradigmatic *[what?]* framework for social work theory and practice.
2. An exploration of the implications of the various paradigms for what is considered to be social work.
3. The nature of social work, its purpose and value. *[yes good, good]*
4. The nature of rural and remote social work practice and the body of theory that informs it. *[is that different from rural and regional policy?; okay more to learn]*
5. An introductory exploration of the relationship between social work theory and practice. *[not sure what that means]*
6. Introduction to the need for a radical theory of practice *[radical theory?]* and an exploration of what it might consist of with particular reference to anti-racist social work *[oh right now I get it].*
7. Basic intervention skills in the social work process. *[yes yes yes! I want to know what to do so I don't make a fool of myself on placement]*

On-Campus Assessment

Journal of reflective practice	40% <i>[I keep a journal already but what does this mean I really hope it's not like that earlier unit where we had to mark each other's journals? K is still not talking to me after that experience...]</i>
In class skills assessment	40% <i>[What will I have to do?]</i>
Student presentations	20% <i>[okay another presentation; but universe - please don't let it be in a group!]</i>

[Source: Recreated from my margin notes on a unit plan in third year before commencing my first field practicum.]

Bridge

While Heggen and Terum were interested in the conditions for optimising student commitment to a profession, what the student does as an individual is the focus of a paper by John Biggs (2012) based on his earlier seminal Australian work on constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996). The idea is that if the learning outcomes, assessment and learning activities are working toward the same end then the student is enabled to engage in higher order learning. This is sometimes characterised as deep learning (Clare, 2007; Ramsden, 1992). The issue of learning to teach and perform meant that in the first few years of coming into the role my focus was not on what the student was doing particularly. Rather, my focus was on my performance as I was trying to learn the craft of teaching. This created some dissonance between my values about student centred learning, active engagement in learning and what I was actually capable of delivering at the beginning. Fortunately students are on their own journeys and they bring their own agency. Occasionally they share it.

Verse 10: A student visit

S came to see me today. She wanted to discuss the class XXXX. She was so angry with me and she told me it was because of that reflective paper I'd set in XXXX class. S said "I was so angry about that paper. I had the worst prac experience, you know I barely got through, my supervisor spent most of it suggesting I need therapy, and even worse picking at me in supervision so that I barely had any skin left by the end...I was starting to wonder if he wasn't right, maybe I do need therapy. He said I had no self-awareness, and had family of origin issues ...when I tried to ask what that meant he told me I was being resistant and should think about what that suggests about my lack of awareness and suitability of social work ... anyway I thought okay I just have to get through, I can't afford to fail the prac, I mean I am on a scholarship and I have kids to feed. I need to get finished. I kept thinking just get through, just hold on. I thought I will never have to think about this experience again!" S paused for breath..."And then what happens? I get back to Uni and I get into your class and you make me go back and examine it in minute detail for an assessment."

She looked so beaten for a minute. I felt for her. I could see the experience of placement had been really painful. I was about to apologise when she said "thank god you did, although I spent most of semester being furious at you...writing about it helped put some perspective on it... The paper helped me look at what I did and what happened. I came today to apologise – I know I was really difficult in class and I wanted you to know why..."

I was stunned and I just sat there – I told S I was grateful she'd taken the time to let me know about it and I shared that I had been wondering about the assessment and the class, especially being new to teaching. I wasn't sure what it had all been about. Well you just can't tell, can you? I thought it was about me...but it's nothing to do with me...You can't tell what is going on sometimes... (*Teaching Journal entry, 2008*)

Bridge

Not all learning is pleasant and not all teaching is either. Learning and teaching the skills of higher order thinking is to engage in hypothetical reasoning and higher order mental tasks including thinking about the *thinking* taking place. This is a function called metacognition (Anscombe, 2009; Fox & Riconscente, 2008). There are debates about whether each part of the brains' processing system (discussed previously) results in different kinds of metacognition (Arango-Muñoz, 2011). Arango-Munoz (2001) outlines how some discussions of metacognition associate it with mindreading and the theory of mind as well as psychological concepts that help explain the self and others. Another perspective is to

consider metacognition as a form of executive function that monitors the environment using the emotions systems to do so (Arango-Muñoz, 2011). In other words, one component is concerned with “ ... knowledge of cognition...[whilst the other is about] regulation of cognition” (Muis & Franco, 2009). Both perspectives are supported by empirical experiment and therefore for the purpose of this discussion it is possible to assume that both kinds of metacognition co-exist and that both contribute to human learning and reasoning.

Educators have been very interested in this function and it has considerable links to beliefs about knowledge (Muis & Franco, 2009). It is considered to be a key route to development of higher order reasoning skills, or in educational terms *critical thinking*. In terms of teaching Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) suggest that along with factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge good teaching requires the planning for opportunities for developing metacognitive knowledge in students. A key route to this is reflection on learning tasks, engagement in a broad array of different kinds of assessment and providing opportunities for students to choose strategies for meeting the assignment tasks (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). These may be incorporated into planning teaching activities.

Metacognition and the associated development of higher order cognitive processes are resource intensive for the individual. Fortunately, as parts of the role become routine this frees up resources for other aspects of learning and/or teaching. This explains why the first semester or year is often very hard for students as they learn different strategies to apply for different tasks. It is the same for learning to teach or indeed going into practice for the first time. Given this it is sometimes hard to hold on through the discomfort some assessment can create for students. I found this was more possible to do if I was clear about my rationale for setting the particular kind of assessment. I was not always clear until after I had run an assessment. It was not the student evaluations at the end that always pointed this out. Grading student assessment is an important impetus for engaging in reflection on teaching and assessment design. Reflective assessments were and are still the most likely to initiate such introspection and reflection, more than any other kind of assessment.

Verse 11: Seeking advice – the role of talking with others.

[I knock and wait; I want some advice...I like to ask G because they have lots of experience, best of all they are willing to share; I almost never feel stupid with them either] Can I talk to you for a minute? I have a problem with a paper a student has submitted and need to talk it over with someone? **“Sure, do you want to get a cup of tea?”** that would be great! **“okay so what is it about?”** “... well I set a reflective paper assessment in _____ class and it’s come in as a 1500 word criticism of my teaching practice. It’s pretty personal actually down to delivery, making lots of assumptions about my lack of social work practice in the area of the unit which I actually discussed and this is the reason why we have had so many guests this semester! I am not sure I can mark it to be honest given the content and I am not sure what to do...the student and I have seemed at loggerheads often in the class — frankly we have had some tussles in class about various things ...in fact I have been rattled more than once by the student glaring at me from the side— they have always seemed very angry and I guess now I know why! The student does not think I am qualified to teach her anything! *[I stop as I realise I am speaking faster and faster and louder than one probably should in the tearoom...]* **“Okay so what was the paper supposed to be about?”** *[I take a breath and feel myself start to calm down a bit]*. “We did an exercise in the first week asking them to write down what they know or understand about _____ and they give them to me to hold on to. I returned them later in semester. Students were asked to write a reflective essay on what they have learned in the class using their first impressions as a place to reflect back on. You know I really think [the student] is entitled to write about her experience of the class and if this is her experience then what can I do? That’s not the problem really...my problem is I don’t think I can mark it fairly because I feel attacked in it...as well as feeling as though her point about my practice experience makes my assessment of it difficult. She is claiming her own experience in this area as more relevant as I have less experience than she does. *[another breath, head shake...my stomach starts to burn...what am I doing here trying to teach?...it’s ridiculous ...]*. **“Oh I see...no I can see what you mean? You want to give it a fair hearing as an assessment?”** *[nodding, leaning forward]* “Yes I want her to have the best shot; she may have points to make that are valid and important to her learning. And I set the assessment up after all and if that is her experience then it should get a fair hearing right? I might not like it but I also might not be able to mark it...” **“mmm...yeah I see the problem”** *[In silence we sip our tea]*

Bridge

Writing reflections came easily to me even as a student. I have always kept a journal and indeed my student journal and personal journals are a neat mash up of the personal, professional and political. I always used this space to think out loud to myself, to see what I

thought about situations, ideas, theories, problems, and working with others. It became a great resource for me in developing my thinking about the ideas I was presented with as a student. I took it into practice with me; however, I kept a journal much less, and found instead that talking about situations with trusted others was a quicker and easier process than writing, especially when time is at a premium. This is not surprising really. Eraut (1995), in a significant paper outlining some issues with aspects of the Schon model, makes the case that these activities probably form *different kinds* of reflection. Eraut suggests that Schon's reflective practice model fails to distinguish reflective activities, and, moreover does not pay attention to the different kinds of resources, time and cognitive required for reflecting-in or reflecting on action (Eraut, 1995). Generally I saved the writing for really big critical incidents.

Chorus

Cause I need an interventionist
 To intervene between me and this monster
 And save me from myself and all this conflict
 'Cause the very thing that I love's killing me and I can't conquer it...
 (Eminem (Feat. Rihanna), 2013)

Verse 12: Imposter syndrome and reflective practice (featured solo)

Y'know that fear everyone says not to worry about – the one we all share? Y'know, the one about being found out to be a fraud? What is it? Aaah...oh yes imposter syndrome (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, & Stober, 1995) ...the fear that one day everyone will realise you really don't know anything at all? That you have been pretending all along, using clever smoke and mirrors; that you are in the building taking up space that a real [fill in the blank] could be using. This is the feeling that any minute now someone will tap you on shoulder and say what are you doing here? ...it's apparently particularly high for academics and possibly PhD students; higher still for women across many professional roles. Yeah well I got tapped on the shoulder – yeah it happened to me for real...publicly outed to my colleagues and to my boss...and you know it's both as bad as you might have imagined and it's not as bad at all...

This email below was sent to the Dean and Faculty manager in addition to all members, including myself, of the social work program. The person also sent it to sessional staff and research assistants working in the program at the time. The email was untraceable as it was sent from an email address created specifically for the purpose.

Dear Mr _____ and Mrs _____

I have been advised [sic] that you may be the best people to address this concern.

I would like to congratulate you for installing the very latest information sharing device into this wonderful campus. This device is very accurate and the text to voice feature is absolutely amazing. I have never come across anything like this before and have often wondered where did you get it from. Is it the latest model from China or just an existing model that has had a software update from Korea? For the past month, I have been thinking of a suitable name for this device and after much discussion with a few others, have decided to call it the "RoboLecturer"!!! Yes that's right the "RoboLecturer". I think you very well know that I am referring to one of your social work lecturers. Yes that's right again, I am referring to Lynelle Watts the course co-ordinator.

Where would you like me to start? Yes, I am a current social work student that has after much thought decided to speak up about an injustice to not only the social work profession but the students who have to put up with third class education. I have decided that I will have my say today and I do realize that there would be consequences for me if I was to sign this letter. After all, some of us are aware of a silenced social work student already. They can often be seen walking around campus with their head down now. Another doing of the RoboLecturer! To avoid the same fate and manage to complete my social work degree, I have decided to not sign this letter today. I will make contact again after graduating and be willing to sit and share my absolute anger and frustration with this issue. So to avoid the potential silence, I have copied this letter to many many people.

I pay good money to learn about social work and get upset and angry when the information being provided is repeated directly from a text book or the internet. RoboLecturer is well known for the being the best drone that your social work course has to offer. By some students but most importantly by some social workers in town I hear. If I wanted to learn social work from a text book then I would sit in the library every day and soak up the knowledge like RoboLecturer. What happened to that fine mix of theory and experience? What happened to the social work experience I thought you had to have in order to lecture at a university? Is this just an ecu method? Has RoboLecturer even worked as a social worker? NO I'm told would be the answer to that one, another fact that has become evident over the past year or so. But you already know that!

I just found out that you have also planted an employee of the social work course in one of my units. I'm sure this person is a student as they seem to be reading texts and listening to the lecturer. Why don't you replace RoboLecturer with this student, you have nothing to lose, NOT -HELLO. You have installed RoboLecturer instead! RoboLecturer is unable to expand on the content and it's funny to watch her fidget and go red in the face when a student asks her for more detail. RoboLecturer gets angry, I can see it in her eyes when unable to answer the questions. RoboLecturer the drone who repeats the information in the text book. Do you want us to start referring to her as that? Oh that's right, we already do! I would like to offer some options to resolve the problem.

A; Replace RoboLecturer with the final year student (not serious, you need to do something here)

1; replace RoboLecturer with one of the other staff in the social work course

2; send RoboLecturer out on a field trip as a social worker for a year or two, make it three.

3; get serious and listen to the feedback, ask the students who finished in 2008 and 2009. There are a few who would like to speak up after they will get their paper in April.

4; ignore it and it will go away – do you really think so?

5; refund some of the unit fees

As I have said, I am willing to visit your office and discuss all of these concerns. I am not available to do this until I have the graduating paper in my hand as there will be consequences I'm certain. When I can call myself a social worker, I will keep my word and contact you at that stage as I'm not going to risk any further disruption to my study. After all, my destiny is secured. I do know that you will be thinking about what to do with this letter. A local social worker told me that it is not right and that we should all band together and oppose this problem like they did a few years ago. I'm saddened to think that there are others that discuss this also and continue to remain silent. I will break this silence.

I thank you for taking the time to read about my concerns. I only hope that you do something about it. I pity [sic] the poor first and second years coming through the course. They will work it out, just give them time.

Concerned Student.

I think this might qualify as a *critical incident* (Fook & Gardner, 2007). I thought about getting a t-shirt... *robo-lecturer*. This was a bid to try to inject some humour into the situation and was only possible a few weeks later after I went through a pretty significant reflective process. My immediate reaction was to feel hurt more than anything. Then really exposed. The email exhibited a certain genius in the way it managed to catch all my sensitive spots about my own sense of what teaching is and about social work; ideas about legitimacy as a social worker in the field and in academia. I had been a mature aged student when I came to study after working in human services in the area of income support. I spent approximately three years in practice as a social worker and then I came back to lecture as an associate lecturer⁸³. The email got to me because underneath I agreed with some of the points being made. What was I doing undertaking a job with no formal training in teaching, not too long out from graduating myself? The email called into question my own sense of these purpose, legitimacy and competence. And it was painful.

I spent the aftermath trying to empathise with this student; trying to understand the extremities for the person that might have pushed them to such a course of action. I wondered a great many things. Did my teaching push them too hard, not hard enough? Was I not as approachable as I thought I was? Is it true that I am all book, and no practice? Was it a bad thing to be frank about using others' expertise and practice wisdom so the class can draw on a wider range than just mine? Maybe I should have not expressed this? Am I too open? Not open enough? Is this a case of that damn *Johari window* (Mohan, 2008) where others can see things about me that I can't see? If so, are these points then legitimate and who would I check with? What do I need to change here? Maybe the student is right – my one talent [reading] which made coming to University such a dream come true for me and seemed to make me a good fit is actually not enough to be going on with as a lecturer? Maybe I do need the 20 years of Social Work practice to be legitimate after all? A few days after a colleague said to me "I don't know how you are still here after a thing like that! I wouldn't have been able to teach again" By that stage I could actually say I felt a little sorry

⁸³ In Australia Associate Lecturer is an entry level position.

the student hadn't had the courage to come and discuss it with me. I like to think I would have done my best to listen and understand.

That didn't mean that the incident did not take its toll. It was months before I felt able to sense how a class was going...Colleagues would ask me how a class went and I would say I don't know because I really didn't. When this email came I had thought my classes were going well and that I had good rapport with students. I had not detected any serious problems at all. And now I realised that you really don't know...I also spent months waiting for more emails to come; a wider campaign amongst students to ensue. I had seen that kind of mobbing (Hugaas, 2010) happen to others. Was it my turn, I wondered? Nothing happened and gradually I came to think it was just one student. Okay so someone did not like my teaching style. I started to relax a bit back into the teaching.

Women particularly, it seems to me, pass the imposter story around to each other (Sanford, Ross, Blake, & Cambiano, 2015), although men do feel it too. I think people usually say this stuff in response to doubts you might have ventured about your own fitness to have the job, do the lecture, or perform the task, be the coordinator. If they are kind they will say it's all in your head, don't worry about it, everyone shares the same fears and reassure you that they are certain that you can do whatever task they are *requesting*. You then agree to it despite your own doubts. I am thinking now it's probably best not to express these doubts to people who are trying to get you to do things, especially if it means extra work for you (which it usually does).

Bridge

The first part of Verse 12 above presents an example of *reflection-on-action* (Schon, 1983, 1987) where the purpose is to make sense of the action and event after it has occurred. The second part is written from reconstructed parts of discussions about it — my journals and voice recordings that occurred up to six months later. So the Robo-lecturer event was well in the past. Here it has been written as though being spoken to an audience and in some of the original journals it is written that way as well. According to Eraut (1995), this concept of

Schon's reflection *post action* is less problematic than that of *reflection-in-action*⁸⁴, which Schon spends considerable time setting up as a form of professional artistry. Reflection-in-action occurs as action is unfolding, according to Schon (1983). The problem is that given the cognitive resources required it is likely that reflection-in-action is reflection using the faster route of type 1 processing. Moreover, it is likely to use the kind of metacognition that allows for the scanning of activities as they are unfolding (Eraut, 1995), also associated with faster, less resource-intensive processes. Eraut (1995) suggests that while university does not have to perfectly replicate the conditions of practice it should provide links of relevance enough so that learning is able to be transferred (Billing, 2007). Transferability of practices, knowledge and skills learnt at university is an important issue for educators. Time factors, willingness to engage in reflection without the need to meet assessment requirements, and "...the post qualification routinization of professional work" (Eraut, 1995) all impact on how people move between these contexts.

Chorus

Five and one half, it doesn't mean I don't care
 Sick from the guts of another interesting quote
 'Bout the time I left you for dead
 I have a theory based on nothing
 It's absolute crap, it's so compelling
 Publish me now, I'm a genius
 Face full of fruit, wow
 Ball Park Music, (2014)

Verse 13: Student journal entry

Sometimes I think I am only a person created out of books and the things I have read. I mean I am not convinced that anything I think did not first get germinated in something I have read or heard outside of myself. Sometimes I wonder if I am a person at all...it's probably a good thing I have a body really otherwise what would I be, a brain full of other folks ideas right? Sometimes I don't know what's mine to have thought...or what is an idea that comes from somewhere else...it's a bit scary. University makes this worse... before University I wouldn't have thought to wonder *how do I know that?* Let alone *where* do I know if from? I just would have known it, period. And it wouldn't have mattered to anyone I knew then where I knew a thing from – for sure they wouldn't have asked me except to work out if they should have watched the news. In fact, most of the time people were not

⁸⁴ Reflection-in-action is said to occur as the action is unfolding in relation to novel, surprising or troubling occurrences and is triggered by intuition that signals that something has occurred outside of the routine (Schon, 1983).

interested in much I had to say anyway. Not much has changed there really. I thought at University people would want to discuss ideas but I find people are still not much interested in ideas, or discussing them. And something else has changed, when I do write papers or discuss readings or ideas in class, I now have to account for where I get them from and then reference them back to the sources. It occurred to me that none of these ideas are actually mine; that everything I think may be traced back to someone else. And then, of course, I find I have picked it up as a habit too because now when I talk to non-university friends, I occasionally forget not to ask them where they know stuff from. They get a bit uncomfortable and sometimes even riled up. When I talk to University friends they want to know who said my point before me so they can assess its truth-value. I am wondering if it might be safer not to speak about anything anymore (*Student Journal entry 2001*)

Bridge

How then to teach adults and how to teach reflective practice? Building on Perry's (1970) work on intellectual development in the college years, there have been a range of research programmes pursued to answer the question of adult intellectual development (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Bromme, Pieschl, & Stahl, 2010; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; King & Kitchener, 2002; Pintrich & Hofer, 2002). The relationship of an adult to *knowledge* emerges as a key marker of development. It should be said that most of these theorists accept the premise of *stages* of development imported from their use of Piagetian models for cognitive development. Nevertheless, the models developed are instructive in what they have to say about the impact education has for adults moving from states of certainty about knowledge to states of uncertainty and/or an understanding that knowledge may be tested and assessed for veracity, truth or relevance (King & Kitchener, 2004). This work suggests that adult approaches to ill-structured problems can be discerned through their assumptions about knowledge.

The main way ideas about adult learning have found their way into social work is through education theorists interested in *transformative* learning (Belenky et al., 1986; Brookfield, 1993; Brookfield, 1995; Brookfield & Preskill, 1999; Luke & Gore, 1992; Mezirow, 1990; J. Mezirow, 1991). Early Australian models of critical reflection (Fook, 1999) were influenced by Mezirow (1990; 1990; 1998) and Brookfield (1993; 1995). Take Mezirow as an example. He did more than just base the model on Piagetian ideas about cognitive development;

Mezirow also linked his model to broad range of philosophy and social theory. In his model Mezirow (1991) adopted the idea of communicative rationality from the work of Habermas, interpretive hermeneutics via Gadamer and then firmly based his schema in what he calls *meaning based perspectives*, that are largely informed by phenomenology (Mezirow, 1991). Brookfield (2009) is equally interesting in that his model privileges the notion of *critique* based on social theory informed by the Frankfurt School and other critical theorists. Indeed this can be seen in the approach to critical reflection Brookfield outlines in a 2009 paper where he says that:

For reflection to be considered critical it must have as its explicit focus uncovering, and challenging, the power dynamics that frame practice and uncovering and challenging hegemonic assumptions (those assumptions we embrace as being in our best interests when in fact they are working against us). (2009, p. 295)

While these are all worthy and different *kinds* of critical reflection (Tully, 1989), to properly engage with them requires the development of basic foundational of *critical thinking skills*. By this I am referring to critical thinking as being a habit of mind as Whetten (2002) describes it and where it involves:

... that mode of thinking – about *any* subject, content, or problem– in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. (Paul & Elder 2001, cited by Whetten, 2002, p. 50; my emphasis)

In a recent study on assessment in an Australian Bachelor of Social Work course Watts and Hodgson (2015) examined the relevant literature on *critical thinking* and distilled the following as foundational critical thinking skills:

- (1) construct and test hypotheses, or compare and contrast explanatory and predictive theories;
- (2) systematically evaluate their thinking, assumptions and perceptions;
- (3) detect and critique bias and ideological and other distortions in everyday discourse;
- (4) identify and assess logical and propositional arguments including the use of evidence and reasoning in establishing claims to truth; and

(5) understand and apply skills in deductive and inductive reasoning. (pp. 7-8).

It is possible to see that detecting and critiquing bias is one of a number of skills needed to assess claims about truth, knowledge and evidence. There is a distinction that can be made between instruction and support to learn the *skills* to engage in critical thinking and being taught that all knowledge is constructed and therefore subject to ideological and value distortions on the basis of vested interests. Such a critique of ideology is the product of previous *critical thinking* undertaken by people who had the good fortune to have been instructed in the hard business of learning to *use* critical thinking. Without these foundational critical thinking skills, or habits of mind, I wonder if we might be missing the opportunity for teaching social work students such skills.

Is this because as a discipline we presents some knowledge as certain and/or self-evident therefore not subject to critical analysis and other knowledge as open for the critical thinking where the process is concerned with uncovering bias and hidden assumptions? If so as a discipline we run the risk of turning the problems of practice and living into well-structured problems for which some theories provide an answer. In doing so, might we not undermine students access to important opportunities for engaging in hypothetical reasoning and thus the kind of limit testing we are hoping they will take into professional practice?

Verse 14: Speaking back to an earlier self⁸⁵

Labouvie-Vief (1990) offers a sequence of three levels of adult logical development. The first is the *intrasystemic* level where one's experience is a single abstract system, usually with conventional language, symbols and norms that 'emphasise certainty and stability' (p.69) [*I am not sure about stability...I remember being hungry for something, I liked to read lots of things...really I remember feeling like I did not know anything at all once I came to university – nothing I had learnt before coming was relevant at all*]. The person does not yet have a reflective language for their experience and can function within this single abstract system. The second level is called *intersystemic* which acknowledges multiple viewpoints. [*I think this is where people stay – multiple viewpoints but no way of working out better or worse explanations – isn't that a problem? I want more certainty than this – are all ideas equal then? When I say I want to know this it becomes a problem of character – a lack of tolerance of uncertainty instead of wanting better arguments for particular positions. Is all reality equal?*] Language develops that can discuss conflicts between systems such as self and other, mind and body, inner and outer. The last level is *integrated* whereby these binaries are transformed and the tensions between them utilised in ways that allow for the valuing of 'historical change and contextual diversity' (Labouvie-Vief, 1990, p. 69). [*The gold standard – this is clearly the best stage from Labouvie-Vief's outline. Integration is highly prized in social work – integration of placement experience with university content; practice and theory, self as a professional and the work; knowledge and skills, values and practice...the list is fairly extensive. When I first read this work by Labouvie-Vief I wondered how would you know if you have reached this stage in your thinking. Who will tell you? Can you determine this yourself? And what if you can't? I think all three forms of thinking are still possible – depending on the context...*] The experience under examination here suggests that one can retain earlier conceptual levels and that the possibility exists that under times of stress one can move to earlier ways of seeing issues. This suggests that *integrated* levels of knowing are not static and with one forever, they too are subject to reworking and re-storying for the sake of a coherent narrative of one's life story (Benhabib, 1992).

Excerpt from original autoethnography conducted in an undergraduate research methods class in 2001 (Watts, 2001)

Chorus

Herald what your mother said
 Reading the books your father read
 Try to solve the puzzles in your own sweet time
 Some may have more cash than you
 Others take a different view, my oh my, heh, hey
 Des'ree, (1994)

⁸⁵ This is a process of inserting text from the present into a piece written much earlier in order to speak back with what one has learned, or through a different perspective. The earlier text formed part of the autoethnography conducted as a third year social work student in a research methods class.

Finale

The purpose of this autoethnographic exploration was to consider my own processes of learning and teaching reflective practice. In doing so I hoped to raise questions about some key assumptions at work in the current social work literature on reflective practice and critical reflection. In this brief section below I offer some conclusions developed out of this line of inquiry.

First, learning is complex and requires time and scaffolding. While this is hardly a brilliant insight, the autoethnography has pointed to the significance of transitions between university and field and back again. Parallels may be drawn between the process of learning undertaken by new students and those teaching for the first time. The processes are similar and both require scaffolding in ways that assist each group to navigate and stretch beyond their existing understanding and knowledge, either prior to university study or from practicing as a social worker.

The psychological literature is fairly clear about the cognitive resource requirements needed for different kinds of thinking and processing. There is little acknowledgement of this body of knowledge to be found within Australian social work education literature. The emphasis on teaching students critical thinking in Australian social work rests on assumptions drawn from critical theory, rather than this extant literature on the workings of *cognition*. Thus, little attention has been paid to explicitly teaching *critical thinking* that would scaffold students into developing the deeper and more complex epistemological positions required for engaging with *critical theory*. This may be a missed opportunity for social work as it might provide the conditions that would make engaging in *critical reflective* practices more likely for students. Explicit instruction in critical thinking skills is needed in order to develop the kind of higher order reasoning that would facilitate engagement with critical theories that are in themselves complex arguments built by people fortunate to be trained in logic, rhetoric, argument, and ethics.

Lecturers, too, must engage in testing the limits of their own knowledge. Due to the cognitive resources required it is easy to see why this may be something difficult for new lecturers, or even overburdened experienced academics, to do. It is nevertheless important for academic staff to resist the temptation to fall back into well learned and rehearsed approaches to the problems and cases presented to students. If lecturers and tutors are not prepared to test the limits of their own assumptions about knowledge and reality, then it is unlikely they will be in a position to mentor, support, develop and facilitate this kind of learning in others.

Interlude 5

Autoethnography and being in the frame

One of the key things about undertaking autoethnography is being vulnerable. Going over old journals, listening to old recordings and remembering what it was like to be a student at the same time as I was walking the halls and corridors of the same institution was at times disorientating and sometimes disturbing. I found myself resisting the process, wanting to paper over and avoid engaging in the emotional aspects. I did not much like coming face-to-face with these different aspects of myself. I found, in those pages, a self-righteous, complaining, intolerant and overwhelmed student who frequently bit off more than she could chew. Fortunately in the accounts I also encountered times when I had been a friend, a colleague, a sister, a daughter, a wife and a mother as well as a student.

In the original autoethnography I explored my biography and my excitement about coming to university and how I immersed myself in the thinking that had gone before me. I thought that access to the library was the greatest gift I could imagine and I was determined to make the most of it. I saw study as such an opportunity to participate in a conversation about knowledge and the big questions about how to live well and how to help others.

At a certain point in my course (third year) the relevance of these philosophies and social theories ceased being discussed, and only rarely were links explicitly made between social work theory and what I had learnt already. There was a new body of knowledge to acquire that came from social work proper. The problem was that in other parts of the course the focus had turned to critiquing the assumptions, theories, and knowledge of this professional knowledge I was hoping to acquire. It was as though I had been offered a glimpse into a way of thinking and seeing the world, only to be told that this way was misguided, modernist and thus not to be trusted. Instead the focus became centred on me as a person, my position as a woman, my class, my ethnicity, my psychology, my identity and my relative privileges. What I was unprepared for was how disorienting this would be to my desire to be a social worker. I understood the bodies of knowledge (sociology, feminism, cultural studies) from where this critique and focus emanated and as it was one I was familiar with, it seemed true and was therefore difficult to critique or even withstand.

Looking back over the journals I can see how seduced I was into well-learned and well-rehearsed ideas during that time. I bought many of those early assumptions and lessons about critical social work perspectives and reflection that I had learned so well during those years into this research, and in particular the autoethnography. It's only through this process that I finally managed to engage with some of that 'other' social work theory and history that I did not engage with earlier. It's modernist, but it is instructive nevertheless.

Chapter 6

Track 2: Policing the gap between theory and practice (a post-rock anthem)

Prelude

In this chapter I present a description of the emergence of reflective practice in social work education. The purpose is to address the research question of how reflective practice emerged in social work education in Australia. The chapter is presented as a post-rock instrumental anthem in two *parts* with three *bridges* and a finale (conclusion). This account



has been arrived at through the use of an **Figure 7: Archaeology** archaeological analytic, described in album notes (chapter four) above. Just to recap briefly, I conducted an archaeological analysis to trace the objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and strategies in order to understand how reflective practice emerged within the discipline of social work in Australia. I start this 'track' by presenting a version of this history, which describes the emergence of reflective practice as a *continuity* of long held debates and ideas about the goals and purposes of the social work project (McDonald, 2006). I do this to illustrate and contrast the way in which total histories focus on continuities across ideas, events and time. This first part is written with the sources included in order to include the continuity of the *oeuvre* and the *book* (see album notes four - chapter four).

The *bridges* of the chapter outline interesting aspects of the findings of this line of inquiry and include graphics to illustrate different aspects of the archaeology. Bridge one outlines

the emergence of reflective practice in relation to the development of schools of social work in Australia and sector reform of higher education. This was arrived at through the documentary analysis of sources in the 'archive'. The second bridge outlines the bodies of knowledge that became important to the transformation of reflective practice into the critical reflection model that was taken into AASW document and standards. The third bridge discusses some of the sources of data included in the archive. The archive sources are listed in Appendix D.

The second part of the anthem (in this chapter) presents my archaeological description of the phenomena of reflective practice and its transformation into the contemporary critical reflective model. The description has been written without the attribution of sources. This is an attempt to show the analytic decoupled from the background meaning that is made possible by the syntheses described in chapter four and which operate through the total history in the first section. This second account shows the emergence of the model within Australian social work education and its relation to the intensification of subjective practices experienced by social workers, particularly with regard to policing the gap between theory and practice.

I am aware that the issue of sources is fraught. While rendering the account this way satisfies the *archaeological* intent of the study, to do so nevertheless is counter to accepted standards of scholarly work. After all, the attribution of authorship is seen as a key way in which the veracity and validity of work is assessed (East, 2010). In order to offer something of a middle ground a table of the source materials utilised in the archaeology has been included as a bibliography in appendix D.

Part 1: Trapping our own culture⁸⁶

Social work has always occupied a space of contradiction. As early as 1975 at the 14th National Conference of the Australian Association of Social Workers, held at Monash

⁸⁶ This section title is a nod to a remark of Foucault's (and reported by Kessl (2006, p. 93)) where Foucault is describing Bachelard's attempts to trap his own culture.

University in Melbourne, Max Cornwell, in the context of his discussion of developments in social casework, is moved to lament that this area of practice was already under attack. Not by the state or by clients of social work services, but by fellow social workers intent on reimagining the practice against a preferred practice modality informed by radical ideas coming from overseas and being applied in Australia. Cornwell raises a caution about this kind of internal belittling of what in his view may be hard-won expertise. Schwartz suggests that in social work:

[T]here are some human issues that are never laid to rest. They are 'solved' by the best minds of every generation, yet they remain troublesome, suspended, permanent centres of uneasiness. These issues tend to persist in the same form in which they began – as polarised absolutes between which we are asked to choose...the dualisms make it necessary to create *religious* solutions rather than technical ones, those where faith is more important than fact and strong belief is its own justification...[W]hat ensues is a kind of 'family quarrel' which takes on a ferocity not ordinarily wasted on strangers. (Schwartz, 1974, cited in Cornwell, 1975, pp. 130-131)

In social work these issues coalesce around the purpose of social work and the relation between private troubles and public issues. Epstein (1999) suggests that this is part of the culture of social work, not least its position as an applied profession using the social sciences as its knowledge base. Indeed, Epstein (1999) suggests that as a result of this social work emerges as a Janus faced profession due to its need to "...influence people, motivate them to adopt the normative views inherent in the intentions of social work practice" (p. 8). But this influencing must be done without authority; without being seen to be influencing. Epstein suggests that this is the communicative *art* of social work; its own technology. The art of "non-influential influencing...a polished style evolved to conceal this basic dissonance within social work...it is common to state the intentions of social work as helping people to accommodate to the status quo and as challenging the status quo by trying to bring about social change" (Epstein, 1999, p. 9). The dissonance was evident as early as 1974 leading Schwartz to report that, in the words of a US graduate student on finishing their social work degree, "This school has taught me to be a good caseworker; and it has also taught me to be ashamed of it"(Schwartz, 1974, cited in Cornwell, 1975, p. 133).

Epstein speaks from the position of being at the centre in that this analysis comes out of the history and experience of social work in the United States (Epstein, 1999). Even so, there are significant parallels with the Antipodean experience, even as there are some differences. There were enough resonances for Cornwell to pick up the perspective of Schwartz and translate as relevant to his survey of the Australian social work experience of casework. Thus, a similar dissonance can be found and it generally translates into a question that social workers may pose to themselves and each other, asking what *kind* of social worker one is: an agent of care or of control⁸⁷? The difference from the US and Australian experiences rests mainly on welfare state arrangements, which shaped the kinds of settings social workers occupy as a profession.

This conflict became more acute within social work generally as the consensus for the welfare state crumbled across the western world over the latter part of the 20th century and into the early 21st century (McDonald, 2006). Kessler (2009) explains that the significant dismantling of the consensus regarding the welfare state in advanced liberal democracies contributed to the “process of transformation [that] reassembles ‘the social’ and has direct implications for social work (p. 308). This transformation has been well described by Rose (1996, 1996) and others (Gilbert & Powell, 2010; Gray, Dean, Agliasi, Howard, & Schubert, 2015) and is said to have occurred in earnest across almost all OECD countries from the 1970s, albeit at different rates of change depending on the specific conditions in each country (Kessler, 2009). The changes to the welfare state saw the importation of free market ideologies and processes, which would substantially transform social work practices.

These transformations have been variously described under the term *neo-liberalism*. Neo-liberal rationalities are a broad church (Dean, 2014). Indeed Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2010) suggest “‘neo-liberalism’ has become something of a *rascal concept* – promiscuously pervasive, yet inconsistently defined, empirically imprecise and frequently contested”

⁸⁷ This is a common rhetorical question often posed to indicate the different aspects of social work practice – it is not intended to imply that only two kinds of social worker exist.

(p.184). Political economy analysts have used the concept to describe it as "... variously...a bundle of (favoured) policies, as a tendential process of institutional transformation, as an emergent form of subjectivity, as a reflection of realigned hegemonic interests, or as some combination of the latter (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 183). Social work has a propensity to use the term neo-liberal in discussions of the realignment of hegemonic interests; the way it has contributed to institutional transformation and to point to the way policies favour or include free market ideologies (Baines, 2006; Bay, 2011; Lonne, 2009; McDonald, 2006).

This crisis within the social work profession did not really permeate the Australian scene with much force until the latter part of the 1980s (Camillieri, 1996; McDonald, 2006).

Explanations for the crisis were and are often described through the term *economic rationalism* (Burchell, 1994b; Pusey, 1991; Stokes, 2014). Economic rationalism can be seen as an ideological term (Burchell, 1994a) and was utilised to describe the deregulation of the economy and along with it the use of market mechanisms for regulating resources. The adoption of this term had the effect of focussing social work theorists and commentators on the way in which the policy programs of government imported free market ideologies. There were, however, significant differences between the actual implementation of market mechanisms in Australia to the manifestation of this so-called 'new right' policy in Thatcherite Britain or the Reaganism of the US during a similar period (Stokes, 2014).

Moreover this *ideological* uptake and focus on the idea of marketisation may have contributed to the profession missing some of the more subtle transformations occurring within the sphere of the 'social'. Burchell (1994a) suggests that Pusey's sociological analysis was largely maintained at the level of general principles and so was based on examining economic rationalist policy as a form of elite interests and this served to cement its status as an ideology of the elite. Pusey's analysis can be seen as a new manifestation of conflict theory focussed on the existence of a power elite (Mills & Alexander Street Press, 1956). This is an old argument familiar to social work educators and was therefore taken up by social work theorists with gusto (Ife, 1997; Rodley, Rees, & Stilwell, 1993). This focus on the ideological content of economic rationalism may also have prevented social work from

developing a more fine-grained analysis of these changes as specific practices, techniques or technologies of neo-liberalism.

The changes to the arrangements for welfare in Australia escalated across the 1990s and into the early 2000s (Camillieri, 1996; Lonne, 2009). While social work commentary describing these changes continued to be offered at conferences (Australian Association of Social Workers, 1995; Dodds, 1995a; Dodds, 1995b), practitioners were describing the material effects on how they did their work and how they saw their mission being changed by the widespread adoption of New Public Management (NPM) techniques (McDonald, 2003). This had the effect of dashing many hopes built by various social movements across the 1970s and early 1980s in Australia. The pain of this was felt greatly by those educated across those hopeful years (Ife, 2006; Palmer, 2014). Many of these people later occupied positions as social work educators; studying again for higher degree qualifications but in a vastly different landscape than that described by Pease about the 1970s (Pease & Fook, 1999).

Social work commentators and analysts, influenced by the social theory 'turns' of the period, found significant resonances in social theory under the broad rubric of postmodernism. These ideas described fragmentation, diversity and the loss of grand narratives associated with modernity (Bainbridge & Williams, 1995; McDonald, 2006). Social work academics returned to the question of the professional project and revisited the problem of what social work is for (McDonald, 2007). Practitioners found their work increasingly subjected to scrutiny and their professionalism being questioned by a focus on evidence, outcomes and processes of accountability (Lonne, 2009). This introduced increased competition for jobs in the marketplace of the 'social' with social work jobs with the title of social worker rapidly disappearing (Healy & Lonne, 2010). Academics in a higher education sector subject to the same economic rationalist forces experienced many of the same processes and questions (Adams, 1998).

The crisis in social work mirrored the change in wider economic and social policy which significantly affected the way in which the delivery of social services operated in Australia

(Capling, Considine, & Crozier, 1998; Jamrozik, 2009; Pusey, 1991). The writings and national conference programs in Australia from the late 1980s through to the late 1990s show heated debates about the relation of social work to the *state* (Encel, 1989; Ife, 1995; Jamrozik, 1989); and the methods and appropriate focus of social work education (Healy & Fook, 1994). This dissonance became grounded in local, specific conditions through the documenting of the experiences of Australian social work academics, practitioners and field educators. During the same period there was an upsurge in the publishing of home-grown textbooks and articles devoted to understanding and describing Australian social work practice (Chamberlain, 1986; Fook, 1993, 1996a; Fook, Ryan, & Hawkins, 2000; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1990; Wearing & Marchant, 1986). Previous to this most of the descriptions and ideas about social work had been mainly imported from social work academics and practitioners writing about the context of the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK).

The extended discussion and debate about the purposes, aims of social work and place of social work in the future occurred over the space of almost two decades in Australia and it happened later than it did for our overseas colleagues. The discussion was largely complete by the middle 2000s as a consensus had emerged in Australian social work about the purposes of the profession. Thus a human rights discourse became linked to a social change agenda informed in large part by critical theory (Healy, 2005; Ife, 2001). By the mid-2000s this consensus also enabled a new push from the AASW, backed by an increasing workforce of private practitioners, for prescribed content in social work courses, the adoption of new accreditation standards, and a revival of the need for social work to be a registered profession in Australia (Lonne, 2009). This reinvigoration and renewed professionalism also occurred in the context of competing in the marketplace of the 'social' for a place at the helping table with other 'psy' disciplines (Rose, 1996a) such as psychologists, welfare workers, community health nurses and increasingly occupational therapists and chaplains.

In this context it is perhaps not surprising that new models for understanding and explaining social work practice were needed. These 'new' models incorporate beloved ideas already in circulation in the profession in a process that makes enough of the model familiar

while introducing new ways of approaching the problems of practice. These processes leave traces that Foucault discusses as systematising propositions (Foucault, 1972). What this means is that in terms of discourse and in the formation of concepts one of the procedures is the *combinatory* process of incorporating already existing ideas, schemes or descriptions into a new whole. Examples of this can be seen in the incorporation of systems theory, psychoanalysis and problem-solving, all quite distinct modalities of practice and generated through distinctive arenas of thought, into a single model called the Life model (inSocialWork®, 2008). Other examples of this kind of systematising of propositions can be seen in the translation of casework into task-centred approaches and radical social work into critical approaches.

Reflective practice emerged at this time as a way of developing theory *from* actual practice; later it would be offered as an alternative to the evidence based practice movement that emerged across the same period (Healy, 2014; Pease, 1993; Taylor & White, 2006). Setting up reflective practice as an alternative to evidence based practice occurred through the transformation of an early model of reflective practice advocated by Donald Schon (1983). This transformation would incorporate social work specific elements into the new model including that earlier dissonance regarding care versus control. Moreover, it would seek to provide a mechanism through which practitioners, students and educators could reinscribe this dualism into process suited to interrogating the theory-practice gap described by Schon (1983) as a problem of technical rationality.

Before this transformation, reflective practice was aimed at bringing self-awareness to a practice problem for the purposes of problem-solving or evaluating practice against the ends of helping the service-user or client (O'Connor, Thomas, & Wilson, 1991). The goals of the helping process were considered to be rational, systematic and involving service user input in regards to decisions for intervention (Perlman, 1957). Criticisms of this approach would use the notion of technical rationality to reject it (Fook, 1999; Morley, 2004) and to build a space for a different conception of practice which included the practitioner-self more centrally in the process. The use of self would now be in service, not just for the client or

service user, but also for the practitioner. Consideration of the hidden assumptions of the practitioner would take a much more central place in linking theory and practice.

This model of reflective practice would reject the rational, systematic approach to practice in favour of a process that is holistic, cyclical and creative (Fook, 2013). It was aimed at learning *from* practice and took up Schon's challenge of developing an epistemology of practice. The model would connect practice as *art* rather than as science. Thus, the reflective practitioner is an artist as opposed to the notion of a practitioner-as-scientist. To conceive of practice as *art* involved the incorporation of the idea of the unknown and uncertainty. The transformation of reflective practice included the idea of *unconsciousness* (Barbour, 1984 cited in Pease, 1993, p. 67) by suggesting that the problems of practice might be reinvented by considering the implicit assumptions of practitioners. Hence, in many accounts of this developing model the need for a way to link action to theory is first supported by extensive claims about the problematic nature of this gap between espoused theory and actual action (Fook, 1996a, 2013; Morley, 2004; Pease, 1993). This unconsciousness can be seen in the work of Schon where he suggests that there are areas in which practitioners are blind to their own behaviour. Taking this further, theory championed by practitioners could be at odds with actual behaviour they display in practice. This point is rehearsed frequently in work inspired by the critical reflection model in discussion here.

Reflecting on social work practice thus became an exercise in confession of the ways in which practitioners and later students are unconscious (Chambon, 1999). Rarely is practice that is seamless, ethical, well executed, advanced, expert or even positive, involving satisfaction, pride, or virtue used for reflective practice exercises. These instances are viewed as less fruitful to learning, not least because seamless practice gives little pause to proceedings and thus tends to the routine. Instead, it is the shadow side of social work practice that is of interest in reflective accounts. This is the place of experience, learning and art. The place where the darker side of human experience — those moments of uncertainty, anger, sadness, disgust, revenge, righteousness, apathy, exhaustion and depression — act as stops to the flow of competent or expert practice. These are the places that must be governed

and these are the areas that practitioners must be responsible for and learn from. These links between “transgression and unreason” (Foucault, 1984, cited in Chambon, 1999, p. 68) normally occupying the private spaces of an individual are now a mechanism to the creation of the “moral subject”. The moral social work subject is one that can lay bare their theoretical assumptions and in doing so bridge the gap between practice and belief by developing a micro practice theory for their practice after each critical incident. Social workers did not escape the intensification of neo-liberal programmes of rationality; these subjectifying practices would be incorporated into a model of practice. We would do it to ourselves and we would call it resistance (Morley & Dunstan, 2012).

The predominant model of reflective practice that emerged in Australia in the early 1990s became known as the critical reflection model (Fronek, 2012). In this model reflective practice accounts begin with a description of practice or experience using concrete details, outlining who was there, what the setting was like, and including any personal or professional issues relevant to the incident (Fook, 2013). This is not the reflection. This is the confession on which the reflection is to work. Stage one includes questions about assumptions, feelings, biases, theories held, behaviour, the kinds of language used, expectations which may be met or unmet and, lastly, the role part one has played in the events are all outlined and deliberated on as an aid in stimulating reflective thinking. Here, the purpose is to lay bare the implicit assumptions held about the critical incident by the participant. During the next stage of the reflection process the *self* reflecting becomes the centre of the inquiry. The biography of the participant is placed under scrutiny for all the ways in which dominant structures in society find expression in the social beliefs of individuals (Fook, 2013). This is the second stage of the process. This turn of the dial focuses on the difference between what one thought one was doing and what actually occurred. This is to insert a question between the experience described and the self who experienced the incident. This is to introduce a space between behaviour and intention; practice and theory. It also opens a space for confession with regard to unconsciousness or lack of awareness. The space between practice and theory and the need for self-awareness, of self-responsibility and accountability are thus mutually dependent.

It was not always so stark. This responsabilisation of the self of the practitioner is not as evident in early accounts of social work in Australia (Lawrence, 1975). There appears to be more of a consensus that social work was authorised in the purpose and work it did within and for the state (McDonald, 2006). The emergence of responsabilisation in social work in Australia is part of the emergence of wider rationalities of government that have characterised Western Liberal democracies (Rose, 1996b). Rose posed the question: what is liberalism from the perspective of governmentality? In answering Rose proposes that liberalism introduced a “series of problems about the governability of individuals, families, markets and populations” (1996a, p. 39). Moreover in attempting to address these problems while also enshrining a limit to political authority the need for the ‘social’ arises within liberal states of which Australia is one. This is an arena where government is conducted through the operation of norms established and co-arising with the deployment of expertise. Rose (1996) explains “Political rule would not itself set out the norms of individual conduct, but would install and empower a variety of “professionals”, investing them with the authority to act experts in the devices of social rule” (Rose, 1996a, p. 40). Moreover, the very subject at the centre of this governmental process would be transformed through the operation of the welfare state from “an individualising moral normativity [in the 19th century]...into a subject of needs, attitudes and relationships” (Rose, 1996a, p. 40; my addition).

Social work practitioners with the aid of expert educator/practitioners would also be enabled to partake in a process of interrogating needs, attitudes and relationships. Indeed Burchell (1996, p. 34) was moved to suggest that “we do not need a tariff to ask whether an increase in our capabilities must necessarily be purchased at the price of our intensified subjection.” Indeed, such intensified attention to the capacities of practitioners to *reflect* on their practice can be seen as a response to the need for accountability as well as an activity aimed at the development of practices of resistance. Herein lays the contradiction at the heart of the Australian version of reflective practice in social work.

This emergence coincided with the need for accountability for social work practices. As Kessl (2006) terms it self-awareness has always been discussed within the profession; it is about how this self-awareness was transformed through a practice which intensified the subjective practices of the self within the context of social work as a profession. This self-awareness had previously been in service to the helping relationship and was seen as crucial to relationships with clients. This has not changed in practice. The way in which it has become tied to wider rationalities of governance and conduct has changed however. Thus, the *tenor* of this self-awareness transformed. Now this self-awareness is about the practitioners' well-being (Fook, 2013) as much as it about struggles to work with service users. Critical reflection in this model at least, was to institute a process for "...the liberation of the individual (*subject*) as the result of successful pedagogic intervention" (Kessl, 2006, p. 96).

Bridge – Surfaces of emergence

Despite the problems with using a time frame and a notion of history that is linear I have constructed a graphic (Figure 8) that depicts the emergence of the reflective practice including the subsequent critical reflection model. Figure 8 shows the development of social work schools in Australia and is drawn from data available on the AASW website (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2015) about the establishment of schools of social work. This graphic only includes the establishment of Bachelor of Social Work courses. Reflective practice was tracked by the year of publication of significant texts and sources starting with Schon but then focussing on Australian authors and official AASW documentation. The table of source data is also included in Appendix D. Another source of data represented here is that of sector reform in higher education in Australia, which emerged as a significant contextual factor in many of the sources in the archaeology. This was well discussed in key conference papers (Leitmann & Crawford, 1995) and other sources about higher education (Adams, 1998; Fredman & Doughney, 2012).

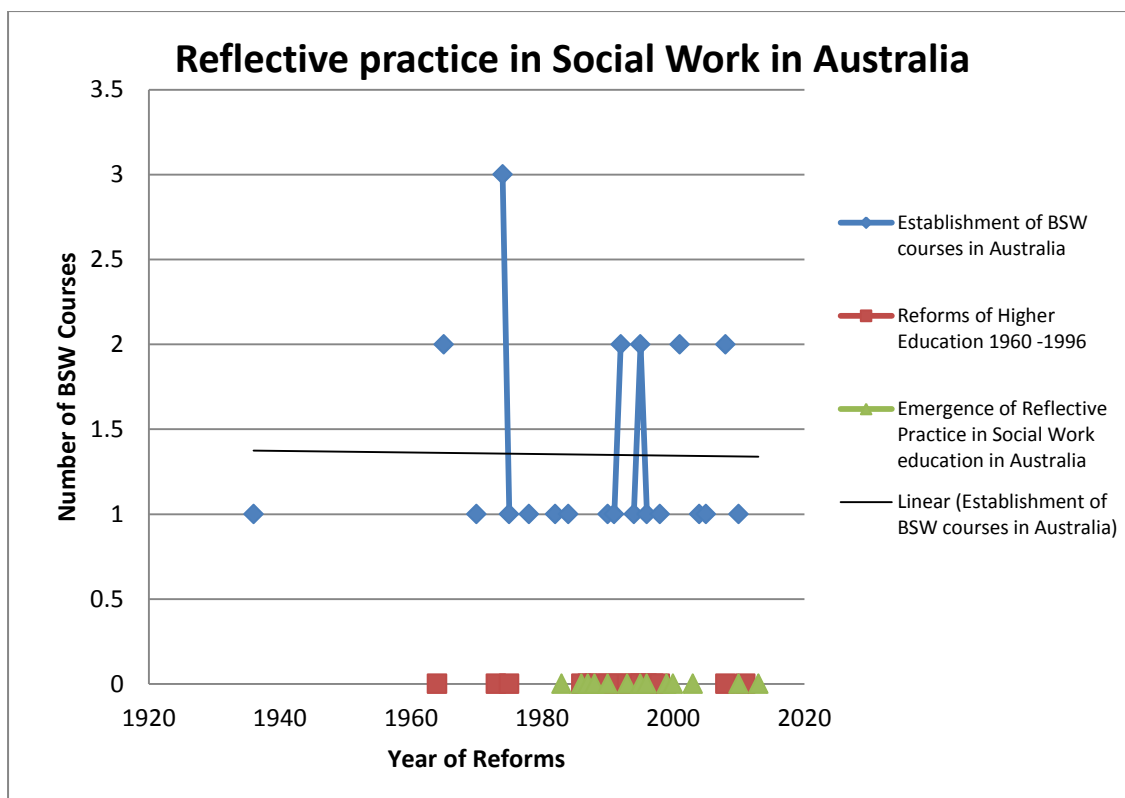


Figure 8: Emergence of reflective practice in Australian Social Work education

There are a few things that emerge as significant. The development of social work was quite slow for a number of years but each instance of higher education reform seemed to result in new courses being established. There are probably many drivers for this but discussion of them is somewhat beyond the scope here. It is possible to see that many of the same reforms experienced by practitioners were being felt through reform in the higher education sector. Another factor to take into consideration is movement of staff between universities. This was not possible in states where there was, for a long period of time, just one university with a school of social work. This was the case for a long period of time as Figure 6 demonstrates. Western Australia is a case in point. The first school was established at the University of Western Australia in 1974 but it would be another eight years before a second school was established at Curtin University in 1982. This is significant because the movement of staff, engagement in cross institutional supervision of higher degrees by research, and research collaboration are important ways in which ideas and models are passed around. This also creates important networks. Thus, in the case of reflective practice and the emergence of the predominant model Victoria emerges as an important surface of emergence. This is because it enjoyed the highest number of schools of social work in relatively close proximity until at

least the early 2000s. Moreover of these schools only one, the University of Melbourne, did not start its life as an Institute of Advanced Education. Many of the staff who established schools and/or taught in the newly formed Dawkins universities were themselves either students of advanced colleges, or had started their teaching careers in those institutions (Bevilacqua & Hyams, n.d.; Fook, 1993; Pease & Fook, 1999; Social Work Network Deakin University, n. d.; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1990)

Reflective practice could be said to have been rather slow to take off if mapped back to the publication of Schon's work in 1983. The transformation of reflective practice into the current *critical reflection* model may be pinpointed by the publication in 1999 of *Transforming social work practice – Postmodern critical perspectives* edited by Bob Pease and Jan Fook. In *The reflective researcher* (Fook, 1996c) which was published three years earlier the first explicit link between Schon's model (Schon, 1983) and reflection as an approach, not just to research but also to practice, (Fook, 1996a) was made. The groundwork for this had been laid earlier during Fook's research on radical casework which linked traditional casework methods to radical and structural social theory (Fook, 1990, 1993, 1996b) and another longitudinal project researching social work expertise by Jan Fook, Martin Ryan and Linette Hawkins which took place from 1990 to 1994 (Fook et al., 2000; Hawkins, 1996; Ryan, 1996). Social work, it seems, was ready for another way of considering professional practice and theory and there were now more opportunities for these ideas to spread with the growth of schools of social work as well as an increasing market for Antipodean produced publications on social work practice.

Part 2: A history of the present – mapping contingencies

An archaeological narrative

It could be said that reflective practice was transformed into a required skill of the 'good' social worker through a need to find something new to teach practitioners. Jan Fook (2007) tells the story "*about the same time I was becoming unhappy about the cultural expressions of social radicalism, I became involved in developing a new postgraduate [social work] advanced practice program. I realised, to my consternation, that I could not peddle the usual material (update on*

practice theories), since a good number of the potential students had only recently completed their undergraduate study (taught by me), and I could hardly teach the same material again." In fact this is not the first time a major model of social work practice emerged from the need of academics to respond to their organisational context. Alex Gitterman (in SocialWork®, 2008), in a podcast discussion marking the 30th anniversary of the *Life Model of Social Work Practice* (Gitterman, 1996) recounts how the collaboration that led to the model arose. It appears the Department of Social Work at Columbia needed to reduce the amount of courses (units) students were undertaking in addition to finding a way for students to integrate methods. At the time (1972) the Department was divided by methods so the Dean at the time chose a team to work on the problem based on them being reasonable and easy to work with. Gitterman was working on the team that taught group-work methods and his colleague Carol Germain was working with the faculty teaching the casework methods. They designed a first year course that acted as a rapprochement between these two main approaches to social work. This experience began a long-term collaboration between Gitterman and Germain which resulted in the creation of the *Life Model*. The *Life Model* has since become a major model of social work practice in the United States (Germain & Gitterman, 1980). In much the same way the need to establish a course in professional practice began a significant collaboration between Jan Fook and Fiona Gardner which would result in the establishment of a critical reflective practice movement in Australian social work.

A useful reflective practice model already existed within other disciplines such as education and nursing. For social work the reflective practice model emerged in that arena where social work practice is explained and described to others; it surfaced first in academia. It would not have been taken up if social work academics authorised to speak about social work education had not adopted some of its core ideas in relation to social work practice. This model resonated with social work academics because at its core there was a critique of formal knowledge, in particular abstract and technical theory. This critique resonated strongly with the disquiet about abstract formal theory associated with science that social workers had already developed and/or adopted through their engagement with practice and/or practitioners. The early reflective practice models in social work were informed largely by this existing model.

The critical reflective practice model was aimed at developing a “specific and technical”⁸⁸ expertise. But for what? This specific and technical expertise was developed to interrogate the gap between theory and practice that practitioners and educators may be unaware of. This gap points to forms of unconscious behaviour and this unconsciousness is a source of dismay for social work educators, students and practitioners. Moreover, the field in which the development of such expertise would operate was firstly in the fieldwork component of *social work practice and learning*. Later this would expand to all forms of social work practice and learning, retaining a special resonance with field work however. Thus, social work academics were the early adopters and developers of this specific and technical expertise, not practitioners. It would be dispersed to practitioners through workshops and specific training processes.

Schools of social work in Victoria were particularly influential to the spread of the critical reflection model of practice. There are significant reasons why. The merger of universities and colleges of advanced education created imperatives for the conduct of research amongst many academics that had been situated in colleges where the emphasis was more on teaching. Many of the academics working in Victoria had been affected by this amalgamation. Moreover the growth in social work schools and schools offering welfare or human services courses, often operated by the same staff, had primarily occurred in the colleges rather than the universities. As these amalgamations occurred many staff in social work and welfare programs experienced pressure to upgrade their qualifications. Many of them had obtained positions due to their extensive experience as social work practitioners. A group of social work academics were working and studying across at least three or four key universities and formed part of a study group grappling with social theory and met regularly in Melbourne. This group was particularly interested in postmodernist ideas.

Staff from the former Institutes now experienced pressure to research and publish in addition to carrying significant teaching loads. Staff from the university sector also

⁸⁸ This is the idea that as a discourse enables and constrains ways to view particular ‘problems’ or ‘issues’ within a field it is also at the same time often providing ‘solutions’ in the form of techniques; thus “specific and technical expertise” often emerges at the same time as a problem is defined and located (Graham, 2011, p. 670).

experienced changes such as higher teaching loads with no lessening of the imperatives of publishing and researching. The other pressure was the change in universities to more business-like processes, which carried with it pressure to expand and grow new course offerings. The higher education sector was still shaking itself out from the effects of reductions in funding. At the same time higher education experienced significant growth in student numbers associated with the reform agenda instituted by the Labor governments of Hawke and Keating. This pressure would see many of these same academics go on to publish several influential textbooks that would further disseminate this model of practice.

Bridge 2 – Bodies of knowledge

The critical reflective practice model did not necessarily displace so much as become grafted on to existing *methods of social work practice*, especially methods that include problem-solving techniques, self-awareness, and ideas about the unconscious. Later versions incorporated ideas from radical social work; structural ideas and postmodern concepts such as *deconstruction* and *power/knowledge*. Early in the formation phase, however the main addition to the existing education model was the use of critical incident technique, developed in psychology in the 1950s and which had been adapted by Australian social workers undertaking research on the development of expertise and skill in social work. Figure nine represents some of these aspects:

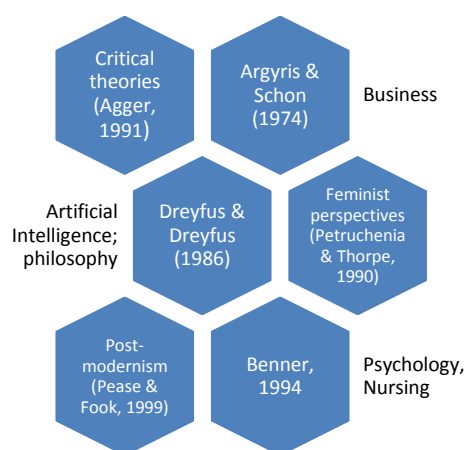


Figure 9: Existing and new knowledge utilised for the critical reflective model

The reflective practice model eventually became known as the critical reflection model through its adoption of social theory informed by critical theory, particularly of the feminist and structural kinds.

Enunciative modalities

Individual speaker status, institutional and technical sites and subject positions

There are three groups who would become positioned to speak about the gap between theory and practice, each with different levels of status and authority: Academics with extensive practice histories; practitioners who supervise students or practitioners who have occupied social work positions which embody professional notions of what real social work is and field education coordinators and students who have experienced field placement. Not all of these speakers enjoy equal status in speaking of the gap between practice and theory.

Interestingly, the gap is described by academics and researchers more than practitioners. For practitioners there was little or no gap; there is the practice and the skills to do it.

Knowledge is seen as practical and driven by need that arises from the context. Practitioners are more concerned with the problems of practice: working with clients; agency politics; funding issues and the need for activism in terms of increasing access to services for clients who were being left behind due to the myriad of social problems they were contending with. Practitioners may hold a perception that learning in the formal social work curriculum is sometimes less relevant to practice, they nevertheless value academic social work education for its status with regard to social work as a profession. The part played by practitioners in the adoption and dispersion of reflective practice was not as developers of practice theory, but rather as confessors. Even so, practitioner stories remain an important element in the spread of training of the model. These stories supply authority and remain important to the development of this social work critical reflective practice model even today.

In addition to the stories from practice delivered by practitioners participating in training in the model, there were also significant practitioner subgroups that were instrumental in its dispersion. These were practitioners keen on pursuing postgraduate studies. Up until at least 1975 social work services were primarily casework services and tended to occur in agencies situated in the public sector. There were significant changes to the arrangements for welfare occurring across the Australia. Changes to funding arrangements, job titles, and

new services ushered in new accountabilities. Public sector functions were increasingly outsourced to a growing non-government sector, which certainly offered opportunities but in quite different industrial circumstances. Job security and tenure became a significant issue for social work practitioners. There was also a need for new skills to fit this changing industrial landscape. Due to the growing non-government sector practitioners found themselves requiring skills in sourcing funding, designing programs and interventions, managing and evaluating programs in addition to advancing practice knowledge in areas already viewed as traditional such as interpersonal and communication skills, casework and group work practice. Practitioners also found themselves needing to account for their practice in ways they had not previously experienced. Debates about the nature of the practice and knowledge of social work became invigorated by practitioner tales of this changing landscape.

Growth in postgraduate Social Work courses in Australia had been very slow until the introduction of a Master level qualification in social work in 2008. For the most of social works' professional existence in Australia the majority have undertaken education at the undergraduate level. The four year undergraduate course only became as standard from the 1970s. This level of qualification was considered sufficient for a good career with reasonable advancement within the Australian welfare sector. This perception changed with the transformations to the sector resulting in increased competition for jobs amongst welfare professionals. One group stands out as particularly relevant to this competition that is psychologists. Social Work practitioners found themselves competing with psychology graduates, often holding master level qualifications.

Two other groups are also significant to being able to describe the problem of the gap between theory and practice: field education coordinators⁸⁹ and social work students, especially those undertaking field placements in their final years of a social work course.

⁸⁹ Field education coordinators are responsible for the delivery of the field education also known as work-integrated learning. This involves extensive negotiation and close networking with practitioners, agency managers, and students for the purposes of creating field placements. Field education coordinators are typically employed for their extensive practice experience (Zuchowski, Hudson, Bartlett, & Diamandi, 2014)

Thus field educators with strong connections to the field, academics who maintain connections with practice and practitioners who supervised social work students were all significant authorities able to describe and speak on the gap between theory, associated with learning in a formal academic setting and the kind of learning that occurs in the 'real world' of social work practice. Field education coordinators often found themselves situated between practice and academia and thus felt criticism from both sides for being seen as either too academic or too practice focussed. Reflective practice would not significantly permeate social work undergraduate education beyond field placement for some time. It was the early 2000s that it began to permeate social work curriculums more broadly in part due to its adoption into practice standards and accreditation documents.

Practice research is another site from which this model of reflective practice emerged. There had been little research undertaken in social work; even less on understanding the knowledge base, practices and skills of students and practitioners. The first site was a study on knowledge and skill development, the first of its kind in Australia. Here the basic use of the critical incident tool was combined with recall to ask practitioners and students what knowledge they used in their work. The impetus for this study was to interrogate what impact beliefs and theoretical assumptions had on the actions of social workers in practice? Not much as it turns out. There was a significant gap between what practitioners and students considered theoretically and how they behaved in practice.

The key point here is that the critical reflection model did not specifically emerge as a practice model *from* practice. Very few accounts of reflective practice were produced by practitioners prior to this period. In fact, descriptions of practice by practitioners were, and possibly still are, quite rare. They were mainly found in conference papers. Thus, understanding practice reflection on practice emerged from sites concerned with learning and where practitioners intersected with academics.

Bridge 3: Outline of the data sources and processes

One of the processes that I undertook to trace the emergence early in the process was a comparison between two complete sets of unit outlines from two different undergraduate curriculums from different universities in Australia. The sample was one of convenience. One set was lent to me by a colleague. The other was a set of unit outlines from my own course. These were useful documents that set out the textbooks and articles recommended to students. The universities are in different states of Australia; one is a large metropolitan university and the other post-Dawkins new generation university. The unit plans collectively span 1996 – 2003 whilst the complete data set of texts spans range from 1964 – present. For the construction of the archaeological narrative the span of texts is 1986 to the present. As for the unit plans they were considered because the analysis of the other data in the original corpus suggested a change to the language of practices within the field of social work and I sought to establish a reference point by looking at the texts in use between the two programs. The main practice modality that changed was problem-solving methods. Casework processes were retained but were then radicalised in Australia (Fook, 1993).

Finale

This narrative has demonstrated the way in which reflective practice emerged in social work education and how this occurred within a wider intensification of practices for interrogating the gap between practice and theory. It is possible to trace the transformation of an earlier professional emphasis on self-awareness and problem-solving into a reflective practice model that incorporates practices aimed at interrogating this gap between theory and practice. Key speakers for this emerging trend were originally field education social workers, academics with extensive practice experience and students on field placement. The assumptions of the model are now incorporated into education and accreditation documents for the social work profession in Australia. Far from emerging through practice, the predominant model built on an existing framework for reflection but incorporated a number of other bodies of knowledge important to the social work discipline. These were critical and radical perspectives, feminist theory and post-structural ideas such as deconstruction and ideas about the relation between power and knowledge (Fook & Askeland, 2007; Hickson, 2013; Morley, 2004; Morley, 2011).

Further, the predominant critical reflective model is sometimes proposed as a way of resisting dominant discourses and finding ways to change workplace practices by the interrogation and deconstructing of participant assumptions (Bay & Macfarlane, 2010; Hickson, 2011; Morley, 2008; Noble & Irwin, 2009). Similarly, it is also possible to consider this critical reflective model as a *technique of the self* which emerged as a response to neoliberal logics that include an intensification of the subjection of social workers. In this sense the model can be seen as a form of *resistance* aimed at social worker self-determination (Karakayali, 2015). Even so it perhaps is not as *transformative* as might be imagined because the model only applies to deconstruction of already specified dominant discourses and structures introduced through informing theoretical knowledge.

Social workers may need to include more forms of critical reflection beyond just *critique* and *deconstruction* as this would broaden their repertoire for thinking differently about some problems. In terms of education the model was firstly dispersed through higher education networks which included educators, students and people engaged in higher degree research study in social work. While it emerged from field education and from practice research the model was dispersed to other parts of social work curricula through the publication of key textbooks, conference papers and training sessions. The other mechanism was through the networks of academics within social work education who offered post-qualifying advanced practice training.

Interlude 6

What is a statement?

What is a statement? This it turned out was a key question for the conduct of this line of inquiry. My first mistake was that I did not begin my process of constructing the *archive* by reading the original work by Foucault. That would have been sensible. Instead I based my construction of the *archive* on secondary sources, specifically work by Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham (1999) and Linda Graham (2011). These texts were informative and from them I gleaned the idea that that one should adopt two key stances in conducting this type of analysis: the first is that of scepticism and the second is not to attribute claims to their author. The problem is that neither text really expanded in much detail about *why* these stances are crucial to the achievement of a certain way of looking at texts and practices (or words-and-things; see Graham, 2011). Achievement of this different vision is akin to changing perspectives; as though you are looking at a vase instead of two faces in the figure adjacent. My experience with the data set I had constructed was very much like looking at the vase even as I understood I should be seeing 'faces'. I conducted the analysis starting with explaining the inclusion/exclusions of each of the text, asking why I had included them and keeping notes on that process. I then conducted a thorough read and annotation of the sources I had included. This was very frustrating as I found I could not *see* anything but kept getting particularly engaged with the content and *meaning* of the texts. I could not seem to locate the 'statements' needed to trace the emergence of reflective practice as a discursive object or formation. What was I looking for? *What is a statement?* Statements are in fact a key building block of discursive formations and these act in a somewhat recursive fashion when working in an archaeological way: one looks for statements to discern discursive formations as a key to understanding the positivity around said statements (Bernauer, 1990; Foucault, 1972). Confused? I was.

It seemed to me that even after some time at this process I did not have a good understanding about what a 'statement' in the Foucauldian sense might be. Perhaps my archive did not contain any? I began to think the problem was with the construction of my *archive*. Did I have the right sources? Had I included enough materials? Was I looking in the right places? How would I know they were the right places? It turned out that the issue of knowing *what a statement is* and whether it is in your *archive* was the right question to ask. I started reading Foucault's work. It helped.

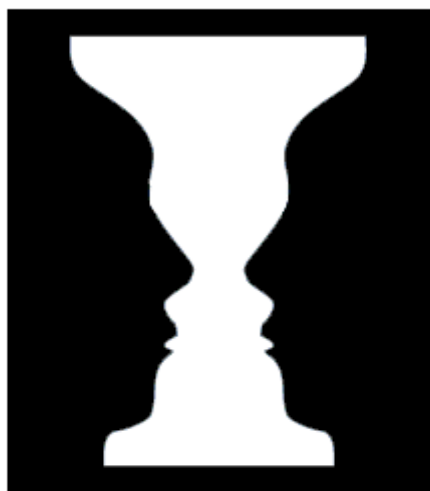


Figure 10: Figure/ground object known as the Rubin vase

Chapter 7

Track 3 – Singing together about reflective practice in Australian Social Work education – A Choir

Prelude

This album track presents the last inquiry of the research and aims to address the question: How is reflective practice utilised in learning, teaching and practicing social work? The chapter has been envisaged to be a choral piece of music which utilises the many voices that

contributed to this aspect of the research. The chapter is written

with a verse and bridge structure. The track also has two main parts, a prelude and finale.

As mentioned earlier, I conducted a series of qualitative interviews with social work students, field educators, academics and practitioners. The key question being explored was how reflective practice is utilised in learning, teaching and practicing social work? My interest here is to go beyond my own experience and the discursive landscape explored in previous stages of this research in order to enquire into how it is used, or not, within the field of social work in Australia. This line of inquiry occurs within this context.

Descriptions of the process of this stage are outlined in chapter four, however, a brief recap of the key detail might be helpful here. There were 14 participants interviewed in this stage of the study. Participants ranged in experience from a first year social work student to a practitioner of 30 years' experience in the field of social work and as an educator. All



Figure 11: Qualitative interviews

participants, even those who were identified as students, had some experience in practising human services/social work. All participants were eligible, either as practitioners or as students in an accredited Australian social work course, for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers. The fields of practice identified by participants were diverse. This chapter describes the results of the overall analysis beginning with the values, attitudes and beliefs about reflective practice expressed by participants. The outcome of this analysis is discussed in section one of this chapter.

The assumption of this inquiry is that the use and value placed on reflective practice within the social work discipline can be seen as emerging from the intersection between the needs of social work practice and that of education. This is a finding from tracing the emergence of the language of reflection through the archaeological phase of this research (see chapter 6). Previous to this, practice was often described in psychoanalytic (Epstein, 1994) or problem-solving terms (Perlman, 1957). Reflective practice has become a professional language and thus I was interested in conducting an analysis that would assist in “discovering the cultural knowledge that people use to organize [sic] their behaviors and interpret their experiences” (Spradley, 1980, cited in Saldaña, 2012, p. 157).

The aim through this layer of analysis was to locate the cultural knowledge about reflective practice that students, practitioners, educators and field educators are using. I have used this in order to map the relationships between key ideas about reflective practice. In this kind of analysis the goal is to identify the semantic relationships in order to trace the meaning and practices utilised by participants in the conduct of reflection in relation to social work education and practice. In my case I chose four different semantic relationships. These are: *means-end*; *rationale*; *location*; and *function*,⁹⁰ as this best addressed the question of the research. These four relationships are discussed below in part two of this track. I close with a discussion of the findings in relation to the research question of this part of the research.

⁹⁰ *Means-end* relationships specify where X [reflection] is a way to do Y. *Rationale* relationships describe the reasons for engaging in behaviours where X is the reason for doing Y [reflective practice]. Coding for *location* relationships is a way to consider where the action or activities of reflective practice occur; and lastly *function* relationships outline what activities are used to do reflective practice (Saldaña, 2012, p. 158).

Part 1 – singing about our values, attitudes and beliefs towards reflective practice.

Prelude

All participants discussed reflective practice in relation to their values as a social worker. This was a very strong theme across all the interviews. As a result, it seemed important to apply a further level of analysis to values generally. In this case therefore, there are three main levels through which to consider reflective practice in relation to values. The first is in the form of how important it was to participants as individuals, concentrating on reflective practice as something they do in their practice. Values also encompassed commentary about what it contributes to them as a practitioner. Consequently, statements were coded as *values* where they could be said to represent "...the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing or idea" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 111). Ideas or activities associated with reflective practice and where it was spoken about as important were thus coded as a value.

The second level encompassed attitudes towards its use in practice or for learning. An attitude in this context is any "...relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting evaluative concepts or beliefs, which have been learned" (Shaw & Wright, 1967, cited in Saldaña, 2012, p. 111). Participant comments that represent evaluative content or feelings about reflective practice related to ideas learnt through practice or study were thus coded as attitudes. Beliefs constituted the final level. In this respect beliefs are "...part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals and other interpretative perceptions of the social world" (Saldaña, 2012). Participant commentary was coded where the expressed beliefs were about the way reflective practice contributes to the profession through building knowledge about social work practice.

Adjacent is figure 12 that represents the movement from interview transcript to initial codes to values, attitudes and beliefs through to the final themes that emerged in the process. The darker boxes represent the emphasis on that particular theme from within

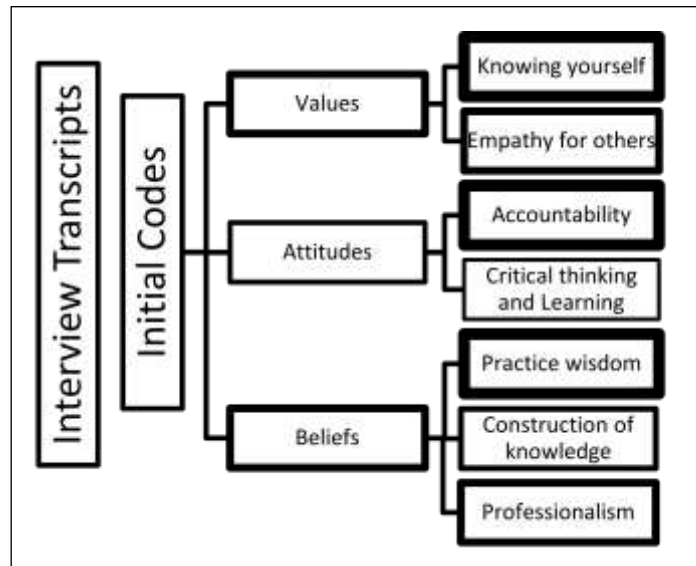


Figure 12; Values, attitudes and beliefs about reflective practice

the participant accounts. The main themes with regard to

values were the usefulness of reflective practice for *knowing yourself and building empathy for others*. In terms of attitudes the main themes are that reflective practice is important for *accountability for practice, for critical thinking and for learning*. In terms of beliefs the strongest themes to emerge were that reflective practice was a way to build *practice wisdom*, understand the *construction of knowledge*, and enact *professionalism*. The rest of this section will discuss these themes in more depth and with illustrations drawn from the voices of participants in the way of direct quotes.

Verse 1: Values

"...its sorting out what your heart's feeling and what your brain's telling you" (Participant nine, practitioner).

Knowing yourself

Participants were very clear that reflection was viewed as key to understanding oneself as a practitioner and also as a person. Self-awareness and the link to practice has always been an important part of social work practice and education (O'Connor et al., 1991; Ruch, 2000). Reflective self-awareness is one of a number of elements also valued within the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010a; see also Pawar & Anscombe, 2015) as a core part of demonstrating professional integrity. Participants saw reflection as a key route to developing this knowledge of

themselves and their practice. For some participants it was closely tied to self-awareness of their emotions, levels of energy and resilience in undertaking what can be stressful work:

...I find that [its] really important to be doing both within the interaction of the [encounter] – of the patient and the client themselves and sort of ... constantly checking back in to what's happening here? What am I feeling? How am I portraying that? What am I looking like outwardly? (Participant five, practitioner).

And it also placed their identity as a person at the centre of the work to differing extents:

... [I] think being reflective is an individual thing as well, not just a social work professional thing. It comes down to the individual too...so, for me, a big part of reflecting involves myself (Participant one, educator).

Gillian Ruch (2000) points out that “[T]he importance of acknowledging the whole person and their ‘multiple subjectivities’ (Peshkin, 1988) in professional and educative arenas is a pivotal characteristic of reflective practice” (p. 105, source in original). Ruch makes this assertion in the context of a study that considered four different kinds of reflection: technical, practical, critical and process (Ruch, 2000). Technical reflection in this schema is related to technical rationality described and well criticised by Schon (1983, pp. 21-30); it refers to the use of external sources of knowledge in order to solve problems (Ruch, 2007). Practical reflection by way of contrast may be related to knowledge derived from practice rather than imposed from the outside and according to Ruch (2007, p. 661), is most related to the reflective practice model of Schon (1983, 1987). Critical reflection is associated with the Habermasian project of emancipation by means of communicative action (Habermas, 1970) and this means looking at “...structural forces that distort or constrain professional practice” (Ruch, 2007, p. 661). Lastly, process reflection is based in psychodynamic principles and includes a focus on the conscious and unconscious aspects of practice. Self-awareness of the kind expressed by the participants here included elements of all four kinds described by Ruch.

The use of self-awareness and the link to reflective ability for resilience has also been demonstrated in a UK study with social work students by Grant and Kinman (2011) where they found that reflective capacity was linked to higher levels of overall resilience. The Grant and Kinman study also considered emotional intelligence, social confidence and empathy as important qualities that contribute to resilience. Participants in this study

discussed it in relation to being able to know one's own strengths, challenges and triggers with regard to practice. Hickson's (2013) research, too, suggested there is a link between emotional intelligence and reflective ability; however, this was tied to an ability to 'survey' one's practice in such a way as to expose hidden assumptions and values that might be inimical to good practice.

Further, this link translated for some participants into the idea that *knowing yourself* is to have an awareness of how assumptions and attitudes from the social worker's own history might shape responses to clients. For example:

That whole issue of, who are they? Why am I having this reaction to this person? Is it them or is it actually something I'm bringing to the interaction? (Participant one, educator).

And

...I didn't obviously realise that in the earlier years but somehow or another I've always reflected on what is it that I bring to this? (Participant thirteen, educator).

It can be seen that these responses connect to modes of thinking, which link the personal and political (Fook, 1990). Indeed, a number of participants explicitly called their process a form of critical reflection characterised by deconstruction and reconstruction. As this participant says:

...I always think about construction deconstruction reconstruction. And that's really about making the implicit values, beliefs and assumptions explicit ... so that's been a real focus for me (Participant fourteen, educator).

And:

...[I'm] still ... drawn to the critical reflection language. I guess for me, it's about self and situations in relationship to other factors (Participant six, educator).

This emphasis on critical reflection includes paying attention to the cultural aspects of interactions. Bender, Negi and Fowler (2010) point out that "[I]ncreased practitioner self-awareness also involves the understanding of personal ethnic and racial background (or roots) within a socio-political and historical context...this entails the critical exploration of personal familial history within geographic, cultural, relational, and societal contexts" (p. 36).

This was seen as an important aspect of being aware of the impact the worker can have for clients. Thus, closely related to *knowing yourself*, was the theme of *empathy*.

Empathy

...[including] the lived experiences from a consumer and family members...is about trying to build empathy and step into the shoes of the other ... (Participant thirteen, educator).

In the study by Bender and colleagues, participants saw empathy as crucial to developing culturally responsive practices (Bender et al., 2010). Participants in this study discussed reflection as a way to being able to stimulate empathy, and by doing so, bring care into their practice. Empathy was expressed by this participant as:

...putting yourself in somebody else's shoes, that's also I think really important, it's one thing to look back and think oh yeah, or say to somebody "Well, why did you do that?" But it's alright then saying this happened in the past ... but you don't actually physically try and, imagine yourself in that position or try and feel how that would've felt I think again, if it's just words it has to have meaning to it. So reflecting but I think ... there has to be some sort of emotional thing going on in there (Participant seven, student).

Another practitioner saw being critically reflexive about their own position and that of the people they work with as a form of understanding that allowed them a way to stand in solidarity with others who may be very different from them:

I mean, ultimately I think what critical reflexivity does for me is [that] it expands my awareness and understanding. It really deepens my empathy and my willingness and openness to have empathy, and it gives me lots of surprises [and] it keeps me curious about my practice. I think it's why I'm still an enthusiastic social worker (Participant six, educator).

In conclusion, reflection was seen as important to building both self-awareness and empathy. These attributes were considered routes to a wider set of values about working with vulnerable people, identifying injustice and being aware of one's own social location and privilege. These ideas about wider elements of justice were found to be core beliefs and thus emerged more strongly within that category. These will be discussed below; however, in the next section I turn to consider the main themes identified with regard to attitudes.

Verse 2: Attitudes

"...reflection is untangling trickiness" (Participant six, educator).

Accountability

The predominant attitude expressed by participants about why reflection is important was accountability for practice judgements and actions. Some tied this to the use of evidence in practice, particularly in settings that are statutory:

...it probably makes social work different to other disciplines because I think it's essential to – for us to be able to recognise in ourselves and in others what's – what's a value judgement, what's not, what's evidence, what's not, how do we develop arguments which are critical and arguments which are convincing and that we feel okay about assessments... that we [consider how we feel] about giving if we're not reflecting... on how other forces and influences within ourselves and outside of ourselves actually impact those things (Participant four, practitioner).

Increased requirements for accountability for practice decisions by social workers, and in the human services generally, have been on the agenda for some time. Scott, Laragy, Giles and Bland (2004) suggest that "A range of factors in the current context of Australian professional practice created the impetus for [the development of practice standards]... including increasing pressure for the profession to take responsibility for articulating ethical and ideological principles of practice, and a workplace environment demanding increased accountability" (p. 613). Connell, Fawcett and Meagher (2009) consider this emphasis on accountability as part of a wider neo-liberal logic. They suggest that:

Under neo-liberalism, this principle [fractal organisational logics] holds down to the lowest level. *Individual workers* are treated as firms, expected to follow a profit-making logic; and are held accountable to the organization in these terms, through 'performance management' schemes. Both organizations and individuals are required to *make themselves accountable* in terms of competition. (Connell et al., 2009, p. 334)

Thus it is, perhaps not surprising, that participants valued reflective practice as a mechanism of accountability as it may act as something of a currency within the space of organisations subject to marketisation forces.

Other participants were more explicit in tracing accountability back to being able to provide reasons for their thinking and thus to be accountable and learn from mistakes. This was strong theme amongst student participants:

I think that reflective practice is thinking about what you're actually doing or what you've done and then learning from, not so much it doesn't always have to be mistakes but just learning from you've done or what you see other people doing and then building that into your knowledge (Participant seven, student).

And in response to the question "what other purposes do you think reflection may have?"

Kind of evaluating and it's ... keeping you accountable in a way, to reflect on your work, ... if you're reflecting on a poor mark and you have to look over it, you can't just throw it out to the side, you actually have to keep yourself accountable that you did get that poor mark and you really have to think why did I get that poor mark, what could I have done differently, where can I get help to do better and what could I have done better...? (Participant twelve, student)

Lastly, accountability for some meant assessing their strengths and challenges as a practitioner and ensuring they are able to improve their performance:

In helping to assess my own skillset and what is strong and what's not (Participant eleven, practitioner).

Critical thinking and learning

Not as strongly emphasised within the overall category of attitudes but still present as a theme, was that of critical thinking and learning. Participants considered reflection as a key part of being able to think critically about what they are doing or learning. Critical thinking in this respect involves processes such as questioning the status quo within a practice situation, using evidence, thinking about what could have been done differently within regard to practice decisions, or what can be challenged within the process for better outcomes for clients. An example from the data illustrates:

[It was] probably a couple of years ago just taking out a student and she – we went to a house and – it was the wrong address or something and then we sat there in the car and we talked about the implications of going to a wrong address and we probably talked for about 20 minutes on what that could mean and how that could unfold for the people there and the implications of leaving a [Government car]... or all that stuff about what could happen just from simply going and doing something where somebody gave us the wrong address. And she was able to then go on and actually use that – the breakdown of all the things that could happen when you – bung in a load of policy and legal implications and social implications and family implications – around just one of those very simple things that [happen]...(Participant four, practitioner).

I turn now to consider the themes that emerged from within the category of beliefs. Beliefs encompass both attitudes and values held by individuals but this category also includes the value participants place on reflection as part of their understanding of social work as a professional project (McDonald, 2007).

Verse 3: Beliefs

Practice wisdom

“...it’s [reflective practice] the spinal column of it. I think everything else hangs off it and I think it’s probably what makes – and I haven’t studied other disciplines so I don’t know ... but I think it probably makes social work different to other disciplines because I think it’s essential...” (Participant four, practitioner).

The strongest theme in this category concerns the way in which reflective practice is a key component to the development and sharing of practice wisdom for social workers. Another theme concerned reflection as important to understanding the way knowledge is uncertain and constructed – this theme I have called construction of knowledge. The two themes are related but distinct approaches to what knowledge is utilised in practice. In the accounts from participants the key difference was the link between knowledge and power. It should be said that participants influenced by current critical reflection models (Fook, 2002; Fook & Gardner, 2007; Fook et al., 2000) tended to link practice wisdom and ideas about power and knowledge together in their discussion of beliefs with regard to reflection.

Sheppard (1995, p. 279) offers a definition of practice wisdom based on his interest in knowledge use in practice:

...the accumulated knowledge social workers are able to bring to the consideration of individual cases and their practice in general. This would appear to have three main and distinct potential sources: knowledge gained from ‘everyday life’, derived from the process of living in society and interacting with others; knowledge gained from social science, specifically research and ideas; and knowledge gained from the conduct of social work practice

Chui and Tsui (2008) also suggest that practice wisdom “...involves the actualization of social work values” (p. 48). This is to say that social work practice involves the exercise of

significant judgement under conditions of uncertainty (Chu & Tsui, 2008; Parton, 2000; White, 2009). Other authors characterise social work practice as a form of *phronesis* (Petersén & Olsson, 2014; Tsang, 2008). *Phronesis*, as mentioned previously, is considered to be a form of practical reasoning which "...takes into account local circumstances, particulars, and contingencies; weighs the tradeoffs; and is iterative — repeats itself, and the aims may change in the process of deliberation." (Tsang, 2008, p. 134):

Q: Do...do you use reflection in your current role (Interviewer)

A: ...Yeah all day everyday I think – it's very hard to separate out your work with your clients and your work with your colleagues or your - or other stakeholders that ... you have linkages with, but lately I have worked in... Everything falling apart is either an opportunity for growth or a lost opportunity and history to be repeated (Participant three, practitioner)

This practitioner went on to talk about the way in which reflection had provided the biggest benefit in terms of how to work with client and worker vulnerability:

...With my clients I think my greatest achievements through reflection have been in boundaries and self-care. I think that when you have very, very vulnerable clients you have to constantly reflect on your interactions and you have to consider so much. I think that's what social workers do so well. The look at power and strength and vulnerability and really try...(Participant three, practitioner).

Given this link between the expression of practice as a conjunction of context and the expression and of values, it is not surprising that practice wisdom has been at the centre of debate within the profession, not least due to it often being held in contrast to knowledge considered scientific or instrumental (Cheung, 2015). Early debate about the use of theory in practice was initiated by Sheldon in the UK (Parton, 2000) and Parton suggests that it has been one of the most enduring tensions amongst social workers as professionals. Parton (2000) suggests that this tension turns on the contrast between "scientific and the more humanist, client-centred approaches to practice" (p. 450) and was played out through debates about methods of social science and the schism between positivists on the one hand and interpretivists on the other (Sheppard et al., 2000). This tension was later to manifest as the contrast between evidence based practice (Plath, 2006) and critical reflective practice in Australia (see chapter six). The emphasis on evidence and judgement can be seen in participant responses about reflective practice:

...Every single assessment that we do whether it is a – safety and wellbeing assessment, a carers assessment, a review of a safety and wellbeing assessment and we're assessing all the

time, all the time... Because – we all – we have to reflect on how we are as people every day coming to the office (Participant four, practitioner).

Further, in a much cited article based on her doctoral research considering knowledge utilisation, Julie Drury Hudson (1997) suggested practice wisdom is but one amongst five types of knowledge used. Hudson defines practice wisdom as:

Knowledge gained from the conduct of social work practice which is formed through the process of working with a number of cases involving the same problem, or gained through work with different problems which possess dimensions of understanding which are transferable to the problem at hand. (p. 42)

In her discussion Hudson concedes that along with procedural knowledge, and values and ethical knowledge social workers tend to utilise practice wisdom rather than formal theoretical knowledge or even scientifically grounded evidence in their practice.

Practice wisdom is developed and passed on from experienced practitioners to more novice practitioners through discussion, modelling and supervision. Moreover, it is seldom codified in writing or research (Hudson, 1997). Statements that indicated the use of reflection for the purposes of reasoning about practice, accounting for decisions or developing knowledge about situations were included under this theme of practice wisdom. Sometimes this use emerged in the discussion between interviewer and participant:

Q: And you clearly use it [reflective practice] in your teaching, as well as modelling it. (Interviewer)

A: I do.

Q: Do you do a lot of think aloud yourself, with students? I'm thinking about this – that kind of modelling?

A: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And I – sort of one of my teaching mottos is, I've learnt a lot from mistakes, so I share lots of my mistakes with students, from practice, from what I'm doing at the moment – I mean I'm always purposeful in it, but I do – it's very relational teaching for me which involves reflection, as well because I'm reflecting on, would this be likely to be beneficial for some people in the room ... (Participant six, educator).

Thus practice wisdom entails the use of opportunities to demonstrate thinking aloud and reasoning with others. O'Sullivan (2005) suggests that there are two competing ways in

which practice wisdom is seen within the profession. One is intuitive, based on personal knowledge and is sometimes considered to be idiosyncratically developed from practice unique to the practitioner. The other way it is viewed is as a form of sound judgement. The second way of thinking about practice wisdom is closer to the idea of *phronesis* mentioned above.

O'Sullivan (2005) goes on to propose that the development of sound practice wisdom should allow for opportunities to "...make reasoning explicit" (p. 229). His view is that not only are there are different kinds of reasoning: (analytic and intuitive) but that these require distinctive processes of development. Analytic reasoning "... involves the capacity to analyse and synthesize information into hypotheses about particular situations" (O'Sullivan, 2005). This process was highly prized amongst participants and there are indications that this thinking aloud occurs through discussion between experienced practitioners and less experienced colleagues, within supervision between workers, educators and students. All participants valued the opportunity to learn from and with others; a point that will be further explored below. The next theme to emerge in terms of beliefs was how reflecting on practice can be seen as one of the marks of social work professionalism.

Professionalism

There was not one kind of professionalism expressed by participants; instead a number of different positions can be seen under this broad theme. What groups them is a notion of the professional project (McDonald, 2007) in which social work is engaged and thus participants are also engaged, albeit from different positions across a spectrum from practitioner to educator to student. Kessler (2009) explains that there are a number of different kinds of professionalism linked with reflexivity and the position of social work within various kinds of welfare states in developed countries. The first kind is that of the expert "who (despite their academic and experiential credentials) were being made increasingly accountable for the effectiveness of their intervention with clients" (Kessler, 2009, p. 308). This kind of professionalism has seen increasing calls for the use of evidence in practice. For participants in health settings or with significant experience in health social work this push for evidence

was particularly keen. The reliance on a notion of expert associated with a more clinical kind of social work was considered by others as a somewhat traditional notion of social work.

The second kind of professionalism is one which is concerned to outline social work that is responsive to current political climates and is, in Kessl's view connected with a significant critique of the current welfare state arrangements. This kind originates within the broad sweep of critical theories (Kessl, 2009) oriented to social change. In addition, this kind of professionalism sees the role of the social worker as transformative, not just for individual clients, but in wider terms with regard to social conditions. This involves using knowledge in a way that contributes to social change beyond change for individuals. An example of this kind of professionalism, linked to reflective practice, may be seen in this quote:

...It's about a whole lot more ... including things like making links between knowledge and power and the ideology and deconstructing those notions and how they impact on the way we practice (Participant ten, educator).

The third kind of professionalism outlined by Kessl is that of *radical constructivists* where the emphasis on professionalism is of the sort developed through the acquisition of practice wisdom associated with development of tacit knowledge (Kessl, 2009). In fact all three notions of professionalism have developed in the context of the welfare state. The welfare state in Australia has been subjected to many of the same neo-liberal logics — often translated in social work parlance as forms of free marketisation (Connell et al., 2009) — as that of overseas welfare states. What has made social work vulnerable as a profession compared to others such as medicine or law is the placement of social work within organisational contexts (Kessl, 2009). In Australia social work has been particularly vulnerable due to its lack of registration and its tenuous hold on the human services sector as a whole (Healy & Lonne, 2010).

Participants expressed the value of reflective practice for developing clear and thoughtful practice that can mean good outcomes for their clients. This was highly valued as a core part of the using reflection to develop expertise:

...we're constantly going back over what we've done in the past and how we can do it better in the future. The children I particularly deal with, I deal with a lot of — obviously a lot of ...

children. We ... currently have 74 children in our care, and they're in tier 2 care [intensive out-of-home care]... So of those – yeah, we have the same people going round the same circles, and if you don't reflect back on what you've done in the past you're just going to repeat what you've done and probably not achieve anything. (Participant two, practitioner who is also studying social work)

Aspects of reflective practice were thought to become automatic and intuitive:

...And I think there's certainly an active component to it but I think certainly a lot of what I'm doing is on a more of a subconscious level just because it's sort of become embedded into the kind of practitioner that I am (Participant five, practitioner).

Construction of knowledge

Participants distinguished between kinds of reflective practice. For a smaller group there was a belief that reflective practice was aimed at addressing their immediate concerns about doing the work. Other participants discussed reflective practice as a process aimed at deconstruction of the very creation of knowledge and power within practice situations. Participants who held this latter view tended to be educators. This discussion centred on critical reflection as a form of deconstruction of assumptions about knowledge and power with a view to transforming situations and practice. The belief of this group was in the power of this kind of reflection for emancipation. An example of this position is described below:

...And reflective practice to me wasn't the reflexive or the critical reflective practice that we, that I came to know more here at [University X]. So there was talk at [University Y]...around kind of being aware of your practice, that kind of knowing and doing and action oriented. But it was, to me it felt a little bit less political, and then when you came to [University X]...I felt it was far more contextualised, far more engaged...(Participant ten, educator).

This participant explicitly discusses the difference between reflective practice and critical reflection:

I think for me pivotal moments were when I worked at [University A]...that whole program was firmly situated and grounded in critical social work theory and so really reconnecting with critical theory then had a significant impact on my ability to work with students then after that to challenge those values, beliefs and assumptions to make you know well what was implicit in that, what was informing that. So I think just summarise what those significant moments being an educator grounded in critical theory that then prompted further reading and exploration of the literature around critical not just reflection but critical reflection and I think that's the difference. There's lots of literature on reflective practice but for me it was [that] I want to go into critically reflective practice (Participant fourteen, educator)

Practitioners who considered knowledge as constructed and related to power relations tended to see understanding this as important to issues of educating students to contribute to wider professional ideals concerned with social justice. The link to critical theory provides these participants with an important reason for concentrating on the way in which knowledge and power are intertwined.

Minor Bridge - Conclusion

In terms of values, attitudes and beliefs about reflective practice in social work, participants saw it as an important and in some cases crucial, marker of a competent professional social worker. All people expressed its value for social work education and practice. The main themes with regard to values were centred on its use for individuals particularly in terms of knowing the self and building empathy for situations in practice. Here it is possible to see the significance participants placed on its use. It should be said that the sample were self-selected and resulted in people who already had an interest in the topic. Also, no-one in the interviews expressed doubt about the practice. Much in line with Hickson's (2013) research, no-one said they were not reflective themselves but could readily point to its absence in others.

With regard to attitudes the main themes here were how reflective practice offered participants a language for accountability for their actions and reasoning. In addition it was important as a process for critical thinking and learning from practice situations. Within the wider politics of human services and the impact of neo-liberal programmes accountability is a something of a fraught issue (Laragy, Bland, Giles, & Scott, 2013), however, this was not a connection explicitly made by participants in this research. Their focus remained on the value of reflective practice for the conduct of their work within the organisational contexts they find themselves occupying.

Lastly, beliefs about the value of reflective practice centred on its use for building and sharing practice wisdom and representing this wisdom in professional terms within the settings which social workers are concerned. Some differences emerged amongst

participants. These centred on the purposes of reflection within social work with one group considering it important for developing and sharing practice wisdom and another, albeit smaller but influential group seeing its purpose to be for the deconstruction and challenging of how knowledge and power operate within social work practice. The second group tied the use of deconstruction to wider aims with regard to social work's role in social change and transformation, whereas the practice wisdom group were more interested in its use for immediate practice goals. Despite this it is clearly a language for describing the way in which action, thought and care come together for social workers.

Interval

As discussed in album note four above I conducted a domain analysis that traced four relevant semantic relationships within the participant accounts. This is presented in part two below. Briefly, domain analysis is a method of analysis which embeds the assumptions derived from ethno-science and is considered interpretative (Sells et al, 1997) with regard to how it considers the cultural knowledge associated with the topic of *reflective practice*. The first relationship I considered was reflective practice as a *means* to something. The second relationship concerned the *reasons* offered by participants for undertaking reflective processes. The third relationship focussed on the activities (called *functions* in this relationship) that participants discussed as important mechanisms of undertaking, learning or teaching reflective practice. The final relationship considered was that of the locations and activities where reflective practice occurs for participants. This section is completed by an examination of these themes with an overview of the meaning systems and language (Sells et al., 1997) with which social workers describe their experience of reflective practice in Australian social work.

Part 2 Reflective practice

Verse 2.1: What is it for? Means-end relationships

Means-end relationships are those that signal the aim of an activity. The figure adjacent represents the main themes that emerged from the analysis of what participants indicated reflective practice facilitates for them. The darker borders indicate the weighting of each theme within the overall accounts. I

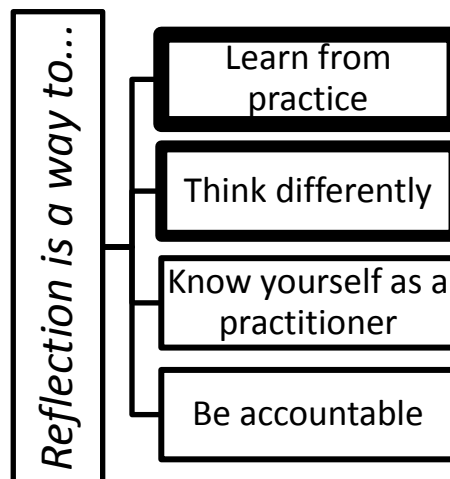


Figure 13: Means-end relationships

will begin with a discussion of the theme *learn from practice*. I will discuss each in turn.

Learn from practice

By far the strongest themes concerned how it enabled social workers to learn from the activities and events of practice. As one practitioner put it:

So being reflective in your practice was one of the most important things to do, that I'd never ... actually really done that before [social work]. I would just do my work and, and that was it, as where now I think, I'm always thinking about, did it go well? How did I do it? What was it about that case that I came away not feeling so good about? So you're constantly thinking about [practice] (Participant one, educator).

And:

And it's figuring out the questions that you need to ask of yourself and the questions that you're – the negative questions if you like (Participant five, practitioner).

While all participants talked about reflection on practice as a way to learn, for educators this learning from practice was more closely tied to the integration of theoretical concepts into practice:

The ... purpose of that role was the reflections like how are they understanding what they're doing and the ethics of that and integration [of] theory into practice (Participant ten, educator).

So this kind of learning from practice was not just operational but for educators, more than any other group, learning from practice incorporated the use of theoretical ideas to explain

practice as much as leveraging procedural knowledge (Hudson, 1997) on what to do in situations. The educators discussed formal kinds of knowledge more than did either practitioners or even students. In their discussion this was often tied to the term “critical reflection” and that to be critically reflective was of a different order than just using reflection on your practice:

I don't use the term reflective practice, I use reflexive or critically reflexive, to use the difference between – Yeah to me reflective practice is more about looking inwards, but more about looking inwards to me. But reflexive is more about my positioning in society and how that's constructed (Participant ten, educator).

In fact all educators in the study mentioned the term reflexivity and used it in relation to discussions of a wider sense of themselves as part of structures and power relations. All educators also discussed the need to work with students actively to instil this kind of orientation to being reflective. Hickson (2013) describes how much of the reflective practice literature suggests that there might exist a *span* of reflection that ranges from little or no reflection to reflection to the achievement of *critical reflection* (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Wong, Kember, Chung, & Yan, 1995). Participants in the study by Hickson (2013) however, suggest that this may be unhelpful. It appears that their reflective practices were instead focussed on the problem or situation being experienced. Somewhat in contrast to these findings from Hickson (2013), this study found that there was some element of a span. However, this span was confined mainly to the accounts of educators. It was not addressed within the practitioners or with student descriptions. One participant demonstrated an awareness of this by suggesting it may be an effect of the educator role, particularly in regard to field education:

Yeah, well I think being an educator brings it to the fore. I don't think that I would have the language and maybe the literacy around critically reflective practice that I have now if I wasn't in this position. I might have some language [about it] if I was still in practice but it wouldn't be maybe as developed as it is now. So I do think this environment [has] invite[d] me to think about it (Participant six, educator).

Student accounts demonstrated that reflection was a means to learning from and engaging with materials in their studies:

...I found that [writing about a skills demonstration] really interesting and [it helped] to really ... highlight positives and negatives. And I suppose not to focus on the negatives as well but to look at the positives of your work (Participant eight, student).

And as another student suggested:

...I think the actual whole learning experience itself ... involves a lot of reflection... the units that I'm doing now I'm finding that my brain is automatically dredging stuff up that I did in first year units and it's oh, hold on a minute that happened then. And then there's also just the way that I approach things, I think to myself oh no, hold on a minute when I plan things that way that didn't really work so I'm not going to do that again this time I'm going to such and such... it's what you're actually learning, it's how you're learning it and you have to think about your approach to learning as well (Participant seven, student)

Having said that another student linked reflective practice as being about changing their practice:

...it shouldn't work like this because last time it worked like that so that's how you should do it and then you've sort of pigeon holed yourself into something or a way of doing something and you don't really want to be doing that because you've got to be open to constantly be learning all the time and not be afraid if things change, for you to change and for you to do something else (Participant two, student).

Thus, for this participant, reflection on the events or situations was a means to changing the way situations may be approached in the future and was explicitly tied to learning. This brings the discussion to the second main theme that resulted from the analysis: *thinking differently*.

Thinking differently

The idea of reflection as a means to *think differently* was discussed by participants and the term *thinking differently* encompasses a wide range of critical thinking descriptions. I have used this term much in the way Tully (1999) does when he discusses it in relation to the kind of critical reflection that attempts to consider the “apparent limits of thought and action in the present” (p. 91). Participants talked about reflection as a process that enabled them to consider limits and possibilities. To think differently in this context is to think about one’s thinking actively (reflexivity) in addition to testing and acknowledging the limits of this thought and action. Thus, participants discussed reflection as a means to questioning:

... Where are my biases? What is it that I need to be thinking about differently? What else is it that's happening in the wider broader world when we look at – at people's messy realities of their lives and how those trajectories impact on their lives and where is my place in that or otherwise (Participant thirteen, educator).

Or indeed to change their minds and trouble their own assumptions:

...my biggest point of reflection in the unit was, I felt confident to be able to deliver [the content] because of my practice work and also teaching in other areas, but my biggest reflection was around the fact that of 36 students three were male, and that we were going to be spending a lot of time and the literature was going to talk a lot about males' use of violence against women and children, and [I] identify as a feminist, and I noticed that sort of, well I guess they're just going to have to deal with it; that was my first response, and I reflected on it, and I thought, oh that's really curious it's a really curious response. But on one level, on an intellectual level, yes that's correct, but will that engage them and bring them in, given that the material inadvertently will [also] marginalise ... them (Participant six, educator)

Other participants discussed reflection as a way to rehearse different ways of acting in similar situations; to consider the meaning and to interpret events in practice. They also used it to locate and understand theories that might be applied in practice; to slow or suspend the action of practice and lastly, consider the opinions of others about what has happened. This last aspect is particularly illustrated by this point:

So because we all came from different thinking backgrounds or paradigms and so we reflection happened when we were considering what each other was saying...it's about discussing it first as well and consulting people or considering all the options. What could go right, what could go wrong, who might be the best person to assist or who would you consult...reflection doesn't always happen just at the end, it can happen at the start (Participant one, educator)

Or as this participant discusses:

...as a social worker you have to be reflective in every aspect of your career, just reflecting on what you've done or how you could've done it better, what you could've done differently (Participant twelve, student).

In sum, with regard to thinking differently, participants considered reflection as a means to thinking differently not only about practice but also in terms of testing the limits of possibility within practice situation. I turn now to the third main theme in this section on means-end relationships, reflection as a means of knowing oneself.

Knowing yourself

Other themes to emerge from the analysis were concerned with reflection as a way to build knowledge of the self as a practitioner. Knowing yourself as a social worker is something of an axiom in the profession. Indeed these authors of an introductory social work text consider it an essential first step to exploring what brings people into the profession (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). In fact, Chenoweth and McAuliffe tie self-knowledge in their text explicitly to transformative learning as that which "... engages the learner

intellectually, emotionally and socially...moves the learning beyond the attainment of factual knowledge into his or her own experience, thinking and meaning-making..." (Giles, Irwin, Lynch & Waugh, 2010 cited in Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012, p. 26). There are, in fact, several uses of the term with different associated meanings according to Larrison (2009). These different uses of the term are conscious, intuitive, purposeful, and therapeutic. While they might all be traced genealogically in terms of their differences each definition does appear to share a common conception of the use of self as the "... integration of the clinician's professional knowledge, coupled with the person's individual characteristics that are present in the therapeutic relationship" (Larrison, 2009, p. 10).

The link between transformational learning and reflection has been made explicit in some Australian social work literature (Bay & Macfarlane, 2010; Morley, 2011). Not all participants discussed reflective practice in transformative language and in instances where this did occur, it was mainly in the accounts by educators:

I think people can say yeah I reflect on my practice but what does that look like? It might be that it's not as deep as it could be for it to actually be really useful or for it to be transformative because I know when I was in [previous role]... we had a framework for that and people needed really needed to work through some things to work out what they needed to work out (Participant three, practitioner).

Participants considered reflection as a route to understanding how they think and feel about practice situations, clients and service users and indeed their hopes of making a difference in the work they undertake. This is closer to Cournoyer's (2008) suggestion that:

[A]t a minimum, social workers must understand how their personal beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies might influence or interfere with their professional activities...[and] develop ways and means to recognize and personally manage maladaptive patterns of thinking, feeling, or behaving that might interfere in ...providing high-quality social work services (p. 47).

Knowing yourself as a practitioner was discussed by some participants as connecting their personal and practice lives together:

...it was to be really reflective around thinking about what makes you a – a person first and what makes you a social work student and what makes you a social work practitioner and how those things interlink and try and kind of really get to that – that end game (Participant five, practitioner).

Reflection was seen a way to do this so that aspects of the self can be managed and brought together:

...So, I think my own personal development work through counselling and therapy opened up a reflection in myself [and gave me] that willingness to look at self (Participant six, educator).

And:

I think it's definitely a skill that we really need to be built on because we need to be doing it in our personal kind of as an individual we need to be doing it...(Participant eight, student).

Participants also discussed reflection as a means to thinking about how one might be travelling in terms of the kinds of work social workers do, recognising that the work itself can be traumatic (Alkema, Linton, & Davies, 2008):

...we have to reflect on how we are as people every day coming to the office. How's – I kind of have a little list in my [head] – how's my resilience today. How am I scaling that with myself and if my resilience is high up I know that I'm going to be a much more professional worker (Participant four, practitioner).

The term resilience did not arise with the majority of the participants but the conditions that assist with being resilient certainly did. These conditions were having good team relationships with others, as discussed by this participant:

...I've just learnt a lot about teams and human service organisations and how people cope with conflict or how people cope with change and how people interact with each other and I've gotten to the point where I can honestly say now that probably for the first half of my career, probably for the first five years I couldn't step out of looking at individual people, now I'm at a point where I tend to look at things from – at a systemic level and then often it's nothing to do with the people, or very little to do with the people and I find that's much more useful... (Participant three, practitioner).

Others discussed supervision that is supportive and safe and developing emotional literacy (Morrison, 2007) to support their practice as crucial to the ways they attended to their resilience and self-knowledge:

I think good reflection has a comfort – it has an emotional literacy, it has a comfort with emotions, it can ride with all of that, it doesn't overstate them, it doesn't understate them, it [just] situates itself, you know...(Participant six, educator)

Lastly many participants discussed also debriefing in the context of paying attention to worker well-being. Below is how one practitioner explained this in the context of working in a busy hospital and offering care to people whose relatives were dying:

...we all need to take a moment here and just sort of reflect on what's happened and did we work as a team and what worked and what worked for that family? We really need to be informing our own practice so that it can go further...(Participant five, practitioner).

To summarise this theme it is possible to consider reflection as a means of knowing oneself in terms of beliefs, knowledge and indeed emotions and well-being. The link between well-being and self-knowledge is also evident in reflection as a means for accounting for practice.

Accountability

Accountability as a theme from the analysis of means-end relationships remains a relatively minor theme here even if it emerged as a significant attitude and has been discussed above. The difference here is that accountability is discussed as a means of ensuring ethical and caring practice with clients consider the use of power in practice and accounting for practice actions. This is probably not surprising as accountability is enshrined as a practice standard (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013b). In the practice standards this translates into being open about the source of judgements, declaration of any conflicts of interest, recognition of how personal factors might impact on practice and seeking support from others with matter as required. Many of the participants expressed these notions in relation to reflection as a mechanism for locating these conflicts, need for support and for being able to lay bare practice judgements, decisions and actions.

Accountability is also mentioned in the Australian Code of Ethics for social workers (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010a) and here it is linked to professional integrity as a value. Indeed, for some, accountability was directly tied to the sense that social workers need to claim their professionalism:

...we [social workers] are skilled professional people and we need to own that and if we're going to own that and hang our hat on it and say - "We deserve to be paid professionally." [then we] need to actually back that up with something substantial and – and for a big part of that for me is about encouraging people to reflect on their own practice... (Participant five, practitioner)

While for others reflection meant being able to trace the reasons why situations were as they were:

...the evidence and deconstructing that and trying to make it fit to help understand what – and help explain the new situation I guess that's more about interaction and about deconstructing human interaction and my human interaction and the effect that I have on situations (Participant four, practitioner).

For others it was a way of accounting for decisions so as to avoid mistakes in the future and/or learning from the past:

...I think it's important as well because our history as social workers has shown that we have made mistakes, the stolen generation being one, the most obvious. But that's perhaps why we do reflection [now] because as a profession in the context of history and time we've made some errors... (Participant one, educator).

Lastly, reflection was tied to accountability for some participants it acted as a process of building awareness of the assumptions and privileges that may be operating:

[asking] what are the stated and hidden assumptions, like we'll often work with an article...in class [to] try to draw out what's not stated here ... what's privileged and what's not privileged, who has a voice, who doesn't have a voice...(Participant six, educator).

Minor bridge 1 Conclusion

In summary four themes emerged from the data with regard to a means-end relationship about reflective practice. These were:

- reflection is a way to learn from practice;
- think differently,
- know yourself as a practitioner; and, finally
- to demonstrate accountability for values, judgements and actions in practice to oneself, colleagues, clients and service users.

In the next section I will consider the themes that emerged from my analysis of the reasons/rationales participants gave for using reflection.

Verse 2.2: Why undertake reflection? Rationales for using reflective practices

Why do social worker practitioners, educators and students use reflective practices? Here the analysis centred on reasons offered for undertaking reflection, paying particular attention to how participants expressed this. Figure 14 below shows four main themes as significant.

As with the means-end figure the darker border represents the relative weighting of the theme in relation to the others. I begin the discussion by considering the first theme of *improving practice performance* before outline the subsequent themes of *ensuring ethical behaviour*; *generating new perspectives* and *managing yourself*.

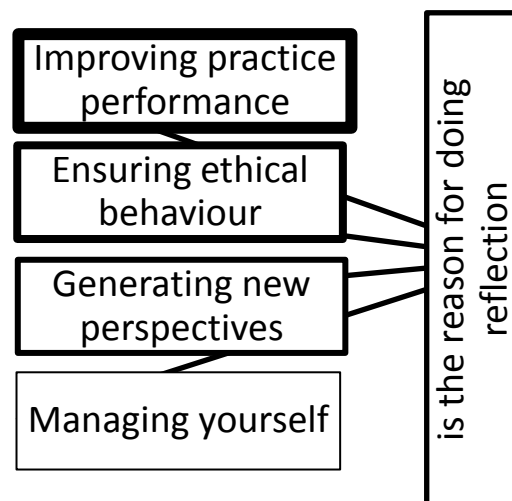


Figure 14: Rationale for engaging in reflection

Improving practice performance

Participants considered reflective practice to be important to being able to learning from practice and from others. In this respect, participants discussed learning from watching themselves, receiving feedback from others about their performance, and then using reflection to consider what they need to change or work on for improvement in how they go about the work of helping and advocating for clients or service users. As one practitioner saw it reflection was useful:

... Identifying areas that I need to upskill in, and finding lateral pathways for [improving] tha[t] if you were just ploughing on and focusing ahead, you wouldn't find (Participant eleven, practitioner).

Another participant considered it helpful to incorporating new knowledge with what is already known:

So I sort of drifted into the job and because I didn't have any background knowledge in human services at all the idea of – actually almost the idea of reflective practice is a quite strange thing anyway ... particularly ... in this area. And being taught to think back on what you've done and how your practice is and what you're doing and whether you're doing the right things probably came from the mentor group that I had at the time, which was a very good group of managers (Participant two, student with considerable practice experience).

Overall this theme really picked up on the way in which reflection focuses attention on what one is doing or have done in practice with an eye to improving this into the future. This was considered by all as a primary reason for being reflective. Indeed, some practitioners who identified as 'doers' saw reflection as burdensome in the face of their inclination to just get in and take action. For example:

And that's been a difficult part for me, because I'm a do-er, I just want to just do it, I don't want to sit around and talk about it and chew over it for hours on end. Yeah, because that process itself is quite tiring. It's like you're continuously going through a counselling stage (Participant nine, practitioner).

And

I'm a doing kind of person and P [final year field educator] taught me very valuably that thinking is a big part of social work and though he never said we need to think, it was just being around him and we'd do a lot of debriefing after sessions and a lot of forward planning, and it slowed me down, because before that I would have just been right, I need to get on the phone and I need to do this, and I need to do that. And that really might not have been the right direction, but also would have expended a lot of energy that might not have been necessary... (Participant eleven, practitioner).

Even in these cases the participants considered reflection as important to ensuring "good" practice and to learning from practice for improvement.

Ensuring ethical behaviour

This theme emerged primarily in terms of an ethic of transparency and ensuring that practitioners were able to see and work with the impact of themselves on others, whether that is colleagues or service users. An example of the significance attributed to understanding the impact on others through reflection is well captured by participant six in relation to a question about whether they had experienced instances where someone was not reflective:

...And I think it's the most difficult student supervision experience I had. I mean it wasn't a performance thing in terms of [a] fail. That's what made it more complicated because if there had been performance issues it could have been more straightforward. And my sense was that the [student behaviour of] not reflecting on self and [their] impact on others, including clients, was a sort of defensive stance. [I thought] that there was quite a lot going on for her, and I'm not wanting to pathologise her in any way but there was just so much historical material that hadn't been touched that it was really unsafe to take the lid off it... (Participant six, educator).

For this participant it was perfectly possible for the reflection to be targeted at others and not oneself. However, ethical behaviour for this participant included being able to work with one's own impact on others. Ethical behaviour is also linked to discussion with others about practice, formally or informally, through debriefing or supervision. In terms of ensuring ethical accountability and behaviour there was a strong link made by participants about the importance of others to reflect with.

Reflection on practice was also seen as a route to fulfilling a wider social work mission with regard to social justice and advocating for system change. This was also tied to an analysis of power that several participants considered crucial for ethical practice behaviour with vulnerable clients:

...you've got to hold yourself accountable, your team accountable and assess whether you're doing the right thing for your client. And they deserve the best, they're in disadvantaged marginalised oppressed positions and their knowledge maybe limited, they're limited in some way or another and we're there to support, advocate and fight for their rights and deliver what they deserve. If we don't debrief, and if we don't reflect on what we've done as an individual, as a team, as an agency, then how are we supposed to provide for them what they deserve? (Participant twelve, student).

And as another participant also explains:

... awareness of those power structures and structures of oppression. So it was [being] aware of those structural issues...[that makes you] a critically reflective practitioner ... if you weren't aware of them then [shrugs]... (Participant eleven, educator).

The next theme picks up on the issue of knowing in practice, which this participant mentions in terms of "structures of oppression".

Generating new perspectives

This theme is about linking knowledge to practice rather than thinking about learning *from* practice in the previous theme, which was concerned with improving performance.

Participants all discussed reflection as a way of learning but many also tied it to generating knowledge as well as integrating knowledge already learnt. In this respect the whole gamut of Hudson's (1997) different kinds of knowledge were discussed by participants, however, locating and using knowledge explicitly required reflective thinking for participants.

Participants valued intuition but they also valued formal ideas for generating a range of

different ways of viewing a new problem or situation in practice. As expected, educators were more able to explicitly link to theoretical and formal knowledge but practitioners and students also demonstrated the importance of this.

The relevance of kinds of knowledge has been studied by Fook and colleagues when they considered the development of expertise in the 1990s (Fook et al., 2000). Fook and her colleagues distinguished between formal or substantive knowledge and procedural knowledge and developed a stage model of experience to expertise ranging from student to expert practitioner. Substantive knowledge in their schema consists of theories, situational rules, and knowledge that could be considered domain specific to an organisational context. Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, is practice, generated knowledge about “how to practice” and develops through experience in situ (Fook et al., 2000, pp. 180-181). Experts tend to use a combination of both kinds of knowledge. *Generating new perspectives* denotes where participants discussed reflection as a way to locate their substantive knowledge whereas the earlier reason for reflecting concerned learning from practice situations more explicitly. For example:

How can I link that back to the theory that I know about? Grief and loss and those kinds of things ... It's sort of that – that aspect but also really going away afterwards and really taking the time to kind of think about [it]? (Participant five, practitioner).

Managing yourself

Lastly, a minor theme emerged that reflection was important to *managing yourself* in practice. Reflection in this sense was primarily tied to dealing with the uncertain nature of the work and the kinds of feelings and pressures this introduces for social workers. As this practitioner suggests:

... You have to keep on top of so much stuff particularly in workplaces like mine where time is money. If you delay a patient submission – a patients discharge by a day because you didn't kind of have it together then that's cost the hospital eight hundred dollars because that person hasn't gone home and they needed a bed overnight... So from that point of view there's already so much that you have to be at the top all the time. I sometimes question the capacity just to be able to have that little bit of extra space in your head to kind of think about it which is – not so much a time thing but [more]... a kind of a mental capacity (Participant five, practitioner).

Others described how reflection assisted with managing the emotion and stress that comes with change:

...it's very hard to separate out your work with your clients and your work with your colleagues or other stakeholders that you have linkages with, but lately I have worked in – well through my whole career I've worked in teams and some of them at some point just turn to shit ... Everything falling apart is either an opportunity for growth or a lost opportunity and history to be repeated (Participant three, practitioner).

Minor bridge 2 Conclusion

In sum the main rationales for reflecting in practice were primarily devoted to improving practice performance. Participants also considered reflection as an important route to ensuring ethical practice behaviour and for using knowledge to generate new perspectives. Lastly, participants also identified it as important for managing the uncertainty and being responsive to changing practice environments. In the next section I will consider the main themes that emerged in relation to locations and spaces that participants identified as important to undertaking reflective practices.

Verse 2.3 Functions through which social work practitioners, educators and students conduct reflective practice

Talk emerged as the main way people practice reflection with *writing* also featuring as an important aid to its occurrence for participants. I chose the term *talk* because this could encompass both formal and informal kinds of talk. Minor themes were the use of processes of *recollection* and *thinking*; however, these have been discussed within the themes of talking and writing. Not all *talk* was equal

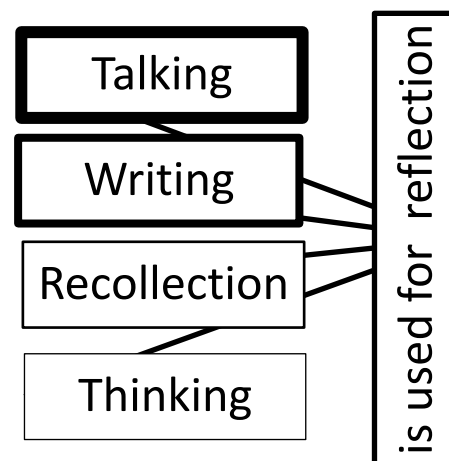


Figure 15: Functions that assist with reflection

and so I will discuss in detail what features of talk participants identified as important to reflection for the kinds of outcomes discussed above. Just as not all talk is the same, so too there are diverse forms of writing that assist with the conduct of reflection for participants interviewed here. There are significant links between all four themes and so the separation of them is primarily for illustration purposes.

Talk⁹¹

Participants identified *talk* and *discussion* as the key activity that assisted with their reflective practice. This talk and discussion is described as occurring with a range of others within various practice settings. For example, regardless of whether the participant was a student, educator, or practitioner they described talking and discussion as key to reflection on events and situations about which they were concerned or in which they were interested. The talk is purposeful in that it was described as oriented to thinking or understanding practice and/or learning. This is not surprising on some level as Tsang (2007) points out that “Social work started as an oral mode of inter-personal practice in alleviating individual and social problems, from the early days of the late nineteenth century” (p. 52).

In addition participants discussed the *kinds* of talk they undertake as a form of reflective dialogue with others which I discuss below. However, dialogue was also discussed as something that can occur with oneself and this is the link to recollection and thinking as minor themes in this area of function. Participants saw talk with themselves as a way of organising their initial ideas and thoughts. As one practitioner explains:

Another way that I reflect for example yesterday I had a very intense and difficult meeting in [name of suburb] and actually met 2 people on my own and when I came out of the hour and a half long meeting – my head was swimming a bit so when I got into the car I put my iPhone – I recorded just some initial thoughts on my iPhone because I knew that I was going – heading straight to another meeting. I was [not] going to have time to write anything and so I just had to record what my initial thoughts were just to help organise some thoughts in my head and once I [had] kind of spoken them I might not listen to that again (Participant three, practitioner).

Participants also saw it as an important process for considering their assumptions, values and actions and for this educator this happened as a first step in dialogue with herself:

And for me that's where the reflection happens, it's about being, when we reflect it's about the time that it happened, the place, the people that were there and for me it's about considering all those factors even on a small, smaller scale because that could've impacted the way that I practiced...(Participant one, educator).

⁹¹ I have used the term talk for this theme in acknowledgement of the words utilised by participants. In this section it will be used somewhat interchangeably with discussion and dialogue unless otherwise specified by an explanation.

Tsang (2007) also explored this talking with oneself as a form of dialogue. Dialogue can be defined in a number of ways depending somewhat on the discipline or domain of interest. Social work accounts have not been of much assistance with a definition as Tsang (2007) laments. This is because even though it is considered crucial to learning and practice it has not often been defined with much clarity in social work accounts. In light of this, Tsang moves to give a definition based on the work from teaching by Barbules (1993, cited in Tsang, 2007, p. 684), where dialogue is "...a process of discovering, exploring and interrogating to achieve understanding or agreement". Thus, dialogue is often considered to occur between two or more individuals, there is still a view that people engage in internal dialogues as well as engaging in external dialogical practices (Hermans, 2001). Internal dialogue is defined as "dialogue directed to oneself, involving only one person, acting as both 'speaker' and 'listener'" (Ho, Chan, Peng, & Ng, 2001, p. 395).

Returning to experience and thinking about situations was often discussed by participants. In addition, there were indications that engaging in internal dialogue was important to at least some participants:

...if I'm in an interaction with...with a patient or a family or even a colleague and it doesn't sit comfortably and I don't know why. I know that's a real – that real physiological reaction that just [happened]– I don't feel right about this and I really take the time after that – I'll go and get a coffee and I'll find somewhere to sit. And I'll just sort of have a think about it and I'll really sort of work through that. And I'm sure if anyone kind of came across me they would probably find that quite unproductive of my work time. But actually for me it's really vital because then I can really get a sense about what happened and then I can go and address it... (Participant five, practitioner).

And as this participant described it:

... But yeah, I do, I spend a lot of my evenings thinking, I don't watch telly much and I spend a lot of my evenings just sort of playing things back and going oh that worked ... And just finding things that you might miss (Participant eleven, practitioner).

Indeed Hermans (1999, p. 72) describes this idea of a self that speaks to itself as a dialogical self "which can be described in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I positions." Ho (2001) describes the ability to engage in dialogue with oneself is a major cognitive achievement leading to the ability to thinking about one's thinking and thus to

engage in metacognition⁹². In the view of Ho and his colleagues (2001) internal dialogue is a precursor to the development of metacognition but its existence does not guarantee the presence of metacognition. Dimaggio, Lysaker, Carcione, Nicolo and Semerari (2008, p. 780) suggest that “Over the last five years evidence has begun to converge suggesting that the ability to think about one’s own thinking is closely related but not reducible or synonymous with the ability to think about the thinking of another.” Thus social dialogue is also required.

Social dialogue, or external dialogue, as it is described by Ho et al (2001) as “... other-directed [and] is interpersonal, referring to dialogue that the self-engages in with other(s)...” (p. 395). This is the predominant kind of dialogue discussed by social work participants in this study. This is probably because internal dialogue may be less socially acceptable to discuss. In this study all participants discussed the importance of talking about practice, cases, their learning, decisions, incidents and feelings with others at some point during the interview. This may not be surprising in the context of social work particularly.

The use of discussion and *case studies* has been a method of instruction and learning within the discipline since it began in the United States (Milner, 2009). Australia is no exception and many of our methods of instruction and practice have been imported from overseas (Chamberlain, 1986; Lawrence, 1975). According to Milner (2009, p. 40) case method instruction has a number of functions which:

...illustrate various stages of the problem solving process, ...expose students to the challenges of working with diverse populations,...describe social work intervention methods, introduce ethical dilemmas, simulate practice situations, and...conceptualize practice in a variety of contexts.

⁹² Metacognition is being able to think about one’s own thinking in addition to thinking about the thinking of others. Dimaggio et al (2008) suggest that although these operations are often discussed as metacognition or mentalising they are not entirely the same thing and involve distinct albeit related processes. It is thought that metacognition requires opportunities to know one’s own thinking but also to develop insight into that of others. They suggest that these “capacities affect one another” (p. 780).

Moreover, this use of case discussion often translates into learning in the field from others within field placements and later through supervision and guidance of more experienced others through engagement in communities of practice within organisations and professional networks (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012). Students, practitioners and educators all discussed *talk* with others as central to their conduct of reflective practices.

Who these *others* might be is outlined in the next section on *locations* but suffice to say participants were primarily referring to dialogue as that which occurs between colleagues, other professionals and student and supervisors rather than dialogue between social worker and client or service user. There was one exception to this — which I mention primarily because it was an exception — and this was the only participant who discussed reflection *with* clients as part of their practice:

... Yeah, well a couple of my cases are reunifications, so we – I make my clients – we sit and we talk, and some situations there will be a breakdown about whatever, and I will talk to the clients and say, “Well, you need to think about that,” and we call it reflect, but I say, “Well you think about that, and think about why that happened, and how better we can do that, and I’ll talk to you in a couple of days.” And then I’ll ring them back and we’ll have a conversation about it. Because I think it’s good for, not just me to reflect about my practice, but if they reflect about it because that will improve my practice if they come back and say, “oh, well I think we should have done it this way or that way – that would have suited me better – and I was a bit upset about that,” I want them to be really open and honest (Participant nine, practitioner).

Talking with others has an important role in the development of “critical, accountable and knowledge-based practice wisdom” (O’Sullivan, 2005, p. 223). Moreover, this appears to be a key way in which knowledge for and about social work practice is created, tested, refined and disseminated at least amongst the social workers interviewed in this study. Writing is another function that assists with developing reflective thinking and it is to this discussion I will now turn.

Writing

Writing emerged as the second strongest theme with regard to activities that assist with or function to support reflective practice. A number of participants said they kept a journal and for some this had been the case even before studying social work:

I think that there probably is an element of that. I think that's – I'm a bit of journaler and a bit [of a] let's sit down and have a bit of a chat about this type of person I guess. And that's I think what one of things that naturally lead me into [social work] (Participant five, practitioner).

A journal was something they used to aid their thinking about things that happen in practice:

...so I personally, myself, I have a journal...And I write a lot of my stuff down...its own my reflection...And it's – [mine] I don't share it... Because it's about me and how I feel about some of the situations . Yeah, so I just write it out, and then it's out there, and then I can go back – I'll do it every Friday afternoon after I finish work.I'll sit and type it up, and then I'll look at it and read over what happened... And see if I've made some changes... (Participant nine, practitioner).

And as this participant explained:

... it's like pause at the end of every day to spend 10 minutes just writing down what happened and what sticks to you or what challenged you and sit with that. [it's good to] question that and then take [it] forward in some way...(Participant fourteen, practitioner)

As mentioned above, dialogue is often a process with oneself and it is likely that much of what gets captured in writing processes that involve a personal journal is this internal dialogue. Several participants suggested this was an important route to self-understanding about their role and practice. One participant suggested it was not just writing that assisted:

...I have – I probably reflected more on my practice than – I can't imagine anybody reflecting anymore than I have – it's really interesting where I got to because I use reflective journaling type tools, diagrams and even just getting pen and paper and drawing something or writing words...(Participant three, Practitioner).

The point this participant is making is about the use of different kinds of processes that could aid reflection and these could include drawing or writing poetry.

This point is echoed by Fook and Gardner (2007) who report that there is increasing interest in using arts-based practices to aid reflection beyond formal or free writing. The benefit of arts-based practice may be in providing access to emotional layers within students in order to foster reflective ability through "...creating disturbance in the mind of the student and of enabling the student to handle that disturbance..." (Barnett, 1997, cited in Ixer, 1999, p. 522). Moreover Trevelyan, Crath and Chambon (2014) suggest that the idea of creating a felt

difficulty has "...figured prominently in this pedagogy" (p. 14). This pedagogy includes simulated exercises in addition to role plays and processes involving music, art and literature in which students participate and then reflect on through writing and discussion. Many participants discussed the use of these kinds of processes in their interviews especially as they recalled their time as students.

Thus writing assignment work was described as part of the process of learning to be reflective:

...but I remember particularly in fourth year we had this fantastic unit which was all about practice – in fact I think the unit was called reflective practice and it was brilliant, we had a really, really good tutor and I really got a lot out of it. I really enjoyed and we did a lot of journaling and a lot of different written reflection work mostly (Participant three, practitioner).

Educators also discussed setting assignment work for students to address learning reflective practice:

[I] ask the students to – or suggest to the students that they –[k]eep a journal or use their ...tablets as they do now or word docs anything that you can find and even if you make dot point notes each day write something or most days try to write something of your experiences for the day. Try and write something about yourself in those experiences and what the challenges or otherwise have been? What the joys are? So that they're – trying to get them to explore more of their inner self in...that as well as their practitioner self in it and it just helps them to begin to articulate the differences and where they converge or otherwise (Participant thirteen, educator).

And another educator discussed how the assignment was reflective without being called reflective and that it, in her mind, achieved something in terms of integrating theory, practice and the student identity in the context of being set as a final assignment:

One of the assignments that they do in a unit in second year called citizenship is, it's a final assignment and it's about their journey – so we teach them social theories, what else do they do, so they do functionalism, structuralism and post modernism, feminism and they learn all about it in the beginning, and then at the end they have to talk about their sort of citizenship journey integrating one or two or three or whatever, the most relevant theories. And that ends up being like an activity around critical reflection; you know again that I think works really beautifully. And people can use whatever means they want to. So last year I read this one that was, had paintings and photos and was beautiful, it was absolutely beautiful. I read another one that was a person talking about how their child was removed and you know all of those kinds of experiences and how coming to social work now what that meant. So I think there have been some really successful, that's a way again where if you said to the students, oh was that a

critical reflective essay, they'd [say] no it was an essay about me but it was [critical reflection]...(Participant ten, educator).

Much of the writing discussed by participants was primarily concerned with skills development and the learning required in field placement. Some participants explicitly tied it to the purposes of preparing and participating in supervision:

...I think probably was a really important practice [to be] organised, so my expectation and the sort of agreement with the students was that they would [send] their written weekly reflection before their supervision session so that we could if we needed to... we could explore that if they wanted to but that was part of...the preparation...was really important so that we could go deep and then other things would come up that were different to that and we could engage with those as well but having that expectation that this will be part of your weekly practice and we have this time and it's set. [I found] that really helped tremendously the practice of reflective practice generally but also then the critical reflection that happened...(Participant fourteen, practitioner).

Consequently, for participants in this study, journal writing was primarily used to enable insight into individual experience and meaning making. It then served to create a space for understanding any insights that arise and link these to actions going forward. For one participant this was particularly important:

...I presented at a [Name of conference] I think it was July/August 2013 and a lot of it was about [about] the move from reflective practice to changing...my external supervisor [said] at the time said "You can reflect and reflect until the cows come home, but what you need is behavioural change". That was a really, really incredibly pivotal moment [for me]... that realisation that reflection has to [be and do] more than reflection. And I think a lot of social workers can reflect and they don't know how to take that leap ...to make the change from reflection to action (Participant three, practitioner).

There were some differences between student accounts of the function of writing for reflection. This group of students struggled to outline examples of where they had been explicitly taught about reflection; or even required to undertake it within assignment work. This may be a limitation in terms of where the students were drawn from and probably indicates something about the particular way in which assessments are described. For example, only one of the student participants could recall an assessment that was specifically called a reflective paper or essay.

... So we had an assessment that was based on an interview and so we were to conduct a one on one interview with a case study – a scenario and then we were to write and reflect on that piece ... (Participant eight, student).

Yet in discussing reflection broadly all students could outline what it was, how it worked, and how it related to their learning and engagement with materials in their studies. As none of the students had yet experienced a field placement they did not discuss its relevance in that context, but rather, concentrated on the experience of it in relation to writing assessments.

This is not the case with other participants in this study. Both educators and practitioners discussed writing for the demonstration of reflection on learning and integration of the self with the theory and practice of the profession. Moreover, these participants all described it in relation to activities undertaken during their own field placements, supervision of students or in instruction to students post field placement when students return to university. Thus field placement is a significant site in which reflective learning and exchange takes place, and writing and discussion form a significant part of this display and process within social work education. This raises a question of pedagogy. Field placement is a very familiar form of pedagogy within social work as a profession and was originally conceived as an apprenticeship whereby "...students learn to practice the profession through an apprenticeship supervised by expert practitioners." (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010, p. 330).

The apprenticeship model of field placement was largely adopted in Australia but has since fallen out of favour (Cleak, Hawkins, Laughton, & Williams, 2014) as field education programs moved towards an "...articulated model of teaching social work practice, which relies on providing clear learning objectives that offer congruence between the theory and practice" (Savaya, Peleg-Oren, Strange, & Geron, 2003 cited in Cleak et al., 2014, pp. 50-51). Cleak and her colleagues (2014) suggest instead that "Reflection, conceptualisation, integration of theory and practice, and future planning occur largely through field educators and students' review and *discussion* [italics added] of students' practice material and feedback about the students' performance..." (p.51). Moreover, discussions of the issues

surrounding teaching and learning within field placements and education have been on-going within Australian social work since the earliest beginnings of the profession (Spencer & McDonald, 1998). There have been significant debates in the United States about whether field education is a signature pedagogy⁹³ for the profession of social work (Boitel & Fromm, 2014; Larrison & Korr, 2013; Wayne et al., 2010). Even though this same debate is not substantially occurring within the Australian Social Work literature with regard to field placement, the significance of field placement as a site of professional socialisation and learning cannot be overstated at least in the view of participants here.

Interestingly, writing was not as strong a theme amongst participants in this study as that of talk, nor was it as strongly emphasised as it was by participants in Hickson's (2013) study exploring how social workers learn and use reflection. How to account for this difference? While the questions asked in both this study and Hickson's are remarkably similar, the data analysis methods are different as are the sample of participants. Thus, it may be an outcome of the analysis focus, which in this case, considered semantic relationships more closely than the meaning offered by the narrative analysis described in the Hickson study. Also, the majority of the participants who participated in Hickson's (2013) study were social work bloggers who were already writing as a form of reflection. Lastly, in another stage of the study by Hickson the inquiry included interviews with social workers who had learned a particular model of critical reflection which explicitly includes written reflection as part of the critical incident process (Fook & Gardner, 2007). It might be said, therefore, that the participants' in the Hickson study were already predisposed to journaling and writing as particular form of reflection.

In contrast the participants in this study were recruited for their identity as social workers who were practitioners, students or educators and who were eligible for membership with the AASW. It was not known before the interviews what kind of reflective practices

⁹³ A signature pedagogy is the "characteristic forms of teaching and learning...that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated" (Shulman, 2005, p. 52). Moreover, Shulman proposes that these pedagogies include instructions to novices on how "...to *think*, to *perform*, and to *act with integrity*" (Shulman, 2005, p. 52, italics original).

participants undertake in their study or practice. The only indication of interest in reflection may be the self-selection of those who chose to participate in the study. The different kinds of participants probably accounts for the diverse responses to some of the questions asked in the course of the interviews as well as the different emphases on the functions that support reflective practice.

Minor bridge 3 Conclusion

To summarise, then, talk with oneself and with others is the predominant activity through which social workers are reflective. In addition, writing is also an important mechanism for reflection and this takes diverse forms from personal and professional journals, essays and reports for assessment work at university and on field placements. Field education is a significant site of reflective learning processes as this emerged as the most noteworthy examples offered by a majority of participants. Case-based discussion within university settings also emerged as an important opportunity to engage in reflective thinking. This was offered by both students and educators by way of giving examples of learning and teaching reflective practice. Two other activities were mentioned explicitly by participants; these were the use of *recollection* and engaging in *thinking*. As these occur in the context of dialogue with oneself or others both functions were discussed as part of these principal themes rather than as separate themes. In the next section I will outline the locations that reflective practice occurs and conclude the chapter with a brief summary of the main findings from this stage of this stage.

Verse 2.4 Location: Where are the spaces and locations for doing reflective practice?

This section will present a description of the locations and spaces identified by participants as important for enacting their reflective practices. In an earlier paper published in *Child and Family Social Work*, Ferguson (2009) discussed the performative aspects of social work practice, albeit in the context of a study into home visiting by child protection social workers. Ferguson (2009, p. 471) suggests that

... Not nearly enough attention is given to the detail of what social workers actually do, where they do it and their experience of doing it ... This in turn means neglecting

the movement and flows of bodies, emotions, information and power involved in doing the work and conducting relationships.

When analysing the data here I was struck by the way in which participants talked about where they undertook the practice of being reflective and how tied that was to the organisation of their workplaces and the activities across quite diverse settings. Thus, the goal for this part of the analysis was to offer a picture of the locations for reflective practice as explained by participants and to tie these to concrete *practices* as much as possible. To do so is to offer juxtaposition to the previous sections in this chapter where the emphasis has been more squarely on the cognitive and normative (values, attitudes and beliefs) aspects of participant accounts of reflective practice. Here the focus is on the movement of bodies, locations, and non-discursive factors that contribute to the presence of reflection in social work practice and education.

I found myself surprised by the many different descriptions of where reflective practice takes place. The other surprising thing was how much of the activity

takes place *with others* and how much of it occurs within both *formal* and *informal spaces*. The

figure adjacent demonstrates the main themes which emerged from the analysis. As with previous diagrams of themes in this chapter

the weighting of the border

indicates the relative presence of each theme. It is possible to see that reflective practice is most often tied to *formal* settings more than informal ones and that it generally occurs *with others*.

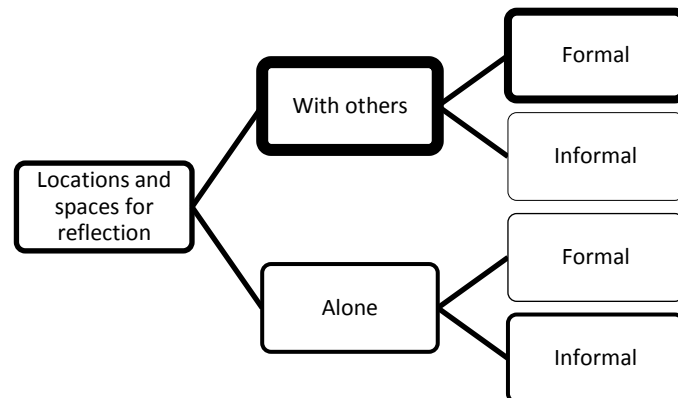


Figure 16: Locations and spaces for reflection

I will begin the description with a discussion of what formal and informal means within the context of this analysis. I will then outline what the theme of *with others* represents within

the analysis and how this is described by participants. I will also describe the *formal* and *informal spaces* discussed by participants. The rest of the section will outline the rest of the themes by presenting how reflective practice is undertaken alone and that this occurs mainly through informal means.

What does formal and informal mean in this context?

In the analysis the terms informal and formal emerged in relation to where the activities of reflective practice occur most for participants. Participants themselves did not use this terminology; however, in their discussion about where reflection occurs, they often indicated whether it was at work, before or after work, or in the evenings. Moreover participants would also describe the conditions under which reflective practice occurs. As I read the accounts the terms informal and formal seemed to fit well with how participants distinguished the practice in their personal and professional lives. The terms also fit with the professional language of social work generally.

The terms informal and formal are part of a social work discourse in Australia that is tied to complicated notions of professionalism (O'Connor et al., 1998), the history of the Australian welfare state (Jamrozik, 2009), and theories and critiques of bureaucracy (Jones & May, 1992) and managerialism (Hough & Briskman, 2003; Ife, 1997). Professionalism in this respect refers to primarily to practitioner autonomy (McDonald, 2011) and “many workers daily experience challenges to their assertion of professional status” (O'Connor et al., 1998, p. 157). Welfare state history and critiques of bureaucracy and managerialism provide explanations for the changing face of welfare delivery and social services that forms a policy backdrop to social work practice. It is somewhat beyond the scope here to trace the exact genealogies for each of these ideas and their respective critiques. Neither is it possible in this space to specify how they combine to provide the discursive frame through which to understand the use of the terms informal and formal. What can be said is that the terms informal and formal may be linked to social work understandings about organisations, which is informed largely by these bodies of formal knowledge. Moreover, these ideas have informed a particular critique of contemporary organisations within which Australian social work practice largely occurs. This critique translates for some into a distinction based on setting. Below is an

example of this kind of critique where the participant offers a distinction between agency settings and how this might affect reflection:

We need to be doing it [reflective practice] ... and a lot through our work and especially being through a government agency [such as] the [named a child protection agency] ... I don't know, I don't work in the agency but they possibl[y] discourage that kind of reflecting and assessing of[f] the agency and what they're doing ... So I think there's a lot more opportunity to reflect in a non-government agency ... I don't think a government agency really wants to be told that they're doing something wrong (Participant twelve, student).

For others this critique captures their experience of negotiating tricky workplace compliances, as this participant notes:

... and so you take that on-board and you look at how other people have handled the situation, and what the policy and – [think about what the] compliances are around that ... and so you take that on-board and you look at how other people have handled the situation, and what the policy [is] ... because compliances always come into every practice that you do at the department...so you've got to be really disciplined, and you've got to get out of the office and you've got to go and see your clients, because there is a [also] a [requirement] that you need to see your clients ... (Participant nine, practitioner).

Social work knowledge has long been informed in Australia by sociology as one of its feeder disciplines (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2014). The term informal and formal can also be traced back to this body of knowledge. Sociology, especially of a critical kind informs much of the critique in the bodies of knowledge discussed above (Agger, 2006). Thus in sociological terms *informal* and *formal* denote a particular way of thinking about the organisation of work and practice (Watson & Korczynski, 2011) that may also be traced back to Weber's theory of bureaucracy. Watson (2001, cited in Watson & Korczynski, 2011, p. 118) suggests that the terms were meant to describe two different sides of organisational life and even though this may have fallen out of favour within sociology of work, it is still used within social work as a way of understanding organisations (Gardner, 2006).

In this sense, then, formal encompasses all the “ ... roles, rules and procedures that we see represented in rule books, organisation charts and formalised sets of operating procedures ... ” (Watson & Korczynski, 2011, p. 118) and this includes locations and spaces such as offices, formal meeting rooms, classrooms and lecture halls, and online spaces such as

*Blackboard or Webct*⁹⁴. In addition, formal in this context is also referring to discussion and talk that is about practice situations or learning, and that which is located within these formal arenas and is thus driven by the rationality of the workplace (Watson & Korczynski, 2011). In contrast informal spaces may be seen as those in which social workers share tacit knowledge and sometimes build resilience to negotiate tricky aspects of modern organisational practice (Carson, King, & Papatraianou, 2011). This aspect of informal spaces as significant learning spaces has also been discussed by Boud and Middleton (2003) who suggest that there are three main aspects to this kind of learning. The first is procedural with regards to knowing how to use systems and meet administrative requirements. The second aspect is political and relational and relates to building and maintaining relationships with others in the organisation and team. The third aspect involves "...dealing with the atypical" (Boud & Middleton, 2003, p. 198). All three of these aspects of informal learning rely on communication and relationships amongst workers and much of this communication is what was described by participants here as reflective practice. Moreover the experience and resilience of individual workers (Carson et al., 2011) and the resilience of organisations is greatly enhanced by relationship building, especially in times of external threat or change (Gittell, 2008).

Thus, these exchanges happen in corridors, in cars going to visits, in coffee shops; and for students it might be sitting on lawns; and sometimes over the phone. Informal might also be outside of work hours, evenings, early mornings, or travelling to and from work, for example. Lastly, while it is helpful for analytical purposes to attempt to separate these two different senses of organisational life and work it is nevertheless likely that they work together and that some reflection occurs in the boundaries between them. This point is discussed more below. For now, I will begin with the theme *with others*.

⁹⁴ Blackboard is a learning management system (LMS) that integrates "... a wide range of pedagogical and course administration tools. These systems have the capacity to create virtual learning environments ... They are ... ubiquitous at universities around the world ... "(Coates, James, & Baldwin, 2005, p. 19). Students in this sample of participants whether on campus or distance have a significant proportion of their materials delivered through the LMS of the university.

With others

For participants, reflection occurs within the presence of others. The others can be colleagues, team leaders, supervisors, and instructors or educators. Reflection occurs in meetings, with team leaders and colleagues, with students and in classroom discussion. This talk takes the form of thinking aloud about a work situation, case, problem or practice to account, make sense of it, or interpret the actions of the self or others. This reflective talk is an aid to clinical and practice judgement (White & Stancombe, 2003) to formulating strategy, and building knowledge for practice (Connolly & Harms, 2012). However, it primarily occurs within the context of the routines of work and organisational norms for that particular setting. How a participant described reflecting *with others* in a hospital setting involved different practices of when and where this occurred compared to how it was described by someone working in the context of child protection. The common thread amongst the participant description is the way in which opportunities for using reflection were most often organised into the routines of work. This could be viewed as a way of dealing with the uncertain aspects of social work practice (Francis, Cheers, Lonne, Wendt, & Schiller, 2012). It was also a way of ensuring it occurs:

Well reflection in my current role has changed. ... you have to make reflection fit practically in terms of timing and how – just how to make it all fit. And how to make it purposeful as well because the clocks ticking all the time and it's not generally seen as a – It's not an outcome, there's no product necessarily. Well there is ... there might be ... Part of my role is to facilitate [child protection team meetings] with workers whether internally, externally and it's a role that I take really, really very seriously and ... and I guess organisationally I can – I can justify that. Not that I should have to but I can justify that because it is a product and it is ... (Participant four, practitioner).

Another practitioner also discussed building reflection into the interdisciplinary team meetings in her workplace. This meeting structure already existed within the context of that particular workplace:

And ... I've really kind of pushed that further within my own workplace because we have family meetings very regularly and family meetings are either for – in my particular practice context they're [to talk about treatment issues/options] ... So and that – and we have very highly emotional families when they come to that and then I was finding what was happening in these meetings[is] ... They're fairly frequent in that environment ... we'd sort of all walk out and we'd all kind of go our separate ways and I'd be thinking guys we – we all need to take a moment here and just sort of reflect on what's happened here ... so I've instituted a debriefing

session after each family meeting. It's just that opportunity to check back in (Participant five, practitioner).

Thus, for the participants in this study, most reflective practice occurs *with others* in formal settings, around meeting tables, in conference rooms. It occurs in formal meetings where practitioners are expected to display their thinking and recount practice situations with and for others.

Participants also discussed supervision as another place that reflection occurs. Supervision can be with a professional supervisor outside of workplace arrangements or with a team leader or supervisor within the organisation. Again the main picture here is these encounters occur in office spaces or meeting rooms, across desks or tables and are part of the formal arrangements of work. There were a few exceptions where participants had sourced their own supervision arrangements outside of work for their own professional reasons. Even in these instances supervision was in relation to practice development. Thus, it can be seen as a formal arrangement, which is why I am including it in the discussion here.

Supervision is often tied to reflective practice (Connolly & Harms, 2012; Noble & Irwin, 2009). Supervision was described as generally one-on-one for practitioners and educators but many of these participants discussed participating in supervision as placement students in groups as well as having individual sessions. Participants suggested that this one-on-one supervision was important to their practice development. The following points were made by participant three:

... there was just some issues that had been plaguing me in my employment from day dot that I just – I knew they were issues, [I] didn't know what to do about them and- Yeah and it wasn't just me, it was also that I didn't have supervisors who knew how to do anything other than encourage me to reflect and then say "Now go and fix yourself" and not having that level of skill that I required to say – there is no blame, how are we going to help you move from this to this to becoming more professional ... Anyway finally I got it [supervision] after about seven or eight years and yeah [I] went from leaps and bounds as a professional ... just hugely improved my practice (Participant three, practitioner).

There was a key difference between practitioners and educators on the one hand and students on the other with regard to this aspect of the analysis. While practitioners and educators discussed reflecting about practice *with others* as a routine part of their work, this was not the case for students in terms of their study. For students in this inquiry, reflection was generally seen as an individual matter that took place within the context of assessment. The other main area students discussed with regard to reflection was in group assignments where reflection processes are explicitly built in to the assessment. It should be noted that none of the students in this study had yet attended a placement, which would presumably impact on the opportunities they would have access to with regard to reflecting as described by practitioners and educators. Consequently, students in the study did not discuss reflection in the context of placement learning. They did discuss reflection as being something they did with their student colleagues and others outside of the formal class and *Blackboard* settings. This primarily occurs in informal settings such as pubs, sitting around between classes, in coffee shops or over social media such as *Facebook*⁹⁵. One example from a student in the study was a discussion of the *residential*⁹⁶ was an important opportunity for this student to discuss things with class mates:

... I mean the discussion boards are good on Blackboard when you're in individual units and there's also some of the social work or the older social work students have set up a Facebook page which is, it's sort of alright ... but when you go to the residentials that's good because you can get a lot out then and you talk to people who when you say something they're oh yeah and because such and such, but when you say it to other people [they don't understand what you mean] ... I mean, sometimes I can have a bit of a vent (Participant seven, student)

This brings the discussion to the point of considering the informal spaces where reflection occurs *with others*. While I am characterising these as *informal* spaces they might be also considered as occupying space between the formal and informal. Bruhn (2009, p. 206), in a helpful discussion of the functionality of ethical grey areas within organisations, discusses how boundaries and borders can be "...physical, social, psychological, emotional, and they can be policies, procedures, rules, or formal and informal agreements." When participants

⁹⁵ Facebook is a social networking site that was created in the United States to enable college graduates to stay in touch. It is now used by people all round the world for a range of social reasons (BBC., n. d.)

⁹⁶ 'Residential' at this particular school means the on-campus attendance requirement as specified by the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) (Australian Association of Social Work, 2013a).

outlined their use of reflective practices they often described it occurring within these kinds of borders where they retained the ability to negotiate between the rules, processes and the compliances to meet the uncertain grey moral dilemmas of practice. Conversations such as these are those that might happen in doorways, while standing in offices, on the way out of meetings, in the lunchroom, and in corridors. Some of these moments of talk also occur in cars on the way to visits, or after visits on the way back to the office, or when travelling to appointments.

... I mean I guess when you do that kind of deconstruction at work it often [happens] in the car conversations, doesn't it? The asking of questions – even in the lunchroom somebody [said] that kid really pushes my buttons the other day, [its] just that opportunity to go I know it's not great but ... but you got to take them [those moments] and ask what is it about that child that pushes your buttons? [To ask] what's going on for you in that? (Participant four, practitioner).

One educator gave an example that could be seen as working this border between formal and informal in order to enact a dialogue with a small number of male students in a class dealing with interpersonal violence about how the material might impact or position them. This resulted in a powerful class for the male students but also for the rest of the class as well:

... Well the women didn't know that I'd had the conversation with the men, but it came up in the last class when one of the men said, oh – because you know, I'd asked for feedback and they said, oh I just wanted to flag this that this was an incredibly powerful experience and it sort of says something about the care that you take in your teaching that makes a difference. And the women were like, oh wow, well that's interesting you did that ... So that's how we navigate this trickiness is that we think and we reflect, and we consider the things and "intersectionality" was our theoretical framework, we think about intersections, and then we have a conversation, we invite a dialogue...(Participant six, educator).

Thus, reflective practice occurs in formal meetings, in offices, meeting and conference rooms and is centred on demonstrating thinking and reflection for the purposes of making decisions, reviewing social work practices or service user situations. Reflective practice also occurs in informal spaces where it serves to address the informal learning as well as communicative functions of the workplace. Reflective practice with others can also be seen as an important source of support and relationship building between workers in facing the difficult, uncertain and problematic aspects of practice (Wendt, Schiller, Cheers, Francis, &

Lonne, 2012). In the next section I will briefly consider the locations and spaces where participants reflected alone.

Reflecting alone

This was a minor but nevertheless significant theme in the analysis and is quite a contrast to the previous theme with regard to whether this reflective activity occurs in formal or informal spaces. Reflecting alone was usually discussed as occurring outside of work hours. It could involve walking or driving to and from work, or relaxing in the evening. One participant thought it would be helpful if workplaces allowed more of it to occur during the course of the day:

I find that sometimes reflecting, just having that time to reflect, doesn't always work well when you're sitting in an office. So I think it would be good if more work places allowed [or] valued reflective practice more, so that you could go for a walk and walk ... or you could go and sit somewhere where you can breathe and because being reflective about being in a relaxed space to be able to allow your mind to think about things that you haven't had time to necessarily consider [before]... (Participant one, educator).

These are important strategies for resilience (Grant & Kinman, 2011), which is important for offsetting the exhaustion often associated with burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Quite a number of participants expressed the value of time alone to review and think about the day or their practice in some way.

... I go home and I spend a lot of time ... I go home and it's me and my dog, I spend a lot of time thinking, almost replaying what are standout things for me or what I feel my brain needs to think over more, generally with a red wine in hand (Participant eleven, practitioner).

A small number of participants also described writing a personal journal as another route to reflection and this was an activity they did on their own. Thus, most of the individual reflection described by participants in this study was conducted by themselves and in primarily informal spaces such as walking, on the way to and from work, or through the crafting of a personal journal.

Minor bridge 4 Conclusion

The location and spaces where social workers conduct reflective practices are generally formal in nature. The practice occurs in the company of colleagues, supervisors or team leaders, in offices and in meeting and conference rooms. Social worker practitioners and educators also discussed the importance of informal spaces for reflective processes and

learning. The main difference between practitioners and educators and students emerged with regard to how this reflection is utilised by social workers. Students, at least in this study, experienced it as an assessment process that is primarily conducted alone and through writing. Thus, for students, the activity is primarily a formal one. Students engaged in reflection on their learning mainly through informal mechanisms such as discussion with classmates and others outside formal arenas such as classrooms or Blackboard forums unless it was explicitly required in an assessment. This may change as these particular students experience placement where the requirement to engage in verbal and written reflection will increase. Both educators and practitioners recalled learning to reflect with others through their placements and then later in their roles within organisations as they became more experienced post qualification. It was found that for some participants reflection, at least in some areas of professional practice, had become embedded in the organisational routine structures and norms. This is a line of inquiry that requires further research and the finding is merely suggestive from this sample of participants.

How is reflective practice utilised in learning, teaching and practicing social work?

This line of inquiry in the research set out to understand how students, educators and practitioners learn, teach and practice reflective practice in contemporary Australian social work education and practice. Two different levels of analysis were conducted with the data. The first analysis identified themes associated with the values, attitudes and beliefs of participants. The second considered the means-end, rationale, functions and locations which participants identified as important to the practice.

The findings indicate that social workers place a high value on the ability to be reflective, that it has wide appeal and is considered the hallmark of a 'good' social work professional. Students, educators and practitioners use reflective practice for different but complementary purposes but it is primarily utilised by most participants as part of their problem-solving and interpretative activities in practice. This is particularly the case with practitioners. It is interesting to note that practitioners with one exception did not discuss using reflective

practice with clients. Students, in addition, utilised reflective practice to integrate new material and to accommodate this to their existing experience. Educators incorporated both kinds of activities but demonstrated a greater emphasis on theoretical integration and explanation. The main reflective practice model in use amongst participants appeared to be closer to that outlined by Donald Schon (1983) where reflection is utilised to build practitioner expertise in problem-solving in practice. The critical reflection model was primarily evident only in accounts from educators. The other area of significance is that reflective practice is primarily conducted *with others* and through *formal spaces* according to these participants. Despite this predominance there were also indications that informal spaces are significant sites of sense-making through reflection with others. There were differences between the students in this study and the practitioners and educators in this regard with students more likely to engage in reflection in informal spaces unless required to do so in assessment. Thus, from this study, it is fair to claim that reflective practice remains an important aspect of contemporary social work practice in Australia, at least for the participants in this study. In the next chapter I will consider the research as a whole and outline the implications this has for teaching and learning reflective practice in social work education.

Interlude 7

Interpreting data and representing others

It is true that the generation of data is no problem. The issue becomes what to do with the data once you have it. The interview stage of the study was undertaken last in the sequence of the research. It meant that when it came time to conduct the interviews and subsequent data analysis I had to contend with my own familiarity with the topic. Likewise the interview schedule had been created years before the interviews were actually undertaken. It had basically sat there waiting for the interview stage to commence. When I turned my attention to it fortunately I found it was still relevant but it was also indicative of my understanding back when it had first been written. Nevertheless it came time to do interviews, the interview schedule stood up quite well. I stayed with the original phrase *reflective practice* resisting the temptation to change it to reflect the findings of previous stages. I am glad I did now as it sparked comment from participants about the differences between reflecting and being critical. .

Contending with my own familiarity with the topic also made me really conscious in the interviews of trying not to *lead* the participants in any particular direction. I also noticed that I've gone through stages about the topic, going in and out of a critique over the years of the various models that I've engaged with. By the time of the interviews I had worked some of this out and had achieved a bit of a middle ground position. It also meant that I was less reactive than I might've been if I had conducted interviews earlier during a critique phase. I found it enjoyable to hearing ideas about its use in practice and for educators and students.

Interpreting the data had its own challenges. I became really conscious about that first step of coding. All enjoyment fled, at least for a little while. I felt a bit like I was standing on the edge of a precipice being told to take a leap out but still wanting a safety net. And I told myself all the right things "*there's no right or wrong, there are just better or worse interpretations*". Regardless it still *feels* like you can get it wrong. Once I got underway the analysis took on a life of its own and was challenging in that enjoyable way that jigsaw puzzles are challenging. Also the issues to contend with had changed. Now it was more about how do I restrain the analysis? I mean it would be possible to go on forever.

I have to say that after spending years by *myself* (figuratively speaking) with only literature and archival documents to contend with, interviewing others was wonderful. Absurdly it felt like *real* research and even though rationally I know the rest of the thesis is *real* research this felt more real somehow. Finding participants, managing consent forms, the audio equipment, transcription services, collating and sorting out the data was absurdly comforting and enjoyable. Despite having undertaken and been part of many research projects before somehow this felt different. I felt like an apprentice being able to make my own widget for the first time.

Chapter 8

Track 4 – In what ways can reflective practice be understood in social work education and practice in Australia?

The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical like in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them (Michel Foucault *What is enlightenment?* 1984).

Introduction

This is the final track of the album. It brings together the findings of the three studies and addresses the overarching research question about the ways in which reflective practice is understood in social work. In another sense this chapter also brings together the central melodies of this extended rhapsody on reflective practice as I attempt to, metaphorically speaking, interweave the protest music of *critique* with the call and response melody of gospel and interpretation. Both of these are underpinned somewhat by the complex arrangements that characterise post-structuralism to incorporate the melody of progressive rock. This part of the thesis aims to bring these melodies together to form the backdrop to this last track.

The research overall has occurred within a broad hermeneutic framework and this accounts for why the overarching question of the study is aimed at *understanding*. Figure 17 below (also presented in chapter one) illustrates this hermeneutic framework:

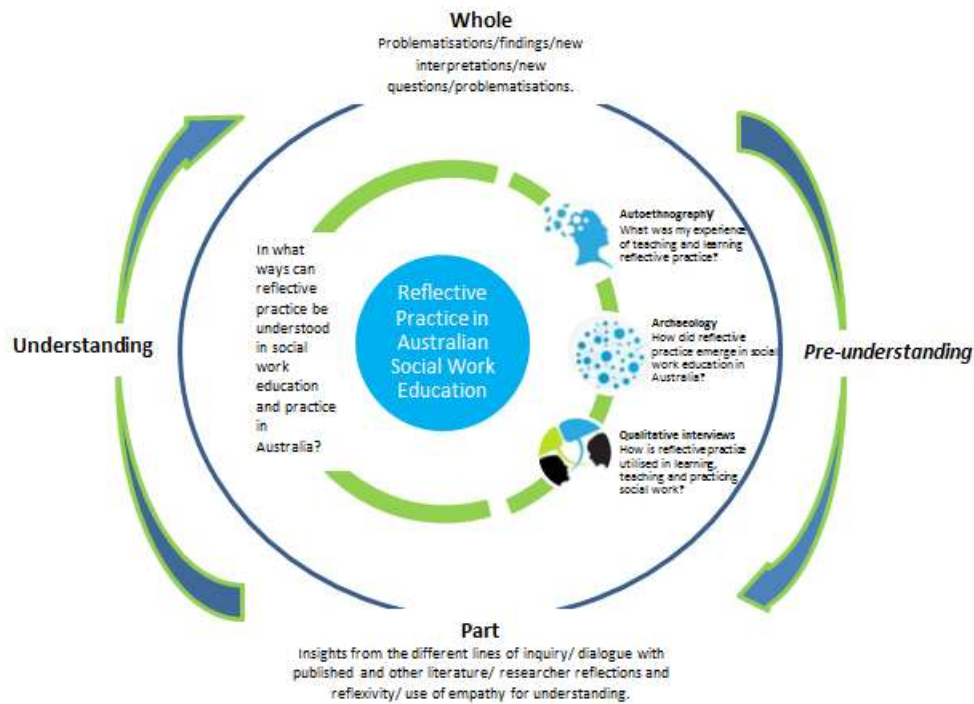


Figure 17: Graphic of the whole study

This research has demonstrated, through the findings from the three studies, my own reflections, and dialogue with published and other literature, that reflective practice can be understood as:

- A capability;
- A form of critical thinking;
- A discipline response to the changing contexts of social work practice;
- A way of understanding and theorising from practice.

I will address each of these as verses and my recommendations are presented as bridges. An ultimate goal in undertaking this research has been to seek ways to improve the outcomes for social work students in teaching and learning. In light of this the final verse of this track presents the implications of my findings for social work pedagogy.

Verse 1: Reflective practice as a capability

This research has demonstrated that the ability to reflect is a capability all ‘normal’ humans can develop. It is a capability that allows people to understand the conditions in which they find themselves as well as their own impact on those conditions. Moreover, the use of this capability has become an essential aspect of professional practice in social work. While it may be that it is a *normal* capability, this does not mean that all people use the capacity to

reflect in the same way and about the same things. Nor does it mean that there are not individual differences in the development and use of the capability.

It was found in this research that there still exists considerable confusion in social work about terms for the different ways the capability might be described. The main source of this confusion can be attributed to the way in which the social work *profession* uses knowledge drawn from a range of different *disciplines* such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and political science. All disciplines consider the capability through their own conceptual apparatus. The main terms adopted to describe this capability within social work education and practice are reflection, reflective practice, reflectivity, reflexivity, and critical reflection. All these terms have come to mean slightly different things and may be traced genealogically back to a specific discipline, a task beyond the scope of this particular research. Nevertheless what this research has established is that the terms adopted will vary, even within social work, according to who is speaking about it. It was found that educators are more likely to use the terms reflexivity and critical reflection, practitioners and students are more likely to use the terms reflective practice and reflection. Despite this confusion there is widespread agreement amongst participants in this research, and in the professional literature, that the capability of *reflection* is important and valuable to professional practice.

Bridge

Based on this research I offer the following recommendations with regard to the use of terms about this capability:

- *Reflexivity* should be adopted as the term used to describe the 'normal' capability human beings possess to consider the social conditions in which they find themselves and the impact of these conditions on them. This includes the ability to consider their impact on said conditions, in addition to that of others.
- The term *reflective practice* should be reserved for the use of reflexivity in service to professional practice. Reflective practice therefore describes the capability as it is utilised for problem-solving, building understanding from and about practice situations, the use of self and for improving and learning from practice.

- The term *critical reflection* should be reoriented to become a descriptor for the many different kinds of *systematic reflection* available for consideration of contemporary social conditions, how these have emerged and the possibilities of changing or moving beyond them. The kinds of systematic reflection are *critique, interpretation, deconstruction, problematisation, evaluation, and genealogy*, all of which have their own distinct forms and grammars (Tully, 1989).

These forms of systematic reflection can be explicitly taught to students. Critical reflection, understood this way can then be distinguished from *reflective practice* because each form of systematic reflection orients reasoning about problems in a different way. For the remainder of the chapter I will use these terms in this way.

Verse 2: Critical thinking and reflexivity

Critical thinking is a crucial ingredient for the extension of reflexivity into professional practice. This research has explored the learning, use and teaching of reflexivity and has established that being able to think critically is an important aspect of what participants describe as reflective practice and/or reflexivity. There is an issue however. Due the adoption of particular approaches to knowledge within Australian social work the term *critical* has acquired a specific meaning within the contemporary period. There is a tendency to describe *critical thinking* within social work as *theoretical thinking* that incorporates key assumptions drawn from different kinds of *critical theory*. The two kinds of thinking are not synonymous. In contrast the literature establishing reflective judgement for professional practice describes the need for critical thinking skills such as deductive and inductive thinking, bias detection, and hypothesis creation and testing, assess and evaluate evidence, propositions, argument and claims to truth. It is through this process that different ways to think about knowledge and truth become available for students. Development of more complex epistemological reasoning that contributes to reflexivity depends on the development of this critical thinking “mindware” (Stanovich, 2011). This development is crucial to the ability of social workers to engage with the ill-structured problems that characterise professional practice.

Critical theories, in contrast, are themselves based on complex epistemological arguments and are forms of critique aimed at uncovering deficits and engaging in struggles with existing political and social arrangements. Critical theories thus may be conceptualised as public political claims made with regard to questions of gender, social inequality, ethnicity and culture, sexuality and ability, ecology, social and human rights (Tully, 2008). Such claims are themselves extended *arguments*, and as such they should be open to testing and evaluation (Tully, 1999). Further, the main assumptions Australian social work has drawn from these theoretical perspectives are the links between the personal and political, the existence of inequality and oppression and the centrality of understanding and resisting dominant power relations for enacting social change.

Without instruction in techniques of critical thinking skills, modelled as forms of public reasoning, students will tend to adopt prevailing theoretical ideas as forms of *certain* knowledge and use this to structure their understanding and to produce feelings of certainty (White & Stancombe, 2003). The introduction of theoretical positions without engaging also in instruction in basic critical thinking early and all through the curriculum may undermine student development of reflexivity for engaging in both *reflective practice* and *critical reflection*.

Bridge

My recommendations for increasing the reflexive capability of social workers through education are as follows:

- The social work profession invest effort into continuing professional development of social work practitioners and educators in the use and instruction of critical thinking skills.
- The Australian Association of Social Workers in their Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards clearly outline definitions of critical thinking skills, in addition to the kinds of knowledge essential for Australian social work courses.

Verse 3: A disciplinary response to the changing contexts of social work practice

This research has demonstrated that the development of reflective practice models arose in relation to changes in welfare state arrangements. Social work as a discipline was very vulnerable to these changes because it is in large part a child of the welfare state. Increased rates of change in these arrangements intensified the need for reflexivity and this in turn increased the focus on the practitioner-self and the regulation of social worker conduct. The research also established that while the changes to welfare state arrangements began in earnest across the 1980s, adaption of early models of reflective practice only occurred in the late 1990s. By the early part of the 2000s, a particular model had assumed prominence through the dispersion of some of its key ideas within the formal documentation of the national accrediting body, the Australian Association of Social Workers, in addition to key Australian authored textbook materials.

This research has established that the main model adopted and adapted for social work in Australia embeds a critique of positivism (Fook & Gardner, 2007). This critique accords with already existing ideas about social work practice as being an *art*, rather than a *science*. In addition to this critique, this model is explicitly informed by two kinds of critical reflection: *critique* and *deconstruction*. Critique orients the thinking of those using the model to an interrogation of the gap between the conditions of the present (*the real*) and those of future ends (*the ideal*) on the basis of an already existing set of assumptions about the use of power, the nature of social justice and the need for equality. This is a fairly standard Kantian form of reason which has been adapted to the contemporary period by Jurgen Habermas (Owen, 1999) into a form of critical theory. This kind of approach is well known in social work as it underpins and informs radical or critical perspectives. The deconstruction aspect of the model attends primarily to the way language is utilised to support and explain power relations and binary oppositions that "... create the basis for political hierarchy and social domination (male/female, freeman/slave, propertied/landless, Christian/other, citizen/inhuman), power differentials that motivate the repression" (Holland, n. d.). Both are forms of *critical reflection*.

While this model provides a powerful lens with which to understand contemporary conditions of practice it does have its limits. One key limit is that the model adopts a juridical⁹⁷ view of power based in social contract theory. While this may be appropriate in some cases where the analysis is aimed at considering rights and duties, it is less helpful in identifying the practices of subjection that are concerned with conduct. If reflective practice is meant as a form of resistance to neoliberal practices, then the current critical reflection model will not assist with analysis in this sense. It is akin to using a different language. Different forms of critical reflection such as problematisation and genealogy are better placed to outline and trace non-juridical practices that might contribute to political subjectification. Examination of these intensifying subjectification processes in professional practice would be an important route to resisting them and thus acting differently.

Bridge

The following recommendations are made based on these findings:

- Curriculums of social work courses could consider offering a range of different models that may be utilised to engage in reflective practice.
- When teaching reflective practice models to students, educators, practitioners and field educators it is important to make plain the kinds of *critical reflection* processes embedded within the models. This will assist in teaching critical reflection as an *orientation to thinking* about different the kinds of problems that emerge in practice.
- The educators and field educators engage in professional development in different *kinds* of critical reflection in order to be able to demonstrate these diverse orientations to thinking. The aspiration here is that this may widen the current disciplinary repertoires of critical reflection beyond Kantian/Habermasian critique and Derridean deconstruction.

⁹⁷ Classical liberalism – associated with Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau – conceived of power as the *right to death* derived from the kinds of power exercised by monarchs (James & Wilson, 2011, 3:25). Enlightenment theorists considered this to be an illegitimate use of power. These ideas underpin modern post-Enlightenment social contract theory and ultimately the discourse of human rights (Heywood, 1992). The term used to describe this kind of power is *juridical* or it is sometimes referred to as *sovereign* power (Dean, 1999). Thus juridical power is associated with rights, duties and the law. There are other ways that power can be exercised usually through norms and the right to life, later discussed by Foucault as *bio-politics* (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1978).

Verse 4: Reflection as way of understanding and theorising from practice

This research has identified that reflexivity is a way for social workers to deal with new, troubling, or novel situations. Additionally reflexivity is considered to be a way of preventing too much habitual action within practice and thus increasing social worker responsiveness to clients and co-workers. This research has demonstrated that the development of routines can be seen as a normal aspect of practice because they potentially free up the cognitive resources required for engaging in the critical thinking and problem solving associated with reflective practice. This research has also established that reflective practice is part of dealing with non-routine aspects of professional social work practice.

Theorising from practice is a disciplinary phrase that describes the development of practice wisdom. This wisdom is sometimes codified into textbooks and papers but it is still more likely to be passed orally through talk and in the observations of practice itself. Engagement in reflective practice has come to be seen as a way of building practice wisdom and learning from the activities of practice. There is a high premium placed on development of practice wisdom within the social work profession in Australia. Moreover, there exists a fairly dominant view within social work that *practice* is the key route to acquiring and learning from practice wisdom. Within education settings, field education is an important part of this process. This aspect of social work education in Australia has thus been an important site of pedagogical interest and development within the profession. Somewhat less attention has been paid to the development of curricula materials that might support the acquisition of *underpinning capabilities* that support the development of practice wisdom *prior* to field placement.

For example, there are differences in how the learning takes place within the university curriculum and how it might take place within the “situated curriculum” (Gherardi, Nicolini, & Odella, 1998) of field education or, indeed, the workplace. These differences emerged clearly in this research. For instance, reflective practice assessment at university is primarily in written form and remains, for the most part, highly individualised. In contrast, in the situated curriculum of workplaces and field education, reflective practice is more

likely to occur *with others* and through discussion. While students often engage in public reflection in small groups, these forms of reflective practice are rarely assessed. On field placement student thinking about practice forms the basis of supervision and is open to scrutiny and assessment for the entire period. These are significant differences in how *reflexivity* translates into forms of *reflective practice* and *critical reflection*.

Bridge

The following recommendations are made on the basis of these findings:

- Assessment in curriculums prior to field placement should embed opportunities for students to acquire the skills of reflecting out-loud with others.
- Curriculum developers in social work should consider what aspects of the curriculum might support student development of *reflexivity* and embed this *prior* to field placement.

Conclusion

In this research I set out to problematise *reflective practice* and I have attempted to do so using three different forms of *critical reflection*: interpretation, archaeology and critique. I have done so in the spirit of taking up Foucault's challenge, outlined in the quote at the beginning of this 'track'. I have used my own reflexive capability to examine what I first experienced as a *limit* imposed by my professions' adoption of certain kinds of models of critical reflection. When I began this research I sensed this merely as a form of disquiet with the models I had myself learnt so well and was attempting to teach and model to students. As the research has progressed it has become clear that there are various ways to approach reflexivity and that its use in social work practice is valued and important for dealing with the contexts social workers contend with. The role of reflective practice in learning from field placement has also become apparent and more research on this before, during and after field practicums is an area for further exploration. Moreover, I have come to a greater appreciation of the many different kinds of critical reflection available to our profession in developing our understanding of contemporary conditions. My hope now is that through undertaking this hermeneutic journey this research will contribute in a modest way to widening the repertoire of *critical reflection* available to our profession and that this will assist us in testing the limits of our present with a view to going beyond them.

Album credits

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Appendix A – Outline of reflective practice models

Models of reflective practice

Introduction

This is an outline of a number of *models* for reflective practice that are currently in circulation within the contemporary social work field in Australia. It was beyond the scope of the research to include every possible model available to social work educators in Australia and thus not every model that is currently in circulation has been included here. I have confined my discussion to those models that emerged through conduct of the archaeology and where relevant to the subject positions identified. These were important 'surfaces' where reflective practice emerged. An example of such a 'surface' would be field education.

I have placed the Schon model first as most of the other models refer to this in the course of their development. I have outlined the models according to the way they are described by their authors. I then offer an assessment of the main forms of *critical reflection* that the models appear to be utilising through their approach to reflective practice. Hence this survey represents a modest attempt at mapping the *kinds* of critical reflection that may be informing a few of the reflective practice models currently circulating in contemporary social work in Australia.

Schon's reflective practice model (Schon, 1983, 1987)

Schon's model was developed through his engagement in considering knowledge in relation to professional practice and owes an explicit debt to the work of John Dewey. The need for reflection is precipitated by an encounter with a "puzzling, or troubling, or interesting phenomenon..." (Schon, 1983, p. 50). Reflection-in-action is considered central to the artistry of professional practice and is a "repertoire of expectations, images and techniques" (Schon, 1983, p. 60) which increasingly disappears from view as being *learnt processes* in a formal sense. In Schon's view reflection-in-action is practice which is informed by tacit knowledge understood as knowing that is embodied practice (Hiles, 2014). This knowledge is informed by practice situated within the body that then allows our conscious attention to encompass other aspects of our surroundings to provide guides to action. Contrary to how tacit

knowledge is discussed in some parts of the literature on reflective practice as implicit or intuitive knowledge (Fook, 1999; Redmond, 2004), it is the embodied dimension of practice that is difficult to articulate and is thus implicit. We can say that the attention paid to our surroundings due to novel, surprising, puzzling or interesting aspects is made possible by this tacit knowledge, and thus this attention is accessible for reflection processes (Peck, 2006).

Schon's examples for the development of reflective practice rely mainly on participation in discussion with others (Schon, 1983, 1987). These others are ones who can assist with bringing any tacit dimensions and actions to the conscious awareness of the practitioner. This accords with Peck's (2006) discussion of the way in which *apprenticing* assists with acquisition of the embodied aspects of the practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss these as *communities of practice* and thus Jordan (2010, p. 392) too emphasises the *social* nature of reflection-in-action in her discussion of the acquisition of the skill in a nursing context. This is a key part of Schon's work that has been taken forward into subsequent models based in social work. The model includes the following aspects:

- A rejection of positivist notions of formal theory for professional practice (Schon, 1983).
- Acknowledgement that there is a gap between what we say we do (espoused theory) and what is actually done (theory-in-use) (Argyris & Schon, 1974).
- Reflective practice involves reconciling this gap and modifying the theory in use. This can occur through discussion with a reflective coach or with others (Schon, 1987).
- Reflection-in-action is said to occur as the action is unfolding in relation to novel, surprising or troubling occurrences outside of the routine habitual aspects of practice that have been acquired through experience.
- Reflection-on-action occurs *post hoc* to explain the events or phenomena. Note: It is not necessarily associated to the *fallacy* of relating events to causes after the event has occurred.

- Discussion with others facilitates *post hoc* reflection-on-action but it may not facilitate access to the tacit dimension as this is the aspect of practice considered implicit in human knowing (Polanyi 1958, cited in Peck, 2006).
- Participation in *doing* practice enables aspects of practice to become part of the embodied tacit dimension of experience. The acquisition of this allows for attention to be directed to *reflection-in-action*.

This model utilises forms of critical reflection that might be most characterised as an interpretive (Tully, 1989). By this I mean the model is aimed at understanding the meaning of experience in the *context* of practice. Moreover the model may be situated within a pragmatist tradition as it can be traced back to Dewey (Koopman, 2013).

The Fook and Gardner model of critical reflection (2007)

This model is the most cited in Australian social work literature. Aimed at, and developed firstly with practitioners or senior masters-level students with significant practice experience (Pease & Fook, 1999), the model has since been adapted to classrooms (Bay & Macfarlane, 2010; Morley, 2011) and workplaces (Fook, Gardner, & Ebook Library., 2012). This model is largely informed by Schon's model, outlined above, with the addition of critical theory (Fook, 2002; Mezirow, 1990) and deconstructive techniques derived from postmodern theory (Fook & Askeland, 2006; Fook & Gardner, 2007). The model has the following characteristics:

- It is generally undertaken in small groups of no more than eight to twelve participants who are in professional practice over three sessions.
- Participants are asked to prepare a critical incident⁹⁸ (Butterfield et al., 2005), or a description of practice where an event has troubled, surprised, or is considered, novel, or out of routine. This is usually written by participants before the first session.
- Group participants take turns outlining their critical incident.

⁹⁸ The original critical incident technique has been adapted by Fook (2002) to serve as a practice tool and as "... a device and process reconstructing personal practice along more critically empowering lines." (p. 98). Fook further suggests, contrary to the specific parameters set out by Flanagan (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005), that a critical incident can be "... any happening which is significant to a person for whatever reason." (Fook, 2002, p. 98).

- Reflective dialogue on these critical incidents is facilitated using a questioning process designed to elicit responses that uncover the following aspects from the participant about the incident:
 - Assumptions
 - Power relations
 - Language practices
 - Values, beliefs and attitudes
 - Own personal experience and/or biographical aspects that might impact on the interpretation of events described in the critical incident.
 - New forms of practice for the future.
 - Direct involvement in discussion by facilitators is preferred.
 - These insights are discussed by the group with everyone taking turns to present their incident or practice for discussion.
 - A culture of open dialogue and support is required for the process to be successful (Fook & Askeland, 2007)
 - There is a need to clarify with the group that there is a difference between groups of a therapeutic nature and this more educative/supervisory critical reflection process (Fook & Askeland, 2007). Having said that the authors acknowledge it is not uncommon for personal issues to be raised within these settings and to become linked to practice experiences.

The authors maintain an emphasis on building practice *knowledge* from attention to the implicit aspects of practice and the gap between what practitioners think they believe or are doing in practice and what they are actually doing. This is one of the key links to Schon's model and the stated issue of espoused theory and theory-in-use. This language from Schon is also utilised in the model and discussion. In this respect the model is oriented to interrogating the gap between the *ideal* and *real* in social work practice through forms of communicative critique (Owen, 1999). We can therefore situate the model within forms of critical reflection that owe a debt to Kant via Habermas (Owen, 1999) with its emphasis the use of reason for the purposes of testing claims to knowledge, sincerity, and authenticity in the spheres of social relations, that is morality and law.

Thus this model is a form of communicative action that is broadly juridical, meaning that it still relies on a liberal framework for its force as it is by notions of the subject being both the object and subject of power relations (James & Wilson, 2011). Moreover, despite the use of postmodern phrases and ideas about discourse, power, and deconstruction attributed in large part to the work of Foucault (Fook, 2002; Fook & Gardner, 2007) the model does not meet the conditions for the forms of critical reflection associated with Foucauldian archaeology or genealogy (Tully, 1989). Rather, it is a reflective practice model that utilises forms of critical reflection that are interpretive, critical and deconstructive.

Redmond's reflective practice model (Redmond, 2004)

Heavily based on Schon's reflective practice model, this example of reflective practice is also significantly influenced by Habermas (1968, cited in Redmond, 2004), Mezirow (1991) and Brookfield (1999), all of whom can be situated within the terrain of critical theory in social theory and education respectively. This model was designed explicitly for a teaching environment aimed at assisting health and social care students to work productively and equitably with service users. The focus of the model is therefore about creating an environment "where students could achieve increasing levels of critically reflective learning." (Redmond, 2004, p. 55). By this Redmond means engaging in forms of critical reflection that are informed by critical theory.

The model has five main phases⁹⁹. These correspond to the same steps or processes outlined in models of reflective learning and critical reflection outlined by Dewey (1933), Argyris and Schon (1974), Mezirow (1991); Habermas (1981, cited in Redmond, 2004) and Brookfield (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999). I have indicated the corresponding influences within brackets with Redmond's phases indicated in italics:

1. *Introduction to reflection* (Habitual action (Dewey); unresolved dilemma (Mezirow); technical practices (Habermas); habitual working processes (Brookfield) and tacit knowledge (Argyris and Schon).
2. *Exposure to new ideas/cases* (New data to inform situation (Dewey); trigger event (Mezirow, Brookfield); exposure to new ideologies (Habermas) and inconsistencies in practice exposed (Argyris and Schon).
3. *Simple model rotation*, which means to change their view of the service user through the use of mirroring (intellectualisation of problem (Dewey); perspective

⁹⁹ Redmond refers to them as *phases* rather than steps so I am following her lead here (Redmond, 2004).

transformation (Mezirow); reassessment of previous meanings (Habermas); discomfort and exploration of old working practices (Brookfield) and knowledge-on-action (Argyris and Schon)

4. *Full model rotation*, which means to consider both original ideas, the ideas from step three and any other perspective generated by looking at other aspects of the situation or case (testing of new hypothesis (Dewey); emancipatory learning (Mezirow); emancipatory learning domain (Habermas); development of alternative perspectives (Brookfield) and reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action – double-loop testing (Argyris and Schon)
5. *Meta-reflection*, which means to reflect on the reflection itself (Redmond, 2004, p. 63) (reflection and evaluation of hypothesis (Dewey); reflection on transformation (Mezirow); emancipatory learning with self-reflection (Habermas); integration of new approaches (Brookfield) and critical reflection (Argyris and Schon).

This model may be considered to use a combination of different kinds of *critical reflection* (J. Tully, 1989) as it incorporates methods of critique, interpretation, and evaluation. This model also incorporates a psychodynamic step in its third phase called *mirroring* which has links to another UK model of reflective practice developed by Gillian Ruch¹⁰⁰ (2000, 2002; 2007; Ruch et al., 2010). The Redmond model does not appear to have been substantially taken up in the Australian social work education scene as a model for teaching reflective practice, although it is cited in literature associated with the Fook and Gardner model (Hickson, 2013). This is why it has been included here.

Placement learning model by Cleak & Wilson (2007)

This model is based on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model incorporating learning theory from Piaget, Lewin and Dewey (Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015). The model includes four modes of learning which are *concrete experience (CE)*; *reflective observation (RO)*; *abstract conceptualisation (AC)* and *active experimentation (AE)* (H. M. Cleak & Wilson, 2007). I have included it here because Cleak and Wilson is a key text for Social Work field placement students across Australia. The table over the page sets out the characteristics of each mode:

Table 13: Kolb's modes of learning

Mode of Learning	Aspects
<i>Concrete experience (CE)</i>	Uses senses to participate in situations; develops emotional rapport with others; uses intuition to explore situations; explores the here and now; and concerned with practical outcomes.
<i>Reflective observation (RO)</i>	Accurately recalls observations and perceptions about individuals and transactions; distinguishes between trivial and essential information; keeps an open mind; is impartial in information gathering; with-holds judgements until all possible sources of data are accounted for; and emphasizes reflection over action.
<i>Abstract</i>	Identifies relationships between concepts; draws conclusions from the analysis of data; develops

¹⁰⁰ This model is not included in this survey as it did not substantially emerge as one utilised in Australia.

Mode of Learning	Aspects
conceptualisation (AC)	tentative explanations; develops generalisations and principles from the information; and develops a plan or proposal to address the identified issues
Active experimentation (AE)	Tests ideas and concepts already developed; attempts new activities in testing the ideas; tests hypotheses by active experimentation; Identifies outcomes that have immediate applications; and emphasises practical application instead of reflective understanding.

These four modes represent different strategies for learning that people use over time and which develop into preferences based on decisions made in relation to new learning experiences. Kolb's experiential learning theory (KELT) was then developed into a Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) by Honey and Mumford (1992) for use as a training package. It is this that has been adapted by Cleak and Wilson (2007, pp. 18-22) for the purposes of field placement. Thus, the model a combination of KELT, solutions focussed therapy adapted for practice teaching (Bucknell, 2000), supervision processes drawn from Kadushin (1976) and reflection based broadly on the *reflection-on-action* aspect of Schon's (1983) model. This is represented in the figure below:

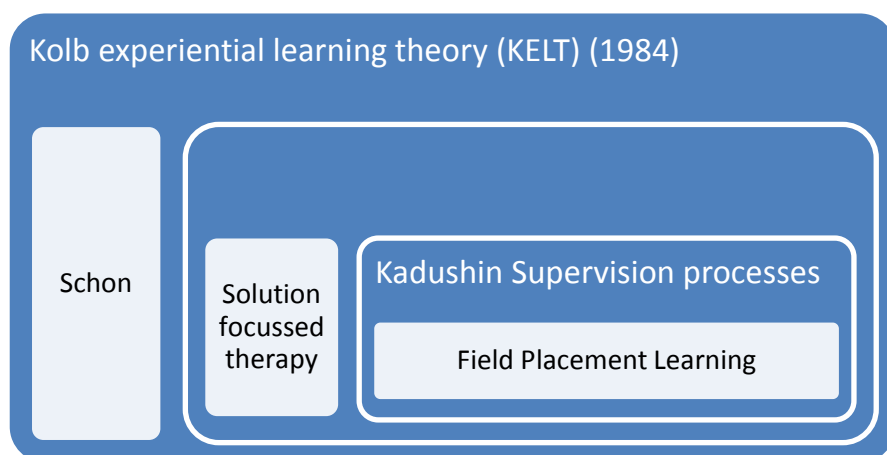


Figure 18: Representation of the Cleak and Wilson model of reflective learning

In the text these aspects are discussed in a number of different chapters. For example chapter 6 includes a discussion of critical reflection for teaching and learning, however this examination is not linked particularly to the techniques for reflection that are outlined in chapter 8. The chapter on critical reflection also describes different kinds of reflection in relation to a reference to Taylor (2004) for which there is unfortunately no end-text citation. The use of Taylor (2004 cited in Cleak & Wilson, 2007, p. 53) is interesting because it is this source that introduces links to broader notions of reflection beyond the instrumental. Indeed the *critical* in critical reflection is "... a belief that supervision should be linked to an emancipatory and empowering process that maximises a working partnership" (Cleak & Wilson, 2007, p. 50) and that reflection assists with "...narrowing the gap between theory

and practice” (p. 51). In chapter 8 of this text there is also a discussion of various techniques which can be used to engage in learning whilst on placement. All of them offer practices that would aid the development of reflective practice. Not all of these techniques are relevant to this discussion, however so I have focussed on the technique that explicitly included using a critical incident and a series of reflective questions for students to undertake. These questions are outlined below outline a series of questions to aid in reflecting on critical incidents on field placement:

Table 14: Questions devised by Cleak and Wilson to aid reflexivity

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What images do you recall? 2. What sounds, smells and tactile sensations do you recall? 3. Which people or comments or practice stands out in your mind? <p>Next consider the affective domain – reflect on how you felt:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What was the high or low spot of the incident? 5. Were you surprised, angered, elated, curious, confused or depressed by anything in the experience? Describe your mood and feelings. 6. What do you think others were feeling? <p>Now interpret the events</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What have you learned from the incident? 8. From this experience, what can you conclude about your understanding of and skills in assessment or analysis? 9. What was your key insight or learning? 10. How does this relate to your framework for practice? <p>Finally consider your decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. What skills and areas of understanding do you need to develop further as a result of your reflection? 12. What would this require? 13. What methods does the experience reinforce as valuable for future practice?

These reflective practice techniques can be seen as oriented in a technical and practical sense (Ruch, 2000) to practice. This is because the techniques are aimed at increasing the self-awareness skills of students with regard to their own repertoires of knowledge and methods for social work practice. In terms of a taxonomy of different kinds of *critical reflection* this reflective practice model is broadly evaluative and interpretative (Ruch, 2000; J. Tully, 1989). The model is also task focussed in its orientation towards uncovering and addressing gaps in knowledge and skills that might emerge for the person engaging in the technique.

The circular process of reflective practice (Connolly & Harms, 2012)

This reflective practice model is informed by the work of Social Work academic Michael Sheppard (1998) and can be described as a practice-led framework. Practice-led in this context means that what social workers do is driven by the exigencies of practice and this is contrasted by Harms and Connolly (2012, p. 165) to practice which is theory driven. Attention therefore is firmly on the worker-in-situation and the action and needs of the practice situation. Connolly and Harms also incorporate Fook's (1999) notion of reflectivity as "... the actions and interpretations, social and cultural background and personal history, emotional aspects of experience and personally held assumptions and values that influence the situation" (p. 199). Lastly, they also incorporate an acknowledgement that "[T]he knowledgeability of human actors is always bounded on the one hand by the unconscious and on the other by the unacknowledged conditions/unintended consequences of action" (Giddens, 1984, cited in Connolly & Harms, 2012, p. 165). The authors see reflection/reflexivity/critical reflection as in service to "... understanding and improving the use of self in professional practice." (Connolly & Harms, 2012, p. 165). As with other models it is practice situations which form part of any eliciting triggers for reflection. This is seen as a dynamic process that operates between the worker and situation and involves the background utilisation of professional ethical standards, knowledge and interpretive lenses. For these authors supervision is crucial to this process and is also important to building practice knowledge for the social worker. Supervision is therefore a key reflective space and this is where the model links with that of Schon's (1983) more closely.

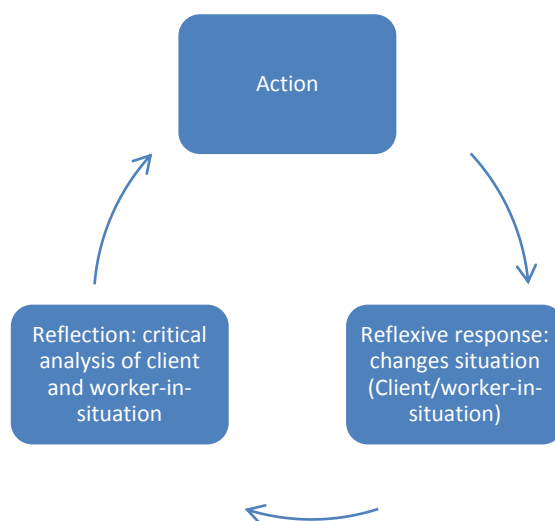


Figure 19: Connolly and Harms model of reflective practice

Critical reflection in this model is about considering power relations in the interaction with clients. Reflexive in this model refers to the triggering situations in practice and these authors link this reflexivity in two distinct ways: one is in relation to social conditions described by work in sociology through Bourdieu and Giddens (Connolly & Harms, 2012). This is interesting as it is not clear from the explanation which aspects of these authors work is being referred to. Is it Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity as related to habitus (Archer, 2010; Bourdieu, 1999) for example? Is it Giddens' ideas about the modernity (Beck et al., 1994) and the impact of this on individual need for reflexivity about social conditions? In a subsequent paragraph the term reflexivity is then linked to transference and counter-transference, concepts more attributable to theories in the psychodynamic tradition.

Lastly critical is treated as synonymous with *critical social work* which is informed by feminist, anti-oppressive and anti-racist ideas (Connolly & Harms, 2012). This collection of theories are grouped through their linking of personal troubles and public issues (Infed.org, 2012). In this respect, therefore, this model meets the conditions of *critical reflection* but is primarily interpretive in its format. This is because the primary focus for engaging in reflective practice/critical reflection within this model is to build meaning and sense from practice situations for service to wider professional goals.

Conclusion

This survey has outlined a number of the reflective practice models available to Australian Social Work educators, practitioners and students. I have not included all possible models within the survey, instead confining my discussion to models that emerged from my conduct of the archaeology and the initial literature review for the research. Each model utilises different forms of *critical reflection* and many include more than one kind in their orientation of thinking towards practice.

Appendix B - Journal article

Watts, L. (2015). An Autoethnographic Exploration of Learning and Teaching Reflective Practice. *Social Work Education*, 34(4), 363-376. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2015.1016903

Abstract

Learning and demonstrating reflective skills for practice is a key requirement for students and practitioners in Social Work in Australia. Yet teaching and assessing reflective practice continues to present a number of practical and ethical issues for educators. This paper will discuss reflective practice in the context of an autoethnographic study that researched learning to be a social worker and educator. The findings from the study suggest that educators should be cautious about the extent to which educational activities direct attention to student selves for the purposes of building skills in reflective practice. The conclusions suggest that the moral order of the discipline, the hidden curriculum and the course culture in addition to the actual activities can have a significant impact on the extent to which reflective practice assessments deliver learning benefits to students.

Appendix C - A possible model

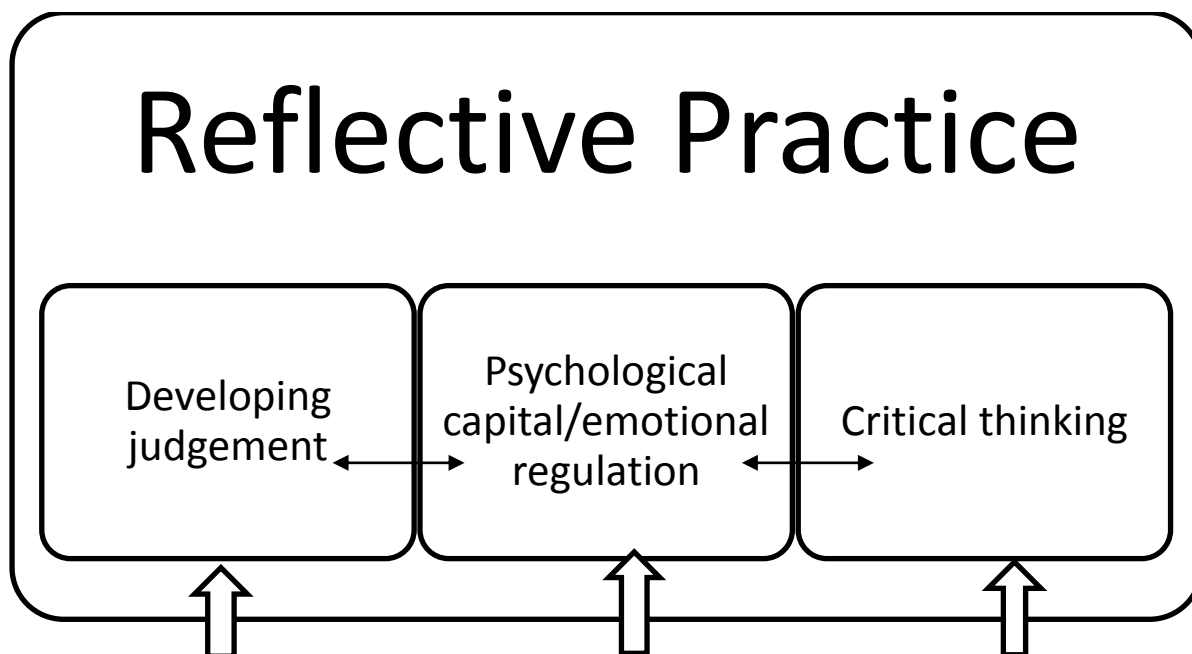


Figure 20: Representation of different aspects of reflective practice

Problem definition (King & Kitchener, 1994; Wood, 1983); **Heuristics (rule of thumb)** (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Mellers, Schwartz, & Cooke, 1998); **Decision making** (Rilling & Sanfey, 2011); **Social Work** (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Helm, 2011; Keddell, 2011; Tsang, 2007; 2013)

Emotion (Damasio, 2010; Fivush, 2011; Levenson, 2011; Oatley, 2009, 2010) **Social Psychology** (Eich, Handy, Holmes, Lerner, & McIsaac, 2013) **Psychological capital** (Carver, 2005; Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, 2011); **Psychopathology** (Carcione et al., 2002; Dadds et al., 2009; Goodman, Quas, & Ogle, 2010; Wells, 2000); **Self-regulation** (Heatherton, 2011); **Social Work** (Gerdes, Segal, Jackson, & Mullins, 2011; Graham & Shier, 2010; Milner, 2001; Morrison, 2007; Rai, 2012)

Rationality (Evans, 2008, Stanovich, 1999; Stanovich, 2011); **Norms of adult development in cognition** (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Kallio, 2011; Labouvie-Vief & Diehl, 2000); **metacognition** (Arango-Muñoz, 2011); **critical thinking** (Bizzell, 1992; Moon, 2008); **learning** (Muis & Franco, 2009); **problem based learning** (Downing, Kwong, Chan, Lam, & Downing, 2009; Trevithick, 2008); **Learning social work** (Osmond, 2005); **reflexivity** (Archer, 2010; Lynch, 2000)

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Appendix E -Information letter and consent forms

Request for your participation in research: Reflective Practice in Social Work Education

To whom it may concern,

I am a PhD student enrolled at the Faculty of Regional Professional Studies at Edith Cowan University. I am conducting a study investigating how reflective practice is understood in social work education in Australia. My supervisor is Dr Vicki Banham from the School of Psychology and Social Science. My study is a mixed method study designed to consider the following research question:

In what ways can reflective practice be understood in social work education and practice in Australia?

Interviewing social work practitioners, educators, students and social work field educators is a part of the third stage of the study. I would welcome the opportunity to interview you to find out your thoughts on reflective practice within social work education and practice. It is expected that the interviews would take approximately 40 minutes and can be conducted either by phone or at a location convenient to participants.

If you have any questions about this research project you may contact me on 9780 7732 or my supervisor Dr Vicki Banham on 08 6304 5530. This project has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee (No. 5875WATTS). If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
100 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
(08) 6304 2170
research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

At a later date the findings of the project may be published in order to disseminate the findings of the research. All participants will receive a copy of the findings of the research.

Yours sincerely,
Lynelle Watts
Faculty of Regional Professional Studies
Edith Cowan University
Bunbury WA 6230
lwatts@ecu.edu.au
09 9780 7732



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ABN54361483361

Consent Form

I have been asked to participate in a research project on reflective practice in social work education

I understand that as a participant in this project I will be interviewed and will be asked questions in relation to reflective practice.

I understand that although I may not benefit directly from participating in the research I understand that my participation will be recorded and the answers I give may be used to construct case studies of reflective practice for possible future use in teaching social work students. I understand that my participation will be kept confidential and that my identity will be kept anonymous.

I have read the information above and I agree to participate in this research, realising that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

I agree that the research data gathered in this study may be used in subsequent research studies and may also be published provided my information and my participation are not identifiable.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F - Recruitment posters for students.

AUSTRALIA
ECU
EDITH COWAN **UNIVERSITY**

Reflective practice in Social Work Education

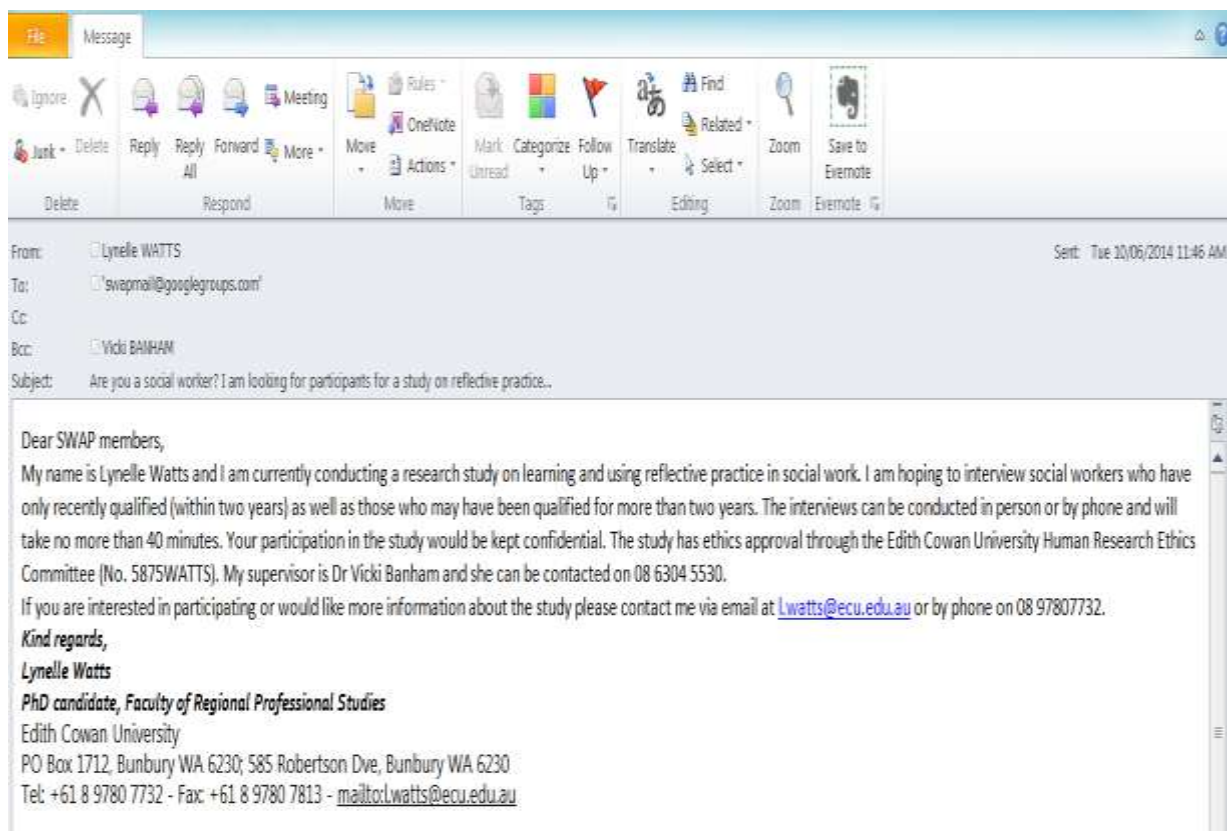
RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS NOW!
Are you a current social work student?
Would you like to have a conversation about your experience of learning reflective practice?
If you would like to be interviewed please contact:
Lynelle Watts on 08 97807732
l.watts@ecu.edu.au

RATIONALE
Social Work students are often asked to reflect on their practice and learning. My PhD research seeks to answer the question: *In what ways can reflective practice be understood in social work education in Australia?*
The aim of the study is to provide better methods for teaching reflective practice in Social Work so that students can be better prepared for practice.

METHOD
As part of the research I am aiming to conduct interviews with Social Work students, practitioners, and educators about their experience of learning reflective practice. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form. Your participation will be kept strictly confidential. Results from the study will be disseminated back to participants and through publication in relevant journals.

This research has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee – (Project number 5875)

Appendix G - Recruitment email sent to the South West Agencies in Partnership (SWAP)



Appendix H - Interview guides for participants

Social Work Practitioners/Social Work Educators

Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study. The interview will take about 40 minutes and with your permission I would like to record the interview as well as take notes. A transcript of the interview will be returned for you to read before it is used in any data analysis process and you will be asked to give your consent for it to be used in the study. You are welcome to withdraw your consent at any time.

- Can you tell me something about your experience as a social worker? What is your current role?
- When did you undertake your studies in social work? Was reflective practice part of the curriculum when you were studying as an undergraduate?
- What do you understand about reflective practice?
- What can you tell me about your experience of learning reflective practice?
- Do you use reflection in your current role? Can you give examples of where you have used reflective practice in your work?
- Have you supervised social work students? If so, does reflective practice play a role in your supervision of students? Can you give some examples?
- Have you any suggestions for teaching reflective practice to students? Can you give examples?
- Have you ever tried to teach reflective practice and been unsuccessful? What happened? What leads you to think it wasn't successful?

- What do you think the barriers to reflective practice are for practitioners?
- Do you think reflective practice is useful to learning how to practice in social work?

In what way?

Social work students

Preamble

Thanks for agreeing to be part of this study. The interview will take about 40 minutes and with your permission I would like to record the interview as well as take notes. A transcript of the interview will be returned for you to read before it is used in any data analysis process and you will be asked to give your consent for it to be used in the study. You are welcome to withdraw your consent at any time.

- Can you tell me something about your experience as a social work student?
- What year are you currently in your undergraduate degree?
- Is reflective practice part of the curriculum? How much of your studies so far have included reflective practice and writing?
- What do you understand about reflective practice? What can you tell me about your experience of learning reflective practice? Can you give examples of assessment that asked for reflective writing or practice?
- What helps you undertake reflective practice and writing?
- Are there any barriers to learning reflective practice or writing?
- Why does social work use reflective practice and writing? In your view what is reflective practice and writing for? Are there other ways to accomplish these goals? What are they?

Appendix I - Examples of the data analysis process

First codes – list

How is reflective practice utilised in learning, teaching and practicing social work?

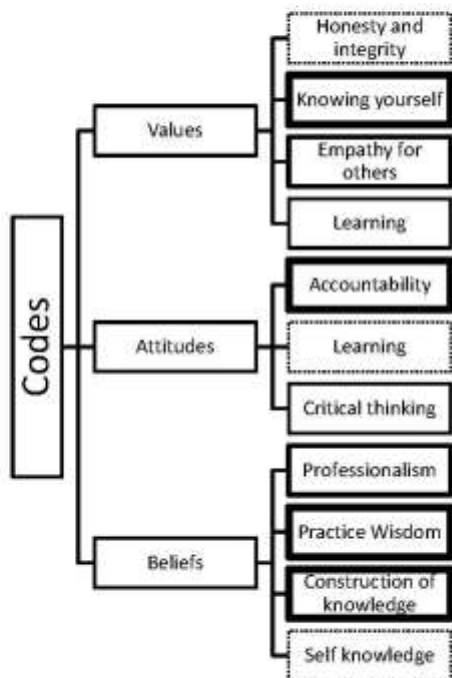
Initial (or open) code (Saldaña, 2012, pp. 100-105)	Values codes (Saldaña, 2012, pp. 110-115) ¹	Means-end (X [Reflection] is a way to do Y) (Saldaña, 2012, p. 159)	Rationale (X is a reason for doing reflection) (Saldaña, 2012, p. 158)	Location for action (X [spaces, locations] is a place for doing Y [reflection] (Saldaña, 2012, p. 159)	Function ² (X [activity] is used for Y [reflection])
Reflection is deeply personal	V: honesty with oneself (INV1)				
Reflection is liberating	V: Freedom of thought A: Questioning the status quo (INV1: 26)	Value different opinions; change your mind.	Liberating your mind	University; with others	Creating social justice (INV1: 26)
Reflection [is aided by] discussion					Discussion
Writing reflections down gives new perspectives		Gain new perspectives	Gain new perspectives	Journal	Writing
Reflection is a mark of professionalism	B: Professionalism			Supervision	
Dialogue with others is a form of reflection	V: Self questioning	Dialogue			dialogue
Reflection is "about being, its our higher selves as a way of	A: good practitioner is a thoughtful practitioner				

¹ According to Saldana (2012, p. 111) values means "is the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing or idea". Attitudes are a "relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs, which have been learned" (Shaw & Wright, 1967, cited in Saldaña, 2012, p. 111). Lastly Saldana considers beliefs to be that "part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretative perceptions of the social world" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 111).

² Means-end, rationale, location, *function* are all domain or taxonomic codes which "is an ethnographic method for discovering the cultural knowledge people use to organize their behaviours and interpret their experience". The aim here is to locate the cultural knowledge about reflective practice that students, practitioners, educators and field educators are using. I have used this in order to map the relationships between key ideas about reflective practice. In addition reflective practice emerged as strongly tied to various beliefs, attitudes and values about what makes a good social worker and so values coding has also been included.

Initial (or open) code (Saldaña, 2012, pp. 100-105)	Values codes (Saldaña, 2012, pp. 110-115) ¹	Means-end (X [Reflection] is a way to do Y) (Saldaña, 2012, p. 159)	Rationale (X is a reason for doing reflection) (Saldaña, 2012, p. 158)	Location for action (X [spaces, locations] is a place for doing Y [reflection]) (Saldaña, 2012, p. 159)	Function ² (X [activity] is used for Y [reflection])
allowing caution" (INV1: 62)	V: Calling to help				
Reflection as thinking aloud with others (INV1: 38-45)	B: Dialogue with others is important as accountability.	Offering fairness of process for stakeholders (INV1L 45)	Checking for ethical practice decisions		Thinking aloud
Reflections as professional accountability	B: Accountability V: Professionalism				
Reflection is slowing down the action		Slow down the action			
Reflection is critical analysis		Critical analysis			Critical analysis
Reflection happens in many different spaces				Driving; walking; after work; when relaxed away from office	
Reflection is learnt through mentors and supervisors	A: Supervision is important	Supervision	Learning from practice	In offices, in formal consultations, with practicum students	
Understanding your own mind	V: Good social work practice requires awareness of self				
Reflection is mind-mapping					Mind-mapping cases and situations is a way of doing reflection
Reflection is thinking	A: SW practice should not be routine or automatic B: thinking is about how the decision is made (INV1: 28)				

VAB Categories to themes doc



Values categories "the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing or idea" (Sakuma, 2012, p. 111):

(H-I) Honesty and integrity

- Honesty with oneself
- Self-questioning
- Thinking about practice is important to being a good practitioner
- Understanding the reasons behind practice is important to being professional/traditional
- Freedom of thought

(KY) Knowing yourself (examples below)

- Calling on help
- Achieving means making a positive difference to someone's life
- Behavioural change should come from reflection
- Organised thoughts are an aid to clarity
- Making sense of situations is good social work practice
- Practitioners should be able to track interactions as they happen
- Values need to be examined as they shape attitudes towards others
- know your own issues to avoid transferring or projecting these onto

Comment [LW1]: Reflection is the way to build self awareness for good practice.

client experience (INV6: 27)

- Practitioners are people too
- Self-awareness is emotional and psychological knowledge of the self
- Self-awareness of one's own issues and trigger points is important to ethical practice [psychoanalytical]
- Self and practice situations are intertwined (INV6: 42)
- Awareness of are important to good social work practice (INV6: 228)
- Growth means change and improvement as a person and practitioner (INV8: 131)
- Values and ethics of others can impact on your practice
- Values need to be examined as they shape attitudes to others
- Reflection on your social location and power leads to change in your practice and self
- Acknowledging difference is important
- Values and ethics are important to enabling social change and different ways of being in the world (INV10: 281)
- Understanding power is important to tempering a "rescue" mentality (INV13: 64)
- Challenging assumptions and bias is the route to being critical
- Practice is permeated by hidden assumptions; these need to be explored to enable different ways of practicing. (INV14:

(EO) Empathy for others

Comment [LW2]: Reflection helps bring care to practice.

- Care is needed for people in critical incidents that involve strong feelings or potential stress
- Knowing how gender and power operate is being a critical practitioner
- Empathy is crucial to social work practice
- Working with vulnerable people is difficult and requires practitioners to be thoughtful and careful
- Reflection introduces care into practice
- Empowerment of others is problematic without knowledge about power and privilege (INV6:214)
- Putting yourself in the shoes of another is important to understanding their situation (INV7: 120)
- Good people skills are a prerequisite to reflecting with others (INV8: 115)
- Colleagues are important debriefing partners (INV11: 26)

(E) Experience and skills

Comment [LW3]: Very small category could be subsumed into learning I think

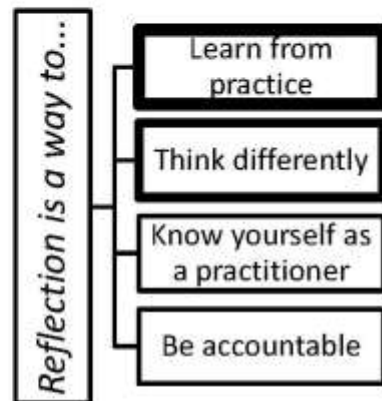
- Experience is important to developing practice.
- Practitioner experience helps solve problems

(L) Learning

Comment [LW4]: Reflection is crucial to learning from experience.

- Workers who are not able to reflect on practice are less likely to learn from difficult situations (INV4: 212)
- Thinking about practice leads to thoughtful practice
- Practice mistakes are important sources of learning for students and colleagues
- Thinking about what you've done leads to learning (INV7: 42)
- Active learning involves engagement in reflection on what has been learned (INV7: 104)
- Feedback is important to learning from practice
- Learning from past mistakes is how we improve ourselves as people
- Learning involves improvement by learning from mistakes (INV12:117-129)

Means-end Categories to themes doc



Learning from practice situations

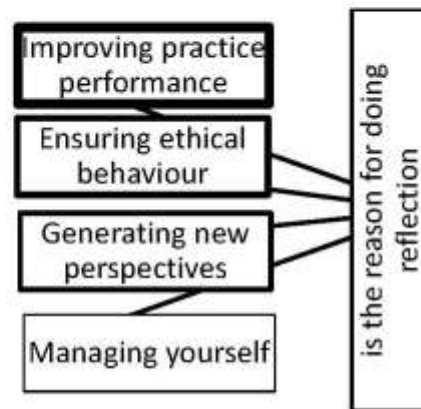
- Slow down the action
- Critical analysis
- Supervision
- Use your experience to benefit others and incorporate theory and research into your practice (INV2: 28)
- Critically analyse ideas
- Not repeat past mistakes (INV2: 39)
- Prevent burnout (INV2: 63)
- Assess new ideas and their applicability to practice (INV2: 125)
- Learn from practice
- Increase effective practice
- Interpret situations in practice (INV2: 139)
- Understand practice situations (INV3: 33)
- Deconstruct the meaning of literature about practice situations (INV4: 17)
- Understanding practice situations (INV4: 17)
- Discussion with team member
- Compare situations with previous experience (INV4: 107)
- Monitoring real-time action with clients
- Return to experience (INV5:53)
- Discharge strong feelings)
- Bring a multidisciplinary team together during stressful times
- Discharge emotion and understand what is happening (INV5: 53-57)
- Take time to consider what happened.
- Learn from practice situations

- Thinking about practice is a way to note differences in the presentation of client problems as trends (INV5: 289)
- Learn from these differently configured situations.
- Learn from past mistakes
- Do better in the future (INV7:42)
- Learn
- Comparing and contrasting the positives and negatives of a practice situations (INV8: 39)
- Assist with dealing with crises in practice; deal with stress; improve practice moving forward (INV8: 85)
- Halt the action (INV9: 46)
- Learn from practice and others
- Build trust with colleagues
- Get beyond just doing the job (the activity)
- Learning from practice supervision
- Understand practice situations (INV11: 26)
- Learn from own performance
- Learning from practice situations
- Look back on practice (INV14: 34)
- Understand practice
- Do things differently; (INV14:46)

Thinking differently

- Connect the literature on critical theory to practice
- Think more broadly about practice issues and situations (INV13: 117)
- Look beyond the self to bigger things (INV13: 48)
- Ask questions *what does this mean?*
- Locating these social constructions
- Understand and interpret these relations of power and knowledge
- Describe, interpret and understand your own power positions
- Change attitudes to others
- Understand otherness
- Look at things from a different perspective
- Take in information; expand your thinking; incorporate new ideas (INV7: 104)
- Create agility in your thinking; a way of being ready to change, reassess your direction (INV7:48)
- Slow down the pace of practice
- Suspending the action to make space for understanding (INV6: 121)
- Build ways to incorporate many different interpretations of experience
- Build openness to thinking differently
- Incorporate other ways of thinking about a practice situation
- Be clear about the theories being used and why (INV5: 84-86)
- Raise questions about practice (INV5: 72)
- Organise thinking
- Observation and interpretation (INV4: 69)
- Be clear about the theories being used and why (INV5: 84-86)
- Raise questions about practice (INV5: 72)

Rationale codes to themes doc



Improving practice performance

- Learning from practice
- Experience is the reason you need to reflect (INV2: 28)
- Learning from the experience of others
- Develop knowledge for practice (INV2: 120-124 Prevent burnout in a tough job (INV4; 212)
- Improve practice and enable more effective interactions with clients and others
- Learning from the incident to improve practice (INV5: 53-57)
- Interpret and build understanding of what happened in practice
- Developing skills and advancing practice wisdom (INV5: 174-176)
- Learning from experience
- Moves thinking beyond concrete thinking [concrete is described as the technical application of models without unpacking their development or inclusive/exclusive use of language etc]
- Avoid social work becoming a technical exercise (INV6: 214)
- The need to incorporate new with past learning, applications of learning to new situations (INV7: 70)
- To learn from individual practice activities
- Challenge these in our own practice with others
- Consolidation of practice for students, integrating theory and practice situations (INV10: 239)
- Develop judgement (INV11:40)
- Learning from practice
- Improving practice and performance
- Improving your practice
- improve practice

20

Generating new perspectives

- Liberating your mind
- Gathering other views about practice situations
- Build a theory about what might be happening in a practice situation (INV4: 91)
- Enables learning from practice situations
- Developing a practice theory base (INV5: 84-86)
- Developing 'ground' to work from (INV5: 94)
- Asking questions about how, why and what happened in practice (INV5: 181)
- Perspectives that challenge your assumptions
- Practice situations are all different so this is a way of understanding what is different (INV7: 42)
- Learning
- Think differently (INV10:153)
- thinking differently about a practice situation (INV13:71)
- Social work is about social change not just inner change for individuals
- Integrating theory learnt with practice (INV13: 125-131)
- Uncovering assumptions in practice (INV14: 34)
- Examine assumptions implicit in practice (INV14: 46)

16

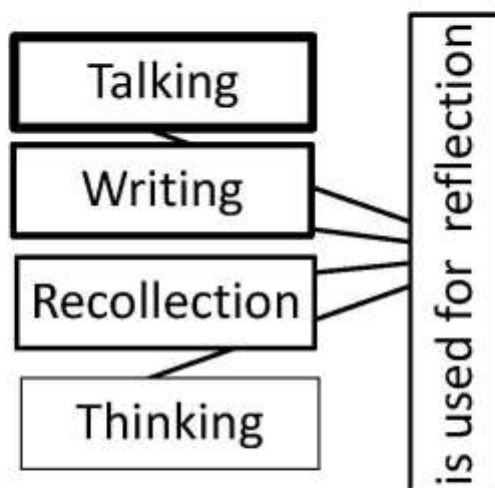
Ensuring ethical behaviour

- Checking for ethical practice decisions
- Considering the best interests of the service user and other stakeholders is a way of using power appropriated – accountability comes from reflecting
- Being ethical in our practice (INV1:40)
- Professionalism in social work is the reason for doing reflection
- Accountability for Making sense of practice situations (INV4: 42)
- Development of ways to be accountable publically for social work knowledge and skills
- Knowing your own impact on practice situations
- Brings to light hidden, invisible factors that may be impeding understanding between people (INV6: 42)
- Social justice and interpersonal empathy (INV6:90)
- Showing care in practice and addressing social injustice (INV6: 166)
- Empowering practice is more likely because practitioners have considered their implication in power relations
- Creating values congruence [meaning alignment between values and behaviour] (INV6: 236-249)
- Accounting to others
- Enacting an ethic of social justice through challenging oppressive social constructions (INV10: 40)
- Unpacking privilege so as to undermine its operation in social work practice with others.
- Enable social change (INV10: 293)
- Activism and social change are important goals for social workers (INV10: 288-291)

17

Managing yourself

Function to themes doc



Talking

- Discussion
- Dialogue
- Thinking aloud
- Placement supervision (INV1: 163)
- Discussion
- Asking questions [what you've done; what's gone right; what's gone wrong] (INV2: 63)
- talking with others
- Dialogue with others
- Discussion with others
- Social work activities such as case management, counselling, case work
- talking about feelings
- Theory discussion with colleagues; supervising students; professional supervision (INV5:84-92)
- Talking
- Discussion; "bouncing back and forth" (INV5: 147)
- Teaching through case examples
- PD by practitioners is a way to stay current; talking to students as visitors to University or by supervising students
- Talking within a professional safe space about your own history and issues
- Talking; using a framework for locating different perspectives (INV6:42)
- Practice activity with likeminded committed others;
- Practice experience
- Discussion; using cases; modelling thinking for students(INV6: 170-93)

- class discussion, modelling by teachers, mentors, supervisors, classmates (INV6: 212)
- Discussion, use of case histories, thinking aloud about cases and practice histories
- Good interpersonal skills
- Talking
- Discussion with others, engagement with public debates and issues, engagement with others different to ourselves (INV10: 96-100)
- Discussion, feedback on assessments
- Talking, listening
- Talking, discussing
- Supervision, peer support
- in conversations

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Writing

- Writing
- Critical analysis
- Reading and writing about cases using literature (INV4:17)
- Writing up case notes; writing meeting notes; journaling
- Journaling; diagrams and maps; drawing (INV3: 33)
- Written work, assignment work (INV14: 38)
- Mind-mapping cases and situations is a way of doing reflection
- Feedback
- Verbalising, writing, (INV14:34)
- Assessment, writing
- Journaling (INV13: 71-75)
- Writing assignments
- Taking good notes; writing
- Case examples assist with developing reflective skills
- Writing, assessment
- Feedback
- Journaling (INV13: 71-75)

17

Recollection

- Practice is utilised for doing reflection.
- Looking back on your experience is one way to reflect
- Trial and error (INV2: 122- 125)
- Recording initial impressions out-loud
- Recall of experience, talking, listening, reflective questioning of supervisors
- Recall experience with others who have been involved
- Recollection of the experience; remembering incidents
- Recollecting (INV5: 157-166)
- Asking questions of yourself (INV5; 181 for question sequence)
- Sequence of learning includes: what happened; why did I act in this way or that way

10

Location for action (X [spaces, locations] is a place for doing Y [reflection] (Saldana, 2012, p. 159)	Themes Formal spaces (FS); Informal spaces (IS); Alone (A) and with others (WO)
University; with others	FS, WO
Journal	IS
Supervision	FS
Driving; walking; after work; when relaxed away from office	A, IS
In offices, in formal consultations, with practicum students	FS, WO
Placement (for socialisation of future social workers) (NV1: 265)	FS, WO
Cars, in corridors, case meetings;	IS
Case notes	FS
Voice memo recording (NV4: 69)	IS, A
Cars, on practice visits (NV4: 79)	IS, WO
With others	WO
With colleagues, practicum students (NV4: 107), with team leaders	IS, FS, WO
On the way to work	A, IS
On the way home after work	IS, A
quiet spaces; while walking	IS, A
With colleagues, in journals, through supervisor, on practicum	FS, WO
Team meetings; debriefing sessions; in supervision	FS
In corridors;	IS, WO
Family meetings (NV5: 53-57); in supervision (NV5: 69-72)	FS, WO
Practice journals; supervision; supervising practicum students (NV5: 86-92)	IS, WO
Through discussion with colleagues; with supervisors	WO, FS
Alone	A
with trusted colleagues; in supervision with line manager; or professional supervisor;	WO, FS
PD sessions; debriefing meetings; (NV5: 156-166)	
In meetings; as practice supervisors of students	IS, WO
Journal; on your own	A, IS
Practitioners visiting classrooms; practica (NV5: 217-223)	IS, WO
PD sessions; debriefing and team meetings; developing knowledge in specific fields of practice; in supervision	WO, FS
University; Counselling; Practica Supervision (NV6: 29-35)	IS, WO
With others; in coffee shops	WO, IS
In classroom	FS, WO
Being surrounded by others interested in challenging themselves (NV6: 59-66); social work mentors or supervisors interested in reflection	WO, IS
Teams or workplaces with others who model reflection; clients or service users	WO, FS, IS

Workplaces, in classrooms	FS, WO
Placement supervision, in classrooms; with colleagues	FS, WO
With others, in supervising students	WO, FS
In thinking by ourselves	A
In classrooms; with students; in placement supervision;	WO, FS
Classrooms, in practice supervision	WO, FS
Discussion with others; classes	WO, IS
Assessment, classrooms	WO, FS
With supervisors; in team meetings; within organisations (NV8: 50)	WO, FS
Keeping a journal	A, IS
Service user or client feedback	WO, FS
professional development	WO, FS
With others	WO
Colleagues, with manager/team leader	WO
Out doing visits, car	IS, WO
Discussion with others	WO
Space to talk	WO
In classroom, through supervising students;	FS
collegial discussion	WO
Classrooms; workplaces; on practicum.	FS
Classrooms; practica supervision	FS
Placement supervision, teachers	FS
Offices;	FS
corridors	IS
In offices	FS
by oneself	A
Journal,	A
with others in supervision	WO, FS
With teachers, supervisors, other students	WO, FS
colleagues, mentors	WO
In assessment	A,
Alone, journaling	A
Journals, assessment;	FS, WO
In classrooms	FS, WO
Practica, process reporting, supervision	FS, WO
Journals,	A
In teams or groups about a shared experience.	WO, FS

Written reflections on practicum, In teams or groups about a shared experience.	A WO, FS
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WO	WO IS	WO FS	IS	FS	A
Discussion with others	Out doing visits, car.	In teams or groups about a shared experience.	Journal	Team meetings: debriefing sessions; in supervision	In assessment
Space to talk	Being surrounded by others interested in challenging themselves (INV6: 59-66); social work mentors or supervisors interested in reflection	Journals, assessment;	Cars, in corridors, case meetings;	In offices	Alone, journaling
With others	With others; in coffee shops	in classrooms	corridors	Classrooms; workplaces; on practicum.	Written reflections on practicum
Colleagues, with manager/team-leader	in corridors;	Practica, process reporting, supervision		Classrooms; practica supervision	Journals,
University; with others	Cars, on practice visits (INV4: 79)	with others in supervision		Placement supervision; teachers	Journal,
collegial discussion		With teachers, supervisors, other students		In classrooms, through supervising students	by oneself
		Service user or client feedback		Team meetings; debriefing sessions; in supervision	Keeping a journal
		professional development			in thinking by ourselves
		In classrooms; with students; in placement supervision;			Alone
		Classrooms, in practice supervision			On the way to work
		Discussion with others; classes			On the way home after work
		Assessment, classrooms			
		With supervisors; in team meetings; within			

		organisations (INV8: 59)			
		With others, in supervising students			
		Teams or workplaces with others who model reflection; clients or service users			
		in classrooms			
		Practitioners visiting classrooms; practica (INV5: 217-223)			
		PD sessions; debriefing and team meetings; developing knowledge in specific fields of practice; in supervision.			
		University; Counselling; Practica Supervision (INV6: 29-35)			
		With colleagues, in journals, through supervision; on practicum.			
		With colleagues, practicum students (INV4: 107), with team leaders			
		In offices, in formal consultations, with practicum students			
		Placement (for socialisation of future social workers) (INV1: 165)			
		University; with others			

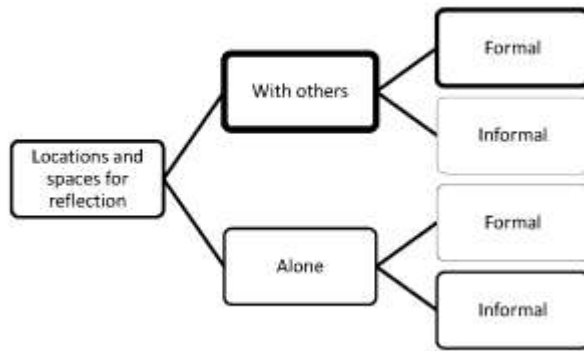




Figure 22: Wordle created from codes about barriers to reflection